

# Flood: Coffee production seen to be down by 12.7%

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**Kochi:** Last year's floods in Kerala have significantly affected the coffee production in the state, as the post-monsoon estimation has showed a 12.7% decline over the post-blossom estimate, said the Coffee Board.

According to the post-monsoon estimation, the coffee production for the fiscal 2019 will be 70,435 tonnes, down by 10,215 tonnes over the post-blossom estimate of 89,650 tonnes.

Karnataka, the largest producer of coffee in the country was also affected by the floods, and the Board estimates that Karnataka's post-monsoon crop would be at nearly 2.20 lakh tonnes for the fiscal 2019, a decline of 48,250 tonnes over the post-blossom estimate.

"It is evident that in all the major coffee growing areas of Karnataka and Kerala, there was an excess rainfall of 46% to 98% during the period of January and September 2018 in comparison to the rainfall received during the corresponding period of the pre-



vious year. The continuous rains led to soil saturation and wet feet conditions resulting in defoliation, berry drop and incidence of stalk rot and black rot. Up-rooting of shade trees as well as landslides also damaged the crop. The very severe intensity rains which occurred in August 2018 caused an unprecedented flooding and landslides in coffee-growing areas affecting the coffee plantations, estate infrastructure and road and communication network," the report said.

Though the initial crop set was good with record post-blossom estimate of over 3,80,000 lakh tonnes, the overall post-monsoon

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estimate for the country is now pegged at 3.20 lakh tonnes, a decline of nearly 60,000 tonnes. Commenting on the Board findings, Prasanth Rajesh, president of Wayanad Coffee Growers Association, said that the crop has declined by a minimum of 20% in areas like Kalpetta and Vythiri. "It seems there is only a decline of 10% in Sulthan Bathery where rains were comparatively less severe," he said.

According to Rajesh, two-three weeks ago, there were rains in Wayanad, which had resulted in partial blossoms. "This will result in 20% of our next year's crop getting ripened three weeks early," he said.