

# Bacterial infection kills over 10K hectares of paddy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Palakkad:** Bacterial leaf blight has destroyed more than one-third of the paddy cultivation in the district, known as the 'rice bowl' of the state.

The spread of the disease, for the first time in the district, is an offshoot of flood and heavy rains experienced during the past two months, said Suresh Kumar, deputy director of the agriculture department, here on Thursday.

"Out of the total first crop paddy cultivation of 33,583 hectares, already 10,024.6 hectares were affected by the deadly disease. Out of this, 6,493.5 hectares were fully lost and attempts are being made to control the disease in 3,762 hectares," said a report sent to the government by the agriculture department.

Suresh Kumar said Chitturblock is the worst-affected (6,203 hectares), followed by Kuzhalmannam (6,200 hectares); Kollengode (5,800 hectares), Alathur (4,500 hectares), Nemmara (4,820 hectares) Malampuzha (2,500



The spread of the disease is an offshoot of flood and heavy rains experienced during the past two months

hectares) and Palakkad (1,620 hectares).

Mannarkad and Agali blocks were not affected by the disease. He said yield loss due to the disease could be up to 70%.

"The bacterial leaf blight is caused by *Xanthomonas oryzae pv.oryzae*. It causes wilting of seedlings and yellowing and drying of leaves. This is one of the most serious diseases of rice. Yield loss can be as much as 70% to 75%. When plants are infected at booting stage, bacterial blight does not affect yield but result

in poor quality grains and high proportion of broken kernels," he said.

To control it, 30 grams of strepto cycline per litre of water is used to spray the affected plants. Bleaching powder is also used to kill the bacteria, Suresh Kumar said.

A multi-disciplinary diagnostic team of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Regional Rice Research Centre and Kerala Agriculture University, Pattambi, headed by Isreal Thomas, Sumiya and Thulasi, visited some of the affected areas.