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Govt raises wages of kendu leaf pluckers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: The State Government today decided to enhance the wage of kendu leaf pluckers and binders. There are over 10 lakh pluckers and binders in the unorganised sector.

The decision to raise their wages was taken on the recommendations of the Kendu Leaf Advisory Committee which met today. The meeting was presided over by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

The price of one bundle (kery) processed kendu leaf has been raised from 25 to 27 paise. There are 20 leaves in one bundle. Similarly, the price of one bundle of broken kendu leaf has been raised to 54 paise from 27 paise. Each bundle has 40 leaves.

Besides, the purchase price of private producers of different kendu leaf products has been enhanced from Rs 1,450 to Rs 1,550 per quintal.

Official sources said the State

Government has decided to amend rules to change distribution pattern of kendu leaf grant. According to the changed rules, 50 percent of the grant will be given to the kendu leaf pluckers and binders' welfare fund. The rest will be utilised for infrastructure development of districts from which kendu leaf is collected.

The binding price of a 5 kg bundle of A and B category kendu leaf has been raised from Rs 17.5 to 21. The binding price of C category leaves of 5 kg bundle has been raised from Rs 14.5 to 19. Similarly, the price of D category kendu leaf bundle has been revised from Rs 14.5 to 18.

The State Government has also decided to provide Rs 20,000 to the families of

pluckers and binders in the event of death or permanent disability. Similarly, the assistance for treating any serious disease has been fixed at Rs 20,000.

Chief Secretary Ajit Kumar Tripathy, Development Commissioner RN Bohidar and senior officials were present.

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