

# Kendu leaf prices up by half a paise!

**Bhubaneswar, Jan. 3:** The State Government on Monday decided to raise the price of kendu leaf offered to pluckers by half a paise per bundle.

Each bundle of kendu leaf consists of 20 leaves and the Government offered 21 paise for it to the pluckers. Now they will get 21.5 paise per bundle.

At the Kendu Leaf Advisory Committee meeting here on Monday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said there is a need for improvement in processing of kendu leaves to make it more marketable.

He called upon the Forest Department to formulate a plan in this regard.

Patnaik also directed that the pluckers should

be paid their dues before Rath Yatra every year.

The meeting decided that supply of slippers to the pluckers, as announced by the State Government before the General Elections, will be completed before the collection season begins now that a legal case filed in the High Court in this connection has been disposed of.

The meeting was attended by Agriculture Production Commissioner G.B. Mukherji, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister B.K. Patnaik, Secretary, Forest and Environment Aurobindo Behera and president of Orissa Kendu Leaf Employees Association Jogendra Nath Tripathy. •ENS