

SATURDAY



# KUENSEL



THAT THE PEOPLE SHALL BE INFORMED

OCTOBER 17, 2020 • Nu 15

COVID-19: Bhutan: 316 | Global: 38,854,441 | Recovered: 26,650,794 | Death: 1,097,358 | US: 7,979,709  
India: 6,835,655 | West Bengal: 309,417 | Assam: 198,982 | Arunachal Pradesh: 12,971 | Sikkim: 3,500

## Export of potatoes and four other agri-products resume

Rajesh Rai | Phuentsholing

Export of potatoes to India, via Jaigaon or any other place, will not be a problem hereafter.

Along with potato, areca nuts, orange, apple and ginger have also been sanctioned for export from Bhutan to India as all these produce have been listed in India's import list from Bhutan.

The Embassy of India in Thimphu yesterday notified the foreign ministry of this latest development, which has come as a huge relief to thousands of farmers across the country and potato traders in Phuentsholing and Jaigaon.

In its "Urgent" notification yesterday, the Embassy of India stated that the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, India on October 14 notified area nut, mandarin, apple, potato and ginger from Bhutan—in the Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) Order, 2003, with immediate effect.

After the export of potatoes to India, via Jaigaon, came to an abrupt halt last week, hundreds of tonnes of potatoes have been stored in various go-downs in Phuentsholing. Potato growers from across the country have also stopped taking the produce to Phuentsholing.

Earlier yesterday, a potato dealer, Singye Wangdi, who was unaware of the notification, said he had about 10 truckloads of potatoes in his go-down. ▶ Pg 2



► The 127 Bhutanese, who were returning to their workplace in Dubai and Kuwait, reached their destinations yesterday after the Kuwait embassy in Thimphu supported the foreign ministry in obtaining the necessary clearance.

## Rescued from Baghdad

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# Export of potatoes ...

From Pg 1

"I am really worried," he said, adding that he had no idea what would happen to his investment if the export didn't resume sooner.

In a desperate attempt, some Bhutanese and Indian traders also attempted to take the potatoes via Jaigaon on the night of October 14 but were apprehended by Shastri Seema Bal (SSB). Four truckloads of potatoes were seized and handed over to the customs office in Jaigaon.

Following this incident, the deputy commissioner of customs of Dinhata Customs Division in West Bengal had written to the regional customs office in Phuentsholing requesting not to process or allow the vegetable consignments until the Plant Quarantine Office (PQO) made arrangements for inspection at Jaigaon Land

Customs Office (LCO).

The letter also requested the SSB to not allow such consignments to enter India until PQO managed arrangements for inspection at Jaigaon LCS.

The problem emerged because the Jaigaon customs office had installed a computerised system called the ICEGATE in 2017 after the introduction of the Indian GST.

This system asked for quarantine clearance but the Plant Quarantine Services of India did not issue the clearance for Bhutanese cardamom and Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) clearance was not recognised.

Cardamom export saw a similar problem in 2017 but it was resolved after it got listed in the India's import regulation follow-

ing government to government dialogues.

Talking to Kuensel, agriculture minister Yeshey Penjor had also said that negotiations to list potato, apple, orange, ginger and areca nuts in the export list had started two years ago and reached the final stage.

He also said the government initially submitted a comprehensive list of numerous products, which the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) in India requested to scale it down to five.

The Embassy of India's notification yesterday also said that the NPPO is further examining chilli, beans, cabbage, cauliflower, carrot, pea and soyabean to be included in the list. "An update will be provided subsequently," it said.