



AIREA News – 19th September 2026

1. India, Nepal discuss ways to facilitate trade

India and Nepal discussed measures to facilitate legitimate bilateral trade, strengthen compliance mechanisms and prevent misuse of preferential trade arrangements. Agricultural, dairy, food, pharmaceutical and other products, along with standards and phytosanitary requirements, were also reviewed.

2. Centre sets food production target at 178 million tonnes for rabi season

The Centre has set a **177.72 million tonne** foodgrain production target for the 2026–27 rabi season, including 121 MT of wheat, 17.20 MT of pulses and 22.30 MT of nutri/coarse cereals. Deficient rainfall in several major producing States and strengthening El Niño could pose challenges to soil moisture and rabi sowing.

3. Lessons from TN rice price spike

The sharp rise in Tamil Nadu rice prices has been attributed to declining paddy acreage, stagnant yields, inadequate irrigation and rising cultivation costs. The article calls for stronger procurement, better irrigation, more storage and incentives to farmers to increase domestic rice production.

4. wins bipartisan support as NZ Parliament approves deal

New Zealand's Parliament has approved the India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement with strong bipartisan support, and the pact is expected to come into force within the next month after the required formalities. The agreement is expected to expand opportunities for food exports, agriculture, manufactured goods, pharmaceuticals and services.

5. Experts concerned over Centre's push for GM rice

Researchers and activists have raised concerns over the proposed wider use of gene-edited/GM rice varieties, citing potential biosafety, environmental and seed-sovereignty issues. They have also warned that the introduction of such varieties could affect India's rice export markets and called for thorough testing and public disclosure of scientific data.