



BASAI News Updates

August 27, 2022

Rain deficit in UP, Bihar, Jharkhand

Paddy farmers worried | Yield likely to take a hit in Punjab, Haryana too

VIBHA SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 26

As the four-month (June-September) monsoon season enters its last phase, key states, including paddy-growing regions, are facing severe rain deficit and continue to lag behind in sowing of the key kharif crop — paddy.

While the country as a whole has received 8 per cent excess rainfall, states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand continue to record deep deficits in the ongoing kharif season along with Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura.

Along with an expected decline in wheat stock, apprehensions of a fall in rice production due to drought-like conditions in some parts has brought the focus on the procurement of the kharif season, which will decide the



FATE OF FOOD SCHEME HANGS IN BALANCE

- Experts say a fall in rice production due to drought-like conditions in some regions will decide the future of the Centre's free food programme — National Food Security Act
- So far, the scheme has been extended six times

future of the Centre's free food programme, say experts.

"It remains to be seen if the scheme (5 kg free grain to National Food Security Act beneficiaries), launched in March 2020 during the Covid pandemic, is extended

beyond the existing deadline (September 30)," they say.

So far, the scheme has been extended six times, the last being on April 1.

Though meteorologists are predicting rains over deficient parts in coming days, paddy

sowing continues to lag, with the area under the key kharif crop recorded at 343.70 lakh hectare, 8.25 per cent lower than in August last year.

Passing through the critical sowing phase, Uttar Pradesh, as to date, is 44 per cent rain deficit, Bihar 41 per cent, Jharkhand 26 per cent and Gangetic West Bengal 27 per cent, according to the IMD's latest data. Not just Jharkhand, UP, West Bengal and Bihar, rice production is expected to be affected in Punjab and Haryana also due to the "mysterious dwarfing of paddy plants".

India's wheat production is projected to have gone down by three per cent to 1,068.4 lakh tonne even though the overall foodgrain production is estimated at a record 3,157.2 lakh tonne in the 2021-22 crop year.

Govt may curb export of rice to maintain 'food security'

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NEW DELHI: India is considering restricting the export of rice to maintain its "national food security" following an anticipated drop in kharif or summer-sown paddy output due to a poor monsoon in key producer states and to put a lid on cereal prices, an official aware of the development said.

The proposal being weighed by the ministries of commerce and food talks of banning the export of white broken rice, the person said, adding that other varieties as well as premium basmati rice will continue to be exported. Poor rains will also crimp yields, prompting a late switch by many farmers to other crops in rice-growing

states where rainfall was deficient. The government is considering banning export of white broken rice only because that will be sufficient to ensure domestic demand is met adequately and global demand for this variety of rice is estimated to be high due to drought in many parts of the world, the person quoted above said.

Unlike wheat, India is a major exporter of rice. In 2021-22, the country exported nearly 22 million tonne of rice, about a sixth of its total output. India accounts for 40% of the world's rice shipments.

A patchy monsoon has upended the country's paddy crop in several states, such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Jharkhand. The total area under paddy, the main

summer staple, has shrunk by 7.6% to 36 million hectares compared to 39 million hectares sown last year at this time of the year, according to official estimates. Prices of rice will rise above minimum support prices because of the expected lower production," said Rahul Chauhan, an analyst with IGrain Pvt Ltd, a commodity-trading firm.

The country had banned private exports of wheat in May after a scorching early summer crimped wheat output by an estimated 2.5%

Despite forecast of a normal monsoon, summer rainfall, which waters nearly 60% of crops, was scanty or uneven in the paddy-growing states. Overall, the rain-bearing system has been 8% surplus between June 1 and August 26.