



BASAI News Updates

Sept. 24, 2022

Late spell of rain stalls harvest, impacts crops

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NEW DELHI: Heavy unseasonal rain in northern food-bowl states has stalled harvesting and damaged crops, while raising risks of pest attacks, cultivators and experts said on Friday.

Farmers struggled to save their produce as continuous rains in parts of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab have flooded fields and soaked standing crops, leading to grain loss.

Experts said a late revival of the monsoon has been a boon for eastern states where rains had been scanty and destructive in the north where harvesting has begun or is about to start.

A low pressure in the Bay of Bengal and a western disturbance, a rain-bearing system, have collided to give heavy rains at a time when the June-September monsoon normally begins to retreat. The country witnessed an erratic monsoon this year. Rains skipped many paddy growing states, such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. A late revival has helped these states.

Adequate harvests are critical this year amid a global food crisis. India banned the export of wheat in May and then put curbs on rice shipments as extreme weather pummelled crops. "Harvesting of paddy has come to a halt because combine harvesters cannot be operated in soft, wet soil. There will be considerable yield loss in paddy," Rajinder Singh, a former agriculture officer with the Haryana government, said.

The rains have delayed planting of vegetable crops and if hot



The unseasonal rain has raised risks of pest attacks.

HT ARCHIVE

dry weather follows, farmers may have to watch out for pest attacks, said Sanjay Sangroiya, a horticulture expert who formerly worked at the Centre of Excellence for Vegetables in Haryana's Gharaunda. There's no immediate let-up in the weather.

According to an official forecast on Friday, Uttarakhand will receive "isolated heavy rainfall" during September 23-26. Western UP will continue to be drenched till September 25, while eastern Rajasthan will get heavy rain on September 23-24. In Uttar Pradesh, heavy rains have damaged paddy and pearl millet (bajra).

"Very heavy rainfall has resulted in crop losses in both central and western Uttar Pradesh," said Sudhir Panwar, a Lucknow-based agriculture expert. Showers have inundated towns and farms in regions such as Agra, Mathura, Etawah, Kanauj and Meerut, he said.

Rajasthan has also received substantial rainfall, especially in eastern districts, damaging crops

such as coarse cereals, said Ram Sevak Singh, a member of the Bharatiya Kisan Union in Alwar.

The rains, which are likely to continue over the weekend in northern states, effectively narrow the window available to farmers to harvest and clear their fields of paddy remnants. Officials from Punjab and Haryana, in a meeting held by the Centre on September 21, said that they expected a lower incidence of farm fires this year, which cause an annual spell of pollution and smog over Delhi. However, delayed harvesting is likely to cause a spike in the intensity of stubble burning, as farmers will have less time to clear fields for their next crop.

Farmers usually plant rabi or winter-sown wheat in the second half of October and finish sowing by the second week of November. "The wheat sowing window lasts till about November 12-15," said Paramjit Singh, a former faculty at the Punjab Agricultural University.

Farmers block Delhi-Chandigarh NH, seek early purchase of paddy

Threaten to hold statewide 'chakka jam' today, if demand not met

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KURUKSHETRA, SEPTEMBER 23
Demanding the advancement of paddy procurement, members of the BKU (Charuni) today blocked the Delhi-Chandigarh National Highway in Shahabad, here today.

After getting no positive response from the state government regarding their demand, hundreds of farm activists gathered at Shaheed Udham Singh Trust despite rain, held a panchayat and decided to go ahead with the call of blocking the NH.

Shahabad SDM Kapil Sharma and DSP Gurnam Singh tried to persuade the farmers but they were adamant. As a number of farmers had brought their tractors to block the highway, a heavy police force was deployed and barricades were erected to stop them. But, the barricades were removed by the farmers in no time and no police force was used to stop them. The farmers blocked the highway around 1 pm and it continued



BKU (Charuni) chief Gurnam Singh addresses farm activists protesting on the NH in Shahabad on Friday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

DIALOGUE ON

“The admn has held three rounds of talks with farmers, but to no avail. The talks are still on. We have requested them to lift the blockade. Efforts are being made to resolve the matter. Kapil Sharma, SDM

till the filing of this report.

BKU (Charuni) chief Gurnam Singh said, “We were

WON'T BUDGE

“Farmers are already facing losses due to dwarf disease. Now rains have added to their woes. As the govt has decided to start the purchase from Oct 1, the NH will remain blocked till then. Gurnam Singh, BKU-CHARUNI

left with no option. The government has been delaying the procurement for no rea-

son. If it can start the procurement from October 1, why not today? And why it wants to keep the farmers waiting in the grain markets with the matured crop. The weather has been unfavourable and untimely rain has already drenched the matured crop.”

“The varieties being grown by the farmers mature early and the arrivals start from the first week of September,” he said, adding the farmers were not going to lift the blockade until the government announced the procurement of paddy.

The BKU chief also criticised Agriculture Minister JP Dalal for delaying the procurement and making statements against the farmers' union. In a tweet addressed to Dalal, Charuni said, “The procurement has to be started, else the roads across the state will be blocked tomorrow.”

Meanwhile, the blockade caused inconvenience to thousands of commuters as the traffic was diverted to link roads.



Arhtiyas protest at the Karnal grain market on Friday. SAYEED AHMED

Arhtiyas intensify stir, launch indefinite fast

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KARNAL, SEPTEMBER 23
As their strike entered the fifth day today, seven arhtiyas from different districts of the state started an indefinite fast at the local grain market.

Meanwhile, due to the non-procurement of the paddy and untimely rains, farmers are at the receiving end. They are seeking an early start of the paddy purchase.

On the call of the Haryana State Arhtiyas' Association, arhtiyas have been on an indefinite strike against the procurement of non-MSP paddy on the e-NAM portal since September 19. They are also demanding the reinstatement of 2.5% commission on the produce instead of Rs 46 per quintal, waiving 4% market and the HRDF fee on the paddy crop along with allowing farmers from neighbouring states to sell their produce in the grain markets of Haryana.

Due to the strike and rains, the grains lying in mandis are getting ruined, forcing the farmers to take their produce back home. “The farmers are being crushed due to the ongoing tussle between arhtiyas and the government. The arhtiyas are thinking about their interest, but nobody is taking care of us. I have been waiting here for the past five days, but my paddy wasn't procured. Instead, it got soaked in the

NEED TO END STRIKE

“Arhtiyas must end the strike and purchase the produce. The govt should also start the purchase. Sudden rains have created havoc in fields and flattened the paddy, and has even delayed the harvesting. Bahadur Mehta, BKU-SR, DEHRA DUN

BUYERS REQUIRED

“Paddy needs buyers, who can manage & dry the produce immediately. Neither the govt, nor the marketing board has made arrangements to buy wet paddy. If not sold immediately, it will be ruined. Vijay Setia, EX-CHEF, ALL-INDIA RICE EXPORTERS' ASSOCIATION

mandi in the absence of sufficient arrangements,” said Anil Kumar, a farmer.

“I have no option but to take my produce back,” he added. Meanwhile, All-India Rice Exporters' Association ex-chief Vijay Setia said unprecedented rainfall had led to serious concerns among farmers. He said the farmers should be given an option to sell their produce anywhere they could find a firm, person or stockist at better prices.

Mineral dealer licence misused, firm issues transit pass illegally



SHIV KUMAR SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

YAMUNANAGAR, SEPTEMBER 23
Owners of a trading firm allegedly misused their mineral dealer licence (MDL) and illegally issued e-rawanas (transit pass) to screening plants in Yamunanagar.

Using these, owners of the screening plants allegedly carried out illegal mining.

The fraud came to light in Tapu Kamalpur village during a checking drive.

As per information, Rajesh Sangwan, who had recently joined as the District Mining Officer, Yamunanagar, has started a physical checking drive of stone crushers, screening plants and mining firms in the district.

A team of the department found that a land situated in Tapu Kamalpur village, for which an MDL was granted to undertake business related to mining material, has been cultivated and paddy crop was grown on it.

On the other hand, it was revealed from the e-rawana portal of the government that though there is no physical stock present anywhere,

the owners of the said MDL holder were selling and purchasing (trading) boulder, gravel and sand to other screening plants.

The record of the sale and purchase entered into the MDL of the said trading company showed the sale of minerals from June 23 to September 12 to various screening plant owners.

Further, another record of this trading company showed that it purchased mining material (minor minerals) from various screening plant owners from June 23 to July 24. "As per the guidelines issued by the Directorate Office of Mines and Geology, Haryana, no sale-purchase of minerals is allowed amongst screening plant owners," said Sangwan. He said the practice adopted by the owners of the said MDL holder was illegal as they sold e-rawanas to other plant owners, who were involved in illegal mining.

"The illegally-mined mineral was converted into legal mineral through these e-rawanas given by the owners of the trading company," said Sangwan. A case has been registered against the owners of the trading company under Sections 379, 188, 420, 120-B of the IPC and Section 21 (5) of the MMDR Act-1957.