



# **BASAI News Updates**

**August 26, 2022**

# China's harvest threatened, a food crisis looms

The autumn harvest in China, the world's largest source of wheat and rice, is under severe threat from record temperatures, drought and even flash floods. A look at the crisis, and what it means for the world

## Freak weather all around

Different parts of China have been hit by record heat, flash floods and droughts – phenomena that experts say are more frequent and intense due to climate crisis

### DROUGHT CRISIS

A severe drought has gripped regions along the Yangtze River and the Sichuan basin, where almost half of the nation's rice is produced.  
Water in the Yangtze is currently flowing about 50% lower than usual

### Worst heatwave recorded

An intense heatwave has gripped southern China, which has recorded its longest continuous period of high temperatures ever recorded

**10th** consecutive day of red alert was in place in China as the heatwave entered its 70th day

**45°C+** temperatures are being regularly recorded across the country since August 1



A farmer shows a dead leaf of sweet potato in Fuyuan village in Chongqing, China, earlier this week. REUTERS

## China temperature anomalies

Difference between current air temperature and 30-year average from 1979 to 2010 on same day

August 23



## AND FLASH FLOODS ELSEWHERE

**16 people** have been killed in flash flooding in northwest China's mountainous region

Officials have warned that heavy rains will continue in northern regions of the country

## A looming crop crisis, its global implications

With nearly all of China reeling from some form of extreme weather, local officials say they fear this will have severe consequences for the country's autumn harvest, that runs to hundreds of millions of tonnes of food, most of which is gathered in the next two months

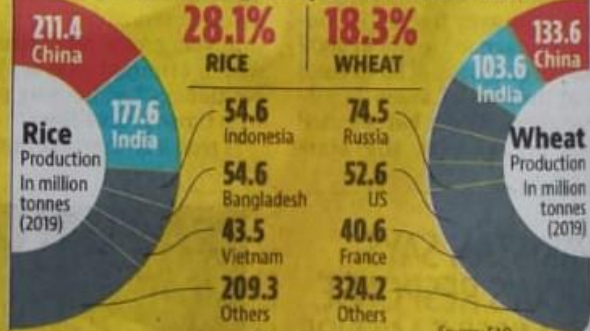
**75%** of grains produced by China is harvested now

"The crops that are mainly going to be impacted are corn and rice," said Darin Friedrichs, co-founder of Sitonia Consulting

### GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

The broadest risk is that China may raise its food import, adding to intense global price pressures. Global food supplies have been hit by the war in Ukraine, sending grocery bills skyrocketing the world over

Of all produced globally can be traced to China



Source: FAO



# The issues with maximum data and minimum privacy

Anniversaries, when meaningful, are not mechanical celebrations played out each year, but prompt deeper reflection. This month marks not only 75 years of Independence but also five years of the right to privacy judgment. On August 24, 2017, the Supreme Court reaffirmed privacy to be a fundamental right, linking it to each fundamental right under the Constitution. It prescribed tests that became legal qualifiers for ensuring an effective framework for state and corporate accountability to ensure the autonomy, liberty and dignity for all Indians.

But since this verdict, two evident trends have compromised the promise of privacy in the context of data protection and surveillance reforms. The first is the growth of digitisation in India through State policies and private enterprise that often lead to indiscriminate data collection and the second is the institutional resistance to privacy. This has collectively led to a policy of data maximisation.



Apar Gupta

In response to rapid digital transformation, countries from the Global North have established and continuously redeveloped frameworks for data protection. Many regulations draw from a common set of principles, including purpose limitation and data minimisation, to safeguard informational privacy.

Variance from it, such as those through regulatory sandboxes, is an exception to the rule. This recognises that personal data when collected and stored by a State or corporate entity, exerts power over an individual or a group. This view is under challenge in India. A common value within the execution of government programmes is to gather sensitive personal data across a range of daily actions through digital systems. It may be referred to as a policy of data maximisation, posing challenges to democratic guarantees.

An example of data maximisation exists within India's biometric national ID, Aadhaar, which as per law is limited to the use of delivery of benefits, entitlements and subsidies. Upholding Aadhaar's validity in 2018, the Supreme Court restricted its use and endorsed data protection principles, including purpose limitation and data minimisation.

Despite this, Aadhaar's use has been expanded and is used as a common digital identifier across public and private services beyond welfare objectives. For instance, in December 2021, Parliament passed a law for the use of Aadhaar to establish the identity of voters ignoring risks of voter suppression and profiling. This amendment is now being operationalised with block-level officers of the Election Commission undertaking a door-to-door collection of Aadhaar numbers and linking it to electoral rolls. Within the private sector, its use is widespread to satisfy "know your customer" (KYC) norms from new age fintech firms to online matrimonial services.

Such expansion of use sets a background to the proliferation of digital databases and platforms in India. For farmers, there is an AgriStack, for unorganised labourers, the e-SHRAM portal, in health, the Aarogya Setu (a contact tracing app that has undergone function creep) and Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission (ABHA), and for

schoolchildren and teachers, a NDEAR (National Digital Education Architecture). These digital databases are without an anchoring legislation but have developed frameworks within publicly available policy documents. They advocate for greater data processing and storage for satisfying public and private purposes. Any privacy protections under them — even when public pressure is applied — remain a mirage for they do not have the force of law. For instance, there is complete unaccountability on any data-related issues for Aarogya Setu.

In addition to database-specific frameworks, there exist data unification policies such as Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA) that advocate "breaking data silos". DEPA is supported by policies encouraging a combination of personal data across databases.

It includes India Digital Ecosystem Architecture (IndEA), which is being updated and the Draft India Open Data Access Policy for the free sharing of data within government and its enrichment, valuation and licensing to the private sector. A noticeable feature within the unification frameworks is their emphasis on innovation and growth that will be spurred by greater data capture through individual digital platforms, which then will need to be combined to provide a complete profile of an individual. Further data unification exists under digital security programmes such as Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS) that leads to 360 degree profiling.

Here, the absence of a data protection law has been made near-permanent by the withdrawal of the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 in Parliament. On the contrary, commercial imperatives of purposeless processing and licensing it to the private sector is being promoted.

Take this example from the Economic Survey 2019 — "Governments already hold a rich repository of...data about citizens. Merging these distinct datasets would generate multiple benefits with the applications being limitless... The private sector may be granted access to select databases for commercial use." Vehicular data in the Vahan and Saarthi databases was licensed for Rs 3 crore annually. The policy was withdrawn only after reports emerged that the data was used in a communal riot to identify persons by religion, based on vehicles parked at their houses. More recently, IRCTC invited bids to explore how train reservation data, including possible personal details of passengers, can be monetised.

Here, powerful state and private sector incentives exist in the absence of any legal regulation. Its impact is beyond regulatory development around data protection such as data retention or localisation mandates towards individual rights and power relationships in a constitutional democracy.

In effect, India has adopted an authoritarian policy cocktail, mixing surveillance welfare and capitalism. Five years on from Puttaswamy, India has not merely failed to implement the right to privacy, but compromised on its core principles.

Apar Gupta is an advocate and executive director, Internet Freedom Foundation. The views expressed are personal.



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अमृत महोत्सव

Gujarat State Biotechnology Mission (GSBTM)

Dept. of Science and Technology,  
Govt of Gujarat



Department of  
Science & Technology  
Government of Gujarat



## TENDER NOTICE

Government of Gujarat is planning to develop innovation commercialization integrated zone namely Bio-IGNITE, comprising of **Pre-Clinical Testing Facilities with integrated Animal House, and Brownfield Facilities including Bio-safety labs (BSL-III) cum testing facilities** at Biotech Park, Savli GIDC Estate, Vadodara.

Tenders are invited from agencies interested to provide consultancy services for Design, Engineering, Bid Process Management and Construction Supervision for the aforesaid Bio-IGNITE project. Detailed terms and conditions and other information of the afore stated project shall be available in bid document on <https://gem.gov.in>

Bid Dates:	Bid shall be available from 24/08/2022 to 23/09/2022 up to 17:00 hrs.
Pre-Bid Meeting	Pre-Bid Meeting shall be held on 12/09/2022 at 12:00 hrs. at GSBTM, 11/9, Udyog Bhavan, Gandhinagar. The Pre-Bid queries may be shared at least 7 days in advance through email (in word format) for the consideration during Pre-Bid meeting.
Bid Due Date	Bid Due Date and time: 23/09/2022 up to 17:00 hrs.

Tender No.:GEM/2022/B/2466063

Gandhinagar: 24 Aug-2022

INF/1193-22-23

-Sd-

Mission Director, GSBTM



# Scientists pursued research despite odds



DINESH C SHARMA  
SCIENCE COMMENTATOR

had direct links with the leadership in the Indian National Congress during the phase when the party was elected in provincial assemblies and was formulating policies for an independent India. Scientists played a constructive role through the National Planning Committee (NPC) constituted by Subhas Chandra Bose as the Congress president in 1938. A majority of them accepted the idea of evidence-based modern science and supported rapid science-led industrialisation propagated by Nehru and Bose. There was no clamour for a revival of 'ancient science'.

The present discourse on the subject, however, altogether ignores this critical phase of science-based planning for national development. In line with the ongoing political project to rewrite or re-tell history, there is a concerted effort to portray some Indian scientists as active participants in the freedom struggle and as nationalists who rejected the notions of western science the British introduced in India in the 18th century. Vigyan Bharati, a wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), is running this campaign with help from bodies like the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Department of Science and Technology (DST), and cheerleaders in the media.

For decades, a myth was being propagated that Raman felt humiliated and was in tears as he had to receive the Nobel prize under the British flag. Based on historical documents and accounts of the award event in the European and Indian press, historian of science Rajinder Singh has debunked this. Lady Raman gave



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CONSTRUCTIVE: Indian scientists engaged with nationalists and the British. FILE PHOTO

detailed accounts of the event to the media, and there was no mention of any humiliation Raman had reportedly felt. Documents show that Raman, who was knighted in 1929, was keen to receive the honour from the King in England though eventually the ceremony was held in India. Raman felt that his Nobel-winning work had 'helped more to raise the estimation of India in the world than recent political events', referring to the salt satyagraha.

Another myth being propagated is that Jagadish Chandra Bose pioneered the concept of satyagraha much ahead of Mahatma Gandhi by refusing to accept a salary lower than the English faculty in the Presidency College. Yes, Bose protested the attitude of the uni-



versity authorities but by no means this amounted to a protest against the British. The evidence, as provided by biographers of Bose, is the following: His application for the post in the Presidency College was endorsed by Lord Ripon himself; Bose joined the Imperial Service as a professor and remained in service till his retirement in 1915; during this long tenure, he received handsome research grants and scholarships for his students; the British sponsored a six-month deputation of Bose and his wife to England in 1896-97 — during which his research work became known to the world; post-retirement, he was made emeritus professor with

full salary (not pension) and research facilities for five years.

Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, another leading scientist, quit his position in the nationalist Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in 1924 to join as the director of the British-controlled and run Chemical Laboratories at the University of Punjab in Lahore. In pre-war years, research and consultancy work of Bhatnagar helped British chemical and petroleum firms that were suppliers for the armed forces. This work helped him get the job of heading the industrial and scientific research board when the war broke out. The board eventually became CSIR. When the Quit India movement was in full steam, Bhatnagar was lobbying for more funds for industrial research while Homi Jehangir Bhabha was planning his institute with help from the Tata

Trusts and Bombay Presidency.

In effect, all these scientists were building their scientific careers and, in the process, laying the foundations of the S&T infrastructure of a future India. They perfected the art of balancing nationalist sentiments and the need for British support for research. They did so by developing 'working alliances' with NPC as well as the British. All of them, including JC Bose and PC Ray, accepted British honours and titles like Knighthood and CIE (Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire), yet participated in political deliberations related to planning for the future. They clamoured for the Fellowship of the Royal Society where selection panels often considered active anti-British stance as disqualification. All this does not mean that scientists were not patriots or were not committed to the idea of a free India.

Only some working scientists joined the national movement, like Syed Husain Zaheer, a German-trained chemistry professor from Lucknow University who in free India became the director general of CSIR. Zaheer was imprisoned in 1940, along with Vijay Lakshmi Pandit and Asaf Ali, for offering satyagraha at Bharosa village near Lucknow. Zaheer's is arguably the only case of a working scientist spending time in prison during the freedom struggle. This, however, does not find a mention in the present discourse on Indian scientists and the freedom movement. Even the CSIR has not acknowledged Zaheer's active participation in the freedom struggle. It's time our scientific institutions learn about their heritage and heroes.



# Govt restricts export of wheat flour

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 25

In a major decision, the government today decided to put restrictions on the export of wheat flour to curb its rising prices. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The CCEA has approved the proposal for amendment to the policy of exemption for wheat or meslin flour (HS Code 1101) from export restrictions/ban. The approval will now allow to put restriction on the export of wheat flour, which will ensure a curb on rising prices and ensure food security of the most vulnerable sections of society," an official statement said.

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade will issue a

notification to this effect.

Russia and Ukraine are the major exporters of wheat, accounting for around one-fourth of the global wheat

Move aims to curb rising prices, ensure food security



trade. The war between the two countries has led to global wheat supply chain disruptions, thus increasing the demand for Indian wheat. As

## DIP IN PRODUCTION

- Wheat prices in both wholesale and retail markets have also come under pressure due to a nearly 3 per cent drop in the domestic output to 106.84 million tonne in the 2021-22 crop year
- Its production is estimated to have declined due to heatwave that resulted in shrivelled grain in Punjab and Haryana
- Industry body Roller Flour Millers' Federation has raised concerns regarding unavailability of wheat and the rise in prices in the last few days



a result, the price of wheat in the domestic market has showed an increase, as per the statement.

"In order to ensure food

security in the country, the government prohibited export of wheat in May. However, this caused a jump in overseas demand for wheat flour. Wheat flour exports from India have registered a growth of 200 per cent during the April-July period this year as compared to the corresponding period in 2021.

"The increased demand for wheat flour in the international market led to significant price rise of the commodity in the domestic market. Earlier, there was a policy not to prohibit or put any restrictions on the export of wheat flour. Therefore, a partial modification of the policy was required by withdrawing the exemption from ban/restrictions on export for wheat flour in order to ensure food security and put a check on its mounting prices," the statement added.



# Procure basmati via portal

**KARNAL, AUGUST 25**  
All non-MSP produce, including basmati paddy, will be procured through e-NAM portal only. Gate passes will be issued and e-auction to be done only through the portal. These directions have been issued by the Chief Administrator Haryana State Agricultural Marketing Board

(HSAMB), in which he directed all secretaries-cum-executive officers of market committees of e-NAM mandis to ensure the implementation of directions. Ishwar Rana, District Marketing Enforcement Officer (DMEO), Karnal, said directions had been issued and they would implement them. — TNS

# Farmers hold panchayat outside CM camp office

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**KARNAL, AUGUST 25**  
On the call of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU-Charuni) president Gurnam Singh Charuni, scores of farmers today began a two-day panchayat outside the CM camp office in Prem Nagar in the city and outside the residences of ministers in Kaithal, Kurukshetra and Ambala districts.



Farmers under the banner of BKU (Charuni) hold a panchayat outside CM camp office in Karnal on Thursday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

They alleged that the government was going "to snatch the land Deh Shamlat and Mushtarka Malkan land to give it to corporate houses for farming".  
Farmers from Karnal, Panipat and Sonapat districts assembled at Jat Dharamshala and took out a protest march towards the CM camp office. They were stopped near the camp office, where they started their panchayat. Addressing the farmers, Charuni said the government wanted to snatch the land of Jumla Malkan, Mustarka Malkan and Deh Samlat

from the farmers by changing mutation in the name of panchayats and urban local bodies. The land belonged to farmers and they had been cultivating it for the past several decades, he added.  
"We demand a special session of the Haryana Assembly to be called for an amendment in the land Act in the wake of the April judgement of the apex court over shamlat deh land. To press for our demands, we have given a call for a two-day panchayat outside the residences of the CM and ministers. The pan-

chayats will continue till 5pm on August 26," said Charuni.  
Kurukshetra: Farmers staged a dharna outside the residence of Minister of State Sandeep Singh in Pehowa. After finding the house closed, they put up the union flag on the gate of the minister's residence. The farmers said memoranda had been submitted to the MLAs for an amendment in the land Act, but their demands were being ignored. If the demands of farmers were not fulfilled, they would intensify the protest.



## REGULAR FOGGING REQUIRED

**U**RBAN State, Sector-20, Panchkula, has two large villages — Kundi and Fatehpur — that have a large number of livestock. It would be extremely helpful to the residents of the surrounding areas and localities if the Municipal Corporation would carry out fogging and fumigation at regular intervals in the rainy season to check the outbreak of the deadly Lumpy Skin Disease in cattle. Veterinary officers should also launch an awareness campaign and guide dairy owners to take preventive measures. **LALIT BHARADWAJ, PANCHKULA**