



BASAI News Updates

August 29, 2022

Officials told to enforce ban on use of insecticides for basmati

KULWINDER SANDHU
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MOGA, AUGUST 28

After imposing a ban on the use of seven insecticides and three fungicides on basmati, the state government has now issued fresh instructions to field officials of the Agriculture Department to strictly implement the ban. It has said legal action will be taken against dealers and retailers selling these insecticides.

The state government has banned the use of acephate, buprofezin, carbendazim, chlorpyrifos, methamidophos, propiconazole, thiamethoxam, tricylazole, profenofos and isoprothiolane agro-chemicals as these were becoming a hurdle in the export of rice due to strict regulatory norms being followed by European, Arab and western countries.

The directorate of the state Agriculture Department, in a letter to chief agriculture officers of all districts, stated that the government would randomly collect samples of basmati crop from across the state and send these to state insecticide testing laboratories at Mohali and Kharar for chemical testing.

"If traces of banned insecticides and fungicides are found in the samples, legal

Erring dealers, retailers to face legal action



FILE

action will be taken against erring insecticide dealers/retailers," the letter stated. It stated that agriculture development and agriculture extension officers must move out in the field to educate farmers about producing insecticide-free basmati so that food grain could be exported easily and fetched a good price.

There were reports that huge stocks of these banned insecticides and fungicides were available with all dealers and retailers in the state. "We do not know what to do with the stock as most of the insecticides are also used for other crops. Agriculture officials have told us that we can-

not sell these for other crops also. The manufacturing companies are not willing to lift the stocks lying with us. After two months, most of the stocks will expire. We will suffer huge losses," said a local insecticide dealer at the Moga grain market.

"We have asked insecticide dealers and retailers to prepare a stock list of the banned insecticides and fungicides available with them so that this record can be maintained by the Agriculture Department at the district level and a physical verification can be done," said Dr Jaswinder Singh Brar, Assistant Plant Protection Officer of Moga district.

Rice acreage down 6%, could result in shortage, inflation

Zia Haq

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NEW DELHI: India's food output is likely to fall after six straight record harvests, as extreme weather dented sowing of crops, such as rice and pulses, raising concerns about inflation and tight supplies, data from the agriculture ministry indicates.

Planting of key kharif or summer-sown crops, which account for half of the country's annual food output, was 1.5% lower on August 26 compared to last year, data shows. The total area sown stood at 104.5 million hectares.

India recorded its hottest March this year. This cut winter wheat production, officially estimated to be the lowest in three years at 106 million tonnes. Now, acreage of summer rice has shrunk nearly 6%, as on August 26 compared to last year due to patchy rains, the data showed. Planting of rice stood at 36.7 mil-

PLANTING OF KEY KHARIF CROPS WAS 1.5% LOWER ON AUGUST 26 AS COMPARED TO 2021, ACCORDING TO AGRICULTURE MINISTRY DATA

lion hectares versus 39 million hectares in the previous year.

Farmers sowed pulses, considered essential commodities, in 12.7 million hectares, down 5.2% compared to the 13.4 million hectares planted last year.

Cereal prices are already rising, although the state-run Food Corporation of India has ample rice reserves. It held 41 million tonnes of rice as of August 1, way above the buffer requirement of 13.5 million tonnes by July 1. But wheat reserves have declined to their lowest in 14 years.

→P8

Food output may drop this yr amid price rise concerns

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The June-to-September monsoon, which waters nearly 60% of the country's net-sown area, has been quite uneven, damaging crops. Overall, the rains have been 7% surplus till August 28 since monsoon onset on June 1, data from the India



Acreage of summer rice has shrunk nearly 6%, as on August 26 compared to last year due to patchy rains, shows farm ministry data. PTI FILE

Meteorological Department (IMD) showed.

However, rainfall has been scanty in many states, causing drought. In several others, excess rains led to flooding. Rains in West Bengal, the country's largest rice grower, were 28% deficient. Other paddy-growing states too had large rainfall deficits, such as Uttar Pradesh (-44%), Bihar (-40%) and Jharkhand (-28%), stunting paddy crops.

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above the buffer requirement of 13.5 million tonnes by July 1. But wheat reserves have declined to their lowest levels in 14 years.

On August 21, the food ministry tweeted: "There is no such plan to import wheat into India. Country has sufficient stocks to meet our domestic requirements and @FCI India has enough stock for public distribution."

Official price data showed, on August 26, the all-India average retail price of fair-quality rice stood at ₹37.63 a kg, up 6.2% on an annual basis. The price of wheat was up 12% to ₹30.89 a kg versus ₹27.09 per kg year-on-year.

"Rice output could go down by 10%-15%," said Siraj Hussain, a former Union agriculture secretary. According to Hussain, this could stoke inflation in basic staples and the government will need to offer its rice stocks for open-market sales to tame prices.

India is the world's largest rice exporter, accounting for 40% of global shipments.

The Centre is weighing plans to restrict overseas sales of some non-premium varieties of rice to boost domestic supplies and put a lid on rising cereal prices, a person aware of the development had told HT on Friday.

WHEAT-RELATED PRODUCTS ON EXPORT BAN LIST

Ravi Dutta Mishra

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NEW DELHI: The government has decided to curb exports of maida, semolina and wholemeal atta to check rising prices ahead of the festive season. This comes after a ban on exports of wheat on 13 May and wheat flour—or atta—last week.

However, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said exports of these items would be allowed in certain cases, subject to government permission.

"Export policy of items (wheat or meslin flour, maida, semolina, wholemeal atta, and resultant atta) is amended from free to prohibited," according to a DGFT notification. Semolina includes 'rawa' and 'sirgi'.

The provisions under the foreign trade policy 2015-20, regarding transitional arrangements, will not be applicable under this notification, DGFT added.

Last week, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved a proposal for amending the policy of exempting wheat or meslin flour from export restrictions.

Mint had reported that atta exports for all of FY22 stood at 500,000 tonnes but nearly 100,000 tonnes were being shipped out every month after the May wheat export ban.

Consequently, the union government in July made it mandatory for exporters of wheat flour and related products such as semolina, wholemeal atta and 'resultant atta' to seek the approval of an inter-ministerial committee (IMC) for exports.

Russia and Ukraine are the major exporters of wheat, accounting for around one-fourth of the global wheat trade. The war between the two countries has led to global wheat supply chain disruptions, thus increasing the demand for Indian wheat.

India usually exports 5% and 25% broken rice, but demand for 100% broken rice has risen sharply in recent months, particularly from drought-hit China, exporters said.

Cancer cases on the rise in Malwa

SUKHMEET BHASIN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

BATHINDA, AUGUST 28

The southern Malwa region, also known as the cotton belt of the state, has a high number of cancer patients, and their count is growing by the year.

Over 82,000 patients, a majority of them from the Malwa region, availed treatment last year from the Advanced Cancer Institute in Bathinda which was set up six years ago. The institute saw 11,000 patients in 2016, 27,000

IN 6 YRS, 2.6L TREATED AT BATHINDA CENTRE

Year	Patients	Year	Patients
2021	82,000	2018	39,400
2020	60,000	2017	27,000
2019	48,000	2016	11,000

in 2017, 39,400 in 2018, 48,000 in 2019 and 60,000 in 2020.

Experts claim that research studies have revealed that the disease has spread in the Malwa region largely due to consistent use of pesticides and other chemicals in agriculture.

A 2018 study, commissioned by the Central University of Punjab, had found concentration of calcium, magnesium, sodium, nitrate and fluoride higher than the permissible limits, rendering 80.3 per cent of the groundwater in the Malwa region unsuitable for drinking.

The Advanced Cancer Institute Director, Dr Deepak Arora, emphasised that early detection and diagnosis improved the chances of

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Cancer cases on the rise...

successful treatment. "We are creating awareness about the disease, and that is the reason people in high numbers are coming to our institute. Earlier, they were going too far-off places like Bikaner for cancer treatment," Dr Arora said.

Dr Karuna Singh, Associate Professor at the cancer institute said breast and cervical cancer were common among female patients, while head and neck cancer were prominent among youth.

To provide financial assistance to the affected, the state government started the Mukhya Mantri Punjab Cancer Raahat Kosh Scheme in 2013. An amount up to Rs 1.5 lakh is made available for the treatment of every cancer patient.



Biological Agri Solutions Association of India

Farmer dies by suicide in Jind

JIND, AUGUST 28

Family members and relatives of farmer Inder Singh, who died after consuming poison at Jind's Badanpur village, started a dharna at the Bad-dowal toll plaza on the Jind-Chandigarh highway today.

Besides compensation and government job to a member of the family, they also want a stay on awarding lease of the village panchayat land. District and police officials had to intervene to ensure smooth flow of traffic on the highway. The protesters assured the administration that they would not block the highway.

A team of the administration, led by Naib Tehsildar Surender Kumar, went with the police to reclaim possession of the panchayat land yesterday. The land was leased out to another farmer. — TNS

Suicide rate soars to highest ever in 2021; crimes, accidents close in on 2019 levels

Abhishek Jha
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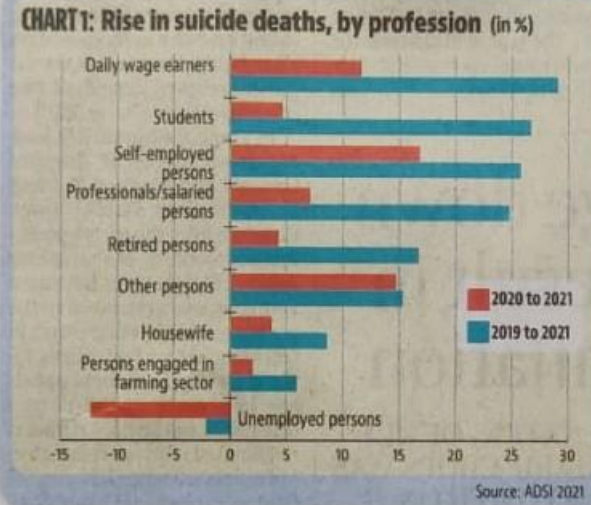
NEW DELHI: At 120 deaths per million population, the rate of deaths by suicide across India in 2021 soared to the highest level ever recorded, rising 6.1% from the previous year, new data from National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows, highlighting the toll the pandemic appears to have taken on the emotional well-being of Indians. In contrast, the trend in the rates of crime as well as accidental deaths has started moving towards pre-pandemic levels, data shows.

The fastest increase in deaths by suicide was observed among students and small entrepreneurs, much like what was observed in the 2020 edition of the reports, supporting anecdotal accounts of prolonged stress induced by the pandemic.

These findings are from Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India (ADSI) and Crime in India (CII) reports for 2021, both of which were published by NCRB under the Union home ministry and were released on Saturday.

Data shows that a total of 164,033 people died from suicide in 2021, an increase of 7.2% from 2020, when 153,052 people died from suicide, data shows. In 2019, this figure was around 139,000.

At 120 deaths per million population, 2021 also saw the highest rate of deaths from suicide since 1967, the earliest year for which this data is available. The



second highest rate of suicide ever reported in the country was in 2010, when it was 113.5 deaths per million population.

The data also shows that those in the lowest income group (people earning less than ₹1 lakh per annum), who make up around two-thirds of deaths by suicide, registered the biggest increase in deaths by suicide in 2021.

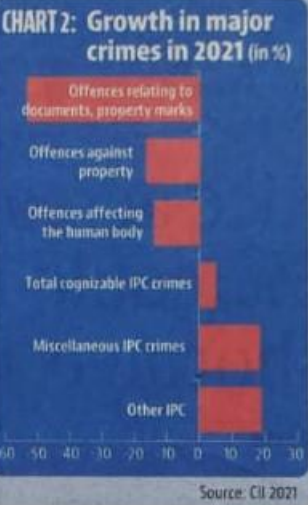
Among professions, people who are self-employed and those who are engaged as daily wagers registered the biggest increase in deaths by suicide, followed by salaried workers and students (see Chart 1). To be sure, students had registered a much bigger increase than salaried persons in 2020. The increase in 2021 compared to 2019 is bigger among students than salaried persons.

Among farmers of different kinds, deaths by suicide increased only among agricultural labourers, which was also the case in 2020.

Accidents, crimes catch up to pre-2020 numbers

In 2020, crimes had increased sharply, but the numbers were inflated as a large number of people had been booked for violating pandemic-related rules. On the other hand, accidents decreased because there were fewer traffic accidents and deaths by suicide increased sharply, likely a result of lockdowns disrupting daily activity.

The relatively relaxed lockdowns through 2021 had (predictably) a much smaller impact on crimes and accidents. Instan-



ces of crimes decreased from 6.6 million in 2020 to 6.1 million in 2021 because lockdowns were less harsh and fewer people were charged with violating them.

Milder lockdowns also caused more traffic accidents and overall accidental deaths increased from 374,000 to 397,000.

Accidental deaths due to forces of nature – such as those from earthquakes, floods, or heat – were fewer in 2021 than in 2020. They decreased from 7,405 in 2020 to 7,126 in 2021. Such deaths were to 8,145 in 2019. Accidental deaths due to other causes – such as traffic accidents – increased. Traffic accidents make up around 40% of all accidental deaths in India. They increased from 146,354 in 2020

to 173,860 in 2021. However, such deaths continued to be lower than in 2019, when 181,113 such deaths took place.

Crimes increasing again?

As explained above, overall crimes decreased in 2021 only because of a decline in pandemic-related offences, which are recorded under three sub-headings: 'Disobedience to order duly promulgated by Public Servant' and 'Other IPC Crimes' among Indian Penal Code (IPC) crimes and 'Other SLL Crimes' under Special and Local Laws (SLL) crimes. Excluding these sub-headings from calculations shows that crimes increased in 2021 compared to both 2019 and 2020.

Crimes unrelated to the pandemic were 4.8 million in 2019, 4.6 million in 2020, and 5 million in 2021. To be sure, IPC crimes continued to be below pre-pandemic level at 2.8 million in 2021 (they were 2.9 million in 2019), although they increased compared to 2020, when 2.6 million such crimes were registered. SLL crimes unrelated to violation of Covid-19 rules, which had increased even in 2020, increased another 8.6% in 2021 to 2.2 million.

Among the most occurring IPC crimes, those related to property (they account for 20%-25% of IPC crimes) registered the biggest increase in 2021 of 18.5%, followed by those affecting the human body (5.1% growth), which account for around a quarter to third of IPC crimes (see Chart 2).

Malnutrition fight should be a mass movement, says Modi

NEW DELHI: India's fight against malnutrition has to be a mass movement, and strong efforts have to be made to eradicate nutritional deficiencies from the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his monthly radio broadcast on Sunday.

"The month of September is dedicated to festivals as well as a big campaign related to nutrition. We celebrate the poshan maah (nutrition month) every year from the 1st to the 30th September," Modi said in the 92nd episode of Mann ki Baat. "Many creative and diverse efforts are being made all over the country

There were attempts to defame Gujarat, stop investment: PM

AHMEDABAD: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday alleged there were conspiracies to defame Gujarat and stop investments, but the state progressed with investments flowing in for industrial devel-

opment, especially in Kutch, which was devastated in the 2001 earthquake. "Kutch has not only risen (from the ruins), but has given a new momentum of development to Gujarat," Modi said. →P9

against malnutrition."

Better use of technology and public participation has become

an important part of the nutrition campaign, the Prime Minister said. →P9

Fight against malnutrition should be mass movement: PM

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: India's fight against malnutrition has to be a mass movement, and strong efforts have to be made to eradicate nutritional deficiencies from the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his monthly radio broadcast on Sunday.

"The month of September is dedicated to festivals as well as a big campaign related to nutrition. We celebrate the poshan maah (nutrition month) every year from the 1st to the 30th September," Modi said in the 92nd

episode of Mann ki Baat. "Many creative and diverse efforts are being made all over the country against malnutrition."

Better use of technology and public participation has become an important part of the nutrition campaign, the Prime Minister said, listing some of the initiatives being undertaken by the government, from providing mobile devices to millions of anganwadi (day care) workers to launching a poshan tracker to monitor the accessibility of anganwadi services.

"In all the aspirational districts and the states in the north-

MODI SAID BETTER TECH USE, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HAVE BECOME AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE NUTRITION CAMPAIGN

east, 14- to 18-year-old daughters have also been brought under the purview of the Poshan Abhiyaan," he said. "The solution to malnutrition is not limited just to these steps. Other initiatives also play an important role."

The Poshan Abhiyaan was launched in March 2018 in Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu to address nutritional deficiencies among adolescent girls, pregnant women, lactating mothers, infants and children up to six years of age. The campaign seeks to reduce stunting, undernutrition, anaemia and low birth weight in children.

Modi shared examples of how community interventions are being carried out to eradicate malnutrition. He referred to Project Sampurna, which is being run in Bongai village of Assam to fight against malnutri-

tion. "Under this project, the mother of a healthy child from an anganwadi centre meets the mother of a malnourished child every week and discusses all the nutrition-related information," Modi said. "With the help of this project, in this region, in one year, malnutrition was eradicated in over 90% children."

Modi cited example of Amrit Sarovar campaign and said it has begun to take shape as people from Warangal in Telangana, Mandla in MP, and Lalitpur in UP, among other places, have created infrastructure to conserve water.



We have been consulting a lot of people to change the IPC, CrPC and the Evidence Act. Under this, the government aims to make forensic investigation compulsory for offences attracting punishment of more than 6 years.



Shashi Shekhar



An urgent clarion call to build a global fraternity

The tragic war between Russia and Ukraine is now almost in its seventh month. The assault and humiliation faced by Ukrainian citizens in this period will be remembered as the stigma of the 21st century. This war has also shattered the claim that the United States (US) and its allies are committed to humanity, equality and poverty eradication. They have shown themselves to be nothing but selfish.

Did you know that when the US attacked Iraq, neighbouring Arab countries, Germany and Japan bore roughly 80% of the costs? Similarly, Russia and the US fought the Taliban for two decades in Afghanistan, but got nowhere. There was much bloodshed to stop the Taliban, but it is back in power in Kabul. US strategists may continue to claim that the Taliban has changed now, but how could the Taliban government be unaware that Ayman al-Zawahiri had been living in a posh area of Kabul for months? Let us return to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

This war has not only caused widespread fear of a third World War, but also planted the seeds of some new fears. Even if we were successful in preventing the Chinese-Russian partnership from sparking major wars, the threat of a new imperialism remains. Stalin once sent tanks to Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia; today, imperialist China treats Taiwan in the same manner. China has already caused tensions on the Indian border. There is no guarantee that such encroachments will not occur elsewhere against its neighbours in the future. In these dire circumstances, even if the superpowers manage to avoid a third World War, Cold War 2.0 is already at our doorstep. The ill omens do not stop here.

Unfortunately, 2022 will be remembered as one of the most tragic years in human history in terms of starvation. Even before the war, approximately 830 million people all over the world were doomed to sleep every night without adequate nutrition. Malnutrition used to kill approximately 3.1

million children each year. As a result, migration, human trafficking and terrorism were flourishing, but this war has worsened this situation. One reason behind this is that Ukraine accounts for 10% of the world's export of wheat. In the case of sunflower seeds and oil, its market share is 46%. Similarly, Russia is a significant agricultural exporter. Russian farmers export roughly 19% of the world's wheat. These figures combined suggest a new and troubling picture.

However, on July 22, under the direction of the United Nations, an agreement to resolve such a situation was reached. Food grain exports resumed on August 4, but the impact on the ground will take time to become visible. Another question arises here: How can war and normal trade coexist? Why would Russia want Ukraine to receive any money from anywhere, knowing that it will ultimately be used against it? This war has thrown the world into disarray.

Consider what would happen if China invaded Taiwan and the world imposed nearly the same restrictions on it as it did on Russia. Despite feeding its massive population, China exports 1.66% of its food grains to the rest of the world. It can worsen an already problematic situation. Now, let's talk about India.

In addition to being self-sufficient in farm products, Indian farmers also make up 2% of the world's food exporters. Unfortunately, seven states across the nation are currently experiencing a severe drought. Where it rained, it rained so heavily that it damaged the crops; and where it didn't, the farmland is parched and cracking. It is not just our country that has had such bad luck. The worst drought in Europe's history has affected Spain, Portugal, France, and Italy. The two biggest economies in the world, the US and China, are experiencing a similar situation. According to US agronomists, 40% of this year's cotton crop was devastated. In addition, there is a severe drought affecting six Chinese provinces. There, the Yangtze, the third largest river in the world, has dried up.

All this is taking place as a result of La Niña. A warmer atmosphere absorbs more rainfall from the land, increasing the likelihood of drought, according to Isla Simson, a climate scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in the US. La Niña typically lasts between nine and 12 months, but this time it is still manifesting itself, even after this duration. As a result, worries about a further rise in hunger cannot be discounted.

To deal with these challenging circumstances, the world requires compassion, cooperation and complete solidarity, but what is happening is just the opposite. Do the ominous clouds of impending war mean that phrases like "global village" and "global fraternity" are merely political catchphrases?

Shashi Shekhar is editor-in-chief, Hindustan. The views expressed are personal.



To deal with challenging circumstances, the world requires compassion, cooperation and complete solidarity, but what is happening is just the opposite. SHUTTERSTOCK



Biological Agri Solutions Association of India

India at 100: Empowering our young children early

As part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, India is celebrating past achievements, taking stock of the present, and identifying potential and priorities for the future. During this global showcase, it is important to highlight the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) initiative — a rarely acknowledged project that has ensured service delivery of health and nutrition interventions for young parents and 0-6-year-old children, but has not yet realised its potential as a free, universal, high-quality preschool system. In the past 50 years, India has put the basics in place to allow us to create a foundation for children for a different India @ 100. This is ICDS's Anganwadi system, a network of 1.4 million community centres in India, "womanised" by female "sevikas" with the mandate to provide free nutrition, daycare, and early childhood care and education (ECCE) to nearly 30 million preschool children and 80 million 0-6 children.



Siddhant Sachdeva



Azeet Gupta

In recent years, ECCE and preschool have become a singular policy focus in the developed world, thanks to advances in neuroscience demonstrating that 90% of brain development happens in the first six years of life and that building or rupturing of neural connections at this stage impacts advancement throughout life. Add the powerful impact on parental (especially women's) workforce participation, and it is no surprise that experts refer to ECCE as having among the highest "social" returns on investment of any development intervention. Budgets remain a challenge though, even with this new-found focus — in the United States (US), President Joe Biden tried and failed to pass legislation mandating free, universal pre-K even in 2022. India has the opportunity to become the envy of the world, if we plan and execute a five-year journey to convert Anganwadis into a high-quality early learning system, both in their capacity and in the national perception.

What makes this setup uniquely poised for delivery of high-quality ECCE to ensure that all children are school ready and able to read and do basic maths by grade 2, rather than only the 50% today?

First, the hard work of institutionalising a network and infrastructure has already been done by women and child development departments at the Centre and state — nearly every child can access an Anganwadi within

a short walking distance. Second, rather than trying to fix an existing education model as is the case with our schools, we have a clean slate and the opportunity to create an effective model from scratch, with the added benefit of learning from our past failures in schools.

Third, the Anganwadi sevika's natural motivation and outlook — she is from the community and vested and accountable for its success, she is less "qualified" and, therefore, hungrier for certification and more open to learning — is important, given the public sector's lack of financial incentives and constrained governance mechanisms. Macro factors are supportive — digital support through phones is accessible to nearly all sevikas (compared to 20% four years ago). ECCE concepts are more fundamental and accessible as compared to higher grades, and new sevikas are recruited with much better education backgrounds.

Finally, ECCE is a policy focus across India and governments at national and state levels are working aggressively to find solutions.

What more is required? The ICDS needs a massive perception overhaul to be considered an education system, in addition to its traditional functioning of nutritional and health support, in the eyes of both its clients (parents and communities) and its own (from sevika to the political and bureaucratic leadership). As part of this, the Anganwadi centre's branding must change from

currently "dalya centres" to centres of quality nutrition and education delivery. This mind-set change will need to be accompanied by quality inputs in the form of more staffing, upgraded buildings and teaching learning materials. Currently, per-child budgets are much lower than in schools — finance departments need to loosen their purse strings, and politicians across the board need to realise that a mission-mode approach to improving ECCE will be a big vote winner. India already has the world's largest early learning system — let's make it a high-quality one.

Siddhant Sachdeva and Azeet Gupta serve on early childhood education task forces at the national and state level, and are co-founders of Rocket Learning, a non-profit supporting a million children with universal high-quality early learning. The views expressed are personal.

Challenging task for Punjab

VISHAV BHARATI

IN the last week of June, farmers from Fazilka and Bathinda districts reported the formation of lumps on their cows. Punjab's Animal Husbandry Department took it for some ordinary disease. Unaware of the havoc it would cause, the department remained inactive for several days. After a severe loss of livestock, the government finally accepted the presence of lumpy skin disease (LSD). The disease, which was first reported in Gujarat's Kutch in April, is believed to have reached Punjab in June. On July 4, the first documented case of the disease, which can be fatal for cows, was recorded in Mehta village in Bathinda. Since then, the disease has infected 1.25 lakh cows and more than 10,000 have succumbed. The fatality rate remains considerably high at around 8 per cent.

Despite enough warning signals and alerts since May, the department was found napping even when the disease had spread to the bordering Rajasthan. It took 23 days for the government to swing into action after the first case was reported. On July 27, it claimed that the outbreak had emerged from southern states and formed district-level teams to prevent the further spread. These teams were asked to visit villages and provide necessary measures to the farmers to protect the infected animals. The state, however, failed to touch the real solution — the vaccine. When farmers approached the department for it, they were told that there was no vaccine for cows, though one for goats and sheep was available. The officials, it seemed, were unaware of the vaccine called Lumpypax available for use on cows.

The state's North Regional Divisional Diagnostic Lab in Jalandhar doesn't have the facility for testing the disease and the samples have to be sent to the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases, Bhopal.

Now the bigger worry for Punjab is that the disease, which was confined to cows, has surfaced in buffaloes as well, although experts argue that it is not that dangerous

The contagious disease has been wreaking havoc in the dairy sector, the state's second largest employer after agriculture



Over
1.25 lakh
TOTAL CASES

Over
10,000
TOTAL DEATHS

WHAT IS LSD?

- Caused by a virus of capripox genus
- Spreads rapidly among cows, buffaloes through flies/mosquitoes/ticks
- Animals develop fever and rashes on body
- Recovery begins after a week



ADVISORY

- The disease spreads more during the rainy season due to mosquito bites, etc.
- The surroundings of animals should be kept clean, and infected animals should be separated from others.
- If any animal shows fever and skin blisters, it should be separated from the healthy ones.

for buffaloes. "So far, we have found nearly 60 cases in buffaloes but there is nothing to worry as the symptoms are weak and mortality rate zero," says Dr Rampal Mittal, Punjab's nodal officer for LSD.

The department is not sure how the virus will change or mutate once the weather conditions change. "You never know how it can affect other livestock," says Dr Nitin Kumar, a retired deputy director from the state's Department of Animal Husbandry. The disease is threatening the crumbling rural economy of the state. According to experts, Punjab is reeling under agrarian distress and the disease has the potential to usher in another crisis in rural Punjab, where dairy farming is the second largest employer after agriculture.

"Even a month after reporting the first case of the disease at my farm, the officials were clueless about the vaccine," says

Muktsar-based Harsimran Singh, a former member of the Punjab Dairy Development Board. Once the animal is infected with the disease, the milk yield drops by 30 per cent, he says, adding that nearly 10 to 15 per cent of the cows in the state have this disease.

The state government should immediately give compensation to the affected farmers, demand dairy farmers. Daljit Singh Sadarpura, president of the Progressive Dairy Farmers Association, says dairy farmers are already in distress. "Now, cows too are dying. This disease has caused a massive loss to both small and big dairy farmers," he adds.

After the initial slow response, the authorities have gone into action mode to deal with the situation. Apart from forming a group of ministers, 5.36 lakh doses of vaccine have been administered to cattle across Punjab.

Haryana fares better

PARVEEN ANGRA

AS farmers of neighbouring Punjab confront the havoc created by lumpy skin disease (LSD), the Haryana government has been quick in responding to the challenge.

Data from the Animal Husbandry Department says around 60,000 animals, including 100 buffaloes, have been infected with LSD, of which more than half (34,000) have recovered. The total number of fatalities is over 830 after the first case was reported in Yamunanagar in the last week of July.

Yamunanagar, Sirsa, Fatehabad, Ambala, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Kaithal and Panchkula are affected the most by the disease in the state, while districts in the National Capital Region are less affected. Dairy farmers' earnings have come down, but the input cost has increased manifold. "My six animals are affected with the disease, which has reduced the milk production. I also have to spend money on medicine and treatment," says Anil Kumar, a farmer of Karnal district.

The Animal Husbandry Department has issued an advisory for farmers and restricted the movement of affected animals. Farmers have also been asked to remain vigilant, says Dr BS Laura, Director General, Animal Husbandry Department, Haryana. "Veterinarians have been directed to visit all *gaushalas* on a regular basis," he adds.

In animals infected by LSD, the yield and quality of milk are also affected depending upon the severity of the disease.

Mahabir, a farmer from Kirmich in Kurukshetra district, has urged the government to announce some relief for the affected farmers as the cost of maintaining and treating animals is quite high. There has been no response by the state authorities as yet.

Haryana's milk production for 2021-22 was 116.29 lakh tonnes. Around 10-15 per cent of it falls in the unorganised sector.

Experts say LSD is not zoonotic, so humans cannot get affected by the disease. Transmission of disease between animals and humans is not possible and consumption of milk after boiling is safe.

CASE STUDY

60,000 (till August 26)		
Total cases		
34,000	833	19 lakh
Recovered	Total deaths	State's cattle strength
Vaccinated: 5 lakh		



After LSD spread to several districts, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar directed the officials in mid-August to procure vaccines and inoculate all cattle. Officials say around five lakh cattle have already been vaccinated out of a total of 19 lakh in the state, despite a shortage of veterinary staff in the field.

Haryana has also ramped up its testing facilities and recently started an RT-PCR facility for preliminary screening at Lala Lajpat Rai University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Hisar.

The recovery rate of cattle has been good. Most infected animals recover in 10 days and the mortality rate is less than 1 per cent. The rate of recovery is quite high in comparison to its spread.

Dr Tariem Rana, a veterinary surgeon, says innate immunity of animals is playing a vital role in their protection. Animals with better immunity are less affected or are recovering faster with mild symptoms as compared to animals with impaired immunity. Dr Rana, however, cautions farmers against rushing to get the infected animals vaccinated, as it is a live vaccine and can only be administered to healthy animals.

Getting no govt aid to deal with lumpy skin disease: Farmers

ARJUN SHARMA

JAMMU, AUGUST 28
Despite the claims of the Animal Husbandry Department regarding going the whole hog to tackle the lumpy skin disease (LSD) cases by setting up a helpline number, initiating door-to-door campaign, setting up rapid response teams, testing facilities and division-level monitoring and surveillance teams besides issuing advisories, farmers living along the border and the Line of Control areas in Jammu division say they were being offered almost no help.

Several farmers claim they have informed the department on the helpline number regarding their sick animals but no veterinarian has visited them, forcing them to take the services of private experts.

Rohit Choudhary, a resident of Korolana Kalan village in Suchetgarh of RS Pura, says he informed officials on the helpline but got no help for his LSD-infected cow. "The official told me that someone will come to examine the animal, but none came. I had to arrange private treatment," he said, adding that after losing an animal costing Rs 70,000 to Rs 90,000, a farmer has to pay Rs 4,000 to dig a pit to dispose of its carcass.

Another farmer of the same village, Phag Singh, said there were many critical animals but the administration had not provided any relief. Most of the LSD cases have been reported in Kathua, Samba, Jammu and Rajouri districts. As per the official figures, over 18,500 animals have been infected in Jammu division, out of which 116 have died so far. However, many



A cow infected by the lumpy skin disease in RS Pura of Jammu.

OVER 18,000 ANIMALS INFECTED

Over 18,500 animals have been infected in Jammu division, out of which 116 have died so far. People say the deaths are much more as many of the cases are not being reported.

Several farmers say that despite informing the Animal Husbandry Department's helpline regarding sick animals, no one turns up, forcing them to take services of private experts,

claim that the deaths are much more as many of the cases are not being reported to the administration.

The department has also said that its officials would be present while disposing of carcasses of the affected animals, but farmers say that too is not happening as many of them are disposing of carcasses in the open, mostly on the outskirts of Jammu, due to no help.

Ramesh Choudhary, Sarpanch of Deeng village in Rajouri, says people in his village have thrown carcasses in the forest area nearby. "This should not have been done, but what are the poor people expected to do as they do not have resources to dig pits to bury the dead animals," he says. Deeng village, situated close to the LoC, witnessed shelling from the Pakistan side, till last year. "At least, we used to get compensation when our animals died due to ceasefire violations," says Choudhary, adding adequate help has not come to tackle

the disease. The situation is similar in other villages. Farmers say that even after contacting the helpline number issued by the Jammu district administration, no help has been received for the infected animals.

Jammu Deputy Commissioner Avny Lavasa had recently stated that in case of emergency, the people should seek immediate help from the nearest veterinary centre. She had also stated that carcasses were to be disposed of in two days under the supervision of animal husbandry officials as per the protocol.

Meanwhile a provincial-level task force visited Samba to assess the situation, pattern of the spread of the disease in the district.

Dr Rahul Dev, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Samba, said there were 3,052 LSD cases so far in the district of which 2,078 had recovered and 961 were under treatment. Thirteen deaths have also been reported.

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Constitution Bench

SC focus back on critical aspect of interpreting laws

THE listing of several five-judge Constitution Bench matters for hearing from today, the first working day of the 49th Chief Justice of India (CJI), UU Lalit, is significant for shifting the focus back on a critical aspect that has been overlooked in recent years. It underscores that the Supreme Court is not merely a court of appeal but also the interpreter of the Constitution, and equally important, that because its role is to lay down the law with clarity, a prompt decision allows lower courts to follow suit in similar matters. The announcement by the new CJI, who has a short tenure of 74 days, that the court would strive to have a Constitution Bench sitting throughout the year is aimed at avoiding the long delays. There are nearly 500 such pending cases, of which 41 are main matters. A decision in these 41 could dispose of most of the connected ones. Seemingly left in the cold storage are matters such as Article 370.

The pendency of cases before the Supreme Court has crossed over 71,000, from a little over 55,000 in 2017, despite the sanctioned strength being increased to 34 judges in 2019. Though outgoing CJI Ramana apologised for not being able to list all the pending matters while citing the difficulties during the pandemic months, his successor said the former's standout achievement was the appointment of more than 250 high court judges as a result of recommendations by the collegium. The vacancies at various levels of the judiciary and the lack of infrastructure, resulting in the huge caseload and pendency, though, remain key areas of concern. The pace of deployment of modern technological tools that can be of assistance in quicker delivery of justice, too, has not been encouraging.

It was in 2018 that a Supreme Court Bench, citing the open court concept, allowed live-streaming of cases having constitutional or national importance before a Constitution Bench. That has not achieved fruition, but it did mark a first for the apex court when it allowed live-streaming of proceedings of the ceremonial Bench that bid adieu to CJI Ramana. At present, six high courts live-stream their proceedings.

1-day workshop on patent-filing procedure

KARNAL, AUGUST 28

The ICAR-NDRI organised a one-day national workshop on "Drafting of a patent application and patent filing procedure" here on Friday.

Ashish Prabhat and Subrat Sahu from the Indian Patent Office, New Delhi, were the resource persons of the workshop that witnessed more than 200 participants. They described what a patent was, why it was needed and explained the general patent laws from design to filing.

Sahu gave the details of different types of intellectual property rights (IPR) while Prabhat explained the lifecycle of a patent application.

Dr Manju Gerard, principal scientist from IPTM unit, Krishi Anusandhan Bhawan-I, said ICAR was making continuous efforts to protect their technologies through patent filing and commercialisation of technologies. — TNS



Biological Agri Solutions Association of India

Rainfall 3% deficient, but losses highest in five years

SHIMLA, AUGUST 28

Notwithstanding the devastation and damages worth Rs 1,721.35 crore caused by rains and landslides, the highest in last five years, the monsoon still remains three per cent deficient in the state this year.

Shimla district (over 46 per cent) has received the highest rainfall above the normal. It is followed by Kullu (over 42 per cent) and Bilaspur (over 12 per cent) districts. Meanwhile, Lahaul and Spiti district has received scanty rainfall with 61 per cent deficiency, followed by Una (-28 per cent) and Sirmour (-24 per cent).

Interestingly, though the state has received three per cent deficient rains as compared to -13 per cent in 2021, -26 per cent in 2020, -10 per cent in 2019, the damage in terms of monetary loss has been the highest in the last five years. The state had received 17 per cent surplus rains in 2018.

So far, a total of 270 persons have lost their lives during this monsoon season, 495 were injured while nine are still missing. The highest loss of Rs 940.27 crore has been suffered by the PWD as massive damage has been caused to roads and bridges, followed by a Rs 708.95-crore loss incurred by the Jal Shakti Department, Electricity Department has suffered Rs 5.62 crore losses.

The loss to private property has been pegged at Rs 19.60 crore. — TNS

Ruinination of the earth

Require a new creation myth to give new meaning to the planet & its beings



SHIV VISVANATHAN
SOCIOLOGIST

I WANTED to write this article a week after Independence Day. August 15 has become a routine litany of a nation-state. I wanted to capture a moral imagination for a different future. This essay is an ode to a vision of the Anthropocene. Ever since India proudly articulated the doctrine of the Panchsheel, it has been bereft of moral imagination. Its vision of peace articulated as non-alignment has been devoid of inventiveness. Its one moment of glory is when we invited the Dalai Lama and his countrymen as guests. Ever since, whether it is Rohingya or nuclear power, India has played second fiddle to the great powers. Even in the Olympiad called development, we are content if we ranked 7th or 10th as a nation. This morality as mediocrity has affected India's creative powers even as we have allowed the Pugwash movement against the atomic weapons fade into oblivion.

India's failure as a moral imagination is now confronted with an ultimate challenge, the crisis of the Anthropocene. If the crisis is not accepted in its totality as man damaging the earth, and reduced to climate change, the struggle becomes a technical answer to a technical question. The moral, ethical, and ecological challenges become mere questions of political economy and search for technology as problem-solving. Climate change becomes the disease, when it is a symptom of a deeper distress, demanding ethical and ecological repair of the earth. One becomes a major problem in plumbing, the other as attempt to create a new economies and a new science where time, nature, value is constructed differently.

In fact, the Pugwash gives way to the biggest questions of the Anthropocene, demanding that we look at violence,



LET IT HEAL: Climate change is a symptom of a deeper distress, demanding ethical and ecological repair of the earth. REUTERS

India can't be content with mere development. We need a sense of the Anthropocene which we recreate civilisationally.

nature and democracy in critical ways. The *satyagrahi* has to reinvent himself as a scholar, a mystic creating new imaginaries for a damaged earth.

It is in this sense that scientists from Lynn Margulis to Zia Sardar demand a reinvention of democracy and a recreation of science. There is need for a cognitive revolution in a double-barrelled sense. One has to locate this historically. Modern historians have emphasised three major changes in the cognitive world. Firstly, the Copernican Revolution which revealed that the earth was no longer the centre of the universe. Thus humbled, one confronted the Darwinian revolution where man discovered that he evolved from bacteria. Then came the Freudian revolution where man realised he was not the rational creature he thought himself to be. Each crisis challenged the ethnocentric visions of man. Industrial man, who thought of nature as helpless, now confronted the fact that he had damaged the earth excessively, confronting everything from extinction to climate change.

We have to simultaneously reinvent democracy and citizenship. Democracy as drama cannot be reduced to the aridity of elections and numbers, because it then reincarnates as sec-

ondary authoritarianism. Democracy has to also challenge the dualism of lay and expert to create citizenship as a trusteeship of knowledge. Citizenship can no longer be confined to voting and consumption but to a range of ethical repairs. One has to challenge the alleged inevitability around extinction and genocide. More, the wisdom of hierarchy has to be questioned. CS Holling's idea of panarchy as an idea of scale, each of which requires its own notion of problem-solving has to be consolidated. It is not John Stuart Mill and Robert Dahl one needs for democracy, but David Graeber and Slavoj Zizek to unravel the paradoxes of democracy. The Occupy movement and the Indigenista struggle in Latin America have to become the prelude to the epic of the Anthropocene. Civil society has to play a bigger role. The only way to resist museumising a culture or subjecting it to genocide is to have a totemistic relationship to it.

Spirituality becomes critical here, but not a spirituality that plays second fiddle to management as manipulation. Today, we have to invent beyond Sri Sri's meditation models in Kashmir or Jaggi Vasudev's attempts to revive an interest in the soil. Trees have to acquire a new

iconicity and India must invoke and reinvent the spirit of the Sacred Groves. One needs a new music around diversity where India celebrates not merely 300 Ramayanas but 1.50 lakh varieties of rice.

One has to realise science alone cannot save diversity. One needs hybridity, a syncretism of myth, fable, festival, cooking, livelihood and lifestyle to sustain diversity. One has to realise that we cannot settle for the current state of knowledge systems. We need interdisciplinarity which is a form of trusteeship of a vision of knowledge as a whole. The reductionist, the atomistic, and the specialised have a limited role to play in this world. The two cultures' divide between science and humanities cannot hold. A science not knowing Hamlet, a writer not knowing thermodynamics parades a lethal illiteracy. The old binaries of sacred and secular will not work. The Anthropocene is not a clerical project, but a moral crisis which needs a new creation myth, an act of storytelling that gives new meaning to the planet and beings in it. Ecology in this sense becomes a restoration of life, livelihood and meaning recreated through nonviolence. It has to combine an old man's wisdom and a child's delight, a theatre where science and the aesthetic create a new politics of life.

The old complaints that it is the West that is responsible for the Anthropocene are true, but incomplete. Humanity now has to take responsibility and go beyond the old colonial and racial distinctions. We need to recover the wisdom and epistemology of tribes, learn to read trees again, sense the lifegiving nature of a soil. India can't be content with mere development. We need a sense of the Anthropocene which we recreate civilisationally. The guru, the mystic, the shaman, the expert, the scientist have to come together to orchestrate a moral drama where every child feels she has a part. Love of a nation cannot be bereft of loving and celebrating the earth. That is the new responsibility of August 15, to reinvent India as a civilisation, playfully, ethically, and ecologically.

Farmers' panchayat near Dy Speaker's house on Sept 11

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

HISAR, AUGUST 28

Farmers under the banner of the Samyukta Kisan Sangharsh Samiti (SKSS) held a meeting on the expiry of the deadline given by them for the release of pending compensation for the cotton crop failure in 2020.

They said Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa had failed to fulfil his promise and now they had decided to hold a mahapanchayat outside his residence on September 11.

Farm leader Surender Arya said they held a meeting with Gangwa on August 18 wherein he assured them that the pending compensation would be disbursed to the affected farmers within a week.

"We gave him time till August 27, but the farmers who lost their crop are yet to get compensation. We have come to know that the Deputy Speaker is on a visit abroad. This is shocking and reveals his lackadaisical attitude towards farmers," he said.

TO RESUME DHARNA

“The Samyukta Kisan Sangharsh Samiti will take a strong decision and resume the dharna that was suspended on August 18 following an assurance by Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa.

Surender Arya, FARM LEADER

The farmer leader said they held a meeting today and gave a call for holding a mahapanchayat near his residence on September 11. "The SKSS will take a strong decision and resume the dharna that was suspended on August 18 following an assurance by Gangwa," Arya said.

Farmers of 20 villages of Balsamand sub-tehsil have been waiting for compensation amounting to Rs 37 crore for the kharif crop failure in 2020. They had launched an agitation about three months ago. They ended their dharna temporarily following an assurance by the Deputy Speaker on August 18.