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Rice output set to dip due to partial drought

Zia Haq

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: India's summer-sown rice output could dip by up to 12 million tonnes due to a partial drought but the country will still have a surplus of the staple, a senior official said on Friday, a day after the government curbed exports to put a lid on rising cereal prices.

Union food secretary Sudhan-shu Pandey said paddy output will go down in four states with deficient rainfall, but in others, where the monsoon was robust,

yields will likely go up. On balance, India will be in a surplus based on previous reserves, the total area sown and expected yields, he said.

Pandey said that the paddy acreage is lower by 3.8 million hectare so far this kharif season because of less rains in many states. "Loss of production of rice may be 10 million tonnes and in the worst case it can be 12 million tonnes this year." According to Pandey, paddy sowing is lower by 2.5 million hectares in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar.

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Partial drought may trigger 12MT decline in rice output

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NEW DELHI: India's summer-sown rice output could dip by up to 12 million tonnes (MT) due to a partial drought but the country will still have a surplus of the staple, a senior official said on Friday, a day after the government curbed exports to put a lid on rising cereal prices.

Union food secretary Sudhan-shu Pandey, citing official projections, said paddy output will go down in four states with deficient rainfall, but in others, where the monsoon was robust, yields will likely go up. On balance, the country will be in a surplus based on previous reserves, the total area sown and expected yields, he said.

The Centre is sitting on a stock of 47MT of rice, including rice equivalent of unmilled paddy, as of July 1. The buffer stock requirement is to have 13.5 MT of rice as of July 1.

Pandey pointed out that the paddy acreage is lower by 3.8 lakh (3.8 million) hectare so far this kharif season because of low rainfall in many states. The kharif season contributes about



Officials said that despite the dip in paddy output from 4 states facing drought, the country still has a surplus of the staple.

80% of India's total rice production. "Loss of production of rice may be 10 million tonnes and in the worst case, it can be 12 million tonnes this year," he told reporters. According to the presentation made by Pandey, paddy sowing is lower by 2.5 lakh (2.5 million) hectares in four states — West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar.

The production could be less by 7-8MT in these four states. Pandey declined to comment on whether the government would be in a position to continue with the Pradhan Mantri

Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, a free foodgrain programme introduced as a Covid-relief measure, beyond September.

The country has witnessed six straight years of bumper harvests, helping expand state-held food stocks and export. Amid the pandemic, the farm economy held steady because of ample production.

But extreme weather this year exposed the fragility of the country's agricultural system to climate risks. In May, the government halted wheat export after a severe heatwave crimped

output, sending state-owned reserves to a 14-year low.

On Thursday, the Union government imposed a 20% export duty on common varieties of rice. The same day, it also suspended overseas sales of broken rice, used as poultry and cattle feed, apart from ethanol blending. Broken rice stocks are almost exhausted due to a jump in international shipments.

Wholesale inflation in rice rose 8.22% from a year ago, official data showed, while retail rates leapt 6.30% on a per kilo basis year-on. Maize price have jumped 26% between January and September 2022, the data showed. These will feed into overall food inflation, the reason why the government curbed overseas sales.

"At the moment this is the first estimate. If the yield is good in some areas, this can be compensated also," Pandey said.

"There could be a 10-15% deficit in rice production. A large rice quantity has been exported... Therefore, prices have risen above MSP," said Rahul Chauhan of IGrain Pvt Ltd.

With PTI inputs

Delhi, Punjab may jointly pay incentive for stubble

Gurpreet Singh Nibber

gurpreet.nibber@hindustantimes.com

CHANDIGARH: The governments of Punjab and Delhi are working on finalising a monetary incentive for farmers if they do not burn their paddy residue after harvesting, a top official said on Friday, after the Union government turned down their request to chip in with funds.

As a result of the Centre's decision, the incentive, which was initially set at ₹2,500 per acre, is likely to come down to ₹1,000 per acre. The scheme will be crucial for attempts to discourage farmers from burning crop residue after harvest, an easy way for them to clear fields but a method that triggers up clouds of smoke that render the world's worst air pollution crisis in much of North India.

"We had sought a support of ₹1,125 crore from the Union government in the total outlay of ₹1,875 crore while ₹375 crore each was to be contributed by Punjab and Delhi governments. Now, we have received a communication from the ministry of agriculture that our proposal has been rejected," said Punjab chief secretary VK Janjua.

The chief secretary added that the states are still trying to work out the incentive, which could be now come down to ₹1,000 per acre. The Punjab government has kept an allocation of Rs 200 crore in its budget this year to check stubble burning.

HT reported in July that the two state government — both now controlled by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) — had written to the Centre seeking for it to chip in with ₹1,500 per acre as incentive to help end farm fires.

The Union agriculture minis-



The cash incentive for farmers, which was initially set at ₹2,500 per acre, is likely to come down to ₹1,000 per acre.

try did not immediately respond to requests for a comment on Friday.

Officials in the Delhi government too did not share details on how they planned to incentivise farmers to not burn the residue.

But officials, who asked not to be named, said they have already begun preparations to spray a bio-decomposer solution free of cost across Basmati and non-Basmati fields in Delhi. The solution, developed by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in Pusa, decomposes paddy straw naturally within 15-30 days, thereby removing the need for it to be burnt.

Delhi's environment and development minister Gopal Rai had on Thursday chaired a review meeting to assess preparation for the same, with the agriculture department had asked to get farmers in Delhi to fill a form at the earliest to iden-

often very short.

The result is that Delhi and its surrounding areas report hazardous levels of air pollution.

An official in Punjab's agriculture department, who was part of the meetings with central officials, said: "The agriculture ministry has rejected our proposal citing that ₹275 crore have already been sanctioned for supplying subsidised machines for in-situ management of paddy straw". With the allocated funds, 32,100 more subsidised machines will be supplied to the farmers.

In the past four seasons, at least 90,000 machines have been supplied to farmers in Punjab, with the Centre releasing ₹269 crore, ₹273 crore, ₹272 crore and ₹331 crore in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively.

The previous Congress government in the state had sought ₹100 per quintal as incentive from the Centre to check stubble burning in 2019.

All these grants, however have failed to bring down the raging farm fires.

Janjua added that in the upcoming kharif harvest the focus would be on optimum use of machines for in-situ management of paddy stubble. "We will make sure all machines are put to best use and arrangements are being made to tack these machines by a GPS system," he said.

"I have no hope from any government. The Centre has backtracked and very soon, the Punjab and Delhi governments will also put a lid on the scheme," said Bharatiya Kisan Union president Balbir Singh Rajwala.

Most farmers burn the residue because it is a quick and cheap way to clear the fields for the sowing of rabi season wheat crop, for which the window is

(With inputs from HTC in Delhi)

Day later, govt flags dip in rice yield

Cites poor rainfall & crop diversification for ban on export

VIBHA SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 9
A day after the ban on the export of broken rice to increase domestic availability, the government today said kharif rice production could fall by 10 to 12 million tonne this season due to poor rain in some places and factors such as diversification. Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said there were four affected drought states



- ### 20% EXPORT DUTY
- **BROKEN RICE:** Prohibited with immediate effect
 - **NON-BASMATI (OTHERS), RICE IN HUSK (PADDY/ROUGH), HUSKED (BROWN):** 20% export duty with immediate effect
 - **PARBOILED/BASMATI:** No change

which translated into seven-eight million tonne less production. "There are other states which have less area under paddy, not due to deficit rainfall but factors such as crop diversification. Total rice sowing is less by 38.06 lakh hectare and loss of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Panel to decide commission on cotton crop

CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 9
The state government has decided to form a nine-member committee to decide on the quantum of commission to be paid to commission agents (arhtiyas) for cotton crop. After chairing a meeting at Punjab Bhavan here today, Agriculture Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal said it had been decided that a nine-member committee would be formed to take a decision on the commission to be taken by agents on the cotton crop. The committee would have two representatives each of arhtiyas, cotton farmers, cotton factory owners and three government officials. The farmers told the minister that there were encroachments in many grain markets across the state, due to which they were facing problems. — TNS

Day later, govt flags dip...

rice production may be 10 million tonne. In the worst-case scenario, it can be 12 million tonne due to a variety of factors," he said. "However, with exports of 212 LMT last year, we can say that India is still surplus in rice. It is early to say how much production will be affected due to poor rain," he said, adding that places with surplus rain might see more yield to compensate for the losses. The preliminary estimate today is the first official confirmation of the impact of poor monsoon on production in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. After imposing 20 per cent export duty on non-basmati rice, the government yesterday banned the export of all forms of broken rice with immediate effect to cool prices. Pandey said domestic wholesale and retail prices of rice were showing an increasing trend along with cattle feed stock prices. While maize prices increased from Rs 19/kg (January 1) to Rs 24/kg (September 8), broken rice increased from Rs 16/kg (January 1) to Rs 22/kg (September 8). Terming the increase in export of broken rice "exponential and abnormal", Pandey said from April to August, the export of broken rice increased by 4,178 per cent as compared to the corresponding period of 2019. Broken rice is largely used as a feed meal in the poultry industry. The largest importer from India is China, followed by Senegal, Vietnam, Djibouti and Indonesia. While the ban on broken rice has come into effect from September 9, the notification says that between September 9 and 15, consignments and shipments — for which loading began in ports and shipping bills of vessels berthed have been filed or where broken rice consignments have been handed over to the Customs before the ban — will be allowed to be exported. The Centre imposed a 20 per cent export duty on select rice varieties but kept major items like basmati out of its purview.



Farmers, millers miffed with 20% export duty on non-basmati rice

NITISH SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

AMBALA, SEPTEMBER 9
The Centre's decision to impose 20 per cent export duty on non-basmati rice, except for parboiled variety, to ensure ample domestic supply, and a ban on broken rice hasn't gone down well with the farmers and rice millers. Criticising the Centre for the export duty, Bhartiya Kisan Union (Charuni) chief Gurnam Singh said: "The farmers have faced financial losses due to the poor yield of wheat, mustard and potato this year. Now, we were expecting that the paddy will fetch good prices, but the government decision will put pressure and the non-basmati paddy prices may fall by Rs 400-Rs 500 a quintal." Jewel Singla, chairman, Haryana Rice Millers and Dealers Association, has apprehensions that the decision may disturb the business. He said: "Higher export

MOVE TO BENEFIT BIG PLAYERS

“The decision will help some big players only as they will procure the paddy at cheaper rates and later sell it on remunerative prices when the export duty will be withdrawn. The union will call a meeting to discuss the issue soon.” Rakesh Bains, BKU (CHARUNI) SPOKESMAN
duty will discourage the buyers. The exports will decrease and it will also have an impact on the local market. The ban on broken rice will also hit the dealers hard. It will disturb the business. The prices of broken parmal rice was Rs 2,151 a quintal and it has dropped by Rs 100 already, and it may fall further. The government has a surplus stock. We will soon meet Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and request him to raise the issue with the Centre.”
Meanwhile, Vijay Setia, former president of the All India Rice Exporters Association, termed the decision as a welcome step. He said: "It is a good decision amid the

Growth dwarfed, dejected Haryana farmers destroy standing paddy crop

SHIV KUMAR SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

YAMUNANAGAR, SEPTEMBER 10
Paddy cultivation has turned bitter for thousands of farmers in Yamunanagar district due to dwarf disease.

Dejected farmers have started destroying their three-month-old disease-hit paddy crop. Farmer Lakhwinder Singh Cheema of Sarawan village in the district has destroyed his standing crop on one hectare with a tractor.

Cheema said that he had to destroy his crop due to stunt-



A farmer destroys his crop in Sarawan village of Yamunanagar.

ed growth and non-emergence of panicle. "I have sown paddy on eight hectares this year. But the crop on two hectares was hit 100 per cent by dwarf disease. I destroyed one hectare

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Ban on export of broken rice anti-farmer: Hooda

ROHTAK, SEPTEMBER 10

Leader of Opposition Bhopinder Hooda today said the Centre's decision to impose 20 per cent duty on the export of non-basmati rice and ban on the export of broken rice was anti-farmer.

Addressing a press conference in Rohtak, Hooda said:

"Due to such decisions, farmers will not be able to benefit from the high prices of food grains in the international market arising out of the Russia-Ukraine war." He demanded immediate withdrawal of the decision and asked the government to start procuring paddy from September 20.—TNS

Growth dwarfed, dejected Haryana farmers destroy...

crop on Thursday," said Lakhwinder Cheema.

Another farmer, Baljore Singh of Gundiani village, said that he destroyed his disease-affected paddy crop on three acres on Wednesday.

Farmers have sown paddy on 83,000 hectares in Yamunanagar district in the current paddy crop season. Of that, crop sown on 12,000 hectares has been affected by dwarf disease.

As per claims made by farmers before the authorities of Haryana Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department, most incidents of stunted growth have been reported in Sawa-127, Sawa-7301, Shift Gold, Arize-6444, PR-114, Pusa-1509 and some

other varieties. "Farmers had suffered huge loss in the wheat crop due to low yield in the past rabi season. Now, they will have to suffer loss due to dwarf disease. So, the government should immediately get a special girdawari conducted and give compensation to farmers," said Sanju Gundiana, district president of Bhartiya Kisan Union.

Dr Pardeep Meel, Deputy Director (additional charge) of Agriculture Department, Yamunanagar, said, "Dwarf disease has affected 12,000 hectares of paddy crop in Yamunanagar district. I have sent a report to the higher authorities of the department."

PM: Joint efforts must to make India research hub

Opens Centre-State Science Conclave in Ahmedabad

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 10

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the 'Centre-State Science Conclave' in Ahmedabad via video-conferencing and said New India was progressing on the slogans "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan".

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister said science was like that energy in the development of 21st century India which had the power to accelerate the development of every region and state. He said concerted efforts were needed to make India a global centre of research and innovation.

"Today, when India is moving towards leading the fourth industrial revolution, the role of India's science and people related to this field is very important. In such a situation, the responsibility of people in administration and policy making increases significantly," the PM said,



PM Narendra Modi

SCIENTIFIC MODERNITY

“As governments, we have to have more and more cooperation and collaboration with our scientists. This will create an atmosphere of scientific modernity.

Narendra Modi, PM

emphasising that science was the basis of solutions, evolution and innovation.

Referring to leading scientists of the West — Einstein, Fermi, Max Planck, Niels Bohr and Tesla — PM said

Indian scientists CV Raman, Jagdish Chandra Bose, Satyendranath Bose, Meghnad Saha and S Chandrasekhar also brought new discoveries to the fore.

The Prime Minister, however, said back home, due recognition had not been given to the work of scientists, something which is now being done.

“Scientists are giving ample reasons to the country to celebrate them,” PM said, lauding the role of Indian scientists in developing Covid vaccines.

He said inclination towards science, technology and innovation was “in the DNA of our young generation and we need to support them with full strength”.

He also asked every state to lay down modern policy regarding science, innovation and technology. “As governments, we have to have more and more cooperation and collaboration with our scientists. This will create an atmosphere of scientific modernity,” PM noted.