



BASAI News Updates

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Incessant rain flattens crops in region, farmers stare at losses

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

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The Met Department said both states received heavy rainfall during the past 24 hours, which also resulted in a decline in temperature. Farmers in Punjab and Haryana rued that the untimely rain and strong winds had flattened their crops. Heavy rainfall and waterlogging in fields would lead to higher moisture content in paddy, affecting the quality of grain and resulting in lower remuneration, they feared. The paddy growers were hopeful of a good harvest this time. With rain playing



Paddy flattened following rain and strong winds in Sangrur. TRIBUNE PHOTO

the spoilsport, they are now demanding adequate compensation for the loss.

India's rice production is expected to decline by 6 per cent to 104.99 million tonnes in the kharif season this year due to a fall in paddy acreage amidst rainfall deficit in key producing states like Jhark-

hand, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.

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declined by nearly 19 lakh hectares to 399.03 lakh hectares compared to 417.93 lakh hectares in mid-September a year ago due to lack of rains earlier. The rains will remain subdued over the plains of the northwest and central India during the next five days, the IMD said.

Grassland, fodder issues merit global attention

BISHWA BHASKAR CHOUDHARY
AND AMARESH CHANDRA

The supply of feed and fodder has always falls short of the aggregate demand in the country. Sparing more area for fodder is vital in the wake of rapid intense competition for additional land from commercially important crops. As the G20 Presidency is a great opportunity for India to place its priorities and narratives on the global agenda, the country should strengthen partnership in fodder research & development as well as in fodder trade.

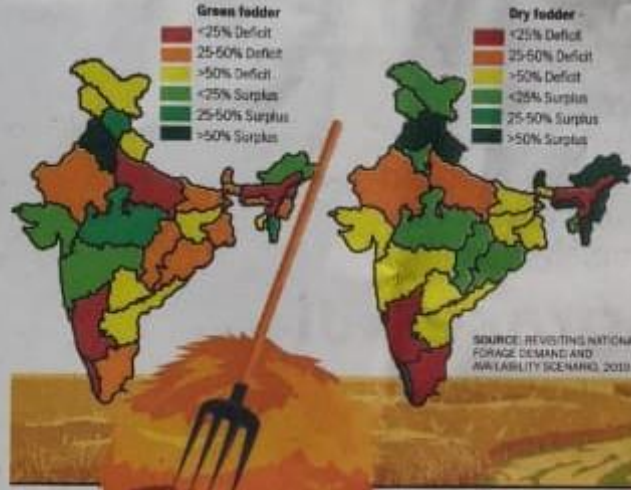
INDIA will occupy the G20 Presidency from December 1, 2022, to November 30, 2023, and host the 18th G20 Summit next year. The G20 Chair undertakes a wide range of activities to help members discuss and coordinate policies on matters of common interest. The shift in focus in recent years to the Global South is illustrative of the growing influence of emerging economies such as India in spurring international development cooperation and strengthening multilateralism. India's vital role in global economic governance has fostered its active participation in the G20 arena.

G20 brings under its umbrella all five permanent members of the United Nation Security Council, all G7 member countries and BRICS nations. The G20 members accounts for two-thirds of the world's population, around 85% of the global GDP and 75% of international trade.

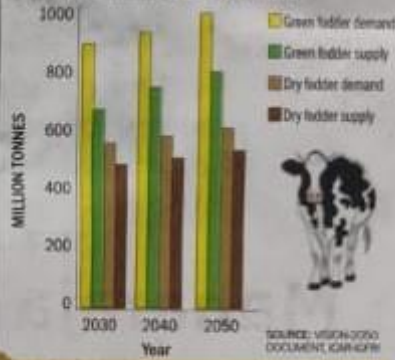
On the agriculture front, the G20 Ministers of Agriculture have had talks on food security, nutrition and global agricultural development and sustainability issues since their first meeting in Paris in 2011. Concerted global efforts in areas such as genomics, digital agriculture, climate-smart and bio-friendly technologies, and efficient resource management issues have been the common agreed agenda at various G20 meetings.

In the G20 Leaders' Summit 2021 hosted by Italy, India stressed on the need to increase investment in agricultural research and development amid the challenges of climate change

GREEN AND DRY FODDER AVAILABILITY ACROSS INDIA



DEMAND AND SUPPLY ESTIMATES OF DRY AND GREEN FODDER IN INDIA



and the expected increase in food demand by 2030. However, it seems that issues concerning feed and fodder, the severe deficit of which may threaten India's numero uno position in milk production, have suffered from exclusion in all G20 Ministers of Agriculture dialogues.

The supply of feed and fodder has always falls short of the aggregate demand in the country. Studies suggest that devoting around 14-17% of the land for fodder cultivation will be ideal for meeting fodder shortages in the country; however, fodder is being cultivated on 8.4 million hectares (nearly 4%) for the past few decades. Sparing more area for fodder is vital in the wake of rapid intense competition for

additional land from commercially important crops. As per the recent report titled 'Revisiting National Forage Demand and Availability Scenario', for every 100 kg required, India is short of 11.34 kg of green fodder and 23.4 kg of dry fodder. The scenario is more unnerving in states where the fodder deficit is above 25%.

With the burgeoning livestock population and the government's focus on the genetic upgrade of cattle through cross-breeding programmes, the demand-supply gap of green fodder will widen considerably in the absence of appropriate policy planning and its grassroots-level implementation. As the G20 Presidency is a great opportunity for India to place its priorities and narratives on the global

agenda, the country should strengthen partnership in fodder research & development as well as in fodder trade.

Premier fodder research institutes of the country can be involved in collaborative discussions with international organisations on sharing ideas as well as technologies and their implementation. Moreover, attracting global investments in strengthening fodder-based Indian startups should be on the priority list of agriculture and allied issues. Stakeholders in feed and fodder development hope that healthy discussions will be dedicated to this ignored sector in the upcoming global mega event.

Another important area of global talk can be conservation and rejuvenation of grasslands and rangelands, which together occu-

developing suitable eco-friendly technologies for grassland rehabilitation in the G20 meet would not only safeguard the resource-deprived livestock farmers across the world but also pave the way for conserving the environment and meeting sustainable development goals.

India has urged G-20 nations to support the celebration of the International Year of Millets (2023) to promote nutrition and sustainable agriculture. On the same lines, India must take the lead in celebrating 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, as declared by the UN General Assembly. Pastoralists — the custodians of rangelands — contribute immensely to rural economies. Reports estimate that pastoralism is practised by 100-200 million people (the actual figure could be closer to 500 million globally). In India, there are reportedly around 35 million pastoralists, though the figure is not officially confirmed, who manage the livestock population of more than 50 million. While a few countries have now formally integrated pastoralism into their rural development policies, there is no official pastoral development policy in India till date.

With the affirmation that New Delhi will set the G20 agenda for the first time, there is hope that these stewards of rangelands in India will also be benefited from global recognition for their immense contribution to sustainable food security and ecosystem services.

Choudhary is a scientist at ICAR-Indian Grassland & Fodder Research Institute, Jhansi; Chandra is Director of the institute. Views are personal

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declined by nearly 19 lakh hectares to 399.03 lakh hectares compared to 417.93 lakh hectares in mid-September a year ago due to lack of rains earlier. The rains will remain subdued over the plains of the northwest and central India during the next five days, the IMD said.

Yet to be paid for earlier crop failures, farmers fear more losses this year

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SANGRUR, SEPTEMBER 25 Without getting any financial aid from the state government for their previous crop failures so far, many farmers are having sleepless nights these days as untimely rain accompanied by gusty winds for the past three days has flattened their ripened paddy crop and inundated fields.

"In 2021, rainwater had damaged my paddy crop on five acres and despite submitting all required documents, I have not received any financial aid from the government so far. The incessant rain for the past three days has again flattened my standing crop," said Sukhwinder Singh, a farmer from Moonak.

Rainwater had caused damage to standing paddy and other crops in 43 villages on over 5,000 acres last year. The affected villages included Makraud Sahib, Mandvi, Chandu, Bushehra, Shergarh, Shahpur Thedi, Nawagaon, Banarasi, Andana, Chatha



A farmer shows damaged paddy crop due heavy rain at a village in Patiala on Sunday. RAJESH SACHAR

Gobindpura, Phulad, Hamirgarh, Bhundar Bhaini, Surjan Bhaini, Salemgarh, Moonak while remaining villages were from Lehra block.

"At present, the situation is not alarming as weather has started improving. I have been meeting farmers and if needs arises, I will take up the matter with the state government for

assessment of the damaged crops," said Lehra MLA Barinder Kumar Goyal.

"There are many farmers in our area, who have suffered losses after repeated crop failures in the past two-three years. But they have not received any financial aid from the government even once. Some officers prepared wrongs reports and favoured

some politically influential farmers during the assessment exercise. The government should order a probe and take action against the erring officers," said Rinku Moonak, a BKU Ugrahan leader.

Sangrur Deputy Commissioner Jitendra Jorwal said he had directed all SDMs to keep a close watch and provide quick help to farmers.



Late Deputy PM Chaudhary Devi Lal's statue installed in Kaithal.

Crop flattened, growers worried

YAMUNANAGAR: Paddy growers are in distress as their crop has flattened due to untimely rain in the district. This is likely to affect the yield of the late sown varieties and quality of the early sown crop.

Farmer Arun Kumar from Jathlana village said they were in distress as untimely

rain had flattened their paddy crop. Dr Pardeep Meel, Deputy Director Agriculture, Haryana Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department, said, "As per preliminary information, there may be about 5-10 per cent loss to paddy crop that has flattened due to rain," he added. — TNS

Special girdawari

KAITHAL: Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala on Sunday said, "A special girdawari will be conducted across the state to assess the loss to the farmers due to the unprecedented rainfall." — TNS

SDM visits waterlogged fields

SONEPAT: Gohana SDM Ashish Kumar, along with officials of the Irrigation Department, on Sunday visited waterlogged fields in various villages here to assess the situation and the

extent of loss caused to the standing crops.

The SDM also reviewed the efforts made by the Irrigation and Agriculture Department to drain out water from the fields. — TNS

Farmers count losses, BKU demands ₹50K/acre relief

PARVEEN ARORA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KARNAL, SEPTEMBER 25 After continual rainfall for five days, the district saw sunshine for sometime today, giving relief to the farmers who had been busy in draining out excessive water from their paddy fields.

The crop was either waterlogged or flattened in majority of the fields, causing losses to the farming community. At some places, grains have started discolouring besides increase in fungal diseases.

The Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) has demanded a compensation of Rs 50,000 per acre for the affected farmers.

Farmer Sandeep Kumar of Nilokheri block said, "Dry season is required at the time of maturity, but the untimely rain has caused heavy losses to farmers. Last year also, they faced losses due to poor output."

Amit Kumar, a farmer from the Nissing area, said his paddy crop was waterlogged due



Waterlogged paddy crop in a field near Kamalpur village in the Nilokheri block on Sunday. TRIBUNE PHOTO: PARVEEN ARORA

to heavy rainfall. He tried to drain out water, but failed as the downpour continued. If the situation remained the same, he and other farmers would have to suffer more losses as water stagnation might damage stems.

BKU state president Rattan Mann said the government should order a special girdawari to assess losses to the farmers. "We demand a compensation of Rs 50,000 per acre to the farmers who have suffered losses," Mann said.

Arhtiyas, led by Haryana State Arhtiyas Association president Ashok Gupta, meanwhile, continued their indefinite fast and no procurement could take place in the grain markets of the district.

The arhtiyas started their stir on September 19 and the fast on September 23 against procurement through e-NAM. They are also demanding 2.5 per cent commission on produce, instead of Rs 46 per quintal.

Erratic rain, severe heat may have hit Delhi's dragonfly count: Survey

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NEW DELHI: A dragonfly survey carried out across the seven biodiversity parks in Delhi over the past week suggests significant behavioural changes in the insect's life cycle, likely due to the climate crisis and erratic rainfall patterns this year, scientists said on Sunday, adding these alterations need to be observed over the next few years.

The survey, conducted by scientists and technical staff of the Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) biodiversity parks with students from Hansraj College, Amity University, Jamia Millia Islamia and others between September 19 and 25, found that there are 25 different species of dragonflies and damselflies in Delhi alone and over 51 species across the National Capital Region. The survey counted 5,219 individual dragonflies and damselflies across the seven biodiversity parks in Delhi.

Delhi's first-ever dragonfly count was held across NCR in 2018, with the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary, Okhla Bird Sanctuary, Dhanauri wetland, Surajpur wetland, Najafgarh Jheel, Basai wetland, Lodhi Garden and Sarjay Van surveyed. The biodiversity parks covered then included the Yamuna Biodiversity Park, Aravalli Biodiversity Park and the Neela Hauz Biodiversity Park. The 2018 count, carried out by the Bombay Natural History Society and World Wildlife Fund, led to the discovery of 25 dragonfly species.

'25 species found in Delhi'

Biodiversity park	Species spotted	Individuals spotted	Common species
Yamuna Biodiversity Park	23	357	Ditch Jewel
Aravalli Biodiversity Park	12	555	Wandering Glider
Kamla Nehru Ridge	25	391	Picture Wing
Tughlaqabad Biodiversity Park	7	81	Wandering Glider
Neela Hauz Biodiversity Park	6	323	Scarlet Skimmer
Tilpath Valley Biodiversity Park	7	164	Granite Ghost
Kalindi Biodiversity Park	16	3,348	Ditch Jewel



A black ground skimmer.
BIODIVERSITY PARKS PROGRAMME

Scientists, however, said that the number of dragonflies this year cannot be compared to 2018, as the previous survey was conducted only at three biodiversity parks, but the significant behavioural changes in the insect's life cycle do need to be observed over the next few years. "There was good rainfall when the monsoon first hit the region, after which there was a long hot and dry spell, leading to the Yamuna river nearly drying up, and then it rained again over the last few days. This has confused the dragonflies as they

lay eggs when it rains. So, they laid eggs in the beginning of monsoon and then entered the nymph stage that normally remains underwater for a long time. Because the wetlands dried up, the nymphs grew up quicker and had a shorter lifespan. When it rained again, the dragonflies laid eggs again—which is unusual. It is now a matter of research for the next year to see what will happen to the eggs and how this shift will impact their population. One year's data is not enough to make a definitive comment," Faiyaz Khudsar, scientist

in-charge of the Biodiversity Parks Programme, said. He added that the nymph stage is the most important regulatory function of the dragonfly as it feeds on mosquito larvae and reduces its population, thereby reducing the possibility of several vector-borne diseases spreading across the region.

Experts believe that a healthy population of dragonflies determines the quality of any ecosystem. The network of seven DDA Biodiversity Parks in Delhi represents both the important ecological landforms—the Yamuna river and Aravalli hill range—in the region. To be sure, any study of these biodiversity parks and its findings represent the true picture of the quality of ecosystems here.

"Effort has been made to assess the population of dragonflies and damselflies in all the biodiversity parks to ascertain the quality of ecosystems, which ultimately provides environmental sustainability and resilience to a city like Delhi. The count of dragonflies and damselflies indicates the quality of water and health of the wetland ecosystem," Khudsar said.

This year, the 457-acre Yamuna Biodiversity Park reported 23 species of the insect—a drop from 2018, when 25 species were recorded—including 357 individuals. The ditch jewel was the most commonly spotted species here and was also the most spotted species at the 400-acre Kalindi Biodiversity Park, which recorded 16 species and 3,348 individuals. Both of these biodiversity parks represent floodplain ecosystems. While

Yamuna Biodiversity Park had the highest number of species, Kalindi had the highest individual count of dragonflies and damselflies. Khudsar, meanwhile, added that a significant change from 2018 was the lack of common picture wing dragonflies in Yamuna Biodiversity Park—a species that was the most common here in 2018.

The 692-acre Aravalli Biodiversity Park recorded 12 species and 555 individuals. The 175-acre Tilpath Valley recorded seven species—an increase from five species in 2018—and 164 individuals. The 320-acre Tughlaqabad Biodiversity Park had seven species and 81 individuals. The 215-acre Kamla Nehru Ridge had 25 species and 291 individuals and the 10-acre Neela Hauz had six species—a drop from nine species in 2018—and 323 individuals. These five biodiversity parks represent the last spur of Aravalli range. While the lowest count of dragonflies was observed in Tughlaqabad, the least number of species was in Neela Hauz, given its small size.

The wandering glider was the most commonly spotted species in the Aravalli and Tughlaqabad, common picture wing in Kamla Nehru, scarlet skimmer in Neela Hauz and granite ghost in Tilpath Valley Biodiversity Park. "This is a good time to survey dragonflies as monsoon is when they can be seen in large numbers as they start breeding. So, any survey needs to be conducted around August-September," said Aisha Sultana, ecologist, Biodiversity Parks Programme.

Centre yet to drop cases against farmers: Pawar

Sunil Rahar

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ROHTAK: The Union government has failed to fulfil the demand of minimum support price (MSP) by farmers who protested for over a year against the now-repealed three farm laws, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar said on Sunday, as he joined leaders from Opposition parties to call for a united front to take on the Bharatiya Janata Party in the 2024 general elections.

Pawar — who was joined by Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, former Haryana chief minister OP Chautala and Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal and other leaders from opposition parties — also talked about the government not taking back cases filed against the protesting farmers.

"The real solution to problems of farmers and unemployment can only be by bringing a change and everyone must strive for a change of the government at the Centre in 2024," the NCP chief said. "There is a need for opposition unity."

Attending a rally organised by the Indian National Lok Dal in Haryana's Fatehabad to mark former deputy PM Devi Lal's birth



NCP chief Sharad Pawar

anniversary, the opposition leaders slammed the Centre over inflation, rising unemployment while accusing it of creating a rift in the society on religion.

"The government has waived off loans of big businessmen instead of waiving off agricultural loans of farmers, who are committing suicide because of fear of losing land and respect," Pawar said. "We have taken a pledge to uproot the BJP government from the Centre..." He also applauded the farmers of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Western Uttar Pradesh for fighting against the Union government over the three farm laws, which are now repealed.

Hitting back, BJP president JP Nadda, who was in Kerala, said: "Two things are common to them. First, all of them are family parties and secondly, they are neck-deep in corruption. Some are accused in corruption cases and some others are out on bail."