



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
**MILLETS**  
2023



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ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE



# **BASAI WEEKLY NEWS UPDATES**

FEBRUARY 19-25, 2023

# Centre cracks down on hoarders of pulses, other farm produce

**Zia Haq**

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**NEW DELHI:** The Union government has begun cracking down on hoarders of pulses and other farm produce based on what a top official described as "reliable" market intelligence following rising consumer inflation, which hit a three-month high in January at 6.52%.

"There are tur (pigeon pea) imported from Myanmar, which people have kept. Please do release it in market is my appeal. Don't hold it. We have a set of very reliable intelligence," consumer affairs secretary Rohit Singh said. Singh had told a top lentil industry body that traders should do good business and earn reasonable profits. "We are with you on that, but if you try to game it, then we are there to control. That's my friendly warning," Singh said.

The government's price-monitoring cell is using better pricing-prediction methods, such as root mean square error, a mathematical model economic forecasters often use to gauge errors in pre-

dicting quantitative data.

Inflation in food and beverages came was at 6.19% in January, compared with a 4.58% rise in December. Food inflation has panned out differently, rising month-on-month compared to typical cooling during winters.

While cereal prices rose 16.12% in January, against a 13.79% increase in December, due to shortages, there isn't a dearth of pulses, according to official data. Yet, pulses inflation was at 4.27%, against 3.89% in the preceding month.

The Centre's view is that pulses should not go beyond ₹125 a kg, the official said.

A broad rise in food prices has knocked household budgets. Food inflation hurts poorer households more as they tend to spend a higher proportion of their income on eatables, relative to higher-income families.

Inflation in meat and fish was at 6.04% in January, against 5.13% last month. Inflation in eggs was at 8.78%, as against 6.19% last month. Vegetable prices, however, saw a decline.



दिल्ली सरकार

आप की सरकार



Delhi Tourism



Arvind Kejriwal  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Delhi



Theme: Garden of Unity For



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{ **EARLY SUMMER?** }

# Season's 1st heatwave alert issued already, for Kutch, Konkan regions

**Jayashree Nandi**

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**NEW DELHI:** The official weather forecaster on Sunday issued the first heatwave alert for the year, predicting soaring maximum temperatures of 37-39°C in parts of the Kutch and the Konkan regions in more signs that the country could skip the spring season and plunge into summer heat.

Officials said this was the earliest a heatwave alert was issued for swathes of regions. Typically, such alerts are issued only in March.

Large parts of west and northwest India, as well as many Himalayan towns, have recorded temperatures 5-10°C higher than what is normal for this time of the year. The Capital had a maximum of 31.5°C, and the day temperature is likely to remain at these levels for another three to four days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

"An anti-cyclone is persisting over the Gujarat region and neighbourhood. Due to this, there is subsidence of air, just like we saw last spring. Whenever there is subsidence, the air

## Capital's mercury rockets past 30°C

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi's maximum temperature on Sunday breached the 30-degree mark for the first time this season, settling at 31.5 degrees Celsius (°C) — seven over normal for this time of the year, showed IMD data. The maximum temperature was marginally higher than the 29.6°C recorded on Saturday.

→P4

gets compressed and is considerably warmer," said M Mohapatra, director general of IMD.

"Maximum temperatures have been rising by 3-4 degrees over the western parts of the country. This condition is particularly intense over Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kutch, where in many places maximum temperatures are over eight degrees above normal," Mohapatra added.

For northwest India, the con-

continued on →12



# FSSAI considers symbol-based nutrition labels for food items

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**NEW DELHI:** India's food regulator may introduce Front of Pack Labelling on packaged items that will inform consumers about the nutritional value of the food, according to people familiar with the matter.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) may make it necessary for packaged food items to have a label in front of the pack that will be based on recognisable symbols on the basis of how much energy, saturated fat, total sugar, sodium, and essential nutrients the packet contains per 100 gm or 100 ml. "There are several reforms that are in the pipeline for the food regulatory ecosystem, and this is one of those ideas," a senior official said, requesting anonymity.

The food regulator began discussions last year on these lines and also proposed an Indian Nutrition Rating for packaged food items sold in the market based on their overall nutritional status. "FSSAI has Draft notified FSS (Labelling and Display) Amendment Regulations 2022 on 13th September 2022 wherein Indian Nutrition Rating has been proposed as a format for Front of Pack Labelling for making informed food choices. The same was open for comments till 18th November, 2022. The comments received are under consideration," the regulator said in a response to a query on the matter.

Nutritional labelling in front of the pack has already been implemented in various formats in some Western countries and has been found to be effective in helping consumers making an informed choice, the official said.

The National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), an Indian Council of Medical Research institute based in Hyderabad, recently released inferences from a study that the institute conducted on acceptability and potential use of different formats of nutrition labels in promoting informed food choices.

"The study suggests that warning labels can deter choice and

## Key guidelines for labelling



### Label on essential nutrients

A label signifying how much energy, saturated fat, total sugar, sodium, and essential nutrients a food item contains per 100 gm or 100 ml

## Possible benefits of the move

Study on acceptability and potential use of nutrition labels said "warning labels can deter choice and consumption of even moderately unhealthy foods". It observed that such labels on pre-packaged processed foods may have "good uptake among Indian population"

## What experts say

"In the context of growing overweight, obesity and non-communicable diseases, if the FOPNL has to serve as a preventive tool and deter the consumers from consumption of nutrients of concern, then warning indicator labels could be helpful."

— Dr Hemalatha R, director, NIN

consumption of even moderately unhealthy foods, while summary ratings like health star or NutriScore can help identify healthier variant," NIN said in a statement.

"Summary labels provide a brief and concise overview of the product's key features and benefits, often including information about positive as well as negative nutrients," it said. "Warning labels, on the other hand, provide information about potential hazards associated with the product as they take into consideration the nutrients of concern like sugars, fats and salt."

This was a cross-sectional study conducted among 3,231 participants (2,616 adults and 615 adolescents) who share responsibility of shopping for food in their homes from five regions of India - north (Delhi), east (Kolkata), west (Pune), south (Hyderabad) and northeast (Jorhat, Assam).

"In the present study, it was observed that even though the percentage of participants reading nutrition information is low, the participants checking the veg/non veg symbols and quality symbols was higher," said the researchers of the study. "Therefore, FOPNL (front of the pack nutrition label) on pre-packaged

processed foods are likely to have good uptake among India population as they are symbol-based."

Nutritional labels are seen as important tools of public health communication about the healthiness of food items. Different formats of these labels are in use in different countries globally, either voluntarily or by mandatory implementation.

"The decision to which type of FOPNL should be used in a country should be based on the local research, along with regional and global evidence, and in consideration of each country's specific objectives for developing a FOPNL policy," NIN said. Nutri-score and Health Star Rating are the formats currently in vogue in Europe and Australia, respectively.

"The choice of the FOPNL format for Indian scenario should not base only on wider acceptability and appeal but on its ability to influence food choice," said Dr Hemalatha R, director, NIN.

"In the context of growing overweight, obesity and non-communicable diseases, if the FOPNL has to serve as a preventive tool and deter the consumers from consumption of nutrients of concern, then warning indicator labels could be helpful," she said.





# Tackle fluctuating mercury with light irrigation, farmers advised

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KARNAL, FEBRUARY 19

Amid the fluctuation in temperature, which is a worry for farmers, scientists of the ICAR-Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research (IIWBR) here have issued an advisory for wheat farmers and told them to give light irrigation to the crop as per the requirement. In case a strong windy weather situation prevails, irrigation should be stopped to avoid lodging that might result in yield loss, said Dr Gyanendra Singh, Director, ICAR-IIWBR.

The scientists also advised keeping a constant watch on leaf aphid (chepa) in wheat, which occurs casually.

For the last few days, the temperature has been fluctuating, creating worries among the farmers. "We have issued an advisory for



SAYED AHMED

## SPRAY PROPICONAZOLE FOR YELLOW RUST

“ Farmers are advised to regularly monitor wheat crop for yellow rust disease. If yellow rust is confirmed, spray of 200 ml propiconazole 25 EC mixed with 200 liters of water for one acre is recommended.

Dr Gyanendra Singh, DIRECTOR, ICAR-IIWBR

the second fortnight of February amid the fluctuation of temperature. Farmers, who

have the facility of sprinkler irrigation, can irrigate their field, with a sprinkler for 30

minutes in the afternoon in case of rise in temperature,” the Director said.

He said farmers having drip irrigation facilities need to ensure proper moisture in the crop to avoid stress. “To avoid damage caused by terminal heat in case of a sudden rise in temperature, two sprays of potassium chloride 0.2 per cent at jointing and heading stage may reduce the losses,” said Dr Singh.

Farmers were advised to regularly monitor wheat crop for yellow rust disease. In case the yellow rust disease occurs, consult the agricultural expert at the nearest Krishi Vigyan Kendra, research institute or state agriculture department staff, the Director added.

If yellow rust is confirmed, spray of 200 ml propiconazole 25 EC mixed with 200 liters of water for one acre is recommended.



# Farmers worried about wheat yield as temperature increases

**RUCHIKA M KHANNA**

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 19**

Gurinder Singh, a farmer at Balial village of Sangrur, is a worried man. As the day temperatures continue to soar in February, he is worried that the yield of his standing wheat crop will fall. "We still need cooler climate for the wheat crop to grow and mature. Last year, the yield was very low because of an unusually warm March. Now, in February itself, the weather is quite warm and it is only expected to get warmer," he said.

He said the temperature during this week was expected to rise further, with the forecast saying that it might touch a high of 30°C. Gurinder's concern is also shared by both the state and central governments, as well as farm experts. The government is keeping a close watch on the changing weather and planning strategies to mitigate the loss of yield that could be caused by this change in weather system. This is the second year in a row that this phenomenon is being witnessed.

For the past nearly a week, the temperature in the state has been two to three degrees above the normal. Every one degree rise in temperature causes damage to the wheat

“We are hoping that high temperature is a temporary phase, and because of cooler nights, there won't be much impact on yield this year.

Gurvinder Singh, DIRECTOR, AGRICULTURE



crop and affects its yield, say farm experts. This year's wheat production in Punjab, which is the third highest wheat producer in the country, is very significant amid depleting wheat stocks in the Central pool, caused by the low wheat production and government procurement last year.

This year, the area under wheat crop is 34.90 lakh hectares. Based on the initial data, the government is expecting that the wheat production in the state would be around 167-170 lakh metric

tonnes (LMT). Of this, 120-130 LMT of wheat is expected to be brought to the mandis for government purchase.

Last year, however, the wheat production had fallen sharply to 148 LMT because of heavy rain in January and abnormally high temperatures in March. The procurement from the state was a record low at 95 LMT. As global shortage of wheat continues this year too (because of the Russia-Ukraine war), a good harvest is of prime concern to the state as well as the Central government.

"We have strategised on a set of practices to be adopted by farmers in case the temperatures rise abnormally. Farmers will be asked to go in for a spray of potassium nitrogen to mitigate any loss in yield because of a heat wave. Farmers have been asked to remain vigilant about yellow rust. We are hoping that high temperature is a temporary phase and because of cooler nights, there won't be much impact on yield," said Gurvinder Singh, Director, Agriculture.

Meanwhile, Punjab Agricultural University too is working on new irrigation practices in case the day temperatures continue to move skywards.



# Insufficient snow, stone fruit to take hit

**AMBIKA SHARMA**

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**SOLAN, FEBRUARY 19**

Apple and stone fruit growers are likely to suffer poor crop **due to elevated temperatures and deficient rain and snow** this winter. Less chill than the



**MAX TEMP IN SHIMLA  
23.2°C | SOLAN 29.5°C  
| BHUNTAR 29.7°C**

optimum leads to staggered, delayed and sparse flowering, resulting in poor fruit pro-

duce. Apple contributes about Rs 5,500 crore to Himachal's economy while stone fruits are grown over 28,000 hectares in the state.

Deficient rain, snow and elevated temperatures have been

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 9**



# Insufficient snow...

FROM PAGE 1

recorded in 2022-2023 in most parts of the state. "During this winter in the stone fruit belt of Solan, 168 chill unit (CU) hours were experienced against the average of 299.8 CU hours registered during the last 30 years (1991-2020)," observed Dr Satish Bhardwaj of Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni. A chill unit hour refers to the time a fruit tree is exposed to effective winter temperatures for breaking dormancy and flowering.

The situation is no different in the apple belts where the CU hours at the wet temperate

(Mashobra, Shimla) zone were 585.7 as against 1010.6 CU hours recorded on an average from 1985 to 2015. In the mid-hills comprising the sub-temperate (Kullu) zones, the CU hours registered this season were 358.9 as against 437.5 on an average from 1985 to 2015.

"The temperate fruits like apple, almond, peaches, plums, pears and cherries require chilling temperature for the growth of dormant buds during spring. The CU temperature during winter should be between 0-7°C for fruits to exhibit normal growth," explained Dr Bhardwaj.



# At 33.6°C, Capital sees third warmest Feb day in 54 yrs

**Sadia Akhtar and  
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**NEW DELHI:** The day's temperature in Delhi shot up to 33.6°C on Monday, the highest for the month since 2006 and a massive nine degrees higher than the 25°C it normally is.

According to data from the weather department, the peak temperature was the third highest for the month of February in the past 54 years for which data was available. Weather experts said the situation is unlikely to improve soon. In fact, Tuesday could be warmer still.

**IMD ON MONDAY  
WARNED THAT THE  
UNUSUALLY HIGH  
TEMPERATURES IN  
MUCH OF INDIA'S  
WEST, NORTHWEST  
COULD IMPACT  
THE WHEAT CROP**

"We are not expecting a significant variation in temperature in Delhi. We have seen western disturbances but their impact influenced the Western Himalayan region. We did not see an impact on the plains in Delhi and the

National Capital Region (NCR). With dry conditions prevailing in the region and clear skies, an increase in temperature is expected," said Naresh Kumar, scientist and spokesperson of the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

IMD on Monday officially issued a warning that the unusually high temperatures in much of the country's west and northwest may impact wheat crop.

"There could be similar impact on other standing crops and horticulture," IMD said on Monday in a special bulletin for farmers of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.



# Punjab, UP...

22nd spot, Uttar Pradesh at 25, Assam at 28, Rajasthan at 32, Tamil Nadu at 36, Maharashtra at 38, Gujarat at 44, Punjab at 48 and Kerala at 50.

China and USA are the other two countries which have the most vulnerable regions.

Two of China's largest sub-national economies, Jiangsu and Shandong, top the global ranking. Over half of the provinces in the global top 50 are in China. After China, the US has the most high-risk states with 18 states in the top 100. Florida is the highest-ranking US state, followed by California and Texas.

According to the report, 80 per cent of the top 50 most at-risk states and provinces in 2050 are in China, the US or India. "This is the first time there has been a physical climate risk analysis focused exclusively on the built environment, comparing every state, province and territory in the world," said XDI in its official statement.



{ **BUSINESS** } AMID INT'L FOOD CRISIS

# Key fertiliser maker slashes prices by 14%



**India's largest manufacturer of fertilisers, IFFCO** Ltd, has decided to cut prices of a widely used mix of crop nutrients by nearly 14%, according to a company executive, a move that will help lower farming costs and subsidies in a year of global food crisis which is driven in part by higher costs of agricultural chemicals. IFFCO, a cooperative, will lower the price of NPKS, also known as complex fertiliser, by ₹200 to ₹1,200. IFFCO was passing on the benefits of lower costs on the back of higher efficiency in output, savings due to newer technologies, such as nano fertilisers, and increase in domestic production capacity, added the official. The country's food security is closely linked to sufficient availability of a range of fertilisers. Crop nutrients are subsidised to millions of farmers, which reimburses manufacturers over 80% of the market price for most types in one of the world's largest consumers and importers. →P19



# 'Among G20 countries, India leading efforts to mitigate climate crisis'

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**NEW DELHI:** India is leading in climate performance or efforts to mitigate climate crisis among G20 nations, the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) said in a report released on Monday.

India should use its G20 presidency to get G20 countries to acknowledge that a fair allocation of the global carbon budget is a must to take climate action forward, the report recommended.

The analysis uses a Climate Performance Index to evaluate the performance of G20 nations in climate change mitigation. It factors in the unique position of each G20 country including their historical emissions, per capita CO2 emissions, demographic factors such as population, and status of economic and human development.

India is followed by Italy and Indonesia in climate performance; the United Kingdom, Turkey, Germany, France and the European Union are runners-up; among laggards are the US, Canada, Russia and Saudi Arabia, the report concluded.

"India, an emerging economy, ranks first among all G20 members in terms of overall climate performance, owing to its significantly low per capita contributions to carbon and GHG emissions; very limited share in legacy

emissions relative to its population needs; least rate of per capita energy use; and significant efforts towards, not only preserving, but also expanding its climate-regulating land cover by 6% compared its 1992 levels," the report said, adding that India has also done well in climate policy initiatives and limiting the unbridled expansion of climate-altering land cover.

On average, the emerging economies within the G20 perform slightly better than the advanced economies.

Among the advanced economies, the overall climate performance of the European countries including Italy, France, United Kingdom, Germany and the members of the EU is considerably better than that of the North American countries.

Canada and the US score significantly low across most indicators of climate performance.

"India's climate targets are ambitious for a country with growing energy and developmental needs, and are in line with its fair share based on its historical contribution to the climate crisis. Achieving those targets will require a tailored sectoral view and addressing of barriers to scaling up green technologies," said Avantika Goswami, climate change lead at Centre for Science and Environment.



# Spring spike sets off alarm

Unusually high temperatures are reminiscent of last year's heat wave, and will test climate policies

**T**he vanishing spring appears to be moving from a vagary to a more enduring facet of the Indian season. Last year, an unprecedented heat wave in March wilted the wheat crop, forcing the government to make a public U-turn and ban wheat exports after belatedly realising that production was tipped to fall short of estimates. This year, temperatures have begun rising even earlier, and more sharply. As a report in this newspaper noted late last week, in states along the western coast, days recorded temperatures that were 5-10 degrees Celsius warmer than normal, and meteorologists said the trend was as bad, if not worse, than the conditions in 2022. In seven states, including Punjab, the third largest producer of wheat, the average maximum temperature on at least one day reached levels usually seen in the middle of March. In another 10 states, including Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, the largest producers of wheat, the maximum was around two weeks ahead of schedule.

The heat wave last year killed around 90 people across south Asia, stoked forest fires in Uttarakhand, scorched reservoirs and shrivelled the wheat crop — all signs of how the climate crisis was increasingly becoming the most important determinant of food security and agriculture policy. The lower-than-expected wheat production last year also emerged as a key pressure point for inflation and the government's procurement efforts that were critical to funnel food subsidies. This year, the pressure of the latter is less due to a rationalisation of the food subsidy (the guaranteed grain endowment under the PM Garib Kalyan Yojana has been phased out), but the other dangers remain clear and present.

With another week left in February and March set to be even hotter, the task is cut out for the authorities. This year will be a test of whether India has put in place systems to deal with climate shocks, including a more sensitive and advanced crop information system that will give the government updated information about yield and harvest — information that could have helped the authorities avoid a sudden clampdown on exports that hurt farm incomes this year. It will also be interesting to see what kind of policy support, including hiking minimum support prices to provide a higher cushion, the government considers if adverse weather hurts the wheat output — given that the general elections are only about a year away. The government will need to be nimble to shield stocks, farm incomes, and food security from rapidly changing weather patterns, while readying the population to adjust to a changing climate.



# 9 Indian states among top vulnerable places

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**NEW DELHI:** The vast majority (80%) of 50 provinces facing the highest climate risk to their physical infrastructure by 2050 are in China, the US, and India, according to a ranking released on Monday by Cross Dependency Initiative, which specialises in climate risk analytics for companies, banks and regions.

In India, Punjab, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Kerala and Assam are the most vulnerable, the ranking indicates underlining that India's commercial capital, Mumbai is at high risk. India has nine states in the 50 high risk states; China, 26, and the US, five.

The Gross Domestic Climate Risk ranking reflects physical risk to the built infrastructure from eight climate change hazards: riverine and surface flooding, coastal inundation (coastal flooding), extreme heat, forest fire, soil movement (drought-related), extreme wind and freeze thaw.

In China, whose states dominate the ranking, the most affected provinces are concentrated in the east and south, along the floodplains and deltas of the Yangtze and Pearl Rivers. In the US, the economically important states of California, Texas and Florida are most affected. Other countries with multiple provinces

**IN INDIA, PUNJAB, BIHAR, U.P., MAHARASHTRA, RAJASTHAN, TAMIL NADU, GUJARAT, KERALA, ASSAM ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE**

and states in the top 50 include Brazil, Pakistan and Indonesia.

The data can be significant for investors, as extensive built-up areas overlap with high levels of economic activity and property wealth. It can inform climate resilient investment, in conjunction with adaptation measures and infrastructure planning undertaken by state and provincial governments, a statement by XDI (Cross Dependency Initiative) said on Monday.

The top two most at-risk provinces in the world in 2050 are two of the largest economic hubs in China, Jiangsu and Shandong. Each has an economy worth over a trillion US dollars, according to the report.

"The findings from the XDI Gross Domestic Climate Risk ranking underscore the importance of pricing physical climate risk in financial markets, including bond markets...", said XDI CEO Rohan Hamden in a statement on Monday.



# Dry weather, rising mercury may hit wheat yield: Experts

DEEPENDER DESWAL

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

HISAR, FEBRUARY 20

Extreme dry weather and high temperature hovering about 5 to 6 °C above normal in February are likely to have an adverse impact on the wheat production in Haryana this season, experts and farmers opined. Sources said similar conditions had prevailed last year, which resulted in over 10 per cent less yield than the target in the state.

Agriculture scientists say wheat and late-sown mustard crops, which are at the seed development stage, may suffer from reduced seed/grain size due to the high temperature. "Increased temperature is harmful to rabi crops, particularly wheat, which is at the stage of flag leaf to earhead emergence of plants," says an expert.

The IMD weather update said Hisar had recorded a maximum of 30.2°C, which was 5°C above average yesterday. The minimum temperature, too, was 13.2°C, which was also 3°C above normal. Significantly, there had been no rainfall in February in almost the entire state.

The Haryana Agriculture Department has set a target of a bumper production of 12.49 million tonnes wheat this rabi season. The officials say that the state has 25.5 lakh hectare wheat area this season, which



A farmer works in a field in Hisar village. TRIBUNE PHOTO

## CROP WON'T BEAR HIGH TEMPERATURE

“I have a good wheat crop as of now, but the present high day temperature is continuing for about one week. Wheat plants will not be able to withstand similar conditions for long. I completely lost my mustard crop due to frost and extreme cold in December and January.”

Ramphal Taak, FARMER

## VEGETABLES, FRUIT CROPS ALSO IMPACTED

- Dr ML Khichar, head of the Agriculture Meteorological Department, Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agriculture University, Hisar, said the increased temperature was harmful to rabi crops, particularly wheat and late-sown mustard. The increased temperature might cause reduced seed size.
- Vegetables and fruit crops were also impacted by high temperature and increased water demand.

is approximately 2.5 lakh hectares more than 2021-22 (23 lakh hectares).

“High temperature can lead to shrivelled grain, which reduces the weight of the grain resulting in low yield per acre. Haryana had also fallen short of its target due to the extreme high temperature at the fag end of the rabi season last year,” said an offi-

cial. The experts also warn of yellow rust in wheat in certain areas in Haryana.

Dr ML Khichar, head of the Agriculture Meteorological Department, Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agriculture University, Hisar, said the temperature during the last week had gone up. “The increased temperature is harmful to rabi crops, particu-

larly wheat and late-sown mustard, which is at seed development stage and the increased temperature may cause reduced seed size. The crop could attract aphid attack. Vegetables and fruit crops are also impacted by high temperature and increased water demand,” Dr Khichar said. However, he said the late-night, early-morning fog and heavy dew during the last two days were signs of some relief. He suggested light irrigation for wheat.

A farmer, Ramphal Taak, said he had a good wheat crop as of now. “But the present high day temperature is continuing for about one week. Wheat plants will not be able to withstand similar conditions for long,” said Taak. He said he had to irrigate the fields about one to two weeks in advance due to dry weather and high temperature. Taak said that he completely lost his mustard crop due to frost and extreme cold in December and January. Haryana has recorded a wheat yield of 10.44 million tonnes in 2021-22 against a target of 12.36 million tonnes, which was the lowest production since 2014-15 when the figure was 10.35 MT. According to officials, Haryana had recorded 12.39 MT in 2020-21, 11.88 MT in 2019-20, 12.57 MT in 2018-19 and 10.47 MT in 2017-18.



# Temperature surge

Pre-emptive steps needed to soften economic blow

**T**HE surge in temperatures, with several parts of India skipping the spring season conditions to enter summer-like weather, follows last year's unusual pattern, but with a stark difference. In 2022, record temperatures and the onset of an early summer in March had taken farmers by surprise as winter crops started to shrivel. The fall in wheat output came amid the global disruptions because of dwindling supplies from the war-torn Russia-Ukraine region. This year, the economic impact of warm, dry conditions in February itself can be worse. There is also a heightened risk of forest fires, rapid glacier melt and quicker drying of water bodies. A dry winter season followed by abnormal heat is an early warning for the country to brace itself for extreme weather.

A few crop-protection advisories have been issued, but would hardly be enough to soothe frayed nerves. The farmer again finds himself being left to fend for himself. Government intervention is the need of the hour, be it in the form of advising citizens and shoring up resources while presenting realistic forecasts of what lies ahead, or simply leading a conversation on trying to make sense of nature's freakish ways. The lack of a science-based, expert-driven policy of announcing pre-emptive and real-time measures is evident.

The planet-warming threshold of 1.5°C is feared to be breached this year. There could be a cascading impact on weather patterns, including the monsoon. According to a new report, 'Gross Domestic Climate Risk', China, the US and India are home to 80 per cent of the 50 at-risk states most vulnerable to climate change by 2050, and Punjab is among nine such Indian states. Projections were analysed of damage to the built environment from extreme weather and climate change, including flooding, forest fires and sea level rise. Apart from the potential economic fallout, the researchers have laid stress on governments ramping up efforts to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to extreme weather events. There's a lesson for India here.



# Price falls, farmers destroy cauliflower

**AAKANKSHA N BHARDWAJ**

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**JALANDHAR, FEBRUARY 20**

"Gobhi ne jimidaar rolte" (Cauliflower has shattered farmers), said Sukhjinder Singh, a farmer from Swal village near Sultanpur Lodhi. Upset over the low price of cauliflower, farmers have started ploughing their standing crops.

Singh also destroyed his produce on 1.5 acres.

He said he had spent Rs 30,000 on one acre and was hardly getting Rs 3 per kg of his cauliflower crop. "Apne hath naal laayi, hun aap hi vaati, mann nai manda par ki kariye (I grew it and I am destroying it, it's very tough but what to do)," an emotional Sukhjinder said.

Gajjan Singh from the same village also destroyed the crop on an acre. "We bought hybrid seed, then a lot of money went into fertiliser and manure apart from transportation cost. 'Kuch nai



bacheya," he said.

Cabbage growers also shared the same problem. The growers said they were hardly getting Rs 2 for one kg cabbage.

Same is the situation with other vegetables like potato,

and tomato. Farmers fear that they may have to dump potatoes on roads if they keep on getting Rs 4-Rs 6 per kg.

Farmer Lakhvir Bassi from Kala Sanghian has cultivated potato on 35 acres of which 25 acres are

on contract. "Looking at the prices, it seems I will not be able to pay money to land owner. "I think I will have to take more loan now. I wish the prices improve in the coming days," he wished.

Surinder Pal Singh, Sec-

retary, Mandi Committee, Jalandhar, said the prices had nosedived since last month. "The prices of tomato have reduced to half. The crate of 20-22 kg is being sold around Rs 300-400," he said.

## RAW DEAL

	Retail price	Farmers getting
Cauliflower	₹20 per kg	₹2-3
Potato	₹20 per kg	₹4-6

## GETTING ₹3 PER KG

I had spent ₹30,000 on one acre and was hardly getting ₹3 per kg. "Apne hath naal laayi, hun aap hi vaati, mann nai manda par ki kariye (I grew it and I am destroying it, it's very tough but what to do)," Sukhjinder, a farmer

« Gajan Singh from Swal village destroyed his crop on an acre in Jalandhar. A TRIBUNE PHOTO



# **Wheat maturing early, growers fear losses**

**MANAV MANDER**

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**LUDHIANA, FEBRUARY 20**

With temperatures rising in February, farmers are having a tough time as wheat is maturing early due to heat and they are foreseeing heavy economical losses due to high temperatures in the region.

“Financial losses are what we are fearing this season. There can be loss of 30-40 per cent if the climatic conditions continue to be the same in the coming days. We can only pray to God as nothing is in our hands now,” said farmer Swarnjeet Singh from Ghulal village in Samrala.



# CM: Centre, state must join hands to manage stubble

MOHALI, FEBRUARY 20

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday flagged the case of immediate release of the pending share of taxes and rural development fund (RDF) before the Union Environment Minister for making Punjab a frontrunner state in the country.

The CM, while addressing a workshop for the effective paddy straw management here today, underscored the need for financial sustainability of the states to contribute to the socio-economic growth of the country.

He sought the intervention of the Union Environment Minister to raise the issue at the appropriate forum.

Describing paddy straw as an asset, he underlined the need for developing a sustainable mechanism for its management in order to end the crop-residue burning menace.

Farmers don't want to burn the stubble as at first, their families have to bear the brunt of the menace."

He said, "The Union and state governments have to join hands to combat the menace by ensuring procurement of stubble." — TNS



# Centre forms panel to save wheat from heat

Zia Haq

zia.haq@htlive.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre has mounted an unprecedented interministerial effort to protect the country's wheat crop, a winter staple, which faces imminent risks from anticipated heatwaves due to an early summer, and has set up a panel to deal with the problem.

Last year, a similar disastrous hot spell in March, when temperatures leapt to record highs, crippled wheat yields as output shrank 2.5% in the world's second-largest producer, stoking a crisis-like situation. The country, which banned exports of the grain last May, has officially forecast wheat harvests of 112 million tonnes this year, the highest ever.

Scores of state-employed farm scientists from institutions such as the flagship Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research, and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (crop advisory centres) have been deployed to fields in five states to apprise growers of crop protection measures in case of a heat-

continued on →17



## Protecting the yield

The govt has stepped up efforts to protect India's wheat crop amid imminent risks from anticipated heatwaves

### THE MEASURES

- 1 Scientists have been deployed to five states to apprise farmers of crop protection measures
- 2 Officials are coordinating with states to ensure sufficient water at sources for protective irrigation
- 3 Officials are checking supply lines for cheap diesel and ensuring steady electricity supply for running pumps
- 4 Experts from animal husbandry dept are advising farmers on protecting cattle from heat strokes

### HEAT THREAT

Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and MP, the main food bowl states, are at risk of heatwaves

## Govt may sell more to lower prices

**NEW DELHI:** The Union government is considering selling an additional two million tonnes of wheat in the open market through auctions to drive down prices, the food ministry said in a statement on Tuesday. The ministry is already in the process of auctioning, in phases, the three million tonnes that it said last

month it would offload.

Despite these measures, along with an export ban imposed in May last year, wheat inflation has remained elevated after a heatwave cut output by 2.5% in 2022. Cereal prices grew 16.1% in January 2023 year-on-year against 13.8% in December 2022.

Higher wheat prices, espe-

cially when they are above federally fixed minimum support prices (MSPs), not just knock household budgets and hurt the poor, but may also hamper the government's own purchases, because farmers will prefer selling in private markets than to state-run silos, which offer only floor rates.

→P18



# Govt likely to sell 2 MT additional wheat in open market to cool prices

**Zia Haq**

zia.haq@htlive.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Union government is considering selling an additional 2 million tonnes of wheat in the open market through auctions to drive down prices, the food ministry said in a statement on Tuesday. The ministry is already in the process of auctioning, in phases, the 3 million tonnes that it said last month it would offload.

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Higher wheat prices, especially when they are above federally fixed minimum support prices (MSPs), not just knock household budgets and hurt the poor, but may also hamper the government's own purchases because farmers will prefer selling in private markets than to state-run silos, which offer only floor rates.

Domestic wheat prices rose to a record ₹32,500 per tonne in January, way above the government-set minimum support price of ₹21,250. High wheat prices have cascaded on to every-



**Domestic wheat prices rose to a record ₹32,500 per tonne in January, way above the minimum support price of ₹21,250.**

HT

day essentials, such as atta (flour) and bread products.

The food ministry said it reviewed offtake, or purchases by traders, with millers via a video conference on Tuesday.

Of the initial allocation, 2.5 million tonnes is being offered through the e-auction route to traders and flour mills. Bidders can participate in e-auction for a maximum quantity of 3000 tonne per region per auction.

Some 200,000 tonnes is to be offered to state governments for their food schemes at 10,000 tonnes per state without e-auc-

tion, according to the terms fixed by the government.

The government has reduced the reserve price to help in reducing the market price of wheat and wheat products for consumers, the statement said.

Though the country has officially forecast a record 112 million tonnes of wheat output this year, growers are worried about a repeat of last year's disastrous early summer that shriveled crops, with temperatures rising steadily over northwestern plains, prompting top agricultural bodies to caution farmers.



# Fog brings cheer to farmers

**BATHINDA, FEBRUARY 21**

The sudden fog this morning brings smiles on the faces of farmers in the region, which were worried over a sudden high temperature and prolonged dry spell in the region for the last few days.

An agriculture expert said the foggy weather was beneficial for wheat. The day temperature was high, which was not conducive for the crop growth.

Farmer union leader Shingara Singh Mann said, "Wheat is a temperature-



Commuters drive amid fog in Bathinda on Tuesday.

---

sensitive crop and high temperature in the past few days will affect the quality of the crop, but fog is good for all crops."

He explained that a warm temperature was required during harvesting only.



## Wheat auctioning fails to curb prices

Zia Haq

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Union government's decision to sell 5 million tonnes of wheat in the open market through staggered auctions to cool prices has not brought down retail rates of the staple beyond a quarter point, according to the latest data.

Several traders HT spoke to cited the government's lowering of the reserve price for some of these auctions as one of the reasons, implying that merchants who bought by bidding when the base rate on offer was higher are at a disadvantage compared to those who waited later and got



**Last year, export of wheat was halted to plug shortages.**

stocks cheap. Reserve price is the lowest price at which a seller is willing to sell.

Many traders are sitting on their supplies because they don't want to sell onwards at a loss, keeping markets from being replenished adequately, one merchant said. Authorities, however,

said wheat reserve prices were "dynamic, scientific and depended on demand".

Stocks of the grain in the world's second-largest grower dwindled when a heatwave crimped output by 2.5% to about 106 million tonnes in 2022, even as it kept exporting. In May last year, the government halted overseas sales to plug shortages.

To control rising prices, the Centre last month decided that the Food Corporation of India, the government's main grain-handling agency, will sell 3 million tonnes in the market through various channels through e-auctions. On February 21, the government said it would auction 2 million tonnes

more. From the first auction on February 1 through to upcoming rounds of bidding, FCI has been tweaking the reserve price. That's because the agency is responding to "demand and inflation dynamics", an FCI official said.

"We invested so much to buy the wheat only to find that the government cut the reserve price within 15 days. How I do recover my losses," said CP Gupta, a trader from Rajasthan's Kota. The latest reserve price, which does not include transportation cost, will "help supply of wheat to general public in different part of the country at a reasonable price," the food ministry said on Tuesday.



# Need to increase area under coarse cereals: Experts

KARNAL, FEBRUARY 22

Renowned agricultural scientist Dr Rajendra Singh Paroda, chairman of Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), and former Director General of the ICAR, emphasised on increasing the area under coarse cereals plantation across the country as the Centre has declared the current year as "International Year of Millets".

"Coarse cereals are healthy for human consumption and a supplement for several micro-elements such as iron, zinc and calcium. They are also rich in fibre content and should be included in our diet," said Dr Paroda, who has also served as the chairman of the Haryana Kisan Ayog. He was chairing a function organised to mark the foundation day of the ICAR-Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research (IIWBR), here.

"With the help of farmer producer organisations, the area under coarse cereals will be increased, which will be beneficial for human, animal and soil health," he said.

Appreciating the work done by the ICAR-IIWBR, he said within such a short time and with limited resources, the institute had done a good job. He told farmers about the importance of millets and encouraged them to grow these and include in their diet.

Dr Gyanendra Singh, Director, ICAR-IIWBR, outlined the success story of record wheat production by varieties developed by the institute. — TNS



# Proposed road on agriculture land draws interest of realtors

**DEEPENDER DESWAL**

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**HISAR, FEBRUARY 22**

The proposal to construct a new road connecting Hisar (NH 9) to the Talwandi Rana-Barwala highway (NH 52) has elicited the interest of the real estate agents in the agriculture land located along the both sides of the stretch of nearly 7.61 km. However, realising the importance of the land, farmers are not keen to sell their land.

Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala informed the Vidhan Sabha yesterday that the state government had purchased around 110 acres from farmers at a total cost of Rs 157 crore for the construction of new road. The land belongs to the farmers of Hisar, Dhansu, Mirzapur and Talwandi Rana villages.

The issue had snowballed into a controversy after the closure of the old Hisar-Talwandi Rana road (about 8 km), which had connected Hisar to Barwala-Chandigarh highway (NH 52). The government acquired a portion of this road for expansion of the Hisar Aviation Hub (airport) months ago. Later, the government gave alternative and temporary passage to the commuters through the airport to connect Hisar to Talwandi Rana village.

On the intervening night of

## Closure of old Hisar-Talwandi Rana road stirs up a controversy



The road that was closed for commuters on February 9. ASHOK KUNDU

### LONG ROUTE FOR COMMUTERS

- The government acquired a portion of the old Hisar-Talwandi Rana road for expansion of the Hisar Aviation Hub (airport) months ago and gave temporary passage to the commuters through the airport to connect Hisar to Talwandi Rana village
- On the intervening night of February 9-10, the district administration also closed the alternative road for the construction of retaining wall to secure the premises of the airport
- As a result, the distance between Hisar and Talwandi Rana village increased by about 10 km. The distance between Hisar to some other villages even grew by about 22 km

February 9-10, the district administration also closed the alternative road for the construction of retaining wall to secure the premises of the airport. As a result, the commuters were left with only option to take Hisar bypass road (Rajgarh-Hisar-Barwala), which is located on the outskirts of Hisar and hence increased the distance between Hisar and Talwandi Rana village by about 10 km.

The distance between Hisar to some other villages even grew by about 22 km.

Sensing commercial viability of the land along the newly proposed stretch, the real estate agents have started approaching the farmers with the offers to purchase land. Dozens of real estate agents have opened their offices near the Mirzapur chowk who claim to broker deals for sale/purchase of agricultural land.



# Checking wheat price

Thanks to MSP, stock is enough to tide over crisis

**T**HANKS to the Minimum Support Price (MSP) offered for wheat in the major states contributing to the Central pool, including Punjab, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh, the Union Government is in a position for the second time in two years to keep a check on the spiralling cost of the staple grain in the country. It is only because MSP is guaranteed for wheat that it is a lucrative crop and we have large swathes of wheat-sown fields, ensuring full and even overflowing granaries of the government, as per the weather-dependent yield. In view of this, it would not be wrong to say that paying MSP to the cultivators is as much an investment in basic food security as it is an assured price return for the toiling farmers. This ability to tide over a crisis-like situation lends weight to the 2020-21 protest by farmers, who demanded assured MSP for food crops and repeal of the 'black' farm laws, which the government was ultimately forced to withdraw.

Thus, with enough buffer stock in hand, the Centre has been able to offload 50 lakh tonnes of wheat in the market through the Open Market Sale Scheme within one month — 30 lakh tonnes, as decided on January 25, and 20 lakh tonnes on February 21 — to help cool off the soaring retail prices of wheat and its flour and bring relief to the common consumer. The scheme ensures a wide outreach as the sale of wheat is proportionately distributed among both public and private channels such as the FCI, state governments (for PDS) and flour mills, traders and bulk buyers and manufacturers of wheat products.

Amid the Ukraine-Russia conflict, it was because of the millions of tonnes of wheat acquired at MSP that India was among the few nations to avoid a food crisis last year. Unlike many countries that stared at price escalation by the disruptions in the global food supply chain and the fact that Russia and Ukraine are Europe's bread basket, India sailed through smoothly. Last May, it had banned wheat exports to rein in its price and ensure *roti* on every table. The development of climate-smart wheat varieties that can beat the heat is another step in the right direction.





# Chhattisgarh Model Bringing NYAY to Last Mile

**Record  
procurement of  
107.53 lakh MT  
paddy**



**₹150,000 crore  
benefit to farmers**

**Institutional purchase of  
cow dung and Gaumutra  
under Godhan Nayay Yojana  
transforming  
rural economy**



**Highest  
minor forest produce  
procurement  
in the country**

**Free healthcare services to  
1.22 crore people through  
mobile hospitals in remote  
villages and slums**

**Leading state in  
recognizing forest rights  
ensuring livelihood of  
forest dwellers and  
better forest management**

**Swami Atmananad Govt  
Schools, new centres of  
excellence providing equal  
opportunities in education to  
more than 2.5 lakh children**

**Upto 70% discount  
on medicines provide relief of  
₹85 crore**

**42 lakh domestic  
consumers save ₹3,250 crore  
on electricity tariff**



**Shri Bhupesh Baghel**  
Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh



# ₹ HARYANA BUDGET

**FILLIP TO GREEN MANURING:** To give fillip to green manuring or dhaincha cultivation, which increases soil organic matter and improves soil health, a scheme for facilitating farmers to adopt green manuring through dhaincha cultivation will be introduced

04

## MAJOR INITIATIVES

- Deen Dayal Upadhyay Antyodaya Parivar Suraksha Yojana to provide assistance in case of death or disability of a member of a family having annual income up to ₹1.80 lakh
- Creation of Department of State Audit for externalising due process in govt and local body expenditures, safeguarding govt assets and checking the misuse of resources
- Nutri-Cereal Research Station being established by Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University at Gokulpur (Bhiwani) will be functional in 2023
- A project worth ₹27 cr being prepared to promote cultivation of millets through cluster demonstration, distribution of hybrid seeds, certified seed production, integrated pest management
- Target set for adoption of natural farming over 20K acres
- Three training centres to be opened in Hisar, Jind and Sirsa
- Target set to cultivate paddy in at least two lakh acres through direct seeding
- Target set to cultivate summer moong on one lakh acres
- Honey quality laboratory to be set up and honey trade policy to be prepared to facilitate beekeepers market honey through auctions
- Haryana Pashudhan Uththan Mission will execute a scheme for entrepreneurship development in the animal husbandary sector
- 70 mobile veterinary units to be set up under PPP mode to provide veterinary services at doorstep
- Four veterinary polyclinics to be opened in Palwal, Fatehabad,

### Mahendragarh and Ambala

- Two state-of-the-art government veterinary pet clinics, to be established in Gurgaon and Faridabad, to provide advanced diagnostics and treatment services
- Incubation centres to be set up to promote entrepreneurship and encourage start-ups
- Venture capital fund, in association with banks and financial institutes, to be established to provide financial support through loans and equity
- Youth policy to be prepared to include calendar of youth activities, strengthening youth clubs, programmes related to ethics and personality development, language and communication
- Mukhyamantri Kaushal Mitra Fellowship scheme to be formulated to engage youth and empower them
- Recruitment to be made on 65,000 regular posts, including Groups C and D posts through CET
- Separate engineering wing in each Zila Parishad to take up additional responsibility for maintenance of rural infrastructure
- 2,250 posts of Gram Sachiv have been created
- Three metro links from Bahadurgarh to Assaudia in Jhajjar, South-east Peripheral road to Panipat via Global City and Manesar, Rezagga Chowk to the IGI Airport
- Haryana Sports Academy, along with sports hostel with a capacity of 200 beds, to be set up in Ambala and Panchkula
- Elevated railway line to be laid in Bahadurgarh and Kaithal

## ₹1,000/TONNE FOR PARALI PURCHASE

48% reduction in parali burning in active fire location (AFL) events has been witnessed this year. The government will now notify a government determined rate of ₹1,000/tonne as an incentive to purchase parali from farmers and ₹1,500/tonne for meeting all expenses related to parali management for paddy straw procured in the prescribed service areas by designated agencies.

## 20K ACRES FOR NATURAL FARMING

As per the Budget proposal, a total of 2,238 farmers have been identified in 2022-23 and provided support for the adoption of natural farming over 5,906 acres against the target of 2,500 acres set in previous year.



## 50K ACRES TO BE RECLAIMED

A target of 25,000 acres was fixed for 2022-23 for the reclamation of lands affected by soil salinity and waterlogging. An area of 20,703 acres has been reclaimed through sub-surface and vertical drainage technology with an expenditure of ₹29 cr. For 2023-24, a target for the reclamation of 50,000 acres of such lands has been fixed to make it available for agriculture.

# ₹7,341 cr proposed for agri, allied sectors

Emphasis on cultivation, consumption of millets, natural farming, micro-irrigation techniques



The government has proposed 3 centres of excellence to promote horticulture. Among these, one will be set up in Panchkula for post-harvest mgmt, second in Nuh district for onion farming and the third in Jhajjar for flowers

### RAVINDER SAINI TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 23

Laying special emphasis on promoting cultivation and consumption of millets, natural farming, optimum use of water through micro-irrigation techniques and resolving the issue of salinity and waterlogging, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar today proposed to allocate Rs 7341.91 crore to agriculture and allied sectors in the Budget, which is over 27 per cent higher than the revised estimates of Rs 5758.02 crore of the current year.

The allied sectors include Department of Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Horticulture and Forest. The government has proposed to establish three centres of excellence to promote horticulture in the state. Among these, one would be set up in Panchkula for post-harvest management, second in Panipat of Nuh district for onion farming and the third Munimpur (Jhajjar) for flowers.

Besides, a honey quality laboratory will be set up and a



ISTOCK

## ₹400 CRORE FOR STRAY CATTLE CARE, SHELTERS

The provision for the Haryana Gau Sewa Aayog is proposed to be increased to ₹400 crore in 2023-24 from the present allocation of ₹40 crore. Gram Panchayat land will be made available with the concurrence of gram panchayats for new gaushalas registered with the Haryana Gau Sewa Aayog. The gaushalas will be linked to the Gobar Dhan scheme, under which biogas plants are proposed to be constructed in every district to ensure the care and protection of stray cows, besides eliminating the occurrence of accidents being caused by stray cattle on roads. The state has 632 gaushalas with housing of around 4.6 lakh stray cattle.

honey trade policy will also be prepared to facilitate beekeepers in the state to market honey through auctions for better price realisation and improving quality.

To give fillip to green manuring or dhaincha cultivation, which increases soil organic matter and improves soil health, a scheme for faci-

ilitating farmers to adopt green manuring through dhaincha cultivation will be introduced under which the government will bear 80 per cent of the cost of Rs 720 per acre and the farmer has to contribute only 20 per cent of the cost. "Agriculture and allied activities contribute 18.5 per cent to the state's economy. Haryana is

the only state to provide assurance on the MSP for 14 crops. Over 9 lakh farmers register regularly on Meri Fasal Mera Byora (MFMB). Haryana was conferred with the Best State Agribusiness Award-2022 by the Indian Agriculture and Food Council.

In the last two years, over Rs 45,000 crore has directly been

transferred into the accounts of the farmers on the procurement of their crops, besides Rs 428 crore for the implementation of different schemes in agriculture," said the CM during his Budget address. He said the government was actively promoting cultivation and consumption of millets in the state.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

I Vijendra Yadav S/o Shri Krishna Kumar Yadav Ward no. 12 siwani. I am a resident of Tehsil Siwani, District Bhiwani. My permanent address No. 938 Ward no. 16 is Ranika Colony, Jamalpur Tehsil Bawani khara, District Bhiwani. Register my plot whose registry stamp no. 5493 Khewat no. 12871 Khatauni



# Food regulator sets norms for 15 types of millets

**NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23**

With an eye on quality production and availability of millets in domestic and global markets, the Indian food regulator on Thursday set group standards for 15 types of millets.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has specified the comprehensive group standard in the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Second Amendment Regulations, 2023, notified in the Gazette of India today. These will be enforced from September 1.

The standardisation is part of government's efforts to boost the use of millets in the ongoing International Year of Millets. — TNS



# 21 Solan water sources may go dry by April 15

**AMBIKA SHARMA**

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**SOLAN, FEBRUARY 24**

The Jal Shakti Department (JSD) is bracing for long summer months with the state already witnessing higher than normal temperatures for the past few days. It has identified 21 potable water schemes in Solan division which could go dry by April 15.

The hill state remained 26

**Scanty rain to blame | Dept braces for summer months**

**26% LESS PRECIPITATION**

■ Hill state witnessed 26% less than normal precipitation this winter

■ Against 149.4 mm, it received 110.4 mm of rainfall



in past couple of months

■ Of 21 sources facing threat, 13 are in Dharampur block, 6 in Solan & 2 in Kandaghat

per cent rain deficient this winter season. As against the normal rainfall of 149.4 mm,

merely 110.4 mm was recorded. Though some rain could be received in the coming

weeks, scant rainfall has become a cause of concern.

Sumit Sood, Executive Engineer, JSD, Solan, said 21 potable water schemes could go dry, at least partially, by April 15, if no rain was received in the coming weeks. Of these, 13 schemes are in Dharampur block, six in Solan and two in Kandaghat. "To deal with the water scarcity, 22 new hand

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



# 21 Solan water sources may...

pumps will be installed in areas identified as critical by the field staff, while 57 existing ones where the water level is found appropriate will be re-energised," said Sood. At least 11 places have been identified where tankers would have to be pressed into service to meet the water requirement. Besides, the JSD is procuring new motors for Giri water scheme which caters to Solan city, he said.

The work to augment water supply to 179 villages in Kasauli segment through the Giri river will be completed by July. This triple stage scheme will benefit a population of 45,458 and it will supply 7.5 million litres of water per day. Residents hope the scheme will help tide over the impending water crisis in summer months.





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# Agri, health get most in ₹2.3L-cr Odisha budget

**Debabrata Mohanty**

letters@hindustantimes.com

**BHUBANESWAR:** The Naveen Patnaik-led Odisha government presented a ₹2.3 lakh crore budget outlay on Friday with health and agriculture sectors receiving a big boost.

The Biju Janata Dal government has also provisioned ₹2,000 crore for a revolving fund, to be utilised for paddy procurement operations that have become a rallying point for aggrieved farmers in the politically important western Odisha districts.

Presenting the annual budget, state finance minister Niranjan Pujari said that this year's budget is based on CM Patnaik's vision of building a new and empowered Odisha. "The state has not only been able to raise the aspirations of our people but has also been able to meet them by taking the State on an unprecedented growth trajectory. From a state often counted among the most underdeveloped ones, Odisha is now surging ahead to lead the country in many sectors. Transformation is our singular aim."

According to Pujari, the budget Estimates for 2023-24 envisage an



**Naveen Patnaik**

expenditure of ₹2.3 lakh crore. The capital outlay in 2023-24 is ₹51,683 crore, which is about 6% of GSDP. Of the ₹2.3 lakh crore outlay, agriculture sector received ₹24,829 crore — an increase of 20% as compared to the last year, while the health sector got a hike of about 27% with ₹16,048 crore allocation.

Other key allocations include ₹1,879 crore for Kalia scheme — a cash transfer scheme for farmers; ₹13,215 crore for piped drinking water; ₹2,800 crore for payment of wages under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme.

While the CM termed it "a people's budget that will take Odisha to new heights", opposition BJP's state unit chief Samir Mohanty said: "The huge budgetary allocation means nothing as the state is faltering in capital expenditure."



# Yellow rust outbreak alarms Hamirpur farmers

**HAMIRPUR, FEBRUARY 24**

Farmers in the district fear losing wheat crop, following the outbreak of yellow rust in some areas. The fungal disease has been reported in several villages, including Bahal, Sadhwan, Lahar Kotlu, Sera, Jasai, Khatrod, Bara, Rangas, Rail and Feste.

Farmers of these villages had informed the Agriculture Department about the outbreak and wanted an early action to control the disease

## EXPERTS' ADVICE

- The fungal disease appears in form of yellow stripes on wheat leaves
- Experts advise farmers to spray Propiconazole fungicide solution in the affected fields
- Organic farmers should spray a solution made of



one litre of lassi with 20 litre of water in intervals of 10 days

and prevent it from spreading.

A team of experts visited these villages on Tuesday to

assess the crops and observed that the disease was in its initial stage.

Atul Dogra, Deputy Director, Agriculture, says the experts, who visited the affected villages, observed that two to seven per cent crop was infected with the disease. They advised the farmers to spray the Propiconazole fungicide solution in the wheat fields, if they notice yellow rust on the crop. Farmers following organic farming should spray a solution of one litre lassi with 20 litre water in intervals of ten days, adds Dogra. — OC



# Conflict could unleash new trade wars



AUNINDYO CHAKRAVARTY  
SENIOR ECONOMIC ANALYST

It has been a year since Vladimir Putin's army invaded Ukraine. It immediately set off an inflation spiral across the world. Before the war, Ukraine and Russia together supplied about a quarter of the world's wheat. Ukraine also supplied nearly half the world's sunflower oil. The war disrupted this and sent food prices sky-high.

The FAO's (Food and Agricultural Organisation) Food Price Index shot up by nearly 13 per cent immediately after the Russian invasion. It dropped back by July 2022 and by January this year, it had dropped well below where it was before the war began. Energy prices also show a similar trend. Brent crude jumped from a shade under \$91 per barrel in January 2022, to nearly \$134 per barrel in March. Now, it is flirting with the \$80 mark. Natural gas prices nearly doubled after the war began, but the prices have dropped to a quarter from their peak and are almost half of what they were before the war. The same pattern can be seen in most commodities, including key metals. In effect, therefore, the economic consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war have largely disappeared.

But that is only if we look at the economy in the way textbooks teach us to — in terms of demand, supply,

trade, markets and prices. In reality, these are just the effects of much deeper economic processes, which have to do with who controls global resources and makes the decisions on how to deploy them. When we talk about that, we have to look at international monopolies, global finance capital, the advanced nation states which back their interests, and the various so-called 'multilateral' institutions, like the World Bank and IMF, which act like 'autonomous' battering rams to open up doors for western companies and financial institutions. It is here that Russia's war on Ukraine has had a much deeper impact.

Already, before the war began, American economic and military hegemony was beginning to wane. A part of this reason was the meteoric rise of China as a global power and its growing influence in smaller countries of Asia and Africa. The second reason is Germany's emergence as a quasi-autonomous power in Europe over the past decade.

In fact, despite the EU backing sanctions on Russia after Putin's 'annexation' of Crimea in 2014, Germany has been opposed to either arming Ukraine or putting NATO boots on the ground to fight Russian separatists in the Donbas region.

Germany had developed deep trade links with Russia ever since the Soviet Union collapsed and was becoming increasingly dependent on Russia for its energy needs. Although this did not lead to any overt diplomatic clashes with the USA, Germany's warm relations with Putin were a cause for chagrin among successive US administrations.

The USA's well-established role in overthrowing Ukraine's pro-Kremlin President Viktor Yanukovich



and backing the Maidan protests was aimed as much at Russia as at bringing Germany-led Europe in line. And the spooks in the Biden administration must have rejoiced when Putin invaded Ukraine one year ago. It forced Germany and other European members of NATO to back US interests, even though it was going to inflict huge economic costs on the people of Europe.

The biggest of these is the energy prices that ordinary Germans are paying because gas supplies from Russia have been stopped. The pipelines that carried gas from Russia to Germany were first turned off by Putin in retaliation for the sanctions against Russia. After that, the pipelines were bombed and damaged so that gas

could not be transferred to Europe.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh has reported that the gas pipelines were sabotaged in a covert operation sanctioned by the Biden administration.

Till this revelation, the West had blamed Putin for deliberately damaging the Nordstream pipelines. Hersh's claims, which have been denied by Washington, could become a source of grave embarrassment for the German government as it tries to convince its people that they are paying more for gas for the greater good.

Selling this has become especially difficult as American energy companies, which have replaced Russia as the key suppliers of gas to Germany, have declared record profits. This has led to a wave of anti-Americanism in Germany, where the right and the left have both attacked the government for backing NATO in Ukraine.

While the extreme right-wing party

Alternative for Germany (AfD) has openly backed Moscow, left voices like Oskar Lafontaine have demanded that Germany loosen ties with America. Lafontaine's book *Ami*, a derogatory term for Americans, has become a bestseller in Germany. Given Germany's reluctance to play a leading role in arming Ukraine, the USA has turned to Poland as its pivot for its 'fight for democracy' in the region. This is ironic, given that Poland today is ruled by a hard-right group, which has dissolved many of the country's democratic institutions.

But it is outside Europe that the USA has found the biggest resistance to its role as the global Big Brother. China and India, who account for nearly one-third of the world's population and are two of the world's biggest economies have refused to take a stand on the war. Their neutrality is, in effect, a shot in the arm for Putin. This has been further bolstered

It is outside Europe that the USA has found the biggest resistance to its role as the global Big Brother. China and India have refused to take a stand on the war. Their neutrality is, in effect, a shot in the arm for Putin. This has been further bolstered by China dramatically increasing its exports to Russia, and India undermining the sanctions on Russian oil exports by becoming its biggest buyer.

**TAKING A HIT:** The war sent food prices sky-high in its early months, but the situation has improved of late. **PH**

by China dramatically increasing its exports to Russia, and India undermining the sanctions on Russian oil exports by becoming its biggest buyer.

Not just China and India, but several other key global players have also turned neutral, and have increased their trade with Russia. While Putin's strong-man tactics have partly backfired on him, it has given the opportunity to many in the developing world to line up against US unilateralism.

The net effect of the Ukraine war has been to weaken the consensus within NATO, give a new lease of life to right wing forces in Europe and puncture three decades of American global hegemony that began with the end of the Cold War.

Things haven't been helped by the USA's newfound attempt to bring production back home. It could unleash new trade wars that will increase economic rivalries in the crisis-ridden developed capitalist world.