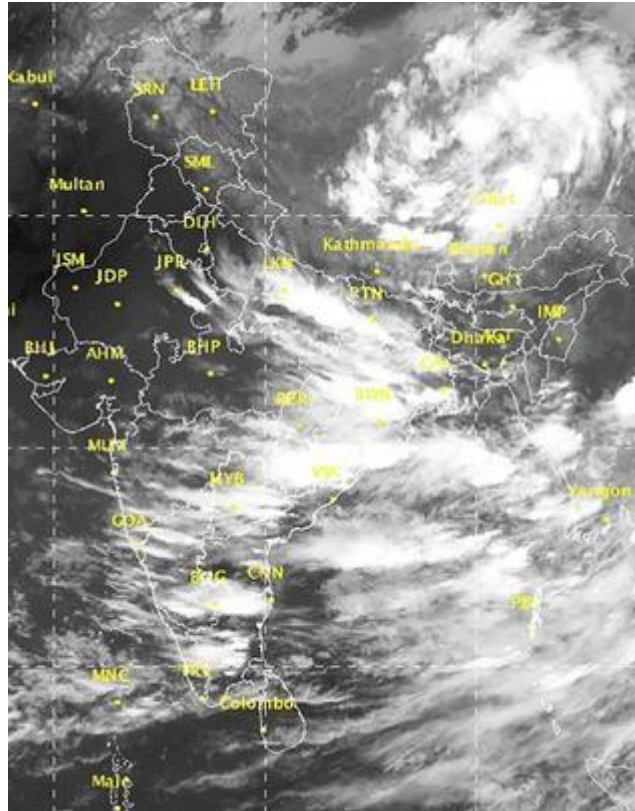


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# THE HINDU BusinessLine

**Wet spell over Peninsula may continue into next week**



The moderate to heavy rainfall from an active phase of the monsoon is forecast to continue along the East Coast and over the South Peninsula into the next week. Global agencies have suggested that not one, but two cyclonic circulations (with the likelihood of converting into low-pressure areas) could emerge from the Bay of Bengal off the East Coast (Odisha to South Tamil Nadu).

The India Met Department (IMD), European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts and the US Climate Prediction Centre have indicated with reasonable confidence that there will be continued rain along the East Coast and South Peninsula.

The overarching rain-producing weather is a persistent trough, aligned north-to-south from Telangana to South Coastal Tamil Nadu on Wednesday.

The trough is a receptacle for moisture blown in by the winds from the seas and is dumped in a heap as rain over an area where temperature, pressure and humidity conspire locally to set up the ideal conditions.

This is what has been occurring over Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and parts of Telangana over the last two days. The trend will continue in varying degrees over these places during this week and into the next.

In fact, the IMD has said that the ‘monsoon shear zone’ (the area with the most active weather conditions) sits over a line connecting Karaikal, Thanjavur, Karur and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu and Malappuram in Kerala.

### **Rain for West India**

Meanwhile, parts of Central and West India, including South and East Gujarat, West Madhya Pradesh, Konkan & Goa (including Mumbai) may also witness alternating spells of heavy rain as the rain-driving systems from the Bay move to the West Coast.

The IMD said in its evening bulletin that the monsoon trough in North India, a seasonally prominent feature, continues to pass through the foothills of the Himalayas.

In its forecast for the next five days, the IMD has indicated that most of the South Peninsula, adjoining Central India, the West Coast and West India stand to gain from the pulsating rain belts originating in the East.

(This article was published on August 16, 2017)

### **Agri farmers have to link Aadhaar with bank a/c for crop loans in 2017-18**

To ensure hassle-free benefits to farmers under Interest Subvention Scheme, the Reserve Bank of India has advised banks to make Aadhaar linkage mandatory for availing short-term crop loans up to ₹3 lakh in 2017-18.

This move is in line with the government’s increasing emphasis on linking Aadhaar to various transactions in the economy including filing Income-Tax returns and getting direct benefit transfer.

In order to provide short-term crop loans to farmers at an interest rate of 7 per cent (the same as in the previous year) during the year 2017-18, the RBI said it has been decided to offer interest subvention of 2 per cent to lending institutions -- public sector banks, private sector commercial banks (in respect of loans given by their rural and semi-urban branches only) on use of their own resources.

This interest subvention of 2 per cent will be calculated on the crop loan amount from the date of its disbursement/ drawal up to the date of actual repayment of the crop loan by the farmer or up to the due date of the loan fixed by the banks whichever is earlier, subject to a maximum period of one year.

Further, farmers repaying in time will be provided an additional interest subvention of 3 per cent. What this means is that farmers paying promptly would get short term crop loans (for a maximum period of one year) at 4 per cent during the year 2017-18.

(This article was published on August 16, 2017)

### **Spices Board teams up with J&K govt**

Stepping up its efforts to promote marketing and upgrade quality of saffron, the Spices Board has teamed up with the Jammu and Kashmir government to boost produce and improve value addition of the signature Kashmiri spice for its consumption and trading in both domestic and international markets.

The Board and the state government are also going full throttle to secure GI (geographical indication) registration for authentication of high quality saffron from Kashmir.

The issues regarding the saffron trade came up for thorough deliberations at a two-day seminar on Saffron in Srinagar recently.

Spices Board Chairman A Jayathilak said that the board and the J&K government are working in tandem for getting the GI registration for saffron. The Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs has initiated the development of Codex standard for saffron at its 3rd session held in Chennai in February, he said.

The saffron trade would get a fillip by addressing the issue of post-harvest management, especially for drying and storage, in order to retain the colour, aroma and flavour of the spice, he said.

(This article was published on August 16, 2017)

### **Farm output to top 275 mt**

An increase in the estimated yields of paddy and wheat has helped the Government to revise its total foodgrain production projection for 2016-17 by over 2 mt to a record 275.68 mt in its 4th advance estimates, released on Wednesday.

The previous advance estimates, put out in May, projected the total grain yield at 273.38 mt. Total foodgrain production in 2015-16 was 251.57 mt.

The yield of staples — rice and wheat — is expected to go up by nearly 1 mt each to 110.15 mt and 98.38 mt, respectively, in comparison with the 3rd advance estimate, according to the data.

### Pulses up

Pulses production too is expected to go up by 500,000 mt to 22.95 mt and the maize yield is pegged marginally higher than the previous estimate at 26.26 mt. What helped pulses production to go up is improved yields estimated from tur and gram, which are projected to be 4.78 mt and 9.33 mt, respectively.

Half a million bales (of 170 kg each) of additional cotton yield is expected as major cotton growing areas in the country received good showers in 2016-17. The total cotton output is projected to be 33.10 million bales as against the 32.58 estimated in May, according to the latest data. The estimated sugarcane yield would also be marginally higher at 306.72 million tonnes.

<b>Output projection</b>		
<i>(In million tonnes)</i>		
<b>Crop</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> advance estimates</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> advance estimates</b>
Rice	109.15	110.15
Wheat	97.44	98.38
Pulses	22.40	22.95
Tur	4.60	4.78
Gram	9.08	9.33
Maize	26.14	26.26
Coarse cereals	44.39	44.19
Oilseeds	32.52	32.10
Sugarcane	306.03	306.72
Cotton*	32.58	33.10
<b>Total foodgrain</b>	<b>273.38</b>	<b>275.68</b>

\*million bales of 170 kg each

Rice, wheat, pulses expected to rise

### Oilseeds down

At the same time, the Government corrected the projected output of several important crops, such as oilseeds and coarse cereals. While oilseeds yield is expected to drop further to 32.10 mt from an earlier estimated 32.52 mt, coarse cereals output received a slight revision to 44.19 mt from 44.39 mt.

The poor projections for oilseeds were on account of estimated lower yields of soybean, which as 13.7 mt as against the earlier estimate of 14 mt, and castorseed, whose projections came down to 1.42 mt from 1.54 mt estimated in the 3rd advance estimate.

Coarse cereals, on other hand, will break earlier yield records even at the revised output levels.

(This article was published on August 16, 2017)

### **‘Easing regulations on veggies from Bangladesh can benefit NE consumers’**



Ritu Raj KonwarFile photo of a vendor bringing goods to Kalaichar Border Haat on the Indo-Bangladesh border in Garo Hills, Meghalaya Ritu Raj Konwar CUTS study sees savings potential by nixing non-tariff barriers

Allowing import of vegetables such as brinjal, tomato, green chillies and potatoes from Bangladesh by removing non-tariff barriers could help Indian households in the North-Eastern States make savings in their monthly vegetable bills, a study by consumer rights body CUTS International has said.

Unrestricted import of just the four identified commodities into India could help a family in Agartala save over ₹350 in its monthly vegetables bill, the case study on ‘Promoting trade between India and Bangladesh in specific agricultural commodities’ supported by Asia Foundation estimated.

In addition to the infrastructure bottlenecks, which remains one of the major hurdles to enhanced cross-border trade between the countries, non-tariff factors such as regulations, non-harmonisation of standards and certification requirements, the lack of institutional as

well as stakeholder capacity, negatively impact trans-boundary cooperation and exchange, the study said.

“We have shared the early recommendations from this study with government officials. The study will be finalised with inputs from the advocacy dialogues being carried out with stakeholders in both countries,” Prithviraj Nath, Associate Director, CUTS International, told *BusinessLine*.

### **Local production**

The North-East contributes only 3-4 per cent of the total production of brinjal, tomato, green chillies and potatoes in the country, the study said. In terms of productivity, these States rank well below the national average.

“While official figures show that the region has a surplus of production compared to its consumption, the field survey conducted by CUTS International in select NE States reveal that these States had to depend on the rest of India to meet their consumption needs,” it said.

With limited water and rail connectivity, the bulk of the commodities in the NE States is usually transported by road, which significantly adds to the cost of the vegetable.

“One of the probable ways to address the issue would be to facilitate their import from Bangladesh, which is much closer to the NE States,” the study suggested.

There may be possible concerns over the export of brinjal, as Bangladesh has allowed the cultivation of Bt Brinjal, which is banned in India. “However, there is no record of any export of Bt Brinjal variety from Bangladesh to any country. It may require special checks during import-export procedure which would be an additional barrier,” the study said.

### **Saving potential**

Giving an estimate on the average monthly saving of families in the NE States if some of the cheaper vegetables are allowed from Bangladesh, the study says that a family of four in Agartala could save ₹109.44 on tomatoes, ₹170.24 on potatoes, ₹39.36 on green chillies and ₹47.04 on brinjals.

The calculations have been made comparing prices in Bangladesh with those in Golbazar in Agartala.

(This article was published on August 16, 2017)

# Business Standard

**Wheat output seen at all-time high, at 98.38 mn tonnes in FY17: govt**

Rice output is estimated at 110.1 million tonnes



Indian farmers harvested a record 98.38 million tonnes of wheat in the crop year to June, up from 97.44 million tonnes estimated in May, data released by agriculture ministry showed on Wednesday.

India, the world's second-biggest grower of staples such as rice and wheat, produced a record 275.68 million tonnes of grains in the 2016/17 crop year against a forecast of 273.38 million tonnes.

Rice output is estimated at 110.1 million tonnes, up from 109.15 million tonnes estimated earlier.