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BusinessLine

No respite from rain for Uttar Pradesh as depression looms over region

The heavy rain outlook and flooding conditions show no sign of relenting in the context of a fresh monsoon depression taking shape over Jharkhand.

This rain-driving system, which is taking its own time to move laterally, has been traced to over South-East Uttar Pradesh, where it lies practically stationary, an India Met Department (IMD) update said.

The slower the movement of the system, the stronger its capacity to trigger flooding rain in the region under its footprint. There is no sign of weakening of the system in the short term.

According to IMD, the laggard system is expected to move gradually to the west-northwest even as it begins to weaken, but not before bringing another round of wet spell for North-West India.

It is bound for South-West Rajasthan, which means that the rain would spread out over North Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Chandigarh, Haryana, Punjab and the hill states during the next few days.

Meanwhile, indications are that this could be the last of the current series of weather systems from the seas, with August (beginning next week) likely ushering in drier climes over the country.

The IMD said the monsoon was 'vigorous' over Bengal, Jharkhand and Gujarat yesterday with heavy rain reported from Jharkhand, East Rajasthan, Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh.

As for today, the heavy rain belt will be active over East and West Madhya Pradesh, North Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, South-East Uttar Pradesh, Vidarbha, Gujarat, Konkan and Goa.

(This article was published on July 27, 2017)

Business Standard

Torrential rain, flood damage 25% kharif sowing in Gujarat

Traders have estimated that at least 50,000 hectares of sowing have been damaged



*An aerial view of flood-hit Totana village in Banskantha district, Gujarat, on Tuesday.
Photo: PTI*

Torrential rain and flooding, especially in north and Saurashtra, have resulted in at least 25 per cent loss in kharif sowing across crops such as cotton, groundnut, castor, pulses, guar and cereals.

According to government data, Gujarat saw kharif sowing on 6.06 million hectares, which was 70 per cent of last year's 8.57 million hectares. Of these, major crops such as cotton and groundnut have seen sowing on 2.50 million hectares and 1.4 million hectares, respectively. However, the excess sowing this year might have been washed away by the excess rain, said government officials and traders.

Cereals have been sown on 720,000 hectares, pulses 382,000 hectares, soybeans 106,300 hectares, guarseeds 83,000 hectares and castor 54,000 hectares, according to the state agriculture department.

Traders have estimated that at least 50,000 hectares of sowing have been damaged, though a complete assessment would happen only once the water begins to recede.

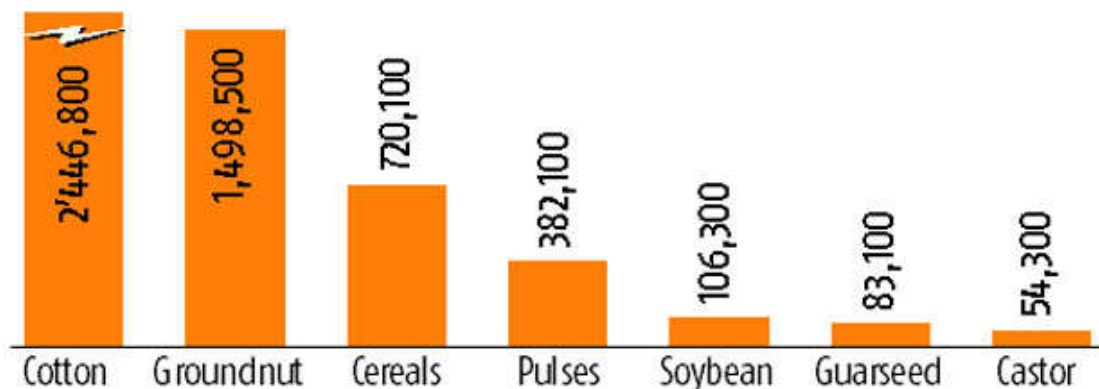
"So far, at least 25 per cent of sowing may have been lost. In worst affected areas like Sabarkantha and Saurashtra, it could be as high as 60-70 per cent and 40-50 per cent, respectively," said Arun Dalal, a leading cotton trader.

Major crops like cotton and groundnut were expected to see higher sowing, he said. "There is still time to sow the Kalyan variety of cotton, which can be done till mid-August if the water recedes and rainfall subsides. The full extent of loss can be done only once the water recedes and the government releases some data," Dalal added.

KHARIF SOWING IN GUJARAT

Data till mid-July 2017

(Acreage in hectares)



Source: State Agriculture Department

The Gujarat government has initiated an assessment of the farm loss situation in the state, even as a team from the Centre is expected to arrive soon for its own assessment. In a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, the state government decided to initiate such an assessment after water recedes in flooded areas.

At 491.54 mm this monsoon season, Gujarat has seen more than 60 per cent of the average rainfall of 810 mm due to a low pressure. According to the state government's water supply department, the excess rainfall has filled around 30 water reservoirs of the 203 and these have been put on high alert. Another 11 dams are 90 per cent full.

West Bengal floods: Vegetable prices soar after farms, supply chain hit

Admitting that floods have affected the supply chain, state agriculture minister Purnendu Bose said some retailers were manipulating the prices.



A woman buys tomatoes in a vegetable market. Tomato prices touched Rs 100 per kilogram in some districts of West Bengal.(HT File)

With flood waters inundating farmlands and disrupting supply chains in seven south Bengal districts for three days in a row, prices of vegetables have soared.

Tomatoes, which were selling for Rs 45 per kg in Kolkata markets earlier this month, skyrocketed to Rs 100 - an all-time high in recent months. So did green chili, which otherwise sold for no more than Rs 70 per kg till last week.

The consumers in Kolkata felt the pinch even as the government alleged that a section of traders hiked the prices, taking advantage of the floods.

“The prices are on fire. This morning, vendors at the local market said this is only the beginning. Things will get worse in the coming weeks,” said Shaktipada Sharma, a resident of Bagha Jatin in south Kolkata.

“Prices will rise more since supply to retail markets has fallen sharply,” said Bikas Das, a vegetable vendor.

Price of vegetables such as parwal (striped gourd), ridge gourd and okra went up by at least Rs 10 at different markets in the last 24 days, shopkeepers said.

Admitting that floods have affected the supply chain, state agriculture minister Purnendu Bose said some retailers were manipulating the prices. “The police and market monitoring committees appointed by the government are keeping a close watch. We will not hesitate to take action against hoarders,” said Bose.

Potatoes, the most consumed vegetable in the state, remained immune to the inflation.

“This happened because farmers moved their harvest from the fields to cold storages long ago. This is the time they sow paddy. But in case of other vegetables the flood has affected retail prices,” said senior peasant leader and CPI(M) politburo member Hannan Mollah.

NABARD takes first step to access Green Climate Fund

India’s National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) signed an Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA) with the Green Climate Fund on Thursday.



NABARD became the first Indian entity to get direct access entity status allowing to access Green Climate Fund easily.(AP Photo/ Anupam Nath)

India’s National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) signed an Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA) with the Green Climate Fund on Thursday.

“We need to take cognizance of the population size and income inequality and cannot ignore the basic requirement of electricity, housing and food for the poor. We expect GCF to partner

with us on these issues and prioritize their work to overcome these challenges,” Dr Harsh Vardhan said.

The GCF was set up in 2010 under the UNFCCC’s financial mechanism to channel funding from developed countries to developing countries to allow them to mitigate climate change and also adapt to disruptions arising from a changing climate. It was central to the Paris climate agreement signed in 2015, that the world’s largest historical emitter, U.S, announced it would leave.

One of the sticking points for the U.S. is the funding that has been promised to developing countries like India through UNFCCC’s financial mechanism.

India has laid down ambitious goals under the climate agreement but these are contingent upon receiving low-cost finance from sources like the GCF. Till now, only one project Installation of Groundwater Recharge System in Odisha is underway using funds from GCF amounting to \$34 million. Several projects have been proposed and are in the pipeline.

With the signing of the AMA, NABARD becomes the first Indian organisation to get Direct Access Entity status and is the first step for the body to access GCF resources.

Cotton farmers fear whitefly attack in hot, humid weather; experts say no threat

The cotton belt of Punjab — districts of Bathinda, Faridkot, Mansa and Muktsar — have had no rain for the past few weeks.



Bathinda agriculture development officer Baljinder Singh said the department had started a weed-eradication programme in February as weeds are foster home for whitefly. (Representative image)

The cotton belt of Punjab — districts of Bathinda, Faridkot, Mansa and Muktsar — have had no rain for the past few weeks. This, and the hot and humid weather, has cotton farmers like Ramandeep Singh, a farmer of Bathinda rural, worried. “We need rain as only it can wash the plant and take away the threat of whitefly. Sprays only protect the leaves,” he says. Gurbaj Singh, another cotton farmer, is in the same boat.

Experience has shown that hot and humid weather and no rain are ideal weather conditions for the growth of whitefly which created havoc in 2015, destroying 65% of the cotton crop of the region. That year, 20 farmers ended their lives in the region.

No threat at the moment: district admn

Shashi Kumar, block agriculture officer, Bathinda, dispels the worries of farmers like Ramandeep, offering technical evidence. “The plants are bigger and better this year. This is not 2015 when the whitefly pest surfaced in June itself,” he added, claiming that the department had appointed scouts to educate farmers on pesticides to be used, if at all a portion of the crop was affected.

Bathinda agriculture development officer Baljinder Singh said the department had started a weed-eradication programme in February as weeds are foster home for whitefly.

“More than 20 teams have been formed to hold camps in villages. The menace of whitefly is difficult to control once an outbreak occurs, but with right precautionary measures, the disease can be tackled,” he said.