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1

CONTENTS

PAGE NOS.

India: Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana: Crop insurance being revamped from Kharif 2022, panel set up	2
Tropical Cyclone Gulab- Shaheen hit India and Oman	4



EARTH



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2



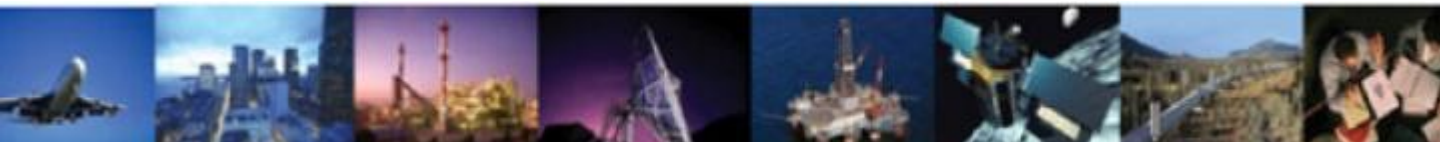
Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana: Crop insurance being revamped from Kharif 2022, panel set up

Aiming to roll out an overhauled Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) from kharif 2022, the government has constituted a working group comprising officials from Centre, key crop-producing states and top executives of public sector insurance companies to suggest “sustainable, financial and operational models.” The move comes after many states quit the scheme, defeating the objective of protecting farmers’ income.

“With a view to achieving sustainable underwriting capacities of insurers and rationalised premium pricing to cut subsidy burden on the government, the working group is expected to address the demand of an alternative model,” an official source said. The group will submit its report in six months.

Of late, the Centre has identified a hardening of premium market, lack of sufficient participation in tenders, inadequate underwriting capacity of insurers as major issues that adversely impacted PMFBY during implementation of the scheme.

The premium to be paid by farmers is fixed at 1.5% of the sum insured for rabi crops and 2% for Kharif crops, while it is 5% for cash crops under PMFBY. The balance premium is split equally between the Centre and states. Many states have demanded their share of the premium subsidy be capped at 30% while some others demand the Centre to bear the entire subsidy.



EARTH



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3

“The working group will find out reasons for high premium rates and suggest mechanism to rationalize them including the option of creating a risk pool,” a source in agriculture ministry said adding role of state governments will have to be defined as they are the implementing agencies.

Already, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Bihar exited the scheme, citing the cost of the premium subsidy to be borne by them. While Punjab never implemented the crop insurance scheme, Bihar, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh have their schemes under which farmers do not pay any premium, but they receive a fixed amount of compensation in case of crop failure.

According to provisional data of 19 states (excluding Karnataka), there is over 10% fall in enrollment of farmers under crop insurance during Kharif 2021 from last season’s 16.8 Million. Karnataka is not included since this year’s Kharif data of the state is yet to be uploaded in the central portal. Among major producing states namely Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh the fall in enrollment is in the range of 2-75%.

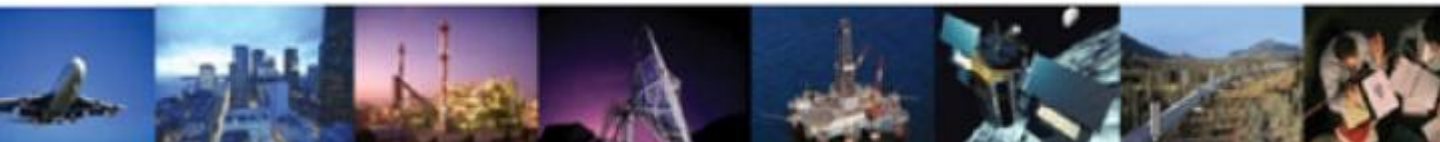
“It is definitely a concern as less than 12% of 146 million land owning farmers are covered under crop insurance during kharif despite the fact that 52% of the country’s farm land does not have assured irrigation facility and depends on monsoon. No other scheme than PMFBY will ensure a stable income during calamities. It will also be a big setback for government’s target to double farmers’ income,” said a top executive of an agri-tech firm involved in technology infusion in the scheme.

It is good that the working group has included some states who exited the PMFBY, added the executive.

The newly formed group, headed by CEO of PMFBY, will have principal secretaries (agriculture) of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha as members.

Other issues to be looked into by the group also include a detailed study on the feasibility to adopt suitable technology-based approaches for early settlement of claims by modifying traditional methodology of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) for loss estimation.

Source: <https://www.financialexpress.com>



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4

Tropical Cyclone Gulab- Shaheen hit India and Oman

Tropical Cyclone "Gulab" formed in the Bay of Bengal at 15:00 UTC on September 24, 2021, as the third named storm of the 2021 North Indian Ocean cyclone season.

It made land fall on the eastern coast of India on the night of September 26, 2021 between Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and moved inwards.

As Cyclone Gulab weakened into a well-marked low-pressure area over western Vidarbha in state of Maharashtra and its surrounding areas, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) noted that its remnants may cross the Arabian Sea and regenerate into a tropical cyclone which doesn't happen often.



OBSERVED AND FORECAST TRACK ALONGWITH QUADRANT WIND DISTRIBUTION OF CYCLONIC STORM GULAB OVER NORTH ANDHRA PRADESH AND ADJOINING SOUTH ODISHA BASED ON 1800 UTC OF 26TH SEPTEMBER 2021



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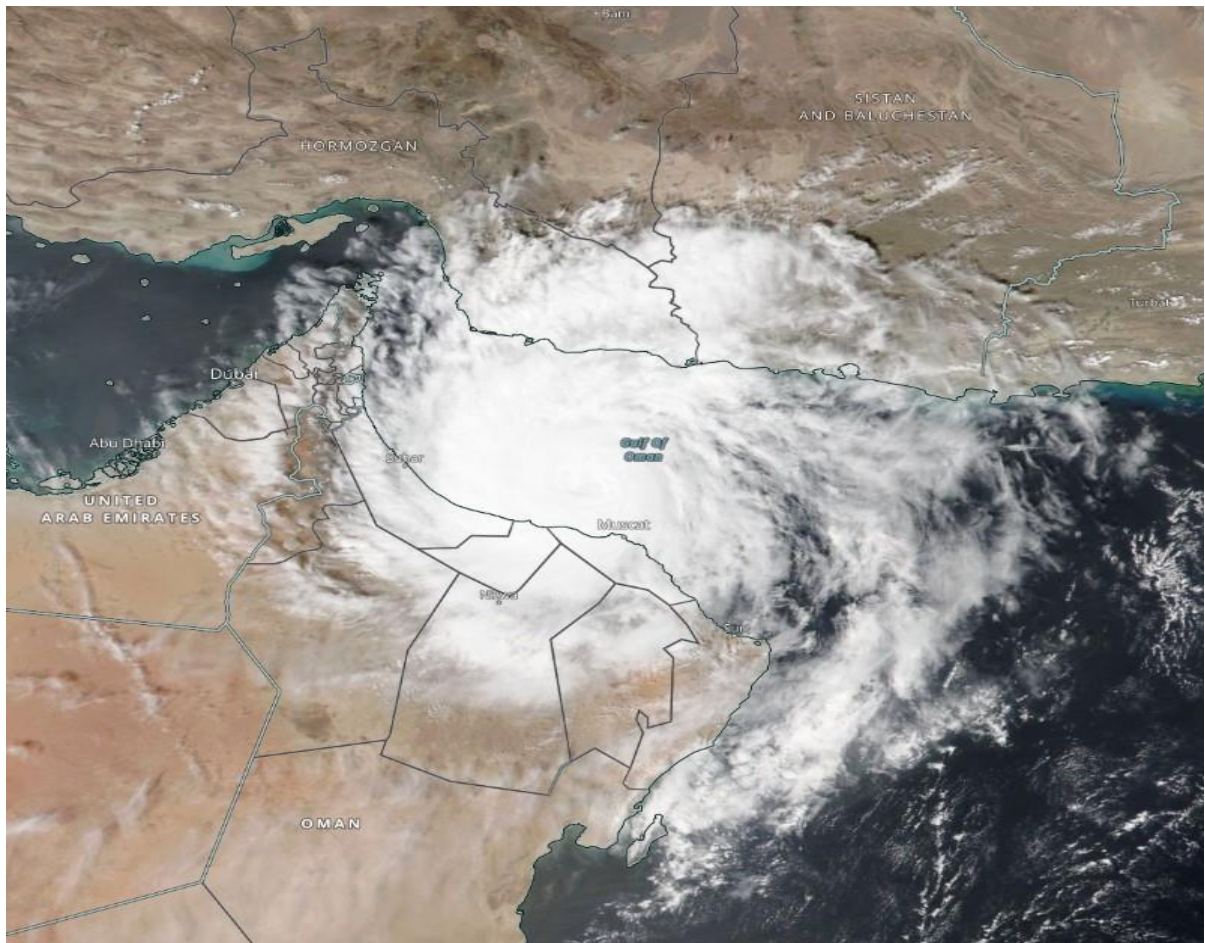
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5

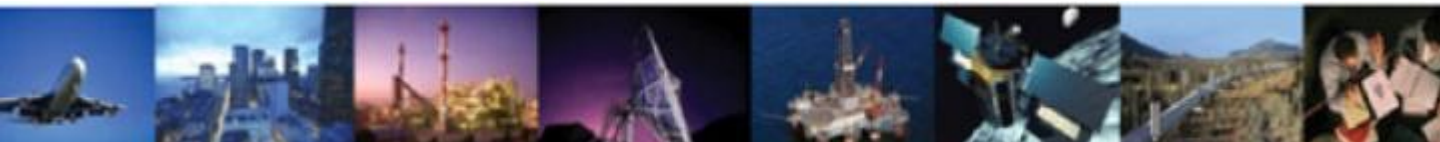
After making landfall, it kept moving westwards, bringing intense rain over parts of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and even Gujarat over three days.

In morning of Sep 30, the remnants of Cyclone Gulab emerged into the Arabian Sea, started gaining strength, and concentrated into a depression. On October 1, it morphed into yet another cyclone - Shaheen-over the Arabian Sea.

It made landfall between Al Masnaah and Al-Suwaiq, Oman, about 80 km (50 miles) WNW of the capital city of Muscat on October 3, 2021, with maximum sustained winds between 120 and 150 km/h (75 - 93 mph). Shaheen brought extremely heavy rains and waves up to 10 m (32 feet).



Tropical Cyclone "Shaheen-Gulab" on October 3, 2021 | Source: NOAA-20/VIIRS



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6

Impact of Gulab and Shaheen

Gulab caused heavy damage in Andhra Pradesh. It downed trees, disrupted communications and electricity, and flooded buildings across the state. 282 mm (11.1 inches) of rain was registered in the city of Vizag, making it the 2nd wettest September on record, behind 2005. Heavy rain and floods triggered damaged standing crops in more than 1.56 lakh acres in six districts of Andhra Pradesh.

It brought heavy rainfall in Telangana and Chhattisgarh. In city of Hyderabad, Telangana flash flooding caused disruption in traffic and severe hardships to the residents.

It brought excess showers over Maharashtra and put most of the regions, such as Konkan, Madhya Maharashtra and Marathwada, into surplus precipitation category, according to the IMD. The cyclone caused heavy to very heavy rain in the districts of Nanded, Beed, Latur, Parbhani, Osmanabad, Aurangabad, Jalna, Hingoli, Akola and Washim. According to initial estimates by the state Agriculture Department, crop loss occurred in at least 1.7 Mln hectares.

In Oman, Shaheen brought torrential rains and flash flooding to a desert climate, in some cases dumping a year's worth of rain or more in a single day. Al Amarat in eastern Muscat received 136.6 mm (5.38 inches) of rain in the 24 hours to 12:00 UTC on October 3, while Muscat's Seeb International Airport recorded 73 mm (2.87 inches) in the 24 hours to 15:00 UTC. The average October rainfall for Muscat is 0.8 millimeters (0.03 inches), and the average yearly rainfall is 89.7 mm (3.59 inches).

In Iran, infrastructure damage, including electrical facilities and roads was reported in province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

Sources:

IMD

The Hindu

<https://weather.com>

<https://www.bbc.com/>

<https://watchers.news/>

