USDA Foreign Agricultural Service
GAIN Report
Global Agricultural Information Network

Voluntary _ Public

Date: 8/31/2012
GAIN Report Number: IN2115

India

Post: New Delhi

Monsoon Report 5

Report Categories:
Agricultural Situation
Climate Change/Global Warming/Food Security
Grain and Feed
Cotton and Products
Oilseeds and Products

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Report Highlights:
Following normal rains in August, the cumulative rain deficit has narrowed to 12% in comparison to 22% in July 2012. Farmers were encouraged to plant or replant an additional 25 million hectares to *kharif* crops, bringing the total planted area to 91.1 million hectares, down 717,000 hectares from the corresponding period last year, but equal to 98% of normal area under *kharif* crops. Additionally, recent rains should help replenish water levels in major irrigation reservoirs and recharge ground water levels, which should improve soil moisture availability for *rabi* sowing.

General Information:

Rainfall deficit narrows to 12%

Normal to excessive monsoon rains from August 1, through August 29, 2012, have narrowed the cumulative rain deficit to 12% (Figure 1) in comparison to 22% and 30% in July and June, respectively. Out of 36 meteorological subdivisions, twenty two subdivisions covering central, northern zone, northwestern, north central, eastern and southeastern regions of subcontinent received normal or above average rains (Figure 2), while fourteen subdivisions received deficient or scanty rainfall. For the week starting September 03, northwestern, central, eastern, western coast and northeastern states will continue to receive normal or above normal rains while the southeastern third of subcontinent would remain dry [1].

With the monsoon's late onset, the western, southwestern, northern zone, north central, and southern third of India are reeling under severe moisture stress. Addressing immediate concerns, the government has published contingency plans for planting alternate crops in the affected regions. Lately, the government has also introduced seed and diesel subsidy programs to provide short-term relief to farmers. The seed subsidy element covers rice, coarse grains and pulses, while the diesel subsidy has been introduced to help farmers provide life-saving irrigation to standing crops in affected regions.

If these regions remain dry, the federal government may provide funds to mitigate the impact of drought [2], particularly in Maharashtra [3], Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat [4], and Punjab. Even late-planted *kharif* crops in these regions have started to show symptoms of withering due to lack of rain. Farmers have no choice but to shift their acreage to feed grains (e.g., sorghum, cowpea, pearl millet), short-duration cluster beans (guar), and castor in Gujarat; finger millet, fox-tail millet, feed grains and cowpeas in the north and south interior of Karnataka; sunflower, red gram, castor, and green vegetables in the central and eastern regions of Maharashtra.

Over the last two weeks, rainfall has improved in Delhi, Bihar, western Rajasthan, and Haryana. Farmers in these regions will be obliged to expand area to forage, vegetables, and other short-duration crops (sunflower, corn, okra etc.)

Progress of planting

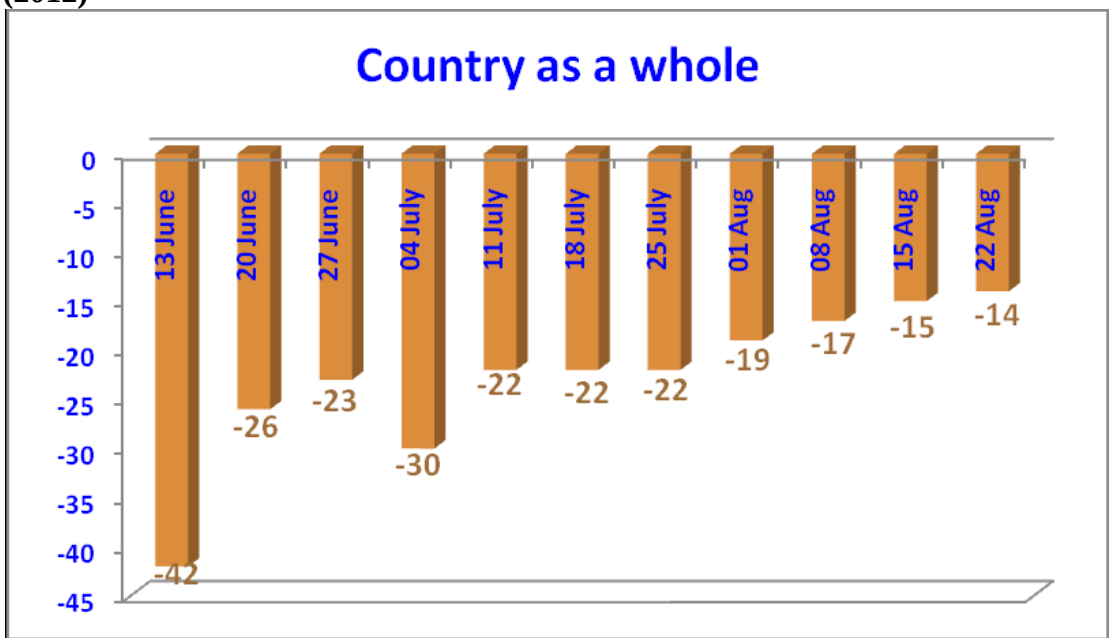
Receipt of normal rains in the last four weeks has encouraged farmers to plant or replant an additional 25 million hectares to *kharif* (July-September monsoon) crops, bringing total planted area to 91.1 million hectares [5] (equal to 98% of normal area under *kharif* crops), but down 7% compared to the corresponding period last year (Table 1). Lower average yields due to late planting will be partially offset by the gain in planted area. Compared to normal area [6] for this time of the year, farmers have expanded planting of rice, oilseeds (soybean), and cotton in anticipation of favorable returns. Recent rains should help to replenish water levels [7] in major irrigation reservoirs and recharge ground water levels, which should improve soil moisture availability for *rabi* sowing. However, the *kharif* harvest will largely depend on withdrawal time of the monsoon and its distribution, particularly in September, when India receives an average 20% of the total rainfall during the monsoon season.

Table 1. India: Kharif Planting Progress 2012

Crop	Area as of August 24, 2012	Normal area for 34th week of the year	Area planted by end of July 2012	Area planted by end of June 2012
Rice	32.91 (34.87)	31.88	19.10	3.07
Coarse Grains	16.53 (18.90)	19.42	11.74	1.04
Pulses	8.83 (10.26)	9.93	06.30	0.40
Oilseeds	16.42 (17.30)	16.38	13.83	1.07
Sugarcane	5.28 (05.16)	4.67	05.28	5.22
Cotton	11.15 (11.80)	10.57	09.72	3.13
Total	**91.12 (98.29)**	**92.85**	**65.97**	**13.93**

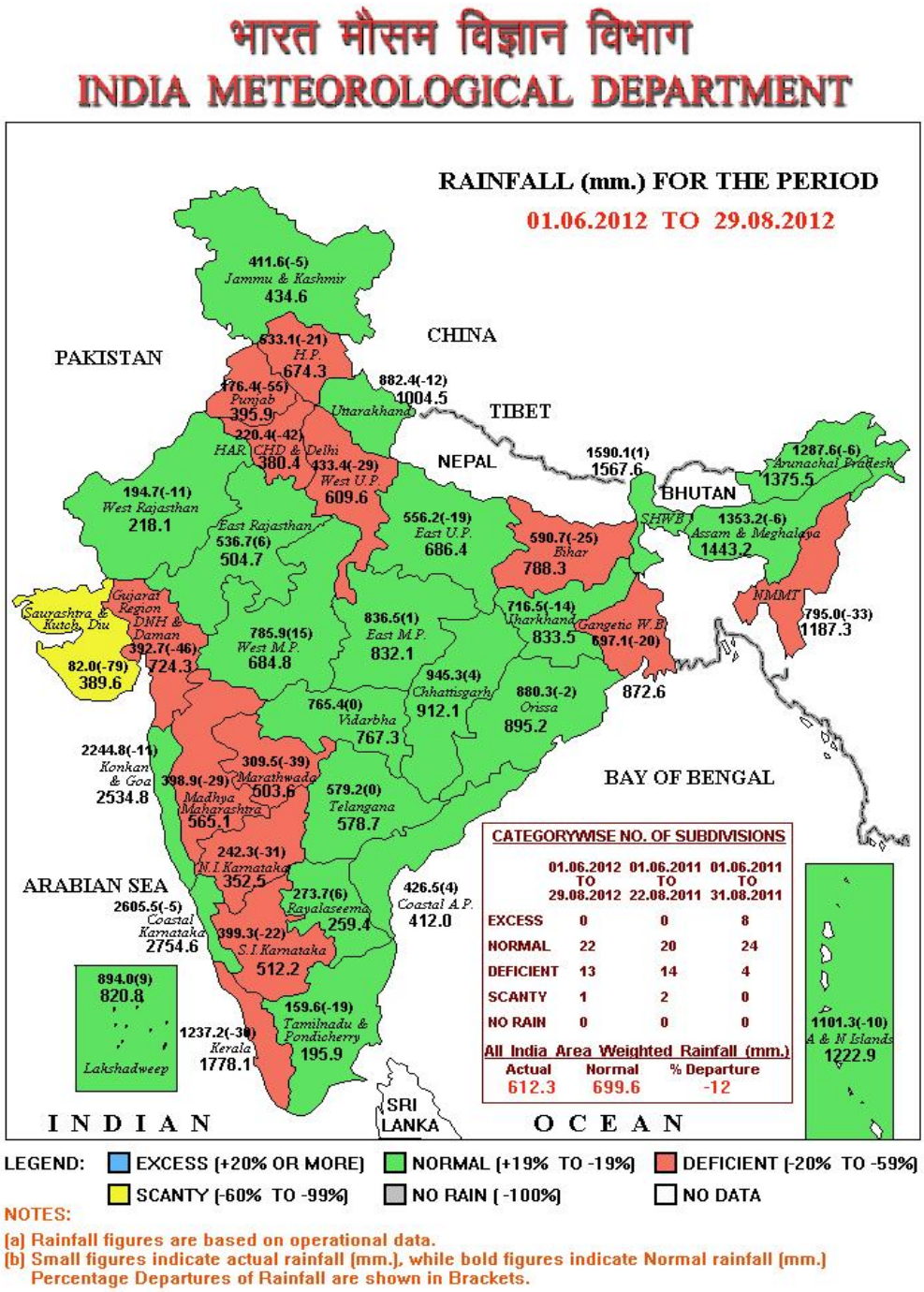
Source: Press Information Bureau, GOI.
Note: Values in parentheses correspond to area as of August 26, 2012.

Figure 1. India: Week to Week Seasonal Rainfall Deviation (%) from Long Period Average (2012)



Source: IMD, GOI

Figure 2. India: Rainfall during the period starting June 01 to August 29, 2012



Source: Indian Meteorological Department, GOI
URL: Link to Figure-2

[1] IMD Weather Bulletin
[2] Central assistance will be provided from National Disaster Response Fund
[3] Media report indicate that Maharashtra has sought Rs 20 billion as funds from the federal government for drought relief, out of which more than 26% is believed to have been allocated to Maharashtra.

[4] Empowered group of Ministers had allocated Rs 4.8 billion to Gujarat for rural drinking water.
[5] According to latest planting report, GOI
[6] Normal area is average of five years from 2006/07 though 2010/11
[7] Water in 84 major reservoirs has more than doubled in the last 4 weeks due to good rainfall. Water levels in main reservoirs rose to 61% of live full capacity from 57% last week.