



Erratic rain leaves farmers frowning

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: North India remained largely dry while other parts got some rain but this wasn't enough to wipe the frowns off faces in Krishi Bhavan. The unusually long dry spell in August and continuing high temperatures are feared to have taken a toll on vegetables and could impact rice, too.

Good rain spells now could still save the situation. On Tuesday, the Met office reported that the peninsula is the main centre of monsoon action, and will remain so over the next three days. Not much rain is expected over north or west India.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research chief Mangala Rai says this year's rain pattern has been so erratic they need to do a region-by-region analysis of impacts.

groundnut-growing areas in Gujarat and Maharashtra didn't get rain August-end, the crop could be adversely affected. In some areas of UP, sudden and too much rain has also harmed crops.

Jharkhand, officially in the grip of a drought, has been a concern throughout. There have been some reports of fields cracking up, particularly in areas like Rajasthan's Sriganaganar. On

Situation Can Still Be Retrieved If It Rains



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Monday, a crop weather watch meeting in the agriculture ministry noted that in some areas, rice, oilseeds and coarse cereals were showing signs of stress. If the rain gods oblige now with the right quantity at the right time, the situation can still be retrieved. Rai says that owing to the ongoing high temperatures, seedling mortality rates could be heavy in pre-rabi vegetable

crops such as cauliflower, tomatoes and eggplants. "Everything depends on rain," he says.

The monsoon has retreated from parts of west Rajasthan. But the erratic pattern has kept scientists guessing throughout. Sowing was slow initially because the rain kept away in June.

It picked up thereafter but some areas didn't get rain in

August and towards the end of the month, the Met office announced there was a 'break' in the monsoon. In other words, no rain in north and central India.

West Rajasthan got no rain at all in the week ending August 31. Most of north and central India got very little rain as that week ended with a 51% deficiency — recording 24.5 mm rain against a usual of 49.9 mm.