

Overflowing Granaries

Why in news?

Punjab's granaries are overflowing with foodgrains due to the suspension of train traffic due to farmers' protest against Centre's farm laws.

What is the situation of foodgrains in granaries?

- The granaries in Punjab are overflowing with wheat and paddy.
- Nearly 110 lakh metric tonne of wheat from the last procurement season is still lying in the open and covered godowns.
- The granaries still have 55 lakh metric tonnes of rice from the last paddy procurement season.
- The state has only 110-lakh metric tonne capacity under covered space.
- Nearly 25 lakh metric tonne and 30 lakh metric tonne grains from 2018-19 and 2018-19 procurement seasons are still lying at the granaries.

How was disruption of trains affecting the granaries?

- Train traffic remained disrupted in the state for nearly 2 months after the farmers started blocking railway tracks to protest.
- After that, the Union Ministry of Railways suspended the train traffic.
- This affected the evacuation of granaries, which led to its overflow.
- This overflow added to the miseries of the government miseries that have been at loss to accommodate paddy still arriving at its mandis.
- Had the movement continued, 50-60 lakh metric tonnes of grains would have been moved out of the state.

How much more grain inflow is expected?

- The state has procured a record 200 lakh metric tonnes of paddy this procurement season.
- After shelling, at least 140 lakh metric tonnes of rice would need to be stored in covered godowns.
- As rice is not as hardy a grain as wheat, it needs to be stored in covered spaces.
- With portions of old stock still lying in the granaries; the state will need lots of space to store rice from this procurement season.

How had the pandemic come as a relief for the granaries?

- Evacuation of food grains had started at a fast pace after the Centre started distributing grains to the underprivileged during lockdown.
- In September also, 1,000 rakes were sent to other states till the train traffic was disrupted in the month end.

Why has the outward movement been slow?

- Since other states started contributing to the central pool, the outward movement of grains from Punjab has been affected.
- Punjab averages outward movement of 6-7 lakh metric tonnes of rice and 2-3 lakh metric tonnes of wheat every month from the godowns.
- Had the trains not been disrupted, the evacuation would have been at least five times than the average.
- With the restoration of train traffic, the state now hopes that evacuation will take place at a faster pace.

Source: The Indian Express

