

Paddy, arhar gain in kharif acreage

MONSOON IMPACT. 64% of normal area covered so far; cotton coverage down 3% but oilseeds gain

Our Bureau
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The early gain in sowing under kharif crops has narrowed to now less than 4 per cent against over 10 per cent a week ago, as the main planting window is set to draw to a close. The revival of monsoon in several parts, aided by a low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal, may boost sowing activities, particularly in States which have received deficient rainfall.

Against the country's normal area of 1,096 lakh hectares (lh) in the kharif season, planting has been completed on 64 per cent or in 704.04 lh as of July 19, which is up by 3.5 per cent from 680.36 lh a year ago, latest data from the Agriculture Ministry showed.

The acreage under paddy, the key cereal crop, which was 20.7 per cent higher until last week is now 166.06 lh which is

6.7 per cent more than 155.65 lh a year ago.

SOWING TO SPEED UP

"It is good that about 50 lh is getting covered under paddy in a week. Over the next one month, the pace will improve since key growing States such as Chhattisgarh, Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand — which received deficient rain earlier, are now receiving good precipitation," said agri-

culture scientist SK Singh. The sowing of paddy in the leading producing State West Bengal continues until September due to its climatic conditions whereas it gets almost over in all other States by mid-August, he said. The area under cotton has, for the first time, tumbled from the year-ago level as it is lower in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Only Maharashtra and Karnataka have

Picking pace

	Kharif sowing (lakh hectares)		
	2023	2024	% Change
Paddy	155.65	166.06	6.7
Pulses	70.14	85.79	22.3
Nutri Cereals	134.91	123.72	-8.3
Maize	63.00	67.78	7.6
Oilseeds	150.91	163.11	8.1
Sugarcane	57.05	57.68	1.1
Jute & Mesta	6.03	5.64	-6.4
Cotton	105.66	102.05	-3.4
All Crops	680.36	704.04	3.5

Source: Agriculture Ministry

reported an increase in the planted area under the natural fibre crop. The cotton acreage reached 102.05 lh until July 19 against 105.66 lh a year ago, down by 3.4 per cent. It was higher by 3 per cent until last week.

SUGARCANE UP A TAD

The coverage under soyabean is nearing its normal acreage of 123 lh. It has reached 119.04 lh, which is 9.2 per cent more than 108.97 lh a year ago. Until July 12, its area was 31 per cent more. Acreage of all oilseeds is now 8.1 per cent more at 163.11 lh against 150.91 lh a year ago. The area under groundnut has further gained momentum by recording 12.6 per cent growth at 37.34 lh from 33.15 lh. Sugarcane acreage is now a tad higher at 57.7 lh from 57.05 lh. But area under jute and mesta is down at 5.64 lh from 6.03 lh. The sowing area under arhar (pigeon pea or tur) is 73 per cent more

at 33.48 lh against 19.34 lh a year ago. This is mainly due to the open market price signal that farmers have picked up to expand the area under the crop. Currently, arhar dal is selling at ₹175-230/kg in retail markets of the national capital region of Delhi.

The acreage under urad, which was up 9 per cent until July 12, has dropped marginally to 19.62 lh from 19.86 lh. But, moong acreage has gone up, after lagging behind for weeks, by 10 per cent to 25.11 lh from 22.76 lh. Overall, sowing of all pulses has reached 85.79 lh, which is 22.3 per cent higher than 70.14 lh year-ago.

Though area under maize has been higher at 67.78 lh, up by 7.6 per cent from 63 lh, nutri-cereals acreage has shown a dip. The planted area under Shree Anna (nutri cereals) is down 8.3 per cent to 123.72 lh from 134.91 lh mainly due to lower area under Bajra (pearl millet).