

Rabi sowing on track despite warming in key wheat zones

ON THE VIGIL. 640 lakh hectares under cultivation as officials keep an eye on weather, market trends and monitor pest incidence

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The overall rabi crop coverage and crop condition is better than previous year, so far, while the acreage of all crops reached 640 lakh hectare (lh) as on January 17 — up from 637.49 lh year-ago.

On the other hand, the temperature in the plains of north-west — the key wheat sowing area — has started moving up, posing concerns for some crops even as scientists have discounted any fear.

Agriculture Minister Shiv-

araj Singh Chouhan on Monday held a meeting with officials and reviewed the progress of rabi sowing, weather conditions, and pest surveillance through National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) as well as prices of various crops in agriculture market yards.

NO IMPACT

The Minister, who recently began holding weekly meetings on farm issues with senior Ministry officials, has directed them to regularly engage with State governments, emphasising that resolving issues at the ground level requires their



ACREAGE UP. Sowing data from the Agriculture Ministry show that wheat acreage was 1.38 per cent higher at 320 lakh hectares so far in the ongoing rabi season

involvement, according to an official statement.

But former director of Karnal-based Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Re-

search (IIWBR) Gyanendra Singh said usually temperature rises for a few days around this time and normally does not have adverse

effects on wheat crop. The weather bureau has predicted that due to a western disturbance, there may be isolated to scattered rainfall/

snowfall over western Himalayan region until January 23 and isolated to scattered rainfall may be seen over Punjab, Haryana and west Uttar Pradesh on both January 22 and January 23, while Rajasthan and west Madhya Pradesh may get wet spell on January 22.

WHEAT, PULSES RISE

Meanwhile, the sowing data show that wheat acreage was 1.38 per cent higher at 320 lh so far in the ongoing rabi season against 315.63 lh in the year-ago period.

Pulses area rose to 141.69 lh (139.29 lh) and that of coarse/nutri cereals slightly

lower at 54.49 lh (54.63 lh). There was no increase in wheat area during January 13-20 week, indicating sowing has been completed.

Gram (chana) sowing has reached 98.28 lh, lentil (masur) 17.43 lh, maize 22.90 lh and jowar 23.95 lh. Oilseeds sowing this season has dropped to 97.62 lh, as on January 20, compared with 101.80 lh a year ago.

The Ministry also said that prices of wheat, rice, gram, mustard and sesame are ruling higher than their respective Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) in the market. However, there was no mention about prices of other crops.