

Wheat crop intact despite rise in temperature

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DESPITE TEMPERATURE RULING above the normal range in major wheat-growing regions, the prospects of a higher output of the key rabi crop look bright as the crop conditions are largely robust, officials and millers said.

"There is no cause for concern about the standing wheat crop, and there are no projections of any abnormal rise in temperature or heat wave in the coming 10 to 15 days," Ch Srinivasa Rao, director, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, told *FE*. He added that prevailing night temperatures have been cooler, thus helping the crop.

However, Rao said that temperature during the second half of March, just prior to harvesting, would be crucial to assess the crop yield. Recently, Ratan Tiwari, director of the Karnal-based Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research, ruled out any reports of yellow or brown rusts in the wheat crop.

Wheat sowing this season has increased to 32 million hectare (Mha) against 31.56 Mha last year and higher than the average sown area of the last five year. Wheat har-

BRIGHT PROSPECTS



vest in the last three years had been adversely impacted by excessive heat prior to harvesting and unseasonal rains in March

Navneet Chitlangia, president, Roller Flour Millers Federation of India, said currently it's a "lean" period in terms of supplies, but there are ample stocks with the millers before new crops start arriving in the market by March.

"Crop health looks robust as per reports we received from ground as night temperature is quite cooler

while higher day temperature helps in crop growth," Chitlangia said. He said the federation had projected a wheat output of 105-106 million tonne (MT) in the 2023-24 crop year (July-June). This year they are anticipating the output to go up by 3-4% which would be adequate for maintaining supplies throughout the year. According to the agriculture ministry, wheat output in the 2023-24 crop year (July-June) is estimated at 113.29 MT. The crop estimate for the 2024-25 crop year

is expected to be released soon.

Chitlangia also stated that mandi prices of wheat, which are currently ruling around ₹3,200/quintal in Delhi, are likely to decline once the new harvest starts arriving in the market over the next six weeks. Inflation in wheat was 8.8% year-on-year in January 2025. Inflation has been in single digit since August 2023. Trades sources said that while global wheat prices are lower than domestic prices, the mandi prices are likely to rule around

₹2,600/quintal once the new crop starts arriving.

Pomegranate exports to Australia using sea route

India has sent its first-ever commercial trial shipments of premium varieties of pomegranates to Australia using the sea route, in a move aimed at boosting exports of fresh fruits. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), in association with private entities AgroStar and Kay Bee Exports, completed the country's first-ever commercial trial shipments of Sangola and Bhagwa pomegranates to Australia via sea.

The shipment departed from the Indian coast on December 6, 2024 and arrived in Sydney on January 13 with 5.7 tonne of pomegranates sourced from the Solapur region of Maharashtra, according to an official note. Another commercial sea shipment carrying 6.56 tonne of Bhagwa variety of the fruit arrived in Brisbane, Australia, on January 6, it stated. There have been requests for additional shipments, an official said, adding that the shipments were timed strategically to align with Australia's non-producing season.