

Reservoir levels jump 89% in 15 days

Nomura report says farm sector could grow 4% in 2016-17 on a good harvest

SANJEEB MUKHERJEE
New Delhi, 21 July

The strong uptick in the southwest monsoon since the start of July has boosted the sowing of kharif crops and given fresh life to reservoirs and major water bodies, which were on the brink.

According to the Central Water Commission (CWC), the total level in 91 major reservoirs across the country as on Thursday was 54.419 billion cubic metres (bcm), 34 per cent of their live storage capacity (157.8 bcm). This is up from 18 per cent of live storage around July 6 and 29 per cent last Friday.

So, over a fortnight, average water levels have risen 89 per cent, one of the fastest such in recent times. These reservoirs are important sources of drinking water, irrigation and power in many places. A good water level also augurs well for the rabi harvest.

The highest increase has been in the reservoirs of central and western India. In the north, where they irrigate large tracts in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, the levels are still lower than last year's.

Research firm Nomura said



RESERVOIR LEVELS IN LAST FORTNIGHT %



*Of full capacity; full capacity of the 91-odd reservoirs is 157.8 billion cubic metres
Source: Central Water Commission

on Thursday that as the July rains have the strongest correlation with kharif (summer crop) production, improved performance of the former could push up seasonal grain production by four per cent, as compared to a fall of 3.2 per cent in 2015

"This should push up agricultural Gross Value Added (GVA) growth to four per cent in FY17, from a weak base of 1.2 per cent in FY16, adding 45 basis points to headline GDP (gross domestic product) growth and offsetting any fall in non-agriculture GDP growth," the report said.

Adding: "Although good monsoons are a positive for production, they do not guar-

antee low food price inflation. Much of the uptick in food inflation is driven by eggs, vegetables and sugar prices; of these, we expect only vegetable prices to ease, and only towards the fourth quarter of the 2016-17 financial year."

It said the impact in kharif production due to poor rain in parts of Gujarat, Bihar and the northeast would be offset by improved output in other areas.

The southwest monsoon might also become vigorous again over central and north-west India in the next 24 to 48 hours, after a lull of three to four days, as the rain trough moves towards the plains from the foothills, while the cyclonic circulation brewing

over the Bay of Bengal penetrates deeper towards the mainland.

Officials this should cause good rain over both central and north India, slightly weaker in the past few days and leading to rise in temperatures.

"The rains which are at present passing through a slightly weak phase will again become active over south Chhattisgarh, Telangana and parts of Vidarbha over the next 24 to 48 hours because a cyclonic circulation around coastal Andhra will move inwards," said Mahesh Palawat, chief meteorologist at private weather forecasting firm Skymet.

Rajshree
22-7-2016