

Kharif Sowing Begins as Monsoon Finally Hits North, Central India

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Pune: After a delay of eight days, the monsoons have finally hit most parts of Maharashtra and central India. With this, sowing of kharif crops like paddy, cotton, maize, oilseeds and pulses, is expected to gather pace. Sowing is expected to peak by the last week of June and first week of July.

After hovering over Karnataka coast around June 10-18, the monsoons have covered most parts of Maharashtra and is expected to cover south Gujarat, parts of Madhya Pradesh, East Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the next 48 hours. "There will be better rainfall during the next 15 days over central India," DS Pai, director (long



range forecast), IMD, has said. As of June 17, kharif sowing was completed on 84.21 lakh hectares, which is 10% less than last year. Rice was sown on 9.17 lakh hectares, pulses on 3.32 lakh hectares, coarse cereals on 6.01 lakh hectares and oilseeds on 1.88 lakh hectares.

N Chattopadhyay, deputy director general (Agrimet), IMD, said, "Nursery sowing operations have started in Andhra, Odisha, West

Bengal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. We have also advised farmers in Maharashtra to begin sowing of cotton and soyabean."

AK Nayak, acting director, Central Rice Research Institute, Cuttak, said, "Monsoon has covered most of Odisha. Though it is not strong, it is sufficient for nursery sowing and direct sowing, which have started." Karnataka has completed kharif sowing on 17% of its kharif area, with farmers sowing cotton, maize and red and green grams. "Cotton sowing is over in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. It has just started in Vidarbha and Telangana and is yet to begin in Karnataka," said Keshav Kranthi, Central Institute of Cotton Research, Nagpur. Seed companies say farmers began seed purchase late this year.

Soyabean acreage likely to drop for 2016-17 season

Nanda Kasabe

Pune, June 20: Two back-to-back droughts in the country may see farmers giving preference to crops other than soya. According to industry experts, a drop in soyabean acreage is almost certain for the 2016-17 season, although it is not clear to what extent the crop may be affected at this point.

The soya acreage for last year's kharif season stood at 110.65 lakh hectares.

"There has been some sporadic instances of sowing across the soya growing regions of the country. Sow-

ing operations have not begun in Madhya Pradesh as there are no rains yet. In Maharashtra and Vidarbha, some farmers have begun sowing. However, the reports of the quantum of sowing are not significant," DN Pathak, executive director, Soybean Processors Association of India said.

Pathak says that if the distribution of rainfall is good, then the productivity may not get affected. Production of soyabean was around 69.29 lakh tonne in 2015 compared with 87.1 lakh tonne in 2014.

This season, however,

farmers may shift to other crops such as pulses and maize. The last two-three years have been difficult and naturally farmers have been looking for alternatives.

Farmers are still worried about the late rains. That's why some may shift from soyabean to some other kharif crop this year, Pathak said. Last year was particularly bad since farmers were not able to recover costs, he added. Last year, farmers faced a dry spell during the sowing season followed by heavy rains during the harvesting period.

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21-6-2016