

Modest start to kharif sowing as monsoon progress tardy

SANDIP DAS
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WITH A DELAY in the progress of monsoon, sowing of kharif crops such as paddy, pulses, oilseeds, coarse cereals and cotton has been delayed.

Although it's early days, according to agriculture ministry data, kharif crops till Friday have been sown in 9.96 million hectares (MH), around 8% less than corresponding period last year.

With the exception of sugarcane, which has been planted in 4.93 MH area till now which is around 2% more than corresponding period a year ago, sowing of paddy, pulses, oilseeds, coarse cereals and cotton have been lagging compared to last year.

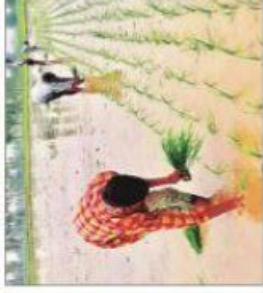
Traders said that the monsoon rains need to cover key pulses, especially arhar and urad, growing areas such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka in the

next week so that sowing is not hampered.

According to an agriculture ministry official, these are early days as the window for sowing of kharif crops is till the end of July.

"With the monsoon rains reviving in the last couple of days and expectation of its progress across the country, the kharif sowing activities will pick up," the official told FE.

In April, 2022, the govern-



ment had set a record food-grain production target of 328 million tonne (MT) in 2022-23 crop year (July-June)

against 314 MT of production in 2021-22, as per the third advance estimate of food-grain output.

The adequate and well distributed rainfall during monsoon months (June-September) helps in boosting kharif crop production besides ensuring sufficient moisture for the rabi crops.

"Conditions are favorable for further advance of monsoon into Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh,

Chhattisgarh and Odisha, some parts of Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand and some more parts of Bihar during next three days," India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in a statement on Friday.

During June 1-17, the cumulative average monsoon rainfall was 61.1 mm, which was 18% less than the normal volume of 74.3 mm.

Only the east and north-east region of the country has received 39% more monsoon

rainfall than normal volume so far, cumulative deficiency in rain over the south peninsula was reported at 24%. Northwest India and central India have rainfall deficiency of 63% and 57%, respectively.

On May 31, the IMD said monsoon rains this year will be more than what it had forecast in April at 103% of the benchmark long-period average (LPA), with 81% chance of rainfall being either "normal" or above.

