

# Kharif Output may Take Big Hit: Experts

Area under cultivation of rice, urad, tur down by an average of 53% from last year; erratic rains too damage crop

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New Delhi: With the sowing season nearing its end, experts have warned that kharif crop output could be significantly lower this year as the area under cultivation of rice, urad and tur is down by an average of 53.8% from last year. Erratic rains fall has also caused crop damage in several areas, they said.

"The lag in kharif sowing may be difficult to make up in the second half of the season," said Aditi Nayak, chief economist at ICRA. Noting the scope of a pickup in sowing is the problem of labour shortage, as farm hands have moved to the urban centres with the revival of labour-intensive sectors such as manufacturing and construction. "We expect the kharif acreage to lag last year's sown area," Nayak said. There is a 52.98% % decline in the sowing area, from 28.73 million hectares in 2021 to 14.48 million hectares as on August 12, according to data on the agriculture ministry's National Food Security Mission website.

The drop in acreage under rice as on August 5 was 13%. In the case of tur, it was 11.67% as on August 12, while that for urad was 4.87%.

**RAINFEEL DEFICIT**  
The shortfall in sowing of rice is mainly on account of rainfall deficit in the major rice producing states, such



as Gangetic West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand. While rainfall deficit in east and west Uttar Pradesh is 13% and 6%, respectively, it is 40% in Bihar and 35% in West Bengal, according to data from India Meteorological Department. Jharkhand has a deficiency of 38%.

As per traders' estimates, rice output may drop by about 30 million tonnes in 2022-23 to 120 million tonnes. However, some believe that the fall in acreage may not necessarily mean shortage of rice. "Rice is grown across the country, so even if there is a slight fall in acreage, the situation will not be as bad as wheat," said Rajiv Kumar, executive director, Rice Exporters' Association. "The government also has a huge stock of rice."

**SOYABEAN**  
The acreage under soyabean is 11.67 million hectares as compared with 11.79 million hectares last year. In addition, it is a stubble crop and can withstand erratic rainfall, so the overall production could be the same as last year, said Chauhan.

season, prompting the government to make it mandatory for stockholders to disclose stocks of rice. "Heavy rain in the major pulses producing regions such as Maharashtra and Karnataka and standing water in the fields may affect plant development," said Rajat Chauhan, director of agriculture research from Grain India. While the area under tur is less than last year, heavy rains in Rajasthan can damage the crops, he said. Moong and urad need clear skies for flowering and are heavily dependent on weather conditions.

**WHEAT**  
The acreage under wheat is 11.67 million hectares as compared with 11.79 million hectares last year. In addition, it is a stubble crop and can withstand erratic rainfall, so the overall production could be the same as last year, said Chauhan.

## GOVT BULLISH ON FOURTH ADVANCE ESTIMATES

### Foodgrain Production may be 1.6% Higher in 2021-22

Our Bureau

New Delhi: India is likely to produce 103.72 million tonnes of foodgrains in 2021-22, 1.6% higher than in the previous year, with an expected revised production of 106.84 million tonnes, according to the fourth advance estimates on Wednesday.

"The production during 2021-22 is higher by 25 million tonnes than the previous five years' (2016-17 to 2020-21) average production of foodgrains," the ministry said in a statement.

Rice production is expected to be 100.28 million tonnes. Wheat production could increase to 158.84 million tonnes, 2.96 million tonnes higher than the post-five years' average of 155.88 million tonnes.

The production for other coarse cereals could be 90.90 million tonnes, according to the ministry. Total production of pulses in 2021-22 is estimated to be a record 27.06 million tonnes, which is 3.87 million tonnes higher than the past five years' average production of 25.82 million tonnes. Total oilseeds production in the country in 2021-22 is estimated at a record 37.30 million tonnes, the ministry said.

RICE RISE

Rice output expected to be 130.2 mt; wheat production could increase to 106.84 mt

2021-22 is estimated to be a record 27.06 million tonnes, which is 3.87 million tonnes higher than the past five years' average production of 25.82 million tonnes.

Total oilseeds production in the country in 2021-22 is estimated at a record 37.30 million tonnes, the ministry said.

Sugarcane production is estimated at a record 41.84 million tonnes, according to the fourth advance estimate.

Production of cotton is estimated to be around 8.20 million bales (each of 170 kg) and that of jute and Mesta 10.32 million bales (each of 180 kg).

# Textile Ecosystem Can Reach \$250 b in 5-7 Years: Goyal

Minister asks industry to make best use of FTAs

Our Bureau

New Delhi: Textiles minister Pithuram Goyal on Wednesday said India's textile ecosystem can reach \$250 billion in the next 5-7 years and help India become a developed economy.

At the Asian Textile Conference organised by the Confederation of Indian Textile Industries, he also asked industry to make best use of the free trade agreements (FTAs) that India is entering into with several countries.

"We can have at least a quarter of a dollar trillion textile ecosystem in India in next 5-7 years and become a developed nation," Goyal said, and asked textile industry to expand to \$100 billion business at the earliest.

"FTAs with the developed world is the agenda of the government. I hope you will study our FTAs and make the best use of it," Goyal said.

The minister said unless there is a significant ramp up

of India's exports to these areas, "we won't get the satisfaction that we're doing the right thing."

"We get market access for labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, leather, sportswear but for that we will also be benefiting or opening our markets," he said.

He emphasised on greater and visible outcome from the textile sector.

Referring to the memorandum of understanding (MoU) that CII and Egyptian Cotton signed, Goyal said "Digitalisation will play an important role in transmutability. We have had some issues with Egypt in the recent past. I hope with the new MoU you're doing we can cross that hump and reduce the trust deficit typically found between two friendly nations."

He said the industry should think about high quality products and elementary products like zip and umbrella

items which are being imported.



## Monetary Thresholds Raised for Customs Offences

Prosecution limit involving baggage increased to ₹50 lakh from ₹20 lakh earlier

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has raised the monetary thresholds for prosecution and arrest for customs offences.

There will be no prosecution against foreigners and non-resident Indians (NRIs) on detection of non-declaration of foreign currency if it is legally acquired, said a CBIC circular issued on Wednesday.

The threshold for prosecution involving baggage has been increased to ₹50 lakh from ₹20 lakh. Similarly, for financial fraud, which includes duty evasion or wrong declaration, the threshold has been raised to ₹50 crore.



For financial fraud, which includes duty evasion or wrong declaration, threshold is now ₹2 crore.

He said the CBIC has not only increased the threshold for arrest, prosecution and bail but also provided a more illustrative list of scenarios where such provisions should be triggered.

"In an effective justice system prosecution and arrest should be initiated only in situations involving substantial duty evasion," according to Abhishek Jain, partner, Indirect Tax, KPMG in India. He said civil proceedings will continue for duty, interest and penalty recovery, and that "prosecution and arrest would be initiated in cases where the financial severity is high".

The rule will be applicable with immediate effect.

"All cases where sanction for prosecution is accorded after the issuance of this circular, shall be dealt in accordance with provisions of this circular irrespective of the date of offence," said the CBIC.

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION MANAGEMENT (MANAGE)**  
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# CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

A special report on Egypt-India relations

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## Partnering Success

H.E. Wael Hamed, Ambassador of Egypt to India, talks about what makes the relationship between Egypt and India, a win-win for both the countries

Could you please throw some light on Egyptian Government's 'Indian Economic Strategy'?

Egypt and India have both taken positive steps towards restoring macro-economic stability and liberalising trade and investment, particularly in the fields of renewable energy, information technology, pharmaceutical, food production, logistics, engineering, and transport. Therefore, Egypt looks forward to strengthening its economic cooperation with India through diversifying and widening the bilateral trade basket as well as exploring new avenues for collaboration in areas of mutual importance. At present, the economic climate is favourable and more conducive for creating further opportunities and exchanging experiences.

Egypt-India trade relations are set to get a big boost with this! How are the areas where they are expected to partner?

Bilateral trade between Egypt and India witnessed growth rates with every passing year as the trade volume in the financial year 2021-22 recorded 7.26 billion USD, a significant increase from 4.15 billion USD in 2020-2021. We see opportunities to further elevate our trade relations to new horizons, particularly in the energy and pharmaceutical sectors. We see greater potential for energy collaboration as Egypt has reached the level of self-sufficiency and has been exporting liquefied natural gas to India and other countries at reasonable prices.

Meanwhile, India is rightly called the 'world's pharmacy' thanks to its advancement in the field of pharmaceutical industry, education and research. It's also well-known for its indigenous and alternative medicine systems (Ayush). That's why, we seek greater cooperation with India to develop research and



manufacture of pharmaceutical products. As a hub for regional trade, Egypt can play a key role in India's strategy to increase its pharmaceutical exports in the Middle East and Africa.

Can you throw some light on the growing defence relations between the two countries?

The two countries share similar military doctrines and a common understanding of security threats. That is why our defence cooperation has witnessed great leaps over the past few years. Last month, the Commander of the Egyptian Air Force visited India as a

**Bilateral trade between Egypt and India witnessed growth with every passing year, and recorded 7.26 billion USD in 2021-2022**

prelude to many other engagements and visits over the coming months. In addition, the Egyptian and Indian militaries have been jointly conducting numerous drills and exercises to exchange experience and improve joint capabilities as forces for peace and stability.

For Egyptian companies interested in entering the Indian market, what are the main challenges, if any? And how do you feel India can streamline this?

We already have a number of Egyptian companies investing in India with great stories of success. We are fully aware of India's Prime Minister H.E. Narendra Modi's ambitious initiative 'Make in India' and hence the Egyptian companies have shown interest to enter the Indian market and expand their existing investments. The Egyptian investments in India are now represented by major Egyptian companies working in the fields of paints, waterproofing materials, as well as electrometer and transformers.

Amidst the pandemic, have you reworked on your travel policies, especially with regards to education and business travel, as also with regards to tourism strategy?

When the pandemic broke out, we tried to strike a balance between imposing precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the virus and keeping the economy functioning normally to prevent a socio-economic breakdown. Therefore, Egypt was one of the few countries to post overall positive rates of growth in 2020 and 2021, thanks to the economic policies adopted by the government during the pandemic as well as the successful implementation of Egypt's economic reform program that was initiated in 2016.

In order to revitalize our economy and tourism, the Egyptian Government has lifted all COVID-related entry restrictions for all incoming travellers. In this regard, Egypt has further relaxed its visa procedures to attract more tourists and business class from India.

In addition, Egypt's national flight carrier, EGYPTAIR, has resumed its direct flights between Cairo and Mumbai, last May, and is also currently planning for a direct link between Cairo and Delhi.

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