

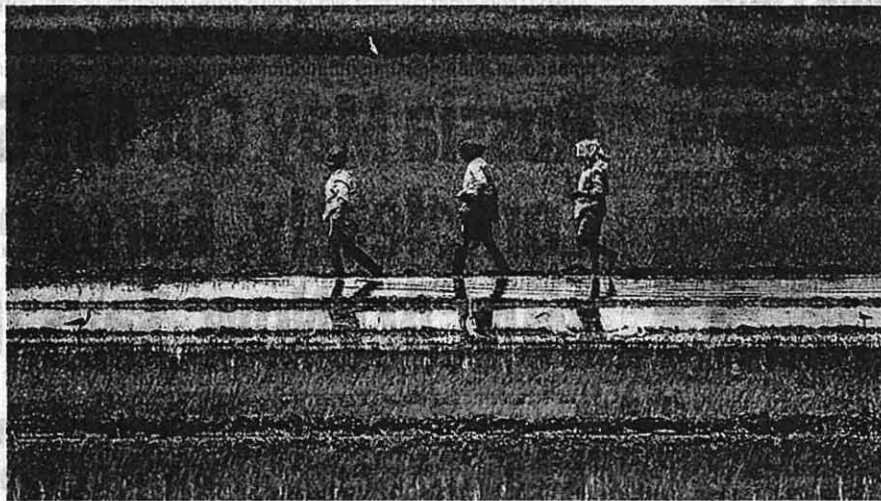
'Next Fortnight Crucial for Kharif Crops as Sowing Picks Up'

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Kolkata: Sowing of kharif crops like soybean, paddy, cotton has picked up in the country amid an advancing monsoon, and rainfall over the next fortnight will be crucial, agriculture experts said.

Some places such as Malwa in Madhya Pradesh and a few districts in Maharashtra are yet to get enough rainfall for sowing soybean while there is a rush among farmers in Gujarat for sowing cotton in anticipation of good returns. In Haryana, intermittent pre-monsoon rains have helped farmers to sow paddy crop. Paddy farmers in

Bengal, too, are sowing. "As of today, monsoon has been decent for sowing soybean crop, though in Malwa region there is lesser rainfall which is impacting sowing," said D N Pathak, executive director of Soybean Processors Association of India (SOPA). "But we have time till first we-



ek of July. If it rains in this fortnight, then sowing will pick up in the region too."

According to government data, as on June 10, kharif crop has been sown in 79.62 lakh hectares of land.

In last kharif, India had produced 127.20 lakh

tonnes of soybean, according to the first advance estimates of agriculture ministry.

Kharif cotton sowing for the season in Gujarat is likely to increase by at least 15% compared to the previous season amid a rush to sow the crop well ahead of its sche-

dule, industry executives said. Farmers had got good prices for cotton in domestic and international markets last season.

Vijay Setia, a basmati rice producer from Haryana, said there has been intermittent pre-monsoon rains in the state for last three to four days, which has helped farmers to sow the basmati crop.

In Bengal, the largest producer of non-basmati rice in the country, farmers have started sowing in places that have received good rainfall. "There have been good rains in last three days. Farmers of Bengal had started sowing and the rains have added further momentum," said Subrata Mondol, general secretary of Burdwan District Rice Mills Association.

In Kharif 2021, India had produced 107.04 million tonnes of rice.

Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) in its forecast for next five days has said gradual maximum temperature is likely to rise by 2-4 degree centigrade over most parts of northwest India and Madhya Pradesh. Between June 27 and 29, scattered to fairly widespread rainfall is likely over peninsular India and east India, while there could be an increase in rainfall over northwest and central India, it said.



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