

Kharif crop coverage exceeds last year's 1,040 lakh hectares

OUR BUREAU

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Kharif sowing this year has surpassed that of the previous year for the first time this week with the net sown area crossing 1,042 lakh hectares (lh) as against 1,040 lh during the corresponding period in 2017-18, data released by the Agriculture Ministry showed on Friday.

Water storage

The higher acreage is surprising considering that nearly a third of districts in the country have been reporting a rain deficit.

According to the Met Department, the quantum of rainfall received by the country as a whole is 7 per cent lower than the normal.

Major reservoirs in the country, on the other hand, are reporting a 30 per cent rise in water levels as compared to the same period in the previous year.

The cumulative live storage in 91 Central Water Commission monitored reservoirs is 119 billion cubic metre (BCM) as against 91 BCM during the corresponding week in 2017-18.

There was a good pick-up in



rice sowing with the acreage moving closer to 382 lh (373 lh).

Rice, oilseeds up

The spurt in rice planting in Karnataka, Telangana, West Bengal and Haryana has led to the higher acreage.

Oilseeds, on the other hand, continued to hold on to higher acreage this week too. The area under oilseeds cultivation is 2.81 per cent higher than last year at around 174 lh.

Soyabean acreage has risen further to nearly 112 lh, while that of groundnut diminished to less than 40 lh.

Cultivation of pulses, coarse

cereals and cotton, however, continues to be subdued. There is nearly a 12.5 per cent drop in urad cultivation as compared to the same period last year.

Similarly, bajra, too, has seen 7 per cent lower acreage this time. At 118 lh, cotton cultivation has fallen 2.39 per cent from last year's 121 lh in the same period.

Bumper sugarcane crop

There is an indication that this year, too, the country is headed for a bumper sugarcane crop with the coverage at 52 lh, as against 50 lh in the corresponding period last year.