

INDIA NEWS

## India's monsoon crop area shrinks by 12% this year as rain play hide-n-seek

Indian farmers have planted monsoon crops such as rice, cotton and soybeans on 61.19 million hectares (151 million acres) of land as of July 16, a decline of 12% from a year earlier, according to the farm ministry.

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Women farmers place paddy saplings at one place before replanting in a field at Tiuri village, in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.(AP)

The farmers in India have planted monsoon crops such as rice, cotton and soybeans on 61.19 million hectares (151 million acres) of land as of July 16, a decline of 12% from a year earlier, according to a report.

Quoting the Union agriculture ministry, a Bloomberg report said that the crop-sown for monsoon has witnessed a decline as area under sugarcane has risen almost 1.7% to 5.37 million hectares so far this year. For cotton, the crop has been planted in 9.84 million hectares, down 13% from a year earlier, the ministry said late Friday.

The decline in sowing crops comes after the country's rain pattern for the monsoon season has dipped, impacting the farm and agriculture sector directly.

India is the world's biggest exporter of rice and top importer of edible oils. A drop in production could not only limit rice exports, but also boost imports of edible oils such as palm oil, sunflower oil and soyoil.

- Planting of rice, the key summer crop, stood at 16.19 million hectares versus 17.44 million hectares in the previous year

- Cotton has been planted over an area of 9.84 million hectares versus 11.3 million hectares the previous year
- Overall oilseeds, including soybean - the main summer oilseed crop - have been planted at 12.9 million hectares, down from 14.9 million hectares the previous year
- Soybean sowing was at 9.3 million hectares against 10.6 million hectares last year
- Sugarcane planting was almost unchanged at 5.3 million hectares. India is the world's second-biggest sugar producer
- Protein-rich pulses have been planted on 7 million hectares against 8 million hectares in 2020.

In June-September this year, the monsoon rains were 7% below average in the week ended July 14, the India Meteorological Department said.

Sowing of monsoon-sown crops normally begins in late May and peaks in July while harvesting starts in late September.

Additionally, the planting of kharif or summer-sown crops has been hit by patchy rains in many parts of the country as the southwest monsoon showed a seasonal deficit of more than 5% for the first time this year on July 10.

Forecasters said the rain-bearing system should reactivate soon. But the total acreage of kharif crops stood at 49 million hectares, nearly 11% less than 55 million hectares sown during the corresponding period last year, data from the agriculture ministry showed.

The country relies heavily on monsoon which backs its agriculture sector for nearly all crops. Almost 60% of India's net-sown area does not have access to irrigation facilities. More than 100 nationally important reservoirs are replenished by rains, especially the monsoon rains. The rains also aid drinking water needs, power supply and irrigation in the country.

In the absence of reliable irrigation facilities, millions of farmers across the country depend on the rains to sow summer crops.

**Source:** <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/indias-monsoon-crop-area-shrinks-by-12-this-year-as-rain-play-hidenseek-101626508642661.html>