

## Radha Mohan Singh writes letters to all the Chief Ministers of the States / Union Territories to review all the measures before time to handle the situation arising out of any monsoon failure

## Central Government permits States and UTs to earmark 25% of funds under centrally sponsored schemes as flexi-funds which, inter-alia, could be used for mitigation of natural calamities: Shri Singh

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Union Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Minister, Shri Radha Mohan Singh, has written a letter to all Chief Ministers of the States/UTs today for the review of the state of preparedness in managing any weather related contingency if any in advance so that the possible adverse impact of sub-par rainfall on the farmers can be mitigated. Shri Singh in his letter mentioned that India Meteorological Department (IMD) projected a likely rainfall of 96% ( $\pm 5\%$ ) of the Long Period Average during Kharif 2017 in its first stage forecast for the South-West Monsoon. An updated forecast will be issued by IMD in June, 2017 with details of temporal (monthly) and regional distribution of monsoon rainfall.

Shri Singh further written that 2016-17 was a very satisfactory year for the agriculture sector as a whole. The State Governments and farmers were able to take the best advantage of a normal monsoon to create record-breaking performance in the production of cereals, pulses and oilseeds. Yet, the normal rainfall notwithstanding, agricultural operations faced disruption in some States during 2016-17 on account of drought caused by aberrant weather conditions. It would, therefore, be helpful if a review of the state of preparedness in managing any weather related contingency is carried out in advance so that the possible adverse impact of sub-par rainfall, if at all, on the farmers can be mitigated.

Shri Singh also reminded the Chief Ministers that Hon'ble Prime Minister had discussed drought mitigation/management measures in meetings with Chief Ministers of States affected by drought during 2015-16. Shri Singh expressed his confidence that the administration would have made arrangements to operationalise their drought mitigation strategies, in the event of failure of the monsoon rainfall. In this context, Shri Singh suggested to consider carrying out a review which, inter alia, may include the following:

- (i) State of preparedness in districts in line with the District Agricultural Contingency Plans (availability of e.g. abiotic stress resilient seeds varieties etc.)
- (ii) Progress in the implementation of schemes under District Irrigation Plans of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana.
- (iii) Status of progress of water conservation/recharge/harvesting related works under MGNREGS and water-shed management.
- (iv) Establishment and activation of Drought Management Centre at the State Headquarter and arrangements for the monitoring of drought.
- (v) Progress in the restoration of irrigation infrastructure e.g, desiltation of canals, repair/energization of tube-wells and replacement/repair of faulty pumps; repair of transformers/power lines.
- (vi) Progress in the repair of handpumps/drinking water projects.

Union Agriculture Minister further informed that the Central Government has permitted States and UTs to earmark 25% of funds under centrally sponsored schemes as flexi-funds which, inter-alia, could be used for mitigation of natural calamities. In addition, expanding the coverage of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana will enable farmers to minimise risks associated with loss of production in the event of a disaster.

Shri Singh hoped that all necessary and advance steps are being taken by the State Governments in the interest of the farmers.

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**SS**

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