

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare



“El Niño concerns put centre on alert, farmers’ interests to be protected at all costs”: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said: “There is no need to panic. Timely preparation is the need of the hour”

Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan has directed special monitoring and swift action in states and districts that are likely to receive low rainfall

“The Government is focusing on seeds, moisture conservation, water management and alternative crop planning”: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

“At present, the water levels in reservoirs are better than normal, which is giving a major boost to Kharif crop preparations”: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan laid strong emphasis on delivering mobile advisories, disease and pest related information, and proper crop advice directly to the farmers

“Contingency plans should not remain only on paper but should be clearly visible on the ground,” Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said during the high-level review meeting

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Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, and Rural Development, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan today conducted a detailed and comprehensive review in Delhi regarding the Southwest Monsoon, the possible impact of El Niño, water availability, seed arrangements, crop strategy and the level of preparedness of various states. In this important high-level meeting, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan gave clear directions that all concerned central departments and state governments must work with complete seriousness, better coordination and proper advance planning. The objective is to ensure that in any kind of adverse weather condition, farmers get timely advice, suitable seeds, alternative crop options, support for moisture conservation and proper water management assistance. He clearly stated that farmers do not need to panic at all because under the guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the government is making full preparations with complete alertness. The first target is to ensure that the effect of any weather-related challenges on the fields and on the farmers should remain as minimal as possible.

In the review meeting conducted by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare along with all related departments held at Krishi Bhawan in New Delhi, Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the interests of farmers are of supreme importance. All necessary preparations must be completed well in time keeping in view the possible effects of El Niño. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on weather forecasts, water availability, present condition of crops, arrangements for seeds and other agricultural inputs, the preparedness of states and the action plans to deal with any possible adverse situations.

It was informed in the meeting that the India Meteorological Department has indicated the possibility that the Southwest Monsoon in 2026 may be below normal. It has been estimated that the seasonal rainfall across the country will be around 90 per cent of the Long Period Average. It was also indicated that El Niño conditions may develop during the monsoon season. Therefore, the Central Government has already intensified its preparations and has asked all states to stay in alert mode. Shri Chouhan made it clear that weather forecasts are being taken with full seriousness, but there is no need for farmers to feel worried. He said that with the coordinated efforts of the Central and state governments, better water management practices, use of advanced technology, expansion of irrigation facilities and adoption of climate-resilient agricultural methods, the impact of possible challenges can be controlled to a very large extent.

An important and positive fact that was presented in the meeting was that at the current time the water levels in the country's reservoirs are quite satisfactory and the overall storage position is better than normal levels. According to the latest available assessment, the reservoir storage is at 127.01 per cent of the normal level for this period. This situation will provide significant and important assistance in meeting the irrigation requirements during the Kharif season and will substantially reduce the risk of moisture deficiency in the fields.

Union Minister Shri Chouhan said that the challenge before us now is not only related to the rainfall forecast, but also to the ground-level preparation connected with it. He directed that in those states and districts where the possibility of low rainfall, long dry spells or relatively higher impact of El Niño exists, special monitoring, continuous review and swift action must be ensured without any delay. He strongly emphasised that contingency plans should be activated right up to the district level and these plans should not be treated merely as paperwork exercises. Such plans should be prepared and implemented after carefully considering local conditions, available water resources, existing crop patterns, seed availability status, progress of sowing, rainfall intervals and all district-specific risks. This will help in providing practical and timely solutions to the farmers.

The government's main emphasis is on adopting area-specific and crop-specific strategies. Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that farmers should be provided timely advice, seeds, necessary resources and suitable options so that wherever required, alternative crops, strategies for delayed sowing and drought-resistant varieties can be promoted immediately and effectively.

On the issue of seed availability, it was informed in the meeting that the availability of seeds for both Kharif and Rabi seasons is more than sufficient as per the requirement. Arrangements for a National Seed Reserve have also been made for any emergency situations. The main objective of this preparation is to ensure that if adverse weather affects any particular area, then alternative seeds and appropriate varieties can be provided to farmers immediately. Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan gave special emphasis on the quality of seeds along with their availability. He said that if the seeds are of poor or weak quality, then the negative impact of low rainfall can become even more severe. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the states to ensure that only certified, suitable and useful seeds reach the farmers. Arrangements for short-duration and low-water requiring varieties should also be kept ready for resowing whenever needed.

Shri Chouhan also highlighted the important role being played by the rural development mechanism and related agencies. He said that immediate action should be taken for maintaining moisture in the fields, water conservation, water harvesting, construction of farm ponds, strengthening of local structures and maximum utilisation of all available resources. He added that even if the rainfall turns out to be less than expected, crops can still be saved to a large extent by adopting effective measures of moisture conservation and scientific water management.

Regarding the use of water from reservoirs, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that wherever water is available, its use should be scientific, balanced and based on proper priorities. He also stressed that states should be given clear advice on whether water is actually reaching the tail ends of the canal systems, how water is being utilised in the command areas and how the maximum number of crops and the maximum

number of farmers can be protected even with limited water availability.

He instructed the officials that there should be a clear and ready strategy even for possible dry spells of two, three or four weeks. In such situations, plans for resowing, life-saving irrigation, short-duration crops, alternative sowing strategies and district-specific advisories must reach the farmers on time without any delay.

Special importance was given to disease and pest management during the meeting. Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan directed that advance identification should be made regarding which diseases and pests may increase due to weather changes, moisture imbalance or rainfall intervals. Proper monitoring systems and treatment-related advice should be prepared in advance and sent quickly to the states as well as to the farmers.

Shri Chouhan said that the government now has sufficient data, technical platforms and effective communication systems in place. Therefore, the arrangement for delivering direct mobile messages, advisories, warnings and crop-related information to farmers should be made even stronger. He said that by properly connecting state-level mechanisms, call centres, local officials and various digital mediums, a robust system should be developed so that the right advice reaches the farmer at the right time.

He also said that the preparedness of states should be reviewed on a continuous basis. It should be clearly seen which states are progressing with better preparation and which states require additional support, intervention or guidance from the Centre. In places where the response is slow or the preparation level is relatively weak, the Central Government will make efforts to strengthen the situation through active coordination and support.

During the meeting, Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan also emphasised that different departments should not work in isolation. Instead, they should move forward together with shared data, joint reviews and an integrated strategy. Only by combining all inputs related to weather, water, seeds, crops, disease-pest management, irrigation and rural development can effective action be ensured at both district and state levels.

Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan clearly stated that the objective of the Central Government is not limited to merely assessing the possible risks. The real aim is to take all necessary steps well in time so that the confidence of farmers remains strong, the continuity of farming activities is not disturbed and the Kharif season moves forward in a smooth and successful manner. He expressed full confidence that with better water management practices, technological advancements, advanced agricultural methods, timely availability of quality seeds, alternative strategies and strong coordination between all stakeholders, the impact of possible challenges can be minimised significantly and the interests of farmers will be protected completely.









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