



Union Minister Shri Shivraj Chouhan Calls for Data-Driven Planning, Timely Procurement and Scientific Monitoring for Rabi Season 2026

**Shri Chouhan Launches Rabi Campaign 2026, Calls for
Climate-Resilient Agriculture Roadmap**

**Union Agriculture Minister Calls for Water-Based Crop
Planning, Stronger Preparedness for Rabi 2026**

**Pulses and Oilseeds to Drive Rabi Strategy as Shri Chouhan
Pushes for Greater Self-Reliance**

**From Seed to Market, States Must Ensure Timely Inputs and
Assured Procurement: Union Agriculture Minister**

**Shri Chouhan Calls for Weekly Crop Monitoring, Balanced
Fertiliser Use and Stronger Farmer Support**

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Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, today called upon States to complete preparations for the Rabi season through coordinated planning, scientific assessment and close field-level monitoring. Addressing the two-day National Agriculture Conference – Rabi Campaign 2026 in New Delhi, he said that amid climate change, erratic rainfall and water constraints, food security and higher farm incomes would require data-driven planning and stronger Centre-State coordination rather than conventional approaches. The conference, organised by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare at the Bharat Ratna C. Subramaniam Auditorium, NASC Complex, Pusa, was attended by Union Ministers of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Ram Nath Thakur and Shri Bhagirath Choudhary, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shri Atish Chandra, Director General, ICAR, Dr. M.L. Jat, senior officials from the Centre and States, Principal Secretaries and Directors of Agriculture, Vice-Chancellors of State Agricultural Universities, heads of ICAR institutes, and representatives of KVKs, ATMA and other stakeholders. In his inaugural address, Shri Chouhan said Rabi 2026 is an important phase in advancing the vision of a self-

reliant and developed India. The conference, he said, is aimed at strengthening Centre-State coordination, raising agricultural production and productivity, promoting sustainability and preparing a coordinated, outcome-oriented strategy for enhancing farmers' incomes.



Water Budget Must Guide Crop Planning

Shri Chouhan identified the water budget as one of the most important parameters for Rabi planning, asking every State and district to assess the water available for irrigation before finalising crop plans. Areas with limited water availability should prioritise less water-intensive crops such as pulses and oilseeds, while areas with assured irrigation can plan other crops accordingly. He said rainfall has remained below normal, although not to an extent that would severely affect water availability at the national level. However, water shortages in some States remain a concern. States must assess water availability and soil moisture in vulnerable areas and make arrangements for irrigation in advance. “There should be no situation where a crop requiring more water is sown and adequate water is subsequently unavailable, resulting in crop losses,” he said, stressing that preparations must begin immediately as the Rabi sowing window is approaching. Rainfed areas, in particular, require careful planning as the availability of soil moisture largely determines the crop choice and outcome.



Centre to Undertake Ground Assessment of Drought-Hit Areas

Expressing concern over drought conditions in Maharashtra and Karnataka, Shri Chouhan said nearly two-thirds of Maharashtra has been affected and the State has declared drought, while Karnataka is also facing drought-like conditions. He said a Central team would undertake a ground assessment in Karnataka on October 3, while a Central team would also be sent to Maharashtra. Shri Chouhan said he would personally visit the affected States with his team and assured that, under the leadership and guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Central Government stands firmly with farmers during the difficult situation. He also said that Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh would need crop plans based on water availability and soil moisture. Separate strategies should be prepared for rainfed and irrigated areas. Delayed sowing, he cautioned, can affect germination as well as productivity, making timely sowing and advance preparation essential.



Timely Availability of Quality Seed a Key Priority

Calling seed the most critical link in Rabi preparations, Shri Chouhan asked States to determine immediately which varieties are best suited to specific regions and agro-climatic conditions. He expressed concern that some States neither place seed demands in adequate time nor lift the required quantities, resulting in delays in distribution. In some cases, valuable seed varieties reach farmers after the sowing window and are subsequently sold at prices comparable to ordinary grain. He called for a complete roadmap covering seed demand, procurement, lifting and distribution. With senior ICAR scientists and experts present at the conference, States should jointly identify the most suitable varieties for different regions and conditions. He also called for an assessment of which varieties released by agricultural institutions have gained adoption and which have not, followed by targeted farmer awareness and extension efforts. This exercise, he said, should be completed scientifically during the two-day conference.



Push for Pulses and Oilseeds, Backed by Assured Markets

Shri Chouhan urged States to promote pulses and oilseeds, particularly in areas that remain fallow after paddy cultivation. These crops require relatively less water and are central to the national objective of achieving self-reliance in pulses and edible oils. He asked every State to finalise by September 29 its Rabi plan indicating the area to be brought under pulses and the crops to be promoted, including chana, masoor and mustard. At the same time, he stressed that production planning must be accompanied by assured market arrangements. Farmers should have confidence that their produce will be procured on time. “If there are areas where nothing is grown after paddy, this is an opportunity to encourage farmers to take up pulses,” he said, calling for immediate action by the States.



Procurement Planning Must Be in Place in Advance

Shri Chouhan said procurement arrangements must be planned alongside production so that farmers have confidence in the market. If State governments are unable to undertake procurement on time, Central nodal agencies NAFED and NCCF will undertake direct procurement from farmers. However, States must provide the necessary support, including timely facilitation of mandi-related requirements and other arrangements, to ensure that procurement is not delayed. He said the Centre has approved proposals on a large scale for procurement of pulses and oilseeds under the Price Support Scheme (PSS) and urged States to make full use of the mechanism. He also pointed out that some States submit procurement proposals but subsequently do not undertake the purchase. States, therefore, must prepare a complete procurement roadmap covering seed availability, distribution, production and market arrangements. Shri Chouhan also suggested that States consult farmers while preparing seed plans and make effective use of the network of Krishi Vigyan Kendras.

Balanced Fertiliser Use and Expansion of ‘Khet Bachao Abhiyan’

Shri Chouhan called for greater emphasis on balanced use of fertilisers, noting that if one bag is sufficient for a crop, there is no reason to apply two. Excessive application raises cultivation costs and can affect soil health. He urged States to extend the ‘Khet Bachao Abhiyan’, launched during the Kharif season, to Rabi as well. He cited the experience of southern States where fertilizer use has declined without affecting production, and called for these experiences to be shared and replicated. States should encourage farmers to adopt balanced fertiliser application with support from agricultural scientists, he said, adding that the Centre is ready to provide scientific assistance wherever required. Shri Chouhan also stressed the need for timely availability and distribution of fertilisers. Just as seed must reach farmers before sowing, fertilisers must also be available at the right time. He referred to pilot initiatives based on Farmer ID to strengthen distribution and ensure that fertilisers reach genuine farmers while preventing diversion and black marketing. He said the Centre is currently spending around ₹2 lakh crore on fertiliser subsidy, while farmers continue to receive fertilisers at subsidised prices, including urea at ₹266 per bag and DAP at ₹1,350 per bag. Ensuring balanced use of this subsidised input, he said, is also a responsibility of the

States. The ‘Khet Bachao Abhiyan’, he said, is not only about reducing excessive fertilizer use but also about protecting soil health, beneficial organisms and the productive capacity of farmland for future generations.

Natural Farming: Focus on Branding, Marketing and Certification

Shri Chouhan said farmers are increasingly prepared to adopt natural farming and registration has also progressed, but States must now focus on branding and marketing of natural farm products. Citing Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, he said these States have developed brands for natural farming products and established their market identity, helping them command better prices. States should also ensure that certification does not become a barrier for farmers and that natural products receive appropriate market recognition.

Farmer Credit Card and Farmer ID Need Greater Coverage

Shri Chouhan said around 9.54 crore farmer families have been covered under the PM-KISAN scheme, but the coverage of Kisan Credit Cards remains inadequate in several areas, particularly among small and marginal farmers. He asked States to identify areas where KCC coverage remains low and examine bottlenecks in loan sanctioning at the banking level so that farmers can access credit in time for agricultural investment. He clarified that the objective is not to push farmers towards borrowing, but to ensure that farmers who need timely capital for agriculture have access to institutional credit. On Farmer ID and AgriStack, Shri Chouhan congratulated States for the progress made and called for completing the remaining work at a faster pace, including land parcel-related work. A robust digital foundation, he said, will help resolve farmers’ problems and enable more efficient delivery of government schemes. He also stressed that tenant farmers and farmers cultivating land at different locations must not be left out of the Farmer ID framework and called for coordinated efforts to bring them into the system.

Weekly Monitoring of Crops, Disease and Market Prices

Shri Chouhan called for weekly monitoring in every State of crop conditions, sowing progress, germination, pest and disease attacks and market prices. He said real-time information would enable authorities to identify emerging problems and take corrective action without delay. The Agriculture Department and relevant agencies should maintain close surveillance of the situation on the ground. He said the Ministry also conducts weekly reviews at the national level covering crop conditions, market rates and disease outbreaks, enabling timely intervention wherever required.

On this occasion, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare, Shri Atish Chandra emphasised that, amid changing weather patterns, uneven rainfall and moisture-related challenges in rainfed areas, it is essential to promote agricultural diversification, sustainable farming and research-based agricultural practices.

He further emphasised the need to take concrete steps to enhance farmers’ incomes and realise the goal of self-reliant agriculture through initiatives such as ‘Per Drop More Crop’, soil health management, modern agricultural infrastructure, robust market mechanisms and digital agriculture solutions, ensuring their reach to the last mile.

Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR, Dr. Mangi Lal Jat in his address identified self-reliance, crop diversification, climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture, digital agriculture, and risk mitigation as key priorities for the upcoming Rabi campaign. He emphasised promoting oilseed and pulse production, with a special focus on crop diversification through targeted strategies in rice-fallow areas. He said that

this would require the development of a comprehensive technological package covering everything from crop and suitable variety selection to quality seeds, mechanisation, biological solutions and seed treatment.

Dr. Jat informed that during the upcoming season, large-scale demonstrations of green ammonia are planned across 10,000 acres in 37 districts of six states.

Two-Day Conference to Shape Rabi Action Plan

The two-day National Agriculture Conference brings together senior officials from the Centre and States, ICAR scientists and the Agriculture Ministry's teams. The first day will feature three rounds of thematic group discussions covering self-reliance and diversification; sustainability and climate-resilient agriculture; and digital agriculture, infrastructure, financing and risk management. On September 29, Shri Chouhan will hold detailed discussions with Agriculture Ministers of the States. The deliberations will cover the weather outlook for the Rabi season, fertiliser availability, the Digital Agriculture Mission, Farmer Registry, missions on pulses and edible oils, the PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana, marketing reforms, and planning through ATMA and KVKs, among other issues. The concluding session will consolidate the outcomes of the discussions and prepare a robust action plan for increasing Rabi production, empowering farmers and advancing the vision of a self-reliant and developed India. Agriculture Ministers from the States will also have an opportunity to share their experiences, priorities and suggestions on agricultural development and Rabi preparedness. Inputs from the States and the outcomes of the thematic discussions are expected to contribute to a coordinated and outcome-oriented strategy for Rabi Campaign 2026.

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