

Punjab sets aside Rs.18,998 crore for wheat procurement | Forex, Pakistan

Written by Shumaila Ahmed
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Targetting a record procurement of over 140 lakh tonnes this season, the Punjab government has set aside Rs.18,998 crore for wheat procurement this season.

A Punjab government spokesman said here Thursday said that as a part of the first instalment, the state government has received Rs.13,529 crore from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the wheat procurement in the month of April.

Procurement in the agrarian state officially began April 1. Bulk stocks of wheat crop are expected to arrive in grain markets after the Baisakhi festival (April 13-14).

The spokesman said that the RBI will release the balance amount by April-end, which would be used for the wheat procurement in the months of May and June.

He said that elaborate arrangements have been made to make payment to the farmers within 48 hours of the procurement of their crop and lifting of the crop procured would be ensured after 72 hours of the procurement.

"Punjab is all set for achieving a new record in wheat procurement as the biggest ever procurement operation has begun," a spokesman of the food and supplies department said here.

According to state agriculture department, 161.59 lakh tonnes of wheat production is expected this year.

The state government will set up 1,770 procurement centres this time. The minimum support price (MSP) for wheat has been fixed at Rs.1,350 per quintal this time.

In 2012, Punjab had procured a record 129.35 lakh tonnes of wheat.

Over 95 percent of the wheat produced in the state is procured by government agencies. These include the Punjab government's Pungrain, Markfed, Punsup, Punjab State Warehousing Corporation and Punjab Agro Industries and the central government's Food Corporation of India (FCI).

Punjab is the biggest contributor (over 60 percent) of food grain to the national kitty despite having just 1.54 per cent of the country's geographical area.

Courtesy: Daily News