

PARLIAMENT QUESTION: SOUTH-WEST MONSOON FORECAST

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The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued its First Stage Long Range Forecast for the 2026 Southwest Monsoon Season on 13th April 2026, predicting below-normal seasonal rainfall at 92% of the Long Period Average (LPA). This was updated in the Second Stage forecast to 90% of the LPA, while anticipating the development of El Niño conditions. In line with these predictions, June recorded 35% below-normal rainfall with 70% of districts experiencing deficits. Although July recorded 1% above the LPA on an all-India scale due to strong rainfall in Central India, significant spatial disparities remained, with 47% of districts facing deficient or large-deficient rainfall. As of 2nd August 2026, cumulative seasonal rainfall stands at 12% below the LPA, which remains broadly consistent with IMD's initial seasonal forecast despite expected intra-seasonal variations.

As predicted, weak El Niño conditions formed over the equatorial Pacific in June 2026 and intensified to moderate strength, acting as a major large-scale climate driver in suppressing monsoon circulation across the country. This phenomenon directly contributed to the overall 12% cumulative deficit and widespread regional rain deficits affecting 47 % districts as of early August. The primary implications of these El Niño conditions include prolonged dry spells, localized meteorological drought, lower soil moisture, and moisture stress on rain-fed crops and water reservoir levels. IMD is continuously monitoring these climate drivers and issuing updated advisories to assist relevant Ministries and State Governments in disaster preparedness and agricultural planning.

Cumulative rainfall up to 5th August 2026 revealed substantial spatial deviations across meteorological subdivisions. Significant rainfall deficiencies (ranging between 20% and 38% below normal) were recorded across sixteen subdivisions, including Bihar (-38%), Arunachal Pradesh (-36%), Assam & Meghalaya (-35%), Coastal A.P. & Yanam (-35%), Lakshadweep (-33%), Punjab (-33%), Rayalaseema (-32%), East Uttar Pradesh (-30%), Jharkhand (-30%), Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi (-26%), Kerala & Mahe (-22%), East Madhya Pradesh (-22%), East Rajasthan (-22%), Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram & Tripura (NMMT) (-21%), Coastal Karnataka (-21%), and South Interior Karnataka (-20%), among others. Deficient regions face potential crop stress and reduced water storage. IMD continues to provide sub-divisional alerts to guide proactive risk management by Central and State agencies.

This information was given by the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences Dr. Jitendra Singh in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

(रिलीज़ आईडी: 2298071) आगंतुक पटल : 958

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