

Skymet Weather Forecasts Below Normal Monsoon for India in 2019

New Delhi, India April 3, 2019: Skymet, India's leading weather forecasting and agriculture risk solutions company has released its Monsoon forecast for 2019. Skymet expects the upcoming Monsoon to be 'below normal' to the tune of 93% (with an error margin of +/-4%) of the long period average (LPA) of 887 mm for the four-month period from June to September.

In terms of geographical risk, Skymet expects that East India along with major portion of Central India is likely to be at a higher risk of being rain deficient, especially during the first half of the season.

The onset month of June is going to have a very sluggish start and deficit rains are likely to spill into July. Second half of the season would see better rainfall wherein August is expected to be a shade better than September, but both the months would manage to see normal rains. Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Coastal Andhra Pradesh are most likely to see normal rains throughout the season.

According to Jatin Singh, MD, Skymet, "The Pacific Ocean has become strongly warmer than average. The model projections call for 80% chance of El Niño during March-May, dropping to 60% for June to August. This means, it is going to be a devolving El Niño year, though retaining threshold values all through the season. Thus, Monsoon 2019 is likely to be below normal".

In its preliminary Monsoon forecast guidance on February 25, 2019, Skymet had predicted normal rains. While the probability of normal Monsoon was kept at about 50%, the forecast also attached the significant chance of rainfall ending in below normal range. This was in association with January projections where in chances of El Niño were fading rapidly.

However, the scenario changed completely in February and presently, moderate El Niño conditions are prevailing over the Pacific Ocean. In fact, El Niño could be declared anytime now. Three-monthly Nino index shows that by MJJ (May-June-July), there is a 66% chance of El Niño, 32% chance of neutral and 2% of La Niña.

The savior factor could be IOD (Indian Ocean Dipole) which is likely to be in the neutral or positive phase during the Monsoon. Thus, it may be able to absorb some of the El Niño blues and possibly would support rainfall during the second half of Monsoon.

Meanwhile, another oceanic parameter of MJO (Madden-Julian oscillation) is currently sailing faraway in the Pacific. In any case, it is too early to comment on its impact on Monsoon.

Pre-Monsoon heat is considered as a trigger for enhancing Monsoon rains. However, heat was missing during March that recorded below average temperatures across the country. However, there has been a rising trend in temperatures in April and its continuation in May is likely to pave way for intense heat before the onset of Monsoon.

According to Skymet, Monsoon probabilities for JJAS are:

- 0% chance of excess (seasonal rainfall that is more than 110% of LPA)
- 0% chance of above normal (seasonal rainfall that is between 105 to 110% of LPA)
- 30% chance of normal (seasonal rainfall that is between 96 to 104% of LPA)
- 55% chance of below normal (seasonal rainfall that is between 90 to 95% of LPA)

- 15% chance of drought (seasonal rainfall that is less than 90% of LPA)

On a monthly scale, the precipitation foreshadow is as follows:

June – 77% of LPA (LPA for June = 164 mm)

- 15% chance of normal
- 10% chance of above normal
- 75% chance of below normal

July – 91% of LPA (LPA for July= 289 mm)

- 35% chance of normal
- 10% chance of above normal
- 55% chance of below normal

August – 102% of LPA (LPA for August = 261 mm)

- 55% chance of normal
- 15% chance of above normal
- 30% chance of below normal

September – 99% of LPA (LPA for September = 173 mm)

- 55% chance of normal
- 15% chance of above normal
- 30% chance of below normal

Skymet is India's largest weather monitoring and agri-risk solutions company. It has an expertise in measuring, predicting and limiting climate risk to agriculture. For the past 15 years, Skymet has been catering to weather analytics and data needs of media, insurance and agriculture. Government of Maharashtra, Government of Gujarat, NSDMA, SBI, USAID, Reliance Infra, World Bank, HDFC ERGO, IFC, Agriculture Insurance Corporation of India Limited (AICIL), ICICI LOMBARD, The Hindustan Times, The Hindu and The Telegraph have been some of its clients. Skymet is backed by ag-tech venture capitalist Omnivore Partners, InsuResilience Investment Fund and dmgs::information.