

DRY DREAD HITS NATION

Drought fear looms large as country gets deficient rainfall till June 18

By Mail Today Bureau in New Delhi

INDIA is staring at the spectre of a possible drought as the progress of the monsoon has been abysmally slow, with authorities saying cumulative rainfall across the country has been 45 per cent below the average for this period. Reason: the El Niño effect is adversely affecting this year's monsoon, say weather experts. The India Meteorological Department (IMD), in its latest report, has highlighted the weak and delayed onset of the monsoon. An analysis for the period from June 1-18 also showed that rainfall has been deficient across the country.

WE SAID IT MAIL TODAY

IMD's latest report on the progress of the monsoon is not good news for the government, which is struggling to rein in galloping inflation.

MONSOON ELUDES PARCHED INDIA

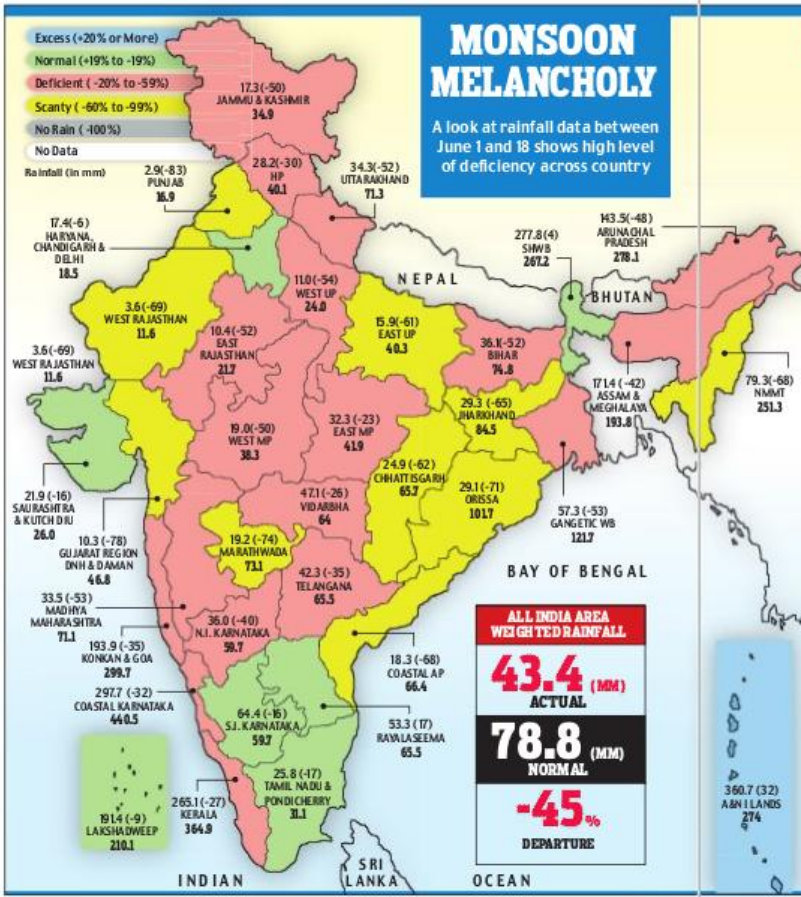
Met. Dept on June 3 had reported the story on drought fears.

The cumulative rainfall across the country has so far been 45 per cent below the Long Period Average (LPA) for 1951-2010. More worryingly, rainfall was 53 per cent below the average in north-west India.

In central India—which includes Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Andhra—only 31.7 mm rainfall has been recorded so far this month, which is 23 per cent below the LPA. The normal level of rain for this region is 68.2 mm.

A further bleak omen of rain deficit in different meteorological subdivisions shows that no-rain rainfall has been recorded in only seven of the 36 regions. It has been deficient in 18 and scanty in 10 subdivisions. Only one subdivision reported no rain.

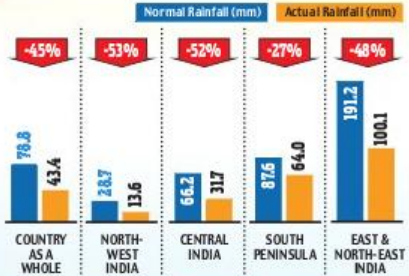
The country received around 43



- MET ANALYSIS AS ON JUNE 20**
- A low pressure area lies over Gangetic West Bengal and neighbourhood with an associated upper air cyclonic circulation extending upto 5.8 km above mean sea level.
 - A trough at mean sea level runs from Punjab to north Bay of Bengal across Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and centre of above low pressure area.
 - A feeble off-shore trough runs from Maharashtra coast to Kerala coast.
 - A western disturbance as an upper air cyclonic circulation extending upto 31 km above mean sea level lies over Jammu & Kashmir and neighbourhood.

SEASONAL RAINFALL SCENARIO (JUNE 1-18)

For the country as a whole, cumulative rainfall during this year's monsoon up to June 18 has been 45% below the Long Period Average (LPA).



The abysmal rainfall this year is going to worsen the already-critical water situation in Delhi as it falls in the north-west region of the country.

mm of rainfall, which is much below the normal level of 78 mm. The IMD report on the progress of the monsoon is not good news for the government, which is struggling to rein in galloping inflation.

The weatherman's last monsoon update had pegged the rainfall at 93 per cent of the average, and even that was enough to give a headache to economic planners. With oil prices

Apart from central India, the north-western region has suffered enormously, receiving only 13.6 mm of fresh rain, way below the normal level of 28.7 mm.

rising because of the crisis in Iraq, the government cannot afford a completely failed monsoon. The month of June, when the monsoon should have gathered pace to cover many parts of the country, has seen scanty rainfall and experts are warning that the deficiency will be wiped out in the remaining three months of the season.

Apart from central India, the north-western region has

suffered enormously, receiving only 13.6 mm of rainfall, way below the normal level of 28.7 mm. Even the southern states have received only 64 mm, down from the 87.8 mm that is normal for the region. The period between June 12 and 18 was particularly bad with the entire country reporting deficient or scanty rains across the board.

Not only has the rainfall been deficient, the progress of the monsoon has been slow. It is still to reach places in central Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, where it

should have entered by now. Eastern India faced comparatively better but deficiency in the northern peninsula and central India has set a alarm bells ringing.

According to the IMD report, a low pressure area has built over the Gangetic West Bengal and its neighbourhood, extending up to 5.8 km above mean sea level.

The cyclonic storm 'Nanang' in the Arabian Sea, which was considered to be bad for the monsoon, has moved northwards into a deep ocean, also setting a low pressure area.

The IMD's forecast for next

week is that most parts of the country will receive scattered and isolated rains. West Bengal will remain mainly dry while most of the north-western states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Assam can expect widespread rain.

Western Uttar Pradesh and Delhi will receive isolated and scattered rainfall. According to

IMD's classification, isolated rainfall is less than 25 per cent of precipitation while scattered rainfall is 25 to 50 per cent of total.

In the southern peninsula, only coastal Karnataka is expected to receive wide spread rain more than 50 per cent rains.

The weak monsoon has been reported at a time when the government is in the process of preparing its first budget. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already promised tough

measures. With many parts of the country facing prospects of drought, an early budget from inflation is not in sight.

During his recent address to a joint sitting of Parliament to outline the new government's plans and policies, President Pranab Mukherjee had said the administration was alert to the "possibility of a sub-normal monsoon" and was preparing contingency plans. Unseasonal and irregular rains from February to April have damaged rice crops, especially wheat, and a below normal monsoon is bound to affect other crops, particularly soy.

Source: Mail Today June 23.06.2014