

## **A Normal Monsoon - Not For Crops**

### **What is the issue?**

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- Indian Metrological Department has recognised the latest south-west monsoon rainfall as 'normal' in statistical terms.

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- However, the spatial and temporal distribution of rains shows a different picture.

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### **What is a normal monsoon year?**

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- Long-Period Average (LPA) rainfall of India for the entire monsoon season is around 887 mm.

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- IMD deems a season 'normal' if the all-India quantum of rain falls within a 10% range of the LPA.

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- In this south-west monsoon season (June to September), India has received a total 841.3 mm of rain.

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- This is short of the LPA by 5%.

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- Thus, statistically south-west monsoon for 2017 has turned out to be normal.

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### **Why is it not 'normal' for agriculture?**

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- IMD categorises India into 36 meteorological sub-divisions for measuring the spatial spread of rainfall.

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- In this monsoon, 5 of the 36 sub-divisions received excess rains, 25 received normal rains and 6 witnessed deficient rains.

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- Also, the first two months of the season witnessed an excess rainfall than the latter two.

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- Thus, however the quantum of rainfall this season was normal, the distribution was quite unusual.

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- Notably, the spatial and temporal distribution of rains decides the crop prospects.

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### **What could the impact be?**

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- **Spatial variation** - This year's monsoon has been deficient in some key food-bowl States, affecting crop production. E.g.

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1. Deficient rains in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab is bound to affect kharif rice production.
2. Deficient rains in Madhya Pradesh would impact rabi wheat crop and pulses output.
3. Patchy distribution in Madhya Pradesh and Haryana could affect oilseeds' prospects.

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- Besides, there are wide variations within each state between growing regions.

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- **Temporal variation** - This year witnessed excess rains in June and July

contributing to good sowing and coverage of the kharif crops.

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- However, August and September months saw below normal rains, impacting the eventual output by reducing crop yields.

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- Also, rainfall in these two months decides reservoir storage and soil moisture and eventually helps planting of the winter crops.

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- Notably, the rabi season and winter crops has been equally important to the agricultural prospects in recent years.

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- Therefore, dry spells in the latter half of this monsoon, taken with deficient rains in key rabi growing regions, has reduced rabi prospects.

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**Source: The Hindu**

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