

# IMD says monsoon will be 'normal'

New Delhi, Sept 19

**G**OING back on its earlier forecast of an 'above normal' monsoon, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday said the monsoon will be 'normal' this year due to delay in the La Nina weather pattern.

The monsoon this year will be below 100% of the long period average, ministry of earth sciences secretary Madhavan Nair Rajeevan said.

IMD director general KJ Ramesh said, "The monsoon will be normal this year."

The activation phase of La Nina which was supposed to boost rainfall in September, got delayed, resulting in lesser than anticipated amount of rain this year, the state-run weather agency said.



The monsoon, which delivers 70% of India's annual rainfall, is critical for the country's 263 million farmers and their rice, sugarcane, corn, cotton and soybean crops because nearly half of its farmland lacks irrigation.

Last month, Skymet, a private weather forecasting agency, had lowered its forecast from 'above normal' to 'normal'. But the IMD had stuck to its earlier forecast of 'above normal' monsoon.

India has been hit by drought in the last two years, with the last monsoon being affected by El Nino.

However, it was expected that this year there would be a gradual transition to La Nina phenomenon, which would have boosted monsoon and given 'excess' rain in September.

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