IMD’s Monsoon forecast

Why in News?

India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecasted a normal monsoon this year (2020).

Why is this forecast an unseen benefit?

- This forecast has come as a positive aspect in the gloomy atmosphere created by Covid-19 outbreak.
- This prediction bodes well for agriculture, hydel power generation and other water-dependent industries.
- The agriculture and allied activities sector can be expected to excel at 3.5% level of growth in 2020-21 regardless of the Covid-19 onslaught.
- The optimism on this count is supported by the remarkable current water profile of the country.

What is India’s current water profile?

- The Central Water Commission’s estimation of water stock in 123 major reservoirs is at 63% above the previous year’s corresponding level.
- This can help meet the water needs of agriculture and domestic sectors during the approaching dry summer.
- The economy as a whole can hope to gain from the buoyant agriculture.
- However, this is conditional upon the success in shielding the farm sector against the crippling impact of the pandemic.

What did the IMD do?

- The IMD has outlined the revised “normal dates” for the onset, progress, and withdrawal of the monsoon in different regions.
- This revision is based on the experience of the past few decades.
- Thus, it virtually altered India’s monsoon-dictated cropping calendar.

What are the revised dates?

- The duration of the monsoon season stands stretched from 4½ months (June to mid-October) to the 4 months deemed earlier.
- **Onset** -The normal date of the onset of the monsoon over Kerala remains

unchanged at June 1.

- **Progress** - Now, its further advance to the middle regions of the country tends to take 3 to 7 days longer.
- Yet it manages to cover the entire country by July 8, nearly a week earlier than the previously deemed normal time of mid-July.
- **Withdrawal** - Reworked date of the monsoon's withdrawal from the country is now October 15, instead of September-end.

What could the IMD improve on?

- The above deviations have a significant bearing on planning for sowing and harvesting crops and other monsoon-related activities.
- However, whether these deviations are attributable to climate change or not may be debatable.
- This means that there is a good credibility for the short- and medium-term forecasts of the IMD.
- But the IMD's **long-period weather predictions** are yet to acquire such a kind of credibility.

What changes could the IMD make?

- IMD's preliminary monsoon projections go wrong most often.
- At times, the updated versions and the region-wise forecasts released later on also prove incorrect.
- Forecast of distribution of the rainfall comes only when the rainy season is already underway and the crop sowing has taken place.
- That is too late to be of much avail for the farmers and policy planners.
- Therefore, the IMD must sharpen the monsoon rainfall foretelling models.
- It needs to take efforts to upgrade its supercomputers and models to warn of weather changes at the district level.

Source: Business Standard

Quick Facts

India Meteorological Department (IMD)

- IMD is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It is responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology.
- It is headquartered in Pune with regional offices at Mumbai, Kolkata, Nagpur and Delhi.



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