Issues with IMD’s Monsoon Prediction

Why in news?

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In recent times the monsoon predictions of Indian Meteorological Department is not accurate.

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What are the issues with recent prediction of IMD?

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- Proving the India Meteorological Department (IMD) wrong yet again, the monsoon has gone through its four-month term (June to September) with a net rainfall paucity of 9 per cent, bordering the drought threshold of 10 per cent.
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- The distribution of monsoon in this season is also wrong when compared with reality.
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- Its long-term monsoon rainfall prognosis issued in mid-April had put the likely precipitation at 97 per cent of normal.
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- It was kept at the same level even in the updated forecast released on May 30, but the actual rainfall turned out to be way below at 91 per cent.
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What are the observations from recent monsoons?

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- The monthly rainfall has remained below par throughout the season with the deficit mounting progressively from 5 per cent in June to 6 per cent in July, 8 per cent in August and 24 per cent in September.

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- Moreover, the maximum rainfall shortage of about 24 per cent has been recorded in the east and north-eastern zones, where the paucity of this order is least expected.
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- The other regions have witnessed only marginal shortfalls in rain just 1 per cent in the northwest and south peninsula and 6 per cent in central India.
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- Moreover, the influence of climate change on the monsoon, in evidence in recent years, has been revalidated this year as well.
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- It is most pronounced in the departure of the monsoon, which now starts from around the end of September instead of the beginning of this month.
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- In recent years, its retreat commenced from September 23 in 2014, September 28 in 2015, October 7 in 2016, September 27 in 2017 and September 29 this year.
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What are the outcomes of the extended monsoon?

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- On the whole, the monsoon has proved benevolent for agriculture and other sectors.
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- This is borne out by the facts that farm production is expected to exceed last year’s peak, the water stock in reservoirs is plentiful.
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- The prospects of hydel power generation are promising, rural demand is looking up, and food inflation is under control and likely to remain so.
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- Kharif sowing has surpassed last year’s record acreage and crop output is projected officially to outstrip last season’s 140.73 million tonnes to an all-time high of over 141 million tonnes.
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What is the way forward?

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- Private weather forecaster Skymet had erroneously claimed the likely

seasonal rainfall to be 100 per cent normal in its preliminary forecast in April.
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- But it managed to make amends subsequently by lowering the estimate to 92 per cent, which proved closer to the mark.
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- While private players with limited resources are predicting the weather accurately it is worrisome with the outputs of IMD.
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- Thus considerable scope for the IMD to refine its monsoon prediction skills to enhance its credibility.
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Source: Business Standard

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