Monsoon: A Boon

Why in news?

India is having a good run with the monsoon, which is good news for farmers and the economy.

What would happen generally?

- June is the month during which the monsoon sets in.
- June is also when the monsoon begins its journey from two extremities of the country.
- One branch starts its journey northwards from Kerala and the other branch enters India from the southeast.
- Both branches eventually converge in the north.
- Usually, this merging of the monsoon currents over the mainland takes at least until July 15.

What happened this year?

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) data reveals that rainfall during the season has been 14% more than what is usual for this period.
- The month of June only accounts for about 17% of the monsoon rainfall spanning June-September.

What are the two significant factors?

- The first factor was that the monsoon set in at a textbook date of June 1.
- Another factor was the record pace at which the monsoon covered the whole country.
- According to IMD, the monsoon would cover India's northern and western borders no later than July 8.
- This year, however, the monsoon broke even this speed limit and covered the country by June 25.

What is the net result of all this?

- The net result is that there were **more rainy days in June**.
- A **fairly even distribution** across the country was also observed.
- Rainfall in east, south and central India posted surpluses of 13%-20%

- Only in northwest India, the rainfall is staring at a 3% deficit.
- While good rains in June signal farmers to prepare the soil and sow kharif crop, the most important months are July and August.
- These two months account for two-thirds of the monsoon rain.
- This is also the time the monsoon goes into so-called ‘break’ conditions.
- Prolonged breaks, or an absence of rainfall, can even lead to drought.

What is needed?

- In spite of the technological advancements, meteorological agencies cannot reliably forecast the advent of a break or how long it can last.
- Therefore, short and medium range forecasts need to be strengthened and effectively communicated to the people.

Source: The Hindu

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