

IMD predicts 'near normal' monsoon this year

NEW DELHI, April 15 (IANS): The monsoon in the country this year is predicted to be "near normal" with the well-distributed rainfall expected to be around 96 per cent, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday.

The prediction stands at a moderate error estimate of plus-minus five per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA), IMD Director General K.J. Ramesh said and ruled out any adverse impact of 'El Nino' on the monsoon such as erratic rainfall.

He told a press conference here that 'El Nino', which is developing in the Pacific Ocean, will start weakening by June, thus ensuring that the country gets normal rainfall, which will be beneficial to farmers during the kharif season.

El Nino is sea surface temperature situation over

Pacific Ocean that is said to have strong negative influence on Indian monsoon, though no direct link has been established yet.

Last year, the IMD had forecast 97 per cent long-term average rainfall, but the actual rainfall stood at 91 per cent at the end of the monsoon season.

"The country is expected to have well-distributed rainfall scenario. The rain distribution will be uniform," Ramesh said.

The average, or normal, rainfall in the country is defined between 96 and 104 per cent of a 50-year average for the entire four-month monsoon season—LPA—which is 887 mm.

Addressing the media on the first Long Range Forecast, M. Rajeevan Nair, Secretary in the Ministry of Earth Sciences, said India is going to have a normal

monsoon in 2019.

"The south-west monsoon is likely to be normal. El Nino would get weaker after June, thus ruling out possibility of drought," Nair said.

About two weeks ago, private weather forecaster Skymet had said that this monsoon would likely to be "below normal" at 93 per cent owing to developing El Nino in the Pacific Ocean, posing higher risk for the eastern parts and a major portion of central part of the country being rain deficient.

The IMD will come up with the second Long Range Forecast in the first week of June in which quantitative analysis will be done, with predication for the every meteorological sub-division in the country.

Nair said information about the onset of monsoon will be given on May 15.