

IMD predicts normal monsoon, for now

By Sunderarajan Padmanabhan

New Delhi (India Science Wire): The India Meteorological Department on Tuesday announced that the coming south west monsoon season would be normal with a rainfall of 96 per cent of the long period average with a model error of plus or minus five percent.

Addressing a press conference, IMD Director General, K.J.Ramesh, said this was the first stage long term forecast of the monsoon. The second stage forecast will be made in early June.

At that time, along with an updated nation-wide and season wise forecast, separate forecasts for monthly (July and August) rainfall over the country as a whole and seasonal (June to September) rainfall over various geographical regions of the country would also be issued.

He said forecasters around the world are facing a major problem this year as there were lot of uncertainties with regard to sea surface temperature conditions in the equatorial Pacific and Indian Ocean.

There are indications that the temperatures over the Pacific Ocean could become more than normal during the later part of the monsoon season. This could mean possibility of development of weak El Nino conditions around that time. El Nino conditions are generally not considered good for Indian monsoon, though there was one one-to-one relationship.

As regard the Indian Ocean, a phenomenon called Indian Ocean Dipole (Iod) influences the Indian monsoon. A positive IOD generally has a good impact and a negative IOD has an adverse effect. As of now, the IOD is neutral and there are indications that it could develop into positive IOD during the middle of the monsoon season and remain so for some months.

But over time, the El Nino and IOD conditions could change. "We will keep a constant watch on the situation. We will get more information on the evolution of El Nino and IOD by the time we come out with the second stage forecast in early June. The update issued would then be more clear", Ramesh said. (India Science Wire)