India’s wettest June in 12 years

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India experienced its wettest month of June in 12 years with 18% above-normal rainfall on the back of timely monsoon onset and its swift advance across the country. While all four regions have recorded surplus rains, central India as well as east and northeast have received the heaviest showers.

Early figures for kharif season sowing reflects the good rainfall so far, with 315.6 lakh hectare already under cultivation, which is 68% higher than the normal for the week, as per agriculture ministry data from June 26. While the area under rice was 5.7 lakh hectare higher than normal, significantly higher sowing was also recorded in pulses, course cereals, oilseeds and cotton.

India received 196.2mm of rain during the June, highest since 2008, when 202mm was recorded during the month, as per India Meteorological Department records. June’s normal rainfall is currently pegged at 166.9mm. June is the first of the four monsoon months and rainfall during this month often sets the tone for kharif sowing. This year’s June rainfall was in sharp contrast to June last year, which had ended with a massive 33% rain deficit.

Northwest plains yet to see significant monsoon rains

This year’s June rainfall was in sharp contrast to June last year, which was the driest June in the previous five years. Despite that, the 2019 monsoon had turned out to be the wettest since 1994, with 10% higher rainfall than the long period average.

“India received good and uniformly distributed rainfall this June. Out of the 36 meteorological subdivisions, only six have recorded deficient rains,” said Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, head of IMD. The monsoon covered the country on June 26, 12 days ahead of the normal date of July 8. Mohapatra said three weather systems aided the monsoon’s swift progress.

“The first was low pressure system in Arabian Sea in the end of May, which later intensified into Cyclone Nisarga. It aided the monsoon’s onset over Kerala and, because it moved north towards the Maharashtra-Gujarat coast, it helped monsoon’s further progress as well. Then, two low-pressure systems, one coming from the Bay of Bengal around June 12 and the other in the third week of the month, pushed the monsoon into the rest of the country,” Mohapatra said.

However, while central India, with nearly 31% above-normal rainfall, and east and northeast (16% above normal) have received the maximum rainfall bounty so far, plains of northwest India are yet to see significant monsoon activity.