

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Monsoon Recovery Fails to Boost Sluggish Crop Planting

Country: India

Post: Mumbai

Report Category: Cotton and Products, Grain and Feed, Oilseeds and Products, Agricultural Situation, Sugar

Prepared By: Dhruv Sood

Approved By: Nicole Podesta

Report Highlights:

By August 1st, India's 2026 southwest monsoon has reduced the cumulative seasonal rainfall deficit to 11.5 percent below the long period average (LPA). Despite this surge, Kharif crop sowing remains sluggish, with total planted acreage trailing by 3.88 million hectares year-on-year as of late July. Live storage in 166 major reservoirs stands at 44.39 percent of capacity. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasts below normal rainfall (less than 94 percent of LPA) for both August 2026 and the second half of the monsoon season (August to September 2026), driven by strengthening El Niño conditions. Government extension advisories are actively directing farmers toward climate resilient practices.

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this report was retrieved from the Ministry of Earth Sciences/Indian Meteorological Department's (IMD) website <https://mausam.imd.gov.in/>. The U.S. Consulate General Mumbai – Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Office of Agricultural Affairs (OAA), USDA and/or the U.S. government make no claim of accuracy or authenticity. The Government of India has not officially endorsed this report.

Monsoon Status

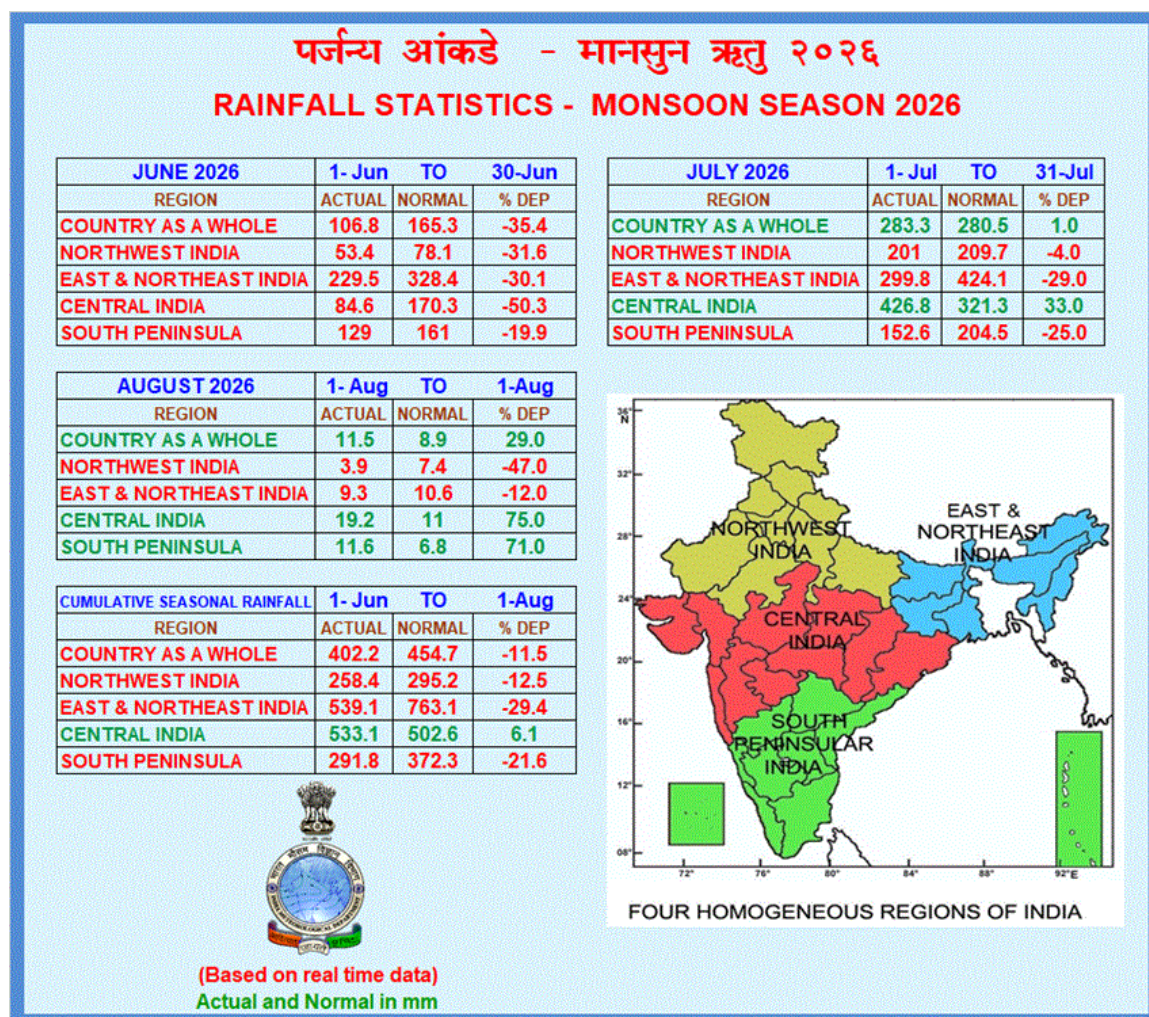
The 2026 southwest monsoon covered the entire country by July 9, following a contrasting two-month start, with a weak and erratic onset in June followed by a strong recovery in July. A delayed, erratic onset in June caused a severe nationwide deficit of 35.4 percent (106.8 millimeters or mm actual vs. 165.3 mm normal) that heavily impacted rainfed agricultural belts in central and northwest India. July brought a strong monsoonal recovery driven by low-pressure systems and a depression, delivering one percent above-normal rainfall (283.3 mm actual vs. 280.5 mm normal) and lifting central India to a 33 percent surplus. This surge significantly narrowed the cumulative seasonal deficit from a peak of nearly 19 percent down to 11.5 percent below the long period average (LPA) by August 1 (402.2 mm actual vs. 454.7 mm normal).

Table 1. Cumulative Seasonal Rainfall (June 1 to August 1, 2026)

Region	Actual Rainfall (mm)	Normal Rainfall (mm)	Departure (%)
Country as a Whole	402.2	454.7	-11.5%
Northwest India	258.4	295.2	-12.5%
East and Northeast India	539.1	763.1	-29.4%
Central India	533.1	502.6	+6.1%
South Peninsula	291.8	372.3	-21.6%

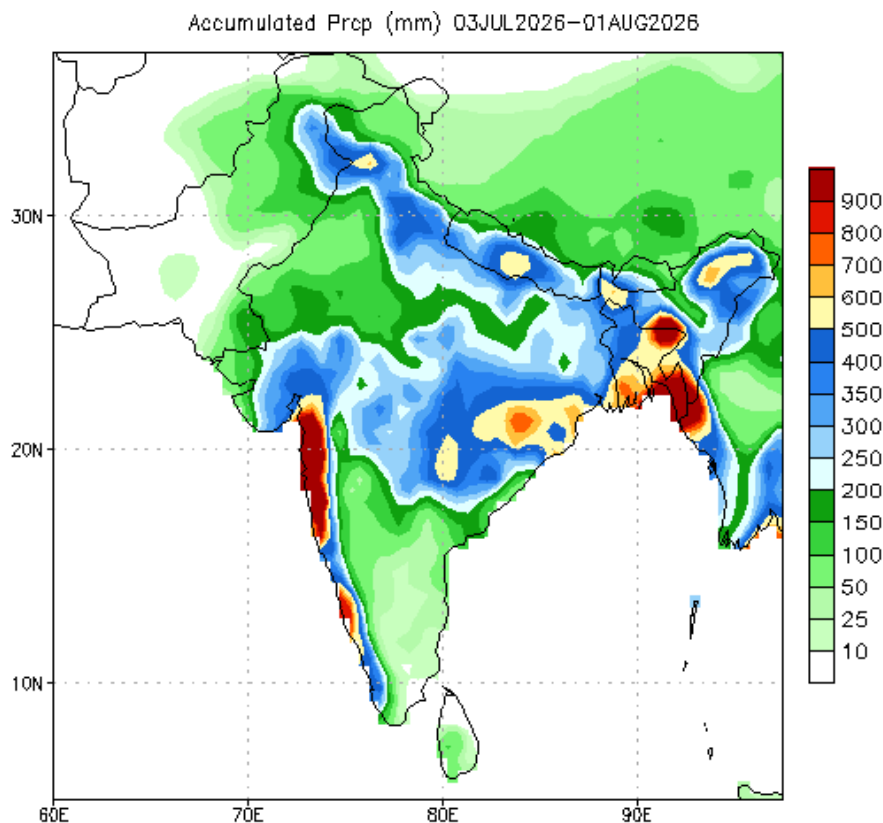
Source: India Meteorological Department

Figure 1. Rainfall Statistics



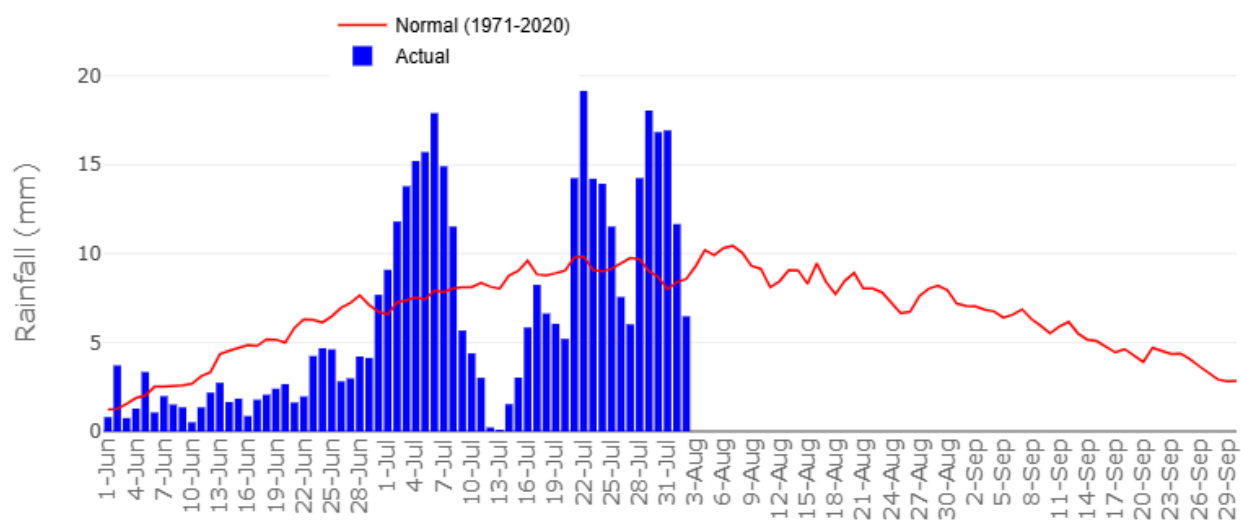
Source: Indian Meteorological Department, Ministry of Earth Sciences

Figure 2. 30-Day Total Precipitation (Jul 03 – Aug 01)



Source: [Climate Prediction Center, National Weather Service, NOAA](#)

Figure 3. Daily Average Rainfall over the Core Monsoon Zone (Jul 01- Aug 02)



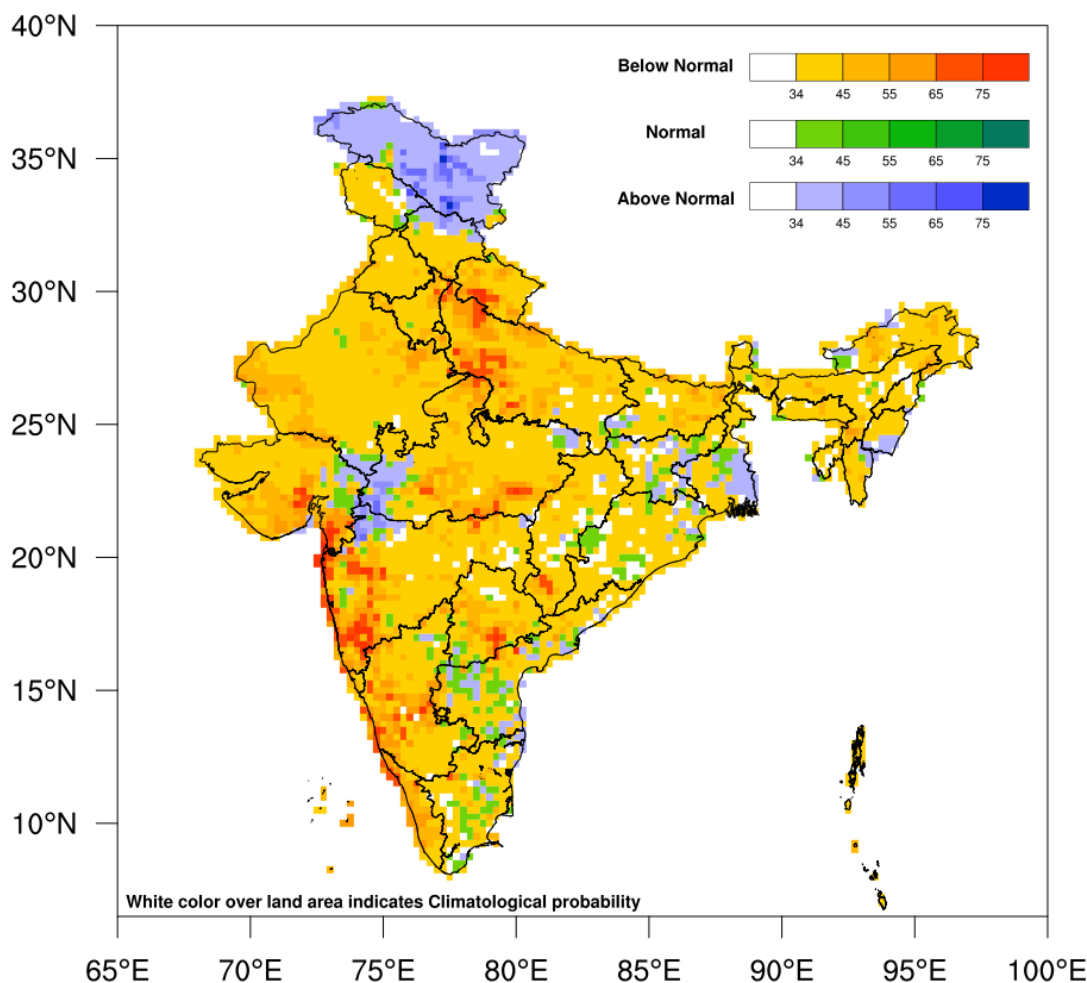
Source: Indian Meteorological Department, Ministry of Earth Sciences

Monsoon Outlook

For the second half of the 2026 monsoon season (August–September), IMD [forecasts](#) nationwide rainfall to be below normal, staying under 94 percent of the 422.8 mm LPA across most regions. August rainfall is similarly projected to fall below 94 percent of its monthly LPA (254.9 mm), accompanied by warmer-than-normal average maximum temperatures nationwide and normal to above-normal minimum temperatures. These dry and warm conditions are primarily driven by moderate El Niño conditions in the equatorial Pacific, which are expected to strengthen through the rest of the season, though a potential positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) developing in September could offer partial relief. IMD will issue the forecast for September rainfall by the end of August 2026.

Figure 4. Rainfall forecast for second half of the southwest monsoon (August-September)

Tercile probability rainfall forecast for 2026 August+September season



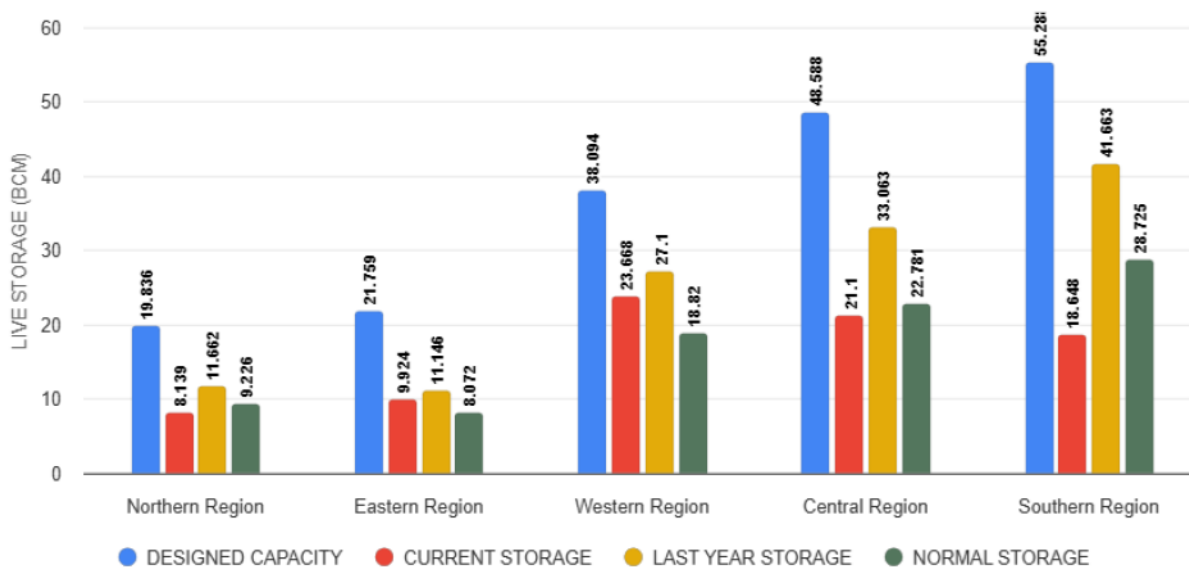
Source: Indian Meteorological Department, Ministry of Earth Sciences

Reservoir Storage Levels

India's Central Water Commission (CWC) monitors the live storage status of 166 major reservoirs across the country on a weekly basis. According to the CWC bulletin dated July 30, 2026, live storage stood at 81.479 billion cubic meters (BCM), representing 44.39 percent of the total live storage capacity of 183.565 BCM. Storage levels are 65.37 percent of last year's level (124.634 BCM) and 92.99 percent of the normal level (87.624 BCM) for the corresponding period. Across all regions, reservoir storage remains below last year's levels. Capacity utilization is highest in the western region at 62.13 percent (23.668 BCM), followed by the eastern region at 45.61 percent (9.924 BCM), central region at 43.43 percent (21.100 BCM), northern region at 41.03 percent (8.139 BCM), and southern region at 33.73 percent (18.648 BCM).

Compared to the same period last year, reservoir storage is higher in Assam, Chhattisgarh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, and Punjab, and unchanged in Goa. Meanwhile, it is lower in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal.

Figure 5. Regional Reservoir Storage (billion cubic meters – BCM) – July 30, 2026



Source: Central Water Commission

Kharif Crop Sowing Progress

Early monsoon dry spells delayed planting operations across major production zones, slowing overall Kharif sowing. Official data released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare up to July 24, 2026, shows total planted area standing at 78.74 million hectares, down 3.88 million hectares, or 4.7 percent, from the 82.62 million hectares sown during the equivalent timeframe last year. The overall acreage lag is primarily driven by substantial drops in coarse grains and pulses, which were heavily

impacted by the delayed monsoon onset and erratic early season rainfall distribution across key rainfed farming belts.

Coarse grains suffered the steepest decline (-11.94 percent to 14.22 million ha), led by severe drops in Bajra (-0.85 million ha) and Maize (-0.84 million ha). This sharp contraction was driven by delayed monsoon onset and early soil moisture deficits across rainfed farming belts, with Rajasthan alone down 1.15 million hectares as farmers postponed planting coarse millets while waiting for sufficient moisture establishment. Pulses dropped 7.54 percent to 8.46 million hectares as early dry spells and erratic precipitation impacted moisture-sensitive crops like Arhar (-0.41 million ha) and Mothbean (-0.26 million ha), particularly in key growing belts of Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Rice coverage contracted 2.57 percent to 23.44 million hectares as planting lags and delayed paddy transplanting in rain-dependent pockets of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra outweighed acreage expansion in eastern states like Assam and Bihar where early monsoonal showers proved more favorable. Cotton and oilseeds also experienced minor acreage contractions of 3.88 percent (to 9.87 million ha) and 2.07 percent (to 16.35 million ha) respectively, as farmers exercised caution due to uncertain early season rainfall patterns and dry soil conditions in major western producing states. In contrast, sugarcane and jute/mesta bucked the broader negative trend with marginal gains of 1.52 percent and 2.10 percent; sugarcane benefited from sustained farmer interest tied to strong ethanol demand policies, while localized early rains supported jute establishment in Bihar.

Table 2. Kharif 2026 Crop Sowing Progress (in million hectares)

Crop	2026 Area Sown (Million Ha)	2025 Area Sown (Million Ha)	Absolute Change (Million Ha)	Percentage Change (%)
Rice	23.44	24.06	-0.62	-2.57%
Pulses	8.46	9.15	-0.69	-7.54%
Coarse Cereals	14.22	16.15	-1.93	-11.94%
Oilseeds	16.35	16.70	-0.35	-2.07%
Sugarcane	5.76	5.67	+0.09	+1.52%
Jute and Mesta	0.63	0.62	+0.01	+2.10%
Cotton	9.87	10.27	-0.40	-3.88%
TOTAL	78.74	82.62	-3.88	-4.70%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare

Attachments:

No Attachments.