

Delayed arrival of the [southwest monsoon](#) in eastern, central and northern India has affected the sowing of [kharif](#) crops, which was 9.7 per cent less during the week ended June 22 compared to the same period last year.

However, government officials and [agriculture](#) experts are of the opinion that sowing of [kharif](#) crops, particularly [paddy](#) in eastern India, [oilseeds](#) and [pulses](#) in central and northern India and [cotton](#) in western parts of the country should pick up once the [monsoon](#) revives in these parts.

[Monsoon](#) had entered India two days ahead of its scheduled date and progressed well for a fortnight, before weakening from June 15.

The Met department, in its weekly weather update released on Thursday, said the rains were expected to make a strong comeback from June 24.

The revival is supposed to overcome the deficit between June 1 and 20, which stood at 7 per cent as on Thursday.

Data furnished by the department of [agriculture](#) showed that till June 22, [oilseeds](#) have been planted in land almost 500,000 hectares less as compared to the same period last year, while [pulses](#) have been sown in 190,000 hectares less than the last year.

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The onset of monsoon has been delayed by almost a week to 10 days over Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh.

Soybean, [groundnut](#) and [sunflower](#) are the main oilseed crops grown during the kharif season. In pulses, arhar has been sown in around 137,000 hectares less than the last year. “The window for the sowing of main [kharif crops](#) such as maize, [pulses](#) and [oilseeds](#) is still open and bulk sowing will happen in July, the most crucial month for kharif crops,” K K Singh, head of agromet services at IMD said. According to the IMD, the [southwest monsoon](#) is expected to be normal in July at 101 per cent of the [Long Period Average](#) (LPA), while rainfall in August is expected to be lower at 94 per cent of the [LPA](#).

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The region-wise forecast has to be considered with a model error of plus and minus 8 per cent. Overall, though the [met department](#) has forecasted a normal monsoon in 2018, but recently doubts have crept in, particularly for the second half of the season, starting from mid-August, owing to the effect of [El Nino](#).

Weather department officials are sure about the arrival of El Nino, but what is significant is its timing and if it appears late in the season, it will not affect India’s peak monsoon time.