PRESS RELEASE

New Delhi, 01 January 2026

भारत सरकार
Government of India
पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्रालय (एम. ओ. ई. एस.)
Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)

भारत मौसम विज्ञान विभाग
INDIA METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

Seasonal Rainfall Forecast for January to March 2026 and Monthly Outlook for Rainfall and Temperature during January 2026

Highlights

a) During the upcoming winter season (January to March 2026) the rainfall over the Northwest India consisting of seven meteorological subdivisions (East Uttar Pradesh, West Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh) is most likely to be below normal (<86% of Long Period Average (LPA)). Seasonal rainfall over the country as a whole during January to March season is most likely to be below normal (<88% of LPA). Below-normal seasonal rainfall is expected across most parts of Northwest, Northeast, and Peninsular India, while above-normal rainfall is likely in some regions of Central India and Uttar Pradesh.

b) Monthly rainfall for January 2026 over the North India consisting of seven meteorological subdivisions (East Uttar Pradesh, West Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh) is most likely to be normal (78-122 % of LPA). Monthly rainfall over the country as a whole during January 2026 is also most likely to be normal (82-118% of LPA). Rainfall across most parts of the country is likely to be normal to above normal; however, below-normal rainfall may occur in parts of northwest, east, and northeast India, as well as in a few localized areas of the peninsular and central Indian regions

c) Monthly minimum temperatures in January 2026 are likely to be below normal over most regions of the country; however, some parts of northwest and Northeastern India, as well as southern Peninsular India, are expected to experience above-normal temperatures. Above-normal cold wave days are expected in some areas of Central India, east Uttar Pradesh and Bihar during January 2026.

d) Monthly maximum temperatures are most likely to be below normal over many parts of the country. However, normal to above-normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of Northwest and Northeast India, and some parts of central India.

Seasonal Rainfall Forecast for January to March 2026 and Monthly Outlook for Rainfall and Temperature during January 2026

1. Background

Northwest India consisting of seven meteorological subdivisions (East Uttar Pradesh, West Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh) receives about 18% of its annual rainfall from January to March. Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh in particular receive about 31% of their annual rainfall during this period. The winter rainfall is very crucial for Rabi crops over the region. It is also crucial for the water management of the region. Because of these reasons, India Meteorological Department (IMD) has been issuing long-range forecast outlooks for the winter rainfall over Northwest India. IMD also continuously works to improve the skill of forecasting models. The forecast is based on Multi-Model Ensemble (MME) technique introduced since monsoon season of 2021. The MME approach uses the coupled global climate models (CGCMs) from different global climate prediction and research centers including IMD's Monsoon Mission Climate Forecast System (MMCFS) model.

IMD has now prepared the forecast outlook for the rainfall during the January to March (JFM) period and for January, 2026. The following forecasts are presented below:

- Probabilistic forecasts for the winter season (January to March 2026) rainfall averaged over Northwest India consisting of seven meteorological subdivisions and country as a whole.
- Probabilistic forecast for monthly rainfall during January 2026 averaged over Northwest India and country as a whole.
- Spatial distribution of probabilistic rainfall forecasts over the country during January to March 2026 and January 2026.

Since 2016, the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) has been issuing seasonal forecast outlooks for temperatures over the country for both hot and cold weather seasons. On 1st December 2025 IMD issued the seasonal outlook for the temperatures and coldwave for the December to February (DJF) season. As additional information, IMD has now prepared a monthly temperature outlook for January 2026 over the country and the same is presented in section 4.

2. Probabilistic Forecast for the Rainfall during January to March 2026

The rainfall during January-March (JFM) 2026 averaged over Northwest India is most likely to be below normal (<86% of the Long-Period Average (LPA)). The LPA of rainfall over Northwest India during JFM based on data from 1971 to 2020 is about 184.3 mm. Seasonal rainfall over the country as a whole during JFM season is most likely to be below normal (<88% of LPA). The LPA of rainfall over the country as a whole during the JFM season based on data from 1971-2020 is about 69.7 mm.

The probabilistic forecast for the spatial distribution of tercile rainfall categories (above normal, normal, and below normal) over the country for the JFM period is shown in Fig.1. The forecast indicates that below-normal seasonal rainfall is expected across most parts of Northwest, Northeast, and Peninsular India, while above-normal rainfall is likely in some regions of Central India and Uttar Pradesh. The dotted areas in the map climatologically receive very less rainfall during the month and the white-shaded areas within the land areas represent no signal from the model.

3. Probabilistic Forecast for the Rainfall during January 2026

The 2026 January rainfall averaged over Northwest India is most likely to be normal (78-122% of LPA). The LPA of rainfall over North India during January based on the data of 1971-2020 is about 49.0 mm. Monthly rainfall over the country as a whole during January 2026 is most likely to be normal (82-118% of LPA). The LPA of rainfall over the country as a whole during January based on data from 1971-2020 is about 17.1 mm

The probabilistic forecast for the spatial distribution of tercile rainfall categories (above normal, normal, and below normal) over the country for January 2026 is shown in Fig.2. The forecast suggests that rainfall across most parts of the country is likely to be normal to above normal; however, below-normal rainfall may occur in parts of northwest, east, and northeast India, as well as in a few localized areas of the peninsular and central Indian regions. The dotted areas in the map climatologically receive very less rainfall during the month and the white-shaded areas within the land areas represent no signal from the model.

4. Probabilistic Temperature Forecast for January 2026

Fig.3 and Fig.4 show forecast probabilities of the minimum and maximum temperatures respectively for January 2026. The probability forecast for the minimum temperatures indicates that during January 2026, monthly minimum temperatures are likely to be below normal over most regions of the country. However, some parts of northwest and Northeastern India, as well as southern Peninsular India, are expected to experience normal to above-normal minimum temperatures.

The monthly maximum temperature is most likely to be below normal over most parts of the country. However, normal to above-normal maximum temperatures are likely over parts of west-northwest India, most parts of Northeast India, and the Indo-Gangetic plains. (Fig.4).

5. Outlook for Cold Wave events during January 2026

The anomaly (deviation from the normal) forecast for the number of coldwave days in the country for the month of January 2026 is presented in Fig. 5. Above-normal cold wave days are expected in some areas of Central India, east Uttar Pradesh and Bihar during January 2026.

6. SST conditions in the Pacific and the Indian Oceans

Current sea surface temperatures (SSTs) over the equatorial Pacific are below average, consistent with La Niña conditions. Atmospheric anomalies, including strengthened easterly trade winds and enhanced upwelling of cold water in the eastern Pacific, are reinforcing the prevailing La Niña state. The MMCFS outlook along with the global forecast centres indicates that La Niña is expected to continue through December 2025 and into early 2026. A transition to ENSO-neutral conditions is most likely during January–March 2026.

In addition to El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions over the Pacific, other factors such as the Indian Ocean SSTs also influence on Indian climate. Current SSTs indicate that near-average SSTs are observed across most parts of of the equatorial Indian Ocean. Neutral IOD conditions are prevailing, with no significant positive or negative dipole signal detected. The MMCFS outlook along with the global forecast centres suggests that neutral IOD conditions are expected to persist during January–March 2026 season.

7. Extended Range Forecast and short to medium-range forecasting services

IMD also provides extended range forecasts (7–day averaged forecasts for the next four weeks) of rainfall and maximum and minimum temperatures over the country updated every week on Thursday. This is based on the Multi-model ensemble dynamical Extended Range Forecasting System currently operational at IMD. The extended range forecasts are available through the IMD website https://mausam.imd.gov.in/imd_latest/contents/extendedrangeforecast.php).

The extended range forecast is followed by a short to medium range forecast issued daily by IMD. The forecasts are available through the IMD website https://nwp.imd.gov.in/gfsproducts_cycle00_mausam.php

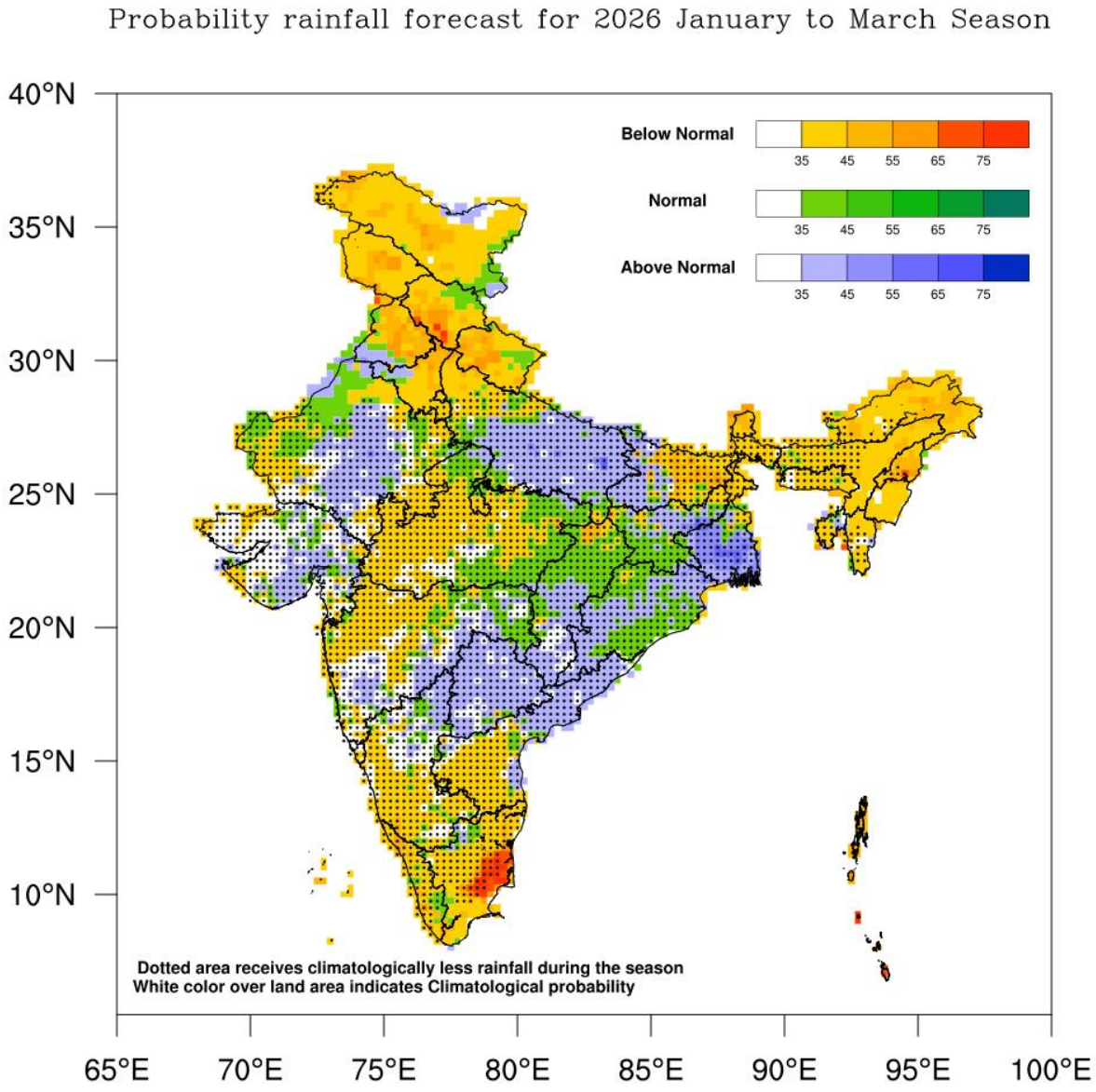

Fig.1. Probability forecast of tercile categories* (below normal, normal, and above normal) for the rainfall over India during JFM 2026. The figure illustrates the most likely categories as well as their probabilities. The dotted area shown in the map climatologically receives very less rainfall during this period and the white-shaded areas within the land regions represent no signal from the model (*Tercile categories have equal climatological probabilities, of 33.33% each).

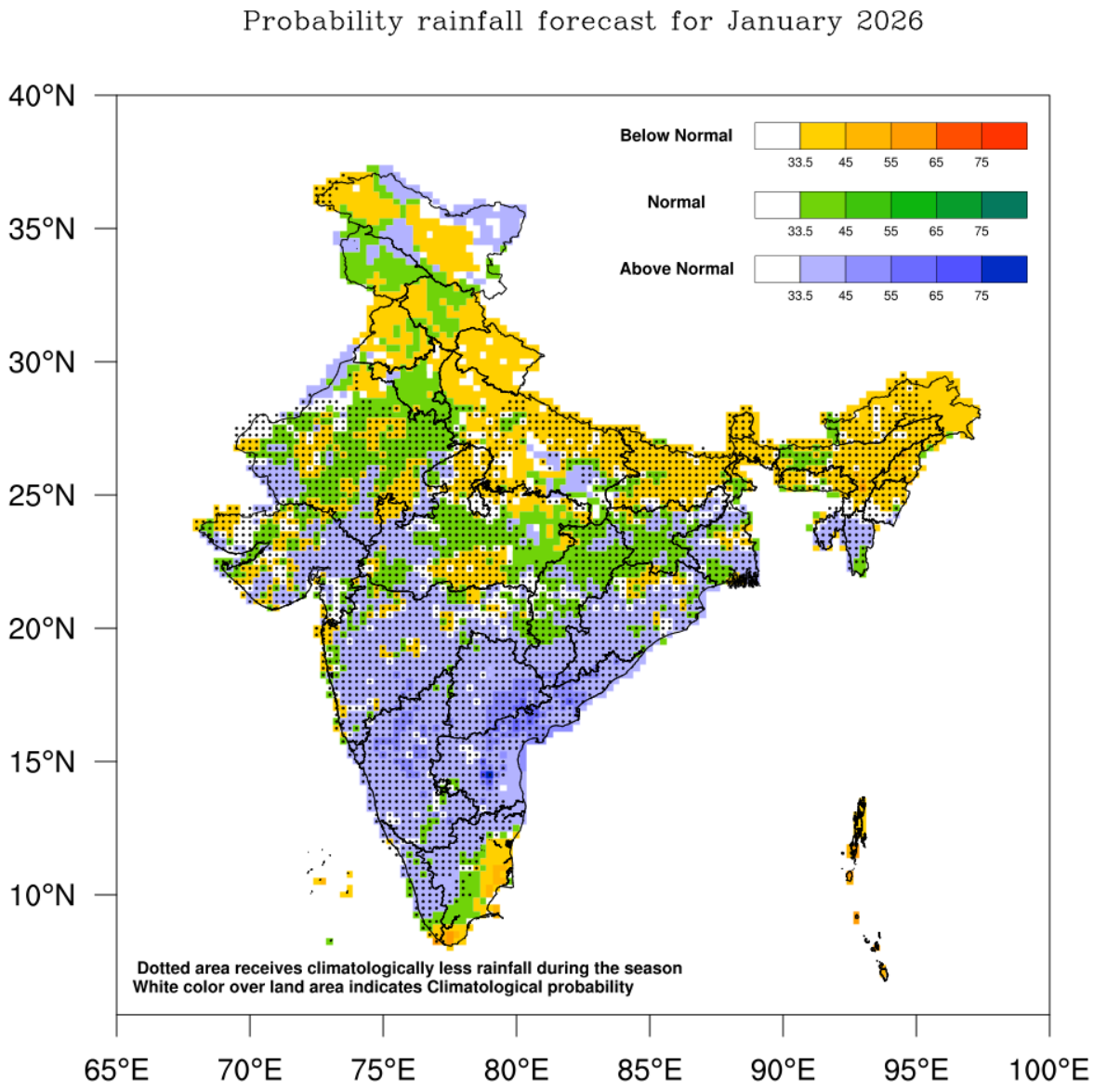

Fig.2. Probability forecast of tercile categories* (below normal, normal, and above normal) for the rainfall over India during January 2026. The figure illustrates the most likely categories as well as their probabilities. The dotted area shown in the map climatologically receives very less rainfall during January and the white-shaded areas within the land regions represent no signal from the model (*Tercile categories have equal climatological probabilities, of 33.33% each).

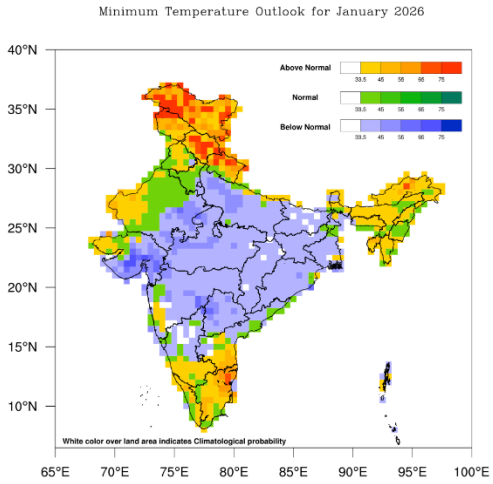

Fig.3. Probability forecast of Minimum Temperature for January 2026.

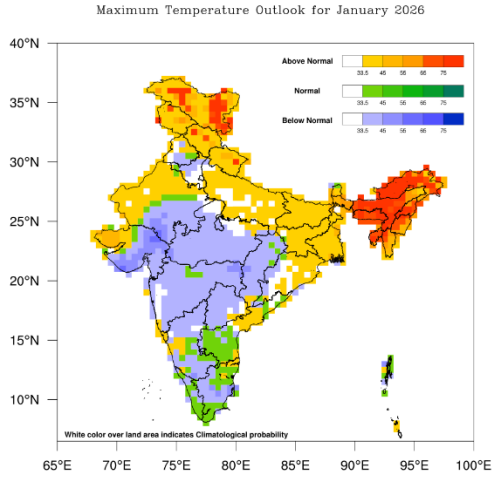

Fig.4. Probability forecast of Maximum Temperature for January 2026.

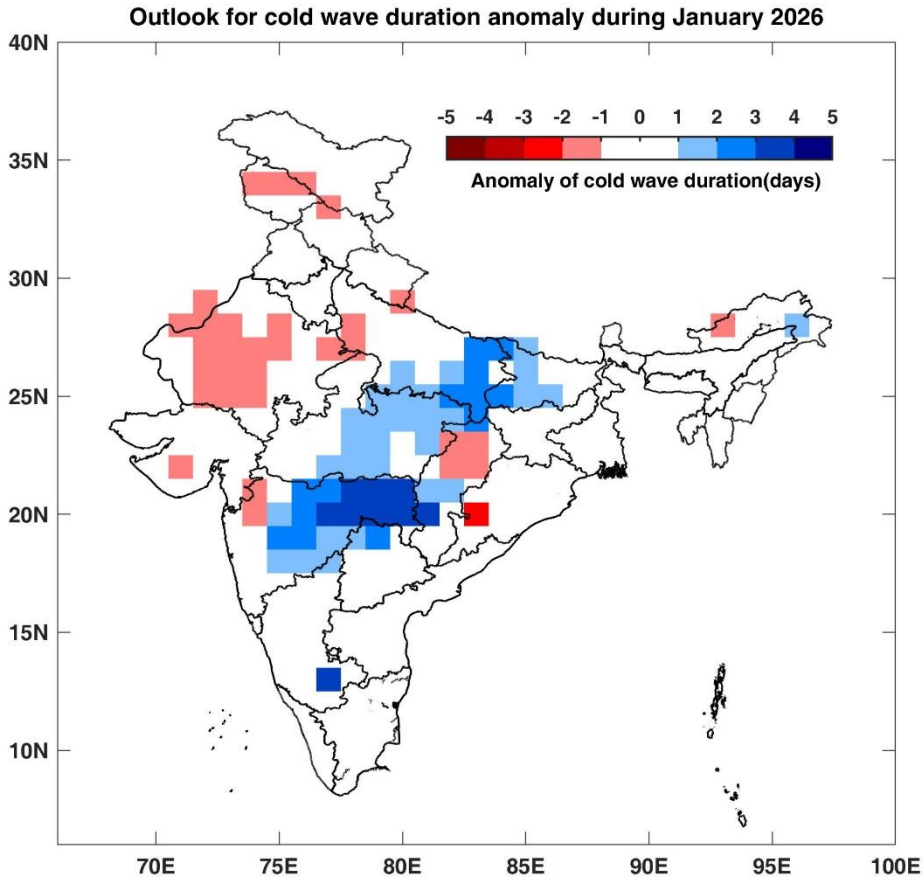

Fig 5. Anomaly (Deviation from the normal) of Cold Wave Duration (in days) for the month of January 2026.