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भारत सरकार
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पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्रालय
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Ministry of Earth Sciences
(MoES)

भारत मौसम विज्ञान विभाग
INDIA METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

Outlook for the Seasonal Temperatures during the Hot Weather Season (March to May) and Monthly Rainfall and Temperatures During March, 2026

Highlights

- During the upcoming hot weather season (March to May (MAM)), above-normal maximum temperatures are very likely over most parts of the country, except over some parts of Northwest and central India where normal or below-normal maximum temperatures are very likely.
- During the season (MAM), above-normal minimum temperatures are very likely over most parts of the country except some parts of South Peninsular India and isolated regions of the remaining parts of the country where normal to below normal minimum temperatures are likely.
- During March 2026, monthly maximum temperatures are likely to be normal to below normal over many parts of India, except northeast India, adjoining east India and some parts of Western Himalayan region and central & Peninsular India, where above normal maximum temperatures are likely.
- Above normal monthly minimum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country except some parts of Northwest India, South Peninsula and along east coast, where normal to below normal minimum temperatures are likely during March 2026.
- Above-normal number of heatwave days are likely over most parts of east and eastcentral India, many parts of southeast Peninsula and some parts of the northwest and westcentral India during March to May (MAM) 2026.
- Above-normal heatwave days are likely over isolated regions of Gujarat & Andhra Pradesh during March 2026.
- During March 2026, normal to above-normal rainfall is likely over many parts of the country except northeast India and some parts of northwest and eastcentral India where the below normal rainfall is likely.

Outlook for the Seasonal Temperatures during the Hot Weather Season (March to May) and Monthly Rainfall and Temperatures During March, 2026

1. Background

Since 2016, the India Meteorological Department under the Ministry of Earth Sciences has been issuing seasonal temperature outlooks for the country covering both the hot weather and cold weather seasons. Simultaneously, IMD has been continuously enhancing the accuracy and reliability of its forecasting models.

At present, seasonal forecasts are generated using a newly developed Multi-Model Ensemble (MME)–based forecasting system. This approach integrates outputs from multiple coupled global climate models (CGCMs) developed by leading climate prediction and research centres worldwide, including IMD's own Monsoon Mission Climate Forecast System (MMCFS) model, to improve forecast skill and robustness.

IMD has now prepared seasonal and monthly temperature forecast outlooks over the country for the upcoming hot weather season (March to May 2026) and for March 2026. The same are presented below in sections 2(a) and 2(b) respectively.

Heat Wave over a location refers to a prolonged period of excessively hot weather (above certain threshold temperature value) over the loation. The heatwave outlook for the hot weather season (MAM) and for March 2026 over the country is presented in section 3. The monthly outlook for rainfall for March 2026 is presented in section 4.

2. (a) Seasonal Temperature Outlook for March to May (MAM) 2026

Fig.1a and Fig.1b show the probabilistic forecast of the maximum and minimum temperatures respectively, for the March to May (MAM) 2026 season. The probability forecast for maximum temperatures (Fig.1a) indicates that above-normal maximum temperatures are very likely over most parts of the country, except over some parts of Northwest and central India where normal or below-normal maximum temperatures are very likely..

The probability forecast for minimum temperatures (Fig.1b) indicates that during the season (MAM), above-normal minimum temperatures are very likely over most parts of the country except some parts of South Peninsular India and isolated regions of remaining parts of the country where normal to below normal minimum temperatures are likely.

2. (b) Monthly Temperature Outlook for March 2026

Fig. 2a and Fig. 2b show the forecast probabilities of the maximum and minimum temperatures, respectively, for March 2026. During March 2026, monthly maximum temperatures are likely to be normal to below normal over many parts of India, except northeast India, adjoining east India and some parts of Western Himalayan region and central & Peninsular India, where above normal maximum temperatures are likely(Fig. 2a).

During March 2026, normal monthly minimum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country except some parts of Northwest India, South Peninsula and along east coast, where normal to below normal minimum temperatures are likely (Fig.2b).

3. Heat Wave outlook for the Hot Weather Season (March to May) and for the Month of March 2026

The anomaly (deviation from normal) forecast for the number of heatwave days in the country for March to May 2026 is shown in Fig. 3a. During the March to May season 2026, above-normal number of heatwave days are likely over most parts of east and eastcentral India, many parts of southeast Peninsula and some parts of the northwest and westcentral India during March to May (MAM) 2026. The normal number of heatwave days is likely over the remaining parts of the country.

The anomaly forecast for the number of heatwave days in the country for March 2026 is shown in Fig. 3b. During March 2026, above-normal heatwave days are likely over isolated regions of Gujarat & Andhra Pradesh. The remaining parts of the country are likely to experience normal heatwave days.

During the March–April–May (MAM) season, the increased likelihood of heatwave conditions may pose significant risks to public health, water resources, power demand, and essential services, particularly affecting vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, outdoor workers, and individuals with pre-existing medical conditions. Elevated temperatures can lead to heat-related illnesses and additional stress on infrastructure and resource management systems. Accordingly, State authorities and district administrations are advised to ensure timely preparedness, including operational readiness of cooling shelters, adequate drinking water supply, and strengthened health surveillance. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) provides weekly and extended range forecasts, along with Early Warnings and Impact-Based Forecasts (IBF), indicating the likely severity and spatial distribution of heatwave conditions to support proactive planning. The public is advised to monitor updates and adopt precautionary measures such as staying hydrated, avoiding peak heat exposure, and taking special care of vulnerable individuals during the MAM season.

4. Monthly Rainfall Outlook for March 2026

The rainfall during March 2026, averaged over the country, is most likely to be normal (83-117% of LPA). The LPA of rainfall over the country during March, based on data from 1971 to 2020, is about 29.9 mm.

The probabilistic forecast of the spatial distribution of tercile rainfall categories (above normal, normal, and below normal) over the country for March 2026 is shown in Fig.4. The forecast suggests that normal to above-normal rainfall is likely over many parts of the country except northeast India and some parts of northwest and eastcentral India where the below normal rainfall is likely. The dotted areas in the map climatologically receive very less rainfall during March, and the white-shaded areas within the land represent no signal from the model.

5. SST Conditions over the Pacific and the Indian Oceans

Currently, weak La Niña conditions are prevailing over the equatorial Pacific, with sea surface temperatures remaining below normal across much of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. However, the latest forecasts from global models and MMCFS indicate these conditions are expected to gradually weaken during the upcoming season.

Currently neutral Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions continue over the Indian Ocean basin. The latest forecast guidance from global models and MMCFS indicates that neutral IOD conditions are expected to persist during the forthcoming season, with no significant positive or negative IOD phase anticipated.

6. 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

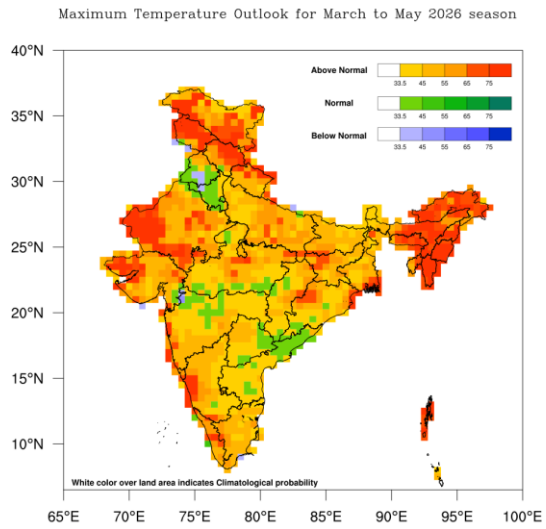

Fig.1a. Probability forecast of Maximum Temperature for March to May 2026.

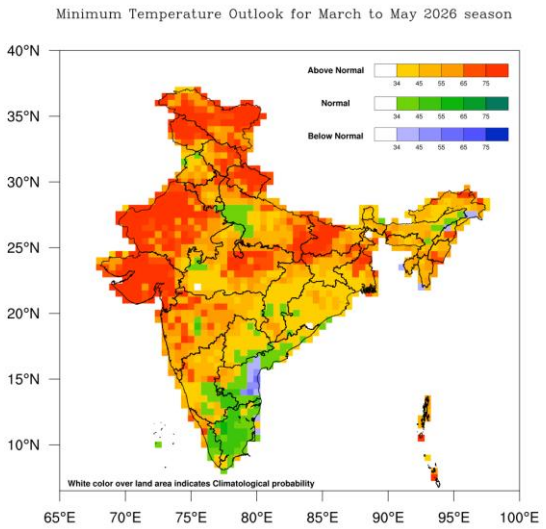

Fig.1b. Probability forecast of Minimum Temperature for March to May 2026.

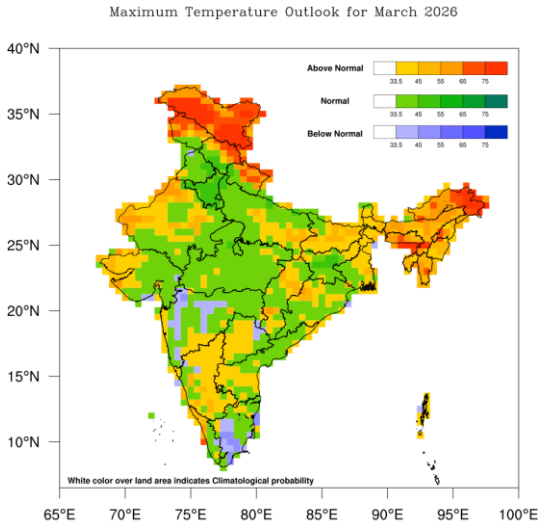

Fig.2a. Probability forecast of Maximum Temperature for March 2026.

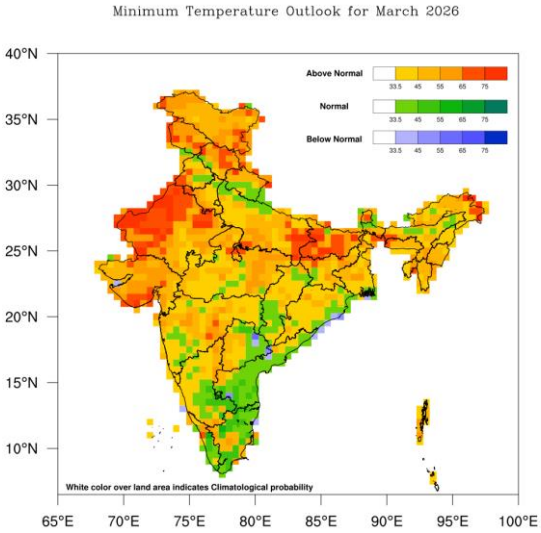

Fig2b. Probability forecast of Minimum Temperature for March 2026.

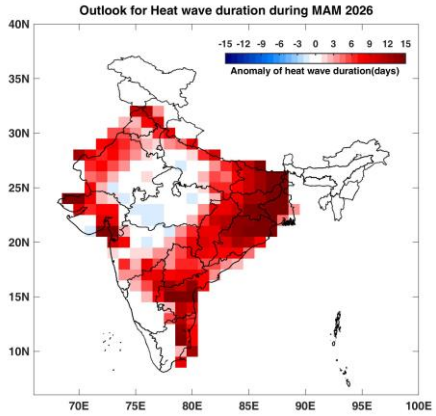

Fig3a. Probability forecast of heatwave events for the season March to May 2026.

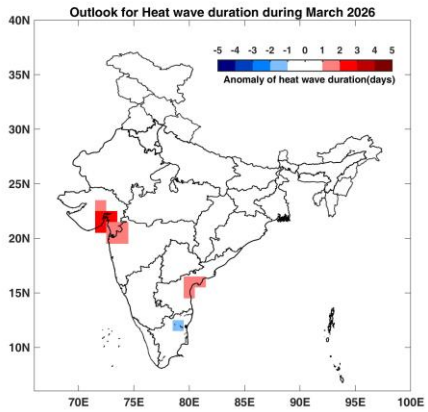

Fig3b. Probability forecast of heatwave events for March 2026.

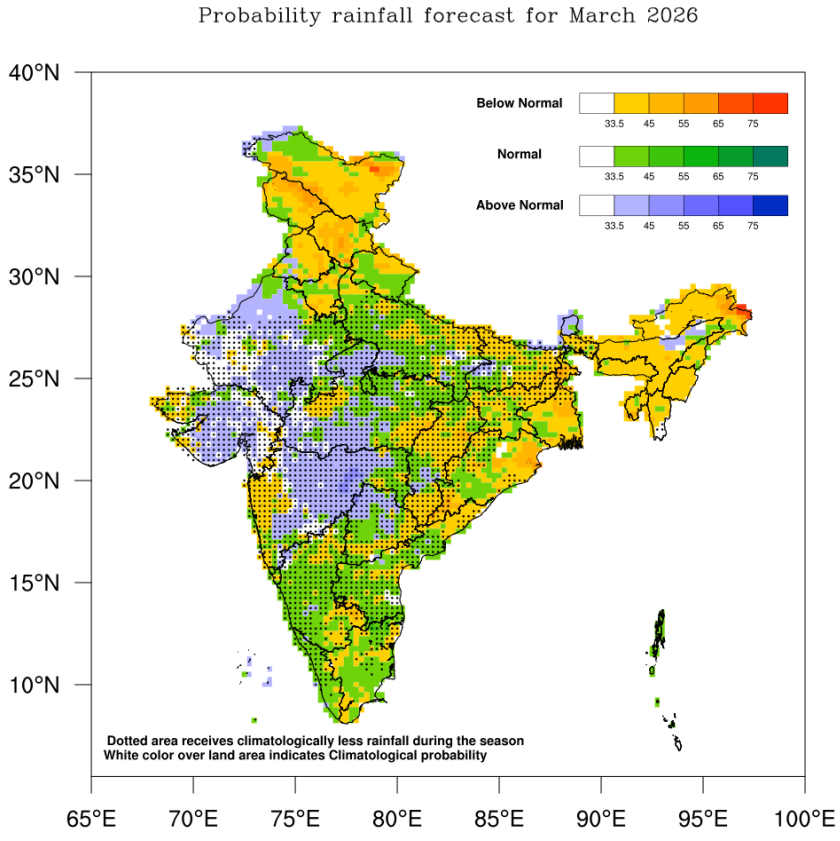

Fig.4. Probability forecast of tercile categories* (below normal, normal, and above normal) for the rainfall over India during March 2026. The figure illustrates the most likely categories as well as their probabilities. The dotted area shown in the map climatologically receives very less rainfall and the white-shaded areas within the land areas represent no signal from the model. (*Tercile categories have equal climatological probabilities, of 33.33% each).