

CYCLONE BIPARJOY BREWING, KERALA TO GET MONSOON SOON

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Inspite of heavy rain, people venture out in Kochi on June 7, 2023. | Photo Credit: Thulasi Kakkat

Cyclone Biparjoy in the Arabian Sea intensified into a 'very severe cyclone' on Wednesday. Currently located about 850 km west of Goa, it is expected to move northwards and turn towards Oman in the coming days. While this will help the monsoon onset into Kerala within the next 48 hours, several experts say this will mean a sluggish ascent up the Western coast.

"As of today, the cyclone system has detached from the monsoon system and there have been good rains over Kerala and the winds are favourable too," said D Sivananda Pai, of the India Meteorological Department, "However we have to wait a few days see whether it will impact the monsoon's subsequent movement."

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Other scientists say that a slew of factors have combined that will likely see the Biparjoy steal considerable moisture away from the monsoon.

"An exceptionally warm Arabian Sea, a weak monsoon onset, and favourable Madden Julian Oscillation (MJO) conditions in the Indian Ocean are favouring this cyclone. With this, it would not be the case of classic monsoon onset, satisfying all the given criteria. We would have scattered rains along the West Coast strip but no inland penetration and widespread rains," Roxy Mathew Koll, Climate Scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, said in a statement. MJO is characterised by an eastward spread of large regions of enhanced and suppressed tropical rainfall, mainly observed over the Indian and Pacific Ocean. Under normal circumstances, the monsoon should have reached Goa by the 5th of June and reached Mumbai by the 10th of June.

"Looking at the location of the likely cyclonic storm, there are chances that the monsoon might make the onset around 8-9 June but it will not be a loud or strong one. (The cyclone) will be detrimental to the progress of the monsoon and its strengthening," said G P Sharma, President-Meteorology and Climate Change, Skymet Weather, a private weather analytics company.

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