

AGRICULTURE

India Meteorological Department in their May, 1999 forecast predicted yet another normal monsoon year – 12th in a row – and, statistically speaking, their prediction proved correct. The monsoon came on time, and covered most of the country. It, however, remained weak in parts of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Western Madhya Pradesh where oilseed crops, as a consequence, suffered

from moisture stress. Uttar Pradesh in the north, the hill states of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir as also Haryana received lower than normal rainfall. Bihar experienced extensive floods and damage. The worst came much after the monsoon had withdrawn, when a cataclysmic cyclone hit Orissa causing extensive loss of human life, livestock and the just harvested rice crop, in nine districts located close to the coast.