

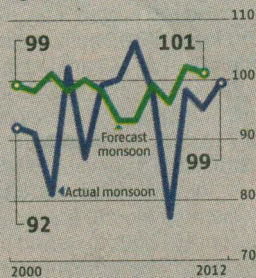
Rain gods to smile adequately this year, shows Met forecast

BS 27.4.12 P1

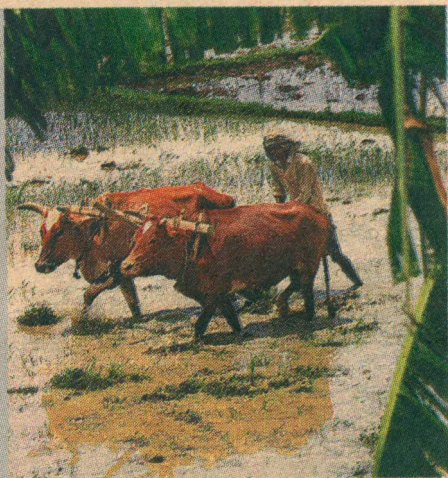
Good tidings for the economy as monsoon seen normal, but El Nino may strike late in the season

FORECAST AND REALITY

Figures as % of LPA



LPA is Long Period Average; rainfall below 90% of the average is considered as a drought. In recent times, the last time there was a drought with rains below this range was in 2009 and earlier in 2004. Rainfall above 110% of the average would mean an excessive monsoon. Source: Met dept



BS REPORTER

New Delhi, 26 April

The India Meteorological Department today said rains during the four-month monsoon season from June would be normal across the country. The monsoon forecast may bring cheer to the economy reeling under a slew of negative signals, including the warning of a rating downgrade by Standard and Poor's yesterday.

However, the Met department did not entirely discount the impact of the El Nino, which causes less rains during the second half of the season.

In its first official forecast for the

2012 monsoon season, the Met department said in all probability rains would be around 99 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA). A monsoon is considered normal when rains are 96-104 per cent of the LPA. The LPA is the average annual rainfall across the country in 50 years starting from 1941. It is estimated at 89 centimetres.

There is a 47 per cent chance of the monsoon being normal this year and a 24 per cent chance of it being below normal.

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ECONOMY, P4

▶ 'El Nino possibility can't be ruled out'

“The final picture of the impact of this prediction on agriculture will be known only when the region-wise forecast is released. Farm growth depends not only on the quantum of rains, but also their spread, distribution and timeliness,” Ramesh Chand, director of National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research, told *Business Standard*.

Higher farm output would also rein in food prices and help the government take steps to cut the fiscal deficit and farm subsidies. Food inflation rose close to double digits in March from 6.07 per cent in February and deflation in the previous month, the latest figures showed.

Eminent agriculture economist and chairman of the Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices, Ashok Gulati, said with 47 per cent probability of normal rains and an unusually cool April, caution was needed and the situation needed to be monitored till May. “The current weather pattern over north India does not make me very upbeat. I will advise caution,” he said.

Madan Sabnavis, chief