Delays in performance assessment

What is the issue?

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Performance assessment of monsoon on agriculture and economy seems to get delayed due to various reasons.

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What is the present situation of monsoon?

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- The monsoon is still active in many parts of the country despite having retreated from the north.
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- The total rainfall of this year is being 5 per cent below average and its spread over time and space being slightly uneven.
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- No state has declared drought despite some prolonged gaps in rainfall, but water stock in major reservoirs is about 11 per cent below last year’s corresponding level and 13 per cent below average.
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- The overall situation is roughly similar to that of last year, when the country bagged a record harvest.
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What is the status of agriculture?

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- Agricultural growth is stagnant because of noticeable inter-crop variations in plantings in response to prevailing prices.
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- Pulses and oilseeds have shrunk considerably due to a price slump.
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- Commercial crops such as cotton and sugarcane have expanded substantially in anticipation of better returns.

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- Additional precipitation due to the belated surge in the monsoon can materially alter the outlook for agriculture.
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- These showers are likely to benefit not only the standing crops but also leave enough residual moisture in the soils to facilitate sowing in the next Rabi crops.
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- Many data about agricultural output are not reliable as they are based on preliminary visual observations recorded at a time when even the crop sowing was not over.
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What are the issues with monsoon prediction mechanisms?

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- India Meteorological Department (IMD) has erred in its long-range monsoon prediction despite an appreciable improvement in its short- to medium-range weather forecasting capabilities.
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- What exposes the IMD’s failing is that it chose to raise its rainfall prediction to 98 per cent of normal, from 96 per cent projected originally, in the midst of the rainy season.
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- The actual rainfall fell short of even the initially anticipated mark thus Indian meteorological department needs to upgrade prediction skills
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Source: Business Standard

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