

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. The India Meteorological Department have forecast a normal south-west monsoon for the year 1997. Quantitatively, the rainfall for the country as a whole for the entire monsoon season (June to September) 1997 is forecast to be 92% of its long period average value within the model forecast error limit of $\pm 4\%$.

(c) and (d) It is too early to assess the effect of deficient rainfall on the growth of the crops. State Governments have already been advised to formulate detailed contingency plans for crop production in order to meet any weather aberrations during kharif 1997. Further, to increase the productivity and production of various crops as a long term measure, the Government is implementing various centrally sponsored crop specific developmental programmes as stated below:

- (i) Intensive Cereals Development Programme (ICDP) for Rice, Wheat and Coarse Cereals Based Cropping System Areas.
- (ii) Accelerated Maize Development Programme.
- (iii) Intensive Cotton Development Programme.
- (iv) Special Jute Development Programme.
- (v) Sustainable Development of Sugarcane Based Cropping System.
- (vi) National Pulses Development Project.
- (vii) Oilseeds Production Programme, etc.

[English]

Ban on Lotteries

981. SHRIMATI SARADA TADIPARTHI :
 SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD :
 SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :
 SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT :
 SHRI AYYANNA PATRUDU :
 SHRI VIJAY GOEL :
 SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ :
 SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT :
 SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation of Members of Parliament called on the President of India and Prime Minister with

an appeal to ban the State lotteries as contemplated under entry 40 to the Union List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India;

(b) if so, the main grounds adduced in support of their demand; and

(c) the decision taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (c) A memorandum signed by 124 Members of Parliament was submitted to the President and the Prime Minister. The memorandum demands that an immediate ban be placed on the lottery trade by the Central Government as lottery is nothing but another form of gambling. It is further stated in the memorandum that, as a first step, 'single digit' lottery should be immediately banned by way of an executive order and then an appropriate legislation should be brought to ban any other form of lottery. The memorandum describes the lottery as a social evil which is playing havoc with the lives of the people.

Entry 40 of List I—Union List of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India relates to "Lotteries organised by the Government of India or the Government of a State." The question of enacting a Central legislation on lotteries is under consideration of the Government.

Mangrove Forests

982. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL :
 SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the large scale destruction of mangrove forests in some coastal States particularly in Orissa and West Bengal;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken by the Government for the proper preservation of the mangrove forests in the coastal States and

(d) the details of the plantation schemes announced for the growth of mangrove forests?