

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?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) and (b) The State Government of West Bengal has informed the Central Government regarding the decrease in mangrove forests and some mangrove species in the Sunderban areas. The reasons stated for this decrease include, position of Bengal basin formed as a result of the Neo-tectonic movement, reclamation of habitat area through bunding and erection of earthen dams, lack of proper tidal flushing of the areas, change in the salinity regime and siltation, lack of employment sources for the inhabitants in the Sunderbans resulting in their dependence on mangrove forests. The State Government of Orissa has reported that deforestation of mangrove forests has taken place in Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur and Bhadrak districts due to unauthorised prawn culture activities.

(c) and (d) Government of India initiated a scheme for conservation and management of mangroves in 1987. Fifteen mangrove areas in the country have been identified for intensive conservation under the scheme. Grants are released to the concerned State Governments/Union Territories for implementation of Management Action Plans of these areas.

Under different schemes, Government of West Bengal has raised mangrove plantation in an area of 6,782 ha. Approximately 2,585 sq kms of the area is being conserved under Tiger Project out of which 1330 sq kms has been designated as Sunderban National Park. In addition, physical protection and prevention of biotic interference is provided through regular patrolling. Plantations of non-mangrove species have been raised in areas outside the forests for meeting local needs of firewood and small timber, alternate energy conservation devices of solar power, smokeless chullahs etc. have been distributed to people. Forest Protection Committees and Eco-Development Committees in the fringe areas of mangrove forests have been formed which provide voluntary protection to the mangrove forests. There are till now 21 Forest Protection and 14 Eco-Development Committees involving 16427 families providing protection to approximately 772 sq km of forest area. Eco-development activities are targetted to provide alternate sources of income and making the people self-sufficient to decrease pressure on mangrove forests.

Government of Orissa have initiated administrative measures for evacuation of encroachments and an area of 6,772 acres has been freed from encroachment till 27.6.1997 and 4,83,600 hypocotyles of mangrove species have been planted on this area.

Identification of People Below Poverty Line

983. SHRI ISWAR PRASANNA HAZARIKA :
SHRI SOHAN VEER SINGH :
SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :
SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD:
SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH :
SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO :
SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT :
SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR :
CHAUDHARY RAMCHANDRA BENDA :
DR. RAMVILAS VEDANTI :
SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT :
SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI NAVINCHANDRA MEHTA :
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the States/Union Territories have prepared themselves for distribution of foodgrains at subsidised price to those below the poverty line through the Public Distribution System/Targetted Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, whether the persons below the poverty line have been identified by all the States;

(c) if so, whether the Ministry have received any report from the State Governments in this regard;

(d) if not, the details of the States that have not completed the process so far.

(e) the names of the controlling authority for the new PDS and the steps taken to ensure that beneficiaries get their due; and

(f) the extent to which the State Governments have been able to help the poor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Targetted PDS has been introduced in all States and UTs except in Punjab, Delhi, Goa and UT of Lakshadweep.

(b) Governments of Punjab, Delhi, Goa and UT administration of Lakshadweep are identifying BPL population. All other States have identified the BPL population.