

Bungalows allotted to 'Hindustan Samachar'

125. SHRI S. KUMARAN: Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of bungalows which have been allotted to "Hindustan Samachar" Hindi News Agency in Connaught Lane, New Delhi and what are its terms and conditions and what is the amount of rent;

(b) when were the premises allotted to them;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Agency is in arrears of rent; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI P. C. SETHI): (a) 4 bungalows have been allotted on purely temporary basis on payment of market rate of licence fee at Rs. 560/- per month for each bungalow. The other terms and conditions are as per the standard licence deed executed by the licensee.

(b) 2 bungalows were allotted on 6-4-78, and the remaining two on 3-4-79.

(c) There are no arrears up to 29-2-80.

(d) Does not arise.

Production of kharif crop

126. SHRI DHARAMCHAND JAIN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared preliminary estimates of kharif production during 1979-80 crop year; if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(b) whether Government have also made any preliminary assessments about the prospects of rabi crop; if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

(SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN):

(a) Final estimates of production of kharif crop for 1979-80 have not yet become available. According to present indications, the output of the kharif season is likely to receive a setback on account of unprecedented drought in large parts of the country. The fall in the production of kharif foodgrains might be of the order of about 12 million tonnes compared to peak level production of 78.7 million tonnes during 1978-79; bulk of the decline would be in case of rice crop. Jute production might show a fall of about 5 per cent. The production of groundnut (kharif) and cotton is expected to be lower marginally. In the case of sugarcane, the production is likely to be lower by about 15 per cent.

(b) It is early to give any precise idea about the size of rabi crops. Special measures were taken to increase the cultivation of rabi crops. However, weather conditions in the rabi season have also not been very satisfactory and there have been difficulties in the supply of adequate energy for irrigation.

Financial assistance to drought-affected areas

127. SHRI DHARAMCHAND JAIN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of districts in the country that have been affected by recent unprecedented drought in 1979;

(b) what is the nature and quantum of relief measures provided by the Central Government in this regard; and

(c) whether Government have taken any policy decision to provide direct relief to the farmers in the affected areas; if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN):

(a) 240.

(b) Following assistance was provided to the States:

(i) A ceiling of additional expenditure of Rs. 156.95 crores has been approved by the Govt. of India for purposes of Central assistance. This would cover besides the non-Plan relief expenditure, items of subsidy to small and marginal farmers, provision of drinking water, undertaking employment generation work, like major and medium irrigation schemes, construction of roads, etc.

(ii) A total quantity of about 25 lakh metric tonnes of foodgrains under Normal and Special Food for Work Programme have been allocated to drought-affected States and Union Territories. Besides, one lakh tonnes of foodgrains have been made available for launching the Food for Nutrition Programme to cover the most vulnerable section of the population living in drought hit areas.

(iii) Short-term loans of about Rs. 122 crores were sanctioned to the drought-affected States to assist them in the distribution of agricultural inputs.

(iv) Besides the financial assistance, the Govt. have organised inter-Ministerial Committees to monitor, co-ordinate and stimulate drought relief operations.

(c) There is no proposal under consideration of the Government of India to provide direct relief to the farmers in the drought affected areas since relief operations are implemented by the States.

Disappearance of life saving drugs from the market

128. SHRI DHARAMCHAND JAIN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the life saving drugs such as "Sorbitrate" have disappeared from the market; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to augment the supply thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) No, Sir. However, reports of shortage of certain brands of some life saving drugs have been occasionally received from certain parts of the country.

(b) Government monitors the shortages of essential & life saving drugs on the basis of monthly reports received from the State Drug Controllers/ Zonal Controllers of the Central Drug Control Organisation and immediate action, to the extent possible, is taken to relieve the shortages.

As regards; "Sorbitrate", the matter was pursued with the manufacturer who has confirmed having sent stocks of the drug to the areas of shortage and has also assured Government that the requirements will be fully met.

Slaughtering of elephants in southern States

129. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE:
SHRI KRISHNA NAND JOSHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that elephants in large number are being slaughtered in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, for their tusks;

(b) whether it is also a fact that cultivators in the forest belts, who are given licences to shoot wild elephants to protect their crops, are now killing them even if they pose no threat since they are getting Rs. 1000/- per kg. for ivory; and

(c) if so, what remedial steps the Central Government are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN):
(a) to (c) The information is being