

for booking reserved accommodation simultaneously from Passenger Reservation System (PRS) counters as well as through the internet on the opening day of reservation, the accommodation on popular trains to some destinations gets booked within a short span after the opening of booking for such trains.

(b) During the Ganesh Festival, a large number of people travel from Mumbai to Konkan region. This year, the Ganesh Festival commences on 29th August 2014 and will be celebrated for a period of 10 days. The booking for trains originating from Mumbai on 28th August 2014 bound for Konkan region opened on 29th June 2014. Passengers got confirmed accommodation to the extent of berths/seats available. Owing to the huge rush the available capacity was exhausted within a short time after the opening of the booking. However, during festivals including Ganesh Festival, special trains are run and extra coaches are attached to regular trains to cater to the surge in demand. For the Ganesh Festival this year, special trains have already been planned to be run between Mumbai-Ratnagiri/Sawantvadi and between Madgaon-Mumbai/Ahmedabad.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Measures to tackle failure of monsoon

*176. SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is any report regarding failure of monsoon this year;
- (b) if so, the States likely to be affected by this; and
- (c) the relief measures Government proposes to take to tackle the situation?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) to (c) India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast that rainfall during 2014 South West Monsoon for the country as a whole is likely to be 93% of the Long Period Average (LPA) with a model error of $\pm 4\%$. Rainfall is likely to be 85% of LPA over North-West India, 94% of LPA over Central India, 93% of LPA over South Peninsula and 99% of LPA over North-East India, all with a model error of $\pm 8\%$. The monthly rainfall over the country is likely to be 93% of its LPA during July and 96% of LPA during August, both with a model error of $\pm 9\%$.

Cumulative rainfall till 16.07.2014 was 196.94 mm which is 36% less than normal (LPA) rainfall of 308.2 mm. So far, all States except Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Tamil Nadu have received sub normal rainfall.

Government has taken several measures to address any situation arising due to deficiency in monsoon rainfall.

States have been advised to ensure availability of short duration and drought tolerant varieties of seeds so as to be in a position to supply them to farmers in case such a need arises. States have also been advised to keep asides 10% of funds available under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and other schemes for undertaking appropriate interventions to mitigate any situation arising out of deficient rainfall.

States have also been requested to construct water harvesting structures, restore irrigation infrastructure by desilting canals; energising tubewells, replacing/repairing faulty pumps and arranging power to meet irrigation needs.

Central Research Institute of Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), in collaboration with State Agricultural Universities has prepared contingency plans for 520 districts for implementing location specific interventions to sustain agriculture production in the eventuality of weak monsoon/deficient rainfall.

Farmers have also been advised to adopt techniques such as *in-situ* moisture conservation, on farm water conservation, ridge furrow sowing, promoting suitable agronomic practices including mulching, inter cropping, mixed cropping, sowing of less water consuming crops etc.

In the eventuality of drought, State Governments are empowered to initiate necessary relief measures from State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) which is readily available with them. Additional financial assistance, over and above SDRF, is considered from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) on receipt of memoranda from State Governments and in accordance with extant norms and procedures.

Providing mobile phones to BPL families

*177. SHRI SHADI LAL BATRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any proposal to provide mobile phones to BPL families in the country;