

and Development is being felt in scientific circles;

(b) if so, whether in the Fifth Plan Rs. 20 crores were earmarked for Research and Development in the Universities and institutes of Technology;

(c) the reasons for his Ministry's refusal to allocate the same; and

(d) steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE (PROF. S. NURUL HASAN): (a) to (d). The University Grants Commission have incurred an expenditure of Rs. 73.21 lakhs during the current year up to 28th of February, towards research, in addition to an expenditure of Rs. 77.21 lakhs towards science fellowships. The Indian Institutes of Technology have also taken up a large number of research projects of crucial significance despite the limitations of the budget. It is not, therefore, correct to say that there is any reluctance on the part of either the U.G.C. or the Institutes of Technology or the Ministry of Education in providing funds for scientific research. The Ministry of Education, the U.G.C. the Central Advisory Board of Education and the All India Council of Technical Education attach the highest importance to such research and are being continued to augment the its linkages to development. Efforts funds available for the purpose and maximum feasible allocations will be made within the overall constraints of resources.

'Yagna' organised at Pandharpur in Maharashtra

4670. **PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that in the 'Yagna' organised at Pandharpur in Maharashtra from 21st February,

1975, huge quantities of foodgrains and ghee were burnt for one month;

(b) if so, whether a demand was made in Parliament and outside to prevent this wastage; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI ANNASAHEB P SHINDE): (a) to (c). The Government of Maharashtra have reported that Shri Tanpure Maharaj started a monthlong Yagna in Phandarpur with effect from the 21st February, 1975. They have further reported that some organizations agitated and represented that the Government should prohibit use of foodstuffs in the Yagna. The State Government arranged for a meeting with Shri Tanpure Maharaj who agreed that no foodgrains would be burnt in the Yagna.

Meetings of the Prime Minister with Opposition Leaders

4671. **PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:** Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that the leaders of the Opposition Parties in the Parliament have expressed their grievance that the meetings of the Prime Minister with the Leaders of the Opposition on burning problems have been converted into mere rituals to report the decisions already taken; and

(b) if so, whether some machinery is being evolved for a more meaningful consultation with the Opposition before decisions are taken?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI K. RAGHU RAMAIAH): (a) and (b). At the last few meetings of the Prime Minister and her colleagues with the leaders of Opposition there have been discussions on the need and desirability of