

[Translation]

Purchase of Aircraft

6119. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Pakistan has expressed concern over the imbalance of its traditional weapons as compared to India and has decided to take fresh initiatives for the purchase of fighter aircraft of high technology from Russia, France and Sweden; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) and (b) Government are aware of Pakistan's efforts to acquire aircraft from various countries, including Russia, France and Sweden. Government believe that the acquisition of weapons by Pakistan, far beyond its legitimate requirement, is not conducive to peace and security in the region. Government have, on various occasions, conveyed their views to the concerned countries. Government constantly monitor developments having a bearing on India's security and take all necessary measures to safeguard it.

[English]

Explosion of Atom Bomb by Pak

6120. SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether recently the Pakistan exploded Atom Bomb as a result the preparedness of our country will undergo a change to meet the future challenges, if any; and

(b) if so, the specific reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) and (b) Pakistan nuclear tests on 28 and 30 May, 1998 have confirmed what has been known all along—that Pakistan had been in possession of nuclear weapons. These tests vindicate our policy on the nuclear issue. Government has been closely monitoring and assessing Pakistan's clandestine pursuit of its nuclear programme. Government remains fully committed to taking all necessary steps to effectively safeguard India's security and national interests in accordance with its own threat perceptions.

Cultivation of Vanilla

6121. SHRI A.F. GOLAM OSMANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to encourage the development of vanilla cultivation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether farmers are given any assistance or incentive for production, processing and marketing of vanilla;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the total production of vanilla produced in the country during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) and (b) For encouraging development of Vanilla cultivation in the States of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the Spices Board under Ministry of Commerce implement various programmes viz; area expansion; production of vanilla rooted cuttings; popularisation of production and improved curing techniques; setting up of vanilla processing units; and Awarding best vanilla grower.

(c) and (d) The assistance/incentives provided for production, processing, etc. of vanilla is given below:-

Programme	Incentive/assistance provided
1) Area expansion	Rs.10,000/- per ha. (two annual instalments of Rs.6500/- and Rs.3500/-) towards 25% of the cost of planting & maintenance.
2) Production of Vanilla rooted cuttings	Rs.1250/- per nursery for production target of 1000 rooted cuttings towards 25% of the cost of production of planting material.
3) Assistance to Growers Associations/Societies for setting up Vanilla processing units	Rs. 5000/- per unit towards 50% of the cost of processing aids.
4) Awarding best Vanilla growers	One First prize of Rs.10,000/- and 2 Second prizes of Rs. 5,000/- each in addition to citation and certificates.

(e) As per rough estimates, the annual production of vanilla is five tonnes of cured beans.

Soil Erosion

6122. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH :
SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the growing soil erosion caused by the Rupnarayan river in district Howrah, West Bengal;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to send a team of experts to examine the situation;

(c) whether the Government are likely to take necessary steps to strengthen the embankments of the said river to check the soil erosion; and

(d) if so, the funds likely to be provided by the Government for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) The river Rupnarayan like other alluvial rivers erodes its bank which is a natural phenomenon.

(b) Government of West Bengal has not reported to the Centre of any serious bank erosion problem caused by the river Rupnarayan, warranting examination of the problem by a team of experts.

(c) and (d) Remedial measures in the form of river training works, raising and strengthening of existing embankments on Rupnarayan are being carried out by the Government of West Bengal from the funds allocated under State Flood Control Sector by the Planning Commission.

[Translation]

Bhagirath Magazine

6123. SHRI SHANKER PRASAD JAISWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the main objectives of publishing the magazine 'Bhagirath' have been achieved;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the measures are being taken to bring about improvement in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main objective of Bhagirath (Hindi) and Bhagirath (English) journals is to disseminate information about the plans, progress and achievements in the development of water resources in the country. This is being achieved by publication and distribution of these journals.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Meetings of the Editorial Board are held regularly to consider (i) improvements in the contents of the journals and (ii) feed back received from the readers from time to time.

Salaries of Agriculture University Employees

6124. SHRI RAMTAHAL CHAUDHARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the employees of Agricultural University in Bihar have not received their salaries for several months;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to pay them their salaries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) The employees of both Rajendra Agricultural University, Pusa Samastipur as well as Birsa Agricultural University, Ranchi in Bihar have received their salaries upto the month of March, 1998. However, they have not received their salary from April 98 onwards.

(b) and (c) The salary of employees from April, 1998 onwards could not be paid for want of non-plan/plan Grants from the State Government. Sanction has now been received as per the information received from these universities.

Agricultural Loans

6125. SHRI VITHAL TUPE :
SHRI ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the steps taken to strengthen the agricultural loan system with a view to increase the agricultural production in the country;

(b) the details of the loans provided under the various agricultural loan schemes, State-wise, alongwith the rate of interest charged thereon;

(c) whether the Government are contemplating to restructure the present agricultural loan system; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Research Centre for Black Mustard Seed

6126. SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Madhya Pradesh has sent a proposal to the Union Government for setting up a research centre for black mustard seed during 1989;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay in approving it; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be approved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) No, Sir. As per available records, no proposal to set up a research centre for black mustard seed has been received from the Govt. of Madhya Pradesh during 1989 in the Ministry of Agriculture.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) Not applicable.

Quality of Wheat

6127. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :