

**Onion**

2824. SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the major onions producing States in the country; and

(b) the quantity of onions produced during 1997-98, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) The major onions producing States are Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh etc.

(b) The State-wise advance estimates of production of onions during 1997-98 is Annexed.

**Statement***State-wise Expected Production of Onions during 1997-98*

(Production in lakh Tonnes)

State	Production
Andhra Pradesh	1.84
Bihar	0.82
Gujarat	5.13
Haryana	0.45
Karnataka	2.80
Madhya Pradesh	2.07
Maharashtra	10.37
Orissa	3.09
Rajasthan	2.00
Tamil Nadu	2.96
Uttar Pradesh	4.49
Others	0.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>36.80</b>

**Relation with Central Asian Republics**

2825. SHRI E. AHAMED : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has paid special attention to the Central Asian Republics for development of closer economic and cultural relationships; and

(b) if so, the details of measures taken so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) To enhance economic co-operation with Central Asian countries, following steps have been taken; Joint Commissions for economic, commercial, technical and scientific co-operation, and Joint Business Councils have been set up; an India Business Centre is being run jointly by Ministry of Commerce and Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) in Tashkent; State Bank of India has opened a Representative Office in Tashkent and Punjab National Bank in Almaty; Lines of credit have been extended to all these countries; trilateral agreement on transit of goods was signed with Iran and Turkmenistan in February, 1997 to develop a surface route to the Central Asian markets; and number of business delegations have visited these countries.

To deepen our already existing close cultural ties, ICCR has set up two Indian Cultural Centres (ICC) at Tashkent and Almaty. An India Chair has been established at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy at Tashkent and also an India Study Centre at Osh University at Osh in Kyrgyzstan. Days of Indian Culture were organised in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and assistance given to reciprocal events organised by these countries in India. Grants-in-aid are given to various cultural societies in the Central Asian States. A number of cultural troupes have also visited Central Asia. To celebrate the 500th Anniversary of Bairam Khan Turkmen in 2000, a joint Indo-Turkmen organising committee has been set up.

[Translation]

**STD Facility in Maharashtra**

2826. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether S.T.D. facility has been made available in all the exchanges of Maharashtra;