

during heavy traffic hours, there is some congestion on the route.

(d) There is a plan to replace the existing transmission media by Optical Fibre Cable Media during 1998-99. After replacement, sufficient number of circuits can be provided to overcome the problem of congestion on the route during heavy traffic hours.

#### Farmers Look to Other Crops

3957. SHRI ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL :

SHRI PRASAD BABURAO TANPURE :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "farmers look to other crops" appearing in the Indian Express dated November 28, 1998;

(b) if so, the details of the facts reported therein; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to stop the farmers from diverting their fields from one crop to other crop?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. It has appeared in the Press that due to high rise in prices of onion seeds farmers are turning to other cash crops.

(c) Government of India have taken following steps to increase production of onion and onion seeds:

(i) A mass spray campaign in farmers fields by National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED) through National Horticultural Research & Development Foundation (NHRDF) has been launched to protect the crop from attack of pests and diseases and increase production in Maharashtra State.

(ii) An assistance to the tune of Rs. 80 lakhs has been provided to the National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation and Maharashtra State Seeds Corporation for increasing production of onion seeds of Kharif and Rabi varieties to be used during 1999-2000.

(iii) Government of India is implementing a Central Sector Scheme on "Production and Supply of Vegetable Seeds under which quality seeds of improved varieties of vegetables including onion are provided to the farmers through minikits.

[Translation]

#### Indian Cultural Centres

3958. SHRI HARIBHAI CHAUDHARY : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have reviewed the activities of Indian Cultural Centres in other countries under his Ministry; and

(b) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) and (b) The activities of the Indian Cultural Centres abroad are constantly examined and reviewed by Constituent Bodies of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, viz. Governing Body and General Assembly. On the basis of this process, the annual programmes of the ICCR is drawn up.

[English]

#### Safety Record of Power Plants

3959. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the safety record of Tarapur Nuclear Power Station, Rawatbhatta Nuclear Plant and Kaiga Reactor has been unsatisfactory;

(b) the number of times the workers and the residents of nearby areas were exposed to dangerous level of radiation from these plants and the number of times the plants were shut down due to technical glitches since their inception;

(c) whether the children living in the villages in the vicinity of Rawatbhatta Nuclear plant have developed various deformities, a possible result of radiation leakage;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) The safety records of both Tarapur Atomic Power Station and Rajasthan Atomic Power Station have remained satisfactory since their inception. The Kaiga Reactor is still under construction.

(b) There has not been any incident in any of the above plants leading to dangerous levels of radiation. The following are the details of shut-down of the above reactors (for capital maintenance, modifications and upgradation jobs) since their inception.

TAPS - 1 - 14 times

TAPS - 2 - 15 times

RAPS - 1 - 6 times

RAPS - 2 - 9 times