

depends upon duration of its validity. Reasons for increase in visa fee are:

- (i) In 1990 the visa regime was liberalised and the duration of visa was extended upto 5 years but the visa fee was not appropriately increased.
- (ii) The recent devaluation of Indian rupee made it imperative to revise the visa fee upwards.
- (iii) Indian visa fee was reduced unnaturally in favour of nationals of UK, USA, FRG, France, Spain, Italy and Netherlands. But these countries did not reciprocate to our action.
- (iv) Increasing local cost of running consular and visa services at Mission Post abroad.
- (v) Mobilising funds for proper staffing and modernisation of Consular Section in our Mission abroad, for further improving the quality of services.

(c) Visa fee is a very small fraction of total expenses incurred by a tourist. The upward revision of visa fee therefore, may not materially affect the tourism industry adversely. Tourists are not attracted so much by low visa fee as by internal peace and tranquillity, tourist value of a country, tourist infrastructure, expeditious special services to tourists etc.

(d) Government policies are reviewed from time to time.

(e) and (f), Yes, Sir. A few representations have been received by Indian Embassies in Singapore and Malaysia. Details are awaited.

**Funds for Command area
development Programme in
Maharashtra**

*113. SHRI SUDHIR SAWANT: Will the

Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether funds have been obtained from the European Economic Community or other international institutions for the implementation of the Command Area Development Programme in the Konkan region of Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure proper utilisation of such funds?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An Agreement was signed in October 1988 with European Economic Community for assistance of 15 million ECU (Rupees Twenty two crores) for development of water control system for diversification of crops in Konkan region of Maharashtra.

(c) Government of Maharashtra has been advised to provide additional staff and additional funds, and to prepare additional new schemes according to a specified time schedule.

**Foreign Collaboration for
Exploitation of Natural Gas**

*114. SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA:
DR. A.K. PATEL:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for collaboration of Oil and Natural Gas Commission/Gas Authority of India with France for providing technology for exploitation of natural gas available in South India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the proposal is

expected to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND
NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

[*Translation*]

Damage caused by Earthquake

*115. SHRI SIMON MARANDI:
SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR
SHASTRI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the States/Union Territories rocked by the earthquake on October 20, 1991 and after shocks thereafter;

(b) the estimated loss caused by the earthquake to property, crops, livestock;

(c) the number of persons killed, injured and rendered homeless in each affected State/Union Territory;

(d) the Central assistance sought by each such State/Union Territory and the amount actually released;

(e) the State/Union Territory visited by the Central Team (s) in this regard;

(f) the follow up taken by the Union Government on the report of the Central Team(s);

(g) the total aid received from various sources for the relief of the earthquake victims; and

(h) the relief measures taken by various voluntary organisations and the Government?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR) : (a) An earthquake occurred in the very early hours of October 20, 1991 in the west Uttar Pradesh

Hills. The impact of this earthquake was felt more severely in Garhwal Region of Uttar Pradesh. Its impact was also felt in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Delhi. India Meteorological Department's seismological Observatory at Delhi has recorded 56 aftershocks till 17th November, 1991.

(b) and (c) Though the impact of this earthquake was also felt in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Jammu Kashmir and Union Territory of Delhi but no damage is reported to have taken place in these States/Union Territories. The State of Himachal Pradesh reported the death of one person, injury to six persons and damage to three houses only. The exact details of the damage caused by earthquake in Garhwal Region of Uttar Pradesh are still being assessed by the State Government. The details of damage so far reported by the State Government of Uttar Pradesh are at statement below.

(d) The State of Uttar Pradesh, where extensive damage has been caused by the earthquake, are yet to submit a memorandum seeking Central assistance over and above the amount available in the State Calamity Relief Fund for 1991-92. The question of seeking assistance by other States/Union Territories does not arise, since no damage had taken place in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Delhi. Himachal Pradesh Government also did not seek any Central assistance as the damage caused by earthquake was insignificant.

(e) and (f). Under the existing scheme of Financing the Relief expenditure, the earlier procedure of sending the Central Teams to the States in the wake of natural calamities has been done away with from 1.4.1990. The Central Teams are deputed to the States only when a State seeks assistance over and above the amount available under the Calamity Relief Fund by treating a particular Calamity as a calamity of rare severity. In the wake of recent earthquake only Central Reconnaissance Team visited earthquake affected areas in