

(a) whether the families of Kuki tribes not only live in Manipur but they are also found in surrounding areas;

(b) whether Myanmar has the highest population of Kuki tribes; and

(c) the number of Kuki tribes in Nagaland, Assam and Tripura?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Information on population of various communities in other countries is not maintained.

(c) While in Nagaland only the Kuki tribal community is listed as a Scheduled Tribe, in Assam 37 tribes and in Tripura 17 tribes are included under the broad nomenclature "Kuki".

[English]

Food Processing Facilities

3112. SHRI YELLAIAH NANDI :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Confederation of Indian Industry has reported that inefficiency riddles India's Food Chain;

(b) if so, the details of the points raised in the said report; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) and (c) The Confederation of Indian Industry in a recent report prepared in consultation with McKinsey & Company has mentioned that India's food chain is riddled with inefficiency right from agriculture through to distribution. The main issues identified are the high cost of the large number of intermediaries, problems of wastage and value loss and low yields. Government is aware of the need to conserve food production. For this, proper post-harvest technologies like storage, transportation and food processing are being developed to reduce wastage and value loss. Also, agriculture research is being developed to improve yields through better technologies and extension Food Processing Industries are being encouraged through delicensing, fiscal concession etc. Proper marketing through price support mechanism and investment in improvement of market infrastructure are other steps to help boost agricultural production.

Gorkha National Liberation Front

3113. SHRI R.B. RAI : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether GNLF Chief has been disputing India's territorial sovereignty over the 'ceded land of Darjeeling and lease hold land of Kalimpong Doors' and has reportedly pleaded the Central Government to evolve appropriate constitutional steps to undo this historical blunder;

(b) whether the Government are aware of the fact that this issue is haunting the minds of the people and giving rise to the bogey of sovereign State of Gorkhaland; and

(c) if so, the details of the steps being taken to do away with such confusion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (c) Shri Subash Ghisingh, as President of the Gorkha National Liberation Front, has been raising the issue of separate State of Gorkhaland from time to time. He had filed a Writ Petition in the Supreme Court, seeking directions to the Government of India to formally absorb the territories of Darjeeling including Kalimpong, Assam Dooars and Bengal Dooars, in the Union of India through a Parliamentary legislation. The Supreme Court had dismissed the Writ Petition.

Indian Council of Veterinary and Fishery Research

3114. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal for formation of Indian Council of Veterinary and Fishery Research was received in the Ministry;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Dr. Asim Bala, Member of Parliament Lok Sabha and other 100 Members of Parliament represented the Government to create Indian Council of Veterinary Research in the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying on the lines of Indian Council of Medical Research in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Similar proposal was received from Chief Minister of Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi. The matter is under consideration of the Government.

Haldia Petrochemicals Limited

3115. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the date on which the downstream industry Haldia Petrochemical was conceived for West Bengal;

(b) the initial cost of the project;

(c) the details of private sector/multinational who joined with State Government in respective years and the equity participation thereof; and

(d) the latest position, cost of Haldia Petrochemical complex and PFI's contribution, State Government contribution and promoter's contribution?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Threat of Earthquake

3116. SHRI MANIBHAI RAMJIBHAI CHAUDHARI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether threat of earthquake has been increasing in various parts of the country;

(b) the steps taken or being taken to prevent the threat of earthquake; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Occurrence of earthquake is random in nature and there is no clear indication of any increase or decrease or occurrence of earthquakes in different parts of the country.

(b) and (c) Prediction of earthquakes with reasonable degree of accuracy and on a scientific basis with regard to space, time and magnitude has not so far become possible. There is also no proven methodology for preventing occurrence of earthquakes. Government is trying to minimise the extent of damage and destruction by popularising earthquake resistant construction practices and through community education programmes.

Veterinary Hospitals

3117. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria laid down for opening veterinary hospitals and breeding centres in the country and the number of cattle prescribed for a village;

(b) the details of veterinary hospitals and breeding centres in the country;

(c) whether the Government have provided any financial assistance for setting up of veterinary hospitals

and breeding centres in the National Capital Territory of Dehli during the last three years;

(d) if so, the details thereof, year-wise;

(e) whether there is any proposal to increase the number of veterinary hospitals and breeding centres in the country; and

(f) if so, the details thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) to (f) The information is being gathered from the States and Union Territory Governments and will be placed on the Table of the House.

[English]

Permission to Corporate Sector in Agriculture

3118. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Corporate agriculture comes to town" appearing in the 'Business Standard', New Delhi dated July 14, 1997;

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

(c) the interested companies working on the schemes would permit them to bring upward of 200 acres of land each;

(d) the expected funding of these projects by the World Bank; and

(e) the broad features of these projects for agricultural production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) No information on the subject is available in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Welfare of Blinds

3119. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have provided sufficient grants to all the institutions who applied for the welfare of blind persons during 1996-97;

(b) if so, the amount sanctioned and number of institutions benefited, State-wise; and

(c) if not, the reason therefor?