

(a) whether the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) backs India's disarmament stand;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures taken to further clarify India's view point in regard to the number of nuclear tests carried out in the world and the number of times discussed in IAEA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) At the instance of Australia, Canada, Japan and New Zealand, the 35 member Board of Governors of the IAEA at its meeting in Vienna from June 8-12, 1998, inserted an additional item on "Nuclear Testing" on its agenda. The summary adopted by the Chairman of the Board of Governors at the conclusion of the debate included a call on the Nuclear Weapon States to redouble their efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate their nuclear weapons in accordance with Article VI of the NPT and to enter into negotiations in good faith to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This is in line with India's consistent position on universal nuclear disarmament.

The Indian statement clarifying our viewpoint quoted extensively from Prime Minister's address in Parliament on 27th May, 1998. The statement also referred to the further steps taken by India towards the de jure formalisation of a moratorium, a "no-first-use agreement, bilaterally or multilaterally, willingness to commence negotiations on FMCT and India's existing stringent export control policy. The statement added that no commitment or treaty with the IAEA or other international body had been violated and pointed to the deteriorating peace and security situation in our region. The fact that our concerns were not limited to South Asia was emphasised and our strong indigenous scientific and technological base and self reliance in nuclear science and technology was highlighted. Our commitment to the global elimination of nuclear weapons within a definite time frame was reiterated.

India opposed the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the Board on the grounds that the IAEA, whose mandate is the promotion of peaceful uses of atomic energy is not the appropriate forum to raise such an issue. India also pointed out that in the past Nuclear Weapon States like the U.S., U.K., and China have said that the issue of nuclear testing did not lie within the competence of the Agency.

The issue of nuclear testing was raised in the IAEA Annual General Conference in 1996 when France and

China carried out nuclear tests prior to signing the CTBT. India's Peaceful Nuclear Explosion (PNE) was also discussed in 1974 at the IAEA.

[Translation]

Crop Insurance Scheme

4139. SHRI VITHAL TUPE:
SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE:
SHRI MADHAV RAO PATIL:
SHRI A. SIDDARAJU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Crop Insurance Scheme is limited only to such farmers who have taken loan from any bank or financial institutions;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether this existing system is confined only up to the damage of Rs. 10,000;

(d) if so, whether the Maharashtra Government has formulated any new scheme in which all the farmers and crops are covered and have submitted the same to Central Government for its approval;

(e) if so, whether the Union Government propose to accord approval to this scheme; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir. The present Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme (CCIS) is limited to only those farmers who avail of crop loans from rural financial institutions.

(b) The CCIS is confined to loanee farmers as the very objective of the scheme is to restore the credit eligibility of farmers, after a crop fails for the next season. Again, for the sake of administrative feasibility of the operation of the scheme, only loanee farmers are covered.

(c) Yes, Sir. The maximum sum-insured per farmer at present is Rs. 10,000/-.

(d) No new scheme as contemplated by Maharashtra Government has yet been received.

(e) and (f) Do not arise.

[English]

Misuse of Funds

4140. SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'Senior IAS official suspended in Orissa' appearing in the Times of India dated 2.5.98;

(b) the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) the action taken by the Government against erring officials responsible for committing irregularities and misappropriation of funds?

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

(b) and (c) As per facts provided by the State Government, no case of misappropriation has been established.

Cyclonic Storm Warnings

4141. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL:
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the salt workers were not shifted even after having been warned against impending cyclone in the sea;

(b) the number of workers actually working in the salt factories and salt pans on the cyclone day, found missing and the number of workers killed;

(c) if so, whether there is any proposal to probe the matter through the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry to be headed by a sitting judge of the Supreme Court;

(d) whether there is any proposal to compensate families of victims the losses of property and lives of the salt workers; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The requisite information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Government to provide relief to the people affected by natural calamities from the allocation under Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), to which the Centre and the State contribute in the ratio of 3:1. The Centre's share is released in 4 equal quarterly instalments. An allocation of Rs. 154.83 crore has been made to Gujarat for 1998-99. Immediately after the occurrence of the Calamity the second instalment of Centre's share of CRF for 1998-99 amounting to Rs. 29.03 crore was released to the State, in advance, to speed up the relief work.

In addition to the payment made from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund in death cases, the State Government reportedly made ex-gratia payment to the next of kin of the deceased at the rate of Rs. 50,000/- per adult and Rs. 30,000/- per minor people who were rendered destitute due to the calamity were paid cash-doles and assistance was also paid for household belongings.

An Inter-Ministerial Central Team has already visited the affected areas in Gujarat to assess the extent of damage and has submitted its report. Necessary action on the report is being taken as per the established procedure for release of assistance from the National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFCR).

[Translation]

Loss of Crops due to Insects

4142. SHRI RAJO SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state

(a) whether in various parts of the country particularly in the 'tal and diyara' areas of Bihar, crops are largely damaged by the insects;

(b) whether the Government accepts it as a natural calamity and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government are aware of the heavy losses being suffered by the farmers due to it;