

[Translation]

Natural Calamities

4225. SHRI PRADEEP KUMAR YADAV:
SHRI MITRASEN YADAV:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country has to face grave crisis due to loss of lives and property worth crores of rupees in the natural calamities from time to time in various parts of the country; and

(b) if so, whether the Government are contemplating to find a way out in consultation with scientists and concerned experts to prevent loss of life and property caused by the natural calamities such as fire, floods, cyclone, etc.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir. The natural calamities result in loss of life and cause extensive damage of property, depending on the intensity of the calamity.

(b) A number of Scientists and Experts in various Government Departments, Organisations and Institutions, like India Meteorological Department, Ministry of Water Resources, Departments of Space and Science & Technology, Central Building Research Institute and Building Material Technology Promotion Council are constantly striving to find out ways and means by using the latest available State of the Art Technology to minimise the adverse impact of various natural calamities like fire, floods, droughts, cyclones etc. The Government of India is also encouraging, through various programmes, effective community awareness and public participation in the disaster preparedness and mitigation related activities.

[English]

Relations with Russia

4226. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Russia have agreed to intensify their bilateral contact and re-affirmed the strength and tradition of close understanding between the two countries as reflected in the Moscow declaration of 1994;

(b) whether the present Government is very keen to improve the relations with Russia and help Russia in bilateral trade;

(c) if so, the steps worked out in this regard; and

(d) the fields in which both Russia and India are strengthening their ties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (d) India and Russia have traditionally maintained warm and friendly ties and are committed to the 1994 Moscow Declaration on the Protection of the Interests of Pluralistic States. Government's efforts are directed at a further consolidation of India's close and multifaceted friendship with Russia on a sustained basis. Both countries attach considerable importance to the enhancement of bilateral trade. The India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation is the umbrella body for promotion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Its eleven Working Groups cover diverse fields such as trade and economy, power, metallurgy, petroleum, coal, information technology, science and technology, pharmaceuticals, environment, culture, and cooperation between regions. The last session of the Commission was held in December 1997 and its next session is to be held in late 1998. Alongwith the Working Group sessions, it helps resolve pending issues relating to bilateral trade and economic cooperation, as well as identify new directions of such cooperation. India's relations with Russia are being strengthened in all areas of mutual interest.

[Translation]

Hybrid Variety of Rice

4227. SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SAHU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Agriculture Research Institute has been doing research on the development of the hybrid variety of rice;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the likely increase in production of rice in various regions?