

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) :

(a) Yes, Sir. With research and development (R&D) work carried out over the years in the research reactors at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Trombay, Thorium has been successfully converted into Uranium(233). The reprocessing of Uranium (233) from the irradiated Thorium rods also has been carried out both at the BARC and the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research(IGCAR), Kalpakkam. The R&D work of the Department of Atomic Energy in the field of nuclear power generation is oriented towards a long-term strategy involving three stages, namely, the current generation of pressurised heavy water reactors as the first stage, plutonium-fuelled fast breeder reactors as the second stage and reactors operating on the Uranium (233)- Thorium fuel cycle as the third stage.

(b) The advanced heavy water reactor, designed to produce most of its energy from Thorium, is under engineering development at present. It is too early to state the time by which the Thorium based nuclear power plants is likely to be put into operation.

[Translation]

Indian Missions Abroad

1198. DR. MADAN PRASAD JAISWAL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have constituted any committee to evaluate the impact of the publicity being carried out by the Indian Missions abroad; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) :

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Production of Soyabean

1199. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production of soyabean has declined this year;

(b) whether the Government propose to import soyabean in view of the demand and supply of soyabean; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) No, Sir. The production of Soyabean during 1997-98 has been estimated

to be 65.21 lakh tonnes whereas the production during 1996-97 was 52.02 lakh tonnes. This is all time highest production achieved in Soyabean.

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Commerce have considered import of one million tonnes of Soyabean subject to fulfilling the quarantine norms against import of harmful pathogens. No imports have been allowed so far.

[English]

Promotion of Horticulture/Floriculture

1200. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU:
SHRI NARENDRA BUDANIA:
SHRI T. GOVINDAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the financial assistance has been provided by the Union Government to promote horticulture and floriculture in the States during the year 1997 till date;

(b) if so, whether Government have received any progress report regarding horticulture and floriculture development; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (c) The States have been provided assistance to promote horticulture and floriculture development to the tune of Rs.182.42 crores under various horticulture schemes of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation during the year 1997-98. A number of States have reported progress in respect of area expansion, supply of planting material, adoption of drip irrigation and training for increasing production and productivity. Based on available information, an additional area of 53,809 hectares has been covered under various horticulture crops during 1997-98.

Expenses in Embassies

1201. SHRI KAMAL NATH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total expenditure incurred country-wise in the preceding year on Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates in various countries; and

(b) the total amount spent country-wise by these Embassies annually on entertainment and transportation for the last available financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE):

(a) The information in respect of total expenditure incurred by Missions/Posts abroad is given in the attached Statement.