

(b) to (d) Government are aware of the ongoing military cooperation between Russia and China including the sale of some ships which have the capacity to carry supersonic anti-ship missiles SSN-22.

Government are also aware of the transfer of missiles and missile technology from China to Pakistan. Our concerns about such transfer are well known and have been conveyed in our bilateral discussions with various countries.

[Translation]

Haj Pilgrimages

1252. SHRI AJIT JOGI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of pilgrims who visited Saudi Arabia during the last three years;

(b) whether all the Haj Pilgrims travel by air or some still travel by ships;

(c) the state-wise number of the Hajis propose the visit to Saudi Arabia during next year; and

(d) the details of the average expenditure on air and sea voyage, separately ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) to (d) The number of Indian pilgrims who went to Saudi Arabia for Haj in the last three years, is as follows :

(i) 1996	75,000 (approximately)
(ii) 1997	87,516
(iii) 1998	95,119

2. Since Haj 1995, all Indian Haj Pilgrims travel only by air.

3. For 1999, Government have not yet fixed the quota of Indian pilgrims performing Haj through the Haj Committee. This is expected to be done in the next one month after which State-wise quota will be determined by the Haj Committee.

4. The air fare paid by pilgrims who go for Haj through the Haj Committee is Rs. 12,000.

[English]

Production of Butter and Ghee

1253. SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the demand and the production of butter and ghee in the country during the last two years till date:

(b) whether the country has become self sufficient in this regard; and

(c) if not, the steps taken by the Government to meet the requirement of butter and ghee in the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) The demand of butter and ghee varies according to the price, consumer preference, purchasing power, availability of substitutes in the market. The production is dependent on demand and hence it also varies. A major portion of butter and ghee is produced in the unorganised sector for which no estimates are available. The butter and ghee produced in metric tonnes during the last two years in the co-operative sector is as follows:

Period	Table Butter	Ghee
1996-97	33180	47264
1997-98*	30477	51650

*Provisional.

(b) The import/export of milk fats are only marginal and hence by and large India is self sufficient in butter and ghee production.

(c) In view of (b) question does not arise.

Cotton Varieties

1254. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state

(a) whether the Indian Textile Industry has requested for immediate withdrawal of a few varieties of cotton grown in the country;

(b) if so, whether any final decision has been taken in this regard ; and

(c) if so, the total varieties of cotton likely to be grown in the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (c) No. Sir No proposal has been recieved by the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture & Cooperation) for withdrawal of some varieties of cotton grown in the country. However, the East India Cotton Association, Mumbai has requested the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for elimination of obsolete varieties of cotton. If any proposal is recieved for de-notifying any variety under section 5 of the Seeds Act, the matter will be considered at the appropriate time. However, even if a variety is de-notified, there is no bar under the Seeds Act on farmers growing the de-notified cotton varieties.