

OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV) : (a) and (b) There have been discrepancies in the stock figures of foodgrains in the central pool as maintained by the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs and the Food Corporation of India. Therefore, Government has requested the Comptroller and Auditor General of India to conduct a special audit of stocks of foodgrains in the central pool held by the Food Corporation of India and the State Governments/their agencies and submit their report.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Vaccine for Leprosy

254. SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any vaccine has been developed for the treatment of leprosy in the country;

(b) whether the said vaccine has been tested so far;

(c) if so, the details of its outcome thereof; and

(d) the time by which commercial production of this vaccine is likely to be started to make the same available in the market for sale ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Three anti leprosy vaccines viz., ICRC vaccine, MW vaccine and M. Habana vaccine have been developed by the Indian Scientists in the country. ICRC and MW vaccines are under clinical trials and M. Habana vaccine is being evaluated.

Shortage of Onions

255. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the reasons for shortage of onions in the country;

(b) whether the export of onions continued despite shortage;

(c) the reasons for not suspending the export agreements;

(d) whether the hoarders are also responsible for this shortage; and

(e) if so, the action taken by the Government against those found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV) : (a) The main reason for the shortage to onions in the country was the reduction in their production during 1997-98 due to climatic factors. The Kharif crop was adversely affected due to heavy rains during August-October, 1998.

(b) and (c) The export of onion has been banned with effect from 14.10.98.

(d) and (e) All the State/UT Governments were requested to initiate stringent action against hoarders and blackmarketeers in July, 1998. Several State Governments took necessary action against hoarders and blackmarketeers in their States and Union Territories.

Rape cases against Women of Poorer Sections

256. SHRI AMAN KUMAR NAGRA : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been an increase in rape cases against women belonging to poorer sections in the country during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any study has been conducted by the Government in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Contamination of I.V. Fluids

257. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Committee constituted by the Delhi High Court to probe into the contaminated I.V. fluids scandal has since submitted its report to the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of persons found guilty therein;