

*(English)***National Capital Venture Fund**

1216. SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Electronics propose to set up a National Capital Venture Fund; and

(b) if so, the main purpose for which the fund is being set up?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Venture capital has been an important trigger in the growth of IT industry around the world. The objective of setting up this fund is to provide SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) in the software and IT sector of India.

*[Translation]***Basmati Rice**

1217. SHRI RAMSHETH THAKUR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have prepared any time bound program to increase the production of Basmati rice;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the estimated demand and supply of Basmati rice for the current financial year and during the Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) No separate data are generated on production, demand and supply of Basmati rice.

*[English]***Transportation of Goods**

1218. SHRI SAMAR CHOUDHARY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Government have requested the Government of Bangladesh to provide facility for transportation of passengers and goods through Bangladesh to North-East;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of Government of Bangladesh to the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c). India has limited transit facility through Bangladesh under the provisions of the India-Bangladesh Waterways Transit & Trade Protocol (IWT&TP), which has been in operation since 1972. Government has made repeated proposals to the Government of Bangladesh for overland transit facilities for passenger and freight traffic. Bangladesh has not agreed to these proposals. Government continues to pursue the matter.

Command Area Development Programme

1219. SHRI NRIPEN GOSWAMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of field channels constructed under Centrally Sponsored Command Area Development Programme in North-East, Particularly in the State of Assam;

(b) the existing ceiling of construction cost of field channel per hectare in Assam;

(c) whether any request has been made by the Government to raise existing ceiling considering the physio-graphical and geographical features by the State; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken by the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The project-wise details, as reported by the State Governments, of field channels constructed in the North-Eastern States including Assam under the Command Area Development Programme is given in the attached statement.

(b) The existing maximum ceiling of cost of construction of field channels per hectare in Assam is Rs. 10,000/- per hectare.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.