

(d) whether the statutory recommendations pertaining to State Governments under section 9(3) of the Act were forwarded to the concerned States; and

(e) if so, the action taken by the State Governments thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The National Commission for Minorities has made 13 statutory recommendations through their Annual Report for the year 1995-96 under Section 9(1)(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992. The report was received on 5th June, 1997. Action on 12 recommendations has been completed by the Government in consultation with the concerned Ministries/Departments. In terms of section 9(2) of the NCM Act, the government is required to lay the Annual Report alongwith Action Taken Memorandum in each House of Parliament. The report containing 13 statutory recommendations has not yet been laid in Parliament.

(d) and (e) The statutory recommendations pertaining to the State Governments are forwarded to the concerned States by the National Commission for Minorities directly for placing the recommendations alongwith Action Taken Memorandum by the States Government before the State Assembly, as required under section 9(3) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.

Government Reserves
Panchayat Elections

2036. SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMED SAYEED: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is constitutionally mandatory to hold Panchayat/local bodies elections in every State;

(b) if so, whether panchayat elections have not been held in Jammu and Kashmir since last 25-30 years;

(c) whether the Government are aware that the Central funds earmarked for rural development under Panchayats are misused in Jammu and Kashmir; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. in States and Union Territories where the Constitution Seventy-third Amendment Act, 1992 is applicable. The Act of 1992 is not applicable to the State of Jammu & Kashmir due to operation of Article 370(1)(b)(ii) of the Constitution of India. The Seventy-third Amendment Act can only be made applicable to the State of Jammu & Kashmir through an order of the President under Article 370(1)(b)(ii) with the concurrence of the State Legislature. The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has not obtained the concurrence of the State Legislature for extending the provisions of the Constitution Seventy-third Amendment Act, 1992 to the State.

(c) and (d) There have been no reports of misuse/diversion of Central funds earmarked for rural development. The sanction order releasing funds to the State Governments invariably stipulate that the funds released should be utilised exclusively for the purpose they have been sanctioned. The State Governments are also advised from time to time at various levels that funds allocated should not be diverted for purposes other than those for which the funds have been released.

Price Control of Five Drugs *Medicine*

2037. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: *934*
SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to deserve and delicense five bulk drugs;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government have decided to deserve and delicense the manufacture of Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Tetracycline, Oxytetracycline and Folic Acid.

(c) Does not arise. *Foodgrain*

Open Market Price

2038. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:
SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have prepared any action plan to deal with the situation arising due to hike in PDS prices; and

(b) if so, the details of steps taken by the Government to check the price hike to foodgrains and other essential commodities in open market due to hike in PDS prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) The Central Issue Prices of wheat and rice under PDS are revised by the Government from time to time to neutralise the increase in the Minimum Support Prices/Procurement prices of wheat and paddy. Similarly, retail issue price of levy sugar for distribution under PDS is increased from time to time. The recent increase in retail issue price of levy sugar is merely 5.26% which is marginal.

No substantial rise in retail open market prices of wheat and rice have been reported after the revision in CIPs of wheat and rice w.e.f. 29.1.1999. As regards sugar, no rise in its retail price in the open market has been reported.

The open market prices depend on various factors such as demand and supply, general inflationary trends, seasonal marketing behaviour. etc.

Government constantly monitor and review the open market prices of essential commodities and all possible steps are taken as and when need arises. Open Market Sale of foodgrains from public stocks is also resorted to if price of foodgrains rise in the market.

Expenditure on Research Projects

2039. SHRI ANANT KUMAR HEGDE: Will the Minister of OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the achievements of Antarctica research centre during the last three years; and

(b) the expenditure involved in the expeditions and the research projects undertaken during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) During the year 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98, Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Expeditions to Antarctica were launched. A special cruise for the Antarctic waters for assessment of Antarctic Marine Living Resources such as krill was also launched during 1995-96.

Some of the major scientific and logistics accomplishments under the Antarctic Research programme are:

- Studies on ozone, trace gases and aerosols of the Antarctic atmosphere, were conducted.
- Meteorological parameters that can be employed for climate modeling and prediction, were achieved.
- *In-situ* geological and air-borne geophysical investigations of the Central Droning Maudland area and establishment of a permanent seismic station, were undertaken.
- Experiments on solar terrestrial physics like optical aurora, geo-magnetic perturbations, planetary boundary layer, were continued.
- Very Low Frequency whistler monitoring and propagation studies were initiated.
- Establishment of a permanent GPS Observatory for planetary geodetic studies, was completed.
- Identification and taxonomic classification of organisms as a part of on-going bio-diversity studies of Antarctica was done.
- Experiments on Antarctic albedo and snowdrift patterns were taken up.
- Studies on adaptation techniques of human beings in adverse conditions were continued.
- Application and utilisation of clean energy sources like wind and fuel cells in Antarctica were planned and accomplished.
- Upgradation of communication facilities through near real time picture transmission established.
- Reorientation of waste discharge and handling facilities, was done.
- Construction of medical inspection room in Maitri, was completed.
- International bilateral collaborations were initiated with Germany, France, Italy, USA, Argentina & Peru in various domains of polar science.