

(b) the rate at which these have been procured;

(c) the name of the countries from which these have been imported during the last year till date indicating the quantity and rate thereof separately;

(d) the rate at which these items were sold in the Indian market;

(e) the quantity of imported onion and potato destroyed during the said period;

(f) the action taken or proposed to be taken against the person responsible;

(g) whether the ban imposed has been lifted on export of onion;

(h) if so, the details thereof; and

(i) the steps taken by the Government to ensure adequate supply of these commodities at reasonable rate in the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV) : (a) and (b) The estimated production of onion and potato for 1998-99 is 44.5 lakh tonnes and 235.6 lakh tonnes respectively and there is a Minimum Support Price fixed for these items.

(c) During the year 1998-99, Government had authorised import of 10,000 MTs of onions on a need based basis, on Government account through NAFED. As against this authorisation, the NAFED could only import 687 MTs. This quantity was imported from Dubai (Iranian) and Kirgizstan. The total cost involved in import of 687 MTs of onions was equivalent to Rs. 1.61 crores. Potatoes were not imported.

(d) The imported onions were distributed at subsidised rate of Rs. 10 per kg. through the outlets of the public distribution agencies at Delhi.

(e) There was no import of potatoes. Onions imported by NAFED were in good condition and there was no damage.

(f) Does not arise.

(g) and (h) The ban on export of onion was partially lifted on 21.1.99 by allowing Bangalore Rose onion and Krihna puram onions as well as 3000 MTs of other onions to Srilanka. Subsequently, on 9.2.99 the Government decided to permit export of 25,000 MTs per month for the next three months through the agencies to be designated by the Government of Maharashtra or by Associate Shippers registered with the designated agencies. These steps have been taken to ensure that onion growers get remunerative prices and onions are available at reasonable prices in the country.

(i) The Government has set up a special Price Monitoring Cell to monitor the prices and availability of essential commodities. The State Governments/UTs have also been directed to set up similar Cells in their States and to take appropriate actions, including market intervention as a last resort, to ensure adequate supply of onions and potatoes at reasonable prices. 5457/000 198

National Institute for SC/ST at Trivandrum

79. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any request from Kerala for setting up a Regional Institute for Research, Training and Development Studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes at Trivandrum; and

(b) if so, reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) No, Sir. Decision to set up a new Regional Institute for Research Training and development Studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes at Trivandrum has to be taken by the State Government and it does not require approval of the Central Government.

(b) Does not arise.

[Translation]

198-99

Report of National Commission for Minorities about Atrocities

80. SHRI C.D. GAMIT : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the role played by the National Commission for Minorities and Backward Classes in investigating the recent attacks on Christians in Gujarat;

(b) whether the Union Government are satisfied with the role played by National Commission on Minorities;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any report has been received by the Government;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) to (f) In the wake of reported attacks on Christian minorities and their institutions in the