

(c) if so, the time by which this centre is likely to be set up and the place proposed for the purpose; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) :
(a) Yes, Sir. In respect of nuclear reactors and associated facilities, for both research and commercial power generation, the safety aspects are gone into and implemented thoroughly at every stage from design to commissioning as well as in operation. Safety review and safety related research and development activities have been in place since the beginning of the nuclear energy programme and constitute one of the most important continuing activities. The operational safety of the nuclear reactors and power plants is continuously monitored by committees of specialists at three levels, viz. (i) Unit Safety Committee, (ii) Safety Review Committee for Operating Plants (SARCOP) and (iii) Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). SARCOP is vested with the authority to enforce regulatory restrictions on the operating plants, wherever necessary.

(b) and (c) A proposal for establishing a new Institute of Safety Research to carry out research on topics related to safety aspects of nuclear facilities and radiation installations is at present in a conceptual stage.

(d) Does not arise.

Crops Under CIS

*14. SHRI SODE RAMAIAH :
SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government propose to modify the present comprehensive crop insurance scheme ;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the crops presently covered under CIS;

(d) whether there is a proposal to include more crops under this scheme and cover all the districts in country;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the scheme is likely to be implemented at Gram Panchayat level ; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a), (b) and (d) to (g) Yes, Sir. Modification of the existing Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme (CCIS) is under consideration.

(c) Crops presently covered under CCIS are wheat, paddy, millets (including maize), oilseeds and pulses.

[Translation]

Investment in Agriculture Sector

*15 SHRI RAMPAL SINGH:
SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the agriculture production has declined due to shortfall of public investment in agriculture sector;

(b) whether Government have formulated any scheme to encourage public investment in agriculture sector;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the anticipated increase in agriculture production as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) The agriculture production has witnessed a rising trend over the years. During the 8th Five Year Plan (1992-93 to 1996-97) the agriculture sector achieved an average annual growth of about 4.0 percent. However, production is likely to decline in 1997-98 due mainly to delayed onset of monsoon and its erratic behaviour over time and space followed by unprecedented excessive rains during post-monsoon months. It is although also true that the public investment in agriculture sector, particularly for the creation of irrigation potential have, fallen short of the targets.

(b) and (c) In order to encourage investment in infrastructure for agriculture, a new rural infrastructure Development Fund within the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development has been established. A new scheme of Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) was also initiated during 1996-97 with a provision of Rs. 900 crore for providing assistance to States by way of loans for timely completion of selected large and multi-purpose irrigation projects.

(d) The agriculture production would increase depending on the level of investment - both public and private as also the plan outlay for agriculture sector.

[English]

Loss due to Land Degradation

* 16. SHRI MOHAN SINGH :
PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have conducted any study with regard to the annual loss of foodgrains in the country on account of land degradation and crop damage due to pollution;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the areas where foodgrains damage is the most; and