

bank erosion. The state Government have been carrying out various measures in the form of spurs, studs, bed bars, rivetments, bank pitching and screen piles.

Unirrigated Land

3075. SHRI SURENDRA PRASAD YADAV (JAHANABAD): Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether more than 70 per cent of agricultural land in the country is still unirrigated; and

(b) the extent to which the irrigation capacity is lying unutilized, due to inland river water disputes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) No, Sir. As per Land Use Statistics brought out by Ministry of Agriculture for the year 1994-95 (latest), 52.9 million hectares of Net Irrigated Area (NIA) in the country out of 142.7 million hectares of Net sown Area (NSA) constitutes about 37%.

(b) Assessment of irrigation capacity lying unutilised due to inland river water disputes has not been made.

Irregularities in Relief Works

3076. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the fact that the office of the Accountant-General, Gwalior observed certain irregularities committed in rescue and relief work after the devastating earthquake in Jabalpur on May 22, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (c) : No report on irregularities committed in rescue and relief work after Jabalpur earthquake of May, 1997 has so been received from Accountant General, Gwalior. However, the Accountant General, Gwalior has been requested to supply the requisite information.

[English]

Kashmir Issue

3077. SHRI RAMKRISHNA BABA PATIL:
SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT:
SHRI MOHAN SINGH:
SHRI K.S. RAO:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of countries who have offered to mediate on Kashmir problem after the nuclear tests;

(b) whether Government has responded to such offers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) to (c) Government are committed to the establishment of friendly and cooperative relations with Pakistan, and the resolution of all outstanding issues through direct bilateral discussions and negotiations. There is no place for any third party involvement of any kind whatsoever in this process. This view has been made known to the international Community through official statements and interaction at the diplomatic and political levels.

[Translation]

Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

3078. SHRI GAURI SHANKER CHATURBHUJ BISEN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have formulated any policy for Kailash Mansarovar Yatra;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the amount of per head aid given by the Government to pilgrims going to Kailash Mansarovar;

(d) whether Government propose to enhance the aid; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) The pilgrimage to Kailash and Mansarovar resumed in 1982, under a bilateral agreement with China and takes place between June and September every year. The Yatra is conducted through the Lipulekh Pass (Uttar Pradesh).

Ministry of External Affairs organises the Yatra with the assistance of the Government of Uttar Pradesh and Government of India/State Government agencies such as the Ministries of Railways and Home Affairs, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN), and Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Advertisement in newspapers, television and radio are released every year, inviting applications from Indian nationals for participation in the Yatra. Applications are registered on a 'first-come-first-served' basis. Applicants are required to be physically and medically fit and have to undergo a medical check-up in New Delhi and Gunji, UP, before being permitted to undertake the Yatra.

Facilities provided by the Government to the pilgrims include medical assistance, security and escort cover