

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) A Conference of Education Ministers of States and UTs was held in New Delhi on 22nd and 23rd October, 1998. The main focus of the Conference was to facilitate wider consultation between the Central and State Governments on items concerning education in the National Agenda for Governance, namely, universalising elementary education, eradication of illiteracy, free education for girls, educational upliftment of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes and minorities and the qualitative improvement of the educational system as a whole. Some Ministers staged a walk-out during the inaugural session on the issue of Saraswati Vandana, inclusion of recommendations of a group of experts in the agenda, and extension of invitation to the Chairman of a NGO—"Friends of Tribal Society"—to address the gathering. The recommendations of the Group of experts were withdrawn from the agenda items for discussion. The invitation to the Chairman of the NGO was also withdrawn. The important decisions taken in the Conference are given in the Statement (Refer to Statement appended to U.Q. No. 713)

(c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

**Scrapping of the Lecture proposed to be delivered by Prof. Amartya Sen**

732. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the Report captioned "Amartya a Bore, Let Joshi Take the Floor", published in the "Statesman" dated 14th November, 1998;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Governing Body of Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla has been re-constituted and the newly constituted body has scrapped the name of Prof. Amartya Sen, Noble Laureate, who was deemed to deliver the prestigious Radha-krishnan Memorial Lecture, some time early next year;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether it is also a fact that Hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister, has been requested to substitute Prof. Sen; and

(e) if so, the basis and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) On the expiry of its term, the Governing Body of Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla was re-constituted on 20th July, 1998. The Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla has informed that the name of Prof. Amartya Sen did not figure in the Governing Body deliberation on 15.10.1998 regarding the invitation for the delivery of the Radhakrishnan Memorial Lecture. Prof. Sen was earlier invited twice on 28th January, 1987 and 16th October, 1997 to deliver the lecture in September, 1997 and September, 1998 but he declined on both the occasion. The Governing Body has decided to invite Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister for Human Resource Development to deliver the 1999 Radhakrishnan Memorial Lecture.

**Planning Education Policy/Strategies**

733. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister inaugurated, in New Delhi on 22nd October, 1998, the State Education Ministers' Conference which was held to plan the educational policy/strategies for our country;

(b) if so, the details of discussions held and outcome thereof;

(c) whether any concrete programme for our primary education/higher education system was chalked out, indicating allocation of Central funds for such purposes during 1998-99, State-wise, as compared to 1997-98; and

(d) whether India's amendment for incorporation in UNESCO's recent world declaration on "higher education for next century" has been accepted?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) Yes, Sir.