

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE): (a) and (b) No, Sir. During the year 2008-09, a total of 99.58 lakh claims were received. Out of this, a total of 93.07 lakh claims were disposed off leaving a balance of 6.51 lakh claims as on 31.3.2009 pending with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation.

As per provisions of the Employees' Provident Fund Scheme, 1952, claims received, complete in all respects are settled within 30 days. Settlement of claims is a continuous process. As there is a continuous inflow of fresh claims, certain claims are pending at any given point of time.

The main reasons for delay in settlement of claims are as under:-

(i) Submission of incomplete forms by the claimants.

(ii) Increased inflow of claims for 'Final Settlement'.

(c) Computerization project in Employees' Provident Fund Organisation is being implemented in collaboration with National Informatics Centre and after completion of the same, the time taken in settlement of claims will come down substantially.

Lack of infrastructure in Army Schools

*79. SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) how many Sainik Schools are there in India;

(b) whether the Ministry is aware of lack of infrastructure in Sainik School in Amravathi Nagar in Tamil Nadu; and

(c) the steps being taken to fulfil the needs of infrastructure of that school?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) There are 24 Sainik Schools in the country under this Ministry. Sainik Schools are the dual responsibility of both the Central and State Governments. The State Government has the responsibility of providing maintenance of building, roads and installations and for major replacements. They are also required to release grants-in-aid sought for additional requirement of building and furniture, transport, laboratory equipment etc.

In the case of Sainik School at Amravathi Nagar in Tamil Nadu, the matter of infrastructure facilities was taken up with the State Government and during last three years, it has granted sanction(s) of Rs.4.25 crore for improvement/construction of classrooms, administrative block, employees quarters, isolation ward, gas plant, laboratories, water facilities etc.

An amount of Rs.15 lakhs is allotted to State PWD every year for maintenance of existing buildings. Proposals for additional projects to improve the infrastructural facilities for construction of staff quarters, cadets' hostels and auditorium have been submitted to the State Government for approval. Since 2000, the school has been receiving 50.4 lakhs every year in the form of block grant to be utilized for disbursement of State scholarships. Balance amount, if any, is to be utilised for deficit budget.

In addition to this, in the Union Budget for the year 2008-2009, an additional amount of Rs.44 crore @ Rs.2 crore for each of the then existing 22 Sainik Schools has been provided for immediate improvement of infrastructure including class rooms, laboratories, libraries and facilities for physical education.

Sanction of Rs.2 crore to Sainik School Amaravathi Nagar for improvement of infrastructure was issued on 31.12.2008 and the projects are under progress.

Mechanism to check GM food products in India

*80. SHRI NANDAMURI HARIKRISHNA:

SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is aware that Genetically Modified (GM) food is entering the country due to lack of regulatory mechanism;

(b) whether it is a fact that when DGFT intercepts consignments of imported GM food, a mere undertaking from the importer that the food is not GM is sufficient for release of goods;

(c) if so, whether such cases have been detected during the last five years;

(d) if so, the year-wise and product-wise details thereof; and

(e) the threshold limit of GM content in India *vis-a-vis* other major countries of the world?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) Import of Genetically Modified (GM) Food Products in India is governed by the rules for 'Manufacture, Use, Import and Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro Organisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells', 1989 notified under provisions of Environment Protection Act, 1986.

Accordingly, as per the provisions incorporated in the ITC (HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items (Schedule I), import of any food, feed, raw or processed or any ingredient of food, food additives or any food product that contains GM material and which is being used either for industrial production, environmental release or field application, will be allowed only with the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) in Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India. At the time of import, all consignments containing products which have been subjected to genetic modification, will carry a declaration stating that the product is Genetically Modified. In case, a consignment does not carry such a declaration and is later found to contain Genetically Modified material, the importer is liable to penal action under Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.

GEAC has prescribed the procedure for import of GM foods in the country. For import of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) as Food, Feed and Processing (FFP), detailed environment clearance of GEAC needs to be obtained, for which bio-safety and food safety studies need to be furnished. In case of GM processed food, the GEAC follows an "event based approval" in a given crop. If the processed food contains any ingredient derived from LMO as Food, Feed and Processing (FFP) or