

weather forecast about Uttarakhand from India Meteorological Department (IMD);

(b) if so, why the Ministry did not take any action in consultation with State Government of Uttarakhand on this probable weather forecast and whether corrective action had been taken, it might have minimized the casualties; and

(c) whether Government proposes to streamline the functioning of National Disaster Management Authority, as in the recent Uttarakhand tragedy, NDMA was not able to tackle such climatic situation properly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) According to available information, IMD had issued general warnings for isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall/ thundershowers on 15th and 16th June 2013 in the State of Uttarakhand. Accordingly, the State Government issued advisories to all the concerned districts. Announcements were made by Police personnel stationed at Kedarnath, Rambada and Gaurikund alerting general public. The forecasts of IMD have been in public domain through their website at [www.imd.gov.in](http://www.imd.gov.in).

(c) The primary responsibility for management of disaster rests with the State Government concerned. The institutional Mechanism put in place at the Centre, State and district levels helps State Governments to manage disasters in an effective manner. As per Disaster Management Act, 2005, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has the responsibility for laying down policies, plans and guidelines for disaster management for ensuring timely and effective response to disaster. Further the Government of India has set up a Task Force in December 2011 with an objective to examine and review the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and to suggest measures required to address the constraints and bottlenecks in course of the implementation of the Act. As NDMA has been constituted under the Act, provisions relating to its functioning were also looked into. The report of the Task Force is being examined.

#### **Agreement with the US to protect interests of Indian professionals**

\*43. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister had recently visited the US with a view to protect

the interests of Indian professionals who contribute billions to that country's economy every year and if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether the US Government has agreed to the Agreement proposed by the Indian Government; and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir. Minister for Commerce and Industry visited USA from 10th to 14th July, 2013 along with a high level delegation of officers to meet new US Trade Representative, US Commerce Secretary and US Senator Menendez, chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee with a view to discussing outstanding bilateral and multilateral issues.

(b) In meetings with USTR, US Commerce Secretary and other representatives of US Government, industry and business and in the India-US CEO Forum, the Minister expressed India's strong concerns *inter-alia* over the proposed US Immigration Reforms Bill and its adverse impact on the Indian IT industry. The Minister further conveyed that the temporary movement of skilled professionals should not be equated with immigration. There was no agreement proposed by the Indian Government as the US Immigration Reforms Bill is pending before the US Congress.

**Ancient sites/temples in Uttarakhand declared as World Heritage Sites**

\*44. SHRI TARUN VIJAY: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of ancient sites/temples in Uttarakhand which have been declared as 'World Heritage Sites' or are under process for such a declaration; and

(b) whether any central cultural study has been conducted, especially with regard to Kedarnath and Badrinath temples and what has been the Ministry's contribution for their preservation?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI KATOCH): (a) No ancient site/temple from Uttarakhand has been declared as World Heritage Site or under process for such a declaration.