

**Reduction in the number of students joining
agriculture courses**

2986. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that number of students joining in the agricultural courses in Agriculture Universities across the country is reducing every year; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to prevent such drastic reduce in numbers of students enrolling in Agriculture Universities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. As per the report of the project on Human Capital Requirements in Agriculture and Allied Sectors entrusted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) under the National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP), the average outturn of students during the last decade grew at the rate of 5% per annum and in the coming decade it is projected to grow at above 5%. Agriculture, including agricultural education is a State subject. However, ICAR is facilitating increase in intake of students and strengthening of research as a precursor to expanding intake in various degree programmes in the existing colleges/universities. To attract and retain talent amongst the younger generation, National Talent Scholarship is awarded to all candidates admitted through the All India Entrance Examination conducted by the ICAR for UG programmes for 15% of seats available under the Agricultural Universities. Further, 475 Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) for the Post-Graduate (PG) programmes and 202 Senior Research Fellowship (SRF) for pursuing Ph.D. degree programmes are also awarded. To create awareness amongst youth regarding agricultural education, 'Agricultural Education Day' is organized at the State Agricultural Universities/ICAR Institutes. As a result, in the recent past, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of applicants for admission to the All India Entrance Examination for the UG and the PG programmes in agriculture and allied sciences.

Production of urea at competitive price

2987. SHRI BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDER: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intends to revive some of the public sector fertilizer units in collaboration with Gas Authority of India Ltd. (GAIL) which will supply LNG to these plants through its pipe-lines, if so, the details thereof;