

(b) whether it is a fact that due to short supply of bullet proof jackets, entitled Army Personnel / Staff were not provided with the same in a time bound manner, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to tide over this crisis?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) to (c) Bulletproof jackets are provided to Army personnel as per scales and authorisation. The procurement for the same is made from time to time to meet the requirement.

Sainik School at Puducherry

535. SHRI N. GOKULAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are only 20 Sainik Schools in the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there is no Sainik School in Puducherry;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Ministry is planning to open Sainik Schools in various parts of the country; and

(e) if so, what are the reasons that Puducherry has not been considered for setting up of Sainik School?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) No, Sir. There are 25 Sainik Schools in the country.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. No proposal for opening of Sainik School has been received from the Union Territory of Puducherry.

(d) and (e) Sainik Schools are established on receipt of a specific request from the State Government. At present, 25 Sainik Schools are functioning in various parts of the country. Regarding Puducherry, no proposal for opening of Sainik School has been received from the Union Territory of Puducherry.

Memorial at Base Camp, Siachen Glacier

†536. SHRI TARUN VIJAY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the special arrangements made to rescue soldiers from the accidents of snow storms and avalanche in places like Siachen Glacier and whether there is any plan to improve such arrangements in future so that they may be strengthened; and

(b) whether any memorabilia will be erected in Base Camp of Siachen in memory of the martyrdom of brave soldiers like Hanamanthappa Koppad?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) The posts in Siachen Glacier are sited after due mapping so as to ensure their safety from avalanche threat. This is reviewed on a regular basis. On occurrence of the avalanche, a command and control set up is activated at Base Camp Siachen to monitor the incident and to coordinate induction of rescue team and equipment to the site. Rescue equipment like Avalanche Victim Detectors, special mountaineering equipment, ice drilling machines as well as Avalanche Rescue Dogs are employed to locate and rescue the victims. Best medical facilities as available are provided to the casualties.

Keeping in mind the advances in technology, efforts are made to continuously upgrade the equipment for avalanche rescue, mobility and communication to enhance capability for avalanche rescue and survival in glaciated areas.

(b) Siachen War Memorial already exists at the Base Camp of Siachen and names of all soldiers who lay down their lives in Siachen while safeguarding the frontiers of the nation are engraved on the said memorial.

Irregularities in bank loans to farmers

†537. SHRI MEGHRAJ JAIN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of loans provided, State-wise for the marginalised and small farmers of various States including Madhya Pradesh by cooperative banks during the last three years and the current year;

(b) whether irregularities have been found in sanctioning of the loans during the above period;

(c) if so, the State-wise details thereof;

(d) whether any action has been taken regarding the irregularities, if so, the details of the action taken; and

(e) the details of the steps being taken by the Government to stop such irregularities in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): (a) State-wise details of agricultural loans disbursed to small and marginal farmers by cooperative banks, during 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 (upto 31 December, 2015), as reported by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), are given in Statement (*See below*).

(b) to (e) NABARD has informed that as per inspection of cooperative banks conducted by NABARD no irregularities in sanctioning of loans specific to small and marginal farmers were reported during the above period.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.