

In a letter dated 30th September, 2002, the USCIRF recommended to the Secretary of State that India may be identified as a Country of Particular Concern. However, the Secretary of State has not designated India as a CPC in the latest report on the International Religious Freedom issued by the State Department in October, 2002.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The US Commission on International Religious Freedom is a non-official body mandated by the U.S. Congress. Government consider its report as part of the internal process of a foreign Government, and reject any interference in India's internal affairs. It is well known that the Constitution of India guarantees equal religious, social and political rights to all its citizens, including minorities.

Inclusion of Hyderabad-Karnataka region in Article-371

2885. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Karnataka Government has requested the Government to include the Hyderabad-Karnataka region in Article 371 to ensure special status to the people of this region in education and employment opportunities;

(b) if so, when the proposal was sent to Government; and

(c) the present status of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) to (c) In September, 2001, a proposal was received from the State Government of Karnataka for amending Article 371 of the Constitution of India to provide for region-wise reservation in employment and admission to educational institutions in Karnataka on the lines of provisions in Article 371 D of the Constitution of India with respect to the State of Andhra Pradesh. The proposal of the State Government of Karnataka has not been found feasible.

Floods in Manipur

2886. SHRI RISHANG KEISHING: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Manipur was ravaged by an unprecedented flood during the last monsoon;

(b) the damages caused by the flood in paddy fields crops, properties, human lives and catties;

(c) the financial assistance sought by the State Government for relief and other works; and

(d) the funds released by the Central Government so far and to be released later?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) The State had experienced floods/ heavy rains during the South-West Monsoon 2002 and reported damage to 36,409 houses, damage to 35,037 ha. of agriculture area, damage of Rs. 11.57 lakhs in the veterinary sector, damage to public properties worth Rs. 10.06 crore, damage of Rs. 37.33 crore to public utilities and two persons killed.

(c) and (d) An amount of Rs. 5.20 crore was available with the State in the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF); to which Central Government contributes 75% for immediate relief to the affected people. The Government of Manipur had also submitted a memorandum for financial assistance of Rs. 287.06 crore from National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) for relief and rehabilitation. An Inter-Ministerial Team had visited affected areas of the State to assess the damage. The matter is under process.

Strength of BSF personnel in Tripura

2887. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the strength of BSF required and the strength existing in Tripura to cover 856 km. border with Bangladesh;

(b) the steps taken upto get the hide-outs of militants of Tripura in Bangladesh demolished;

(c) the steps to expedite the construction of barbed wire fencing along the boundary between Tripura and Bangladesh; and

(d) the period by when at least one battalion of army will be sent to Tripura to contain terrorism effectively?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) On 856 kms long stretch of border which Tripura shares with Bangladesh the deployment of BSF is equal to its authorization on the border.