

in order to ensure that the balance of payments situation is viable.

[*English*]

External Debt

340. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA:
SHRI PARASRAM
BHARDWAJ:
SHRI YASHWANTRAOPATIL:
SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR
GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's external debt has increased manifold during the current year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the present position about external debt indicating the principal and interest thereon; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to lessen the burden of foreign debt on Indian economy?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b). India's external debt outstanding as on 31st March, 1990 was Rs. 79982 crores. This was 15 percent higher over that of Rs. 69361 crores as on 31st March, 1989. In dollar terms the increase is only about 6 percent.

(c) The amount of external debt outstanding as at the end of March 1990 is estimated to be Rs. 79982 crores and the amount of interest paid on the debt outstanding works out to Rs. 3548 crores during 1989-90.

(d) The Government has taken a number of steps to bring about improvements in revenue receipts and eliminate unessential and low priority expenditure, to boost exports and to increase invisible earnings, to ensure efficient import substitution and to reduce dependency on borrowed funds for financing expenditure.

[*Translation*]

Zikhari Irrigation Project in Gujarat

341. SHRI C.D. GAMIT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Zikhari irrigation project in Surat district of Gujarat is pending approval of the Union Government;

(b) if so, when this project was sent by the State Government for approval;

(c) the reason for delay in according approval to the project; and

(d) by when approval is likely to be accorded to the State Government for this project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (d). No, Sir.

No proposal titled "Zikhari Irrigation Project" has been referred from Gujarat for consideration so far.

Modernisation of Mines

342. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to import modern equipments for use in mines;

(b) if so, the total amount to be spent thereon;

(c) whether there is any scheme for modernisation of mines; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BASAVARAJ PATIL): (a) and (b). Modern equipments for use in mines are imported by various public sector undertakings. Of the six public sector undertakings under the Department of Mines, Bharat Gold Mines Limited, Hindustan Copper Limited and Hindustan Z-inc Limited have proposed to import equipments during the current financial year to the tune of Rs. 432.48 Lakhs, Rs. 79.89 Lakhs and Rs. 3436 Lakhs respectively. Further, Bharat Gold Mines Limited and Hindustan Zinc Limited have future plans for importing such equipments to the tune of Rs. 900 Lakhs and Rs. 338 lakhs respectively.

(c) and (d). Modernisation of mines is aimed at optimum exploitation of the mineral deposits and improvement of productivity and safety with due attention to conservation and safeguarding environment and ecology. This is achieved through computerised mine planning and design, faster mine construction, improved mining methods, use of modern equipment and environment management plans.

Pending Cases and Vacancies of Judges in Supreme Court and High Courts

343. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD:
SHRI SHANKERSINH
VAGHELA:
DR. A.K. PATEL:
SHRI MANDHATA SINGH:
SHRI JANARDHANA
POOJARY:
PROF. K.V. THOMAS:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases pending in the Supreme Court and High Court as on 15 December, 1990, category-wise and Court-wise;

(b) the steps taken by the Union Government to tackle the problem of arrears in the Supreme Court/High Courts;

(c) the number of vacancies of judges in the Supreme Court/High Courts as on 15 December, 1990, Court-wise and the date from which these have been lying vacant;

(d) the steps being taken to fill up the vacant posts of Judges;

(e) whether Government propose to raise the strength of Judges of the Supreme Court and various High Courts in view of the increased litigation; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI SUBRAMANIAMSWAMY): (a) The available information is given in Statement-I below.

(b) Besides increasing the Judge strength, various steps viz; grouping of cases involving common question of law, constitution of specialised benches, etc. have been taken by the Government from time to time. The recommendations contained in the Report of the 3 Chief Justice' Committee constituted by the Government to study the problem of arrears in Courts and to suggest measures have been forwarded to all the concerned State Governments, Central Ministries and High Courts.

(c) The information is given in Statement-II and III below.

(d) All possible efforts are made by the Government to complete expeditiously the consultative process envisaged in Articles