

[Translation]

Sale of Boeing 747-200 Aircraft

386. SHRI ANNA SAHIB M.K. PATIL:
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Air India has decided to sell its two very old Boeing 747-200 aircraft;

(b) whether tenders have been invited for their sale;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the number of aircrafts of Air India which have completed their life period; and

(e) the time by which new aircrafts are proposed to be purchased in their place?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (e). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) to (c). Air India invited bids through advertisements, for sale of six B747-200 aircraft. No final decision in the matter has been taken by the Government.

(d) and (e). No life span is specified. The aircraft may continue to operate as long as it is airworthy as per regulations of the Director General of Civil Aviation. Air India plans to continue renewal and expansion of its aircraft fleet during the Ninth Plan Period.

Communication System in Bihar

*387. SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the amount spent on the development of communication system in Bihar during the last three years;

(b) whether the above system is still poor in the State in comparison to other States;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to improve the communication system in Bihar during 1996-97?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) The Plan expenditure on development

of Telecommunication system in Bihar during the last three years is as under:—

Year	Plan Expenditure (in crores of Rs.)
1993-94	180.89
1994-95	222.61
1995-96	189.01

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) During 1996-97 it is proposed to provide 47,000 Direct exchange lines against waiting list of 42,481 as on 31.3.96, add 67,800 lines of Electronic switching capacity, provide 6,500 village public telephones and 10,000 lines of Trunk Automatic Exchange capacity.

[English]

Multinationals/Pvt. Sectors to Explore and Mine Gold and other Metals

* 388. SHRI PRADIP BHATTACHARYA:
SHRI GEORGE FERNADES:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken a decision for allowing Indian private companies and multinationals to explore and mine gold and other precious metals in the country and particularly in Karnataka;

(b) whether a request from the Government of Karnataka has been received in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof and reasons for allowing multinationals to explore gold and precious metals in Karnataka;

(d) the details of the proposals received from various companies;

(e) whether Karnataka have stipulated any condition on companies to explore and mine gold;

(f) if so, the details thereof;

(g) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(h) the arrangements ensured for rehabilitation of the people living there who are likely to be evicted?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (c). The National Mineral Policy, 1993 encourages foreign investment and technology in the exploration of high value and scarce minerals. The Policy also deserves minerals earlier reserved for exclusive exploitation by the private sector, so allowing exploration and exploitation of all minerals including gold, by the private sector, both domestic and foreign. Any company registered in India can apply to the State Governments for grant of prospecting licence/mining lease.

(b) No, Sir.

(d) to (g). The Govt. of Karnataka has informed that it had invited applications from private companies, both domestic and foreign, to submit proposals for mineral exploration especially that of gold, subject to multinational companies entering into a joint venture with Indian companies. In response, they have received proposals from 281 companies. The Government of Karnataka has stated that it has yet to take any view on these applications.

(h) The question, of this stage, does not arise. However, it may be added that the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 and the rules made thereunder, provide that prospecting/mining operations can only be carried out with the written consent of the land owner.

Unmilled Paddy

* 389. SHRI CHHATAR SINGH DARBAR:
SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN:

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of paddy lying unmilled in the Food Corporation of India godowns, State-wise;

(b) whether the millers have refused to mill this paddy; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government to get this paddy milled before the same is declared unfit for human consumption?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) A statement giving the requisite information is attached.

(b) A few problems in milling of paddy of 1994-95 crop have been experienced mainly in Punjab. A record quantity of 73.76 lakh tonnes of paddy was procured in Punjab by FCI and State Government agencies, which was 33% higher than the previous season. Uncooperative attitude of rice millers of Punjab by raising demand for relaxation in the percentage of brokens far beyond the prescribed limits further compounded the problem. Even then except for a balance of 4.68 lakh tonnes of paddy, the entire stocks have been either milled or disposed of through sale. The entire stocks of unmilled paddy in Punjab, except a small quantity of 1.03 lakh tonnes, are contracted under which the millers are under obligation to complete milling of the contracted quantity of paddy.

The milling of 1995-96 crop paddy is in progress.

(c) The following special steps were taken to expedite milling of paddy:—

- (i) Some quantity of Paddy was moved from Punjab to other regions like Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh during 1994-95 and 1995-96 seasons to the extent of spare milling capacity available in these regions.
- (ii) Brokens percentage of rice was relaxed upto 30% for 1994-95 crop paddy;
- (iii) Relaxations in certain parameters of specifications have been allowed during 1995-96 season.
- (iv) Driage allowance for production of raw rice was allowed at 2% during 1995-96 season.
- (v) A memorandum of understanding was signed with Government of Punjab on 21.12.95 which provides for completion of milling of the paddy procured by Government of Punjab/agencies in the year 1995-96 by 31st May, 1996. This period has now been extended upto 31st August, 1996.
- (vi) Additional incentive of Rs. 5/- per quintal over the normal milling charges for production of parboiled rice during 1995-96 season with effect from 27.5.96.
- (vii) A total quantity of 21.66 lakh tonnes of 1994-95 crop paddy in Punjab was sold under tender or through open sale. The disposal of paddy through tender is in progress.