

Misuse of Soft Loan

*267. SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Horticulture Board has ordered a probe into the alleged misuse of its soft loan scheme meant to promote the horticulture and floriculture in the country

(b) if so, the outcome of the probe; and

(c) the action taken by the Government against those found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) to (c) Few cases of irregular disbursement of loan have come to the notice of the National Horticulture Board (NHB). The NHB is inquiring into the matter.

[Translation]

Procurement, Storage and Transportation Cost of Foodgrains

*268. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :
SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) the per quintal expenditure incurred by the Food Corporation of India on the procurement, storage and transportation of foodgrains during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 so far.

(b) whether the transportation and storage cost of the Foodgrains has been continuously increasing.

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to check the rise?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) :

(a) The expenditure per quintal incurred by the FCI on procurement, storage and transportation of foodgrains (wheat and rice taken together) during 1994-95 and 1995-96 is as under. The expenditure for the year 1996-97 will be known only after finalisation of accounts of the year.

(Rupees per quintal)

Expenditure on	1994-95 1995-96	
	1994-95	1995-96
(i) Procurement incidentals on foodgrains procured	72.31	74.43
(ii) Storage cost	7.94	10.97
(iii) Transportation cost on quantities moved	50.10	50.27

(b) and (c) Apart from normal inflation, the unit storage cost has shown an increase due to provision of arrears of pay to godown staff and due to lower storage capacity utilisation in 1995-96 as compared to 1994-95. Unit transportation cost on the actual quantity moved has remained more or less constant during 1994-95 and 1995-96.

(d) The following are amongst the important steps taken to check the rise :

(a) FCI is trying to achieve average storage capacity utilisation of 75% as against the utilisation of 51% as on 1.11.1996.

(b) Government has issued directions to FCI with a view to effect economy in its operations.

(c) The procurement-movement ratio is being maintained at 1:1.35 as fixed by Government to reduce the expenditure in freight.

[English]

Taking over of Fertilizer Units

*269. SHRI MEHBOOB ZAHEDI :
SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA :

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the profit making fertilizer companies like IFFCO, KRIBHCO, NFL etc. are being asked to take over some units of the Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation and Fertilizer Corporation of India.

(b) if not, the reasons thereof; and

(c) whether the Government are proposing to revive the plants of HFC and FCI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) :

(a) and (b). The option of takeover of the units of Fertilizer Corporation of India Limited (FCI) and Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Limited (HFC) by any of the profit making fertilizer undertakings, including IFFCO, KRIBHCO and NFL, was explored by the Government. Because of the prior commitments of these undertakings towards their own ongoing expansion projects and joint ventures for augmenting the fertilizer production capacity, no such proposal could materialise.

(c) The revival packages of FCI and HFC were approved, in principle, in April, 1995. These packages envisaged the revamp of Sindri, Ramagundam and Talcher units of FCI and Durgapur, Barauni and Namrup units of HFC, entailing a fresh investment of Rs. 2201.13 crore at 1994 price levels, apart from capital restructuring and financial reliefs to the undertakings. The funding arrangement for these packages could, however, not be tied up. An expert Group was, therefore, constituted to reformulate the revival packages. The Group appointed

a consultancy organisation to undertake an independent appraisal of the technical viability of the revival packages from the standpoint of funding by the Financial Institutions. The consultancy organisation has since submitted its report, based on which the Group would reformulate the revival packages. The final decision on the implementation of the reformulated revival packages would depend upon the tie-up of funding arrangements and outcome of the proceedings pending before the BIFR which is a quasi-judicial authority.

[Translation]

Scholarship to SCs/STs

*270 SHRIMATI BHAVNA BEN DEVRAJ BHAI
* CHIKHALIA
SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state

(a) whether the Government propose to do away with the scheme of giving scholarship to the children belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe;

(b) the maximum income limit prescribed in respect of different scholarship schemes sponsored by the Union Government for them scheme-wise

(c) whether the Union Government propose to enhance the income limit

(d) if so the details thereof

(e) if not the reasons therefor and

(f) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure proper utilisation of the funds earmarked for the schemes?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) (a) No Sir

(b) The maximum income ceiling prescribed under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Post-Matric scholarship to students belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is Rs. 44,500/- per annum. The maximum income ceiling prescribed under the Scheme of National Overseas Scholarship for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes etc. candidates is Rs. 60,000/- per annum.

(c) to (e). The income ceiling under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Post-matric scholarship to students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has already been revised with effect from 1.10.1995 and the revised maximum income ceiling of Rs. 44,500/- per annum takes into account consumer price index for industrial workers upto October, 1995. It has also been decided to have revision of income ceiling under this Scheme once in two years and to link it with consumer price index for industrial workers. It is also proposed to enhance the existing income ceiling of Rs. 60,000/- per annum to Rs. 1,20,000/- per annum in case of the Scheme of National Overseas

Scholarship for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes etc. candidates

(f) Central assistance is released to concerned State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations for a financial year under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Post-matric Scholarship to students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, while invariably accounting for the actual utilisation of Central assistance in previous financial year and the unspent Central assistance if any with them is adjusted at source while releasing due Central assistance which avoids accumulation of unspent Central assistance. Under the Scheme of National Overseas Scholarship for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes etc. candidates a lump-sum amount is placed at the disposal of Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Missions abroad directly pay the scholarship, University fee and air passage for return to India for the candidates. The Ministry of Welfare itself books air-passage for selected candidates to go abroad. The system ensure proper utilisation of funds under this Scheme.

[English]

Purulia Arms Drop

*271 SHRI RAM NAIK Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have conducted any inquiry into the Purulia Arms Dropping case

(b) if so the findings thereof

(c) whether the Purulia Arms Dropping case has been fully resolved

(d) if so the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to check recurrence of such incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJI GUPTA) (a) and (b). The case relating to arms dropping in Purulia district of West Bengal has been handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation. After investigation, CBI has filed chargesheet against 14 persons for offences under the provisions of Indian Penal Code, Arms Act, Indian Explosives Act, Explosives Substances Act and Aircraft Act. During investigation, CBI have also recovered large quantity of arms and ammunition.

(c) and (d). CBI has intimated that further investigation is continuing for locating the absconding accused persons and also to trace out others who may be involved in the case. Investigation pertaining to financial transactions abroad is also continuing through Interpol and Letter Rogatory. CBI has filed chargesheet against the accused persons based on the evidence available during investigation. The investigation has brought out involvement of a section of Anand Margis