

(a) whether the Government is having any proposal to introduce direct bus service between Calcutta and Dhaka;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the said service is likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Official level talks in this regard were held in New Delhi on February 16 and 17, 1997. The details of the proposed service are in the process of being worked out.

#### **Fishermen in Pak Jails**

2165. SHRI GORDHANBHAI JADAVBHAI JAVIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian origin fishermen captured by Pakistan coastguard and police and jailed during the last three years; and

(b) the number of fishermen who have returned to India through dialogue and other measures?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) 343 Indian fishermen were detained by the concerned Pakistani authorities since March 1996. During the same period, Pakistan has released 439 Indian fishermen. These included Indian fishermen detained by the Pakistani authorities prior to March 1996.

#### **Decontrolled Fertilizers**

2166. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to lift its control on fixing maximum retails prices (MRP) for decontrolled fertilizers; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent future increase in costs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) A proposal for not indicating the Maximum Retail Prices of decontrolled Phosphatic & Potassic fertilisers for 1999-2000 is under examination. The proposal also includes continuance of the concession (subsidy) to the manufactures/importers to enable sale of these fertilizers to farmers at reasonable price. The increase in costs of production or import is dependent on a number of factors like international prices of inputs and products which may be beyond the control of the Government.

#### **Employment Policy**

2167. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:  
SHRI ARVIND KAMBLE:  
SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI:  
SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the alarming unemployment situation in the country;

(b) if so, the details of contribution of Public Undertakings of Union Government and State Governments in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to increase employment generation in organised and unorganised sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) As per the estimate available from the comprehensive quinquennial surveys on employment and unemployment conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), the overall employment in the country, during the period 1987-88 to 1993-94, grew at the rate of 2.43% per annum. The unemployment rate during the same period declined from 2.62% to 1.90%.