

seals of the Booking Station intact, generally the railways do not entertain the claims of shortages as the consignments are booked without 'clear railway receipts'.

(c) In order to minimise the operational transit losses, FCI has taken a number of steps at each stage of activity. Some of the measures are as under:—

- (i) Administrative measures such as tightening of security at depots, intensifying surprise checks at the loading/unloading points, ensuring regular stock verification etc.
- (ii) Installation weighbridges in depots.
- (iii) Minimising multiple handling transshipment and movement in open wagons.
- (iv) Induction of CISF at vulnerable depots to curb theft and pilferage.
- (v) Adoption of 50 Kg. packing in a phased manner and encouraging machine stitching of bags.
- (vi) Food Corporation of India has issued a set of instructions recently to control the operational transit losses prescribing a systematic approach to achieve transparency and accountability.

[English]

Agriculture as Compulsory Subject

3173. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA:
SHRI MOHAN RAWALE:
SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI:
SHRI RAM PAL SINGH:
SHRI RAM CHANDRA BAINDA:
SHRI MUKUL WASNIK:
DR. CHARAN DAS MAHANT:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether agricultural education is being given in primary, secondary and senior secondary classes in schools;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to include agriculture as a compulsory subject in schools from class Vth onwards;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (e) At present there is no proposal to introduce agriculture as a separate compulsory subject in CBSE affiliated schools. However, aspects of agriculture are taught as part of subjects like Social Science, Geography and Botany etc.

[Translation]

Purulia Incident

3174. SHRI ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL:
SHRI MADHAVRAO PATIL:
SHRI SADASHIVRAO D. MANDLIK:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the latest position of the investigation into the Purulia incident;

(b) whether security lapses have been noticed in the preliminary investigation report;

(c) if so, the action taken by the Government against the officials found responsible for such lapses; and

(d) the time by which the investigation in regard to Purulia incident is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Central Bureau of Investigation, which was entrusted with the investigation of the Purulia Arms Drop case, has intimated that the case is sub judice. Most of the prosecution witnesses have deposed in the court and during the coming months, more are likely to depose. Letters Rogatory have been sent to various countries, execution reports of which are yet to be received. The matter is being pursued through diplomatic channels and through the Interpol. All efforts are being made by the CBI to apprehend the 7 absconding accused persons through the Interpol.

(b) and (c) The Central Bureau of Investigation submitted reports highlighting certain administrative lapses on the part of different agencies that came to light during

investigation. The concerned authorities have been apprised of the reports of the CBI for appropriate action.

(d) CBI has intimated that the remaining investigation is being conducted in some other countries. Therefore, a definite time frame cannot be given regarding the completion of the investigation.

[English]

Import of Life Saving Drugs

3175. SHRI RAM NARAIN MEENA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the total value of life saving drugs imported during 1997-98 and 1998-99 till date;

(b) the names of the countries from which these drugs have been imported; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to produce these drugs in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL): (a) to (c) There is no classification of drugs as life saving drugs either in the "Modifications in Drug Policy, 1986" (announced in Sept. 1994) or the DPCO'95 and hence no such data base is maintained.

Amendments in UGC Act, 1956

3176. SHRI K. PARYMOHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPEMNT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Task Force set up to examine the proposal of amendments to the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the main recommendations made therein; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) With a view to examine the proposal of amendments to the UGC Act, 1956, to provide for suitable safeguards against the incidences of fake universities as also to empower the Commission to cope with the emerging challenges and to strengthen and

restructure the Commission, the Government of India had constituted a Task Force that has since submitted its report on 15th Feb., 1999.

The important recommendations of the Task force include (a) provision for whole-time members in the Commission in addition to the Chairman; (b) punishment with imprisonment for a term ranging between one year and three years and/or fine ranging between one lakh and 10 lakh rupees for contravention of the provisions of Sections 22 and 23 of the UGC Act; (c) provision for affording opportunity for establishment of private or self-financing universities in the country, subject, of course, to the observance of the prescribed rules for establishment of such universities; and (d) provision for the regulation of functioning of foreign universities/institutions in respect of any programmes in India and also recognition of universities or institutions which confer degrees/diplomas/certificates.

[Translation]

Hostels for Working Women

3177. SHRIMATI REENA CHOUDHARY:
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:
SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN:
SHRI VIJAY GOEL:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of hostels meant for the working women particularly belonging to the backward classes and minorities at present in the country, State-wise and Union Territory-wise;

(b) the number of working women benefited from such hostels as on date, State-wise and Union Territory-wise;

(c) whether the Government have received any complaints regarding the functioning of these hostels;

(d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and Union Territory-wise;

(e) whether the Government have any scheme to construct some more hostels for these women;

(f) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(g) the total fund proposed to be allocated for this purpose during 1999-2000, State-wise;