

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(English Version)

Fourth Session
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)



(Vol. VII contains Nos. 1 to 10)

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, March 10, 2005/Phalgun 19, 1926 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, yesterday the Supreme Court has interfered in the functioning of a particular State Legislature. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Let us take it up after the Question Hour.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have called a meeting of the leaders today. I will decide about it afterwards.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have not allowed him.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Due to the important nature of the matter, I have called a meeting of the leaders of the parties today.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Let me conduct the proceedings.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You have raised an issue. I have informed you that I have called a meeting of the leaders of the party on this issue.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Adhir Chowdhury, what is this? Please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, at the appropriate time you will be allowed to make your observations, not now.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Topdar, you can speak later, not now.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded. Nothing will be recorded.

*...(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please cooperate.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is very unfortunate.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Adhir Chowdhury, you are crossing the limits. I am not minimising the importance of the issue. It is because of the importance of the issue that I have called a meeting of the leaders of the parties. Let us sit and discuss. Then, I shall make my observation.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please sit down when I am on my legs.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Topdar, I will not hear you.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have myself said that the matter is important. But sitting here I have informed you that I have called a meeting of the leaders of the parties. On this matter, let us hear their views. Then, I shall make my comments on this issue.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please sit down. I have not allowed anything now.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, nothing is being recorded.

*...(Interruptions)**

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House about one thing.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Why are you not sitting? You are not the Chair. Please sit down. It is my job to control the House.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: You please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You do not have to advise me. I am trying to do whatever is my duty. Please sit down. By standing here, you are not doing your duty.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): At least ask someone to sit. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have asked everyone to sit.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Do not teach me how to conduct the House.

...(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded. I have already directed them.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded. Why are you saying these things? Please sit down.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Chowdhary, you have to sit down now.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded. I have already directed them.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Swain, you are crossing your limits. Please sit down. Nobody is minimising the importance of the issue. But how do we conduct ourselves? Because of these things, the other organs are getting more importance. It is because the way we are behaving here.

I have to inform the House about one thing.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Are you helping the Chair to control his House? Is this the way the senior Members would have to conduct themselves? Do you think you are helping us?

...(Interruptions)

11.06 hrs.

RESIGNATION BY MEMBER

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received a letter dated 10th March, 2005 from Shri S. Bangarappa, an elected Member from Shimoga Parliamentary Constituency of Karnataka resigning from

*Not recorded.

the Membership of Lok Sabha with effect from 10th March, 2005.

I have accepted his resignation with effect from 10th March, 2005.

MR. SPEAKER: Let us have some semblance of order. Everybody is teaching the other. Everybody is teaching the Speaker.

Now, the hon. Minister for Civil Aviation to give reply.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: That is why we are making others more important. It is because the way we are functioning.

11.07 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Operation of Flights of Gulf Countries

*101. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR:
SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of flights of Indian Airlines and Air India being operated to the Gulf countries;

(b) the number of passengers travelled to Gulf countries during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the Government proposes to increase the number of flights operating between India and Gulf countries;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to introduce low cost flight from India to Gulf countries and also South East Asia regions; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Air India and Indian Airlines are at present operating 103 and 70 flights per week respectively to Gulf countries.

(b) The number of passengers travelled to Gulf countries by Air India and Indian Airlines during the last three years are as under:

Year	No. of passengers travelled (In Lakhs)
2001-02	20.43
2002-03	22.32
2003-04	24.38

(c) and (d) Increase in frequencies will depend on bilateral arrangements between India and the respective countries on the basis of assessment of traffic demand on different routes. As far as peak season demand is concerned, foreign airlines are allowed to mount additional services during the limited open sky policy announced by the Government.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. Air India is in the process of starting a subsidiary Low Cost Airlines, Air India Express. This airline will commence operations in a phased manner from India to the Gulf and India to South East Asia. In Phase I, this airline will operate from India to certain points in the Gulf. In Phase II, based on bilateral issues and availability of aircraft, these services will be extended to South East Asia and to other points in the Gulf. The first phase of the operations is expected to be launched in April 2005.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Hon. Speaker, Sir, one of the busiest sectors in the air travel is the Gulf sector. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is the first supplementary. Please sit down. There should be no cross-talk.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Shall I put my supplementary now?

One of the busiest sectors in the air travel is the Gulf sector. Maximum passengers in the Gulf countries are increasing as stated by the hon. Minister. Most of the passengers are from Kerala, especially from the Malabar area. In the case of Air India and the Indian Airlines, it is this sector which provides the maximum

return and makes the Airlines profitable. Most of these passengers work in the Gulf countries and they are contributing to our foreign exchange. Unfortunately, the passengers in the sector are not getting a fair deal compared with the other international destinations. Air India and the Indian Airlines are charging much higher fares to Gulf countries. Why is this discrimination prevailing there?

I would also like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is ready to end this discrimination to the Gulf passengers by reducing the air fares at par with the other international Airlines. Also in Kerala, the Calicut Airport attracts the maximum passengers. Only the Air India and the Indian Airlines flights are operating from there. *...(Interruptions)* Moreover, both Air India and the Indian Airlines are charging higher fares to Gulf countries than other Airlines like the Oman Air, the Qatar Air, the Gulf Air, the Srilankan Air and the Emirates which are operating from Cochin and Trivandrum.

MR. SPEAKER: You are putting too many questions.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: I would like to know whether the Government would reduce the fare and also allow the other Airlines to operate from Calicut.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, I must concede that Kerala is one of the most important States in terms of traffic to the Gulf and the concerns raised by the hon. Member are always welcome and we take them very seriously. However, just to give a little bit of an indication about fares, I would like to inform that the fares of Indian Airlines and Air India are not decided by the Government, they are decided by both the organisations on commercial considerations and I must inform the House that as much as we talk of Air India and Indian Airlines as national carriers and Government owned, we do not give any budgetary or any kind of financial support to both these carriers. They have to function basically on the economic viability of their operations.

However, that being so, I do not think that it is the correct view point that the fares, especially on the Kerala-Gulf sector, are slightly higher than that of other sectors, as has been mentioned by the hon. Member. Just to give a little bit of an idea as to how the fares are moving, I would like to inform that if we compare the fares of April, 2004 versus April, 2005, the fare between Kochi and Abu Dhabi were Rs. 7,840 in 2004 and they have come down to about Rs. 6,500 now. Similarly, on many other sectors, the fares, including Mumbai-Dubai and

Mumbai-Saudi Arabia sectors, have all progressively started coming down. This is all on account of competition, more the services, more the competition to get passengers. However, certain factors like increase in international fuel prices have affected the fares which were coming down in the last one year, because, as all of us know, international fuel prices have really gone up very much.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS: He has not answered it primarily. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What is the good of passing judgement like this? This is not the way to pass judgement on an answer.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Sir, even though Calicut airport is named as an international airport and international flights are operating from a separate terminal, it has not been declared by the Government as an international airport. I would like to submit that 76 international flights are being operated from there every week. Why is the Government not recognising Calicut airport as an international airport? I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government would declare Calicut airport as an international airport. Moreover, many international flights are connecting Chennai and Calicut, but none is connecting Calicut with Bangalore. Would the Government consider connecting Calicut with Bangalore?

MR. SPEAKER: The main question is regarding flights to Gulf countries.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, I would like to reiterate that in view of large number of our own countrymen working in the Middle East and Gulf countries, we give special emphasis to flights to Gulf area and the Middle East. Therefore, many of the concerns, which he has raised, are being taken care of. Of course, Calicut is a very important airport and there is no doubt about it. Not only to Calicut, in fact the Government attaches the highest priority to most of the airports in Kerala because a large number of air movements take place not only internationally, but even domestically.

The hon. Member's question is very general in nature, but just to give a little idea, I would like to inform that we would look at Calicut in the way as he is expecting that airport to shape up. But even to answer the first part of his question. I would like to inform that Air India is launching a low cost carrier known as Air India Express. Most of its operations, initially, are going to be operated

from Kerala. In fact, aircraft are going to be based in Kerala. The fares would be roughly 20 to 30 per cent below the fares which Air India is charging right now because of the lower cost structure of that airline. Aircraft of Air India, for the first time, will be positioned outside Mumbai. They would be positioned in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Calicut and such other places so that there could be direct flights from there. In fact, for the knowledge of most of the Members here, I would like to inform that not only will the aeroplanes be parked there, but there would also be Malayalee-speaking crew or crew speaking a language of that particular area so that our passengers feel more at home and more at ease and yet they are able to get better services at a cheaper cost.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS: Sir, first of all, I must thank the hon. Minister as he is expressing more concern about the passengers who are travelling to the Middle-East, especially from Kerala.

The hon. Minister has mentioned here: "It is not correct, the fare from Kerala to Middle-East countries is not far higher than any other sector". But I would like to say that it is correct if you compare it with other sectors, to Europe, to America or to any other destination. As compared to the distance, at present, the cost of travel is much higher than any other sector. It is a very consistent demand of lakhs of people who are travelling between Middle-East, especially Gulf and Kerala to reduce the price level comparing it with any other destinations or any other sectors.

Now, the hon. Minister has mentioned that it is not decided by the Government. My first part of the question is whether the Government would give any direction to the public sector undertakings, that is, Air India or Indian Airlines, to consider the consistent demand of the passengers who are travelling between Middle-East and Kerala.

The second part of my question is regarding newly declared Air India Express. As everybody knows the passengers, especially travelling from Kerala to Middle-East are ordinary passengers. They do not need any five-star flights. So, considering all these things and considering only a four to five hour journey between Kerala and Middle-East, whether the prices will be rationalised. ...(*Interruptions*) I would like to have a reply on these questions from the hon. Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, if you put your question succinctly, then you will get a satisfactory reply.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, I think, I have answered most of the queries which the hon. Member has raised here and it is in context of the earlier supplementary. But I would reiterate that, firstly we are conscious of the fact that Kerala has a large number of countrymen living abroad who are price conscious, who are working class labourers. Therefore, they need good service at a reasonable price.

As I said, we cannot mandate our public carrier to do any operation because we do not give them any financial support. In terms of economic viability, they do their best. However, I am sure, in today's competition, if the prices in our public carriers are more than any other carriers, automatically they will be out of business. It is a situation where I think, it will depend on the economic viability. However, because of the price conscious workers or for persons, who are out of Kerala living in the Middle-East, we are launching this low cost carrier, that is, Air India Express, particularly to address the concern expressed by the hon. Member.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GANESH SINGH: Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister about Khajuraho. Khajuraho is an International tourist centre in our country.

MR. SPEAKER: Khajuraho? The original question relates to Gulf.

SHRI GANESH SINGH: My question relates to that only. People from all over the world visit this place. The flight of Indian Airlines which used to operate from our place has been discontinued recently. I would like to know the reason for its discontinuance?

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Not allowed. You need not answer.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPA: Sir, the hon. Minister had agreed that comparatively the price from any airport, from Kerala to Gulf is higher. When a public sector undertaking is taking an exploitative attitude towards large masses of passengers, is it not the responsibility of the Government to intervene and say that they should be rational? Would the Government do that and get some result?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: I think, our public sector carriers are not over charging. I can assure the hon. Member about that. The fact of the matter is that in today's open market environment, people are competing. Today if 'A' Airlines wants to give a fare which is lower than a public sector carrier just because to get a larger market share, I do not think, we can hold our public carrier responsible for over charging. I do not think that is the correct stated position.

However, as I said earlier also, we are sensitive to the concern and that is why Air India Express is particularly launched to cater to the lower rank of the travelling public which is price conscious and is working in the Middle-East.

MR. SPEAKER: I think you meet the Members from Kerala once and sort it out.

DR. C. KRISHNAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you very much. There are only three flights from Chennai to Coimbatore. There is no flight at all from Coimbatore to Bangalore.

MR. SPEAKER: This Question is related to the operation of flights to Gulf countries.

DR. C. KRISHNAN: The Civil Aviation Minister may kindly answer this question.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it between Chennai and Bangalore?

DR. C. KRISHNAN: It is between Chennai and Coimbatore.

MR. SPEAKER: It is not allowed.

Now, Dr. Rajesh Mishra. Dr. Rajesh Mishra, if it is related to Gulf, you put the question. Otherwise it will be disallowed.

[Translation]

DR. RAJESH MISHRA: Sir, through you, I would like to bring to the notice of hon'ble Minister that besides Kerala people of other States in the country also travel regularly to Gulf countries. I would like to mention particularly about Uttar Pradesh. The people of eastern U.P. travel to Gulf countries from business point of view but in the absence of direct air service from Uttar Pradesh to Gulf countries they have to take flight from Delhi or other cities of the country. I would like to know from the

hon'ble Minister that with a view to promote trade and particularly while considering the trade of eastern Uttar Pradesh, whether Government propose to start direct air service for Gulf countries from Varanasi also which has been declared as an international airport by the Government, as this move will be beneficial to the Government also from business point of view.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with regard to the view expressed by hon'ble member for starting Air India service to Gulf countries from other cities, I would like to tell that Air India Express has not been set up for Kerala only, rather the number of aircraft under Air India Express will increase in future. We are making a beginning with only three aircraft but later on we propose to increase them upto 18 aircraft which would cover several big cities of the country and some of them would be from Uttar Pradesh also. From there also, certainly air services will be started for Gulf countries. Once it is started, it will cover Uttar Pradesh also but all that would be done in the phased manner.

Sir, hon'ble member has said that air services should be started from Varanasi to Gulf countries. In this connection, I would like to say that Varanasi is an important city of our country and it has an international airport also. As and when competition increases, air facilities would also increase and consequently air services would also be provided there.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I express gratitude to hon'ble Minister for starting Air India Express to Gulf countries. My question is that if the Government have started Air India Express to strengthen Air India then, the Minister of Civil Aviation or the Government should not give permission to private Airlines to operate their flights to Gulf countries. I would like to say that permission should not be given to King Fisher Airlines, Sahara Airways and Jet Airways to operate their flights to Gulf countries. I would like to know the view of hon'ble Minister in this regard? His Air India Express is going to run smoothly like our U.P.A. Government which would complete its term of five years. Therefore, his Air India Express should operate smoothly.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, so far as the question which the hon'ble Athawaleji has asked is concerned I would like to say only this that we have given permission to Private Airline Companies to operate their flights to foreign countries but alongwith this, we have reserved the right of Air India and Indian Airlines to operate in Gulf region for three years so that their viability

remains intact. Therefore, Ramdasji, need not worry about five years, let first three years be completed after that we will think as to what could be done in this regard.

MS. MEHBOOBA MUFTI: Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to bring to the notice of hon'ble Minister that recently the Government have declared Srinagar Airport as an International Airport and there the work has also been going on for the last several years. For the last two three years, flights are already operating between Srinagar and Jeddah during Haj.

[English]

I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether the would consider it since the infrastructure is already there to accommodate these direct flights from Srinagar to Gulf countries.

[Translation]

Whether he would consider that to give boost to tourism, a consulate of Gulf countries should be set up in Srinagar and a direct flight should be made operational between Srinagar, Sharjah, Dubai and other countries?

[English]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we attach the highest importance to Kashmir and Srinagar. Of course, Ms. Mehbooba Mufti is aware that at her intervention of Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, we had started direct flights for Haj from Srinagar this year, which were actually to go *via* some other place. The work on construction of the new terminal for the Srinagar airport has also started in full vigour. Also, Srinagar airport has been accorded the status of an international airport as recently as a few months ago. Therefore, with all this background, definitely, there would be more flights between Srinagar and international cities, including the Gulf, which she would see in the months and years to come. Right now, because of security considerations, the Government has taken upon itself that only the Government carriers would start international operations. Progressively, I am sure, a review could be taken and further steps could also be taken.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Shivanna.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA:* Sir, there is tremendous increase in the number of air passengers who wish to

go to Gulf countries from Bangalore. Hence there is an urgent need to have an international airport in Bangalore. Therefore, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the Centre would take up the construction of Devanahally International Airport immediately? If so, the details thereof, and if not, why?

MR. SPEAKER: No, it does not arise out of the main Question. I am sorry, this Question is not about construction of the Bangalore airport.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Next, Shri Anandrao Vithoba Adsul.

SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL: Sir, I have got the answer.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU: Sir, Visakhapatnam is a fast growing city in South Asia and South-East Asia. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any proposal to run direct flights from Visakhapatnam to the Gulf. A lot of minority population is there in Visakhapatnam. That is why I would like to know whether there is any such proposal.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, Visakhapatnam is a big city and big airport is being planned there. However, I do not think, there is any definite plan, to answer the question of Shri Yerrannaidu.

SHRI SURESH KURUP: Sir, I am sorry that the hon. Minister is evading the questions put by hon. Members from Kerala. It has been a constant complaint of the Gulf passengers that Air India and Indian Airlines are charging exorbitant rates from these passengers. Even the Kerala Legislature has passed a Resolution regarding this and I am sure that the hon. Minister must be aware of that. To explain the magnitude of the exploitation, if a passenger takes a flight *via* Colombo, the charges are less but here, our own airlines are charging exorbitant rates. That is the complaint of the passengers. I would like to know whether we should conclude that the Government has no control over our own airlines. The hon. Minister should assure this House that he would look into it and if the charges were found to be exorbitant they would be reduced.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: I would reiterate it for the benefit of hon. Members from Kerala, especially since they are very conscious of what is being charged by various airlines. I do admit that there are many airlines

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada.

trying to lure passengers by giving all these benefits because they want a larger market share. In an open market situation, if somebody wants to lose money and take a higher percentage of the traffic, it is beyond the control of the Government.

However, that is why, precisely because of your concerns, I think, Air India Express is being born. It is precisely to keep the concerns of the Members of Kerala and the people of Kerala's sentiments in mind that this action is being taken.

Outstanding Dues of AAI

*102. ⁺ SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN:
SHRI BHARATSINH MADHAVSINH SOLANKI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether many scheduled airlines and foreign carriers owe huge amount of money to Airport Authority of India;

(b) if so, the details of outstanding dues as on date, Airlines-wise;

(c) the steps taken by the Airport Authority of India for recovery of outstanding dues from them;

(d) whether the Government proposes to start charging any security deposit from foreign carriers; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Dues as on December 31, 2004 from various domestic airlines including Indian national carriers (in crores of rupees) are as follows:

Indian Airlines Ltd.-404.34, Air India Ltd.-116.66, Alliance Air-101.57, Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd.-2.69, Vayudoot-23.70, Jet Airways-20.71, Sahara Airlines-6.77 & others-8.27.

Dues are also outstanding from private airlines who have closed down their operations. Details are as under:

East West Airlines-16.22, NEPC Airlines-3.55, Skyline NEPC-1.66, Elbee Airlines-1.07, Continental Aviation-1.30, VIF Airways-0.24 & others-1.52.

Details of dues outstanding from various foreign airlines as on December 31, 2004 are given in the enclosed Annexure.

(c) In the case of national carriers Indian Airlines and Air India efforts are made constantly to sort out the disputes regarding payment of dues at the level of Ministry. An internal arbitrator has been appointed to mediate between Indian Airlines and Airports Authority of India (AAI). Meetings are also held to sort out disputes between Air India and AAI. Government has written off the dues of Vayudoot towards AAI in February, 2005. In respect of Air Transport Operators, dues are backed by Bank Guarantees/Security. In respect of other airlines, dues are monitored regularly and action through Legal/ Arbitration/Public Premises Act are taken wherever necessary. Besides, interest is levied for the over-due period on defaulting airlines and they are put on operation on Cash & Carry basis.

(d) and (e) Airports Authority of India (AAI) proposes to take a Security Deposits from foreign Airlines, to secure the dues of AAI. The matter is under consideration of the Government, keeping the international practices in view.

Annexure

Dues from Foreign Airlines as on 31.12.2004

(In Crores of Rupees)

Name of the Airline	Total
1	2
Aeroflot	0.69
Aerosvit	0.22
Air Asia	0.60
Air Europe Italy	4.33
Air France	1.99
Air Mauritius	0.62
Air Maldives	0.46
Air Arabia	0.10
Air Lanka	1.89

1	2
Atlanta Italian Airlines	1.41
Ariana Afghan Airways	0.20
Asiana Airlines	0.18
Austrian Airlines	0.88
Atlanta Iceland	0.25
Air Kazak	0.12
Blue Panorama Airlines	0.22
Blue Dart Aviation	0.17
Biman Bangladesh	1.03
British Airways	3.00
Britania Airways	0.10
Balkan Bulgarian	0.10
Condor	0.31
Cathy Pacific Airways	1.21
China Airlines	0.48
Czechoslovakia	0.15
Delta Airways	0.26
Druck International Airlines	0.62
EL AL Israel	0.42
Egyptian Airlines	0.19
Emirates	3.75
Ethiad Airways	0.53
Ethiopian Airlines	0.88
Eva Air	1.12
Eurofly SPA	1.33
Expo Aviation	0.29
Fedra	0.29
Finn Airways	0.76
Garuda Indonesia	3.30
Gulf Air	7.14
Hong Kong Dragon Air	0.24

1	2
Iraqi Airways	0.34
Iran Air	0.12
Japan Airlines	0.20
JES Air	0.08
Jugoslovenski Arotransport	0.36
Kazakhstan Airlines	0.20
Lot Polish	0.11
KLM Royal Dutch	1.42
Kenya Airlines	0.38
Korean Airways	0.50
Kuwait Airways	0.82
Kyrgyzstan	0.15
Lufthansa Cargo	2.04
Lufthansa German Airline	3.60
LTU International	0.19
Lauda Air	0.71
Morarch Air	0.50
Martin Air Holland	0.79
Mahan Air	0.14
Malaysian Airlines	2.22
Mk Airlines	0.73
Mayanmar Airways International	0.08
MIC	0.51
North West	0.90
Nova Airlines	0.27
NOV Air	0.06
Olympic Airlines	0.53
Oman Air	0.78
Pakistan International Airlines	0.63
Phuket Airlines Thailan	0.25
Phillipines Airlines	1.23
Qatar Airways	0.63

1	2
Qatar Airways Cargo	1.49
Qantas Airways	0.77
Royal Brunei Airways	0.81
Royal Jordanian Airways	1.12
Royal Nepal Airlines	1.24
Saudi Arabian Airlines	4.27
Scandinavian Airlines	1.31
South African Airways	0.08
Singapore Airlines	3.98
Singapore Airlines Cargo	0.82
Scan Air Ltd.	0.52
Sri Lanka Airlines	0.28
Sky cabs	0.17
Swiss Air	0.38
Silk Air	0.28
Thai Airways	6.50
Travel Service Airlines	0.25
Turkish Airlines	2.17
Turkmenistan Airlines	0.64
Transmile Air	0.13
Transaero Airlines	1.43
Tarom Romanian	0.36
United Parcel Service	0.17
Foreign Defence Aircraft	7.29
United Arab Emirates	0.40
Uzbekistan	1.12
Virgin Atlantic	0.24
Yaman Airways	0.47
Vietnam Airlines	0.70
Others (less than 10 Lakhs)	17.64

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: The hon. Minister has given a list of outstanding dues of Airports Authority of India from so many Airlines. It is very alarming. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what steps our Government is going to take to avoid heavy dues in future.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: I would just like to inform the hon. Member that the dues from the Airlines are not as alarming as it has been made out to be in the numbers because majority of the dues are from our own public carriers. However, we have a policy where the credit of 15 days is given to all scheduled carriers in India and for private carriers, barring our own public carriers, security deposit of one-month billing is already taken. So, these arrears sometimes do not reflect the correct position. On the other hand, there is a security deposit also which has been received from the private scheduled carriers.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: I would like to know whether our Government plans to take any action for collecting this money through the court of law.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Yes, Sir. What the hon. Member, probably, trying to refer is regarding some of the Airlines which had started in the early 90s and closed down soon thereafter. At that time, there was no policy within the Airports Authority to collect money up-front or have security deposit. Therefore, some of the Airlines, which have been closed down, definitely owe some money to the Airports Authority of India. There is already court litigation and other measures, which are suitable, are being taken to recover this money.

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN: From the statement supplied by the hon. Minister, we came to know that Vayudoot has a due of Rs. 23.70 crore. I would like to quote from the reply which he has given. It says:

"The Government has written off the dues of Vayudoot towards AAI in February, 2005."

Will it not be a bad example for others who are in dues? They will not be in a condition to pay the dues because the Government has written off the dues of the Vayudoot.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: As we all know, Vayudoot was a public carrier and it was started in circumstances where, I think, most of the hon. Members would agree and it was the desire of all of us to connect our own

country to every small city or town. It was, unfortunately, not a very happy experience. Since the Airlines has wound up and being a Government carrier, I think, the Government, in its wisdom, at that time, has taken a decision to write off the dues of Vayudoot.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: Sir, I would like to point out here that a few months back the hon. Minister had a meeting with the MPs from the North-Eastern States of India wherein he had promised that there would be a regular flight from Guwahati to Bangkok. He had also promised to build up international Airport level infrastructure facilities in and around Guwahati. What steps have been taken so far in this regard?(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, you need not answer. You can inform him otherwise.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, I sympathise with your question. But it does not relate to this question. Therefore, I have requested the hon. Minister to inform you.

Supply of Gas Cylinders to Customers

*103. **SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the public sector oil companies have instructed the gas agencies to slow down the delivery of gas cylinders to the customers;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure supply of gas cylinders to customers on time?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) While there are no instructions from Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to slow down the delivery of gas cylinders to customers, there is now more strict monitoring than earlier of the distribution of cylinders.

Based on long-term trends, OMCs have estimated the national average consumption per family of 5 persons to be about 10 Kg per month, i.e., a 14.2 kg cylinder

may last for about 40 days. However, it varies from market to market and season to season. Against this norm, and taking into account the growth in customer base, it was noted that there has been a spike in the growth of domestic LPG consumption, which can only be accounted for by unauthorised use of subsidised domestic LPG. The growth rate in consumption increased from 8.6% in 2002-03 to 13.4% in 2003-04 and further to 17.5% during April-June 2004. With a view to monitoring and minimising unauthorised usage of domestic LPG, OMCs have started strict scheduling and monitoring of supplies to their distributors since June 2004.

Domestic LPG is a subsidized product. In addition to the Government subsidy, the public sector Oil Companies have also been subsidizing this product. Based on February 2005 international prices of LPG, the total subsidy on domestic LPG works out to Rs. 96.20/ cylinder of 14.2 Kg. Thus, while, ensuring easy availability of LPG to genuine customers, it is necessary to monitor that the subsidized product is not diverted for unauthorised usage, such as commercial purposes and automobiles, including auto-rickshaws.

In addition to the problem of diversion, on account of the increase in steel prices, especially from January 2004 onwards, OMCs also faced a shortage of LPG cylinders for some time. However, this has since been resolved and there is no longer any shortage of LPG cylinders.

On account of regulated supplies to distributors, in certain markets, rush of refill booking may cause a time gap between the date of refill booking and date of refill supply. However, in such cases, necessary corrective action is taken by OMCs.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: From the answers supplied by the hon. Minister it seems that recently there has been a spurt in enthusiasm among the public sector oil marketing companies to strictly monitor the unauthorised usage of domestic LPG.

But, during the NDA Government, the sale of LPG was being marketed by the LPG companies even in the slum areas. So, my question is this. Why is the turnaround nowadays, and is it a fact that the OMCs are not interested in increasing the customer base and they are refusing to supply the second cylinder before 21 days?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, while it is a privilege to be able to cross swords once again with a

foeman worthy of my steel, I must say that he is deeply misinformed. The increase in the consumption of LPG started rising alarmingly. While it was 8.6 per cent in the year 2002-2003, it rose to 13.4 per cent the following year and in the months of April to June, 2004 it had reached the peak at 17.5 per cent. This could not be accounted for by either average market consumption patterns or by the increase in the customer level or by the requirement of new cylinders. It could only be accounted for by the unauthorised diversion of domestic LPG to non-domestic users.

That is why we put in place a very strict monitoring which has resulted in the figure of 17.5 per cent being brought down to 10.9 per cent in the period April to December, 2004 and—this is the point to be stressed—although we have decreased the consumption of domestic LPG, the number of LPG connections being given by us has, in fact, increased in the year 2003-2004 when approximately 72 lakh new customers were enrolled. This year, in 2004-2005, it is estimated that we have slightly increased the number of new customers to about 76 lakh.

Sir, it is completely untrue to suggest that there is, in any way, a slowing down of the provision of either connections or LPG to genuine customers. But, those who are unauthorised, I would plead with the hon. Member, not to take up their cause.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Sir, actually I am not taking up their cause. I only say that to the domestic users, before 21 days, the LPG dealers or the oil marketing companies are refusing to supply the cylinder. Actually, I would request the hon. Minister to look into it. It is a genuine problem in this country.

My second supplementary is this. How much of total subsidy was provided by the Government for the domestic LPG during the year 2003-2004 and 2004-2005; how much of subsidy is proposed to be given in the next financial year; and how much has been the increase or reduction in the subsidy provided by the Government when we compare the year 2004-2005 to 2005-2006?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I must protest against the unfounded allegations being made on the floor of the House and if the hon. Member does, in fact, have any information to justify the point that he is taking, I would request him to please let my Ministry know because it is the duty and it is a duty that is being fulfilled, by the oil marketing companies to make

available domestic LPG to genuine customers, but ensure, at the same time, that the rapid increase in illegitimate diversion which took place under the previous regime is first capped, then reversed and finally halted.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Actually it is not an unfounded allegation. Actually I am making a request and if he wants I can supply the information. But let him not say it is unfounded. It is not unfounded.

MR. SPEAKER: Everybody is entitled to hold an opinion.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, can I answer his second supplementary? He made an allegation and then asked an unrelated question. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: It is not unrelated. It is very much related.

MR. SPEAKER: In view of the special friendship between you two, he refers to it.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, I have to inform him that the quantum of subsidy has, in fact, been substantially increased not so much through the Budget as through under-recoveries that are suffered by our public sector undertakings.

In the year 2002-03, under-recoveries were of the order of Rs. 5,430 crore which increased the following year 2003-04 to Rs. 9,274 crore. This is on both kerosene and LPG. This year, they have topped Rs. 18,000 crore. In respect of specifically LPG, it has gone up from Rs. 3,363 crore in 2002-03 to Rs. 5,523 crore the following year and then to Rs. 6,404 crore up till the month of December. It is expected this year to reach Rs. 8,700 crore. So, we are undertaking a very large number of steps on the part of the Government. We have specifically brought down to nil under the Budget from 12 per cent, when they were in power, both the customs duty and excise duty. So, I think, there needs to be a recognition on the part of the hon. Members, particularly those in the Opposition that both the Government and the oil marketing companies are bearing an increasing share of the subsidy in the interest of consumers of domestic LPG and even more importantly of PDS kerosene.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Sir, he must have understood that it is not an unrelated question.

MR. SPEAKER: I know that because of your special friendship, you will get an elaborate answer.

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: Since LPG is a subsidised product and to reduce losses, it is natural for the oil companies and officers to restrict supply of cylinders. Hence, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the action taken against companies or officers responsible for the recent short supply of gas cylinders to demonstrate that this Government makes everyone accountable for his deeds and misdeeds.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, there are a very few Members of this House more capable of understanding the significance of the rise in steel prices than the hon. Member who just asked this question, given his industrial background. May I, therefore, remind him, in case his General Managers have failed to let him know, that the prices of steel have risen ex-Bokaro in terms of rupees per metric tonne from 17,600 in December, 2003 to 26,600 today in February, 2005. With this enormous increase, the suppliers of cylinders decided not to make supplies and the reason they did not make supplies is that the previous Government failed to ensure that there would be an escalation clause in the previous contracts. So, we were dumped with a situation where there was a refusal on the part of the cylinder manufacturers, understandably, to make the supplies, given this rise in steel prices.

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: A year before also, it was Rs. 26,000 per metric tonne.

MR. SPEAKER: No, you are not to give information.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: No, Sir. He is quite wrong. I am sorry that he is completely wrong on that. In February 2002, the steel price was Rs. 9,975 per metric tonne. I agree that up to the month of March, 2003, it did go up to Rs. 17,580 per metric tonne, but then it declined. I gave you the figure for December, 2003, which is Rs. 17,600 per metric tonne. ..."

MR. SPEAKER: That portion need not go in record. We have to take inputs from everybody including General Managers.

[Translation]

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in 1992-93 MPs used to get booklets for providing gas connection to the people in their respective constituency because at

that time there was too much shortage of gas. After our Government came to power gas cylinders were being supplied immediately to all. I do not agree with the reply given by hon'ble Minister. It is my right to disagree with the reply. Just now he has stated that in 2003-04. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

Try to understand. I am getting the point for the people.

[Translation]

I am not levelling any allegation. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Do not do this. We have completed only three questions. What is this.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: You please speak.

[English]

You are a seasoned Parliamentarian and you can ignore this.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Just now hon'ble Minister has said that during the year 2003-04, more than 76 lakh connections have been given which is a good thing. I would like to know as to whether they are all unauthorised? In his reply he has stated that the scarcity which we are facing today is due to unauthorised connections. But the question is not this. We, all members, who are associated with people are sitting here. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Pathak, you have put your question.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Sir, let me complete my question.

[Translation]

Everyday a demand is being made by members that they may be issued booklet of gas coupons so that they

can provide gas connection to people in their constituency as registration has been stopped. The people are not getting even first cylinder. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

Shri Kharabela Swain rightly pointed out that the waiting time-period is 21 days.

My question to the hon. Minister relates to the last paragraph of his answer. The hon. Minister has stated, and confessed that:

"On account of regulated supplies to distributors, in certain markets, rush of refill booking may cause a time gap between the date of refill booking and date of refill supply. However, in such cases, necessary corrective action is taken by Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs)."

I would like to know through you, hon. Speaker, as to what sort of necessary action is being taken on this issue. Please try to tell it to the nation, and the Parliament.

[Translation]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to explain to the hon'ble member that there is a difference between unauthorised connection and unauthorised use. As far as the question of providing connections is concerned, the number of LPG consumers till December 2004 had already reached 8 crore 27 lakhs. There has been record increase in number of consumers this year. They had increased the number of LPG distributors upto 424 and later 415 in one year whereas we have appointed more than 640 distributors in this year itself. You should not think that we are not supplying LPG to the consumers seeking it ...*(Interruptions)* We are supplying LPG to them but it is being misused.

SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN: Today cylinders are not available. Their black-marketing has started again. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Ashok Pradhan, this is very unfortunate. You do not have to agree with whatever is being said here. What is this?

...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Sir, the answer given by the hon. Minister is very unfortunate. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Ministers are entitled to reply and you are entitled to put supplementary related to the question or the answer, but you cannot pass judgement in the midst of someone answering a question. How do we decide on this issue?

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Malhotra, please do not do it. Mr. Pathak very succinctly and very cogently expressed his reservations. Shri Pathak, I am sure that you do not want any supporters.

[Translation]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, I have said that we have taken some concrete steps to check the increasing misuse. We will bring it under control, which was not done while they were in power, which is why the misuse has increased so much. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Black-marketing of LPG has started again. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Next, Shri Omar Abdullah.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have already called another hon. Member's name.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please do not take down anything. Nothing will be recorded except Shri Omar Abdullah.

...*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: There is a method of raising a particular matter, and you know about it. You can put in notices for the same.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Sir, what sort of necessary action is being taken? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, I have already called another hon. Member to ask his question. Now, Shri Omar Abdullah.

...*(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: It is not being recorded.

[*Translation*]

All right. If you do not like his answer then

[*English*]

you know the method of raising it. So, please sit down.

...(Interruptions)*

[*Translation*]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: There can only be one action. ...(Interruptions) please have patience. At least wait for the reply. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: What is all this happening?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: They want to know as to what necessary action is being taken. ...(Interruptions) I would like to say that wherever there is some delay, the action should be to reduce the delay. What other action can be taken. ...(Interruptions) But along with this we have to see that there should not be anything from their side favouring misuse. We have to stop the misuse and if while checking the misuse, some of the genuine consumers are not supplied gas for some time. ...(Interruptions)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing else will be recorded, except the supplementary of Shri Omar Abdullah.

...(Interruptions)*

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the recent snowfall in the Kashmir Valley exposed completely the Government's ability to supply essential supplies to the people in the face of adverse weather. A situation was reached in the Valley when gas cylinders were being sold at black rates for Rs. 600 to Rs. 700 a cylinder which put the common people to enormous hardship. Even as late as day before yesterday, queues as long as two to three kilometres were stretched outside gas depots and people were waiting for gas cylinders to be replaced.

My supplementary to the hon. Minister has two parts: (a) Will the Minister consider speeding up the delivery of cylinders on an emergency basis so that the hardship of the common people in the Kashmir Valley is reduced? (b) Will the Minister consider putting into place certain guidelines to ensure that in Winter adequate stocking of gas cylinders is done so that when the road is closed on account of adverse weather, sufficient supplies are in the place and we do not have this black marketing and the common people are not put to difficulty?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, (a) Yes, Sir, (b) The guidelines are already in place. No guideline can take into account the possibility of the kind of unprecedented disaster that took place in the Kashmir Valley a few days ago. We will certainly do all we can to restore normalcy with respect to LPG supplies as quickly as possible. I am grateful to you for having brought this issue to my attention. It will receive the highest priority from the Ministry.

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: Can I just add that earlier the procedure was that minimum 30 to 45 days of reserve was kept of petroleum supplies and gas cylinders. Obviously, this time, that amount of supply has not been stocked. Would the Minister consider reviving that?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: I regret I cannot accept that. It is entirely possible that from the depots where these are stocked it was not possible owing to the unseasonal and exceptional snowfall for the supplies to reach the particular point at which the consumption used to take place. Nevertheless, the charge having been made, it will be investigated.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, the basic question is about delay in supply of LPG cylinders and ensuring the supply of gas cylinders to consumers on time. I would like to tell the hon'ble Minister that the cylinders do not weigh up to the expected standards, particularly the blackmarketing of LPG cylinders is taking place at large scale. I would like to know that in some Metropolitan cities gas is supplied to homes in pipelines, whether he will consider providing gas supply through pipelines into homes in Uttar Pradesh also?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: As far as the question of under weight gas cylinders is concerned, an inquiry will be made if a formal complaint is put before us but to say on a large scale that everywhere gas cylinders

are not supplied on time, I do not think it is possible.
...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, inquiry should be made everywhere. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Let the answer be completed.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You do not reply to Shri Raghunath Jha, you reply to him.

[Translation]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: We will conduct an inquiry if Jha Saheb or any other hon'ble Member has any specific information on the basis of which an inquiry can be made. As far as the question of providing gas to homes through pipelines is concerned we have formulated a policy according to which we have identified 11 cities where we are making efforts to supply gas to homes through pipelines. To provide gas in these 11 cities we need to have availability of gas and to put the required infrastructure for this purpose. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Which are those 11 cities?
...(Interruptions)

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: This question is not related to the basic question but this information has been presented again and again in the House and will send the information to hon'ble Member by post also.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Patience always pays! Why do you not have patience?

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble Member has mentioned two points here—firstly they have set a time limit of 21 days for a family of 5 members but there is a difference between the life in Urban and rural areas. In the Urban areas it may be sufficient for a family of 5 members but it is not sufficient in rural areas because of the joint family system. Secondly, what has been mentioned by the hon'ble Minister here is the marketing of gas. Many distributors were appointed in rural areas during the previous Government's tenure. Their present distribution system....

MR. SPEAKER: If you ask such long questions, the time will be over and it will not be replied.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Sir, I am talking practically. Both the old LPG dealers and officials in the distribution system there are not able to supply gas to the new LPG dealers of the rural areas which causes such shortcomings. Which is why consumers in rural areas do not get gas cylinders on time. I would like to know as to what steps Government are taking to remove the shortcomings in the marketing system. The time limit of 21 days should be changed believing the families in the rural areas to be of more than 5 members.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, I would like to draw the attention of hon'ble Member towards the second line, which he has not read. It is written that

[English]

"However, it varies from market to market and season to season".

[Translation]

We already believe that usually a family consumes 10 Kilograms of gas, but there may be certain places in the country where the supply would be more or less than this. The supply is affected by weather also. I request him to read the reply as sincerely as he reads the question.

The second thing I would like to say is that because some problems were faced. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble Minister only reads the material written by Government officials sincerely. He lacks the practical knowledge. We do not need to learn from him.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: He lacks the practical knowledge of the things. He doesn't know that now the policy has been changed. ...(Interruptions) Neither he reads the reply properly nor he knows that the policy has been changed and still he blames us that we do not possess practical knowledge.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seats.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Please listen to me. I will tell them also, please have some patience.

[English]

I am trying to help you.

I am only appealing to you that this is the Question Hour which is a very important period. We have only one hour for this. Some time was lost today also. Therefore, the question may be specific and the answer may also be specific. Let us not get into personal things. You also do not make any comment; ask for information. I am sure the experienced Minister, and the experienced Member Shri Prabhunath Singh who is a cooperating Member, can always adjust themselves. Thank you very much.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I shall look into it. If there is anything derogatory, I shall delete it.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir Half an Hour Discussion should be held on this issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Who has stopped you, give a notice for this.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Sir, I have not got the reply.

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Sir, I have been asking for a chance to put a question. It is most unfortunate that from the beginning you did not allow me to put even one question. What is this? This is too much.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Subsidy on Kerosene and Diesel

*104. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government is aware of the severe hardships being faced by the small and marginal coastal fishermen due to frequent rise in diesel and kerosene prices, particularly in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the relief measures proposed to be provided to alleviate their sufferings;

(c) whether the Union Government proposes to increase the subsidy on kerosene and diesel for the fishermen;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The public sector oil companies have not increased the selling prices of PDS Kerosene since April 2002 despite the increase in international prices. PDS Kerosene is a subsidized product and in addition to Government subsidy, Oil PSUs are bearing the substantial burden of subsidizing this product. PDS Kerosene is allocated at the subsidized rate to States/UTs, who, in turn, make their own arrangements to reach this product to entitled customers. Further, effective 19.8.2004, excise duty on PDS kerosene was reduced by 4% and customs duty by 5%. In the Budget 2005-06, the customs duty on PDS kerosene has been reduced from 5% to nil, and excise duty from 12% to nil.

(b) Government have taken a number of fiscal measures to contain the impact of the unprecedented rise and volatility in international prices of HSD. Effective 16.6.2004, the excise duty on diesel was reduced by 3%. Later, effective 19.8.2004, the excise duty on diesel was further reduced by 3% and customs duty by 5%. As regards Diesel, domestic diesel prices have been frozen since midnight of 4/5 November 2004.

(c) to (e) The "Fishermen Development Rebate on HSD" scheme implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture provides for a subsidy of Rs. 1.50 per litre of HSD used by mechanized fishing vessels below 20 meter length.

The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) have been commissioned by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to institute a scientific assessment of demand for kerosene in the country, an exercise not previously undertaken, and after their report

is received (expected date; mid-May) decisions will be taken about the pricing and supply of kerosene for different sections of society, including fisherfolk.

As for diesel prices, these are kept under constant review.

Relaxation in Journey Rules

*105. SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has announced relaxations in journey rules for passengers starting journey from the station falling between originating and destination stations as reported in the *Hindustan Times* dated January 09, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons for relaxation in rules;

(c) whether such move of the Railways has increased difficulties for general/reserved ticket holding passengers;

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(e) whether general ticket holding passengers have to take prior permission of TTEs before boarding the train;

(f) if so, the steps taken/to be taken by the Government to ensure the availability of ticket examiners in trains at each station; and

(g) the corrective measures taken/to be taken by the Government to save the passengers from the inconveniences caused by such move of the Railways?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) to (g) The boarding procedure from intermediate stations for passengers, who do not possess any wait listed or reserved ticket, has been slightly modified with effect from 1st January, 2005 according to which such passengers will purchase the journey ticket for 11nd/1st class depending upon the class in which they desire to travel instead of purchasing the platform ticket as earlier. There is no change in boarding procedure for those passengers who possess reserved/wait listed tickets. These modifications were made in the administrative interest.

There has been no perceptible inconvenience to the passengers as instead of platform ticket, they have to purchase the journey ticket for their journey from any of the current booking counters. There is no change in boarding procedure as far as asking permission from the Travelling Ticket Examiner (TTE) is concerned as no passenger irrespective of the ticket he possesses is allowed to board a reserved coach without the permission of the TTE if he does not have the confirmed reserved ticket for that coach.

Regarding improving the availability of the coach manning ticket examiners, the Railways have taken the following steps:-

- (a) Additional posts of ticket checking staff are being created.
- (b) Vacancies in the ticket checking cadre are being filled up.

[Translation]

Policy for Conservation of Monuments and Maintenance of Archives/Museums

*106. SHRI MUNAWAR HASSAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the policy laid down by the Government for conservation of monuments and maintenance of the archives/museums;

(b) whether the Union Government has received proposals from the various State Governments for financial assistance for preservation of manuscripts of historical and cultural importance in their States;

(c) if so, the details of financial assistance provided during each of the last three years, State-wise; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for safety and preservation of manuscripts of historical and cultural importance in the country particularly in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Conservation of protected monuments is the primary responsibility of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958 lays down these responsibilities.

Archival records are collected and conserved by the National Archives of India under the Public Records Act 1993.

In order to protect and conserve manuscripts, a National Mission for Manuscripts was set up in 2003.

The National Museum Institute, New Delhi and the National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property (NRLC), Lucknow have been set up with a view to imparting training in the area of conservation. Government maintains important museums like National Museum, Indian Museum, Salarjung Museum, Allahabad Museum etc. where antiquities are collected, exhibited and conserved.

Besides, the Ministry of Culture extends financial and technical help to other Museums.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The information is given in the statement enclosed.

(d) The National Archives of India (NAI) extends financial assistance to State Archives and NGOs for improving storage facilities, better records management and computerization.

During the last three years, National Archives of India has released Rs. 13,95,000/- to five Non-Government Organisations in Delhi and Rs. 18,75,000/- to five Government Organisations and Rs. 6,60,000/- to eight Non-Government Organisations in Uttar Pradesh.

The National Mission of Manuscripts has designated 27 Manuscripts Resource Centres and 20 Manuscripts Conservation Centres in the various States. In Uttar Pradesh, three Regional Manuscript Conservation Centres are already in existence. The Manuscripts Conservation Centre in Delhi region has been conducting conservation and preservation work of both types, curative and preventive.

Statement

Details of Financial Assistance provided during last three years

S.No.	Name of the State	Financial Assistance Provided
1	2	3
2001-2002		
1.	Goa	Rs. 4,00,000/-
2.	Gujarat	Rs. 2,00,000/-

1	2	3
3.	Jharkhand	Rs. 2,25,000/-
4.	Karnataka	Rs. 5,00,000/-
5.	Madhya Pradesh	Rs. 11,50,000/-
6.	Manipur	Rs. 2,28,750/-
7.	Mizoram	Rs. 1,71,000/-
8.	Nagaland	Rs. 10,00,000/-
9.	Tamil Nadu	Rs. 8,00,000/-
10.	West Bengal	Rs. 13,27,500/-
	Total	Rs. 60,02,250/-

2002-2003

1.	Andhra Pradesh	Rs. 8,75,000/-
2.	Assam	Rs. 7,00,000/-
3.	Gujarat	Rs. 2,50,000/-
4.	Haryana	Rs. 5,95,000/-
5.	Himachal Pradesh	Rs. 2,00,000/-
6.	Punjab	Rs. 7,30,000/-
7.	Karnataka	Rs. 3,00,000/-
8.	Maharashtra	Rs. 3,75,000/-
9.	Nagaland	Rs. 3,00,000/-
10.	Orissa	Rs. 12,50,000/-
11.	Rajasthan	Rs. 2,82,500/-
12.	Tamil Nadu	Rs. 9,00,000/-
13.	Uttar Pradesh	Rs. 16,25,000/-
	Total	Rs. 83,82,500/-

2003-2004

1.	Andhra Pradesh	Rs. 8,00,000/-
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Rs. 4,09,000/-
3.	Assam	Rs. 7,50,000/-
4.	Gujarat	Rs. 5,35,000/-
5.	Haryana	Rs. 2,60,000/-
6.	Kerala	Rs. 9,75,000/-

1	2	3
7.	Madhya Pradesh	Rs. 6,00,000/-
8.	Manipur	Rs. 10,00,000/-
9.	Orissa	Rs. 6,30,000/-
10.	Rajasthan	Rs. 5,00,000/-
11.	Uttaranchal	Rs. 6,00,000/-
12.	Uttar Pradesh	Rs. 2,50,000/-
13.	West Bengal	Rs. 5,00,000/-
Total		Rs. 78,09,000/-

*[English]***Reservation in Private Sector**

*107. SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA:
SHRI GANESH PRASAD SINGH:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has held any consultation with Big Business Houses alongwith CII, ASSOCHAM, FICCI and PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry for extending reservation policy in the Private Sector;

(b) if so, the response from the Big Business Houses in this regard;

(c) whether the Government has formulated any concrete opinion on the basis of views expressed by the Indian Corporates and Industrial Houses;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the final decision to implement reservation in the Private Sector is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) to (e) According to the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), the Government has to initiate a National Dialogue with political parties, industry and other organizations to see how best the private sector can fulfil the aspiration of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe youth. Accordingly, Associations of trade and industry have been addressed. The response of the private sector has on the whole been positive regarding affirmative action. Regional consultations with industry associations will be held soon by the Group of Ministers constituted for the purpose.

New FM Radio Policy

*108. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPAPARAI:
SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of FM Radio presently broadcasting in the country by AIR and private companies, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government is considering to formulate New FM Radio Policy;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the time by which it is likely to be announced;

(e) whether the Government is also considering enhancement of FDI limit from 26% to 49% in order to double the reach of FM radio from 30 to 60 per cent during the Tenth Five Year Plan; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Presently, 139 AIR and 21 FM Private radio stations are broadcasting in the country. The State-wise details are given in the Statement enclosed.

(b) to (d) A new policy for private FM Radio broadcasting is under consideration of the Government and no final decision has yet been taken, for which no time frame can be indicated.

(e) and (f) New policy framework for private FM radio broadcasting would include various aspects including FDI. As per the existing policy, no FDI is permitted in the companies holding FM radio licenses.

Statement

S.No.	Name of the State/UT	No. of FM Radio Station	
		AIR	Private FM Station
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	10	1
2.	Assam	5	—
3.	Bihar	3	—

1	2	3	4
4.	Chhattisgarh	3	—
5.	Delhi	2	3
6.	Goa	1	—
7.	Gujarat	5	1
8.	Haryana	2	—
9.	Himachal Pradesh	4	—
10.	Jammu & Kashmir	7	—
11.	Jharkhand	5	—
12.	Karnataka	13	1
13.	Kerala	6	—
14.	Madhya Pradesh	11	1
15.	Maharashtra	15	5
16.	Meghalaya	1	—
17.	Mizoram	1	—
18.	Nagaland	1	—
19.	Orissa	5	—
20.	Punjab	3	—
21.	Rajasthan	11	—
22.	Tamil Nadu	6	4
23.	Tripura	2	—
24.	Union Territory	3	—
25.	Uttar Pradesh	7	1
26.	Uttaranchal	1	—
27.	West Bengal	6	4
Total		139	21

Purchase of Aircraft

*109. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:
SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to purchase aircraft for Indian Airlines and Air India;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether the Government has also worked out a modality for providing a sovereign guarantee for fleet acquisition programme;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the total expenditure involved for purchase of aircraft for each Airline and how the Government proposed to meet it;

(f) whether tenders have been invited for purchase of aircraft;

(g) if so, the firms from which tenders have been received; and

(h) the time by which tender process will be completed and order placed for aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) Indian Airlines proposal for acquisition of 43 aircraft comprising 19 A-319, 4 A-320 and 20 A-321 manufactured by Airbus Industries with engines from CFM International was considered/approved by the PIB in its meeting held on 10.11.2004. The net project cost is Rs. 10089 crores. Provision of Rs. 325 crores approved by Government towards equity enhancement has been considered in Indian Airlines proposal. Pursuant to the PIB approval, final negotiations with the lowest bidder have been initiated. An inter-disciplinary team of IAL is undertaking the negotiations under the overall supervision of an Oversight Committee. The matter will be placed for final approval before the CCEA thereafter.

In November, 2004, Air India Board approved a fleet acquisition Plan for the period upto 2012/13. This Plan envisages the acquisition of 18X B737-800 aircraft for its new airline subsidiary, Air India Express and 50 Medium Capacity Long Range Aircraft for Air India. The estimated project cost for purchase of 68 aircraft will be around Rs. 30,000 crores. A Project Report for the induction of 18 B-737-800 W aircraft for Air India Express has been submitted to the Government for approval. Air India has invited offers for the 50 aircraft to be acquired for Air India. These offers have been received. Air India's Techno Economic-cum-Negotiating Committee has evaluated the Technical Bids and submitted its evaluation report to the Management in February 2005. The Financial Bids are under evaluation and the results will be submitted to the Management thereafter.

As has been done in the past, both the airlines will raise funds through their internal resources and also through commercial borrowing from International/Indian market after obtaining requisite approvals from the respective Boards/Government. Both the Airlines will also seek Government's support for guarantee or Letter of Comfort, as the need may be.

(f) and (g) Yes, Sir. Tenders have been invited for the purchase of 50 aircraft. Air India received the technical and financial bids from M/s. Airbus Industries and M/s. Boeing for the aircraft and from Rolls Royce, General Electric and Pratt & Whitney for the engines.

(h) No firm time frame can be indicated at this stage, as the established procedures for public investment will have to be followed before the orders are placed.

Handing over of Services to Private Parties

*110. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has handed over some of the services of the International Airports on lease basis to the private parties;

(b) if so, the details of services handed over to the private parties;

(c) the terms and conditions on which these services have been handed over to the private parties;

(d) whether the Government has made any assessment of the services provided by the private parties;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Government also propose to hand over such services at domestic airports to private parties; and

(g) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) provides certain services such as Duty Free Shops, Travellers Requisite/Book Shops, Restaurant, Snack Bar & Fast Food Facility (both

inside and outside terminal building), Car rental, Interstate Coach services, Tea, Coffee, Cold Drink vending machine, Car parking services, Money exchange counters, STD, ISD/Payphone facility/Cyber cafe/Photostat, Insurance counter, Cellular Phone Hire facility, Hotel reservation counter, Health care etc. through private parties and ATM facility by banks through competitive tendering amongst banks. Service providers are selected through a transparent process of competitive bidding as per terms and conditions of the Airports Authority of India's Commercial Manual.

(d) and (e) AAI ensures that the terms and conditions on which the services have been contracted are followed by the parties.

(f) and (g) Service contracts to private parties are granted at domestic airports also as per the requirements.

[Translation]

Release of Quota of Kerosene Oil

*111. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:
SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the quota of kerosene oil required to be released in the whole country from April 2004 to December 2004 and the quota actually released during the said period;

(b) the quantum of shortcomings that remained against the general requirement after the release of quota;

(c) whether the Government has assessed the fact that large scale price-rise of kerosene has been witnessed in the market due to the shortcomings in the release of quota;

(d) if so, the facts thereof;

(e) whether the Union Government propose to modify the kerosene oil distribution policy keeping in view the need to keep a check on the prices of kerosene oil to minimise the difficulties of the general public; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Under the present system, the

Government of India makes allocations of PDS Kerosene to States/UTs, who in turn lift their quotas from public sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs). During the period April-December 2004, as against the allocation of 67,75,786 Metric Tonnes (MTs), States/UTs uplifted 67,55,075 MTs of PDS Kerosene. In addition to PDS Kerosene, which is subsidized, the oil companies also sell Kerosene for other uses on commercial terms.

(b) With a view to assessing the genuine demand and requirement of Kerosene in the country, Government have commissioned a comprehensive study through the National Council of Applied Economic Research. Further necessary action will be taken upon receipt of the study report.

(c) and (d) The selling price of PDS Kerosene has not been increased after 01.03.2002 despite a sizeable increase in average international FOB prices of Kerosene which rose from \$24.26/barrel in March 2002 to \$53.87/barrel in February 2005. In addition to the Government subsidy, OMCs also subsidize this product. During April-December 2004, OMCs have suffered under-recoveries of Rs. 7,155 crore on PDS Kerosene. This is projected to rise to Rs. 9,316 crore for the full year 2004-05. Of course, as regards free sale kerosene, increases in international prices do impact on domestic prices.

(e) and (f) There is a proposal under the consideration of the Government for strengthening the distribution network for PDS Kerosene with the objective of reaching subsidized Kerosene to the targeted population and preventing its diversion to unauthorized uses/adulteration.

International Standard Facilities at Airports

*112. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE:
SHRI ANANTH KUMAR:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to provide international standard facilities at some of the airports of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount allocated by the Government for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The Government has already accorded its approval for restructuring and modernisation of the international airports at Delhi and Mumbai through the formation of two separate Joint Venture Companies (JVCs) for world class development and expansion. Airports Authority of India (AAI) and other Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) of Government of India will hold 26% equity with the remaining 74% equity held by the private sector partners. In addition approval of the Government has also been accorded for the development of two Greenfield Airports near Bangalore and Hyderabad by adopting joint venture route with 74% held by strategic joint venture partners and balance 26% held by AAI and the respective State Governments' Undertakings jointly. Also Airports Authority of India (AAI) has decided to modernize 25 tentatively selected non-metro airports to world class standards in phases with focus on airside and city side development and enhancement of non-aeronautical revenue. Indian Financial Consultant (IFC) and Global Technical Advisor (GTA) have been appointed to conduct techno-economic feasibility study of 10 identified airports to evolve an appropriate model based on viability of the project. The action for appointment of these consultants for another 15 airport in Phase II is in hand.

(c) Funds have not been allocated by AAI to modernize the non-metro airports since the developmental works will be finalized based on the basis of Techno Economic Feasibility Reports and availability of internal and external resources.

[English]

FDI in Print Media

*113. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of growing discontentment in the small and medium scale newspapers industry in the country due to allowing FDI in print media; and

(b) if so, the safeguards taken/likely to be taken to protect the interests of the indigenous magazines/periodicals/journals in Regional languages?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI

S. JAIPAL REDDY: (a) No such representation has been received by the Government.

(b) Does not arise.

Allocation of Funds for Disabled

*114. **SHRI DAYABHAI VALLABHBHAI PATEL:**
SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether out of total allocation of Rs. 952.63 crores made towards the welfare of disabled during the 9th plan Rs. 197.89 remained unspent;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the total allocation made towards the welfare of disabled during the 10th plan period and amount utilized during the first two years of the said plan;

(d) whether the large chunk of the allocation made remained unutilized; and

(e) if so, the steps taken or being taken by Government to ensure that the whole amount allocated for this purpose is utilized judiciously?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) The utilization of funds is measured as difference in Revised Estimates and actual expenditure. Thus, the unspent amount for disability sector for the IX Plan was Rs. 35.07 crores and not Rs. 197.89 crores as reported. Major reasons for non-utilisation of funds were:

(a) State Governments took time to formulate projects and set up mechanism for implementation.

(b) The office of Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCD) could be set up only by the middle of the 9th Plan due to administrative procedure involved in getting required clearances/ approvals.

(c) to (e) The total Plan outlay for the 10th Plan is Rs. 1454.10 crores. During the 10th Five Year Plan, for the year 2002-03, expenditure was Rs. 194.05 crores against the Revised Estimate (RE) of Rs. 192.37 crore. Thus, there was slight excess expenditure.

For the year 2003-2004, the expenditure was Rs. 168.92 crores against an RE of Rs. 186.25 crores. Thus, there was a shortfall of Rs. 17.33 crores. The shortfall was on account of delays in receipt of utilization certificates from the NGOs and the recommendation of State Governments as well as time taken in completing procedural formalities under certain schemes.

Production of Crude Oil

*115. **SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN:**
SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the annual demand of crude oil in the country and how much of it is met indigenously;

(b) the quantum of crude oil produced in the country during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the Government proposes to formulate a long term plan to increase the production of crude oil in the country;

(d) if so, the efforts being made by the Government in this regard;

(e) whether the Government has proposed a long term crude oil supply contracts with the oil producing nations;

(f) if so, whether any preliminary discussions have been held with the oil producing nations in this regard; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The annual demand of crude oil during last three years is as under:

(in million metric tonnes)

Year	Demand
2001-02	100.4
2002-03	104.1
2003-04	107.8

The indigenous crude production (including condensate) during last three years is as under:

(in million metric tonnes)

Year	Production
2001-02	32.022
2002-03	33.077
2003-04	33.368

(c) and (d) Government have taken the following steps to meet the growing demand for hydrocarbons:

- (i) Improve the recovery factor from existing major fields by implementing Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) schemes; in particular Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has taken up 15 fields for this purpose at an estimated investment of Rs. 10,000 crore, which would also help in accelerating oil production from these fields.
- (ii) Increase exploration efforts through the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP); under the four rounds of NELP, Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) have been signed for 90 blocks. Bids for 20 exploration blocks have now been invited under NELP-V.
- (iii) Speed up exploration efforts by ONGC and OIL in the blocks allocated to them on nomination basis.
- (iv) Explore in new areas, specially in the deep water and difficult frontier areas, as also explore in the deeper layers of already producing fields.
- (v) Develop newly discovered fields faster and to step up the use of new technologies for seismic surveys, work over, stimulation operations, drilling of wells etc. in producing areas.
- (vi) Acquire acreages abroad. ONGC-Videsh Ltd. (OVL), Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL), Gas Authority (India) Ltd. (GAIL) and Oil India Ltd. (OIL) have participating interest in acreages abroad.
- (vii) Make efforts to import natural gas in the form of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) as well as through trans-national pipelines from gas rich regions such as the Middle-East including Iran, Central Asia and South East Asia.

- (viii) It has been decided to set up strategic crude oil storage of 5 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) capacity as an emergency response mechanism against short term oil supply disruptions.

(e) to (g) The question of longer-term supply contracts was raised by India at the first Round Table of Asian Oil Ministers on regional cooperation in the oil & gas economy held in New Delhi on 6th January, 2005 which was attended by Ministers/representatives from Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, China, Korea besides host India. The inaugural address of the Chairman and the Closing Statement by the Chairman setting out the draft conclusions of the conference is enclosed. Public sector oil companies factor in long-term contracts in their purchase arrangements, as appropriate, but it may be noted that long-term contracts only provide for assurance of supplies; prices are linked to periodic variations in international markets.

Statement

The Inaugural Address of Chairman of Round Table Conference

Your Excellency, the co-host of this conclave, the distinguished Head of Delegation of the Emirate of Kuwait,

Your Excellencies, Ministers and Heads of Delegation from the principal Asian suppliers and consumers of petroleum,

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors to New Delhi of these countries,

Distinguished representatives of the Governments of participating countries,

Distinguished representatives of National Oil Companies and the Asian Oil Industry,

Distinguished delegates of the principal international organizations here present, our co-sponsor, the Secretary-General of the International Energy Forum, the distinguished representative of the International Energy Agency, and the distinguished Acting Secretary-General of OPEC-the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries,

My fellow-Minister, the distinguished Minister of State for External Affairs of India, Shri E. Ahamed, Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Asians,

We meet in the shadow of the terrible Tsunami tragedy that has struck our shared continent of Asia. Might I request you to please stand and observe a minute's silence in memory of the 125,000 or more who have been snatched so cruelly from our midst? ... Thank you.

This is a moment that might yet be recorded as "historic" in the annals of regional cooperation in Asia. For this is the first gathering together of the principal Asian ministers charged with responsibility for the most crucial sector of the economy-petroleum and natural gas. Whether our meeting today does get recorded as "historic" does, of course, depend on the outcome of our deliberations and of our resolves to persist on the path of such dialogue. I have little doubt, however, that it will-for in the very act of journeying to our capital you have registered your commitment to our shared destiny. Through almost all of the advancement of human civilization, it is Asia that has been in the vanguard. For the last few centuries, we fell to the sway of others. Now, once again, are we the captains of our ship and the masters of our fate. I thank you most warmly and sincerely, on behalf of our Government and all our one billion people, for having done us the unforgettable honour of being present here at the creation. Thank you, indeed.

Excellencies, in the sector of our concern, hydrocarbons, the dawn of the 21st century heralds an unprecedented, dare I say revolutionary change in international oil and gas relations. In the last quarter of the last century, Asian oil producers came into their own when OPEC secured fair and just remuneration for the most vital element of growth and prosperity-oil. Now has come Asia's turn to consume that oil-and thus fuel the resurgence of Asia as the harbinger of the further advancement of human civilization. The total consumption of the Asian countries here present almost equal the total production of the Asian countries here present. No longer are we labouring so that others might profit. We have already emerged as the world's principal source of supply; we are emerging as the world's principal destination for the consumption of that supply. Already, some two thirds of the fossil fuel that principal producers around this table extract from the bosom of Mother Nature is bought by the principal consumers represented at this very table. That trend will only accelerate as we traverse the 21st century-the Asian Century. We are gathered here to rise to that challenge and to avail of that opportunity.

The Challenge, Your Excellencies, lies in eschewing the errors of the past. The opportunity, Your Excellencies,

lies in Fashioning a more fair, more just and more remunerative oil order for all of us in Asia-in which the Asian producer is ensured a stable, secure and sustainable return for a most precious but depleting natural resource, and the Asian consumer is assured a stable, secure and sustainable regime within which to promote progress and prosperity for that deprived one-half of humankind that inhabits our shared continent of Asia. We commence here a dialogue to meet that challenge and rise to that opportunity.

How do we do so?

First let me deal with stability. Last year has seen the worst roller-coaster ride in oil prices for the better part of generation. OPEC has behaved most responsibly through this period of turmoil and turbulence. Instead of pursuing short-term advantage; OPEC, led by its Asian members, has persistently striven for moderating volatility and dampening speculation. For this, OPEC and its membership have earned the world's gratitude. Moreover, OPEC's production plans give the world the reassurance that global oil supply will keep pace with booming global demand, and that over the next twenty years at least there will be no market disequilibrium to warrant any wild fluctuation in prices. If, nevertheless, volatility rather than stability has marked international prices in the last twelve months that is largely because of speculation and apprehensions-that have been mostly belied-of the fallout on oil production of exogenous political developments. The fact is that however uncertain developments in the world political order have been, the underlying global oil economy has held a steady course.

For us in Asia to convert that underlying stability in production (and the prognosis for production) into stability in oil markets, it is essential that we develop a sophisticated Asian market for petroleum and petroleum products. That is how the West converted their abundance of natural resources into abundance of production and consumption.

Unfortunately, we in Asia continue to behave as if we were still a residual consumer of Asian oil production when, in fact, we are the principal consumer.

Your Excellencies, for Asia to be the residual consumer made some economic sense when there was large and growing production on both sides of the Atlantic, on-land in the Americas and off-shore in Europe. It was in that era that Western Texas Intermediate (WTI) and Brent emerged as markers. But as the world wheels into

the 21st century, WTI output is down by three-quarter compared to two decades ago and Brent output is down by two-third compared to just a decade ago-and both are set decline even further, and to decline quite precipitately at that. Meanwhile, it is Asia, from Eastern Siberia through the Caspian, Central Asia and China, to South-East Asia and to some extent even South Asia, and, if course, above all, Iran and West Asia, that is booming in both the output and throughput of oil. Yet, Asia has little in terms of a global market. And even less in terms of a well-prepared oil and oil products market.

With a view to bringing about greater stability in Asian trade in petroleum and petroleum products, can we think in term of an Asian market

- where long-term contracts become longer,
- where price discovery through the market is more transparent,
- where such transparency facilitates greater stability in formulate for printing in long-term contracts,
- where spot purchases occupy a progressively larger share of market transactions,
- where petroleum exchanges are establishes and used,
- where derivatives are integrated into market practice,
- where, in short, an Asian market emerges

which reflects Asian realities and the real role in the global oil economy of Asian production, Asian consumption and Asian trade?

To pose the problem, Your Excellencies, is easier than to find the answers. But I do submit, Your Excellencies, that through sustained dialogue among ourselves, buttressed by dialogue among our experts and market operators, we might be able to find an Asian solution to the imperatives of Asian stability.

As for the second theme of our meeting-security-the answer there too lies in promoting mutual interdependence. Security has two aspects. One is security against unexpected disruption of supplies. As a joint emergency response mechanism, perhaps we should consider jointly building storages which would enable consumers to enjoy an uninterrupted flow of supplies and producers to enjoy an uninterrupted flow of oil revenue till normalcy is restored.

The second aspect of security relates to assurance of market for producers and assurance of supplies for consumers. This calls for mutual interdependence through mutual investments in each other's countries by producer and consumer nations of the Asian oil community. Hitherto, we have looked West for much of the investment in Asian petroleum exploration and production, Asian petroleum refining, and Asian petroleum marketing-and in saying so I include gas as well. Now, increasingly, Asia itself is merging as a significant source of investment in Asia. Japan is, of course, a long-established Asian investor in other Asian countries. China in the last decade, as also Malaysia, have become key players in E&P in Asia and, indeed, the world over. So has India. We are already in E&P, refining and marketing projects in more than ten countries and much of our overseas investment is in Asia. Reciprocally, in refining, we in India have been the beneficiary of investments by Iran in the Chennai Petroleum Corporation and of Qatar in LNG. These are but illustrative examples. A future beckons in which Asian countries can become major participants in the massive investments which need to be made in the Asian countries represented at this table, running to an estimated 1580 billion dollars over the next 25 years in upstream, midstream and downstream oil and gas development in all our countries put together. Investment on this humungous scale, to the extent possible mutual and reciprocal intra-Asia investment, would hugely enhance security of production and consumption for all of us around this table, for all our fellow-Asians and, indeed, for all of humankind the world over. The oil and gas sector in India welcomes the world with open arms, and reserves a particular welcome for Asian investors. Equally, we stand ready to do our share for the promotion of the global oil economy in general and the Asian oil economy in particular. We believe we should continue and intensify this dialogue in the interests of facilitating mutual investments to ensure mutual security.

The third great theme of our meeting today is sustainability. It has taken millions of years indeed, hundreds of millions of years for Nature to create and store what we have substantially exhausted in a mere one hundred years or so. What remains we can use only if used with great care. That calls for conservation, on the one hand, and technology, on the other. Japan has shown the way to both conservation and the technology for conservation, as perhaps no other country in the world has. India has had no alternative but to conserve and innovate, although we still have a long, long way to go. China has taken significant initiatives. So has the Republic of Korea. Asian

oil exporting countries have demonstrated a commendable awareness of the importance of sustainability. The time now is for us to pool together our experience, forge them into a shared, common experience, and build on that experience in concert. Sustainability in Asia calls for sustained dialogue among Asians. We stand ready and willing to place our Petroleum Conservation Research Association, the Indian Institute of Petroleum, the University of Petroleum Studies, The Energy and Research Institute of India (TERI), our Center for High Technology, our Oil Industry Safety Directorate, Indian Oil's R&D Centre, and all our other scientific and technological research and development institutions at the service of all Asia. It is said that one in every three Information Technologists in the world is an Indian. Our achievement in petroleum technology is perhaps less spectacular. But we would be more than happy to share what we know with our fellow-Asians and even more to learn from others, above all to learn from our fellow-Asians.

As we embark on this historic initiative which will, I hope, bring us together frequently, even up to once or preferably twice a year, perhaps alternately in a net oil exporting and a net oil importing country of Asia, and perhaps progressively expanding our ambit while keeping our core intact, I welcome all of you once again to our national capital and wish you all a pleasant and fruitful stay in our midst.

Your Excellencies, I thank you, one and all.

Chairman's Statement on the conclusion of the first Round Table of Asian Ministers on Regional Cooperation in the Oil and Gas economy, New Delhi on 6th January, 2005.

A. GENERAL

1. The Asian oil economy is integral to, and inseparable from, the global oil economy.
2. With Asian destinations emerging as the principal consumers for Asian production, and the share of Asia in global production and consumption likely to progressively increase, cooperation between Asian producers and Asian consumers is crucial to ensuring.

Stability,
Security and
Sustainability
through
mutual interdependence
in the Asian oil and gas economy.

3. The fundamentals of such cooperation must include moderation, dialogue, mutual understanding and respect, security of international supplies, demand-supply, equilibrium, and strategic partnerships based on a reciprocity of interests.
4. To this end, an Asian dialogue is both welcome and indispensable aimed at evolving and elaborating an Asian consensus.
5. It is, therefore, agreed that the instrumentality of Round Tables of Asian Ministers on Regional Cooperation in the Oil and Gas Economy, initiated here in New Delhi, must be maintained. The following countries have kindly agreed to host/co-host subsequent Round Tables:

Second Round Table : Saudi Arabia, Co-Host: Japan

Third Round Table : Japan, Co-Host : Qatar

Fourth Round Table : Kuwait, Co-host : Republic of Korea

The Round Tables may follow the pattern of alternating between net importing and net exporting countries.

6. For the preparation of Ministerial Round Tables, the Secretariat of the International Energy Forum might convene experts, operators and officials to prepare position papers and agenda documents.
7. To reinforce Ministerial-level discussions at the Round Tables, a parallel effort may be initiated to bring together Asian business operators belonging to the countries represented at the Round Table.

B. STABILITY AND SECURITY

1. There is scope for improving Asian markets for petroleum and petroleum products. The issue requires careful study and detailed consideration, primarily among experts and operators with a view to identifying broad policy parameters that might require further consideration.
2. Prices should be sustained at levels which encourage Asian consumers to increase their purchases of Asian produce; at the same time, prices should be such as to encourage Asian

producers to promote investment in oil and gas for Asian consumer destinations as an economic priority.

3. Crisscross investments all along the entire oil and gas products chain through reciprocal investment interlocking of producers and consumers will guarantee security of both supply and demand, thus contributing to stability of prices and thereby security of both supply and demand. Thus stability of prices would encourage domestic and cross-country investment in all streams of the petroleum sector and other energy-related projects.
4. Caution must be exercised in promoting balanced investment so that over-investment does not lead to excess capacity nor under-investment to shortage of supplies.
5. Strategic storage and stockpiling contribute to security, and in this regard the valuable experience of Japan might hold significant lessons for other major consumers. However, there must be no abuse for illegitimate commercial purposes of such strategic storage and stockpiles.
6. The exchange of information and knowledge is the key to increasing confidence on the part of both buyers and sellers.
7. The Sustainable and Flexible Energy system ("SAFE") proposed by Japan constitutes a useful framework for further consideration of issues of energy security.
8. The Iranian proposal for an Asian Bank for Energy Development merits deeper consideration.

C. SUSTAINABILITY

1. Endorsing the importance of energy conservation of the protection of environment and issues of climate change, the need for technological cooperation in the pursuit of cleaner and more environmentally-sound fossil fuel technologies was emphasized.
2. To this end, cooperation among Asian research and development centers and the promotion of conservation awareness among the general public were recognized as key instrumentalities.

Refining Capacity

*116. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the present petroleum refining capacity in the public sector;

(b) how much petroleum refining capacity has been increased during 2003-04;

(c) whether the Union Government is considering to further increase its petroleum refining capacity;

(d) if so, the details of the plan in this regard; and

(e) the total expenditure likely to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The present petroleum refining capacity in the public sector is 94.37 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA).

(b) During 2003-04, the petroleum refining capacity in the public sector increased by 3 MMTPA.

(c) and (d) Expansion plans of refining capacities of existing refineries are as under:-

IOC, Panipat	from 6 MMTPA to 12 MMTPA
BPC, Mumbai	from 6.9 MMTPA to 12 MMTPA
HPC, Mumbai	from 5.5 MMTPA to 7.9 MMTPA
HPC, Visakh	from 7.5 MMTPA to 8.33 MMTPA

Besides, three new refineries have been planned to Paradeep (9 MMTPA) to IOC, at Bhatinda (9 MMTPA) by HPC and at Bina (6 MMTPA) by BPC.

(e) The approved expenditure for the above projects is as under:

(Rs. in crores)		
IOC, Panipat	=	Rs. 4165/-
BPC, Mumbai	=	Rs. 1831/-
HPC, Mumbai	=	Rs. 1152/-
HPC, Visakh	=	Rs. 1635/-
IOC, Paradeep	=	Rs. 8312/-
BPC, Bina	=	Rs. 6354/-
HPC, Bhatinda	=	Rs. 9806/-
Total		Rs. 33,255/-

Functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions

*117. SHRI P.C. THOMAS:
DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether any national level survey has been conducted by the Government about functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of those States where Panchayati Raj Institutions are functioning effectively;

(d) the names of those States where Panchayati Raj Institutions have not been constituted as yet along with the reasons therefor; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) No national level survey has been conducted by the Government about functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the country. However, the information available with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj indicates that the Panchayati Raj System is being implemented in all the States/Union Territories to which Part IX of the Constitution apply except for Jharkhand and Pondicherry where elections are still to be held and NCT of Delhi where the Panchayati Raj Act had been suspended several years back. However, implementation is uneven. Therefore, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened seven Round Table Conferences with the State Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj and evolved by

consensus a set of around 150 points for action which have been put together in a compendium that was adopted unanimously at the conclusion of the last Round Table in Jaipur.

(c) As may be seen from the enclosed Statement showing the status of devolution of funds, functions and functionaries given that PR Institutions are functioning fairly effectively in some States and are becoming progressively effective in others.

(d) and (e) Panchayati Raj Institutions have not been constituted as yet in Jharkhand and Pondicherry. Elections have not been held in Jharkhand on account of some controversy on the issue of non-tribal population in Schedule V Areas. The Government of Jharkhand has informed the Government of India that the State Government has since amended the Jharkhand Panchayati Raj Act, 2001 in November, 2003 and elections will be held in the near future. The High Court of Jharkhand has asked the State Government to hold the elections. The Union Territory of Pondicherry has informed that the elections of Pondicherry could not be held as there were court cases pertaining to reservation for backward classes. The matter has now been settled and the necessary steps for the conduct of the elections were being made. However, Pondicherry and Karaikal Regions were unfortunately struck by the devastating Tsunami on 26th December, 2004, putting the people into hardship and requiring the entire Administrative Machinery to be geared to attend to relief and rehabilitation works. The Government of Pondicherry expects that the situation will come back to normalcy in about three months, by which time it might be possible for them to hold the elections sometime in May, 2005. The NCT of Delhi had suspended the Panchayati Raj Act several years back and it is now actively considering the reviving of Panchayats in Delhi.

Statement*Status of Devolution of Funds, Functions and Functionaries to Panchayati Raj Institutions*

(As on 1.4.2004)

Sl.No.	States/UTs	No. of Departments/subjects Transferred to Panchayats with			
		Funds	Functions	Functionaries	
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Karnataka	29	29	29	
2.	Kerala	26	26	26	
3.	Sikkim	24	24	24	

1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Maharashtra	18	18	18	
5.	Andhra Pradesh	05	17	02	
6.	Arunachal Pradesh	—	—	—	Elections held recently. Yet to devolve 3Fs.
7.	Assam	—	29	—	
8.	Bihar	8	25	Only functional control	
9.	Jharkhand	—	—	—	Elections have not yet been held.
10.	Goa	6	6	—	
11.	Gujarat	15	15	15	
12.	Haryana	—	16	—	
13.	Himachal Pradesh	02	26 subjects	11	
14.	Madhya Pradesh	10	23	09	
15.	Chhattisgarh	10	29	09	
16.	Manipur	—	22	04	
17.	Orissa	09	25	21	
18.	Punjab	—	07	—	
19.	Rajasthan	18	29	18	
20.	Tamil Nadu	—	29	—	
21.	Tripura	—	12	—	
22.	Uttar Pradesh	04	12	06	
23.	Uttaranchal	—	11	11	
24.	West Bengal	12	29	12	
25.	A & N Islands	06	06	06	
26.	Chandigarh	—	—	—	
27.	D & N Haveli	—	03	03	
28.	Daman & Diu	05	09	03	
29.	NCT of Delhi	Panchayati Raj System is yet to be revived			
30.	Pondicherry	—	—	—	Elections have not yet been held.
31.	Lakshadweep	—	06	—	

The provisions of the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 are not applicable to the States of J&K, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland.

Adulteration of Petroleum Products

*118. SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI:

SHRI TUKARAM GANGADHAR GADAKH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that adulteration in petroleum products is on increase;

(b) if so, the number of such cases detected by the Government during the last one year, State-wise;

(c) whether some State Governments have requested increase in the number of mobile labs to check adulteration in petroleum products;

(d) if so, the details in this regard, State-wise; and

(e) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Government does receive reports of adulteration of transportation fuels and other such malpractices by unscrupulous elements. State-wise details of the cases of adulteration detected and action taken during 2003-2004 are given in the Statement enclosed.

(c) to (e) During the last one year, a request was received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh for the provision of two additional static laboratories and one mobile laboratory in each district of the State. As mobile laboratories are not equipped to conduct all the tests envisaged in the quality control system, and for advanced tests the samples are required to be sent to the static laboratories, the provision of additional mobile laboratories might not serve the desired purpose. Further, in case of exigencies, the services of the laboratories situated in neighbouring States can also be utilized as is being done in other regions. However, the State Government have been advised to ensure optimum utilization of the capacity available at the existing 8 static and 4 mobile laboratories in the State.

Statement

State-wise details of Adulteration cases detected during 2003-04 and action taken

State/UT	No. of cases of adulteration detected
Andhra Pradesh	28
Bihar	07
Delhi	03
Gujarat	20
Haryana	08
Jammu & Kashmir	01
Jharkhand	04
Karnataka	07
Kerala	05
Madhya Pradesh	15
Maharashtra	26
North East States	02
Orissa	05
Punjab	12
Rajasthan	10
Tamil Nadu	22
Uttar Pradesh	36
Uttaranchal	02
West Bengal	03
Total	216

In these cases action has been taken under the Marketing Discipline Guidelines which provides penal action of fine along with suspension of sales & supply in the first instance and termination of dealership in the second instance.

Interlinking FDI Policy on Electronic and Print Media

*119. SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has pointed out that there should be an interlinking FDI policy across News, Entertainment, TV, Cable, Newspapers, Magazines, Radio etc.;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and.

(c) the main changes that are being considered by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) While making recommendations for Phase II of Private FM Radio Broadcasting, TRAI *inter-alia* recommended that:-

"The FDI policy should be reviewed along with the policies in other segments of the media sector to make the whole policy consistent. Similarly there should be a conscious policy decision on cross media ownership as part of the comprehensive media policy. Pending a decision on these issues by the Government there should be no change in the policy for Phase II and formulation of these policies should not delay Phase II. A suitable time frame should be laid down for licensees to comply with the new guidelines, wherever dilution is found necessary."

(b) and (c) TRAI's recommendations are under consideration of the Government and no final decision has yet been taken.

[Translation]

Compensation Claim Cases before RCT

*120. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases relating to refund of fare and accident compensation claims disposed of by the Railway Claims Tribunal (RCT) alongwith the total amount paid by the Tribunal during last one year, till date, separately;

(b) the number of cases pending before the RCT, till date;

(c) the time since when these cases are pending and the reasons for delay in disposing of cases; and

(d) the steps taken/to be taken by the Government for speedy disposal of pending claims and the time by

which these pending claim cases are likely to be disposed of?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Disposal of cases

Year	No. of refund of fare cases	Amount decreed by the Tribunal (Rs.)	No. of Accident compensation claim cases	Amount decreed by the Tribunal (Rs.)
2003-04	9	34,000	438	5.59 crore
2004-05 (upto 1.2.2005)	5	2,794	307	2.60 crore

(b) 6 cases of refund of fare and 395 cases of train accident compensation claims are pending as on 01.02.2005.

(c) Out of 6 cases of fare refund pending in Railway Claims Tribunal (RCT), 4 cases are less than 1 year old and 2 cases are 4 years & 5 years old respectively.

Out of 395 cases of accident compensation claims cases, age-wise pendency is as under:-

Less than 1 year	195
1 year old	133
2 years old	42
3 years old	19
4 years old	2
5 years & above	4

The main reasons for delay in settlement of cases by Railway Claims Tribunal are:-

- Vacancies of Members from time to time.
- Non-availability of heirship title with the claimants.
- Adjournment sought by the applicant/their counsel for producing evidence, etc.
- Transfer of claims cases from one Bench to the other, sought by the claimants.

(d) Railway Claims Tribunal is a judicial body, as such no time limit is fixed for disposal of cases. However following steps have been taken for speedy disposal of cases.

1. RCT (Procedure) Rules have been amended, these cover:-

- (a) An application for accident compensation cases can be filed before the Bench having territorial jurisdiction over the place from which the passenger obtains or purchases his pass or ticket or where the accident or untoward incident occurs or where the place of destination station lies or where the claimant normally resides.
- (b) RCT to pronounce an order within 21 days after final hearing.
- (c) Earlier the affidavits were attested by Notary Public. For the convenience of claimants, the Registrars have also been empowered to attest the same.
- (d) The Registrar of the Tribunal has been empowered to monitor and see that the payment of compensation award is made expeditiously to the claimants by the Railway Administration.

2. Chairman, Railway Claims Tribunal is empowered to depute a Member of one Bench to the other Bench for holding Circuit Bench to clear the backlog.

3. Following administrative measures are also taken:

- (i) An Accident cell is set up at each zonal Head-quarter to provide assistance for filing accident compensation claim and monitor them till the satisfaction of decree in the Railway Claims Tribunal.
- (ii) After the decree has been passed, payment of accident claims compensation is made at the earliest.

4. In order to provide on line information regarding status of claims, Computerization of Railway Claims Tribunal and creation of website has been announced in the Railway Budget 2005-2006.

Handicapped Rehabilitation Centres

1110. DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of sanctioned and actual strength of officials, working in Handicapped Rehabilitation Centres particularly, in Madhya Pradesh, centre-wise;

(b) the criteria adopted for selection of officials for these centres; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to fill up vacancies as per their sanctioned strength and the time by which the same are likely to filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) The sanctioned strength of staff in a District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRC) is 11. Actual strength of staff working in DDRC at Agar-5, Alot-4, Balaghat-4, Damoh-4, Dewas-6, Gwalior-6, Indore-4, Jawad-4, Jhabua-4, Mandsaur-4, Rajgarh-4, Rewa-11, Sagar-5, Satna-7, Ujjain-7 in Madhya Pradesh.

(b) The criteria adopted for selection of officials apart from their educational qualification include:

- (i) Existing professionals of Government/District hospitals on honorary basis.
- (ii) Existing professionals of Government/District hospitals on payment of token honorarium.
- (iii) Professionals and others on purely contractual basis.

(c) DDRCs are rendering services through personnel taking on contract basis for which honorarium is paid or rendering free services. These persons selected by District Management team.

Purchase of Stationery

1111. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA:
SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is rampant corruption in the purchase of stationery and other items in the Ministry of Defence and offices under it such as Integrated Defence Services and Chief Administrative Office;

(b) if so, the number of cases that have come to notice of the Government alongwith the action taken thereon;

(c) the steps taken to streamline the system of purchase;

(d) whether Integrated Defence Services sought inquiry into the rate of certain items during the last six months; and

(e) if so, the details thereof alongwith the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise in view of (d) above.

Digitalisation of Cable TV

1112. SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIYA:
SHRI Y.G. MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received proposals for digitisation of cable T.V. and to improve licensing system;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), issued a consultation paper on 3.1.2005 for comments of the stakeholders on the issues relating to digitalisation of cable T.V. TRAI has not come up with its final recommendations/suggestions so far in the matter.

[English]

Facilities at Bogri Railway Station

1113. SHRI MAHBOOB ZAHEDI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that adequate facilities and amenities have not been provided for the passengers and Railway employees at the Bogri Railway Station;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the concrete measures/steps being taken by the Government to provide all the required facilities and amenities at the said station?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Adequate Passenger amenities as per norms are available.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Construction of Flyover at Railway Crossings

1114. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to construct flyovers at Railway crossings in Haryana for convenience of the public; and

(b) if so, the time by which work on the projects is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There are already 10 works of Road Over/Under Bridges sanctioned on cost sharing basis in the State of Haryana. In addition one more work of Road Over Bridge has been included in Railway Works Programme 2005-06. All the on-going works are at different stages of planning and execution. Work on bridge proper (over the tracks) is executed by Railway and approaches work by State Govt. All out efforts are made by the Railways to complete its portion of work along with approaches by State Govt.

Electrification of Kollam-Trivandrum

1115. SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress so far made in electrification work between Kollam-Trivandrum sector; and

(b) the steps taken by the Government for timely completion of the on-going work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Kollam (Quilon)-Trivandrum is a part of Kayankulam-Quilon-Trivandrum rail line on which electrification work is progressing satisfactorily. Electrification of Kollam (Quilon)-Paravur is targeted for completion during 2004-05 and Paravur-Trivandrum section is targeted for completion by Dec. 2005.

[Translation]

**Container Depot at Ravantha Road
Railway Station**

1116. SHRI RAGHUVeer SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news captioned "Container Depot key Nirman main deri sey das crore ka ghata" appeared in *Dainik Bhaskar*, Kota dated 13th January, 2005;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the details of progress of the Container Depot being constructed at Ravantha Road railway station near Kota Mandal of West-Central Railways;

(d) the details of the work completed on the said Depot alongwith the details of the remaining work;

(e) the amount spent on it as on date alongwith the amount likely to be spent on the completion of the remaining work;

(f) the expected capacity of the said Depot alongwith the number of Containers arranged for loading; and

(g) the names of the ports where the Containers would be sent from the said Depot?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) The project for setting up a Container Depot at Ravantha Road is planned for completion by 31.3.2005 and is progressing as per the planned schedule.

(d) The works of providing paved area, administrative building and gate complex have been completed and other works for providing rail siding and warehouse area are at an advanced stage and are likely to be completed by the planned completion date.

(e) Amount spent till date—Rs. 167 lakhs. Amount likely to be spent on remaining work—Rs. 140 lakhs.

(f) The depot is planned to handle around 22000 TEUs (Twenty Feet Equivalent Units containers) per annum initially. This would include around 6000 outward Export loaded containers and around 4800 outward domestic containers.

(g) The container depot at Ravantha Road will initially provide linkages to the ports in Mumbai, viz. Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) & Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal Pvt. Ltd. (NSICT).

[English]

Change of Pune-Miraj-Hubli Section Track

1117. SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether high speed trains like Rajdhani Express cannot be run on the Pune-Miraj-Hubli section due to slow speed track;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to change this track from slow speed to high speed track; and

(c) the track utilization capacity of Pune-Miraj-Hubli section at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The maximum permitted speed of the section is related to route classification. The track structure on a section is provided, keeping in view the route classification and traffic density. Pune-Miraj-Hubli is 'D' route, where maximum speed permitted is 100 kmph. However, the speed of passenger trains had been permitted upto 105 km per hour at present as a Special Case.

(b) Upgradation of track takes place along with track renewals which are sanctioned on age-cum-condition based criteria and are executed as per availability of funds.

(c) The line capacity utilization for different stretches of Pune-Miraj-Hubli section, varies from 72% to 139%.

[Translation]

Explosion in Joshimath Cantonment

1118. SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a powerful explosion occurred in the Joshimath Cantonment area in Uttaranchal recently;

(b) if so, the details of loss of life and property suffered thereby;

(c) whether the Government has conducted an enquiry into the matter; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) There is no Cantonment at Joshimath but a military station. No explosion has occurred in Joshimath military station area in the recent past.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Allotment of Gas Agencies

1119. SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria laid down by the Government for the selection of locations and dealers for allotment of gas agencies;

(b) the composition of Oil Selection Board in Andhra Pradesh;

(c) the details of the locations identified so far in Andhra Pradesh for allotting new gas agencies; and

(d) the details of the gas agencies allotted during the last three years and likely to be allotted during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Government have given freedom to Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) for the identification of locations and the procedure to be followed for selection of LPG distributorships. However, as a matter of policy, Government have advised OMCs to concentrate on semi-urban/rural areas for opening of new LPG distributorships.

The criteria and the procedure for selection are published by OMCs from time to time in various newspapers at the time of advertisement/selection.

(b) The erstwhile Oil Section Boards have been disbanded on the order of Supreme Court. The selection committee now comprises of three senior officers of the concerned OMC.

(c) The identification of locations for setting up LPG distributorship is a continuous process. OMCs are in the

process of finalising a new marketing plan for Andhra Pradesh for setting up LPG distributorship.

(d) OMCs have allotted 123 LPG distributorships during the last three years (2001-02 to 2003-04) and 119 distributorships during the current year in Andhra Pradesh.

[English]

Encroachment Around Protected Monuments

1120. SHRI M.K. SUBBA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received representations about large scale encroachments on historical monuments of the AHOM Kings, in Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Golaghat districts of Assam by major Tea Estates;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the total area of such lands under encroachments; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to remove the encroachment?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No representation has been received about large scale encroachments in centrally protected monuments in Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Golaghat districts of Assam.

(b) and (c) Question does not arise.

Withdrawal of Notifications

1121. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to withdraw the notifications issued by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) declaring some of the temples as national heritage monuments all over the country; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the details of the temples, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, a preliminary gazette notification was published in the Official Gazette of India expressing the intention of the Central Government to protect the Arunachaleshwara Temple at

Thiruvannamalai in Tamilnadu as a protected monument and invited objections from the public. In response, a large section of local public and the Govt. of Tamilnadu objected to the proposal of protection of the temple. After examining the objections, a view was taken to withdraw the preliminary notification, and the matter was brought to the notice of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India where a Special Leave Petition is pending regarding the development of the temple under reference. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has directed the Archaeological Survey of India to file an affidavit mentioning the intention to withdraw the preliminary gazette notification in respect of above temple.

[Translation]

BG Line between Dhasa and Jetalsar

1122. SHRI V.K. THUMMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to lay a broad gauge line between Dhasa and Jetalsar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) A survey for gauge conversion of Dhasa-Jetalsar metre gauge line has been taken up.

Selection of LPG Distributors in M.P.

1123. SHRI ASHOK ARGAL:
SHRI RAMSWAROOP KOLI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received complaints regarding interviews conducted by various oil companies for selection of distributors (LPG and RO) in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether any enquiry has been conducted into the matter;

(c) the details and outcome thereof; and

(d) the follow-up action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) The selection of LPG distributorships and retail outlets is made by Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) as per their laid down guidelines. OMCs have conducted 144 interviews for LPG distributorships and 349 locations for dealerships in the State of Madhya Pradesh during the year 2004. The complaints received by OMCs against the selections are investigated in line with the laid down policy guidelines. The details about the complaints received and action taken thereon are given in the Statement enclosed.

Statement

The details of locations interviewed for setting up of LPG distributorships and retail outlets during 2004 in Madhya Pradesh and complaints received thereon:-

	Total number of locations interviewed	Complaints received against the selection	Number of complaints established	Number of complaints pending for investigation
LPG distributorships	144	37	1	3
Retail outlets	349	70	6	16

Petroleum Projects

1124. SHRI BALESHWAR YADAV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Oil and Natural Gas Commission has submitted various petroleum proposals to the Government for approval;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has accorded approval to those projects of ONGC; and

(d) if not, the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Board of Directors of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) is empowered to take investment decisions in accordance with the powers conferred to the company subsequent to its becoming a "Navaratna" Public Sector Enterprise.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Promotion of Short Plays and Stories of Regional Languages

1125. SHRIMATI KALPANA RAMESH NARHIRE: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the policy being adopted by the Government to promote the short plays and stories of regional languages;

(b) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to promote them; and

(c) the funds allocated by the Government for this purpose during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) There is no separate policy for promotion of short plays and stories of Regional languages as the Government treats all the languages included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution at par for development of literature.

(b) The Sangeet Natak Akademi and Sahitya Kala Akademi have different Schemes like Playwrights' Workshop in Indian Languages, Assistance to Young Theatre Artists, Translation, Publication etc. that *inter-alia* take care of the short plays and stories.

(c) There is no separate allocation of funds exclusively for promotion of Short plays and Stories as it forms part of the overall developmental activities of the Akademies.

[English]

International Flights from Kolkata

1126. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to introduce more international flights particularly for Hongkong, Singapore and Jordan from Kolkata;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has any plan to start more Air India flights from Kolkata; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Singapore Airlines is presently operating thrice weekly flights between Kolkata and Singapore. Royal Jordan Airlines is also connecting Kolkata with Amman through its twice weekly flights. Kolkata is also available as a point of call to the designated airlines of Hong Kong, although they are presently not operating on this route.

(c) and (d) Air India plans to operate thrice weekly flights between Kolkata and London effective Summer, 2005.

Salem-Cuddalore Gauge Conversion

1127. SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of progress so far made in gauge conversion work of Salem-Cuddalore;

(b) the latest position of the Cuddalore-Virdhachalam-Attur railway line;

(c) the present status of Salem-Karur project; and

(d) the progress of work on Omalur overbridge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Virdhachalam-Cuddalore section (52 kms) has already been completed and commissioned. In Virdhachalam-Attur (81 kms) section, works are in various stages of progress and section is targeted for completion during 2005-06.

(c) On this project, earthwork and bridge works are in progress. However, litigations regarding land acquisition had affected the progress of the work.

(d) Construction of Road Over Bridge in lieu of level crossing No. 9 at km 8/6-7 between Salem-Mettur near Omalur Yard has been sanctioned in 2000-01 on cost sharing basis with the Government of Tamil Nadu. Due to failure of previous tenderer for execution of Railway portion of the work i.e. bridge proper, tender was terminated at risk and cost. Re-tendering was delayed due to stay order obtained by previous contractor. However, now stay has been vacated and fresh tender has been called. This has resulted in slowing down the progress of work. Efforts are being made for early finalisation of fresh tender. Work on approaches is in progress.

Quantity of Gas Lifted by ONGC

1128. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of gas lifted by ONGC daily on the average in different States against the optimum capacity of lifting; and

(b) the details of the plans for out-sourcing natural gas with the stages of development?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The daily average gas production from the fields operated by ONGC in various areas during the current year 2004-05 (Apr'04 to Dec'04), Statewise, is as under:-

States	Average daily production (MMSCMD)
Western Offshore	48.55
Gujarat	5.93
Assam	1.31
Andhra Pradesh	4.66
Tamil Nadu	1.78
Tripura	1.32
Rajasthan	0.05
Total	63.60

The optimum production of gas from any field is a dynamic process subject to different factors like reservoir characteristics, the stage of field life cycle, availability of end consumers, techno economic feasibility, etc. ONGC endeavours to produce gas at rates commensurate with the prevailing circumstances in the area.

(b) Natural gas produced by ONGC, after meeting internal requirements and production of value added products, is handed over to GAIL for further transportation and distribution to various gas based industries.

With a view to maximizing the utilization of gas produced from isolated/marginal fields, Government have empowered ONGC to directly market gas upto one lakh Cubic Meters Per Day (LCMD) in each case if GAIL is not able to identify consumers in the respective areas

within 6 months. Accordingly, ONGC have thus far identified 27 consumers in Gujarat, 6 in Andhra Pradesh and 1 in Tamil Nadu for the supply of gas upto 1 LCMD, under the direct marketing provisions. Supply to these consumers has already started.

[Translation]

Rail Overbridges in Haridwar

1129. SHRI RAJENDER KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that a number of rail overbridges in Haridwar district of Uttaranchal are in decrepit state;

(b) if so, the details of those bridges identified; and

(c) the time by which the railway bridges, which are in decrepit state, are likely to be repaired?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) There is no decrepit Road Over Bridge (ROB) in the State of Uttaranchal. The bridge proper (across the track) is maintained by Railway and approaches by State Government. Any repair needed to be attended to by Railway is carried out promptly.

[English]

Gujarati News on DD-I

1130. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the telecasting of Gujarati news on DD-I at 16 hrs. has been discontinued;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government has received representations for re-starting the said news programme;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The 1600 hrs. regional News bulletins including that of Gujarat were stopped throughout the country in 2003, on account of launch of

24 hrs. News Channel on Doordarshan. However, Gujarati news bulletins continued to be telecast from 9.00 A.M. to 9.15 A.M. on DD Gujarati and 7.00 PM to 7.15 P.M. on DD-I.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Bio-Diesel

1131. SHRI KISHAN SINGH SANGWAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has sent any proposal to the Government for making bio-diesel; and

(b) If so, the details thereof and reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI

SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. While IOC have undertaken successful trial runs to establish the feasibility of blending diesel with bio-diesel, they themselves have no plan of manufacturing bio-diesel.

Import of Ultra Low Sulphur Petrol and Diesel

1132. SHRI RAJENDER KUMAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Oil Corporation has proposed to import ultra low sulphur petrol and diesel in order to meet the April 1st, 2005 deadline for supplying green fuel in the country; and

(b) if so, the details alongwith the quantity proposed to be imported?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details of quantity of petrol and diesel imported by IOC since January, 2005 is given below:

(in thousand metric tonnes)

	Jan 05	Feb 05	Mar 05	Apr 05
BS II (HSD)	—	120	180	60
Euro III equivalent (HSD)	30	60	30	—
BS II (MS)	—	32	35	Under Finalization
Euro III equivalent (MS)	35	60	65	-do-

Allotment of LPG Dealership in West Bengal

1133. SHRI HITEN BARMAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications received by the Union Government for allotment of LPG dealership from West Bengal during each of the last three years;

(b) the number of persons allotted LPG dealership during the said period;

(c) the number of applications pending at present; and

(d) the time by which the pending applications are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have released advertisement for 58 locations during the last three years in West Bengal as under:-

Year	Number of locations Advertised
2001-02	44
2002-03	00
2003-04	14

(b) to (d) Out of the 58 locations indicated above, 20 locations are pending for allotment. The selection of LPG distributorships is made by the OMCs themselves, in terms of laid down guidelines. As this is a continuous process, no time limit has been fixed for the selection of such pending locations, but every effort is made to do so as quickly as possible.

LPG Shortage in West Bengal

1134. SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of LPG supplied in West Bengal as compared to demand thereof during each of the last three years;

(b) whether there is an acute shortage of LPG supply in West Bengal;

(c) if so, the details alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) The total quantity of LPG supplied by Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in West Bengal during the last three years is as under:-

Year	LPG (Metric Tonnes)
2001-02	384344.9
2002-03	422298.4
2003-04	458566.8

OMCs have not reported any shortage of LPG supply in West Bengal and say they are meeting the entire demand of LPG customers in full. They have further informed the Ministry that strict scheduling and monitoring

of supplies is being done to check possible diversion of LPG to unauthorised uses.

The crackdown on the illegitimate diversion of domestic LPG to unauthorised uses is perhaps causing some disruption by unscrupulous elements but this problem is also being addressed.

Fraudulent Refunds

1135. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether cases of illegal collection of money from prospective candidates and fraudulent refunds of PRS tickets from Bharuch Station under Vadodara Division of Western Railway have come to the notice of Government;

(b) if so, whether the Government has ordered CBI inquiry into the matters;

(c) if so, the progress made so far in investigation of the matters; and

(d) the action taken against the officials involved in these cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Western Railway Vigilance has requested the Superintendent of Police, Central Bureau of Investigation/ Gandhinagar to take up the investigation.

(c) and (d) The SP/CBI/Gandhinagar has advised that a complaint has been registered by them. Based on preliminary investigations conducted by Railway Vigilance, the suspected railway officials have been placed under suspension.

Production of Bio-Fuel

1136. SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any target for the X Plan for production of Bio-fuels;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken to promote Biofuels as an alternative fuel for petrol and diesel?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Planning Commission had set up a Committee on Development of Bio-fuel which recommended in 2004 that a National Mission on Bio-diesel with a special focus on the plantation of *Jatropha curcas* may be launched. Ministry of Rural Development, as the nodal Ministry, has got a Detailed Project Report (DPR) prepared. The DPR needs to be processed further for approval of the Planning Commission and the Government, before the project gets taken up for implementation.

(c) The Government is implementing a 5% ethanol-blended petrol programme in notified sugar producing States/adjoining States and Union Territories. According to the parameters of the programme, w.e.f. 27.10.2004, if the price at which ethanol is offered for the programme is comparable to the price of ethanol for alternative uses, and is comparable to the delivery price of petrol at the notified locations, and if the supply of ethanol can be maintained at such prices, supply of 5% ethanol-blended-petrol in notified areas is mandatory. Under instructions from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to the Oil Marketing Companies in the public sector, field trials using bio-diesel and diesel blend in buses are in progress in collaboration with Haryana Roadways and the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking (BEST), Mumbai. Field trials and engine tests on locomotives are also in progress.

[Translation]

Vocational Training Centres for SCs

1137. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has implemented any scheme for setting up of vocational training centres in the States including Maharashtra for providing alternative employment to the unemployed SCs; and

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the number of vocational training centres set up in this regard, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[English]

Gorkha Regiment Personnel Kidnapped in Nepal

1138. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:
SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that fourteen army personnel of Gorkha regiment were kidnapped in Nepal;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry has been conducted in this regard;

(d) if so, the findings thereof;

(e) the action taken thereon;

(f) the numbers of cases of kidnapping of army personnel reported during the last two years;

(g) whether all such personnel have since been released; and

(h) if not, the present status of each incident?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

(f) Four.

(g) and (h) Three personnel have been released and one has been killed.

Setting up of Training Centre by European Airbus Company

1139. SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA:
SHRI S.D. MANDLIK:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the European Airbus company proposes to set up a Training Centre in India to provide engineering and other services;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the services that will be provided at the Centre; and

(c) the financial implication of the proposed Training Centre?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No proposal in this regard has been received by Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Funds for Restructuring of Mumbai and Delhi Airports

1140. SHRI PRAKASH BAPU V. PATIL:
SHRI MAHBOOB ZAHEDI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether restructuring and modernisation of Mumbai airport would cost much more than what Government had expected earlier;

(b) if so, the details thereof together with the basis for earlier estimates;

(c) whether the Government has agreed to re-allocate funds for the purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) As per staged development plan worked out by Global Technical Advisor (GTA) appointed by Airports Authority of India (AAI), the preliminary cost estimates in respect of Mumbai airport is of the order of Rs. 6400 crores for next 20 years. The development works are to be undertaken by the proposed Joint Venture Company for Mumbai airport as mandated by Government.

Import of LPG

1141. SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":
SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:
SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total import of LPG into the country during 2004-05;

(b) the increase in percentage as compared to last year;

(c) the total outflow of foreign exchange on account of import of LPG; and

(d) the steps being taken to increase the domestic production of LPG in the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Total import of LPG into the country during 2004-05 (April-December, 2004) was 1799 thousand metric tonne (provisional). The increase in percentage as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year has been of the order of 64%.

(c) The total outflow of foreign exchange on account of the import of LPG during 2004-05 (April to December, 2004) was US\$ 764 million (provisional).

(d) Domestic production of LPG in the country is sought to be increased through refinery expansion/modernization plans, implementation of LPG maximization projects and enhanced capacity utilization.

[Translation]

Modification in Flight Schedules

1142. SHRI SAJJAN KUMAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken a decision to modify the domestic as well as international flight schedules;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Flight schedules are not decided by the Government. These are decided by airlines as per their commercial judgement.

Shifting of TV Tower

1143. DR. COL. (RETD.) DHANI RAM SHANDIL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received requests from village Panchayat Heads of Chirgaon Tehsil in district Shimla for shifting of TV tower from Chirgaon to Sundralli;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Requests from some village Panchayats viz. Todsa, Zangla, Thana & Sariwasa Panchayats in Chirgaon Tehsil of Shimla district for shifting the VLPT, Chirgaon from its present site to another location have been received. There is no proposal to shift VLPT, Chirgaon from its present site as this is likely to result in some areas losing the TV coverage presently available there.

[English]

Ban on Indian Carriers

1144. SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN:
SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH:
SHRI D. VITTAL RAO:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to ban Indian Carriers from flying on a particular route for two years if they fail to use fully the rights granted for that route as reported in 'The Hindu' of January 23, 2005;

(b) if so, the details and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of the new guidelines issued in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per the guidelines issued by the Government, an airline would face a ban of two years on the route on which it fails to operate after getting traffic rights. This has been done with a view to discouraging airlines from seeking traffic rights without making serious preparations for actively utilising it.

(c) As per the guidelines notified by the DGCA, Indian Scheduled Carriers with continuous operations of at least 5 years in domestic sector and having a minimum fleet size of 20 aircraft are permitted to operate on international

routes. Operational plans of Air India and Indian Airlines are given due consideration before allocation of routes to other scheduled airlines. If the total entitlements fall short of the requirements projected by the eligible airlines, inter-se allocation of entitlements will be in the ratio of Available Seat Kilometer (ASKM) deployed by the scheduled carriers over last 5 years.

Recognition of Trade Unions

1145. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any action to implement the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India issued while disposing of special leave petitions in the matter of holding secret ballot to determine exclusive membership of Unions for the purpose of recognition of Trade Unions of Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay in implementing the directions of the Supreme Court?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) The Hon'ble Supreme Court in their judgment dated 08.03.2004 while disposing of the special leave petitions held that they saw no reason to interfere with the decision of the High Court and had upheld the High Court's reasoning for requirement of 30% membership exclusively for the membership of the union. In this context, the Supreme Court had observed that the High Court had correctly relied upon the decision in the case of Food Corporation of India Staff Union Vs Food Corporation of India which held that the method of Secret Ballot adopted in that case, was a natural, rationale and viable alternative. There is, thus, no specific direction of the Supreme Court for holding secret ballot to determine exclusive membership. Judgement of the Hon'ble Court is under consideration.

Compensation to Passengers

1146. SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE:
SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT "BACHDA":
SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that several domestic and international flights are frequently delayed

and cancelled causing great inconvenience to passengers and also loss of precious time, energy and money;

(b) if so, whether the Government would consider providing compensation to the affected passengers on the pattern of European regulation;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) In spite of best efforts by airlines to operate flights as per the scheduled timings and routing, at times flights do get delayed/disrupted due to last minute technical or operational reasons, including weather conditions, which are generally beyond their control.

(b) to (d) There is presently no proposal to bring about legislation to compensate the affected passengers on the pattern of EU Regulations. However, in the eventuality of delay/disruption/cancellation of flights, most airlines are providing certain facilities like full refund of fares, alternate arrangement to take the passenger to the destination, either by air or by other modes of transport, complimentary service of beverages, snacks or meals to the delayed and/or stranded passengers, reimbursement of taxi fares from residence to airport and return, overnight lay over accommodation in case of flight cancellation etc. depending on circumstances, feasibility and the preference of the passenger.

Contribution of States In Promotion of Indian Culture

1147. SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government pay attention to the States who contribute significantly to the country's culture for attracting tourists from abroad;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the incentives given to them; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Ancient monuments of historical and artistic importance and the

multifarious expressions of Indian Culture are the major points that attract foreign tourists to India. The various institutions and programmes under the Ministry of Culture aim to conserve the built heritage as well as art forms and traditions that express Indian Culture. The Archaeological Survey of India is the major institution, which has protected a large number of monuments of national importance. The various Academies, the Anthropological Survey of India, the seven Zonal Cultural Centres etc. are some other institutions that study and foster cultural expressions and traditions. These organisations work with the involvement of State Governments. Though there is no direct assistance aimed at States that attract significant number of tourists, the States derive benefit from these activities in their tourism development initiatives.

(c) Does not arise.

Rejection of NGOs' proposals

1148. SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDLIKRAO GAWALI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has rejected some new projects of N.G.Os. which were approved by the previous Government;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the fate of those projects and N.G.Os. who are already running these new projects for the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Establishment of National Defence University

1149. SHRI AKHILESH YADAV:
DR. K.S. MANOJ:
SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA:
SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI:
SHRI ATIQ AHAMAD:
SHRI RAJENDER KUMAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of the proposed National Defence University; and

(b) the objectives of the said University?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The setting up of the Indian National Defence University is still at project formulation stage and no final decision has been taken for its establishment by the Government.

(b) The objective of the proposed National Defence University is to undertake long-term defence and strategic studies and create synergy between the academic community and government functionaries. Further, it aims to educate national security leaders on all aspects of national security strategy, national military strategy, national information strategy and national technological strategy through teaching and research.

Naval Operation in Tsunami Hit Countries

1150. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE:
DR. BABU RAÓ MEDIYAM:
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Navy launched different operations in Tsunami hit countries;

(b) if so, the total ships, helicopters and armed personnel deputed in these operations by the Indian Navy;

(c) the expenditure incurred on the operations in these countries;

(d) whether some operations are still going on at present in these countries; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and time by which these operations are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Indian Navy had launched Operation (Op) Madad on the East & West Coast of India and Andaman & Nicobar Islands; Op Rainbow in Sri Lanka; Op Castor in Maldives; and Op Gambhir in Indonesia for post-Tsunami relief operations.

(b) Indian Navy had deployed the following assets for relief operations:-

(i) Op Madad (East & West Coast of India): 11 ships, 11 helicopters and 2 fixed wing aircraft with 4347 personnel.

(ii) Op Madad (Andaman & Nicobar Islands): 30 ships, 8 helicopters and 3 fixed wing aircraft with 6959 personnel.

(iii) Op Rainbow: 16 ships, 6 helicopters and 2 fixed wing aircraft with 1438 personnel;

(iv) Op Castor: 4 ships and 4 helicopters with 442 personnel;

(v) Op Gambhir: 2 ships and 1 helicopter with 603 personnel.

(c) The estimates of expenditure incurred by Indian Navy on relief operations is as follows:

(i) Op Madad (East & West Coast of India including Andaman & Nicobar Islands) — Rs. 17.07 crore

(ii) Op Rainbow — Rs. 9.58 crore

(iii) Op Castor — Rs. 5.58 crore

(iv) Op Gambhir — Rs. 1.82 crore

(d) and (e) All naval ships, aircraft and personnel deployed for various overseas relief operations were de-inducted on 31st January, 2005. 82 personnel from the Army composite team continue to be deployed in Sri Lanka for rehabilitation work and are likely to be de-inducted by 15th March, 2005.

[Translation]

Discontinuation of Express Train

1151. SHRIMATI RUPATAI D. PATIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kacheguda-Manmad Express train No. 7664 (Pari-Parbhani route) and Manmad-Kacheguda Express train No. 7663 have been discontinued since February 07, 2005;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the alternative arrangements made/to be made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

*[English]***Royalty on Crude Oil**

1152. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI:
 SHRI BHUPENDRASINH SOLANKI:
 SHRI MAHESH KANODIA:
 SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA:
 SHRI V.K. THUMMAR:
 SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether royalty on crude oil received by the State Government is normally used for entire State;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the existing permission allow this royalty to be used for development of the area from where the crude oil is found; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Royalty on crude oil is payable in terms of the provisions of the Oil Fields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948 and the Petroleum & Natural Gas Rules, 1959, framed thereunder. Royalty on on-land production is paid to the State Government concerned and the proceeds are credited to their State's Consolidated Fund. The Oil Fields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948 and Petroleum & Natural Gas Rules, 1959 do not prescribe the manner of utilization of royalty proceeds by the State Government. These are, therefore, utilized by the recipient State Government similarly to any other general revenues accruing to it.

*[Translation]***Rail Link between India and Bhutan**

1153. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY:
 SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:
 SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:
 SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:
 SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN:
 SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreement has been signed for connecting India and Bhutan through rail;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which railway connectivity is likely to be established between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of India and the Royal Government of Bhutan was signed on 25th January, 2005 for conducting feasibility studies for the establishment of Railway Links between the bordering towns of India and Bhutan. Under the MOU, M/s RITES, a Public Sector Undertaking, would conduct feasibility studies for the extension of the Indian railway network from the States of West Bengal and Assam to the nearest border towns in Bhutan covering the following links:

1. Hasimara (West Bengal)—Phuentsholing (18 Kms) and bifurcation of Pasakha;
2. Kokrajhar (Assam)—Gelephu (70 Kms);
3. Pathsala (Assam)—Nanglam (40 Kms);
4. Rangia (Assam)—Samdrupjongkhar via Darranga (60 Km);
5. Banarhat (West Bengal)—Samtse (16 Km).

The feasibility studies would be financed by Government of India on grant basis. The decision regarding establishment of rail connectivity between the two countries would be taken by the two Governments depending upon the result of the feasibility studies.

*[English]***Uneconomic Routes**

1154. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the uneconomic routes in the country where Indian Airlines is operating at present;

(b) whether the private Airlines are also operating on uneconomic routes;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government proposes to make it mandatory for the private Airlines to share the uneconomic routes; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Indian Airlines including Alliance Air operated 134 services on domestic network during 2003-04, out of which 53 services did not meet direct cost. The remaining 81 services generated surplus over direct cost.

(b) to (e) As per the Route Dispersal Guidelines issued by the Government, all operators are required to deploy in Category II routes at least 10% of the capacity deployed by them on routes in Category I (*i.e.* trunk routes) and of the capacity thus required to be deployed on Category II routes, at least 10% would be deployed on services or segments thereof operated exclusively within the North-Eastern region, Jammu & Kashmir, Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep. The operators are also required to deploy in Category III, at least 50% of the capacity deployed on routes in Category I. Category II and IIA routes are considered to be non-profitable routes.

Private scheduled operators which operate on Category I routes *i.e.* Jet Airways, Sahara Airlines and Air Deccan operate on Category II and IIA routes alongwith Indian Airlines and Alliance Air to meet the requirements of Route Dispersal Guidelines.

[Translation]

Allotment of Petrol Pumps and Gas Agencies to MPs

1155. SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the policy of the Government regarding allotment of petrol pumps and natural gas agencies to the Members of Parliament;

(b) whether the Supreme Court of India has issued any order for not granting any such agency to the Members of Parliament;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the policy being framed by the Union Government in the light of the judgement?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Under the existing policy of the

oil marketing companies for allotment of retail outlet dealerships, LPG distributorships and SKO-LDO dealerships, there is no bar on the Members of Parliament from applying for allotment of such dealerships/distributorships.

(b) No, Sir. There is as yet no such order issued by the Supreme Court.

(c) and (d) Do not arise, in view of reply to (b) above.

[English]

Publication of Advertisements in Employment News

1156. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Department is publishing advertisements in Employment News after proper verification;

(b) if so, the reasons that a fake advertisement of Railway Exam Results has been published in the Employment News;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted into the matter;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the action taken against the erring officials?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) On the basis of request received in the name of Chairman, Railway Recruitment Board, Jabalpur for publishing of examination result in the language and format similar to the advertisements received from the other Railway Recruitment Boards, the examination result was published in 'Employment News'/'Rozgar Samachar' dated 29 January-4 February 2005. A Public Notice was published in the next issue of 'Rozgar Samachar' dated 5-11 February 2005, declaring the result relating to Railway Recruitment Board, Jabalpur as null and void. Appropriate precautions are being put in place to avoid recurrence of such mistakes.

(c) and (d) Investigations have been carried out by General Manager-cum-Chief Editor, Employment News. The investigations do not suggest the involvement of any official of Employment News.

(e) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Mixing of Ethanol in Petrol

1157. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to make the percentage of ethanol to be mixed with petrol as optional;

(b) if so, the likely adverse impact of this decision of the Government on the production of domestic ethanol;

(c) whether consumption of petrol has been reduced due to use of ethanol in vehicles; and

(d) by making the percentage use of ethanol as optional, to what extent the economy of the country will be effected adversely due to increase in petrol consumption, resulting more import of petrol?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) In terms of Gazette Notification, GSR 705(E) dated 27.10.2004 issued in accordance with Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 (10 of 1955) read with clauses 3(F) of the Motor Spirit and High Speed Diesel (Regulation of Supply and Distribution and Prevention of Malpractices) Order, 1998, supply of 5% ethanol-blended-petrol in notified areas is mandatory if the price at which ethanol is offered is comparable to the price of ethanol for alternative uses, and is comparable to the delivery price of petrol at the notified locations, and if the supply of ethanol can be maintained at such prices.

(c) Consumption of petrol goes down to the extent of use of ethanol in petrol.

(d) Does not arise in view of what has been stated at (a) & (b) above.

Petrol/Diesel Retail Outlets

1158. SHRI KRISHNA MURARI MOGHE:
SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD:
DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:
SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of diesel/petrol retail outlets allotted in the country during 2003 and 2004, State/Union Territory-wise and year-wise;

(b) whether the Government proposes to formulate a new policy for allotment of petrol retail outlets; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The total number of retail outlet dealerships (petrol/diesel pumps) allotted in the country by the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs), viz., Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and IBP Co. Limited during the years 2003 and 2004, were 1,420 and 6,676 respectively. The State/Union Territory-wise and year-wise position is indicated in the Statement enclosed.

(b) and (c) Based on certain broad parameters advised by the Government to the OMCs, the latter have framed their guidelines and have been making selection and allotments of dealerships/distributorships in terms of these guidelines. No new policy is on the anvil.

Statement

Retail Outlets (ROs) allotted by the public sector oil marketing companies in the country during 2003 and 2004

S.No.	States/Union Territories	No. of ROs allotted during 2003	No. of ROs allotted during 2004
1	2	3	4
A. States			
1.	Andhra Pradesh	100	591
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	0	8
3.	Assam	7	73
4.	Bihar	66	172
5.	Chhattisgarh	6	115
6.	Gujarat	69	206
7.	Goa	0	19
8.	Haryana	118	360

1	2	3	4
9.	Himachal Pradesh	20	116
10.	Jammu & Kashmir	14	93
11.	Jharkhand	20	112
12.	Karnataka	129	548
13.	Kerala	106	303
14.	Madhya Pradesh	23	326
15.	Maharashtra	45	602
16.	Manipur	2	6
17.	Meghalaya	4	42
18.	Mizoram	0	7
19.	Nagaland	0	6
20.	Orissa	73	152
21.	Punjab	148	559
22.	Rajasthan	94	477
23.	Sikkim	0	7
24.	Tamil Nadu	50	583
25.	Tripura	1	4
26.	Uttaranchal	13	109
27.	Uttar Pradesh	215	756
28.	West Bengal	75	250
	Total (A)	1,398	6,602
B. Union Territories			
29.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0	0
30.	Chandigarh	0	1
31.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0	4
32.	Daman & Diu	1	2
33.	Delhi	18	28
34.	Lakshadweep	0	0
35.	Pondicherry	3	39
	Total (B)	22	74
	Grand Total (A+B)	1,420	6,676

*[English]***Power to 'Navratna' and 'Miniratna' CPSUs**

1159. SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPA:

SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA:

SHRI S.D. MANDLIK:

SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to enhance powers of 'Navratnas' and 'Miniratnas' in Public Sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government will allow Miniratna PSUs to have access to the National Investment Fund for developing their base;

(d) if so, which are the PSUs that need help from the National Investment Fund; and

(e) the policy of the Government in dealing with Miniratna PSUs from their present plight?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The powers delegated to the Navratna and Miniratna Public Sector Undertakings in respect of investment in subsidiaries/joint ventures, merger and acquisition, capital expenditure, business tours abroad etc. are to be enhanced.

(c) and (d) Selected PSEs including Miniratnas may be allowed to have access to the National Investment Fund for capital investment in order to enlarge their capital base to finance revival package and/or expansion/diversification.

(e) The policy is to make public sector strong and effective.

Deal with Iran for Purchase of LNG

1160. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:

SHRI JAI PRAKASH (MOHANLAL GANJ):

SHRIMATI ANURADHA CHOUDHARY:

SHRI MUNSHI RAM:

SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:

SHRI PARAS NATH YADAV:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has signed a deal with Iran for purchase of LNG;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the terms and conditions on which Iran agreed for such deal; and

(c) the cost of LNG to be imported from Iran in the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) An understanding has been reached between IOC & GAIL and National Iranian Gas Export Company (NIGEC) for import of 5.0 Million Metric Tonne Per Annum (MMTPA) of LNG in India from Iran for a period of 25 years commencing 2009. Further, the Indian Consortium has the option to consider import of additional 2.5 MMTPA of LNG from Iran.

(c) The cost of the LNG shall be firmed up in the LNG Sale Purchase Agreement, which is under active negotiation.

[Translation]

National Commission for Ex-servicemen

1161. SHRI SURESH CHANDEL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a lot of discrepancies between the facilities being provided to ex-servicemen by the Union Government and State Governments;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to set up National Commission for Ex-servicemen;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which it is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) Yes, Sir. The State Governments take their own decisions about facilities to be provided to ex-servicemen.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) In view of (b), question does not arise.

Super Express Train Status to Panchvati Express

1162. SHRI DEVIDAS PINGLE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently given the status of Super Express train to Panchvati Express and increased its passenger fares; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons for taking this decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The trains, whose average speed, on the entire run in both directions is minimum 55 kilometres per on Broad Gauge and 45 kilometres per hour on Metre Gauge are designated as Superfast and a surcharge is levied for travel by such trains. Panchvati Express has been declared as superfast train with effect from 15.11.2004 as it fulfills the required speed criteria.

[English]

Contracts for Supply of LNG

1163. SHRI SURESH KURUP: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently entered into any contracts for the supply of LNG with other countries; and

(b) if so, the details alongwith the terms and conditions thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) An understanding has been reached between IOC & GAIL and National Iranian Gas Export Company (NIGEC) for import of 5.0 Million Metric Tonne Per Annum (MMTPA) of LNG in India from Iran for a period of 25 years commencing 2009. Further, the Indian Consortium has the option to consider import of an additional 2.5 MMTPA of LNG from Iran. The contractual details are under negotiation.

Fire in Coaches Standing at Stations/Yards

1164. SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the incidents of fire in railway coaches while standing at stations/yards since June 2004, till date, train-wise;

(b) the loss suffered by the Railway in these fire incidents, train-wise;

(c) the details of inquiry ordered, their outcome and the action taken thereon, incident-wise;

(d) the number of persons booked for sabotage activities in these incidents alongwith the number of railway officials and RPF persons booked for negligence in these fire incidents, incident-wise; and

(e) the measures taken/to be taken to check the recurrence of such fire incidents?'

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) Details of Fire in Coaches standing at Stations/Yards are given as under:-

S.No.	Railway	Date of occurrence	Train No. and place of occurrence	Value of property damaged (In Rs.)	Details of Police Investigation Junior Administrative	Numbers of person booked for negligence	The measures taken/to be taken to check such incidents
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Central	08.01.2005	One case of fire in the stabled unserviceable coach.	Nil. As the coach was unserviceable	A Junior Administrative Grade inquiry committee concluded that the fire started from the dried grass and bushes & spread to the stabled coach.	No person was found responsible	The plants, Bushes have been cleared to prevent such incidents
2.	Eastern	21.10.2004	Tower van No. 849 Sonpur	Nil. As the Tower van was condemned	A joint inquiry was conducted no clue is found	No case was registered	Fire prevention measures are taken
3.	Eastern	17.11.2004	3 Tier Sleeper Coach in Liluah Workshop	6,45,441	Fire caught during repair by oxygen cutting process	First Information Report lodged	Fire prevention measures are taken
4.	Eastern	28.12.2004	SLR No. 82/24 in Liluah Workshop	9,003	The coach was condemned	First Information Report lodged	Fire prevention measures are taken
5.	Northern	25.12.2004	FSLR No. 97702 attached with Train No. BSF Spl. at Rasauli	12,00,000	The case was closed as charges could not be proved during investigation	Nil	Security measures are taken by Northern railway

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6.	Northern	09.02.2005	Train No. 2716 coach No. 95714 SLR at Hamira-Kartarpur station	Known	Joint departmental enquiry is under progress	Nil	Security measures are taken by Northern railway
7.	Southern	June 2004	Fire in coach in mid Section	66,940	Negligence of unknown person	Nil	Special checking to prevent loading of inflammable items
8.	Western	22.06.2004	Fire in wagon in Lower Parel Workshop	3,00,000	Negligence of the staff is being examined	Nil	Locking system in empty racks introduced
9.	Western	08.10.2004	Pantry Car Train No. 4064 at Andheri (Mumbai)	98,000	Case is under investigation	Seven persons of pantry car were arrested	Special safety drives have been launched
10.	Western	01.11.2004	Train No. 9310 sleeper coach no. 70808	1,46,000	Case is still under investigation	Nil	Special safety drives have been launched
11.	Western	27.01.2005	Sleeper coach of Train No. 1454	1,000	Outsiders are responsible	Nil	Special safety drives have been launched
12.	N.C. Rly.	06.02.2005	Pantry car of train No. 4084	Nil.	Due to burst of rubber tyre	Nil	Special safety drives have been launched

[Translation]

Remuneration to Casual News Readers/Editors

1165. SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether daily remuneration of casual news readers/editors/other artists working in News Service Division, Akashvani has not been increased for years;

(b) if so, whether the Government has decided to increase their remuneration;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the time by which final decision is likely to be taken in this regard;

(e) whether transportation facility provided to casual employees for night duty has been withdrawn; and

(f) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken to restore the transportation facility?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI

S. JAIPAL REDDY: (a) to (d) A proposal for increasing the remuneration of Casual News readers/Editors/Other categories of staff engaged by the News Services Divisions is under consideration by the Directorate General.

(e) and (f) The transportation facilities provided to casual employees working in News Services Division during odd hours has been partially resorted. Measures to withdraw these facilities were taken in view of reduced allocation of funds under the relevant head.

(English)

Bookstall Allotment Policy

1166. SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering not to allot bookstalls to any party for more than three years at a time;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some contractors are running bookstalls at platforms with the same name and style for a number of years; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to break the monopoly of such contractors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir. M/s A.H. Wheelers and M/s Higginbothams are the major bookstall licensees operating their bookstall at various stations of Indian Railways for a number of years.

(d) A New Revised Bookstall Policy-2004 has been formulated with a view to do away with the monopoly and to give a fair chance to different sections of society.

Private Companies in Oil Exploration Activities

1167. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) which are the private companies engaged in oil exploration activities under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) alongwith their achievements; and

(b) the total revenue earned by the Government on this account?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The list of private companies engaged in oil exploration activities under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) is given in the Statement enclosed. The following companies have made oil/gas discoveries:

1. The consortium of Reliance Industries Ltd. and Nko Resources Ltd. has made 13 gas discoveries in two NELP exploration blocks KG-DWN-98/3 and NEC-OSN-97/2.
2. Cairn Energy India (Pty.) Ltd. has made two oil/gas and one gas discoveries in NELP exploration block KG-DWN-98/2.
3. Niko Resources Ltd. has made two gas discoveries in NELP block CB-ONN-2000/2.

(b) Gas production has started only in one NELP block *i.e.* CB-ONN-2000/2, for which the Government of Gujarat has been paid an amount of Rs. 2.95 crores as Royalty by the contractor till Feb., 2005.

Statement

Private Companies working under NELP as on 4.3.2005

(a) Indian Companies:

1. Reliance Industries Ltd.
2. Hindutan Oil Exploration Company
3. Jubilant Enpro Pvt. Ltd.
4. Enpro Finance Ltd.
5. Prize Petroleum Company Ltd.

(b) Foreign Companies

1. Cairn Energy Gujarat Block 1 (subsidiary of Cairn Energy Plc., UK)
2. Cairn Petroleum India Ltd. (subsidiary of Cairn Energy Plc., UK)
3. Cairn Energy Search Limited (subsidiary of Cairn Energy Plc., UK)
4. Cairn Energy India Pty. Ltd. (subsidiary of Cairn Energy Plc., UK)

5. Energy Equity India Pty. Ltd. (Subsidiary of Energy Equity Resources Limited, Australia)
6. Geo Global Resources Inc. Canada
7. Hardy Exploration & Production India Inc.
8. Niko Resources Limited, Canada
9. OAO, Gazprom, Russia.

Demand of Oil Companies for Wagons

1168. SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Railways is meeting the demand of wagons of oil companies in North East for Transportation of petroleum products in full;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to meet the demand of the oil companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Ministry of Railways makes every possible effort to meet the demand of wagons of Oil companies in North East for Transportation of petroleum products, in line with their actual requirement, keeping in view various limitations it is faced within that region.

The average loading of petroleum products in tank wagons in year 2004-2005 (April-February) has increased up to 462 four wheeler wagon units per day as compared to 382 wagon units in the Financial year 2003-04. This marks an increase of approximately 21% in loading in the current year so far.

(b) Supply of tank wagons for loading of petroleum products gets affected by various factors like short registering of demand at certain locations, non-uniform registering of demand, law and order problems in North East Region, breaches on account of heavy monsoon, movement of essential commodities to all North Eastern States including Foodgrain for Public Distribution System (PDS).

(c) "Monthly State Meetings" are held between the members of Oil Industry and Indian Railways to assess the demand and provide tank wagons for evacuation of Petroleum products. The supply of wagons and loading is monitored very closely on a day to day basis. With

persistent efforts it has become possible to achieve the highest ever loading performance of 599 four wheeler wagon units per day in the month of February 2005. As a consequence, the projected demand of industry for the month of March 2005 has come down from a level of 817 four wheeler wagon units in February 2005 to only 514 four wheeler wagon units per day.

[Translation]

Seventh Round Table Conference on Panchayati Raj

1169. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":
SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:
SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Seventh Round Table Conference on Panchayati Raj was held in Rajasthan in December 2004 to discuss all the aspects to strengthen the Panchayati Raj;

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

(c) the follow-up action taken by the Government on the decision taken at the Conference?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Seventh Round Table of Ministers in-charge of Panchayati Raj was held from 17-19 December, 2004 at Jaipur in which the subject of IT-enabled e-governance and capacity building and training were discussed. A copy of the recommendations made during the Seventh Round Table Conference is given in the Statement enclosed.

(c) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened seven Round Table meetings with State Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj and evolved by consensus, a set of around 150 points for action which have been put together in a compendium that was adopted unanimously at the conclusion of the last Round Table in Jaipur. The Ministry has now initiated a process of visiting each of the States/UTs to review with the authorities concerned the progress in implementing the points for action contained in the compendium. It is expected that this will accelerate the pace of implementation of provisions of Part IX, read with Article 243ZD of the Constitution and bring about greater conformity, in both letter and spirit, to the

Constitutional provisions of Panchayati Raj in all States/UTs concerned.

Statement

Seventh Round Table of Ministers in-charge of Panchayati Raj—Jaipur, 17-19 December, 2004

IT enabled e-Governance

1. It is recognized that IT (Information Technology and Communication) *is a vital input of capacity* for Panchayats so that they can perform their constitutionally and legislatively mandated functions better.
2. IT ought to be primarily positioned as:
 - (i) a decision making support system for Panchayats themselves;
 - (ii) a tool for transparency, disclosure of information to citizens social audit;
 - (iii) a means for better and convergent delivery of services to citizens;
 - (iv) a means for improving internal management and efficiency of Panchayats;
 - (v) a means for Capacity building of representatives and officials of the Panchayats;
 - (vi) An e-Procurement medium.

In this endeavour, the Round Table specifically proposes the following initiatives.

Process Re-engineering

3. All States shall undertake a time-bound exercise of process re-engineering in consonance with the activity mapping already being undertaken by them for the functions transferred to the Panchayats, with a view to moving the processes of decision making, implementation, disclosure to the public, delivery of services and reporting and dissemination of information to Panchayat representatives to an IT enabled environment.
4. In this exercise regard shall be had to avoid duplication of hardware and software initiatives by different State Government departments and agencies.

5. Considering the functional domain of Panchayats that potentially extends to 29 subject listed in the Eleventh Schedule, all e-Governance initiatives at the local level have to converge with the appropriate PRI as the nodal point.

Data Ownership

6. Such re-engineered processes shall ensure that the ownership of the data collected at the Panchayat level is with that level in the first instance, as the system becomes sustainable when those who use the data feel that they own it.
7. While owning the data, the Panchayat could also operate, outsource or provide space to IT enabled multi service kiosk centers that provide IT enabled services to the people, including those that fall within the functions of the Panchayats.
8. The Community Service Centres being rolled out by the Ministry of Information Technology at the Centre may be located in the Panchayat offices so that panchayats services can also be delivered through these Common Services Centres (CSC).

Training

9. There has to be a systematic approach on training of staff and Panchayati Raj members through a cascading mode on use of IT.
10. The opportunities offered by the satellite connectivity provided through the ISRO, including EDUSAT, can be used for undertaking training.
11. While developing training material, regard shall be had to design user friendly approaches that can facilitate training of the illiterate or the neo-literate.

Software

12. Development of common software application package with provision for appropriate customization by States is preferred. In this connection, the National Informatics Centre (NIC), which being a government body present in all districts of the country and which has already done considerable software development for Panchayats, may be considered as the primary software provider.

13. It is recommended that NIC strengthens themselves at all levels and provide dedicated staff through creating a Panchayat informatics division, with a time bound mandate to develop e-Governance solutions to all levels of Panchayats. This will include the strengthening of the District Informatics Office of the NIC to support the District Planning Committee and the Panchayats.
14. The National Panchayat Portal developed by the NIC for the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to become the information hub that links up Panchayats, the State Government and the Central Government for sharing of information, experiences and best practices. As a first step, all State Governments may immediately link and port the content of their existing Panchayat Raj websites or portals to the National Panchayat Portal and all District, Intermediate and Village Panchayats can be enabled and facilitated to link up with the portal. The content can be regularly updated by the respective stake holders.
15. A repository of software solutions already developed by several States shall be maintained by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj or an institution nominated by it, so that they can be used by other States.
16. Software development shall be primarily undertaken in open source software, with Indian language interphase, so as to reduce cost of replication and licencing.

Hardware

17. States should consider specifying a framework for common standards for hardware and put in place a system for transparent procurement through competitive bidding.
18. Funds for acquisition of hardware could be dovetailed from various sources and could include:
 - (i) Infrastructure funds available in multilaterally funded projects,
 - (ii) Own incomes of Panchayats,

- (iii) Funds recommended by the Finance Commission for the creation and maintenance of Databases,
 - (iv) Funds sourced from a fund to be created and managed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj,
 - (v) MP and MLA Local Area Development funds,
 - (vi) Purchases based on systems of annuity based purchases.
19. Considering the present power situation in the country, while procuring hardware, special attention shall be paid to providing reliable and uninterrupted power supply to computer systems. Special emphasis shall be placed on renewable energy devices and systems that consume less energy.

Infrastructure and connectivity

20. It is recommended that the NIC expands its communication network, NICNET, to link all Panchayats at all levels by using State Wide Area Network funds provided by the Department of Information Technology, Government of India.
21. State Governments can approach ISRO for providing satellite based connectivity in all the States to enable connectivity of all Panchayats. The initial infrastructure cost could be considered to be met or supported by an infrastructure fund that could be operated by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj.

Operationalisation of the plan

22. The initiative of empowering Panchayats with IT capacity shall be treated on par with creating national infrastructure such as power, telecom and roads.
23. Formulate a mission mode/empowered committee mode for IT enabled automation of panchayat institutions with NIC and other solution providers, keeping in view the national e-governance action plan of the Government of India.

Capacity Building & Training

1. Training and communication ought to reach all PRI functionaries and elected representatives, namely:

- (i) Gram Panchayat Members, Chairpersons and Office bearers;
 - (ii) Intermediate Panchayat Members, Chairpersons and Office bearers;
 - (iii) District Panchayat Members, Chairpersons and Office bearers;
 - (iv) All officials concerned at National, State, District, Intermediate & Village level; and
 - (v) Standing Committee members at all levels.
2. There should be special effort made towards sensitizing the media, political parties, representatives in the legislatures, civil society organisations and citizens.
 3. There must be special campaigns for mobilization of Gram Sabha members.
 4. There must be special training for women, SC/ST representatives as well as first time entrants into the panchayat system within 3 months of their entry.
 5. Training for PESA areas should be designed so as to have regard to the cultural traditions and special needs of tribal people.
 6. Training and communication should not be viewed as a single one-time intervention but should be a continuous, ongoing process leading to enhanced sense of self esteem and confidence. Training should cover both the "before" and "after" election periods. Initial training and communication should reach all elected representatives within one year.
 7. For those Panchayat members who need it, a functional literacy training course should be undertaken immediately after their elections.
 8. The panchayats should be encouraged to have a sense of ownership of the training programmes and play a major role in designing content and mechanisms of training. To this end, there must be representation for Panchayat members in the governing boards of training institutions that cater to their needs.
 9. Content of training should press on strategic and technical aspects and should be based on a systematic Training Needs Analysis arrived at

through multi-stakeholder consultative workshops, which would precede the design of training modules and materials.

10. There should be a minimum core curriculum that is common across the States adapting to suit local contexts. Core curriculum should include:
 - (i) Vision on purna swaraj through Gram Swaraj;
 - (ii) Principles of secularism, equality and human rights emanating from the Constitution of India;
 - (iii) Gender equity and social justice;
 - (iv) Status of human development;
 - (v) Poverty alleviation;
 - (vi) Participatory planning, implementation and monitoring;
 - (vii) Right to information and transparency;
 - (viii) Social Audit; and
 - (ix) Rules and regulations covering Panchayati Raj.
11. Overall perspective of training must reinforce issues of social equity, gender sensitivity and justice among all participants in the process of governance through Panchayati Raj, including all levels of the bureaucracy.
12. Thematic curriculum should include:
 - (i) Human Resource Management;
 - (ii) Natural Resources Management;
 - (iii) Disaster Management;
 - (iv) Financial Management, including own resource management and accounting;
 - (v) Sectoral approaches into providing basic human needs.
13. Training strategy should be inclusive, participative and interactive and a composite mix of various interventions:
 - (i) face-to-face participatory training;
 - (ii) exposure visits;
 - (iii) peer training/learning;
 - (iv) satellite training; and

- (v) radio/cassettes/films;
 - (vi) Traditional means of communication;
 - (vii) Newsletters, updates and digests of replies to Frequently Asked Questions;
 - (viii) Resource centers and Help Desks for Panchayats.
14. Training content and processes should be relevant to the ground reality of elected representatives. It should continue to develop and evolve based on feedback and impact assessment. Training should become a two way process so that feedback can help in reforming the content and process of training, as also result in systemic changes in panchayat and government functioning.
 15. States should move towards formation of training networks and collectives to share experiences, learn from each other, and access material from each other. States should also institutionalize collaboration with Community based organisations at the State, District and Block level.
 16. Training should inspire elected representatives to form federations or collectives and facilitate them to voice their demands for genuine devolution and development.
 17. Trained members should be encouraged to become resource persons for further training of panchayat representatives Peer to peer learning both within and outside the State through regional or national tie ups should be encouraged and supported.
 18. Training should include exposure to best practices through visits to other Panchayats.
 19. All open universities may tie up with IGNOU and build linkages with the SIRDs and other like institutions engaged in training and capacity building.
 20. Training programmes shall be designed especially for the secretarial and technical staff working with Panchayats through institutions such as IGNOU. Such training programmes should lead to formal certification on achieving prescribed standards of learning.
 21. Education in democracy and the constitutional role of panchayats as institutions of local self-

government should be made part of school curricula.

22. It shall be the endeavour of the Central Government to provide in as short a time as possible a panchayat capacity building fund through the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, which could include a certain percentage of central transfers specially earmarked for that purpose. Similarly, State Governments should also create a Panchayat Capacity Building Fund for periodic training.
23. There should a national perspective plan on decentralized training and capacity building for all PRI functionaries with specific objectives time-frame and resources.
24. States can benefit by the use of pedagogy and training techniques with information accessible to all. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj could develop a repository of training programmes, including training, resources and manuals developed by the Commonwealth. Development of master modules in training in issues of gender, poverty, mass communication etc. could also be developed.
25. Independent training impact assessment studies should be periodically undertaken to assess the outcomes of training and inform emerging needs for follow up.
26. States shall work towards upgradation of training centres, such as SIRDs, and extension training centres at the district, block level and below.
27. With respect to the training needs of Panchayat members from the Union territories and States with Sixth Schedule areas, the Government of India would identify an SIRD or a group of institutions that could undertake the training.

Conversion of Sondeemra Halt Into Railway Station

1170. SHRI TEK LAL MAHTO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to convert the Sondeemra halt into Sondeemra railway station;

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be done; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) There is no proposal for upgradation of this station in view of poor sale of tickets.

[English]

'Model State' status for implementing PWD Act

1171. SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has declared Karnataka as a 'Model State' in implementing the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the facilities provided for the State in this regard;

(c) whether any other State has also been given this status; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Supply Contracts for Oil

1172. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering for 5-6 years' supply contracts instead of the present practice of one year arrangement of oil;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent of which the revenue would be saved therefrom; and

(d) the present position of spending on purchase of Crude Oil?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) This issue was discussed during the first Round Table of Asian Ministers on regional cooperation in the oil & gas economy held in New Delhi on 6th January, 2005 which was attended by Ministers/representatives from Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, China, Korea besides host India. The inaugural address of the Chairman and the statement by the Chairman setting out the draft conclusions of the conference are given in the Statement enclosed.

(c) Long-term contracts ensure security of supply, but prices are determined in international markets. As such, long-term contracts by themselves do not in the normal course provide for savings in expenditure.

(d) During April-December, 2004 71.74 million metric tonnes (MMT) of crude valued at Rs. 85,541 crore was imported as compared to 66.94 MMT of crude valued at Rs. 60,450 crore during April-December, 2003.

Statement

The Inaugural Address of Chairman of Round Table Conference

Your Excellency, the co-host of this conclave, the distinguished Head of Delegation of the Emirate of Kuwait,

Your Excellencies, Ministers and Heads of Delegation from the principal Asian suppliers and consumers of petroleum,

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors to New Delhi of these countries,

Distinguished representatives of the Governments of participating countries,

Distinguished representatives of National Oil Companies and the Asian Oil Industry,

Distinguished delegates of the principal international organizations here present, our co-sponsor, the Secretary-General of the International Energy Forum, the distinguished representative of the International Energy Agency, and the distinguished Acting Secretary-General of OPEC-the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries,

My fellow-Minister, the distinguished Minister of State for External Affairs of India, Shri E. Ahamed, Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Asians,

We meet in the shadow of the terrible Tsunami tragedy that has struck our shared continent of Asia. Might I request you to please stand and observe a minute's silence in memory of the 125,000 or more who have been snatched so cruelly from our midst? ... Thank you.

This is a moment that might yet be recorded as "historic" in the annals of regional cooperation in Asia. For this is the first gathering together of the principal Asian ministers charged with responsibility for the most crucial sector of the economy-petroleum and natural gas. Whether our meeting today does get recorded as "historic" does, of course, depend on the outcome of our deliberations and of our resolves to persist on the path of such dialogue. I have little doubt, however, that it will for in the very act of journeying to our capital you have registered your commitment to our shared destiny. Through almost all of the advancement of human civilization, it is Asia that has been in the vanguard. For the last few centuries, we fell to the sway of others. Now, once again, are we the captains of our ship and the masters of our fate. I thank you most warmly and sincerely, on behalf of our Government and all our one billion people, for having done us the unforgettable honour of being present here at the creation. Thank you, indeed.

Excellencies, in the sector of our concern, hydrocarbons, the dawn of the 21st century heralds an unprecedented, dare I say revolutionary change in international oil and gas relations. In the last quarter of the last century, Asian oil producers came into their own when OPEC secured fair and just remuneration for the most vital element of growth and prosperity-oil. Now has come Asia's turn to consume that oil-and thus fuel the resurgence of Asia as the harbinger of the further advancement of human civilization. The total consumption of the Asian countries here present almost equal the total production of the Asian countries here present. No longer are we labouring so that others might profit. We have already emerged as the world's principal source of supply; we are emerging as the world's principal destination for the consumption of that supply. Already, some two thirds of the fossil fuel that principal producers around this table extract from the bosom of Mother Nature is bought by the principal consumers represented at this very table. That trend will only accelerate as we traverse the 21st century-the Asian Century. We are gathered here to rise to that challenge and to avail of that opportunity.

The Challenge, Your Excellencies, lies in eschewing the errors of the past. The opportunity, Your Excellencies, lies in Fashioning a more fair, more just and more remunerative oil order for all of us in Asia-in which the Asian producer is ensured a stable, secure and sustainable return for a most precious but depleting natural resource, and the Asian consumer is assured a stable, secure and sustainable regime within which to promote progress and prosperity for that deprived one-half of humankind that inhabits our shared continent of Asia. We commence here a dialogue to meet that challenge and rise to that opportunity.

How do we do so?

First let me deal with stability. Last year has seen the worst roller-coaster ride in oil prices for the better part of generation. OPEC has behaved most responsibly through this period of turmoil and turbulence. Instead of pursuing short-term advantage; OPEC, led by its Asian members, has persistently striven for moderating volatility and dampening speculation. For this, OPEC and its membership have earned the world's gratitude. Moreover, OPEC's production plans give the world the reassurance that global oil supply will keep pace with booming global demand, and that over the next twenty years at least there will be no market disequilibrium to warrant any wild fluctuation in prices. If, nevertheless, volatility rather than stability has marked international prices in the last twelve months that is largely because of speculation and apprehensions-that have been mostly belied-of the fallout on oil production of exogenous political developments. The fact is that however uncertain developments in the world political order have been, the underlying global oil economy has held a steady course.

For us in Asia to convert that underlying stability in production (and the prognosis for production) into stability in oil markets, it is essential that we develop a sophisticated Asian market for petroleum and petroleum products. That is how the West converted their abundance of natural resources into abundance of production and consumption.

Unfortunately, we in Asia continue to behave as if we were still a residual consumer of Asian oil production when, in fact, we are the principal consumer.

Your Excellencies, for Asia to be the residual consumer made some economic sense when there was large and growing production on both sides of the Atlantic, on-land in the Americas and off-shore in Europe. It was

in that era that Western Texas Intermediate (WTI) and Brent emerged as markers. But as the world wheels into the 21st century, WTI output is down by three-quarter compared to two decades ago and Brunet output is down by two-third compared to just a decade ago-and both are set decline even further, and to decline quite precipitately at that. Meanwhile, it is Asia, from Eastern Siberia through the Caspian, Central Asia and China, to South-East Asia and to some extent even South Asia, and, if course, above all, Iran and West Asia, that is booming in both the output and throughput of oil. Yet, Asia has little in terms of a global marker. And even less in terms of a well-prepared oil and oil products market.

With a view to bringing about greater stability in Asian trade in petroleum and petroleum products, can we think in term of an Asian market

- where long-term contracts become longer,
- where price discovery through the market is more transparent,
- where such transparency facilitates greater stability in formulate for printing in long-term contracts,
- where spot purchases occupy a progressively larger share of market transactions,
- where petroleum exchanges are establishes and used,
- where derivatives are integrated into market practice,
- where, in short, an Asian marker emerges

which reflects Asian realities and the real role in the global oil economy of Asian production, Asian consumption and Asian trade?

To pose the problem, Your Excellencies, is easier than to find the answers. But I do submit, Your Excellencies, that through sustained dialogue among ourselves, buttressed by dialogue among our experts and market operators, we might be able to find an Asian solution to the imperatives of Asian stability.

As for the second theme of our meeting-security-the answer there too lies in promoting mutual interdependence. Security has two aspects. One is security against unexpected disruption of supplies. As a joint emergency response mechanism, perhaps we should

consider jointly building storages which would enable consumes to enjoy an uninterrupted flow of supplies and producers to enjoy an uninterrupted flow of oil revenue till normalcy is restored.

The second aspect of security relates to assurance of market for producers and assurance of supplies for consumers. This calls for mutual interdependence through mutual investments in each other's countries by producer and consumer nations of the Asian oil community. Hitherto, we have looked West for much of the investment in Asian petroleum exploration and production, Asian petroleum refining, and Asian petroleum marketing-and in saying so I include gas as well. Now, increasingly, Asia itself is merging as a significant source of investment in Asia. Japan is, of course, a long-established Asian investor in other Asian countries. China in the last decade, as also Malaysia, have become key players in E&P in Asia and, indeed, the world over. So has India. We are already in E&P, refining and marketing projects in more than ten countries and much of our overseas investment is in Asia. Reciprocally, in refining, we in India have been the beneficiary of investments by Iran in the Chennai Petroleum Corporation and of Qatar in LNG. These are but illustrative examples. A future beckons in which Asian countries can become major participants in the massive investments which need to be made in the Asian countries represented at this table, running to an estimated 1500 billion dollars over the next 25 years in upstream, midstream and downstream oil and gas development in all our countries put together. Investment on this humungous scale, to the extent possible mutual and reciprocal intra-Asia investment, would hugely enhance security of production and consumption for all of us around this table, for all our fellow-Asians and, indeed, for all of humankind the world over. The oil and gas sector in India welcomes the world with open arms, and reserves a particular welcome for Asian investors. Equally, we stand ready to do our share for the promotion of the global oil economy in general and the Asian oil economy in particular. We believe we should continue and intensify this dialogue in the interests of facilitating mutual investments to ensure mutual security.

The third great theme of our meeting today is sustainability. It has taken millions of years indeed, hundreds of millions of years for Nature to create and store what we have substantially exhausted in a mere one hundred years or so. What remains we can use only if used with great care. That calls for conservation, on the one hand, and technology, on the other. Japan has

shown the way to both conservation and the technology for conservation, as perhaps no other country in the world has. India has had no alternative but to conserve and innovate, although we still have a long, long way to go. China has taken significant initiatives. So has the Republic of Korea. Asian oil exporting countries have demonstrated a commendable awareness of the importance of sustainability. The time now is for us to pool together our experience, forge them into a shared, common experience, and build on that experience in concert. Sustainability in Asia calls for sustained dialogue among Asians. We stand ready and willing to place our Petroleum Conservation Research Association, the Indian Institute of Petroleum, the University of Petroleum Studies, The Energy and Research Institute of India (TERI), our Center for High Technology, our Oil Industry Safety Directorate, Indian Oil's R&D Centre, and all our other scientific and technological research and development institutions at the service of all Asia. It is said that one in every three Information Technologists in the world is an Indian. Our achievement in petroleum technology is perhaps less spectacular. But we would be more than happy to share what we know with our fellow-Asians and even more to learn from others, above all to learn from our fellow-Asians.

As we embark on this historic initiative which will, I hope, bring us together frequently, even up to once or preferably twice a year, perhaps alternately in a net oil exporting and a net oil importing country of Asia, and perhaps progressively expanding our ambit while keeping our core intact, I welcome all of you once again to our national capital and wish you all a pleasant and fruitful stay in our midst.

Your Excellencies, I thank you, one and all.

Chairman's Statement on the conclusion of the first Round Table of Asian Ministers on Regional Cooperation in the Oil and Gas economy, New Delhi on 6th January, 2006.

A. GENERAL

1. The Asian oil economy is integral to, and inseparable from, the global oil economy.
2. With Asian destinations emerging as the principal consumers for Asian production, and the share of Asia in global production and consumption likely to progressively increase, cooperation between Asian producers and Asian consumers is crucial to ensuring.

Stability,
Security and
Sustainability
through
mutual interdependence
in the Asian oil and gas economy.

3. The fundamentals of such cooperation must include moderation, dialogue, mutual understanding and respect, security of international supplies, demand-supply, equilibrium, and strategic partnerships based on a reciprocity of interests.
4. The this end, an Asian dialogue is both welcome and indispensable aimed at evolving and elaborating an Asian consensus.
5. It is, therefore, agreed that the instrumentality of Round Tables of Asian Ministers on Regional Cooperation in the Oil and Gas Economy, initiated here in New Delhi, must be maintained. The following countries have kindly agreed to host/co-host subsequent Round Tables:

Second Round Table : Saudi Arabia, Co-Host: Japan

Third Round Table : Japan, Co-Host : Qatar

Fourth Round Table : Kuwait, Co-host : Republic of Korea

The Round Tables may follow the pattern of alternating between net importing and net exporting countries.

6. For the preparation of Ministerial Round Tables, the Secretariat of the International Energy Forum might convene experts, operators and officials to prepare position papers and agenda documents.
7. To reinforce Ministerial-level discussions at the Round Tables, a parallel effort may be initiated to bring together Asian business operators belonging to the countries represented at the Round Table.

B. STABILITY AND SECURITY

1. There is scope for improving Asian markets for petroleum and petroleum products. The issue requires careful study and detailed consideration, primarily among experts and operators with a

view to inditifying broad policy parameters that might require further consideration.

2. Prices should be sustained at levels which encourage Asian consumers to increase their purchases of Asian produce; at the same time, prices should be such as to encourage Asian producers to promote investment in oil and gas for Asian consumer destinations as an economic priority.
3. Crisscross investments all along the entire oil and gas products chain through reciprocal investment interlocking of producers and consumers will guarantee security of both supply and demand, thus contributing to stability of prices and thereby security of both supply and demand. Thus stability of prices would encourage domestic and cross-country investment in all streams of the petroleum sector and other energy-related projects.
4. Caution must be exercised in promoting balanced investment so that over-investment does not lead to excess capacity nor under-investment to shortage of supplies.
5. Strategic storage and stockpiling contribute to security, and in this regard the valuable experience of Japan might hold significant lessons for other major consumers. However, there must be no abuse for illegitimate commercial purposes of such strategic storage and stockpiles.
6. The exchange of information and knowledge is the key to increasing confidence on the part of both buyers and sellers.
7. The Sustainable and Flexible Energy system ("SAFE") proposed by Japan constitutes a useful framework for further consideration of issues of energy security.
8. The Iranian proposal for an Asian Bank for Energy Development merits deeper consideration.

C. SUSTAINABILITY

1. Endorsing the importance of energy conservation of the protection of environment and issues of climate change, the need for technological cooperation in the pursuit of cleaner and more environmentally-sound fossil fuel technologies was emphasized.

2. To this end, cooperation among Asian research and development centers and the promotion of conservation awareness among the general public were recognized as key instrumentalities.

National Gas Grid

1173. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is any proposal to set up a National Gas Grid;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the time by which it is likely to be set up;
- (d) whether any other steps have been taken to improve the gas situation in the regions of the country where the availability of gas is meagre; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) A draft Pipeline Policy which envisages the progressive development of a nation-wide gas grid in a competitive environment, involving both the public sector and the private sector, under the overview of a Regulator, is under consideration of the Government. Implementation of different pipeline segments will, *inter-alia*, depend upon achieving appropriate sources of supply and marketing tie-ups.

(d) and (e) To meet the current and projected shortfall in supply, Government propose to import natural gas in the form of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) as well as through transnational from gas rich countries in West Asia (including Iran), Central Asia and South East Asia. Government is particularly pursuing gas imports through pipelines from Iran through Pakistan and from Myanmar through Bangladesh. The negotiations for these transnational pipeline initiatives are at initial stages. PLL had signed an agreement with RasGas, Qatar in July 1999 for import of 7.5 Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMTPA) of LNG. Import of 2.5 MMTPA of LNG from Qatar has already commenced. Recently, an understanding has been reached with Iran for import of 5 MMTPA of LNG with a provision for later adding 2.5 MMTPA.

*[Translation]***Use of Fuels for Trains**

1174. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA:
SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether different kind of fuels are used for running trains;

(b) if so, the details of fuels being used and percentage of trains being run by the said fuels;

(c) whether the Government has assessed expenditure increased on running trains by different types of fuels;

(d) if so, the estimated amount spent on different types of fuels, during 2003-2004, fuel-wise;

(e) whether possibilities to reduce the said operational expenses have been explored; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. High Speed Diesel only is in regular use for Diesel Locomotives to run trains.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

(e) and (f) Preliminary studies, including fields trials, have been successfully carried out for running diesel locomotives on percentage bio-diesel. As and when bio-diesel becomes freely available commercially, detailed planning will be undertaken to exploit this fuel as a regular option. A feasibility trial is also contemplated to run the trains with a mixture of Compressed Natural Gas and Diesel. Should initial trial be successful, ways and means to consolidate energy security, environment friendliness and economies of operation will be explored on Railways.

CBI Inquiry Into Fake Pension Cases

1175. SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH:
DR. RAJESH MISHRA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway Administration propose to conduct CBI inquiry in the cases of grant of pension to

the persons who have not rendered any service to the Northern Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which this inquiry is likely to be completed alongwith the action being taken against the officials/persons found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The CBI has registered a Regular Case for investigation in February, 2005 relating to grant of pension to ineligible persons on Northern Railway.

(b) and (c) The exact ramifications and extent of the irregularities committed as well as action to be taken against Railway officials can be assessed only on receipt of CBI's final investigation report. The CBI normally do not intimate a time schedule for completion of their investigations.

Ordnance Factories

1176. SHRIMATI NEETA PATERIYA:
SHRI B. MAHTAB:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the policy of the Government for setting up a Ordnance Factory;

(b) whether the Government is aware that some of the Ordnance Factories and depots are located in populated areas;

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

(d) whether the Government is considering to shift these factories and depots to safe places;

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to tighten the Security of Ordnance Factories and depots?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) There is no specific laid down policy for setting up an Ordnance Factory.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The details are as under:

- (i) Gun & Shell Factory, Cossipore, West Bengal.
- (ii) Ammunition Factory (Magazine), Pune, Maharashtra.
- (iii) Central Ordnance Depot (COD), Delhi.
- (iv) COD, Kanpur, U.P.
- (v) COD, Jabalpur, M.P.
- (vi) COD, Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- (vii) Ordnance Depot (OD), Shakur Basti, Delhi.
- (viii) OD, Kolkata, West Bengal.
- (ix) OD, Allahabad, U.P.
- (x) 223 Advanced Base OD, Suranussi, Jalandhar, Punjab.
- (xi) 2 Field OD, Srinagar, J&K.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) There is no proposal to shift these factories or depots due to strategic and logistic reasons and the cost involved.

(f) Strict security, access control and round the clock vigil is maintained. Regular inspections are carried out by Board of Officers to check adequacy of safety and security arrangements.

[English]

Payment of Wages to Employees

1177. SHRI SUNIL KHAN:
SHRI JUAL ORAM:
SHRI MAHBOOB ZAHEDI:
SHRI BIKASH CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the workmen in many Public Sector Undertakings particularly Bum Standard Co. Ltd., Hindustan Cables Ltd., Bharat Ophthalmic Glass Ltd. and Tyre Corporation of India have not been getting wages for the last so many months;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government for payment of wages/outstanding dues to the workmen;

(c) whether VRS payments of many employees are also pending; and

(d) if so, the action taken for early payments to the retired employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Payment of wages/salaries is regular in case of Bum Standard Co. Ltd. & Tyre Corporation of India Ltd. However, in case of Hindustan Cables Ltd. and Bharat Ophthalmic Glass Ltd. the wages/salaries payment is pending for a few months.

(b) Various steps are taken to improve the viability of these enterprises. Though Government provides financial assistance to some of the Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs), payment of wages/salaries is primarily the responsibility of the Company concerned.

(c) and (d) In none of the above PSEs payment towards VRS is pending.

Manual Paper Line Clearance System

1178. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the outdated Manual Paper-line Clearance System is still existing and being used on many routes by the Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the corrective measures taken/to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The paper Line Clear System is not being used as a normal system of working trains on Indian Railways except on three short narrow gauge sections viz. Katwa-Ahmedpur and Katwa-Bardhaman of Eastern Railway and Pandharpur-Miraj section of Central Railway. Miraj-Pandharpur is a sanctioned work for gauge conversion with provision of Block Instrument instead of existing Paper Line Clear System. Survey work for gauge conversion of Katwa-Ahmedpur and Katwa-Bardhaman has also been sanctioned during the year 2004-2005.

The system of Paper Line Clear, however, has to be resorted to in exceptional circumstances in the event of failure of Block Instruments. Detailed procedure listing precautions to be observed has been laid down in such situations to ensure safety of train operation.

Modernisation of Kanchrapara Railway Workshop

1179. SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to modernise the Kanchrapara Railway Workshop in West Bengal;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of employees working at present in the workshop;

(d) whether several workmen will loose their jobs due to the modernisation; and

(e) if so, the estimated number of employees likely to be affected and the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to rehabilitate the surplus employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Employees working at present = 11238.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

High Sea Bunking of Diesel and Kerosene

1180. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether High Sea or Mid Sea bunking of diesel and kerosene is allowed in the Indian Sea Coast; and

(b) if so, the reasons for not allowing the same to fishermen of Kerala's Sea Coast?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) There is no restriction on the supply of bunkering on the high seas, including off

Kerala's sea coast. However, only high flash diesel can be supplied as bunker fuel.

Oil Refineries at Mathura and Panipat

1181. SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the installed oil refining capacity is more than the actual refining capacity in the various public sector oil refineries;

(b) if so, the quantity of crude oil refined in each Refinery during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) the terms and conditions on which the oil refineries at Mathura and Panipat were set up;

(d) what specific financial and tax incentives were given for establishment of oil refineries at Mathura and Panipat;

(e) whether the terms and conditions and incentives granted for oil refineries at Mathura and Panipat are comparable with those granted to the proposed oil refinery at Bathinda in Punjab; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The details of installed refining capacities and actual crude oil processed by Oil PSUs during the last three years are given in the Statement enclosed.

(c) Mathura and Panipat refineries were set up under the Administrative Pricing Mechanism (APM) regime, where the profitability of the refinery was ensured by providing assured return of 15% (gross) on the total capital employed which was changed to post tax return of 12% on the net worth on the recommendation of Oil Price Review Committee.

(d) No specific financial and tax incentives were given for establishment of the above refineries since they were based on retention price concept.

(e) Does not arise in view of (d) above.

(f) With effect from 1.4.1998, the refining sector has been deregulated. No assured return is available to the refineries, which are now subject to market economics.

Statement

Figs in MMT

	2001-02		2002-03		2003-04	
	Capacity	Actual	Capacity	Actual	Capacity	Actual
IOCL						
IOC-Mathura	8.00	8.03	8.00	8.21	8.00	8.25
IOC-Koyali	13.70	11.70	13.70	12.43	13.70	12.76
IOC-Haldia	4.60	4.02	5.78	4.51	6.00	4.52
IOC-Barauni	4.20	2.88	4.20	2.99	6.00	4.30
IOC-Guwahati	1.00	0.66	1.00	0.46	1.00	0.89
IOC-Digboi	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.58	0.65	0.60
IOC-Panipat	6.00	5.82	6.00	6.10	6.00	6.34
IOCL-Total	38.15	33.76	39.33	35.29	41.35	37.66
HPCL						
HP-Mumbai	5.50	5.63	5.50	6.08	5.50	6.11
HP-Visakh	7.50	6.71	7.50	6.85	7.50	7.59
HPCL-Total	13.00	12.34	13.00	12.93	13.00	13.70
BPCL-Mumbai	6.90	8.74	6.90	8.74	6.90	8.70
CPCL						
CPCL-Chennai	6.50	6.12	6.50	6.18	6.50	6.09
CPCL-Narimanam	0.50	0.57	0.50	0.64	1.00	0.65
CPCL-Total	7.00	6.69	7.00	6.82	7.50	6.74
KRL-Kochi	7.50	6.80	7.50	7.58	7.50	7.85
BRPL-Bongaigaon	2.35	1.48	2.35	1.46	2.35	2.13
NRL-Numaligarh	3.00	2.31	3.00	1.88	3.00	2.20
ONGC-Tatipaka	0.05	0.01	0.08	0.09	0.08	0.08
MRPL-Mangalore	—	—	—	—	9.69	10.07
Sub-Total PSU REF.	77.95	72.11	79.16	74.78	91.37	89.14
MRPL-Mangalore	9.69	5.49	9.69	7.25	—	—
Sub-Total JVC	9.69	5.49	9.69	7.25	—	—
Grand Total	87.64	77.60	88.85	82.03	91.37	89.14

Capacity during the year prorated as per the Commissioning/Expansion Schedule.

Re-opening of Naginimara Railway Station

1182. SHRI W. WANGYUH KONYAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Naginimara railway station in Nagaland has been abandoned in 1980;

(b) if so, whether the Government is considering to re-open the said station; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be re-opened?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Naginimara railway station was closed for traffic w.e.f. 22.06.1990.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Kodarma-Hazaribag-Ranchi Line

1183. SHRI BHUBANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made so far in construction of Kodarma-Hazaribag-Ranchi rail line;

(b) whether the Government has constituted any committee to review the progress of work to ensure that construction work of rail line is completed within stipulated time; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The work has been taken up in phases. Land acquisition has been completed on Koderma-Hazaribagh Town. Earthwork and bridge works are in progress in entire length. 2/3rd cost of the project is being shared by Jharkhand Government.

(b) and (c) No specific committee has been set up for reviewing the progress of this work. However, an Empowered Committee consisting of Member Engineering, Railway Board, Secretary, Planning Commission, Secretary (Expenditure), Ministry of Finance and Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests has been set up for periodically monitoring the progress of all the projects costing Rs. 100 crore and above.

[English]

Use of Kalaikunda Air Base for Civil Flight

1184. SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any representations regarding grant of permission by the Indian Air Force for the use of the Kalaikunda Air Base for Civil Air Flight;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A request was received from the Hon'ble Member himself for grant of permission to use the Indian Air Force airbase at Kalaikunda for civil flight operations on the sector Kolkata-Kalaikunda-Bhubaneswar-Delhi/Bombay/Chennai.

(c) The request has been examined in this Ministry. For use of Kalaikunda Air Base for civil flights, aircraft operators are required to forward firm proposal which will be examined as per the laid down procedure before necessary permission is accorded.

Lease of Aircraft for Air India

1185. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India Empowered Committee had cleared a proposal to lease three Boeing 777-200 aircraft to enable the Airline to launch more flights to London and US;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent to which it would help AI to overcome the losses suffered by them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Empowered Committee approved Air India's proposal to lease 3 X B 777-200ER from M/s Briston Associates for a period of 5 years. The above aircraft will be deployed to operate the following services:

5 flights routed Bombay/London/Bombay.

3 flights routed Delhi/Amritsar/Birmingham/Toronto/
Birmingham/Amritsar/Delhi.

3 flights routed Kolkata/London/Kolkata.

(c) With this lease Air India can take advantage of the increased bilateral entitlements in the India/UK market and also restart its operations to Canada. Air India will therefore be able to increase its revenue, reach and market share.

[Translation]

Inter-State Air Service

1186. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to introduce Inter State Aviation Service to connect all districts of States to their respective State capitals in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the names of the States of the country where this scheme is in operation and name of the States where this scheme is likely to be introduced in the next financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) During a meeting held by Minister of Civil Aviation with the Members of Parliament of North East region on 8.12.2004, a suggestion was made for formulating a specific policy for air connectivity in North East which should, *inter-alia*, aim at connecting all district headquarters with respective State capitals and all State capitals with Guwahati. The suggestion is under examination of the Government.

Exploration of Oil/Gas Reserves

1187. SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN:
SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of oil/gas reserves explored in the country during 2004, with locations thereof;

(b) the amount spent on exploration of these oil/gas reserves;

(c) the quantity of petroleum products likely to be procured therefrom; and

(d) time by which the extraction of oil and gas is likely to begin from these reserves?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) During 2003-04, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd. (OIL) have made 11 new oil/gas discoveries in the States of Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Tripura as well as the Eastern and Western offshore coast of India. The total in-place reserve accretion by ONGC and OIL has been 136.63 Million Metric Tonne (MMT) and 18.55 MMT in 2003-04 respectively. Private/Joint venture companies have made 14 oil/gas discoveries in 2004 in the States of Rajasthan and Gujarat and eastern offshore of India. The reserve accretion by Private/Joint Venture companies from 8 discoveries is 186.51 MMT the remaining 6 discoveries are under appraisal.

(b) The amount spent on exploration by ONGC and OIL was Rs. 2672 crore and Rs. 314.90 crore respectively in 2003-04. The amount spent on exploration by Private/Joint Venture companies till 31.12.2004 in blocks, RJ-ONN-90/1, CB-SO/2, KG-DWN-98/3, NEC-OSN-97/2 and CB-ONN-2000/1, in which discoveries were made in 2004 was US\$ 907.89 million (Rs. 4085.5 crore approximately).

(c) and (d) The quantity of oil/gas to be produced as well as the time when production will commence from the above discoveries will depend on the establishment of the commerciality of these discoveries and subsequent approval of their development plan.

Gap between Production and Consumption of Petroleum Products

1188. SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK:
SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:
DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the gap between production and consumption of gas and oil/diesel in the country at present;

(b) whether the Government has formulated any action plan to bridge this gap;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the number of national and foreign companies involved in exploration of oil and gas in the country at present; and

(e) the share of Indian companies in oil/gas produced in the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) During 2003-04, the indigenous production of crude oil was 33.373 million metric tonne (MMT) as against the total crude requirement of 118.678 MMT. The shortfall was met through import.

As regards natural gas, the production during 2003-04 was 87.32 Million Metric Standard Cubic Metres per day (MMSCMD) as against the demand of 155 MMSCMD projected in the 10th Plan document.

Domestic production of diesel during the above period was 43.13 MMT against consumption of 37.07 MMT; surplus diesel was exported.

(b) and (c) Several important steps have been taken to increase oil and gas production to meet domestic requirements. These include the following:-

- (i) improving the recovery factor from existing major fields by implementing Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) schemes; in particular, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) have taken up 15 fields for this purpose at an estimated investment of Rs. 10,972 crore, which would also help in accelerating oil production from these fields;
- (ii) increasing exploration efforts through the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP); Under the four rounds of NELP, Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) have been signed for 90 blocks. The Fifth Round of NELP has been declared open from the 4th January, 2005 to invite bids for 20 exploration blocks;
- (iii) exploring new areas, especially in deep water and difficult frontier areas, as also the deeper layers of already producing fields;
- (iv) developing the newly discovered fields speedily and stepping up the use of new technologies for seismic surveys, work over, stimulation operations, drilling of wells etc. in producing areas; and
- (v) acquiring acreages abroad.

(d) 20 Indian and 20 foreign companies are at present working in India in the Exploration and Production sector.

(e) Of the total crude production of 33.37 MMT during 2003-04, the share of the National Oil Companies, namely, ONGC and Oil India Ltd. was 26.057 MMT and 3.002 MMT, respectively.

[English]

Vacant Posts in PSUs

1189. SHRI HARIN PATHAK:
SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY:
SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL:

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether board level posts are lying vacant in the public sector undertakings;

(b) if so, since when and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken to fill up the vacant posts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (c) Appointments to Board level posts in Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) are made by the administrative Ministries on recommendations of the Public Enterprises Selection Board, thereafter obtaining vigilance clearance as well as the approval of competent authority. Around 100 Board level posts were vacant in various CPSEs in December, 2004. Most of these vacancies arose during 2004 and 2003. The administrative Ministries and the Department of Personnel and Training have been requested to expedite the action for filling up of the Board level posts in CPSEs.

[Translation]

Shifting of Sub-Divisional Office at Nainpur Junction

1190. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to shift the sub-divisional office set up by the South-Eastern railways at Nainpur Junction to some other place;

(b) If so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Railway Board has also decided to transfer the various schemes being implemented by the said sub-divisional office to some other place; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There is no Sub-Divisional Office existing in Nainpur. However, an Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM), Nagpur, is keeping direct control on the functioning of the Nainpur area. Also, one Senior Divisional Medical Officer and an Assistant Engineer are positioned at Nainpur to look after all the local issues of the Railways and report to ADRM, Nagpur.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Security Arrangements in Trains/Railway Premises

1191. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has convened a coordination meeting with State police officials, RPF and other officials for an adequate security arrangement in trains and railway premises;

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof and the action taken/to be taken on the outcome of the meeting;

(c) whether the railway premises, Railway quarters have been encroached by the outsiders;

(d) if so, the details thereof, Zone-wise; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to prevent encroachments and ensuring security to the Railway users?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) To provide better security to passengers travelling by trains and in the passenger areas coordination meetings are held with the State Police periodically. The results of the meetings between GRP (Government Railway Police) Chiefs and RPF (Railway Protection Force) Chiefs are very encouraging. Such meetings are regularly both on Zonal Railways as well as Board's levels.

(c) to (e) Yes, Sir. Indian Railways have more than 7 lakh staff quarters and large number of service buildings. Quarters are allotted to railway employees only. For subletting of staff quarters, concerned railway employees are taken up under Railway Servants (Discipline & Appeal) Rules, 1968. Data for such cases are not maintained at apex level. Regarding encroachments on land, about 2240 hectare of railway land is under encroachment which is 0.47% of total land holding on Railways. Railway is engaged in continuous exercise to prevent/remove encroachments and unauthorised occupation of quarters, etc. as per provisions of Railways Act and Public Premises Eviction Act.

Gauge Conversion of Mangalore-Hassan Rail Track

1192. SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present position of gauge conversion of Mangalore-Hassan railway track;

(b) the total amount allocated for the project and how much has been spent so far; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Hassan-Mangalore section is part of Arsikere-Hassan-Mangalore Gauge conversion project. Work on Hassan-Mangalore section is being executed by Hassan Mangalore Rail Development Company. Work on Arsikere-Hassan, Hassan-Sakleshpur and Mangalore-Subramanya Road sections have already been completed. Work on Subramanya Road-Sakleshpur is in advanced stage and likely to be completed by June, 2005.

For this project, the total amount spent so far is Rs. 281.56 crore against the estimated amount of Rs. 312.42 crore.

Green Fuel

1193. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:
 SHRI BALESHWAR YADAV:
 SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL:
 SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had decided to make available green fuel throughout the country from April 1, 2005;

(b) if so, whether oil PSUs have expressed inability to meet the deadline in some States including National Capital Region;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) As per the Auto Fuel Policy approved by the Government on 3.10.2003, the Oil Companies had been instructed to introduce Bharat Stage II/Euro III equivalent fuels in the country as per the road map provided therein. The Oil PSUs have expressed certain constraints in implementing the schedule, occasioned by unexpected and unforeseen problems including delay in implementation of quality upgradation projects, inland logistics etc. In view of the above, the Government is considering slight alterations in the programme of introduction of Bharat Stage-II equivalent fuels in the country. These will be notified shortly.

Farm/Agricultural Related Programmes on Radio

1194. SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to make use of Radio to its maximum potential to broadcast farm/agricultural programmes;

(b) if so, whether there is any round the clock farm-radio broadcasts at national, regional and local level;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the other viable propositions to utilize Radio to increase farm output and agricultural production?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Prasar Bharati has informed that all 214 AIR Stations broadcast Farm & Home programmes, which are meant for benefit of farmers and others in rural areas. These programmes are designed on the basis of needs identified through systematic surveys.

(b) to (d) Farm and Home broadcasts are special audience programmes. Timings of broadcast are fixed in such a way that the maximum number of farmers may listen to the same. Round the clock broadcasts may not serve any purpose. AIR has further stepped up Agricultural broadcasts with the launch of exclusive Agriculture Channel 'Kishan Vani' from 15th February 2004. Presently Kishan Vani is being broadcast from 98 AIR Stations.

Agreement with Foreign Airlines

1195. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:
 SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether, following the decision to allow private airlines to fly from India to foreign destinations, the Government has signed/negotiated open skies agreements with different countries;

(b) if so, with which countries such agreements have been negotiated/signed; and

(c) the details of the agreements indicating the bilateral/multilateral obligations arising therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) India has so far entered into open skies agreement only with United States of America. Consultations with US Government on a revised agreement were in process much before the Government decided to allow private airlines to operate on foreign routes.

(c) This agreement provides that legal framework for operation of air services between India and USA. As per the agreement, both countries can designate any number of airlines for operation of any number of services to any

point in the territory of the other country with full intermediate and beyond rights. The bilateral obligations as well as the rights accrue equally to both the contracting parties. There are no multilateral obligations arising out of the agreement.

Development of Khandagiri and Udayagiri Sites

1196. SHRI JUAL ORAM: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Archaeological Survey of India (A.S.I.) has taken any steps for maintenance and development of Khandagiri and Udayagiri historical sites in Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the funds allocated and expenditure incurred on these monuments during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Archaeological Survey of India has taken steps for the maintenance and development of Khandagiri and Udayagiri Caves in Orissa.

Apart from normal maintenance activities, some of the special works taken up include:

1. Sealing of the cracks to check the ingress of water.
2. Levelling the area.
3. Providing sand stone pavement.
4. Fencing over dwarf wall.
5. Environmental development.

(c) The funds allocated and the expenditure incurred on these monuments during each of the last three years is furnished below:-

Year	Expenditure in Rs.
2001-2002	2,70,744
2002-2003	1,39,60,117
2003-2004	1,39,881
2004 April to 28.2.2005	6,83,384

Refinery in Sudan

1197. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC has been entrusted with the work of construction of a refinery in Sudan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether other PSUs like EIL are also collaborating in the project with ONGC; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) In view of the satisfactory performance of ONGC/OVL in Sudan in the Greater Nile Oil Project (GNOP) and the 5A & 5B Blocks, where OVL have a participating interest, and keeping in view the excellent relationship between the two countries, the Sudan Government offered the Khartoum-Port Sudan Pipeline Project and Port-Sudan Refinery Project to ONGC/OVL in October, 2003.

After obtaining Government approval, OVL have signed an agreement with the Ministry of Energy and Mining (MEM) of Sudan on 30.6.2004 for implementing the pipeline project, which is scheduled to be inaugurated by Minister (P&NG) towards the end of August or early September, 2005. The proposed Port-Sudan refinery will have a refining capacity of 100,000 bbl/per day for the Coker+Cracker Fluidized Catalytic (FCC) configuration as chosen by the MEM.

(c) and (d) As ONGC/OVL is not essentially a refinery company of the planning and execution of the Sudan Refinery Project, they have been advised to take the required technical support from Engineers India Ltd. (EIL) and Mangalore Refinery Petrochemicals Ltd. (MRPL), a subsidiary of ONGC, who are in the business of setting up and operating refineries.

Rail Projects In Punjab

1198. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of on-going rail projects in Punjab at present with regard to constructing of new rail lines and conversion of narrow gauge into broad gauge; and

(b) the status of each project as on date?

gauge conversion project in Punjab. The details of on-going new rail line projects falling partly/fully in Punjab are as under:—

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) There is no

(Rs. in crore)

S.No.	Project	Anticipated cost	Expenditure upto March' 2004	Budget outlay 2004-05	Status
PUNJAB					
New Lines					
1.	Nangal Dam-Taiwara and taking over siding of Mukerian-Taiwara	210.00	81.46	11.00	Nangal Dam-Una-Churaru Takrala has been completed. The work of Churaru Takrala-Amb Andura (11 kms.) has been taken up and land acquisition on this section is in progress.
2.	Taran Taran-Goindwal	37.51	5.10	1.00	Final location survey has been completed and land acquisition is in progress. An amount of Rs. 10.02 crore has been paid to the State Govt. for land acquisition. Work will be taken up once land is handed over to the Railways.
3.	Chandigarh-Ludhiana	371.97	129.85	20.00	The construction of rail line between Chandigarh-Morinda (45 kms.) is targeted for completion during 2005-06. In the next phase, the work of Ludhiana-Sahnewal is planned to be taken up.
4.	Abohar-Fazilka	86.44	6.91	1.00	Final location survey has been completed and land acquisition is in progress. Work will be taken up once land is handed over to the Railways
5.	Beas to Dera Baba Jaimal Singh	4.07	—	0.01	The project was sanctioned with the proviso that Dera Authorities would provide land free of cost and also to carry out earthwork at their own cost. The work would be taken up after the agreement is signed and land made available by Dera Authorities.

Yoga Classes at Taj

1199. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any provisions to allow commercial activities in a monument protected by the Archaeological Survey of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some US nationals were allowed to hold yoga classes at the Taj in the presence of Central Industrial Security Force on Christians Day last year;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether any action has been taken against the persons for violating the ASI Act; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Under Rule 8(d) of the Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules 1959, certain activities e.g. selling of information literature, souvenirs relating to protected monuments/sites, photography, guiding facility etc. are allowed in accordance with the conditions of, a licence granted by the competent authority.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. However, it is reported by the field office that one Shri Vikram Choudhary and a small group of his disciples enacted certain Yoga postures in the main podium of Taj Mahal on 25th Dec. 2004.

(e) and (f) The field office took immediate action by filing a F.I.R. with the local police against Shri Vikram Choudhary and his group. Departmental Enquiry has also been conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India and Central Industrial Security Force.

Grant of Pension to Ex-Military Personnel

1200. SHRI CHENGARA SURENDRAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received a memorandum from Military Service Pensionless Association requesting to grant minimum pension and other benefits to military personnel who left the service due to unfavourable climate conditions, disease or tragic family conditions;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Military Service Pensionless Association has represented that those military personnel who had to leave service due to unavoidable personal reasons without completing the minimum qualifying service for pension, should get some minimum pension and other benefits as is given in the case of Kerala State employees and the personal staff of Ministers who serve only for a few days or for a particular period.

(c) The issues raised in the memorandum have been examined in this Ministry. As per existing instructions, a minimum qualifying service (without weightage) of 20 years in case of Officers and 15 years in case of Personnel Below Officer Rank is required to earn service pension. At present no change in the provision of minimum qualifying service is contemplated. However, as per extant instructions, disability pension is admissible if the disability is attributable to/aggravated by Military service, in case the individual is invalidated out on the recommendation of the Medical Board even before completion of qualifying service.

Preservation and Protection of Ancient Sculptures and Artefacts

1201. SHRI B. MAHTAB: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether ancient sculpture and artefacts of different archaeological sites are lying unprotected in the country for lack of watch and ward staff;

(b) if so, whether representations have been received from different State Governments by the Union Government in this regard; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government to preserve and protect such ancient sculpture and artefacts?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Ancient sculptures and artefacts of the protected archaeological sites, museums and sculpture sheds are under the care of the Archaeological Survey of India and are properly protected. Where the departmental watch and ward staff are inadequate, private security guards have been employed.

(b) and (c) Representations have been received from different persons for extending Archaeological Survey of India protection to monuments and archaeological sites, and these representations are considered under the provisions of the AMASR Act, 1958 and Rules made thereunder.

Promotion of Indian Dances

1202. SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any schemes to promote Indian classical dances of numerous patterns like Bharatnatayam, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, Odissi etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any proposal to increase financial assistance to dances of numerous patterns; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Culture administers several schemes to promote Indian Classical Dances such as award of scholarships/fellowships, financial assistance to Professional Groups and Individuals for specified Performing Art Projects; building grant to cultural organisations for constructing auditorium and a scheme for providing pension to aged artistes.

Besides these, the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, an autonomous organisation of the Ministry, administers a scheme of scholarship in Indian Classical Dances to young children in the age group of 10-14 years. Sangeet Natak Akademi has also been set up by the Govt. for the furtherance of the Performing Arts in India.

While there is no immediate proposal to increase financial assistance to dance, the relevant schemes are periodically reviewed so as to ensure that they provide financially adequate support.

[Translation]

Rail Projects in Chhattisgarh

1203. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of the on-going railway projects in Chhattisgarh;

(b) the amount allocated and spent so far on each project;

(c) whether some of these projects are running behind the schedule; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to ensure their timely completion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The project-wise progress along with the target dates, wherever fixed, anticipated expenditure up to 31.03.2005 and budget allocation proposed during 2005-06 for various new/ongoing New Line and Doubling projects in Chhattisgarh are as given under:—

Sl. No.	Name of the Project	Present Status	Anticipated Expenditure up to 31.03.2005 (Rs. in crore)	Outlay proposed in the Budget 2005-06 (Rs. in crore)
1	2	3	4	5

NEW LINE

1.	Dallirajahara-Jagdalpur (235 Kms)	The work was included in the Budget in 1995-96. Construction of Dallirajahara-Jagdalpur (235 Kms) new line is to be implemented through the joint participation of Ministry of Railways, Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL), National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) and	0.44	0.01
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1	2	3	4	5
		State Government of Chhattisgarh. The first phase, viz., Dallirajahara-Rowghat (95 Kms), is to be funded fully by SAIL. SAIL has not yet deposited the cost of this part-project with the Railways for want of mining permission in Rowghat area and forestry clearance. The work would be taken up as soon as SAIL deposits the money with the Railways and the State Government hands over the possession of the requisite land.		
2.	Bishrampur-Ambikapur (20 Kms)	The work was included in the Budget in 1997-98. 82.5% of work has been completed.	48.49	22.06
DOUBLING				
1.	Korba—Gevra Road (8 Kms)	The work was included in the Budget in 1998-99. Gevra-Kusumunda section has been completed and opened to traffic. Work on Korba-Kusumunda section is in progress. The project is targeted for completion in 2005-06.	42.95	3.50
2.	Bilaspur-Urkura (3rd Line) (110 Kms)	The work included in the Budget in 1997-98. Bilaspur-Dadhapra has been opened to traffic. Dadhapara—Dagori has also been completed. On Dagori—Bhatapara section, track linking is in progress. The work of Bhatapara—Urkura section is under National Rail Vikas Yojana (NRVY) and is being funded through Asian Development Bank (ADB) funds.	171.36	56.00
3.	Bilaspur-Salka Road-Patch Doubling (39.4 Kms)	The work was included in the Budget in 2004-05. Final Location Survey is under progress. Preparation of Estimates has been taken up.	6.81	10.00
4.	Bhilai-Durg (3rd Line) (13.15 Kms)	New work included in the Budget 2005-06.	—	2.00
5.	Bilaspur-Anuppur (except Katakhand-Khongsara) with flyover at Bilaspur	New work included in the Budget 2005-06.	—	12.00

(c) and (d) The works are being progressed as per the availability of resources. Railways have taken a number of initiatives to get additional resources from sources other than the normal budgetary support to expedite the progress of the projects.

[English]

New Inter-Connect Regulation for Broadcast and Cable Services

1204. SHRI D. VITTAL RAO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has introduced new inter-connect regulation for broadcast and cable services as reported in the *Times of India* dated January 1, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the manner in which the new Regulation is different from the earlier one?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued Register of Interconnect Agreements Regulations, which are given as under:

(i) The Register of Interconnect Agreements (Broadcasting & Cable Services) Regulations 2004.

(ii) The Register of Interconnect Agreements (Second Amendment) Regulations 2004.

(c) The TRAI has informed that the New Register of Interconnect Agreements Regulations has been issued to meet the specific requirements of the Broadcasting and cable services whereas the earlier regulations were common for telecom and broadcasting sector. The new Regulations require all broadcasters to register with the Authority all interconnect agreements entered into by them as against the provisions of earlier regulations which required the filing of interconnect agreements to which not only the broadcasters but also the multi service operator were party. It also stipulates that the amendments/modifications to the agreements as well as new agreements pertaining to a particular quarter need to be filed within one month of the end of respective

quarter. The earlier regulations provided for filing of agreements within 30 days of date of agreements or modifications thereof. The provisions for providing non-confidential summary of confidential information as provided in the earlier regulation has been dispensed with in the new regulation keeping in view the experience on the nature of requests for keeping information confidential.

Employment Opportunities in PSUs

1205. SHRI RAJESH VERMA: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been decrease in number of employees in PSUs in the recent years;

(b) if so, the number thereof during each of the last three years; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to increase the employment opportunities in PSUs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) As per the Public Enterprises Survey 2002-03, there were 17.40 lakh, 19.92 lakh and 18.71 lakh employees in the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) in the year 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03 respectively.

(c) The decisions regarding creation of employment opportunities in CPSEs are taken by the concerned CPSEs based on the industry/enterprise-specific factors.

External Services Division Programmes

1206. DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the Indian Languages in which the External Services Division of AIR relay its programme and bulletin;

(b) the criteria adopted for the selection of language for this External Services Division programmes;

(c) whether there is any proposal to relay the programmes of External Services Division in some more Indian Languages which are now included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati has informed that the External Service Division of AIR broadcasts programmes and News Bulletins in eleven Indian Languages viz. Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Saralki, Sindhi, Hindi, Malayalam, Kannada and Urdu. These languages were introduced keeping in view the linguistic background of the Indian immigrants in countries covered by AIR's short wave broadcast.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Crime In Trains/Stations

1207. SHRI MUNSHI RAM:
SHRIMATI ANURADHA CHOUDHARY:
SHRI BHUPENDRASINH SOLANKI:
SHRIMATI KALPANA RAMESH NARHIRE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an increase in crime in trains and at stations;

(b) if so, the number of cases reported during 2004, till date and the action taken in respect of those cases; and

(c) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to provide security to passengers in trains and at stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. There is an increase in the number of cases of crimes (Murder, Dacoity, Robbery and theft of passengers' belongings) reported in trains and Railway premises during the year 2004 as compared to the year 2003.

(b) The number of cases of Murder, Dacoity, Robbery and theft of passengers' belongings reported in trains and Railway premises during the year 2004 is as under:—

	Murder	Dacoity	Robbery	Theft of Passengers' Belongings
In Trains	49	107	224	7055
In Railway Premises	220	25	183	4645

All cases of crimes on railways are reported to, registered and investigated by the concerned Government Railway Police (GRP) of the State Governments.

(c) In order to improve safety and security of passengers travelling by trains, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) Act, 1957 has been amended to enable Railway Protection Force to effectively supplement the efforts of the Government Railway Police (GRP) of the State Governments in controlling Crime. To enable the State Government Railway Police to concentrate better on serious crimes, the minor offences under the Railway Act, 1989 have been brought under the purview of the Railway Protection Force by amending the Act with effect from 1st July, 2004. As such, RPF escort parties, as far as possible are deployed for escorting of important trains, withdrawing them from various scheduled duties, to assist GRP actively with effect from 1st July, 2004. In addition, the security in Railway premises is augmented by the Railway Protection Force to supplement the efforts of Government Railway Police (G.R.P.). Investigation and prosecution of crime under the Indian Penal Code (including offences of Murder, Dacoity, Robbery, Theft of Passengers' belongings and other crimes against passengers); offences under various other Acts as well as sabotage related cases under the Railways Act continue to be with GRP (State Police).

MoU between Indian and French Railways for Development of Fast Track Connection

1208. SHRI DINSHA PATEL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Indian and French Railways to develop fast track rail connection;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Ahmedabad-Mumbai route is proposed to be covered in the first phase of the MoU; and

(d) the details of other tracks in the country which are likely to be covered subsequently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Modernisation of Railway Junctions

1209. SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount allocated for modernization of major Railway Junctions including Kazipet and Warangal by the South Central Railway during each of the last three years;

(b) the details of the major works carried out by the South Central Railway for providing and improving passenger amenities in major Railway Junctions in S.C. Railway in general and Kazipet and Warangal in particular; and

(c) the total amount sanctioned and spent for modernization works and provision of passenger amenities in S.C. Railway in general and Kazipet and Warangal in particular?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (c) The works of modernizations and provision of Passenger Amenities at stations are charged to Plan head "Passenger Amenities" mainly. The allocation/expenditure of funds under this plan head for the South Central Railway including Kazipet and Warangal during the last three years is as follows:-

(Fig. in lakh of Rupees)

Year	Budget Grant		Amount Spent	
	South Central Railway	South Central Railway	Kazipet	Warangal
2001-02	1543	1456	30	8
2002-03	1577	1611	16	25
2003-04	957	1563	5	5
2004-05	2790	1948 up to Jan. 2005	12 up to Jan. 2005	10 up to Jan. 2005

(b) Information with regard to major modernization works and passenger amenity works-in progress and new works approved for the current year at various railway stations in South Central Railway are included in the Works, Machinery and Rolling Stock Programme, Part II 2005-06 presented to the Parliament along with the Railway Budget Documents. At Kazipet and Warangal works costing about Rs. 3.00 crore at each station have been sanctioned and are in progress.

[Translation]

Special Residential Schools for Disabled Children

1210. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme to run special residential schools for disabled children;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the category of disabled children eligible for availing such facility and types of facilities available for such children in the said schools?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Under Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (formerly known as Scheme to Promote Voluntary Action for Persons with Disabilities) eligible and capable voluntary organizations are given grant-in-aid to run various projects including special schools for disabled children. The details of this scheme are available on the website of the Ministry—www.socialjustice.nic.in.

(c) The special schools are meant for Mentally Challenged children, Hearing and Speech Impaired children and visually Impaired children. While the existing special schools for Orthopaedically Handicapped children supported under the scheme are given continued support, no new special school for this category of children is being sanctioned, as there is no special education requirement for this category of disabled children. Facilities like special education, speech therapy, physiotherapy, language and communication skills, vocational skill development training, etc. and other facilities like medical care, hostel maintenance for residential children, transport allowance and stipend for non-residential children, are available for the disabled children in the special schools.

[English]

Refinery in Saudi Arabia

1211. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Saudi Arabia has invited Indian firms to set up a refinery in the Oil Kingdom for exporting petro products to the third countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto;

(d) whether ONGC has also tie up for exploration activities in Iran and join hands with other foreign based companies; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) During the bilateral meeting between Minister (PNG) and Minister of Petroleum & Mineral Resources of Saudi Arabia, held on the sidelines of the first Round Table of Asian Oil Ministers in January 2005, the Saudi Arabia Oil Minister stated that there were opportunities for Indian companies to invest in export-oriented refineries in Saudi Arabia. Minister (PNG) stated that Indian companies would examine such opportunities for making appropriate proposals. Indian Oil Corporation have sought details from Saudi Aramco for firming up its response. The subject will be further discussed when Minister (PNG) visits Saudi Arabia towards the end of the month.

(d) and (e) ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) currently hold a 40% participating interest in the Farsi Exploration Block in Iran along with other Indian PSUs, namely Indian Oil Corporation and Oil India Ltd. Other exploration blocks are under negotiation.

[Translation]

Oil Blocks in U.P.

1212. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:
SHRIMATI ANURADHA CHOUDHARY:
SHRI MOHAN SINGH:
SHRI MUNSHI RAM:
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has explored oil blocks in some areas of U.P. as reported in *Rashtriya Sahara* dated January 29, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether international oil companies have submitted their tenders for these oil blocks;

(d) the estimated quantum of hydrocarbon (oil and gas) likely to be produced from these blocks; and

(e) the time by which the production of oil and gas is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Under the Fifth round of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-V), Government have invited bids for the exploration of oil and gas in 20 blocks, i.e., 12 onland, 2 shallow and 6 deep water blocks. Out of the above, as reported in the *Rashtriya Sahara* dated 29 January, 2005, one block, namely; GV-ONN-2003/1 lying in the districts of Deoria and Gorakhpur is situated in the State of Uttar Pradesh. The NELP provides a level playing field for both private (including foreign and Indian) companies as well as Public Sector Undertakings for award of exploration acreages through Global Competitive Bidding. The response of the bidders, including international oil companies, can be known only after the bid closing date, i.e., 31.05.2005.

(d) and (e) Since these are exploration blocks, production from these blocks can start only after discovery of crude oil and/or natural gas is made through exploration and the commercial viability of the discovery is established. As of now, no time frame can be envisaged for commencement of production of oil and gas."

Mechanised Sanitation System at Railway Stations/Platforms

1213. SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of railway stations/platforms on which mechanised sanitation system have been introduced in the country alongwith the names thereof; and

(b) the details of other schemes which have been introduced by the Government to improve the sanitation system at the railway stations/platforms alongwith the names of those stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) A statement is enclosed.

(b) Inter-Division cleanliness competition scheme has been launched where the stations will be awarded points

in selected aspects of cleanliness and the Division obtaining maximum points will be awarded.

Statement

Sl.No.	Zonal Railway	Name of Stations having mechanised Sanitation System
1.	Central (3)	Mumbai (CST), Dadar Terminus and Kalyan
2.	Eastern (15)	Howrah, Sealdah, Asansol, Malda, Bhagalpur, Sahibganj, Jamalpur, Bandel, Bardhaman, Rampurhat, Andal, Barakar, Madhupur, Panagarh and Sitarampur
3.	East Central (8)	Dhanbad, Mugalsarai, Gaya, Samastipur, Darbhanga, Narkatiaganj, Raxaul and Saharsa
4.	East Coast (2)	Visakhapatnam and Sambalpur
5.	Northern (5)	New Delhi, Delhi, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Moradabad and Ambala Cantt.
6.	North Central (2)	Allahabad and Agra Cantt.
7.	North Eastern (4)	Gorakhpur, Gonda, Lucknow and Chhapra
8.	Northeast Frontier	Nil
9.	North Western (4)	Jaipur, Jodhpur, Ajmer and Bikaner
10.	Southern (11)	Chennai Central, Chennai Egmore, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Virudunagar, Dindugal, Tiruchchirappalli, Trivandrum, Quilon, Palghat and Coimbatore
11.	South Central (17)	Vijayawada, Rajahmundry, Tenali, Nellore, Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Kazipet, Tirupati, Guntakal, Cuddapah, Raichur, Renigunta, Nanded, Aurangabad, Kacheguda, Kumool Town and Guntur
12.	South Eastern (3)	Adra, Purulia and Bokaro
13.	South East Central (1)	Raipur
14.	South Western	Nil
15.	Western (18)	Mumbai Central, Bhavnagar, Rajkot, Jamnagar, Ahmedabad, Bharuch, Vadodara, Jetalsar, Botad, Porbandar, Veraval, Anand, Nadiad, Godhra, Surat, Ratlam, Indore and Ujjain
16.	West Central (2)	Jabalpur and Bhopal
Total		95

[English]

Gauge Conversion of NFR

1214. SHRI M.K. SUBBA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress on gauge conversion works in

different section of Northeast Frontier Railways, especially on the Rangya Murkong Selek section; and

(b) the time by which the works on different sections are likely to be completed and the reasons for delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The progress

of ongoing gauge conversion projects under Northeast Frontier Railway alongwith target date of completion,

wherever first, is as under:

(Rs. in crore)

Sl.No.	Name of the work	Year of inclusion in the Budget	Anticipated cost	Remarks alongwith target for completion wherever fixed.
1.	Rangiya-Murkongselek along with linked fingers	2003-04	915.70	Preparation of plans and estimate has been taken up.
2.	New Jalpaiguri-Siliguri-New Bongaigaon including linked branch lines.	1997-98	894.38	New Jalpaiguri-Gosalgaonhat (218 Kms) has already been commissioned. Work in balance section (62 Kms) on main line is in advance stage of completion and is targeted for 2004-05. Works in branch lines are also in progress.
3.	Lumding-Silchar including alignment between Migrendisa-Ditokchara and extension from Badarpur to Bhariagram	1996-97	1496.42	Earthwork, bridge works & tunnelling is in progress. This project has been declared as "National Project". The work is targeted for completion by March' 09.
4.	Katihar-Jogbani & Katihar-Barsoi-Radhikapur	2001-02	402.98	Earthwork, bridge works are in progress. Barsoi-Radhikapur (53 Kms.) is likely to be completed in 2005-06.
5.	Lumding-Dibrugarh Gauge Conversion project with linked fingers & Haibargaon-Mairabari and Senchoa-Silghat Town.	2003-04	882.11	Lumding-Dibrugarh Gauge Conversion project and linked fingers completed except Haibargaon-Mairabari & Senchoa-Silghat. Detailed estimate has been sanctioned. Earthwork and bridge works are in progress.
6.	Katakhal-Bhairabi	1998-99	89	The physical work is proposed to be taken up at the appropriate item to match with completion of Gauge Conversion work of Lumding-Silchar-Jiribam.

The works are being progressed as per the availability of resources.

[*Translation*]

Commercial Parking Charges on Sixty Seater Planes

1215. SHRI ASHOK ARGAL:
SHRI RAMSWAROOP KOLI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Airport Authority of India has decided not to levy commercial parking charges on the planes having capacity upto sixty seats;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the companies benefited from the decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[*English*]

Committee to Review DAVP Advertisements Rates

1216. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has constituted a Committee to review the existing rates structure of DAVP advertisements and suggest new rates;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Committee has interacted with State Governments Newspapers and other related organizations in this regard;

(d) if so, the progress made so far by the Committee in this regard; and

(e) the time by which the Committee is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The Government has constituted a Committee to carry out a comprehensive review of existing Rate Structure for DAVP Advertisements and to suggest a new Rate Structure Formula to be effective from 1.10.2005. The Committee is headed by Chief Advisor (Cost), Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor, Joint Secretary (P&A), Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and Director, DAVP are the members.

(c) to (e) The Committee has already initiated consultation process with the concerned Organisations, newspaper including regional newspaper establishments etc. The Committee is expected to submit its report within the stipulated time.

Setting up of Railway Hospitals in Kerala

1217. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to set up Railway hospitals in Kerala; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Reduction in Rent of Siri Fort Auditorium

1218. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sri Fort Auditorium in Delhi is unoccupied for most of the year due to higher rent;

(b) if so, the details of occupancy rate during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the Government proposes to reduce the rent of the Auditorium and to convert it into middle-class cultural hub and to improve the occupancy rate of the Auditorium; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) A statement showing the details of occupancy in Siri Fort Auditorium I, II and III is enclosed.

(c) and (d) A Committee has been set up recently, to look into the issue of revision of rates for the Siri Fort Auditorium.

Statement

Year	Number of days used by institutions, Government Departments, Autonomous Bodies, Government Undertakings, Schools, Colleges, NGOs etc. on hire basis for holding cultural programme			Number of days used by the media units/autonomous bodies under this Ministry for Holding International Film Festivals of India, National Film Festival, Festivals by Children's Film Society of India, Cultural Exchange Programmes etc.			Total number of days of occupancy		
	Auditorium I	Auditorium II	Auditorium III	Auditorium I	Auditorium II	Auditorium III	Auditorium I	Auditorium II	Auditorium III
2002-03	149	31	5	27	36	36	176	67	41
2003-04	131	39	4	32	32	64	163	71	68
2004-05 upto Feb. 2005	141	56	9	17	21	16	158	77	25

*[Translation]***Flights for Haj Pilgrims**

1219. SHRI JAI PRAKASH (Mohanlal Ganj): Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had made special provision for Haj pilgrims this year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of flights operated from all the airports for the Haj pilgrims in the country, airport-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The quota of pilgrims for Haj 2005 has been increased by 10,000. Guwahati and Aurangabad have been added as new embarkation points this year. The restrictions imposed for availing subsidy on airfare for Haj pilgrims last year have also been withdrawn from this year.

(c) The number of flights operated from each port of embarkation in India are: Ahmedabad-14; Aurangabad-17; Bangalore-11; Calicut-34; Chennai-8; Delhi-50; Guwahati-14; Hyderabad-16; Jaipur-20; Kolkata-13; Lucknow-38; Mumbai-34; Nagpur-6; Patna-16 and Srinagar-44.

Ancient Temple Unearthed at Mamallapuram

1220. SHRI RAGHUVeer SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some temple relics have been unearthed by the Tsunami waves at Mamallapuram Coast (Chennai);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether above relics belong to Pallava Dynasty;

(d) whether any decision is being taken to undertake carbon dating of relics;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for the maintenance of the relics?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI

S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Three bas-reliefs were exposed by the Tsunami waves at Mamallapuram coast (Chennai). These depict (i) the figure of tiger and a deity in a niche flanked by demi-gods, (ii) bas-relief figure of an elephant and a horse with a circular niche at the top and (iii) and figure of a *kirtimukha* (lion face).

The bas-reliefs are carved over a bed rock and stylistically they belong to Pallava period.

(d) and (e) These bas-reliefs are in stone and therefore they cannot be subjected to carbon dating.

(f) The exposed reliefs are safe and maintained within the protected area of Seashore Temple.

*[English]***Army College at Jamnagar**

1221. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government is considering to open any new Army College or EME school at Jamnagar;

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be opened; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) There is no proposal to open any new Army College or Electronics and Mechanical Engineering School at Jamnagar, as no requirement has been felt for the same.

Rescue Operation in Jammu and Kashmir

1222. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether IAF has participated in the rescue operation in snow-bound area of Jammu and Kashmir; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Air Force has airlifted 2191 civilian stranded passengers by transport aircraft and helicopters. A total

number of 1600 persons were airlifted from Ramban/ Udhampur to Srinagar. Similarly, 40 foreign tourists were rescued from the Zaskar Valley.

Bulldozer and snow plough equipment was airlifted by Indian Air Force from Leh to Srinagar for runway/road clearance tasks.

The Indian Air Force airlifted 660,000 litres of Kerosene and 180,000 litres of petrol to meet the urgent energy requirements in the valley.

In the whole process, the Indian Air Force has airlifted a total load of 1010 Tonnes and 42,000 passengers.

Revision of Rent of Land Occupied by Army in J&K

1223. SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Army has occupied a considerable land in Jammu and Kashmir for operational purposes;

(b) if so, the procedure being adopted for revision of rent payable to the landowners;

(c) whether the landowners have made representations to the Defence Ministry for proper assessment of rent for the occupied land from time to time; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government have either hired or requisitioned considerable land in Jammu and Kashmir to meet the operational requirements of the Army.

(b) Revision of rent for requisitioned lands is governed by statutory provisions. According to Rule 9 of Jammu & Kashmir Requisitioning and Acquisition of Immovable Property Rules, 1969, the rents are revised every five years on the recommendations of the State Government and approval of Government of India.

(c) and (d) Representations have been received for revision of rent from some organizations recently. The State Government has sent proposal for revision of rentals in the months of August 2004. Government of India have initiated steps to effect the revision of rentals in accordance with the existing provisions of law.

Alleged Illegal Occupancy and Construction

1224. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received alleged complaints about illegal occupancy of rooms, illegal construction etc. in the Rest Camp, Railway Colony, Charbagh, Lucknow;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry has been conducted into the matter;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the action taken against the persons found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Details of the complaints received are as under:

(1) Letter dated 08.12.04 of Shri Brajesh Pathak, MP;

(2) Letter dated 23.12.04 of Shri Umakant Yadav, M.P.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Two quarters were found unauthorisedly occupied. Further, ten temporary garages, three temporary cowsheds, one temporary security hut and one pucca room were found erected unauthorisedly.

(e) Action has been initiated against the defaulting railway staff.

Kishan Channel

1225. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE:
SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN:
SHRI PRADEEP GANDHI:
SHRI CHANDRABHAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Television Channel 'Kishan' launched exclusively for farmers has now been closed down;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government proposes to re-start the Kishan Channel;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (e) Prasar Bharati has informed that there is no separate TV Channel named "Kishan" Channel. However, telecasting of agricultural programmes from select transmitters was started in the narrowcasting mode on 21st January 2005. Prasar Bharati has informed that this is being sustained over expanded areas across the country.

Deployment of Personnel in U.N. Peacekeeping Mission

1226. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some personnel of Indian Forces deployed in U.N. Peacekeeping Mission are found guilty of misusing their rights;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) No such report involving Indian Armed Forces personnel deployed in U.N. Peacekeeping Missions, has been brought to the notice of the Government.

(c) Question does not arise in view of the reply given at (a) & (b) above.

[English]

Use of Z Section Steel In Fabrication of Wagons

1227. SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA:

SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway is using Z section steel in fabrication of almost all types of wagons;

(b) if so, the details of the contract entered into with the steel manufacturers during 2000, 2001 and 2002 alongwith the rates thereof;

(c) whether the Railway stores, Kolkata failed to procure the quantity entered into contract with the steel manufacturers;

(d) if so, the details of the orders released during the said period alongwith the rates thereof;

(e) the reasons for not procuring the contract quantity of Z section steel during the said period;

(f) the amount of revenue loss to the Railways as a result thereof; and

(g) the action taken against the officials responsible for such loss to the Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) M/s. Indian Iron and Steel Company, Kolkata, a Public Sector Undertaking, is the only manufacturer of 'Z' Sections in the country. Details of contract finalised on M/s. Indian Iron and Steel Company, Kolkata, order released by Railway Stores, Kolkata are as under:

Sl. No.	Year	Quantity (Metric Tonnes)		Rates (Rupees per Metric Tonne)
		Contracted quantity (Metric Tonnes)	Release order quantity (Metric Tonnes)	
1.	2000	7716	7760	17,390
2.	2001	9556	5334	17,200
3.	2002	7323	7325	18,890

(c) to (e) No, sir. Railway Stores (Iron and Steel), Kolkata merely issues release orders based on the contracts entered into by Ministry of Railways. Orders for adequate quantity had been placed on M/s. Indian Iron and Steel Company by the Ministry of Railways. Requirement for the year 2001 had to be restricted due to withholding of wagon orders on detection of use of mild steel instead of corten steel by various wagon manufacturers.

(f) and (g) Do not arise.

Mechanism to Check Malfunctioning at Airports

1228. SHRI BHARATSINH MADHAVSINH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any mechanism available to check the malfunctioning of the various Government and other agencies at the international and national airports in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the corrective measures being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The mechanism *inter-alia* includes installation of Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTVs) for surveillance of various areas and facilities and providing suggestion boxes/complaint boxes/complaint book at prominent locations at airports. Customer satisfaction surveys are also conducted twice in a year at various airports to ascertain passengers satisfaction levels so as to improve/upgrade various facilities. The complaints pertaining to airport officials are monitored by the concerned head of departments. Complaints pertaining to other agencies like customs, immigration, airlines etc. are forwarded for suitable action to the concerned agencies who have their own set-up to monitor the functions of their personnel as well as for redressal of passengers' grievances.

(c) Does not arise.

Mumbai Rail Vikas Corporation

1229. SHRI PRAKASH BAPU V. PATIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Western Railway has recently earmarked some funds for Mumbai Rail Vikas Corporation for the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of projects proposed to be undertaken with this fund;

(d) whether the funds are to be utilised for providing Railway Protection Force personnel in all the trains for security of railway passengers and railway properties; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Funds are allotted to Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation by the Ministry of Railways through Metropolitan Transport Project, Central Railway. No funds for Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation has been earmarked by Western Railway.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

AIR Station at Siliguri

1230. SHRI HITEN BARMAN:
SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the all India Radio Station at Siliguri is not self-sufficient for relaying the programmes;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there is any proposal to upgrade the said station;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether there is any proposal to increase the timings of North Bengal Local Sanskriti Programmes; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. All India Radio station at Siliguri is a full-fledged station with 200 kW Medium Wave transmitter (primary channel), studios,

satellite receive facilities and 10 kW F.M. transmitter for Vividh Bharati programmes.

(c) to (f) Presently, there is no proposal either to upgrade the said Station or increase the timings of North Bengal local Sanskriti programmes.

Railway Projects in Gujarat

1231. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the proposal received from the Government of Gujarat regarding construction of new railway lines, gauge conversions, doubling of rail lines and electrification during the last three years;

(b) the details of the each of the new and on-going projects alongwith funds allocated and expenditure incurred thereon, so far;

(c) the target fixed for completion of these projects, project-wise;

(d) whether these projects are going as per schedule;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the steps taken or being taken by the Union Government for timely completion of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Record of each and every demand for taking up new project is not maintained. However, some of the proposals received from the Government of Gujarat for construction of new lines, gauge conversion, doubling and railway electrification in the last few years is as under:

Sl.No.	Proposal	Action Taken
1	2	3
New Line		
1.	Bhavnagar Port-Dholera-Tarapur	Survey is in progress from Bhavnagar to Tarapur via Dholera.
2.	Extension upto Hazira Port new line	It is one of the identified port connectivity projects entrusted to Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL). Bankability study have been done and project found bankable.
Gauge Conversion		
1.	Bharuch-Dahej	It is one of the identified port connectivity projects with RVNL. The proposal is under process of approval.
2.	Sabarmati-Botad	Survey for gauge conversion of Ahmedabad-Botad is also in progress.
3.	Ahmedabad-Udaipur via Himmatnagar	Survey for gauge conversion of Ahmedabad-Himmatnagar-Umra (Udaipur City) is in progress.
4.	Dhasa-Jetalsar	Survey is in progress.
5.	Mahesana-Taranga Hill and its extension upto Abu Road and Ambaji	Survey for gauge conversion of Mahesana-Taranga Hill with extension upto Ambaji is included in the Budget 2005-06.
6.	Bhuj-Naliya	Survey for gauge conversion of Bhuj-Naliya with extension to Baranda/Koteswar is included in the Budget 2005-06.

1	2	3
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Doubling

1. Ahmedabad-Mumbai 3 line

A survey for construction of 3rd line between Virar and Ahmedabad has been completed. In view of saturation on this section, it has been decided to augment the line capacity of the route by adopting automatic signalling. However, in phase-I, the work of 3rd line from Surat to Kosamba has been taken up.

An updating survey for 3rd line between Virar and Ahmedabad is in progress.

2. Additional track for Vadodara-Godhra

Survey for third line between Ratlam-Vadodara is included in the Budget 2005-06.

Besides the above, the proposals had been received for construction of new lines, gauge conversion, doubling & railway electrification and in some of the cases, surveys have also been taken up. However, it has not been found feasible to take up the following proposed projects in view of heavy throw-forward of ongoing works and constraint of resources.

New Line

1. Rail link to Bedi Port

Gauge Conversion

1. Dhasa-Veraval.

(b) to (f) Details of the new and on-going projects alongwith funds allocated, expenditure incurred and present position with targets wherever fixed are as under:

(Rs. in crore)

Sl.No.	Project	Year of inclusion in Budget	Cost	Approximate Expenditure upto March 2005	Budget Outlay 2005-06	Status
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

New Lines

1.	Gandhinagar-Kalol	2000-01	49.96	27.09	15	42.20 hectare out of 51.19 hectare land has been acquired. Earthwork, bridgeworks and ballast supply are in various stages of progress. Work on Gandhinagar-Kalol section is targeted for completion during 2005-06.
2.	Godhra-Indore via Dahod, Sardarpur, Dhar & Dewas-Maksi	1989-90	946.16	67.70	15	On this project, work on Dewas-Maksi (36 Km) has been completed and commissioned. Preliminary arrangements are being made to take up to work on remaining section.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gauge Conversion						
3.	Gandhidham-Palanpur	1998-99	344.63	183.56	100	This project is being executed by RVNL through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) named "Kutch Rail Company". Earthwork, bridges and ballasting are in various stages of progress. Work on Palanpur-Samakhiali section is targeted for completion during 2005-06.
4.	Surendranagar-Bhavnagar, Dholadhasa-Mahuva with extension to Pipavav	1996-97	440.18	163.51	4.50	The work of conversion of main line from Surendranagar to Rajula with connectivity to Pipavav has been completed. Work on Dholadhasa-Bhavnagar and Rajula-Mahuva has also been completed and Sihor-Palitana is targeted for completion during 2004-05.
5.	Rajkot-Veraval, Wansjalia to Jetalsar with new line from Veraval to Somnath	1994-95	359.8	234.26	5	Work on Rajkot-Veraval section (186 km) has been completed. Work on Veraval-Somnath is in progress.
6.	Bhildi-Viramgam	1990-91	199.75	106.79	5	The project consists of gauge conversion from Viramgam to Patan and construction of new line of 52.64 kms between Patan and Bhildi. Work on Viramgam-Mahesana (85 kms) has been completed and commissioned.
7.	Phulera-Marwar-Ahmedabad & Delhi-Rewar 2nd line	1993-94	621.86	472.97	3	The work on main line has been completed and commissioned. Residual works of Sabarmati-Khodiyar and Ahmedabad Yard remodelling are in progress. Gauge conversion of Rewari Delhi (82.5 kms) is also a part of this work where formation works have been completed. The work is targeted for completion during 2005-06.
8.	Bhildi-Samdari	1990-91	244.74	7.58	30	This work was sanctioned in 1990-91 as a part of Kandla-Bhatinda rail link. The work was earlier given lower priority in view of gauge conversion of Delhi-Ahmedabad. The project is being implemented under National Rail Vikas Yojana by RVNL. Earthwork & bridge works on Samdari-Bhinmal are in progress.
Doubling						
9.	Surat-Kosamba (Phase-I)	2000-01	49	0.005	8.62	Project is being regulated as per low (operational) priority.

Projects are being progressed as per availability of resources. A number of initiatives have been taken to augment resources for expediting completion of the ongoing projects. These include sharing by State Governments, Public/private Partnership, funding from Ministry of Defence, additional resources for National Projects and funds for National Rail Vikas Yojana. With these efforts, it may be feasible to expedite the progress of projects.

Oil and Gas Prices

1232. SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:
DR. CHINTA MOHAN:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":
SHRI S.D. MANDLIK:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to fix the oil and gas prices for a fixed period of time despite fluctuation of prices in the international market;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Facilities for Programme Production

1233. SHRI MUNAWAR HASSAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has granted permission to various Doordarshan Kendras in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh to provide facilities relating to programmes production; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, Doordarshan Kendra-wise?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI

S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Permission has been granted by Prasar Bharati to Doordarshan Kendras all over India to make available programme production facilities to outside agencies on hire as per the Doordarshan rate card, subject, however, to the availability of studios.

[English]

Ghatkopar Road Over Bridge in Mumbai

1234. SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has fixed any time-frame to complete the Ghatkopar Road Over Bridge in Mumbai;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is considering to reopen the old Railway Overshed Bridge opposite Jhunjhunwala College in Ghatkopar after the same is repaired; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Rebuilding of existing Road Over Bridge is in progress and the work is likely to be completed by March 2006.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Foot Over Bridge (FOB) belongs to Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and BMC has deposited a sum of Rs. 12.0 lakh with Railways for repair of the FOB for which finalization of executing agency is in progress. The repair work would be completed in a period of 6 months after finalization of agency.

Barak Anti-Missile Defence System

1235. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Navy is satisfied with the performance of the Barak anti-missile defence system acquired recently from Israel; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The performance of the Barak 1 Anti Missile Defence System fitted on Indian Navy ships has been 'Good'. This system has successfully engaged and destroyed low flying missile targets, during the Acceptance Test Firings conducted so far.

Execution of Projects by IRCON

1236. SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDLIKRAO GAWALI:
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the projects executed by IRCON International Ltd. during each of the last three years;

(b) the profit earned by the company during the said period;

(c) the amount of foreign exchange earned by the company during said period;

(d) the number of projects in hand at present; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to further increase the performance of the company?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The details of projects executed by IRCON International Limited during the last three years in India and abroad are as under:

Sl.No.	Name of Project	Date/Month of Completion	Value (in lakhs of Rs.)	Date/Month of Award	Name of Client
1	2	3	4	5	6
Year 2001-02					
1.	Design & Construction of Rail Link (including Bridges and Viaducts) from Pelabuhan —Tanjung-Pelepas-Johor in Malaysia	Jan. '2002	58,601.58	13.07.1999	Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB), Ministry of Transport of Malaysia
2.	Sylhe T-Tambil-Jaflong Road Improvement Project, Bangladesh	Feb. '2002	4,068.39	24.08.1999	Ministry of Communication, Roads & Highways Department (RHD), Bangladesh
3.	Grid Sub-station for PEDEEE at Syria.	Mar. '2002	4,398.12	24.05.2000	Public Establishment for Distribution & Exploitation of Electrical Energy (PEDEEE)
4.	Construction of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry College Campus at Salesih, Aizawl, Mizoram.	June '2001	2,498.00	31.01.1997	Central Agricultural University IROISEMBA, Imphal, Manipur.
5.	Sector Development (including Road works) Project, Noida	Jan. '2002	2,900.00	23.06.1998	New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (NOIDA)
6.	MGR including Bridges for Mejia Thermal Power Project at Durlavpur	Mar. '2002	10,799.00	18.11.1988	Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Year 2002-03					
1.	Sub-station for ACFRM at Lattakia, Syria	June '2002	489.00	12.03.2002	Arabian Company for Rolling Mills, Saudi Arabia.'
2.	Additional works for Sub-stations for PEDEEE at Syria	Dec. '2002	1,073.65	24.05.2000	Public Establishment for Distribution & Exploitation of Electrical Energy (PEDEEE), Syria
3.	Road Over Bridges over Railway Lines on deferred payment for MSRDC (Phase-I)	May '2002	9,000.00	01.03.1997	Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation
4.	Mechanised Coal Handling Facilities at Paradip Port.	June '2002	3,350.00	02.08.1997	Paradip Port Trust
5.	Road Over Bridges over Railway Lines on deferred payment for MSRDC (Phase-II)	Sept. '2002	8,500.00	01.03.1997	Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation
6.	Construction of outer ring road bet. Magadi road and Tumkur road at Bangalore	Nov. '2002	2,400.00	27.01.2001	Bangalore Development Authority
7.	National Agricultural Science Centre Complex at IARI, Pusa, New Delhi	Jan. '2003	5,207.00	09.08.1995	Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)
8.	Fatuha-Islampur BG Railway line (including Bridges) Project for E.Rly.	Jan. '2003	3,441.00	12.10.1998	Eastern Railway
9.	Construction of Cable stayed bridge and approaches at Bangalore	Jan. '2003	3,967.00	15.08.1998	Southern Railway
10.	Land development work at new town/Rajarhat (Contract-I)	Mar. '2003	4,572.00	12.11.1999	West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corpn. Ltd.
11.	400 KV PGCIL Sub-station work at Mapusa, Goa	Mar. '2003	3,321.00	16.03.2001	PGCIL
Year 2003-04					
1.	Rehabilitation and dual gauging the existing B G Rail Line, 245 Route KM (290 KM Track) between Parbatipur to Jamtoll of Bangladesh Railway including Signalling & Telecommunication and other allied works for Jamuna Bridge Rail Link Project, Contract No. 2	Dec. '2003	30,817.60	19.10.1999	Ministry of Communication Roads & Railway Division, Republic of Bangladesh

1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Grid Sub-station for DESA at Dhaka—Bangladesh	Nov. '2003	1,564.00	29.08.2001	Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, Bangladesh
3.	Construction of ballast less track for MTP (Railways) at Chennai	Oct. '2003	2,539.00	27.09.2002	MTP (Railways), Chennai
4.	Delhi Metro Rail Corporation —RC III Project	Mar. '2004	16,467.00	04.01.2001	Delhi Metro Rail Corporation
5.	EHV Sub-Station (Package 'D') for GRIDCO Orissa.	Mar. '2004	3,343.00	30.06.1999	GRIDCO Orissa

(b) The profit earned by the Company during last three years is as under:

(Rs. in crore)

Particulars	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Profit before Tax	127.21	115.83	78.74
Profit after Tax	103.69	87.05	61.80

(c) The amount of foreign exchange earned by the Company during last three years is as under:

(Rs. in crore)

Particulars	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Earning	590.17	363.19	224.22
Expenditure	306.17	173.31	110.50
Net foreign exchange earned	284.00	189.88	113.71

(d) At present, IRCON have 8 overseas projects and 21 domestic projects in hand.

(e) Company on its part has taken initiatives for aggressive marketing and has also entered into Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) projects both in India and abroad through Joint Ventures etc. to enhance the business opportunities and further growth of the company.

Gauge Conversion of Pathankot-Joginder Nagar Rail Line

1237. PROF. CHANDER KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a survey has been conducted in 2001 to convert the Pathankot-Joginder Nagar narrow gauge railway line into broad gauge;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the follow-up action taken by the Government on the survey report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) A survey for conversion of Pathankot-Joginder Nagar narrow gauge line into broad gauge with extension of broad gauge line from Joginder Nagar to Bhanupali via Mandi and Bilaspur (352

kms.) was completed in March, 2001. As per survey report the cost of the project was assessed as Rs. 3566 crore with a rate of return as (-) 27.28%. Due to constraint of resources and heavy throwforward of ongoing projects, it was not considered feasible to take up the work.

Based on demands, an updating survey for gauge conversion of this line has been included in the Budget 2005-06.

Documentary on Pigeon Mail Service

1238. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Film Division is preparing a documentary on the pigeon mail service assigned to the pages of history by Orissa Police;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the funds allocated for the documentary; and

(c) the time by which the documentary is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) A documentary film on 'Pigeon Postal Service in Orissa' is being produced by Films division as an in-house production from the Non-Plan funds. This film will be tracking down the history of Pigeon Postal Service in India and how Pigeons have been useful in sending messages during the time of natural calamities etc. when there were no modern communication systems available.

(c) The documentary film is likely to be completed in 3 months time.

[Translation]

Requirement and Manufacturing of Relief Cranes

1239. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to the shortage of relief cranes, the railways is not able to perform post-accident relief works effectively;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the number of relief cranes required by the railways and the number of such cranes manufactured in the country;

(d) whether the Government proposes to increase the manufacturing of relief cranes keeping in view the shortage of such cranes; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Not applicable in view of answer to (a) above.

(c) For Broad Gauge, the current assessed requirement is 73 nos. of 140 Tonne Diesel Breakdown Cranes.

For Metre Gauge, it is estimated that roughly 10 Cranes would be required over the long term, depending upon the progress of gauge conversion.

Jamalpur Workshop has the capacity to manufacture 6 to 9 Cranes per annum for Broad Gauge.

Current population of 140 Tonne Broad Gauge Cranes is 52 and it should be possible to meet the balance demand from the indigenous production at Jamalpur within the next 3 years. Thus, the important stations have already been covered and the balance shall be covered by progressively phasing out Steam Cranes.

5 Metre Gauge Cranes have also been sanctioned by the Ministry of Railways, for which suitable design specifications are under finalisation. It is also proposed to manufacture these Cranes in railway workshop.

(d) There is no proposal to increase the manufacturing capacity of such Cranes.

(e) Does not arise.

[English]

Foreign Countries connected through Air Service

1240. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:
SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA:
SHRI Y.G. MAHAJAN:
SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIYA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the countries connected to India through air-service at present;

(b) whether the Union Government proposes to directly connect some more countries through air-service;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which these countries are likely to be connected through air-service?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Countries connected with India through air services are given in the Statement enclosed.

(b) to (d) Traffic rights for operation of international air services are decided through bilateral air services consultations, which is an on-going process. Actual operations are matters of commercial judgement of the airlines designated for utilizing these rights.

Statement

Countries connected to India through air-service

1. Afghanistan
2. Australia
3. Austria
4. Bahrain
5. Bangladesh
6. Bhutan
7. Canada
8. China
9. Egypt
10. Ethiopia
11. France
12. Germany
13. Hong Kong
14. Indonesia
15. Iran
16. Israel
17. Italy
18. Japan

19. Jordan
20. Kazakhstan
21. Kenya
22. Kuwait
23. Kyrgyzstan
24. Malaysia
25. Maldives
26. Mauritius
27. Republic of Korea
28. Myanmar
29. Nepal
30. Netherlands
31. Oman
32. Qatar
33. Pakistan
34. Russian Federation
35. Saudi Arabia
36. Seychelles
37. Singapore
38. Slovakia
39. South Africa
40. Sri Lanka
41. Switzerland
42. Syria
43. Taiwan
44. Tajikistan
45. Tanzania
46. Thailand
47. Turkey
48. Turkmenistan
49. United Arab Emirates
50. United Kingdom (UK)
51. U.S.A.
52. Ukraine
53. Uzbekistan
54. Yemen Arab Republic

Demand For LPG & Kerosene

1241. SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the demand for LPG and Kerosene oil is being met by means of import;

(b) if so, the percentage of the demand met by means of import during each of the last two years in the country; and

(c) the concrete steps taken by the Government to reduce the dependence on import for meeting such demands?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) On an overall basis, the indigenous production of petroleum products, is more than the consumption except for LPG, a part of which has to be imported. While indigenous availability of kerosene is adequate to meet demand, imports of kerosene have taken place in the last two years under the Parallel Marketing Scheme (PMS). The details of imports of LPG and Kerosene during the years 2002-03, 2003-04 is as under:

(Figs in million metric tonne per annum)

Year	Imports		%of total consumption	
	LPG	Kerosene	LPG	Kerosene
2002-03	7.23	0.70	6.6	6.8
2003-04	8.00	0.80	6.8	7.8

(c) In order to reduce dependence on imports of petroleum products, the refining capacity of the refineries is being augmented, although there is marginal surplus in refining capacity at present and the country is a net exporter of petroleum products. India's annual exports of petroleum products was of the tune of Rs. 16,781 crore for the year 2003-04.

Foreign Investment in Petroleum Sector

1242. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has a proposal to invite Foreign Investment in the upstream and downstream business of the Petroleum Sector; and

(b) if so, the details of the proposals mooted in this regard for 2005-06?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes Sir. Policies are already in force for inviting Foreign Investments in the upstream and downstream business of the Petroleum Sector. International competitive bids are invited for oil and gas exploration under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). Similarly under the Coal Bed Methane (CBM) Policy, bids are invited for exploration and production of CBM. The Refineries Sector has been delicensed since June, 1998 and a refinery can be set up anywhere in India by private or public sector enterprises depending on the promoters' assessment of its viability.

(b) In the upstream petroleum sector, under the fifth round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-V), Government has offered 20 exploration blocks under international competitive bidding. Last date of submission of the bids is 31.05.2005. Bids for the third round of the CBM blocks will also be invited after completing various preparatory activities leading to invitation of bids.

Parallel Marketing of LPG & Kerosene

1243. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any plan for parallel marketing of LPG and Kerosene both at subsidized rates and actual market prices; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The parallel marketing of LPG at market determined prices is allowed as per LPG (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order 2000. Similarly, parallel marketing of Kerosene is also allowed as per Kerosene (Restriction on Use and Fixation of Ceiling Price) Order 1993.

At present, there is no proposal to allow parallel marketers to market Kerosene at subsidized rate, but a

proposal for marketing LPG by parallel marketeers under the subsidy scheme is under consideration.

[Translation]

Suggestion of CII

1244. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any suggestion from the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) regarding Airport facilities;

(b) If so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) A suggestion was received from CII for moving some of the international flights to domestic terminal at the Indra Gandhi International Airport, Delhi during late night to reduce congestion at the international terminal. Views of relevant agencies have been requested on the proposal to facilitate a decision.

New Rail Lines During Tenth Five Year Plan

1245. SHRI MUNSHI RAM:
SHRIMATI ANURADHA CHOUDHARY:
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress of work on new rail line projects started during the Tenth Five Year Plan;

(b) the total number of projects undertaken to connect the States of the country and kilometre length of rail lines constructed;

(c) whether work on all the projects is likely to be completed on time;

(d) if not, whether the cost of the said projects are likely to escalate;

(e) the likely cost of each project; and

(f) the estimated percentage cost overrun owing to non-completion of work in time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) 10 New Line projects have been included in various Budgets during X Plan period including one proposed in 2005-06 Railway Budget. The projects are in various stages of progress.

(b) 78 New Line projects are in progress in the country. During X Plan, 463 Kms of new lines have been completed upto February, 2005.

(c) The projects are being progressed as per the availability of resources.

(d) The cost of the projects is likely to undergo upward revision due to general price escalation and other reasons.

(e) and (f) The anticipated cost of each project is indicated in the Budget documents. The cost overrun is not feasible to be assessed as funding is not assured.

[English]

Loading and Unloading Points

1246. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of loading and unloading points in Railways network, Zone-wise;

(b) whether the Government propose to develop these points with private participation;

(c) if so, the details alongwith identified points and proposed revenue sharing on leasing/licensing of such points;

(d) whether the Government has already handed over some sites for development to different parties;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Government has explored the possibilities of developing these sites at its own; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Number of loading/unloading points:

Sl.No.	Railway	Loading/unloading points
1	2	3
1.	Central	59
2.	Eastern	108
3.	Northern	379
4.	North Eastern (NE)	128
5.	Northeast Frontier (NF)	88
6.	Southern	139
7.	South Central (SC)	256
8.	South Eastern (SE)	105
9.	Western	160
10.	East Central (EC)	126
11.	East Coast (ECO)	97
12.	North Central (NC)	75
13.	North Western (NW)	96
14.	South East Central (SEC)	100
15.	South Western (SW)	80

1	2	3
16.	West Central (WC)	81
Grand Total		2077

(b) to (g) Development of Railway goods sheds is a continuous exercise of the Indian Railways. A pilot project was initiated at the Satellite Goods Terminal, Whitefield at Bangalore for development of an integrated rail-side warehousing complex by M/s. Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC). Subsequently, Railways had executed a Memorandum of Understanding with CWC for development of similar rail-side warehousing complexes at 22 proposed locations, the details are given in the statement enclosed. However, the list is provisional and it is mutually open for Railways and CWC to develop alternative locations where it is not found feasible to develop the integrated warehousing complexes as per the list. Zonal Railways will execute separate agreements for each identified location for development of warehousing complex. CWC will pay to Railways 5% of gross receipts from all activities of the Corporation arising out of the business at the location leased to them.

As announced in the Railway Budget (2005-06), the scheme of the development of integrated warehousing complexes will be extended to other parties also on the same model.

Statement

List of Proposed Locations for Development of Rail-Side Warehouse Complexes

	Location	State	Nearest City/Town	Distance from nearest City/Town (Km)	Railway section
	1	2	3	4	5
I.	Central Railway				
1.	Kalamboli	Maharashtra	Mumbai	63	Diva-Panvel
2.	Pune	Maharashtra	Mumbai	192	Kalyan-Pune
3.	Nasik	Maharashtra	Mumbai	207	Mumbai-Manmad
II.	ECO Railway				
4.	Sambalpur	Orissa	Rourkela	149	Sambalpur-Jarsuguda

	1	2	3	4	5
III.	Northern Railway				
5.	Shakurbasti	Delhi	Delhi	11	Delhi-Rohtak
6.	Holambi Kalan	Delhi	Delhi	21	Delhi-Sonepat
7.	Ambala	Haryana	Chandigarh	68	Delhi-Ambala
8.	Rohtak	Haryana	Delhi	70	Delhi-Bhatinda
IV.	N.F. Railway				
9.	New Guwahati	Assam	Guwahati	4	Rangiya-Guwahati
10.	Changsari	Assam	Guwahati	38	Rangiya-Guwahati
V.	Southern Railway				
11.	Royapuram	Tamil Nadu	Chennai	60	Ernakulam-Kottayam
12.	Kottayam	Kerala	Ernakulam	125	Ernakulam-Kottayam
13.	Kannur	Kerala	Mangalore	191	Calicut-Ernakulam
14.	Kozhikode (Calicut)	Kerala	Ernakulam Trichur	117	Calicut-Ernakulam
VI.	S.E. Railway				
15.	Hatia	Jharkhand	Ranchi	7	Ranchi-Bondamunda
VII.	S.W. Railway				
16.	Hubli	Karnataka	Goa	200	Hospet-Londa
17.	Hassan	Karnataka	Mysore	119	Mysore-Arsikere
18.	Mandya	Karnataka	Bangalore	94	Bangalore-Mysore
19.	Hosur	Tamil Nadu	Bangalore	56	Bangalore-Salem
20.	Dharmapuri	Tamil Nadu	Bangalore	147	Bangalore-Salem
VIII.	Western Railway				
21.	Rajkot	Gujarat	Rajkot	0	Ahmedabad-Okha
IX.	W.C. Railway				
22.	Gangapur City	Rajasthan	Jaipur	154	Sawai Madhopur-Jaipur

Khanna Rail Accident Report

1247. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the report on Khanna railway accident has been submitted to the Government;

(b) if so, the findings thereof;

(c) the follow up action taken thereon; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the time by which the same is likely to be submitted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The findings and the follow-up action taken thereon are under examination after which the same will be laid before both the Houses of Parliament.

[Translation]

Small Aircraft for Flight Operation

1248. SHRI DEVIDAS PINGLE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to introduce small aircraft for flight operations to the different places in the country;

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

(c) the time by which these are likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) The Government has laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the needs of different regions of the country including North-Eastern region. However, as per the extant policy, choice of aircraft is left to the operators and they are free to provide air services with appropriate type of aircraft depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability.

[English]

Flights from Hyderabad

1249. SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI:
SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP:
SHRI K.S. RAO:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Saudi Airlines is willing to operate 4 flights a week to Hyderabad;

(b) if so, whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has also requested to give permission to Saudi Airlines for the purpose; and

(c) if so, the final decision taken by the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Hyderabad has been granted as a point of call to the designated airlines of Saudi Arabia. However, they are yet to commence operations. A request was also received from Government of Andhra Pradesh in this regard.

Integration of Rail and Road Transport

1250. SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to integrate rail and road transport in the selected areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) There is no policy to integrate rail and road transport. However, proposals of such nature are processed on case to case basis. Ministry of Railways in partnership with Government of Andhra Pradesh is strengthening the existing suburban rail infrastructure in the city of Hyderabad and its suburbs as part of a comprehensive multimodal suburban commuter transportation system. Similarly in Maharashtra, Ministry of Railways in partnership with State Government is implementing Mumbai Urban Transport Project.

Special Package to Heritage Train

1251. SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to introduce any special package in consultation with the Ministry of Tourism to increase tourism for the heritage train running between Darjeeling and Siliguri;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total revenue earned by the Government from the heritage train during last year;

(d) whether the revenue is upto the expectation; and

(e) if not, the corrective measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (e) The special chartered trips organized over the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway for the tourists earned a revenue of about Rs. 6 lakhs in 2004, which is considered to be satisfactory.

[Translation]

Setting up Rail Coach Manufacturing Factory

1252. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is shortage of railway coaches;

(b) if so, the expected number of shortage of rail coaches in the country as on date;

(c) whether the Government proposes to set up another Rail Coach Manufacturing Factory; and

(d) if so, the details alongwith location thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. There is no shortage to run the scheduled train services.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

New Airports in Karnataka

1253. SHRI ANANTH KUMAR:
SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Karnataka Government has approached the Union Government to set up new Airports in the State at Mysore, Hassan and Gulbarga;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the State Government has agreed to contribute to Rs. 10 crore towards the development of these Airports in the association with the Airport Authority of India;

(d) the amount proposed to be contributed by the Union Government for development of these Airports, Airport-wise;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the time by which these airports will be developed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government of Karnataka (GoK) has requested to develop new airports at Hassan and Gulbarga and to develop and commission the Mysore airport. Gok have assured to provide land required for development works free of cost and free from all encumbrances.

(c) Yes, Sir. The State Government has agreed to contribute upto Rs. 10 crores each for development of new airports at Hassan and Gulbarga only.

(d) to (f) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has already initiated action to work out the detailed cost of the development work at Mysore airport which would be met out of their internal resources. Work would commence after signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AAI and the Government of Karnataka. The construction period is 24 months from the date of award of work. As regards the new airports at Hassan and Gulbarga, AAI is likely to undertake a techno-economic feasibility study in this regard.

Electrification of Bangalore-Jolarpet Rail Line

1254. SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress so far made in electrification work of railway line between Bangalore and Jolarpet;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Bangalore-Jolarpettai Rail line is already electrified.

Increase in Production of Gas

1255. SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gas Authority of India is proposing to increase production of gas by exploring new wells and increasing production in the existing wells;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there are some sick wells in the country; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to restart production therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir. GAIL has participating interest in 11 exploration blocks of which one is overseas, viz., Myanmar offshore. None of the blocks are at the commercial production stage.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) Yes Sir, as far as Private/Joint Ventures are concerned, 29 oil & gas sick wells are there.

(d) Sick wells are regularly worked over to revive them and start oil/gas production depending on their techno-economic feasibility.

National Instruments Limited

1256. SHRI PRABODH PANDE: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to refer to reply given to Unstarred Question No. 2718 dated December 16, 2004 regarding 'National Instruments Limited' and to state:

(a) whether the letter expressing the interest on taking over the responsibility of National Instruments Limited by Jadavpur University has been examined by the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the further action taken in the matter; and

(c) if not, the time by which the process is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) In response to interest expressed by Jadavpur and Kolkata Universities, the Department has written to them to submit a proposal, which includes ownership of both the assets and the liabilities of National Instruments Limited.

(c) The detailed proposal from the two Universities is still awaited.

[Translation]

Preservation of Folk Culture

1257. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether various folk cultures are on the extinction;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to keep them alive;

(c) whether the Government is aware that many folk artists of Indian Culture are on the verge of starvation;

(d) if so, whether the Government is considering any specific scheme to safeguard these folk artists; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, there are a few art forms which are on the verge of extinction.

(b) The purpose of establishing Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) was to preserve and promote the such folk art form in their respective Zones. In addition to this, ZCCs organize a number of Cultural Programmes to provide the folk artists a platform to perform and also obtain financial support for various artists living in remote areas.

(c) Government have not received such information.

(d) and (e) Government of India has taken up Schemes such as Guru Shishya Parampara, Theatre Rejuvenation, Young Talented Artists and National Cultural Exchange Programme through various ZCCs and cultural organizations to safeguard the folk artists. Since inception

of ZCCs, these Centres organize various programmes/schemes for the benefit of folk artists. About 2500 performing artists are being benefitted by each ZCC every year through our programmes. This is besides a number of craftsmen who get opportunities through its various programmes being conducted throughout the year.

[English]

Supply of Substandard Ammunitions

1258. SHRI V.K. THUMMAR:
SHRI TUKARAM GANPATRAO RENGE
PATIL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been invited to C&AG Report No. 6 of 2004 wherein it has been observed that the Ordnance factories are supplying sub-standard ammunition to armed forces;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to conduct a thorough inquiry into the working of the Ordnance factories and depots through an independent Committee;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to update and streamline quality products by ordnance factories?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) The C&AG has made certain observations regarding the 125 mm High Explosive/High Explosive Anti Tank ammunition.

(b) 125 mm High Explosive and High Explosive Anti Tank ammunitions are fired from Tank T-72. The original Russian ammunition uses single base propellant for manufacture of the same. Since there were doubts about the performance of the single base propellant in higher temperatures encountered in India and also since technology was not obtained from Russia for manufacture of single base propellant, a decision was taken to use triple base propellant for manufacture of these ammunitions. The performance of the ammunition manufactured with triple base propellant has been commented upon in the report.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Specific board of enquiry is appointed wherever need is felt to conduct enquiry or investigations in a particular matter.

(e) There is a structured system for ensuring the quality of the end products supplied to the Armed Forces which includes inspection of the input material, process control as well as various stage inspections.

Hostels for Blind Students/Persons

1259. SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to open hostels for blind students/persons in major cities of the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Development of Concrete Sleepers

1260. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the railways remained deprived of a direct benefit of Rs. 72.90 crores due to delay in giving final shape to new design by the RDSO and delay in approval by Railway Board for field testing of revised design of reinforced concrete sleepers developed by a private firm as has been pointed out by Comptroller and Auditor General of India in its Report No. 8 of 2004;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The concerned para of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's report has also been replied to clarifying that Railway has not suffered any loss as contended by Audit.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Funds for Model Railway Stations

1261. SHRIMATI KALPANA RAMESH NARHIRE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount sanctioned by the Government for constructing of Model Railway Stations during 2003-2004;

(b) the amount allocated and spent for this purpose, State-wise; and

(c) the time by which the construction work of these model railway stations is targeted to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) All the works relating to Model Railway Stations are financed from the Plan Head "Passenger Amenities". Separate figures for allocation/expenditure only on Model Stations are not maintained. State-wise allocation/expenditure of funds are also not maintained. Funds allotted under this Plan Head in 2003-04 was Rs. 205 crore and the actual expenditure was Rs. 181.19 crore. Out of 319 identified Model Stations, 61 have been developed as per laid down norms. Railways' endeavour is to complete all the work in three years time subject to availability of funds.

[English]

Setting up of New Museums

1262. SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI:
SHRIMATI KALPANA RAMESH NARHIRE:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up new museums in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, location-wise;

(c) the expenditure likely to be incurred thereon; and

(d) the time by which these museums are likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI

S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) The Government has received a proposal to establish a National Museum on the Freedom Movement. However, the proposal is at a preliminary stage and no details have been firmed up.

Airport at Navi Mumbai

1263. SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:
SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN:
SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD:
SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a project proposal for development of an International Airport at Navi Mumbai through public-private participation has been submitted by Government of Maharashtra;

(b) if so, when alongwith the estimated cost of the project; and

(c) the decision taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal with an estimated cost of Rs. 3500 crores was submitted to the Government in September 2000.

(c) M/s City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) have been advised to carry out the simulation study for the proposed operations at the new site with a view to determine that there would be no conflict of flying operations at Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport, Mumbai due to the orientations of the runway proposed at Navi Mumbai.

Reduction In Service Period

1264. SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN:
SHRI P. MOHAN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to reduce the minimum period for discharging defence personnel after ten year of their enrolment; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[*Translation*]

Plantation of Ayurvedic Trees

1265. SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIYA:
SHRI Y.G. MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to start the plantation of Ratan Jot/Ayurvedic trees on the waste land on both sides of the railway lines throughout the country;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme;

(c) the amount likely to be allotted by the Government for the implementation of this scheme; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Railways have taken up plantation of 'Jatropha Curcas' (Ratanjot) on railway land on a large scale from the year 2003-04 onwards. During 2003-04, 24 lakh Jatropha have been planted on railway land. Another 57 lakh trees have been planned for the current year 2004-05. Instructions have also been given to plant medicinal/Ayurvedic plants wherever suitable & feasible by Zonal railways.

(c) An amount of Rs. 26.85 crore has been allotted for Trees, plantation, nurseries etc. including this scheme, in Revised Estimates 2004-05. In Budget Estimates 2005-06, this amount stands at Rs. 29.69 crore.

(d) Does not arise.

[*English*]

Air Fare Policy for Children

1266. SHRI TUKARAM GANGADHAR GADAKH:
SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines and other Airlines charge fare for infants, even for 1-day old baby;

(b) if so, the justification to charge fare for infants;

(c) the air fare structure for children;

(d) the difficulties of the Airlines to allow similar type of concession for children upto 5 years and upto 11 years as is given by the Railways;

(e) whether the Ministry proposes to view air fare policy for infants and children; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Airlines charge fare for infants as they are provided special facilities and as the airlines undertake all the liabilities and provide indemnities of carriage.

(c) to (f) The Indian Airlines/Air India air fare structure for children for domestic travel is as follows:

Infant: Under 2 years—10% of the applicable adult fare in all classes.

Child: 2 to 12 years—50% of the applicable adult fare in all classes.

Government does not regulate the domestic airfare after repeal of Air Corporation Act, 1953. Infant and child fare limitations are decided by International Air Transport Association (IATA) an international body where all the airlines participate.

Oil Refineries

1267. SHRI JUAL ORAM:
SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:
SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM:
DR. CHINTA MOHAN:
SHRI AJIT JOGI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Oil Refineries functioning in the country in the public as well as in private sectors;

(b) the details of the capital investment made in the public sector oil refineries till March, 2004;

(c) the amount being paid as interest by the public sector oil refineries on this investment; and

(d) the average annual profit earned by the public sector oil refineries during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The details of Oil Refineries working in the public and private sectors in various States of the country are given in the Statement enclosed.

(b) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Locations and Capacities of Refineries in India

Sl.No.	Name of the company	Location of the Refinery	Capacity (MMTPA)* As on 1.1.2005
1	2	3	4
Public Sector			
1.	Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)	Guwahati, Assam	1.00
2.	IOCL	Barauni, Bihar	6.00
3.	IOCL	Koyali, Gujarat	13.70
4.	IOCL	Haldia, West Bengal	6.00
5.	IOCL	Mathura, Uttar Pradesh	8.00
6.	IOCL	Digboi, Assam	0.65
7.	IOCL	Panipat, Haryana	6.00
8.	Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL)	Mumbai, Maharashtra	5.50
9.	HPCL	Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh	7.50
10.	Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)	Mumbai, Maharashtra	6.90
11.	Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL)	Manali, Tamil Nadu	9.50
12.	CPCL	Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu	1.00
13.	Kochi Refineries Ltd. (KRL)	Kochi, Kerala	7.50
14.	Bongaigaon Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd. (BRPL)	Bongaigaon, Assam	2.35

1	2	3	4
15.	Numaligarh Refinery Ltd. (NRL)	Numaligarh, Assam	3.00
16.	Mangalore Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd. (MRPL)	Mangalore, Karnataka	9.69
17.	Tatipaka Refinery (ONGC)	Tatipaka, Andhra Pradesh	0.078
Private Sector			
18.	Reliance Petroleum Ltd. (RPL)	Jamnagar, Gujarat	33.00
Total			127.37

*Million Metric Tonne Per Annum.

Procurement of Gas from China

1268. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether GAIL is acquiring 10% stake in China Gas Holding Limited for gas transmission and distribution business in China;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether India is also trying to procure some gas in the form of LPG and CNG from China; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. China Gas Holding Limited is listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. GAIL propose to acquire 210 million shares of the company at HK\$ 1.158 per share after satisfaction of various conditions stipulated in the Agreement. The total value of the transaction is about Rs. 137 crores.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Subsidy on Petroleum Products

1269. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether involvement of Private sector has been able to bring down subsidy burden on petroleum and petrol products;

(b) if so, to what extent; and

(c) the measures being taken to check increase in subsidy?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas had approved the PDS Kerosene and Domestic LPG Subsidy Scheme 2002 effective 1-4-2002 vide Gazette notification No. P-20029/18/2001-PP dated 28th January, 2003 for administering the post-Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) subsidy on PDS Kerosene and Domestic LPG. Initially, the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs), viz., Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and IBP Company Limited participated in the above scheme. Other companies were to be allowed to participate later.

In addition to the Government subsidy, oil PSUs have been sharing the burden by not passing full increase in international prices on to the domestic consumer prices of Domestic LPG. The price of Domestic LPG was increased on 16-6-2004 and 5-11-2004 by Rupees 20 per cylinder (14.2 kg) with a view to passing on a small portion of the increase in international prices of LPG to domestic consumers.

As per current Government policy, the Government subsidy on these products is to be phased out over a period of 5 years effective 1-4-2002, i.e. Government subsidy would be available upto 31-3-2007.

Khalsa Heritage Complex

1270. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA:
DR. RATTAN SINGH AJNALA:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of financial assistance provided by the Union Government for the construction of Khalsa Heritage Complex at Anand Pur Sahib in Punjab during each of the last three years;

(b) the present status of the project; and

(c) the time by which the project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No financial assistance has been provided by the Union Government for this project during the last three years.

(b) and (c) The structural work is almost complete. As per the estimates and project status given by the State Government, an amount of Rs. 145 crores is needed for completion of the remaining works by 2006-07.

Cine Artists Welfare Fund

1271. SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Cine Artists Welfare Fund of India set up by the National Film Development Corporation is the biggest ever trust in the Indian Film Industry;

(b) if so, the total amount disbursed to the Cine Artists from Welfare Fund during 2004-2005;

(c) whether there is any proposal to enhance pension and other financial assistance such as housing to poor cine workers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The Cine Artists Welfare Fund of India was set up by National Film Development Corporation Limited on 5th February, 1991 registered as a Public Charitable Trust with funds received by way of 5% of profit on the feature film "Gandhi". The Trust extends financial help to needy cine artists of yesteryears. The fund amongst other things pays pension @ Rs. 750/-p.m. to needy artists and medical assistance upto a maximum of Rs. 10,000/-per applicant. Figures are not available to give a comparative picture.

(b) The amount disbursed in 2004-05 till date is Rs. 48 lakhs.

(c) At present, the Trust is not in a position to enhance pension and other financial assistance to the cine artists.

(d) Does not arise.

[Translation]

National Policy On Bio-fuel

1272. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to formulate a National Policy on Bio-fuel;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be formulated?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) After the success of the Pilot Projects on blending 5% ethanol in petrol, in the year 2001, the Government implemented the 5% ethanol-blended petrol programme in notified sugar producing States/adjoining States and Union Territories. According to the parameters of the programme, with effect from 27.10.2004, if the price at which ethanol is offered for the programme is comparable to the price of ethanol for alternative uses, and is comparable to the delivery price of petrol at the notified locations, and if the supply of ethanol can be maintained at such prices, supply of 5% ethanol-blended-petrol in notified areas is mandatory.

For promotion of bio-diesel, the Planning Commission had set up a Committee on Development of Bio-fuel which recommended the launching of a National Mission on Bio-diesel with a special focus on the plantation of *Jatropha curcas*. The Ministry of Rural Development has been made the nodal Ministry for the National Mission on Bio-diesel and that Ministry has recently got a Detailed Project Report prepared by The Energy and Research Institute (TERI).

[English]

Opening of New Channel

1273. SHRI RAJESH VERMA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received proposals for opening of new T.V. Channels in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the proposals pending with the Government for clearance alongwith reasons therefor; and

(d) the time by which these proposals are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) As on date, 8 new proposals are under process for permission to uplink TV channels from India, the names of companies are as under:

- (1) Ekonkar Television Pvt. Ltd.
- (2) Lok Prakashan Ltd.
- (3) Hamara Samay TV News Network Ltd.
- (4) Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd.
- (5) Media Content & Communications Services (India) Pvt. Ltd.
- (6) Js Media Pvt. Ltd.
- (7) Positive TV Pvt. Ltd.
- (8) Calcutta Television Network Ltd.

(c) All these cases are at various stages of scrutiny and no delay has been noticed in the process.

(d) No time frame can be indicated.

Joint Exercise

1274. SHRI G.V. HARSHA KUMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Israel have decided to hold Joint Special Forces' exercise in Defence;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of joint exercises of Armed Forces held with foreign forces during the last one year till date, force-wise;

(d) the expenditure incurred thereon; and

(e) the benefits gained therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) India and Israel have not decided to hold any Joint Special Forces' exercise in Defence.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The number of joint exercises of Armed Forces held with foreign forces during the last one year till date, force-wise, is as follows:

Army	—	Two
Navy	—	Ten
Air Force	—	Three

(d) The expenditure in respect of the joint exercises was met out of the allocated annual budget of the Armed Forces.

(e) Joint exercises help the Armed Forces to practice procedures for undertaking military operations in the areas of our strategic interests besides promoting goodwill and understanding.

Renovation and Preservation of Monuments in Warangal

1275. SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has taken any steps for renovation and preservation of monuments in and around Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh such as

Warangal Fort, Thousand Pillar temple and Ramappa temple etc. during the last three years;

(b) If so, the details thereof alongwith progress made thereon so far; and

(c) the total amount allocated and spent for the purpose during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes Sir, Archaeological Survey of India has attended to the conservation works of protected monuments of Warangal Fort, Thousand Pillar Temple, Ramappa Temple and also environmental development of Ramappa Temple in Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh during the last three years.

(b) Besides normal maintenances activities, the Conservation works include:

(i) Warangal Fort, Warangal:

The missing roof of the Kushmahal within the fort was restored following the original pattern. Nandi Mandapa was erected using the available architectural members scattered here and there. Loose sculptures were displayed properly in an open-air gallery.

Many structures and architectural members were exposed after removal of the overlying debris.

(ii) Thousand Pillar Temple: The walls of the temple were strengthened with pressure grouting. The undulated Pradakshina Pada was reset. Essential repairs to southern porch were attended to. The repair work of Kalyana Mandapa of Rudreswara temple is in progress.

(iii) Ramappa Temple: The protected area of the temple was fenced properly, solar lights provided, signage improved and drinking water facility provided.

Renovation and re-orientation work of the garden around the temple is in progress.

(c) The total amount allocated and spent during the last three years at these monuments is as under:

Year	Allocation/Expenditure (in Rs.)
2001-02	16,99,396
2002-03	35,79,287
2003-04	17,78,797

Exploration and Production of Natural Gas

1276. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to invite private parties for exploration and production of natural gas from some new blocks;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of blocks propose to be offered to private parties for this purpose; and

(d) the estimated quantum of oil and natural gas likely to be provided from each of such blocks?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. Under the Fifth round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-V), Government have invited bids for the exploration of oil and gas in 20 blocks i.e. 12 onland, 2 shallow and 6 deep water blocks. NELP provides a level playing field for both private (including foreign and Indian) companies as well as Public Sector Undertakings for the award of exploration acreages through Global Competitive Bidding.

(d) Since, these are exploration blocks, the hydrocarbon potential in the above blocks can be assessed only after discoveries are made through exploration.

Oil and Gas Exploration in West Bengal

1277. SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of oil exploration in West Bengal;

(b) whether the Government is considering actively to offer some blocks for oil and gas exploration in West Bengal; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation

Ltd. (ONGC) hold one onland nomination Petroleum Exploration Licence (PEL) block—Contai in the State of West Bengal. During 2003-04, ONGC drilled an exploratory well Gobindpur-1 in the block which gave some minor gas indications. At present, 3-D seismic data acquisition is in progress.

Another exploration block, WB-ONN-2000/1, was awarded to an ONGC and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOC) consortium under the second round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). The block was relinquished on 27.9.2003 by the consortium after completing the work programme of exploration phase-I i.e. acquisition, processing and interpretation of 100 Line Kilometre (LKM) of seismic data.

It may also be noted that 3 shallow water and 2 deep water blocks are being explored in the North-East Coast area, part of which falls off the coast of West Bengal offshore. Exploratory wells are in the process of being spudded in the North-East Coast area. Besides, four discoveries have been made in the North-East Coast area by Reliance Industries Ltd. in the block NEC-OSN-97/2 and are being appraised.

(b) and (c) No exploration block in the State of West Bengal is on offer under the fifth round of NELP. However, existing exploration work would be reviewed and depending upon the results of review/analysis, exploration block(s) may be carved out in West Bengal also.

[Translation]

Ancient Languages

1278. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE:
SHRI P. MOHAN:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of languages spoken all over the country particularly in Maharashtra as per official records;

(b) the criteria followed by the UNESCO for declaration of a language as classical language;

(c) whether it was revealed on the eve of the UNESCO's meeting on 'Safeguarding the World's Intangible Heritage' that the future of the 80 percent of Indian languages is uncertain;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to declare certain ancient languages as classical languages;

(f) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and

(g) the measures taken by the Government for the survival of the least spoken Indian languages in the country?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) According to the latest Census information 72 languages are spoken in Maharashtra.

(b) As per our information, no language has been declared classical by UNESCO.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) and (f) The Government has already declared Tamil as a Classical language of India. A Committee of Linguistic Experts constituted by the Government for this purpose will consider claims for classical languages.

(g) The oral traditions of less spoken languages are sought to be safeguarded.

[English]

Loss suffered by Indian Airlines

1279. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines has suffered several crores in the first half of the fiscal year 2004-05;

(b) if so, the facts and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to make Indian Airlines profitable?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Indian Airlines has incurred an estimated loss of Rs. 66.40 crores during the first half (April-September, 2004) of the fiscal year 2004-05. This loss is substantially lower than Rs. 103.50 crores incurred in the corresponding period of previous year 2003-04.

(b) The loss of Rs. 66.40 crores during first half of 2004-05 is mainly because of steep increase in ATF prices during the year. The domestic ATF price increased to Rs. 29,800/-per kilo litre in September 2004 as compared to Rs. 21,530/-per kilo litre applicable during March, 2004.

(c) Indian Airlines has been encouraged to take various economy measures and is working out strategies from time to time, on an on-going basis to improve its financial performance.

[Translation]

**Permission to Foreign Companies for
Oil Exploration**

1280. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:
SHRIMATI ANURADHA CHOUDHARY:
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have permitted the foreign oil exploration companies to explore new oil reserves in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which oil is likely to be extracted from these new areas;

(d) the number of more such areas of Rajasthan where exploration of oil is likely to begin;

(e) whether import of oil is estimated to go down after exploration of oil in these areas alongwith the percentage of the estimated decrease in the import of oil as a result thereof; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, Government of India have invited foreign companies to explore oil and gas in the country, including the State of Rajasthan, through various exploration bidding rounds under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) as well as earlier pre-NELP rounds.

So far, Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) for three exploration blocks in the State of Rajasthan have been signed with foreign companies under NELP rounds. Oil has been discovered in one block RJ-ON-90/1 under exploration by M/s Cairn Energy India (Pty.) Limited. Two exploration blocks (RJ-ON-90/4 & RJ-ON-90/5) have been relinquished after exploration phase-I & III respectively, where a Polish Oil & Gas Company was working with an Indian company, M/s Essar Oil Ltd.

(c) Four of the oil discoveries in the block RJ-ON-90/1 have been declared to be commercial on 15 October, 2004. As per PSC, development plan for these discoveries is to be submitted by the operator within 200 days of the declaration of commerciality. Other four discoveries in the block are under appraisal. The time of start of commercial oil production would depend upon the preparation of development plan of commercial discoveries by the operator and its approval by Management Committee and implementation

(d) As far as production sharing regime is concerned, four more exploration blocks are under exploration in Rajasthan, out of which one block is with Indian private company while three blocks are with Oil India Ltd. and Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC). In addition, ONGC is also carrying out hydrocarbon exploration in two blocks awarded to it on nomination basis falling in Jaisalmer Basin. Three more exploration blocks in Rajasthan are on offer under fifth round of NELP for which last date of submission of bids is 31.05.2005.

(e) and (f) Yes Sir, import of oil would come down to the extent of production from the development of discoveries in the block for which development plan is under preparation.

[English]

Revenues from Freight Traffic

1281. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether higher movement of iron ore for exports is significantly adding to the revenues of the Railways;

(b) if so, to what extent the revenues earning freight traffic in Railways has increased during 2004; and

(c) if so, the what extent the Railways freight traffic achieved during 2004?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The increase in revenue earning freight traffic on account of iron ore export is 54.53% during the period from April 2004 to January 2005, as compared to the figures for the same period of last year. The share of iron ore export accounts for 4.78% of the total freight earnings.

(c) Railway have achieved an increase of 2.58% in its revenue earning freight loading as compared to target.

Payment by ONGC to Marketing Companies

1282. SHRI D. VITTAL RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ONGC had made payments of Rs. 1,332 crores to oil marketing companies to compensate for their under-recoveries on LPG and kerosene as reported in the 'Hindu' dated February 1, 2005; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, ONGC gave a price discount on crude oil, LPG and SKO of Rs. 1,332 crores during the third quarter of the year 2004-05, to Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), to share their under recoveries on Domestic LPG and PDS Kerosene.

Implementation of Special Package for NER

1283. SHRI M.K. SUBBA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received representations from the North Film & T.V. Producers and Directors Association against the practices being followed in implementing special package for North Eastern Region;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI

S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A representation received from the North East TV Producers and Directors Association has sought special treatment to the Producers from the region in commissioning programmes for Doordarshan.

(c) Prasar Bharati has informed that applications will be considered in terms of the conditions stipulated in the notice issued for this purpose by the Programme Production Centre, Guwahati. However, the suggestions received from the North East TV Producers and Directors Association is engaging the attention of the Government.

Funds for Drilling Exploratory Wells

1284. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC has slashed funds for drilling exploratory wells by 20% in 2004-05;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken to increase oil exploration and make the country self-sufficient in oil and gas?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. As per revised Budget Estimates, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) has budgeted Rs. 2496 crore for exploratory drilling in 2004-05 which is 47.69% higher than the actual expenditure of Rs. 1690 crore incurred during the financial year 2003-04.

(c) Given the present oil & gas production in the country, self-sufficiency in the near future is not envisaged. However, Government have taken the following steps to meet the growing demand of oil and natural gas.

(i) to improve the recovery factor from existing major fields by implementing Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) schemes; in particular Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has taken up 15 fields for this purpose at an estimated investment of Rs. 10,000 crore, which would also help in accelerating oil production from these fields.

(ii) to increase exploration efforts through the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP); under the

first four rounds of NELP, Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) have been signed for 90 blocks; the fifth round is underway.

- (iii) to explore in new areas, specially in the deep water and difficult frontier areas, as also explore in deeper layers of already producing fields.
- (iv) to develop faster newly discovered fields and to step up the use of new technologies for seismic surveys, work over, stimulation operations, drilling of wells etc. in producing areas.
- (v) to acquire acreages abroad.
- (vi) to explore alternative sources of hydrocarbon such as Coal Bed Methane. 16 PSCs for Coal Bed Methane exploration have been signed to date.
- (vii) to tap alternate resources like Gas Hydrate, and Underground Coal Gasification.

AIR Station at Cooch Behar

1285. SHRI HITEN BARMAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the All India Radio Sub-Station at Cooch Behar is not being used for years together;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government proposes to re-start the said sub-station;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be re-started;

(e) whether the Government has allocated any special fund for the development of this sub-station; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) At present, there is no Radio Station at Cooch Behar.

(b) to (f) Do not arise.

Upgradation of Radio Stations In Gujarat

1286. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any proposal from the Government of Gujarat for upgradation of radio stations in the State particularly at Rajkot and Junagarh District;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon;

(c) whether some LPTs in the State are not functioning properly due to shortage of staff; and

(d) if so, the action taken/proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Prasar Bharati has informed that no such request has been received from the Government of Gujarat.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Frequent Traveller Scheme

1287. SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:
SHRI MOHAN RAWALE:
SHRI S.D. MANDLIK:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 'Frequent Traveller Scheme' is being implemented by the railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time since when this scheme in operation;

(d) whether the Government proposes to auction tickets of A/C accommodation in all trains in line with scheme adopted by Airlines; and

(e) if so, the details of scheme and the anticipated revenues gain from frequent travellers in A/C?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Frequent Rail Travellers, who register for the scheme, will be awarded points depending on their frequency of travel. Accumulated

points will be suitably rewarded. The scheme will be applicable to 1st AC, 2 AC & AC-Chair Car classes.

(c) This scheme is likely to be started in all trains in the current year.

(d) Presently no such scheme has been approved.

(e) The gains from frequent travellers scheme have not been estimated.

Gas Agencies in Uttar Pradesh

1288. SHRI MUNAWAR HASSAN:
SHRI RAJESH VERMA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of gas agencies allotted in Uttar Pradesh during each of the last three years;

(b) whether the Government is contemplating to open more gas agencies in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh;

(c) if so, the locations thereof; and

(d) the time by which these gas agencies are likely to be opened?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The total number of LPG distributorships allotted in Uttar Pradesh by Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) during last three years is as under:

Year	Number of distributorships allotted in Uttar Pradesh
2001-02	210
2002-03	65
2003-04	58

(b) to (d) Government have given freedom to OMCs to set up LPG distributorships in accordance with their commercial considerations. However, as a matter of policy, Government have advised OMCs to concentrate on semi-urban/rural areas for opening of new LPG distributorships. The commissioning of LPG distributorships depends upon

various factors such as identification of viable locations, release of advertisements, conducting interviews, ability of the candidate to secure land for godown, showroom etc.

Redevelopment of Dilapidated Goods Sheds and Freight Terminals

1289. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan to redevelop dilapidated goods sheds and freight terminals in partnership with the private sector;

(b) if so, whether the proposal involves handing over damaged property on long term lease to a private sector player for development operation and maintenance on a revenue sharing basis;

(c) If so, whether the Ministry of Railways has circulated the proposal to various industry players for their views; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. There is no such scheme at present.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Financial Assistance to NGOs

1290. SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDLIKRAO GAWALI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria/guidelines being followed by the Ministry of Culture for providing financial assistance to NGOs under the schemes 'Seminar' and 'Construction of Building';

(b) the number of the proposals received from various NGOs under these schemes during each of the last three years till date; and

(c) the number of NGOs selected and the financial assistance provided to them under these 'schemes' during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Each proposal is examined on its merit by the Committee of Experts chaired by the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture. NGOs are selected by the Committee as per the criteria/guidelines laid down in the relevant schemes.

Seminar Grant: The scheme covers voluntary organisations engaged in cultural activities and doing research in different aspects of Indian Culture as related to its traditions and philosophy etc. They should be of all India character or of National fame and should have been functioning for at least three years and registered under the Societies Registration Act (XXI of 1860). Such organisations or institutions as mentioned above should have a properly constituted managing body and should

be financially sound. The financial assistance is given for the purposes of holding conferences, seminars and symposia on important cultural matters and to meet expenditure on activities of development nature like conduct of surveys pilot project, etc.

Construction of Building: Under the scheme, the grants are given for construction of building to the cultural organisations working for promotion of culture for at least five years and are registered under the Societies Registration Act (XXI of 1860) for at least two years. The above organisations should have a regional identity and should be duly recommended by the State Government concerned.

(b) and (c) A statement is enclosed.

Statement

Seminar Grant

Year	No. of proposals received	No. of NGOs selected	Financial Assistance provided
2002-2003	394	72	Rs. 45,29,000/-
2003-2004	264	71	Rs. 69,94,859
2004-2005	593	192	Rs. 83,66,790/-

Building Grant

Year	No. of proposals received	No. of NGOs selected	Financial Assistance provided
2002-2003	393	94	Rs. 2,35,00,000/-
2003-2004	472	106	Rs. 2,63,00,000/-
2004-2005	777	224	Rs. 5,57,14,441/-

Diversion of Coal Rakes

1291. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether diversion of coal rakes and non-issue of Supersessional Railway Receipts is a common feature on Eastern and South Eastern Railways;

(b) if so, the number of diversion cases of coal rakes reported during each of the last three years in various loading points;

(c) the details of freight outstanding on account of non-issue of SSRs during the said period;

(d) the action taken by the Railways against the officials found responsible for such lapses; and

(e) the steps taken to check the recurrence of such lapses in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No Sir. Diversion of coal rakes has been prohibited save in very exceptional cases like accidents, breaches, civil commotions or heavy congestion of the terminals or in extreme cases where the thermal power house is facing closure due to non-availability of coal. However, a detailed procedure has been laid down for diversion of coal in such exceptional cases also.

(b) Number of coal rakes diverted during the last three years on Eastern and South Eastern Railways, is as under:

(In rake)		
Year	E. Rly.	S.E. Rly.
2001-02	271	854
2002-03	257	577
2003-04	138	28

(c) There is no freight outstanding on Eastern and South Eastern Railways on account of diversion of coal rakes done by them o their respective systems.

(d) As the diversion of coal rakes are done in emergent situations and to ensure adequate availability of coal with the Power Plants, no official is held responsible for such diversions.

(e) In order to minimize diversion of coal rakes, instructions have been issued to Zonal Railways that any diversion of coal rakes from one State Electricity Board (SEB) to another State Electricity Board or Power Corporation except for the purpose of match delivery is not permissible at the level of Zonal Railways. Even while ordering of match delivery, care has to be taken to ensure that the same grade of coal is match delivered as far as possible. Any diversion from one SEB to another SEB or Power Corporation for purposes other than match delivery shall be done only with the approval of Railway Board in exceptional circumstances.

[*Translation*]

Satellite Radio Service

1292. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:
SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to formulate a policy for Satellite Radio Service;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has received any suggestion from Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), issued a consultation paper on 29.12.2004 for comments of the stakeholders on the issues relating to Satellite Radio service. TRAI has not come up with its final recommendations/suggestions so far in the matter.

Exploration Licensing Policy

1293. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE:
SHRI PRADEEP GANDHI:
SHRI CHANDERBHAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to modify the New Exploration Licensing Policy; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Government of India approved the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) in 1997 and it became effective in 1999, since when licenses for exploration are being awarded through an international competitive bidding system. National Oil

Companies are required to compete with Indian and foreign companies to secure Petroleum Exploration Licenses. Four rounds of bidding have so far been completed under NELP. While the overall fiscal and contractual terms under NELP have more or less remained the same, consultations are held with all stakeholders at the end of each round to suggest and incorporate improvements for succeeding rounds. The same process was followed for the fifth round of NELP, which was announced on the 4th January, 2005. The fifth round also incorporates some new features which make an improvement over earlier rounds. The salient changes from earlier rounds are given in the statement enclosed.

Statement

- (i) All geo-scientific data has been made available online through the internet to enable companies to view data at their own convenience and location.
- (ii) Work stations equipped with software has been provided at data centres at London, Houston, Calgary and Dubai. This will enable companies to analyse and interpret the data at the data centre itself
- (iii) In order to provide marketing stability to the companies, the government shall exercise its option to take its profit share of natural gas in cash or kind for a block of 5 years instead of such option being made every year as in the previous rounds.
- (iv) Data packages and information dockets can be purchased at a discounted price.
- (v) In order to encourage small and medium size investors, companies having a net worth of US\$ 500 Million or more will not be required to give a bank guarantee towards Minimum Work Programme commitment in respect of onland and shallow water blocks. This threshold value in the previous round was US\$ 1000 Million.
- (vi) In order to bring more transparency in the bidding process, weightages for all bid evaluation criteria including weightages for sub-criteria have now been made public under NELP-V for the first time.
- (vii) Details of all operational block from earlier rounds such as work programme, fiscal terms etc. are available at Data Centres. This will

enable companies to assess existing work programme as well as other bidding parameters while formulating their own bids and may also help them in forming strategic alliances.

[English]

Childline Service

1294. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has framed Model Rules under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the childline service has been set up in various parts of the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof, location-wise;

(e) the objectives of childline service and response received to childline service in various parts of the country so far; and

(f) the details of various programmes organized for Juvenile Justice during the last one-year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Model Rules have been framed for better implementation of the provisions of the Act. they were notified on 22.06.2001.

(c) to (e) The childline service has so far been established in 61 cities of the country as per statement given in the Statement enclosed. Childline is a 24-hour toll-free emergency phone outreach service for children in need of care and protection. It recommends the child to other organizations for long-term care and rehabilitation, or returns the child to his/her family as the situation warrants. Any child or a concerned adult on behalf of the child can call 1098 free of cost, and avail of the service at any time of the day or night.

(f) The National Institute of Social Defence (NISD), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment organized various training/sensitization programmes for implementation of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 during 2003-04 and 2004-05, the details of which are as under:

Training Programmes for	2003-04		2004-05	
	No. of training programmes	No. of personnel trained	No. of training programmes	No. of personnel trained
Police	2	100	1	50
Judiciary—including Members of Juvenile Justice Board	11	310	5	137
Government functionaries (Social & Child Welfare)	8	253	2	55
Non-Government functionaries	17	614	7	248

<i>Statement</i>			
Sl.No.	City/District	1	2
1	2	19.	Vijaywada
		20.	Kochi
1.	Mumbai	21.	Guwahati
2.	Hyderabad	22.	Lucknow
3.	Delhi	23.	Vishakhapatnam
4.	Nagpur	24.	Baroda
5.	Kolkata	25.	Alwar
6.	Chennai	26.	Kutch
7.	Patna	27.	Pune
8.	Coimbatore	28.	Mangalore
9.	Bhopal	29.	Shillong
10.	Jaipur	30.	Trichy
11.	Varanasi	31.	Chandigarh
12.	Goa	32.	Allahabad
13.	Thiruvananthapuram	33.	Ranchi
14.	Cuttack	34.	Salem
15.	Puri	35.	Kozhikode
16.	Bhubaneswar	36.	Madurai
17.	Indore	37.	Kalyan
18.	Ahmedabad	38.	Udaipur

1	2
39.	Bangalore
40.	Wayanad
41.	Imphal
42.	Thrissur
43.	Thirunelveli
44.	West Medinipur
45.	Sholapur
46.	New Jalpaiguri
47.	Purva Medinipur
48.	Agartala
	South 24 Parganas
49.	Diamond Harbour
50.	Nadia
51.	Amravati
52.	Aurangabad
53.	Ahmednagar
54.	Nasik
55.	Ujjain
56.	Akola
57.	Kota
58.	Rourkela
59.	Murshidabad
60.	Port Blair
61.	Nagapattinam
62.	Karaikal

[Translation]

Contingency Plan to Deal with National Calamities

1295. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways has proposed any 'contingency plan' for providing immediate assistance to tackle national calamities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways has also constituted 'Rapid Action Task Force' to implement the said scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) 'Contingency Plan for Crisis Management' on Indian Railways has been made to deal with crisis situations affecting Railways which are given below:

(i) All India Railwaymen's strike;

(ii) Railway Accidents;

(iii) Hijacking of trains; and

(iv) External Aggression.

Respective Central Management Committees/National Crisis Management Committee comprising of concerned senior level officials of Ministry of Railways as well as other civil Ministries have been formed. The members of the committee function in liaison with each other during the above crisis situation. Ministry of Railways has also prepared Emergency Support Function Plan for providing rail transportation during national calamities under the overall co-ordination and directions of Ministry of Home Affairs.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Appointment of RTSA/RTA in Border States

1296. SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the distance areas of Boarder States face hardships for reservations in railways and some times suffer losses due to the system constrains on ticketing;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the Government has appointed rail Travellers' Service Agents and Rail Tourists Agents throughout the country;

(d) if so, whether such Agents have also been appointed in the Border State; and

(e) if not the reasons for reluctance in appointment of such agents in Boarder States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) For the convenience of the public, Railway has opened Computerised Passenger Reservation System (PRS) in various parts of the country including Border States area of the country. Moreover, public can book their tickets on Internet in various parts of the country including Border States.

(c) to (e) Rail Travellers Service Agents (RTSAs) and Rail Tourist Agents (RTAs) have been appointed in various parts of the country including border States depending upon the reservation workload.

Air Proximity Incident

1297. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV:
SHRI SUKDEO PASWAN:
SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether on Republic-Day rehearsal, Air Force Sukhoi Aircraft has violated the order which was resulted near collision with Air India plane in mid-air near Alwar on January 23, 2005;

(b) if so, whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard;

(c) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(d) the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) A Su-30 aircraft of the Indian Air Force and an Airbus A-310 of Air India came close to each other during the rehearsal of the Republic Day parade on 23rd January, 2005.

The matter is under investigation with the Director General, Civil Aviation (DGCA)/Ministry of Civil Aviation. Officers from the Indian Air Force are also participating. The report is yet to be submitted by the DGCA.

Theft of Buddha's Idol from Museum

1298. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:
SHRI UDAY SINGH:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a rare, sandstone head of Buddha, brought from Sarnath was stolen from the Kolkata museum's Archaeology Long Gallery;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any enquiry in the matter;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken thereon; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to stop the recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. One sculpture named 'Buddha Head (Samath)' was found missing from the Archaeological Gallery of Indian Museum, Kolkata on 29th December, 2004. The matter has been referred to the Kolkata Police for investigation. After the incident the entire security system of Indian Museum has been further strengthened and additional CCTV have been installed with recording facilities. The Ministry has reviewed from time to time the security arrangements of all the museums and passed necessary directions. The Government has also constituted a Security Committee to look into the issues related to Museum Security, which has members from CISF and IB. The mandate of the committee is to review the existing policy and practices of selected museums, identify critical gaps, and to recommend minimum standard for Museum Security measures that are at par with International Standard. The Committee has already started functioning.

[Translation]

State-of-the-Art Communication System in Railways

1299. SHRI MUNSHI RAM:
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to develop a State-of-the-Art communication system in the

railways as reported in the *Rashtriya Sahara* dated January 16, 2005;

(b) if so, the funds sanctioned by the Government for the scheme;

(c) the names of the States in which the system is proposed to be introduced in the first phase; and

(d) the extent upto which the accidents on the tracks is likely to decline with the introduction of this system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Works for provision of Mobile Train Radio Communication (MTRC) system have been approved on 2415 Route Kilometres on selected routes of Northern, Eastern, East Central, North Central & North East Frontier Railways covering States of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir and Assam, at an estimated cost of Rs. 194.63 crore.

(d) This system will prove to be an useful telecommunication and safety aid between various operational and maintenance staff which will help in reducing accidents.

[English]

Procurement Policy

1300. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA:

SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI:

SHRI S.D. MANDLIK:

SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA:

SHRI K.S. RAO:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether under the present procurement policy, the purchase of weapons are being delayed abnormally;

(b) if so, the details of the present procurement policy and the reasons for delay;

(c) whether the Government proposes to remove the bottlenecks in the procurement system; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Procurement of Defence equipment by its very nature is a complex and intricate process. The Government constantly endeavour to expedite and accelerate the acquisition process. But in certain cases involving complex equipment, the process takes additional time to conduct technical evaluation, staff evaluation and trials where required. Defence Procurement Procedure, 2002 (Version June, 2003), lays down the steps that are required to be followed in regard to the procurement of equipment and weapons etc. The procedure is constantly reviewed by the Government with a view to modifying and streamlining the procedure as also to address any practical difficulty which the Services may face in the acquisition of required defence equipment.

Prices of Natural Gas

1301. SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the High-powered Committee of Ministers appointed by the Government to look into the issue regarding fixation/revision of prices of natural gas has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the salient features of the recommendations of Report;

(c) the follow-up action taken by the Government to implement the recommendations; and

(d) if not, the time by which the Committee is likely to submit its Report?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) Government have not laid down any time frame for the Group of Ministers to submit their report.

[Translation]

Outstanding Dues against UNO

1302. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any amount is to be paid by the United Nations Organisation to the Government for deployment of Indian Forces in UN Peacekeeping Mission;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons for outstanding such amount; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for early realisation of outstanding dues?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) India has been an active participant in peacekeeping operations conducted by the United Nations since 1950. For their services in UN Peacekeeping Missions, reimbursement is made by UN Headquarters towards troop cost, contingent owned equipment and for self sustaining items like office equipment, catering equipment, furniture etc. The process of reimbursement is that the UN carries out a verification of manpower and equipment deployed in the Mission Areas. Based on this verification, the reimbursement is calculated.

As on 28.2.2005, the following payments are due from the UN for ongoing Missions:

(i) Payment certified by the U.N.	—	US \$ 1,236,758.94
(ii) Payment yet to be certified by the U.N.	—	US \$ 50,092,985 (Approx.)

The balance outstanding dues for the missions that are already over and the troops are back in the country is US \$ 15,570,830.96 and Rupees 1,53,879,84/-.

The issue relating to payment of dues is constantly pursued with the UN through the Permanent Mission of India, New York.

[English]

Recruitment Offices

1303. SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria being adopted for selecting places for establishing Recruitment Offices for the Armed Forces;

(b) the details alongwith locations of Armed Forces Recruitment offices opened in the country during each of the last three years;

(c) the number of youths recruited in the Armed Forces during each of the last three years, State-wise and Force-wise;

(d) whether the Government proposes to establish Recruitment Offices for defence forces in the areas where traditional warrior communities live; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Statement-I is enclosed.

(b) While no recruitment office has been opened during the last three years in the Air Force and Navy; in the Army, new Branch Recruiting Offices (BROs) have been approved for opening at Cuddapah (Andhra Pradesh), Aizawl (Mizoram), Behrampore (West Bengal), Udhampur (Jammu & Kashmir) and Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh) in 2004-2005. The Branch Recruitment Office at Behrampore has been opened in 2005.

(c) Statement-II enclosed.

(d) and (e) Recruitment in the defence forces is carried out of cover all areas in the country, including areas where traditional warrior communities live, in accordance with criteria placed at Statement-I enclosed.

Statement I

The criteria adopted for selecting places for establishing recruitment offices in the armed forces are as under:

In the Army:

- (i) Location, preferably in Military Stations.
- (ii) Proximity to the State/district administration.
- (iii) Availability of land/accommodation.
- (iv) Number of districts covered by the centre.
- (v) Communication facilities should be adequate.
- (vi) Adequacy of security arrangements.

In the Air Force:

The location and commitment of the nearest Airmen Selection Centre (ASC) and availability of accommodation and other support services in the proposed place are also taken into account.

In the Navy:

The recruitment of sailors into the Indian Navy is conducted by Naval Recruitment Organization under Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi. The criteria adopted for deciding the location of a recruitment examination centre are as under:

- (i) Convenience of candidates of a particular region;
- (ii) Availability of place and infrastructure for conducting recruitment test; and
- (iii) Number of applications from a particular region.

Statement II

Name of States/UTs	2002			2003			2004		
	Army	Navy	Air Force	Army	Navy	Air Force	Army	Navy	Air Force
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Andhra Pradesh	6614	323	268	7193	303	337	5648	317	748
Andaman & Nicobar	49	03	05	22	03	18	22	08	00
Assam	1555	27	20	1650	65	52	1618	55	36
Arunachal Pradesh	191	02	02	61	01	00	82	00	00
Bihar	5105	814	1762	6895	605	838	5707	588	2265
Chandigarh	11	01	12	07	00	00	04	01	02
Chhattisgarh	1030	14	10	1183	34	54	1072	21	16
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Daman & Diu	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Delhi	1210	82	74	1460	46	35	1388	43	40
Gujarat	1899	12	18	3656	14	03	2128	01	55
Goa	140	09	03	20	05	00	125	02	00
Haryana	3922	418	333	3099	674	168	2927	493	473
Himachal Pradesh	2747	59	45	2884	133	40	2336	99	79
Jammu & Kashmir	3638	66	47	4266	125	16	3261	55	297
Jharkhand	1574	56	234	1987	40	153	1715	34	230
Karnataka	3994	06	38	3077	39	16	4686	18	101
Kerala	3037	318	292	3529	229	242	2599	180	334
Lakshadweep	00	00	00	00	18	00	00	00	00
Madhya Pradesh	4084	41	60	4726	55	16	4011	68	103
Maharashtra	7998	103	36	10290	86	51	6723	80	60
Manipur	644	16	17	302	57	99	371	38	43

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Meghalaya	120	04	00	139	05	07	119	05	03
Mizoram	296	02	04	178	01	27	329	04	05
Nagaland	578	02	02	253	31	06	528	16	02
Orissa	1929	261	208	2460	247	54	1814	198	225
Pondicherry	06	03	01	23	01	01	06	00	02
Punjab	6995	59	32	5843	158	08	7944	101	71
Rajasthan	6595	229	211	7271	345	121	5566	371	420
Sikkim	62	15	02	64	13	00	64	15	02
Tamil Nadu	5462	61	82	5615	39	52	4492	49	127
Tripura	157	00	00	151	00	54	159	00	36
Uttar Pradesh	12562	598	1352	16442	629	680	12650	656	848
Uttaranchal	5966	95	149	3698	88	195	4077	75	200
West Bengal	4760	133	149	5417	129	92	4258	193	217
Nepal	1880	01	00	1542	01	00	1412	00	00
Total	96810	3833	5468	105421	4201	3435	89841	3784	7040

[Translation]

Culture Based Programmes

1304. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to allot daily time slot on the National channels of Doordarshan for telecasting of culture based programmes to keep the Indian culture intact and to attract the youths towards it;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to make special programme through the Doordarshan in order to attract the new generation towards the Indian culture; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI

S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) Prasar Bharati, a statutory, autonomous corporation, has informed that programmes highlighting Indian culture have been, and will continue to be a regular part of Doordarshan's programme schedule of its National Channels. Prasar Bharati has informed that some of the programmes currently being telecast on DD-I and DD-Bharati are "National programme of music", "National programme of dance", "Swaranjali", "Sur Sangam" and "Kala Parikrama" which are concerning music, dance, light classical music and cultural round up.

Addition/Deletion of Castes in SC List

1305. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to bring any comprehensive Bill regarding all matter relating to addition and deletion of name of castes in SCs list immediately;

(b) whether the Government has received any suggestion or request from Hon'ble Members of Parliament or other Social Organisation in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) to (d) No Sir. The Government has approved 'modalities' for the processing of proposals for addition and deletion of castes in the list of Scheduled Castes. These modalities are specific and clear. The requests were made by Members of Parliament during discussion in Parliament on the Constitution (Scheduled Casts and Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Amendment) Bill, 2002 and the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order ((Amendment) Bill, 2002 and through a point raised under Rule 377 during the year 2004 to introduce a comprehensive Bill with regard to all cases of inclusion/exclusion in the list of Scheduled Castes.

[English]

Grants to Non-Official Institutions for Blind

1306. SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the guidelines for giving grant-in-aid to non-official institutions for blind are changed frequently causing delay in receiving grant-in-aid;

(b) if so, the details of guidelines and when they were issued;

(c) whether there is any proposal to enhance the honorarium last fixed in 1999-2000 for the employees working in these institutions; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) and (b) No frequent change has been made in the guidelines on Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (formerly the Scheme to Promote Voluntary Action for Persons with Disabilities) under which grant-in-aid is given to various non-Governmental organizations including non-official institutions for blind. However, the item-wise cost norms for funding various projects including the projects for blind under the scheme were rationalized/revised and made

applicable from 1.4.2003. The revised guidelines in this connection were issued in March 2003. The details of the revised guidelines are available on the website of the Ministry www.socialjustice.nic.in.

(c) and (d) The revised item-wise cost norms including the rate of honorarium to staff were made applicable only from 1.4.2003. There is no proposal to revise them.

[Translation]

Procurement of Composite Brake Blocks

1307. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the C&AG Report No. 8 of 2004 (Railways) wherein it has been observed that Railway Board failure in analysing the reasonableness of rates and availing of lower rates resulted in extra expenditure of Rs. 7.10 crore on procurement of Composite Brake Blocks;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The facts are:

(i) Whenever a new technology is developed, initially the rates are generally high as Research & Development cost is amortised on the product cost over a period of time. In view of the substantial investment in machinery & plant, testing equipments and transfer of technology fee etc., it is generally not possible to make reputed companies to agree to do business without commitment for some assured business.

(ii) Normally, the lowest rate of established/regular suppliers is counter offered to the likely Suppliers.

(c) The observations made in the Report are considered factually and logically incorrect for which the Action Taken Note has been sent to Comptroller & Auditor General of India (C&AG) However, subsequent observations made by the C&AG are being replied.

*[English]***Guidelines for Heritage Sites**

1308. SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to formalise new guidelines for heritage sites;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the views of the State Governments have been ascertained with regard to the inclusion of the various sites located in their respective jurisdiction; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, monument/sites which are of historical, archaeological or artistic importance and which have been in existence for not less than 100 years are protected as monuments of national importance by the Central Government under the relevant provision of the Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

For containing illegal mining/unauthorized construction in the prohibited/regulated area of the monuments of national importance, some basic guidelines have been formulated by an expert committee of the Archaeological Survey of India, and a notification to that effect has been issued in June, 1992.

(c) and (d) The protection of the monuments of national importance is made in accordance with the provisions of Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. Under the prescribed procedure, the objections/views of all interested parties including the State Government are considered before notifying various sites/monuments as national monuments under the act.

*[Translation]***Oil from 'Ratan Jyot' as Bio-Diesel**

1309. SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIYA:
SHRI Y.G. MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been conducted by the Government for using oil extracted from a plant named 'Ratan Jyot' as a bio-diesel in vehicles;

(b) if so, the results thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Under instructions from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to the Oil Marketing Companies in the public sector, field trials of bio-diesel [*inter-alia* using bio-diesel from Ratan Jyot (*Jatropha Curcas*)] and diesel blend in buses are in progress in collaboration with Haryana Roadways and the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking (BEST), Mumbai. Field trials and engine tests on locomotives are also in progress. So far the trials have shown positive results. Indian Railways also conducted a field trial of bio-diesel provided by IOC R&D (5% bio-diesel in diesel) in Amritsar-Delhi Shatabdi Express on 31st December, 2002, which was found successful.

*[English]***Commission on Sale of Petrol and Diesel**

1310. SHRI TUKARAM GANGADHAR GADAKH:
SHRI RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of Commission given to dealers on sale of Petrol and Diesel at present;

(b) whether the Government is considering to increase the percentage of commission on sale of petrol and diesel; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The dealers' commission on sale of petrol and diesel is not paid in percentage terms but at specific rates.

The current rate of dealers' commission on petrol and diesel are given as under:

Rs./KL

	Petrol	Diesel
Dealers' Commission	707	425
In addition to dealer commission, reimbursement is made to dealers at following rates:		
Demand Draft Charges or	58	34
Pay Order/Banker's Cheque charges	29	17
Licence Fee Recovery (LFR) is recovered at following rates:		
Site 'A' Retail Outlets	43	36
Site 'B' Retail Outlets	13	11

(b) and (c) A Committee of Directors (Marketing) of Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have submitted a report on revision of dealers' commission on petrol & diesel and other related issues. Government are examining their recommendations.

Disturbances during Telecasting of Republic Day Parade

1311. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of regular disturbances during telecast of Republic Day Parade, 2005 both in picturisation and sound;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any enquiry in the matter; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Prasara Bharati has informed that no such disturbance was noticed in the video/audio signals of the said telecast down-linked via INSAT 2E/3C, during the telecast of Republic Day Parade.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Allotment of Seats/Berths under Tatkal Reservation Scheme

1312. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether 10 per cent of seats in all coaches are allotted under the Tatkal Reservation Scheme instead of an additional coach thereby reducing the number of seats on regular quota; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to mitigate the sufferings of genuine passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Total quota meant for passengers at counter has not been reduced. Both Tatkal and normal quotas are given at the counter and are meant for the benefit of passengers. Tatkal quota scheme was introduced for catering to the needs of those passengers who were required to travel in emergent circumstances. Any unutilised Tatkal accommodation is released to waitlist passengers.

Exploration of Oil in Joint Venture with Norway

1313. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has a proposal for exploration of oil in joint venture/collaboration with Norway;

(b) if so, the oil blocks identified; and

(c) the terms and conditions laid down for offering oil blocks to Norway?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) There are no existing joint ventures with Norwegian companies for blocks in India. However, at the first meeting of the Indo-Norway Joint Working Group on Cooperation in the Hydro-Carbon sector

held in New Delhi on 2 December, 2004, both sides agreed that there were ample opportunities for cooperation in the Exploration & Production sector in Norway, India and possibility in third countries, and agreed to facilitate commercial discussions between companies from both sides for commercial partnership arrangements and exchange of technology. It is hoped that Norwegian companies will consider bidding for the blocks on offer under New Exploration Licensing Policy-V (NELP-V) or for pre-NELP, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) blocks, either in their own or through joint ventures. The outcome will be known when bids for NELP-V close on 31 May, 2005.

Development of Airports

1314. SHRI RAJESH VERMA:
SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIYA:
SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR:
SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of on-going projects for development of various airports, both national and international level in the country;

(b) the details of target set for completing these airports; and

(c) the funds allocated and released for the purpose, Airport-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The development/upgradation/improvement of airports in the country is an ongoing process and is taken up as per plans depending upon the traffic demand and availability of resources. Various projects relating to construction and extension of terminal buildings and extension and strengthening of runways and associated works and construction of cargo complex etc. have been undertaken on requirement basis at Hyderabad, Vishakhapatnam, Dibrugarh, Gaya, Ahmedabad, Porbandar, Surat, Vadodara, Srinagar, Mangalore, Bangalore, Calicut, Agatti, Khajuraho, Coimbatore, Mumbai, Amritsar, Trichy, Madurai and Kolkata airports. Target set for completion of development work is March, 2005 for Khajuraho, June 2005 for Hyderabad, Porbandar, Mumbai, Amritsar and Coimbatore, July 2005 for Ahmedabad and Vadodara, September 2005 for Trichy, October 2005 for

Mangalore, December 2005 for Vishakhapatnam, Dibrugarh, Gaya, Surat and Calicut, June 2006 for Madurai, September 2006 for Agatti, December 2006 for Srinagar and Kolkata airports. Besides, construction of building for GAGAN project has also been undertaken at Bangalore airport for which target set for completion is December 2005.

(c) Fund allocated and fund released upto January 2005 in crores of rupees at above airports are as under: Hyderabad (69.69, 34.00), Vishakhapatnam (159.00, 55.37), Dibrugarh (14.00, 0.00), Gaya (44.52, 23.94), Ahmedabad (46.09, 18.96), Porbandar (8.72, 3.04), Surat (17.73, 2.33), Vadodara (24.75, 3.73), Srinagar (56.57, 2.79), Mangalore (40.60, 9.48), Bangalore (27.89, 1.40), Calicut (48.45, 3.58), Agatti (5.90, 0.00), Khajuraho (21.78, 16.29), Mumbai (112.81, 12.72), Amritsar (79.27, 55.11), Coimbatore (20.84, 8.67), Trichy (25.93, 2.08), Madurai (35.25, 0.00) and Kolkata (14.58, 8.50) respectively.

[*Translation*]

Utilisation of Unused Airstrips

1315. SHRI DEVIDAS PINGLE:
DR. M. JAGANNATH:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of airstrips lying unused in the country as on date and the reasons for keeping them unused;

(b) the amount being spent on the maintenance of these airstrips annually;

(c) whether the Government has formulated any scheme for maintenance of such airstrips and their utilisation at State level; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Number of airstrips lying unused in the country State-wise is as under: Mizoram-1, Maharashtra-3, West Bengal-5, Chhattisgarh-1, Jharkhand-1, Andhra Pradesh-4, Gujarat-1, Karnataka-2, Uttar Pradesh-2, Orissa-1, Bihar-3, Tripura-3, Madhya Pradesh-3, Arunachal Pradesh-1, Assam-2 and Tamil Nadu-1 respectively. Non-commitment of scheduled airlines to operate their services, airport being unfit for operations etc. are the reasons for not utilizing these airports.

(b) An amount of Rs. 128.82 lakhs has been spent in 2003-04 towards maintenance of these airstrips.

(c) and (d) Operationalisation of utilisation of unused airstrips are taken up by Airports Authority of India based on requirement by airlines for starting operations.

[English]

National Task Force on Disability

1316. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Society for Disability and Rehabilitation Studies had demanded for setting up of a National Task Force on Disability;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken by the Government thereon; and

(c) the other steps taken by the Government to frame policy on disabilities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) and (b) A Memorandum dated 17.1.2005 from the Society for Disability and Rehabilitation Studies regarding implementation of ten-point charter of demands for promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities has been received. The charter of demands cover a wide range of issues, including the setting up of a National Task Force on Disability.

(c) A draft National Policy for persons with Disabilities has been sent to the concerned Central Ministries/ Departments for their comments, before finalization.

[Translation]

Ban on Travelling with Platform Tickets in Trains

1317. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has imposed ban on travelling with platform tickets in trains as reported in '*Rashtriya Sahara*' dated January 09, 2005; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The boarding procedure from intermediate stations for passengers, who do not possess any waitlisted or reserved ticket, has been slightly modified with effect from 1st January, 2005 according to which such passengers will purchase the journey ticket for 1st/2nd class depending upon the class in which they desire to travel instead of purchasing the platform ticket as earlier. There is no change in boarding procedure for those passengers who possess reserved/

waitlisted tickets. These modifications were made in the administrative interest.

[English]

National Media Policy

1318. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:
SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:
SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to formulate National Media Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be formulated?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Due to rapid changes in the spheres of technology and economy, it is felt that a static Media Policy would be inadequate to meet the requirement of the dynamic situation. Government has been responding in terms of policy decisions required to meet the challenges of changing requirements, from time to time.

Reservation Upgradation from Lower to Upper Class

1319. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the commuters have been affected by the new policy of denying reservation upgradation from lower to upper class;

(b) if so the reasons for removal of the earlier policy in this regard; and

(c) the extent of loss suffered by the Railway due to this move?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. There is no change in instructions regarding reservation upgradation from lower to upper class.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Hostels and Schools/Residential Schools for SCs, and OBCs

1320. SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD:
SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDLIKRAO GAWALI:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of proposals received from various State Governments/Union Territory Administrations and NGOs for construction of hostels and establishment of schools/residential schools for SCs and OBCs students during 2004-05 and the funds allocated and released thereunder State/Union Territory-wise and NGO-wise;

(b) the funds actually utilized in this regard during the said period, State/Union Territory-wise and NGO-wise;

(c) the number of Scheduled Castes and OBCs students benefited under the schemes, State/Union Territory-wise;

(d) the details of proposals/applications pending with the Union Government in this regard, State/Union Territory-wise alongwith the reasons therefor;

(e) the time by which the same are likely to be cleared and the funds released;

(f) whether there is involvement of officials in large scale corruption in allocation of funds under the schemes; and

(g) if so, the number of cases reported in this regard and the action taken against guilty officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) to (c) The details of proposals received from various State Governments/UT Administrations seeking Central assistance during the year 2004-05 under the Schemes of (i) Hostels for Scheduled Caste Girls and Boys; (ii) Hostels for OBC

Girls and Boys; and (iii) Scheme of grant-in-aid to voluntary organizations working for Scheduled Castes (for Schools/Residential Schools) are given in the Statement-I enclosed. There is no provision for State/Union Territory-wise and NGO-wise allocation of funds under these schemes.

The details regarding State/Union Territory-wise release of funds during the year 2004-05 alongwith anticipated beneficiaries under the scheme of (i) Hostels for SC Girls and Boys and (ii) Hostels for OBC Girls and Boys are given in the enclosed Statement-II and III respectively. However, there is no release of funds to NGOs under the scheme of grants-in-aid to voluntary organizations working for Scheduled Castes. The schemes envisage construction of hostels within a period of five years.

(d) The proposals of State Government/UT Administrations under the said schemes are pending with the Union Government for want of certain documents and other reasons mentioned at Statement-I enclosed.

(e) The proposals under the Schemes of Hostels for SC and OBC boys and girls would be considered on receipt of complete requisite documents/clarifications from the State Governments/UT Administrations concerned and subject to availability of funds. Likewise the proposals of the NGOs working for Scheduled Castes (for Schools/Residential Schools) would also be considered on first-cum-first serve basis and the pending proposals would be considered accordingly.

(f) No such instances have been brought to the notice of the Ministry.

(g) Does not arise.

Statement I

Sl.No.	Name of the Scheme	Proposals received from the State Governments/UT Administrations/NGOs (received through State Governments) during the year 2004-05 (Till 7.3.2005)	Details of proposals/applications of State Governments/UT Administrations/NGOs (received through State Governments) pending with the Union Government (Till 7.3.2005)	Reasons for pendency
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Hostels for SC	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh,	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh	For want of requisite documents/information like site plan, availability of land, detailed cost estimate, CPWD/State PWD certificate,

1	2	3	4	5
	Girls and Boys	Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Pondicherry.	Uttarakhand and Pondicherry.	State matching share and physical and financial progress reports as well as paucity of funds.
2.	Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Hostels for OBC Boys and Girls	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Pondicherry.	Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala and Manipur.	For want of requisite documents/information like site plan, detailed cost estimate, CPWD/State PWD certificate, State matching share and physical and financial progress reports as well as paucity of funds.
3.	Scheme of grants-in-aid to voluntary organizations working for Scheduled Castes	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand (for Schools/Residential Schools).	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand (for Schools/Residential Schools).	Due to consideration of the proposals on first-cum-first serve basis.

Statement II

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl.No.	States/UTs	Girls Hostel		Boys Hostel	
		Funds released	Anticipated Beneficiaries	Funds released	Anticipated Beneficiaries
1.	Andhra Pradesh	675.00	5400	0	0
2.	Chhattisgarh	26.30	60	171.60	120
3.	Jharkhand	103.47	300	103.47	300
4.	Karnataka	150.1525	450	447.68	1150
5.	Kerala	128.21	280	24.00	30
6.	Tamil Nadu	0	0	1275.75	4050
7.	Tripura	58.835	66	0	0
8.	Uttarakhand	0	0	95.81	150
9.	Pondicherry	50.00	Arrear of 2003-04	0	0
Total		1191.97	6556	2118.31	5800

Statement III***Release of Funds under the Scheme of Hostels for OBCs Boys and Girls during 2004-05.***

Sl.No.	Name of the States/UTs	Funds released (Rs. in lakhs)	No. of students benefited	No. of Hostels sanctioned
1.	Andhra Pradesh	330.00	3000	30
2.	Assam	Due to paucity of funds proposal not considered		
3.	Bihar	Proposal not considered due to want of certain inputs <i>i.e.</i> utilization certificate, audited accounts for previous years and progress of hostels already sanctioned.		
4.	Chhattisgarh	132.67	300	4
5.	Gujarat	138.00	525	7
6.	Himachal Pradesh	42.00	60	1
7.	Jharkhand	96.57	300	6
8.	Kerala	State Government have not confirmed amount of State Share in their budget allocation 2004-05.		
9.	Karnataka	Proposal received in the month of Jan. 2005 till that time adequate fund in the budget is not available.		
10.	Madhya Pradesh	91.50	400	4
11.	Manipur	State Govt. have not furnished proposal alongwith relevant documents <i>i.e.</i> site plan, budget estimate, PWD certificate etc.		
12.	Pondicherry	50.0	50	1
13.	Tamil Nadu	157.50	500	10
14.	Uttar Pradesh	200	1020	13

*[Translation]***Modernisation of Azamgarh and Jaunpur Railway Stations**

1321. SHRI MUNAWAR HASSAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the category under which Azamgarh, Jaunpur Junction-Jaunpur (City) Railway stations under the North-Central Railway falls;

(b) whether the standard of facilities available at the said railway stations match the category they fall under;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps being taken by the Government for renovation and beautification of the dilapidated building of these stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The Azamgarh station of North Eastern Railway fall under 'A' category. Jaunpur Junction and Jaunpur City stations of Northern Railway fall under 'B' & 'D' category respectively.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) All the minimum essential amenities like Booking office, Drinking water, Waiting hall, Seating arrangement etc. as per norms and according to the category of stations are available at these stations.

(d) Do not arise.

(e) Station buildings of these stations are in satisfactory condition.

[English]

Taking of Photographs of Airports by Passengers

1322. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has allowed the passengers travelling by air to take photographs of the civil airports which they are using during their journeys;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has considered the security of the country before giving such permission;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to check the misuse of such photographs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Bonafide passengers have been permitted to take photographs at the terminals buildings of civil aerodromes and civil enclaves at Defence aerodromes.

(c) to (e) The restrictions on photography at airports had lost their rationale and become outdated following advancements in technology, including satellite-imaging etc. with which photographs can be taken from remote places. Besides, this has been done after consulting the concerned security agencies/organizations. As suggested by Ministry of Defence, passengers are not allowed to take photograph at Defence aerodromes except civil enclaves.

Financial Irregularities

1323. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the matter of some Army Officers having alleged to have destroyed sensitive documents and files pertaining to financial irregularities has come to the notice of the Government;

(b) if so, whether any inquiry has been conducted into the matter;

(c) if so, the outcome thereof;

(d) the action taken against officials found guilty; and

(e) the steps being taken to avoid recurrence of such cases in future?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) A Court of Inquiry has found a Lieutenant Colonel and a Colonel (since retired) responsible for breach of security and violation of certain rules and regulations. An attachment order has been issued in February, 2005 for proceeding with disciplinary action against the Lieutenant Colonel. A criminal case against the Colonel, who has retired, will be filed after completion of disciplinary action against the Lieutenant Colonel.

(e) A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been issued to tighten the security procedure in the Military Farm Directorate.

News Papers from J&K

1324. SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the names of newspapers and daily/weekly from Jammu and Kashmir registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India (RNI);

(b) the names of Newspapers, which are getting advertisements from DAVP and the amount released to each of the newspapers during the last three years;

(c) whether request for advertisements of some of newspapers from Jammu & Kashmir are pending with DAVP;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which advertisements for these newspapers are likely to be released by DAVP? ,

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The list containing 92 dailies and 278 weeklies from the Jammu and Kashmir State registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India (RNI) is given in the Statement-I enclosed.

(b) The names of Newspapers, which are getting advertisements from DAVP and the amount released to them during the last three years is given in the Statement-II enclosed.

(c) to (e) Government Advertisements are not released on the basis of requests made by the Newspapers. Government advertisements to the newspapers are released subject to their fulfilment of stipulated requirements indicated in the 'Advertisement Policy of Government of India and Guidelines for empanelment of Newspapers with DAVP'.

Statement I

Sl.No.	Name of Newspaper	Periodicity
1	2	3
1.	Daily Aftab Srinagar	Daily
2.	Martand	Daily
3.	News	Daily
4.	Chinar	Daily
5.	Wular	Daily
6.	Sada E Jamhoor	Daily
7.	Shankh Dhun	Daily
8.	Kashmir Times	Daily
9.	Khidmat	Daily
10.	Imarat	Daily
11.	Qaumi Awaz	Daily
12.	Hamdard	Daily
13.	Naya Sansar	Daily
14.	Political Times	Daily
15.	Pabandi	Daily
16.	Excelsior	Daily

1	2	3
17.	Taskeen	Daily
18.	Muntizar Bazhari Hind	Daily
19.	Morning Times (The)	Daily
20.	Teevra Yug	Daily
21.	Nawa I Shubh	Daily
22.	Wadi Ki Awaz	Daily
23.	Sitara Voice	Daily
24.	Afaq Srinagar	Daily
25.	Kashmir Numa	Daily
26.	Glimpses of Future	Daily
27.	Sach	Daily
28.	Mother-E-Hind	Daily
29.	Maal Dev	Daily
30.	Nav Jammu	Daily
31.	Ak Rijal	Daily
32.	Dogra News	Daily
33.	Greater Kashmir	Daily
34.	Alsafa News	Daily
35.	Lazawal	Daily
36.	Mansar	Daily
37.	Daily Sandesh	Daily
38.	Rahe Manzil	Daily
39.	Airport Times	Daily
40.	Nawa-I-Waqt Azeem	Daily
41.	Barqi Duniya	Daily
42.	Bahar E Kashmir	Daily
43.	Awami Tanqeed	Daily
44.	Jasarat	Daily
45.	Nida I Mashriq	Daily
46.	Jeehad-E-Akhbar	Daily
47.	Tawi Samachar	Daily

1	2	3
48.	Tasweer I Kashmir	Daily
49.	Gulami Ko Door Karo	Daily
50.	Iqbal-E-Kashmir	Daily
51.	The Mirror of Kashmir	Daily
52.	Barg-E-Chinar	Daily
53.	Subah Kashmir	Daily
54.	Wadi Ki Khabar	Daily
55.	Payame Jamhoor	Daily
56.	Uqab	Daily
57.	Sadaqat Rehbar	Daily
58.	Pakiza Tasveer	Daily
59.	The Himalayan Mail	Daily
60.	State Times	Daily
61.	Gardish	Daily
62.	Wadi-E-Gulposh	Daily
63.	The Bismark	Daily
64.	Shahanshah	Daily
65.	The Kashmir Monitor	Daily
66.	Kashmir Observer	Daily
67.	The Northlines	Daily
68.	Journey Line	Daily
69.	Kashmir Express	Daily
70.	Indian Express	Daily
71.	Shiv Times	Daily
72.	Views Today	Daily
73.	Ujale Darechay	Daily
74.	New State Reporter	Daily
75.	JK Prehary	Daily
76.	Srinagar Mail	Daily
77.	Mission Kashmir	Daily
78.	Kashmir Focus	Daily

1	2	3
79.	Aayeena Kashmir	Daily
80.	Views Today	Daily
81.	Trikuta Times	Daily
82.	Vyeth	Daily
83.	Early Times	Daily
84.	Pir Panchal News Line	Daily
85.	Rehmet The	Daily
86.	Rajdhani Evening News	Daily
87.	Tameel-I-Irshad	Daily
88.	Shiv Times	Daily
89.	Nav Jammu	Daily
90.	Voice of Silence	Daily
91.	Nav Jammu	Daily
92.	Latest The	Daily
93.	Visasta	Weekly
94.	Economic Post	Weekly
95.	Hamara Kashmir	Weekly
96.	Nawai Kashmir	Weekly
97.	Sal Sabeel	Weekly
98.	Jehlum	Weekly
99.	Udhampur Samachar	Weekly
100.	Crterlon	Weekly
101.	Kashmir This Week	Weekly
102.	Al Ghufuran	Weekly
103.	Hamayat	Weekly
104.	Kashmir Vishwa Kalyan	Weekly
105.	Pasmandagi	Weekly
106.	Zamindar	Weekly
107.	Gujjar	Weekly
108.	Iqbal	Weekly
109.	Wagt	Weekly

1	2	3
110.	Awami Liehar	Weekly
111.	Rahmuma	Weekly
112.	Syasat	Weekly
113.	Tawi Gazzete	Weekly
114.	Chaman	Weekly
115.	Itgad	Weekly
116.	Cooperation Bulletin	Weekly
117.	Gulbang	Weekly
118.	Awaze Haq	Weekly
119.	Arya Mission	Weekly
120.	Jammu Post	Weekly
121.	Carvan-I-Hayat	Weekly
122.	Transport and Driver Gazette	Weekly
123.	Kashmir Mail	Weekly
124.	Muzter	Weekly
125.	Hamara Watan	Weekly
126.	Hamzuban	Weekly
127.	Lok Awaz	Weekly
128.	Pragash	Weekly
129.	Log Yug	Weekly
130.	Payam-I-Inqilab	Weekly
131.	Azan	Weekly
132.	Chenab The	Weekly
133.	Armughan	Weekly
134.	Kashmir Post	Weekly
135.	Ranbir	Weekly
136.	Nawai Duggar	Weekly
137.	Vaadi	Weekly
138.	Jahan-I-Nav	Weekly
139.	Sevak	Weekly
140.	Humwatan	Weekly

1	2	3
141.	Jawahar Nagar	Weekly
142.	Jammu Samachar	Weekly
143.	Builders	Weekly
144.	Jammu Leader	Weekly
145.	Rahnuma-I-Qoum	Weekly
146.	Kashmir Tanzeem	Weekly
147.	Young Era	Weekly
148.	Democrat	Weekly
149.	Uljh-Anen	Weekly
150.	BT-Litz Krieg	Weekly
151.	Tarjamanul Haq	Weekly
152.	Hajawor Reformer	Weekly
153.	Presagar	Weekly
154.	Jammu Express	Weekly
155.	Sarchashma-E-Hayat	Weekly
156.	Al Bian	Weekly
157.	Mazloomen Ki Faryad	Weekly
158.	Student Express	Weekly
159.	Sada-I-Kashmir	Weekly
160.	Diarah	Weekly
161.	Sharda	Weekly
162.	Chand (The)	Weekly
163.	Aina	Weekly
164.	Awami Daur	Weekly
165.	Naya Walwala	Weekly
166.	Jaqnaza-E-Haq	Weekly
167.	Azad	Weekly
168.	Jammu Times	Weekly
169.	Kamama	Weekly
170.	Koh Himaliya	Weekly
171.	Jado Jihad	Weekly

1	2	3
172.	Everest Times	Weekly
173.	Be Rehm	Weekly
174.	Advice	Weekly
175.	Sher-I-Duggar	Weekly
176.	Shere-I-Jammu	Weekly
177.	Esquire	Weekly
178.	Taj Weez	Weekly
179.	Sports Columns	Weekly
180.	Kashmir Transport	Weekly
181.	Khilt Phool	Weekly
182.	To Gulstan Hamara	Weekly
183.	Taloo A Sahar	Weekly
184.	Duggar Desh	Weekly
185.	Matkar	Weekly
186.	Preet	Weekly
187.	Yog	Weekly
188.	Prahaad-I-Jadid	Weekly
189.	Subha Ki Shogofa	Weekly
190.	Zewar-E-Jaalim	Weekly
191.	Sada-E-Jammu	Weekly
192.	Awaz-Eh-Jammu	Weekly
193.	Taraj Mame Duggar	Weekly
194.	Srinagar Express	Weekly
195.	Akhbar-I-Am	Weekly
196.	Kashmir Herald	Weekly
197.	Valley Times	Weekly
198.	Jan Shakti	Weekly
199.	Charhta Suraj	Weekly
200.	Voice of the Day	Weekly
201.	Duggarastau	Weekly
202.	Duggarastau	Weekly

1	2	3
203.	Muhafiz	Weekly
204.	Azad Hind	Weekly
205.	New Style (The)	Weekly
206.	Indian Times	Weekly
207.	Rajasaapta	Weekly
208.	Call of Nation	Weekly
209.	Sairbeen	Weekly
210.	Meer-E-Karwan	Weekly
211.	Himalayan Herald	Weekly
212.	Srinagar News	Weekly
213.	Kashmir Feature Service	Weekly
214.	Shiv Jyoti	Weekly
215.	Durast News	Weekly
216.	Gul-E-Khandan	Weekly
217.	Barg-I-Sabz	Weekly
218.	Awami Adalat	Weekly
219.	Huqbeen	Weekly
220.	Budshah	Weekly
221.	Awaz-E-Jahan	Weekly
222.	Awami Rabita	Weekly
223.	Tarjuman-E-Sahar	Weekly
224.	Nasiat	Weekly
225.	Frogh-I-Watan	Weekly
226.	Nok-E-Kalam	Weekly
227.	Shagaf	Weekly
228.	Sunehri Shua	Weekly
229.	Industry in J&K	Weekly
230.	Noor Ul Sabha	Weekly
231.	Dehati Samachar	Weekly
232.	Paristan Times	Weekly
233.	Chattan	Weekly

1	2	3
234.	Charag-I-Arzoo	Weekly
235.	Kasheer	Weekly
236.	Hilarious	Weekly
237.	Nayi Nazar Naya Zaviye	Weekly
238.	Slamti	Weekly
239.	Trikuta Express	Weekly
240.	Attam Videya	Weekly
241.	Rajouri Times	Weekly
242.	Apna Parcham	Weekly
243.	Jammu Today	Weekly
244.	View Window	Weekly
245.	Jawi Dan	Weekly
246.	Weekly Srinagar	Weekly
247.	Be Kafan Janaza	Weekly
248.	Nawa-I-Subh	Weekly
249.	Logo Ke Haqook	Weekly
250.	Sher A Bharat	Weekly
251.	The Martand	Weekly
252.	Srinagar Bulletin	Weekly
253.	Trikuta Express	Weekly
254.	Srinagar Al Fatah	Weekly
255.	Azhawar	Weekly
256.	Baaz Gasht	Weekly
257.	Akhbar Shola	Weekly
258.	Shaheen Kashmir	Weekly
259.	Mera Khayal	Weekly
260.	JK Post	Weekly
261.	Chashm-E-Beena	Weekly
262.	Aab Gina	Weekly
263.	Akhbar-E-Kashmir	Weekly
264.	Bafraan	Weekly

1	2	3
265.	Jammu Panoramama	Weekly
266.	Equinox	Weekly
267.	Ishaet	Weekly
268.	Kashmir Saffron Times	Weekly
269.	Jusarat	Weekly
270.	Tawi Times	Weekly
271.	The Commoners View Point	Weekly
272.	Nigahvan	Weekly
273.	Sada-E-Shitaj	Weekly
274.	Jammu Charcha	Weekly
275.	Lal Chowk Times	Weekly
276.	Arjan Bani	Weekly
277.	Alamzeb	Weekly
278.	Roti Dunia	Weekly
279.	Sarwa-E-Gulistan	Weekly
280.	The Gypsy	Weekly
281.	Jabroot	Weekly
282.	Beenish	Weekly
283.	Dooran	Weekly
284.	Khak-I-Wattan	Weekly
285.	Kishtwar Times	Weekly
286.	Khatm A Nabuwat	Weekly
287.	Tafaqur	Weekly
288.	J K Post	Weekly
289.	Currents and Tender Currents	Weekly
290.	Shahenshah	Weekly
291.	Haque-Go	Weekly
292.	Kursi	Weekly
293.	Hil Post	Weekly
294.	People Times	Weekly
295.	Demo	Weekly

1	2	3
296.	The Jehlam Times	Weekly
297.	Khabhar O Nazar	Weekly
298.	The Sahayogi Times	Weekly
299.	Karwan Kashmir	Weekly
300.	Awami Mazin	Weekly
301.	Tafakur	Weekly
302.	Ishraq	Weekly
303.	The North Lines	Weekly
304.	Jannat A Kashmir	Weekly
305.	Kashmir Paradise	Weekly
306.	Suargam	Weekly
307.	The Border Line	Weekly
308.	Green Acres	Weekly
309.	Khush Go	Weekly
310.	News and Views Line	Weekly
311.	Srinagar Reporter	Weekly
312.	The Truth Line	Weekly
313.	Zodiac Times	Weekly
314.	Sight and Sound	Weekly
315.	Sad Rang Sahar	Weekly
316.	Jammu Ki Khabar	Weekly
317.	Gaulmik	Weekly
318.	Al-Atash	Weekly
319.	Parchoal	Weekly
320.	Bharat Ka Shaheed	Weekly
321.	Passban-I-Kashmir	Weekly
322.	Art and Literature	Weekly
323.	Amar	Weekly
324.	Zamin-E-Jannat	Weekly
325.	Heights of Life	Weekly

1	2	3
326.	J&K Prahari	Weekly
327.	Kashmir Images	Weekly
328.	Ahtisab	Weekly
329.	Sada-E-Kohsar	Weekly
330.	Al-Sidha	Weekly
331.	Nida-I-Bharat	Weekly
332.	Jammu Tawi	Weekly
333.	Bahu Times	Weekly
334.	Muballig	Weekly
335.	Kashf-UI-Qaloob	Weekly
336.	Muslim Kashmir The	
337.	Wattan	Weekly
338.	Kashmiryat	Weekly
339.	Politician Interview	Weekly
340.	Sarzameen	Weekly
341.	Shari-Nav	Weekly
342.	Rodadi Kashmir	Weekly
343.	Behbood-I-Hind	Weekly
344.	Kashmir Associates	Weekly
345.	Kashmir Winds The	Weekly
346.	Hitaishi	Weekly
347.	Bahu Express	Weekly
348.	Rehbar	Weekly
349.	Shahadat	Weekly
350.	Sacrifice The	Weekly
351.	Asian Express	Weekly
352.	Shabroz Times	Weekly
353.	Voice of Valley	Weekly
354.	State Samachar	Weekly
355.	Khurshid	Weekly
356.	Kashmir Info	Weekly

1	2	3
357.	Lok Shakti News	Weekly
358.	Great News Services	Weekly
359.	Valley Post	Weekly
360.	Qaumi Waqar	Weekly
361.	Dugger Voice The	Weekly
362.	J&K State Express	Weekly
363.	Prakarti Ka Sandesh	Weekly

1	2	3
364.	Street Voice	Weekly
365.	Amar Taranga	Weekly
366.	Barnihal Times	Weekly
367.	Voice of Kashmir	Weekly
368.	Vitasta Times	Weekly
369.	Dehat Sandesh	Weekly
370.	Guard The	Weekly

Statement II

*Amounts Committed to Newspapers/Periodicals Published from J&K During
Financial Years 2001-02, 2002-03 & 2003-04*

Sl.No.	Name of the Newspaper/Journal	City	Committed amount for Financial Year (in Rs.)		
			2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Excelsior, Eng/Dly (M)	Jammu	26,91,749	35,84,968	52,51,059
2.	Glimpses of Future, Eng/Dly (M)	Jammu	77,196	1,02,560	3,06,160
3.	Himalayan Mail, Eng/Dly (M)	Jammu	1,41,915	3,09,197	2,33,856
4.	Kashmir Times, Eng/Dly (M)	Jammu	44,76,908	45,48,039	49,13,249
5.	State Times, Eng/Dly (M)	Jammu	9,13,244	9,43,116	14,99,591
6.	Kashmir Times, Hin/Dly (M)	Jammu	10,99,427	14,64,302	23,25,259
7.	Barqi Dunia, Urd/Dly (M)	Jammu	5,57,040	6,22,206	7,22,964
8.	Pakiza Tasveer, Urd/Dly (M)	Jammu	6,023	—	—
9.	Sandesh, Urd/Dly (M)	Jammu	7,51,129	7,55,540	7,68,446
10.	Sharada, Urd/Dly (M)	Jammu	4,38,522	4,39,544	6,32,262
11.	Taskeen, Urd/Dly (E)	Jammu	9,77,023	12,64,028	24,06,758
12.	Nav-Jammu, Hin/Dly (E)	Jammu	4,70,479	—	—
13.	Muntizar Bahar-E-Hind, Urd/Dly (E)	Jammu	4,402	—	—
14.	Reformer, Urd/Weekly	Jammu	6,120	5,245	—
15.	Shiv Jyoti, Urd/Weekly	Jammu	6,120	9,393	3,273

1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	Sarapa Kashmir, Urd/Fortny	Jammu	6,120	1,836	—
17.	The Mirror of Kashmir, Eng/Dly (M)	Srinagar	1,78,171	2,15,291	—
18.	Alsafa News, Urd/Dly (M)	Srinagar	95,515	—	—
19.	Roshni, Urd/Dly (M)	Srinagar	1,06,435	2,77,043	5,04,292
20.	J&K Reporter, Eng/Monthly	Jammu	—	1,958	—
21.	The Kashmir Monitor, Eng/Dly (M)	Srinagar	—	1,36,035	9,40,515
22.	Journey Line, Eng/Dly (M)	Jammu	—	—	1,78,028
23.	Janat-E-Kashmir, Urd/Weekly	Jammu	—	—	4,509
24.	Srinagar News, Urd/Dly (M)	Srinagar	—	—	3,22,269

Unauthorised Petrol Pumps

1325. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government is aware that a large number of unauthorised petrol pumps and barrel points are operating in rural areas on the National Highways in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether the Union Government has recently directed the States/UTs to launch a drive against unauthorised petrol pumps and barrel points;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the role played by oil companies in detecting unauthorized petrol pumps in the country; and

(e) the action taken by the Government against the owners of unauthorized petrol pumps?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. Some State Governments such as Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal have issued licences for petty dealers or barrel storage points for retailing diesel in rural areas. As such permission is not in consonance with the provisions of Motor Spirit & High Speed Diesel Control Order, 1998, the matter is being brought to the attention of the State Governments concerned and Public Sector

Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have been asked to conduct a survey and identify such unauthorized pumps. OMCs have also been asked to expand their network to serve rural areas to cater to the demand of the agriculture sector.

Increase in Kerosene Quota for Andhra Pradesh

1326. SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Union Government for increase in the quota of Kerosene; and

(b) if so, the details thereof with the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. This Ministry has received representations from various State Governments/ Union Territories (UTs), including Andhra Pradesh, for the enhancement of their kerosene (SKO) quota.

(b) Additional allocations have been made to various States/UTs to meet their demand including an additional allocation of 12,101 Metric Tonnes (MTs) of SKO for the period January to March, 2005 to Andhra Pradesh. The Central Government have also commissioned the National Council of Applied Economic Research to undertake the first-ever detailed study of Kerosene demand in the country.

*[Translation]***Review of Schemes for SCs**

1327. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently reviewed the performance of present schemes related to assistance given to Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) engaged in welfare of Scheduled Castes;

(b) if so, the findings thereof and the changes needed for their better implementation;

(c) whether the Government has decided to spend the amount earmarked for the development of SCs on some other heads; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) and (b) The assistance is being given to Voluntary Organizations under the Scheme of grant in aid to Voluntary Organizations working for Scheduled Castes. The Scheme has not been reviewed recently.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

*[English]***Stake in Oil Companies**

1328. SHRI D. VITTAL RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) had held talks with Russia for picking up stake in assets of oil companies as reported in the *Hindu* dated January 11, 2005; and

(b) if so, the details of talks held so far and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI

SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) To enhance the country's energy security, ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) have been pursuing the acquisition of equity oil abroad, including Russia, as well as acquisition of oil and gas acreages and producing properties abroad.

Some preliminary discussions about possible areas of collaboration/participation, including acquisition of a stake in Yuganskneftegaz, as reported in the news-item, have been held between India and Russia at Ministerial, official and commercial levels.

Growth in Production of CPSEs

1329. SHRI RAJESH VERMA: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Public Enterprises have registered any growth in production during the recent years;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the value of the production thereof during the last three years;

(c) the percentage of the production as compared to GDP of the country; and

(d) the investment made by Government in the form of capital and loans in these enterprises during the said period, year-wise and PSU-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The value of production at current market prices in the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), as per PE Survey 2002-03 has recorded increase during the recent years *i.e.* 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03 as follows:

(Rs. in crore)		
Year	Value of production	% Increase
1999-00	400806	—
2000-01	464287	15.84%
2001-02	483558	4.15%
2002-03	556315	15.05%

(c) The percentage of Value of Production of CPSEs to GDP of the country at current market prices during last three years is as follows:

Year	% of Value of Production to GDP
2000-01	22.22%
2001-02	21.19%
2002-03	22.53%

(d) The investment made by Central Government in CPSEs during last three years in the form of equity and long-term loans is as follows:

(Rs. in crore)			
Year	Equity	Long Term Loans	Total
2000-01	2263	7464	9727
2001-02	14673	7642	22315
2002-03	4895	-1947	2948

The PSU-wise details regarding equity and long-term loans are available in Volume-I of PE Survey of respective years at statement No. 17 and 18B respectively.

Cess on Air Travel

1330. SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:
KUNWAR JITIN PRASAD:
SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to impose a cess on air travel to raise funds to finance airport modernisation project;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the annual estimated collection of cess the Government will get from such cess; and

(d) the name of the airports to be modernised from such cess collection?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) The framing of Airports Authority of India (Development Fee) Rules under Amended AAI Act of 2003 which, would *inter-alia*, provide for levying of a Development Fee from the Embarking passengers at an airport to be utilised for development and upgradation of airports is being formulated through inter-ministerial consultations.

World Heritage Sites

1331. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the places in India declared so far by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites;

(b) whether the Government has taken any steps to include more important sites in India in the World Heritage list; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Twenty six sites have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List from India. The details are given in the Statement-I enclosed.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. More sites have been included in the tentative list which is a prerequisite condition for inscription of a site on the World Heritage List. There are limitations in the number of nominations for inscription on World Heritage Site per year. The World Heritage Committee would consider a maximum of only two nominations from a State party in one year, of which at least one has to be in the natural category. The details of tentative list are given in the Statement-II enclosed.

Statement I

Details of Sites Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List

Cultural Sites

Sl.No.	Name of Site	State
1	2	3
1.	Ajanta Caves	Maharashtra
2.	Ellora Caves	Maharashtra

1	2	3
3.	Agra Fort	Uttar Pradesh
4.	Taj Mahal	Uttar Pradesh
5.	Sun Temple, Konark	Orissa
6.	Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram	Tamil Nadu
7.	Churches and Convents of Goa	Goa
8.	Group of Temples, Khajuraho	Madhya Pradesh
9.	Group of Monuments at Hampi	Karnataka
10.	Group of Monuments, Fatehpur Sikri	Uttar Pradesh
11.	Group of Temples, Pattadakal	Karnataka
12.	Elephants Caves	Maharashtra
13.	Great Living Chola Temples at Thanjavur, Gangaikondacholapuram and Darasuram	Tamil Nadu
14.	Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi	Madhya Pradesh
15.	Humayun Tomb, Delhi	Delhi
16.	Qutab Minar Complex, Delhi	Delhi
17.	Darjeeling Himalayan Railways	West Bengal
18.	Mahabodhi Temple Bodhgaya	Bihar
19.	Prehistoric Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka	Madhya Pradesh
20.	Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park	Gujarat
21.	Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (Formerly Victoria Terminus)	Maharashtra
Natural Sites		
22.	Kaziranga National Park	Assam
23.	Manas Wild Life Sanctuary	Assam
24.	Keoladeo National Park	Rajasthan
25.	Sunderban National Park	West Bengal
26.	Nanda Devi National Park	Uttaranchal

Statement II**Tentative List of Sites from India****Cultural Sites**

1. Ancient Buddhist Site, Samath, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
2. Buddhist Monastery Complex, Alchi, Leh known as Alchi Chos-kor
3. Dholavira: a Harappan City, Gujarat, Distt. Kachchh
4. Golconda Fort, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
5. Group of Monuments at Mandu, Madhya Pradesh
6. Hemis Gompa, Leh, Ladakh
7. Kalka Shimla Railway, Himachal Pradesh
8. Mattanchéry Palace, Ernakulam, Kerala
9. Rani ki Vav at Patan, Gujarat
10. River Island of Majuli in Midstream of Brahmaputra River in Assam
11. Sri Harimandir Sahib, Amritsar, Punjab
12. Temples at Bishnupur, West Bengal
13. The Nilgiri Mountain Railway
14. Tomb of Sher Shah Suri, Sasaram, Bihar

Natural Site

15. Valley of Flowers National Park.

Constitution of Committee to Study Hydrographic Features

1332. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to recent Tsunami, Seawater level had gone up in certain places and there had been dislocation of some other areas;

(b) if so, whether the Eastern Command of the Indian Navy has constituted a Committee to study the hydrographic features in the wake of the tsunami;

(c) if so, the details alongwith results of such study thereof; and

(d) the steps taken/being taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Initial studies by Survey of India have established that the sea-water level at Port Blair has risen by approximately 1 to 1.2 metres and the islands have horizontally shifted to the extent of 5 to 6 metres for Nicobar Islands and 2 to 3 metres for Andaman Islands.

(b) No such Committee has been constituted.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Three survey ships of Eastern Naval Command are undertaking hydrographic Surveys of six major harbours/ports in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands to collect fresh data.

[Translation]

Digging of Gas in Myanmar

1333. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC Videsh Ltd. and GAIL India have completed the digging work in Gas Block-A of Myanmar as reported in the 'Rashtriya Sahara' dated January 9, 2005;

(b) if so, whether GAIL has been awarded the status of first purchaser of the gas to be made available from the said block;

(c) if so, the estimated gas reserves in A-1 Block in million metric standard cubic metres per day;

(d) whether these companies are also engaged in digging and exploration work in other areas; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) In Block A-1, Myanmar, M/s. Daewoo International of Korea is the main Operator carrying out drilling operations, and ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL), Gail (India) Ltd. (GAIL) as well as KOGAS of Korea are the other non-operating partners. Gas was discovered in the first well drilled in June, 2004. Further drilling of 8 wells is planned.

(b) GAIL have the first right of refusal to market OVL's share of gas in term of their MoU with OVL, and under their agreement with Daewoo, enjoy the status of the most preferred buyer for Daewoo's share of gas in case such natural gas is sold to India. Ministry of Energy, Myanmar have also acknowledged GAIL as the preferential buyer of natural gas from A-1 block.

(c) The estimated gas reserves of Shwe prospect in Block A-1 are of the order of 4-6 Trillion Cubic Feet (TCF) with an estimated production rate of around 22-28 Million Standard Cubic Metre per day (MMSCMD).

(d) and (e) OVL currently have 14 overseas E&P Projects in 10 other countries including Russia, Vietnam, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Libya, Syria, Australia, Ivory Coast and Qatar. OVL have also been awarded one block in Egypt. At present, GAIL's only E&P Project is in Myanmar.

[English]

FWAIR/TV Centre at Border Areas

1334. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up new FM Radio and T.V. Transmitters/Stations in the border areas of the States situated at Indo-Pak and Indo-Bangladesh during 2005-06;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the places selected for the purpose particularly in Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) During 2005-2006, three HPT TV transmitter projects at Bikaner (Rajasthan), Radhanpur (Gujarat), Kurseong (West Bengal) and one LPT TV transmitter project at Ambassa (Tripura) are expected to be completed.

Six transmitters on the Indo-Pak Border and seven transmitters on the Indo-Bangladesh Border, as per details given below are proposed to be set up by All India Radio during the Tenth Five Year Plan. The implementation of

these schemes will, however, depend on the availability of funds and subject to approval.

I. Indo-Pak Border:

Chautan Hills (Raj.)—20kW FM Tr.

Fazilka (Punjab)—10kW FM Tr.

Amritsar (Punjab)—20kW FM Tr.

Ramgarh (Rajasthan)—20kW FM Tr.

Bikaner (Rajasthan)—10kW FM Tr.

Bhuj (Gujarat)—10kW FM Tr.

II. Indo-Bangladesh Border:

Silchar (Assam)—5kW FM Tr.

Karimganj (Assam)—1/5 kW FM Tr.

Dawki (Meghalaya)—1/5 kW FM Tr.

Nutan Bazar (Tripura)—1/5 kW FM Tr.

Cooch Bihar (West Bengal)—10kW FM Tr.

Balurghat (West Bengal)—10kW FM Tr.

Maldah (West Bengal)—10kW FM Tr.

[Translation]

Pilferage Incidents

1335. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the incidents of pilferage of goods have increased during the last three years at the time of loading and unloading of the goods at the yards;

(b) if so the number of cases reported during each of the last three years, Zone-wise;

(c) the number of persons/officials found guilty for such incidents; and

(d) the action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[English]

Luxury Tourist Trains

1336. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 2698 dated

December 16, 2004 regarding Luxury Tourist Trains in Kerala and other States and state:

(a) whether the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have sent their replies to the Union Government for introduction of luxury tourist trains linking their States;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the further action taken by the Union Government thereon;

(c) whether any proposal to start such luxury tourist trains in other States, particularly in Gujarat has also been received from respective State Governments;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether any feasibility study in this regard has been made;

(f) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(g) the decision taken by the Union Government on their proposals and the time by which the same is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (g) No, Sir. The Railways is yet to receive any reply from the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The proposal from the State of Gujarat, however, has not been found viable.

Exchange of Programmes with Film Societies

1337. SHRI SURESH KURUP: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any decision not to part the films in Film Archive, Pune with the various film societies in the country for shows;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government has any plan to exchange programmes with the film societies which played a major role in cultivating alternate film culture in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The National Film Archive of India, ever since its inception in February, 1964 has been supporting the cause of film societies all over India by making available prints of classic films, both Indian and international. The Archive has been engaged in spreading a healthy film culture in the country by organizing film appreciation courses, workshops and seminars in coordination with film clubs in colleges and universities, film societies and cultural organisations. The Archive organises regular screening programmes in various parts of the country in collaboration with the film bodies.

Rights for Telecasting DD Channels

1338. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:
SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prasar Bharati proposes to give rights for telecast of 18 Doordarshan Channels globally;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is aware that the quality of DD programmes is deteriorating; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to improve the quality of DD programmes?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati has stated that they have floated a tender for the worldwide distribution of 13 TV channels and 12 radio channels.

(c) and (d) No, sir. The programme telecast on different Doordarshan channels continue to be popular among its viewers, and it is the constant endeavour of Doordarshan to enhance the quality of programmes through innovative programme formats.

Irregularities and Corruption in Northeast Frontier Railways

1339. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any complaint regarding serious irregularities and prevalence of rampant corruption in Northeast Frontier Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken by the Government in the matter; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to give protection to the officials/complainer who made complaints of irregularities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The allegations pertain to irregularities in the award of contracts as well as execution thereof in Ekdakhi-Balurghat New Line Construction Project.

(c) The matter is under investigation.

(d) Security has been provided to the complainant.

12.00 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Petroleum (Amendment) Rules, 2004 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 4 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 4th January, 2005 under sub-section (4) of section 29 of the Petroleum Act, 1934.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1649/05]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): I beg to lay on the Table:

(1) A copy of the statement (Hindi and English versions) explaining reasons for not laying the Annual Reports and Audited Accounts of the Weighbird India Limited and the Bharat Brakes and Valves Limited for the year 2002-2003, within the stipulated period of nine months after the close of the financial year.

(2) A copy of the statement (Hindi and English versions) explaining reasons for not laying the Annual Reports and Audited Accounts of the Weighbird India Limited, the Bharat Brakes and Valves Limited and the Reyrolle Burn Limited for the year 2002-2003, within the stipulated period of nine months after the close of the financial year.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1650/05]

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing else should be recorded.

*...(Interruptions)**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL): I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following statements (Hindi and English versions) showing action taken by the Government on the assurances, promises and undertakings given by the Ministers during various sessions of Eleventh, Twelfth, Thirteenth and Fourteenth Lok Sabha:

ELEVENTH LOK SABHA

1. Statement No. XXXIII Fourth Session, 1997.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1651/05]

TWELFTH LOK SABHA

2. Statement No. XXXIV Second Session, 1998.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1652/05]

3. Statement No. XXVII Third Session, 1998.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1653/05]

4. Statement No. XXX Fourth Session, 1999.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1654/05]

*Not recorded.

Thirteenth Lok Sabha

5. Statement No. XXX Third Session, 2000.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1655/05]

6. Statement No. XXV Fourth Session, 2000.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1656/05]

7. Statement No. XXIV Fifth Session, 2000.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1657/05]

8. Statement No. XXIII Sixth Session, 2001.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1658/05]

9. Statement No. XXXI Seventh Session, 2001.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1659/05]

10. Statement No. XVIII Eighth Session, 2001.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1660/05]

11. Statement No. XVI Ninth Session, 2002.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1661/05]

12. Statement No. XIII Tenth Session, 2002.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1662/05]

13. Statement No. XI Eleventh Session, 2002.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1663/05]

14. Statement No. IX Twelfth Session, 2003.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1664/05]

15. Statement No. VI Thirteenth Session, 2003.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1665/05]

16. Statement No. V Fourteenth Session, 2003.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1666/05]

FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA

17. Statement No. III Second Session, 2004.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1667/05]

18. Statement No. I Third Session, 2004.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1668/05]

...(Interruptions)

12.01 hrs.

**COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE
LEGISLATION****Third Report**

[English]

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (Palghat): Sir, I beg to present the Third Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation.

12.02 hrs.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

- (i) **Constitution of National Disaster Management Authority and Its Associated Committees Pending Enactment of a Law on Disaster Management**

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): "Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make the statement on the constitution of the National Disaster Management Authority and its associated Committees pending enactment of a law on disaster Management.

The country has witnessed some major disasters in the past few years; with the Super cyclone in Orissa in the year 1999, the earthquake in Bhuj in 2001 and the recent Tsunami. In the light of these experiences, a need has been felt for an institutional mechanism which would facilitate drawing up and implementation of plans and projects for mitigation of disasters; taking appropriate preparatory measures by various authorities/departments; and for coordinating response and relief after a disaster strikes.

The approach to disaster management has so far been reactive-responding to disasters after they occur. Not much attention has been paid to mitigation. It is possible to ensure this, provided appropriate mitigation measures are taken so that the next calamity does not result in the loss of property and lives at hitherto fore. It will be the endeavour of the Government to ensure that over a period of time this objective is achieved.

*Also placed in Library. *See* No. LT 1669/05.

Whereas it has been widely accepted that the country's response to the recent Tsunami was prompt and effective, it is felt that the response to future disasters can be better if appropriate preparedness and capacity building measures are put in place. A need has also been felt over time to vest the coordination mechanism with the necessary legislative back up to enable holistic coordination of resources for response.

In the light of the above requirements, it is proposed to enact a law on disaster management which will provide for the requisite institutional and coordination mechanism and empower for undertaking the mitigation measures as also mechanism for ensuring preparedness and capacity building to handle disasters. The Disaster Management Bill, 2005 is proposed to be introduced in the current Budget Session of the Parliament.

In the light of the above requirements and keeping in view that the passage of the Bill is likely to take some time, it is proposed to provide for the requisite institutional and coordination mechanism and powers for undertaking mitigation measures as also mechanism for ensuring preparedness and capacity building to handle disasters during the interim period. It is, therefore, proposed to set up a National Disaster Management Authority and associated Committees by Executive orders immediately, in accordance with the provisions of the proposed Bill, pending enactment of the law. These institutional and coordination mechanisms will be modified in line with statutory provisions after the passage of the Bill.

In the meantime, action has already been taken to earmark 8 battalions of Central Para Military Forces, from their existing strength, to be trained and equipped to function as specialist response teams. Training of trainers for responding to natural disasters has been completed. Similar training for responding to radiological, biological and chemical emergencies has also been undertaken. 18 specialist response teams have already been trained for responding to natural disasters.

Communication is of the utmost importance in coordinating response to a disaster. An Emergency Communication Plan has been approved and is under implementation for providing communication linkages among national, State and District level Emergency Operation Centres and the Mobile Communication Units to be set up at the sites of disasters.

The National Institute of Disaster Management was set up through issue of an executive order in October 2003. After the passage of the Bill, necessary notification for setting up of the National Institute of Disaster Management will be issued with appropriate modifications, if any, to ensure that it conforms with the law.

MD. SALIM (Calcutta-North East): The House should find some time to discuss this issue ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: We shall do that. We shall do that with the cooperation of all.

12.06 hrs.

(II) Relief and Rehabilitation of Tsunami Affected People*

(*English*)

MR. SPEAKER: The second Statement is about the relief and rehabilitation of Tsunami affected people. You can lay it on the Table of the House.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): I beg to lay this Statement on the Table of the House. ... (*Interruptions*)

**As all the Hon'ble Members are aware, the Tsunami of 26th December, 2004 has caused extensive damage to life and property in the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and UTs of Pondicherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The tsunami was triggered due to an earthquake of 8.6 (Mw) magnitude which occurred at 0629 IST of west coast of Sumatra Island (Indonesia) on that day. This kind of disaster has been experienced for the first time in the country. It also affected other countries in the Indian Ocean, namely, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Maldives and even the east coast of Africa.

The Tsunami affected a population of 27.92 lakh in 1089 villages in the five States and UTs. 10273 people lost their lives and 5823 people are said to be missing and feared dead. Most of the missing persons are from the Nicobar Islands. 530 children have been rendered orphaned. 35605 livestock was also lost besides damage to about 22,000 hectares of cropped area. The Tsunami disaster has badly hit the fishermen community who not

*Also placed in Library. See No. Lt 1670/05.

**Speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Shivraj V. Patil]

only lost their near and dear ones but also lost their means of livelihood. 2.39 lakh dwelling units and over 83,000 boats were damaged. There has also been extensive damage to the infrastructure including harbours, jetties, roads, bridges, power, telecom, hospitals, schools and other social sector buildings.

The Government of India coordinated, monitored and reviewed the National efforts in providing logistics and financial support to the affected States/UTs. The Ministry of Home Affairs, being the nodal Ministry, coordinated the relief efforts. The strategy to deal with the Tsunami Disaster was divided into three phases; immediate relief and response; temporary rehabilitation and restoration of infrastructure and long term rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Cabinet Committee/Group of Ministers on Disaster Management under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister regularly reviewed the situation. The Armed Forces provided round the clock logistic support for undertaking relief, rescue and evacuation operations. The Government of India and the affected States/UTs worked together in facing the great challenge. The National response has been overwhelming. The States not affected by tsunami came forward to provide required relief at the crucial stage. It was because of this support of the people of the country that we have been able to respond to the disaster with our own resources and did not require any external assistance for relief and response. Not only this, the country also provided, to a limited extent, relief assistance to the Tsunami affected countries of Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia.

It may be recalled that the Government had made a presentation before the All Party meeting on 9th January, 2005 on the measures taken for handling the disaster. Later on members of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs were also briefed about these measures on 24th January, 2005. The Prime Minister, the Defence Minister, the Finance Minister, the Agriculture Minister, myself and other Union Ministers visited the affected areas. The Chairperson of UPA, the Leaders of Political Parties and Members Parliament have also visited the affected areas. The feedback from these visits has been very useful in framing our policies and response for the affected people.

The Prime Minister announced an ex-gratia of Rs. 1.00 lakh to the next of the kin of the deceased and an amount of Rs. 450 crore was released as an immediate assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) to the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. In addition, an amount of

Rs. 50.00 crore to Pondicherry and Rs. 200.00 crore for Andamans was also earmarked.

The massive relief and rescue operations launched by the States and the Government of India has helped in normalizing the situation very early. About 20,900 personnel from army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Para Military Forces were deployed. 40 Naval/Coast Guards ships, 34 aircrafts and 42 helicopters were part of the massive operations. 28,734 persons were rescued on the mainland and more than 6000 stranded people including tourists from Andaman & Nicobar Islands, were brought to the mainland. 6.36 lakh persons in all were moved to safer places and kept in 930 relief camps.

The Ministry of Home Affairs had designated the relief supply hubs in different parts of the country from where relief was mobilized with the help of the respective State Governments. A total of 13,639 MT of relief material has been transported to the affected areas of which 994.67 MT is by air, 7,763.70 MT by ship and 2,761.50 MT by Rail. All the concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India, namely, Telecom, Health, Power, Petroleum, Civil Aviation, Defence, Drinking Water Supply, Road, Transport & Highways provided necessary emergency support in dealing with the situation. It is a matter of great relief that in spite of such a huge tragedy, no epidemic was reported from any of the affected areas. A team of 2000 doctors worked continuously to take care of the health sector.

The Government of India, considering the fact that most of the people affected by the Tsunami disaster belong to weaker sections of the society and the fishermen community in particular were worst hit, approved a special package of Rs. 3644.05 crore named as "Rajiv Gandhi Rehabilitation Package for Tsunami affected areas" to provide assistance for immediate relief and response, revival of fishery and agriculture sector, immediate construction of temporary (intermediate) shelters and repair/restoration of infrastructure besides special relief to orphans, unmarried girls above 18 years of age, widows and disabled. The package for Tamil Nadu is Rs. 2347.19 crore, Andhra Pradesh—Rs. 70.00 crore, Kerala—Rs. 249.36 crore, Pondicherry—Rs. 155.62 crore, Andaman & Nicobar Islands—Rs. 821.88 crore.

For revival of the fishery sector, the Government has decided to provide full subsidy to the fishermen who have lost their Catamaran (wooden boats). Such fishermen also have the option now to switch over to boats with motors

upto unit cost of Rs. 1.50 lakh. In this category the fishermen will be entitled for 50% subsidy and 50% loan. The bank loans will carry interest @ 7% and interest subsidy of 2% will be reimbursed in case of prompt repayments. The moratorium for the loan payment will be 1-1/2 years and repayment period will be 7 years after that. The affected fishermen will be entitled to get the loan even if the earlier loans are outstanding. For fishermen who have not lost their boats but these have been damaged, full subsidy up to Rs. 10,000 has been approved for repair of damaged boats. This package has been announced in relaxation of the existing norms and it is the first time that assistance in a natural disaster is being provided on such a scale.

The Government has also considered the fact that the fishermen and others have lost their houses. For the inter-mediate period, the Government has provided funds to the States for construction of temporary (inter-mediate) shelters. These are proposed to be constructed before the onset of the coming monsoon. The Government has also decided to provide permanent housing by way of a minimum of two room dwelling unit to each of the family who had lost the house in the Tsunami disaster. These houses will be multi-hazard proof and the designs are being finalized. It is the intention of the Government. That the new settlements for permanent housing are properly planned with all the required social infrastructure and civic amenities. The Government of India will also be bearing the cost of acquisition of land for these new settlements.

In case of Andaman & Nicobar Islands where the agriculture sector has been extensively damaged, the Government has approved a special package for revival of agriculture sector at a cost of Rs. 239.54 crore.

There is no doubt that revival of the livelihood of the affected people will take some time. Generally the sustenance allowance for the interim period has been allowed in the past for about 30 days. However, for the Tsunami affected people, the Government of India is bearing the cost of sustenance for a period of 90 days and, if necessary, it will be extended further. The Government wants to assure the people affected by the unprecedented disaster that not only the Governments but the Nation stand behind them and no effort will be spared to ensure that they resume their normal life and a better life at the earliest. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the community and the State Governments are taking due care of the orphaned children.

A Core Group under the Planning Commission has also been constituted to plan and make provisions for long term rehabilitation, reconstruction and providing multi hazard proof permanent houses. Whereas no external assistance was sought for immediate relief and response, the Government is considering such assistance from multi-lateral agencies like World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Union and the UN agencies for long term reconstruction purposes. Once the Core Group finalises its plan of action, the package for long term reconstruction will be announced.

The Government has decided to set up Tsunami Early Warning System in the Indian Ocean. The Department of Ocean Development has already initiated work in this regard.

A Bill will also be introduced in the current Session of the Parliament for enacting a legislation on disaster management. A National Disaster Management Authority is separately being notified with the Prime Minister as its Chairman. Building up the capacity both at the National and State levels, setting up the National Disaster Response Force and measures for mitigation are the areas of immediate attention of the Government.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil): I want to seek a clarification. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: It is exactly on the point which is raised by the hon. Members. I am informing this House as to the steps which have been taken to respond to the calamities. If this is brought to the notice of the hon. Members, then we can discuss it at any time the Members want to discuss this, in any form that you may allow.

MR. SPEAKER: We shall find time to discuss it.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: I want to seek a clarification. I have given notice also. Kerala is one of the States which is affected by Tsunami. The most important question is about the rehabilitation. That is not taking place. The people who are uprooted and whose families have been lost, they are on the streets. ...(Interruptions) I request the Central Government to take immediate steps for rehabilitation of people who are thrown out of their homes. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: We shall have a discussion on this.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: That should be taken into consideration. It is a humanitarian issue and nothing has been done. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister wants to respond to this.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: What has been done in Kerala is mentioned in the Statement. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is mentioned in the Statement. You read it and we shall allow a discussion.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: If any more information is required, we will give it to the hon. Member. We have provided the relief and rescue facilities. We are taking steps to provide temporary shelter. And things are being done for permanent shelter also. This information is available in the Statement. If any more information is required, I will furnish that.

MR. SPEAKER: We shall discuss it.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: It is a question of human feelings. The poor people are not going to schools. Nothing has been done to rehabilitate them. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You have very justifiably raised a very great human issue. He has made a statement. If anything has to be discussed, we shall do that. I have already agreed to have a discussion on this.

Now we take up Item Number 7. Shri Jaipal Reddy may lay the statement on the Table of the House.

12.08 hrs.

(iii) Status of Implementation of Recommendations Contained in the Fourth Report of Standing Committee on Information Technology Pertaining to Ministry of Information and Broadcasting*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI

S. JAIPAL REDDY): I beg to lay the Statement on the Table of the House.

**I am laying this statement on the status of implementation of recommendation contained in the Fourth Report of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology 2004-05 concerning the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, in pursuance of direction 73A of the Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha issued vide Lok Sabha Bulletin-Part II, dated September 01, 2004.

The Standing Committee on Information Technology held its meeting on 19 August 2004 to consider Demands for Grants for the year 2004-2005. The Committee also took the Oral Evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Committee analysed the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with reference to the aims, objectives and achievements of the Ministry and presented the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (2004-2005).

In its Report the Standing Committee made 16 recommendations in all. The Action Taken Notes on these recommendations have been furnished to the Committee on 23-12-2004 (in English version) and on 6-1-2005 (in Hindi version). In these Action Taken Notes, the Committee has been apprised of the status of implementation initiated by the Ministry.

12.09 hrs.

GOVERNMENT OF UNION TERRITORIES AND THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2005*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now we take up Item Number 8.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 and to amend the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991.

**Speech was laid on the Table.

*Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section 2, dated 10.3.2005.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 and to amend the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

12.09 1/2 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Matters under Rule 377 listed for the day be treated as laid on the Table of the House.

(I) Need to formulate a National Waterways Project for linking the major rivers of the country

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN (Dindigul): Our nation is endowed with natural resources of water, flora and fauna. But one part reels under drought and another with flood. Tamil Nadu is one of the victims of this contrast. Frequent monsoon failures plunges the State into severe drought situation. While farmers suffer withering of crops before their own eyes, rural women have to walk long distance for a pot of water. In the urban areas there are long queues even after midnight to get their little share of drinking water. To avert such calamities in future the only solution would be of linking rivers. As per the assessment made by the Central Water Commission the precipitation in the country is about 4000 BCM out of which 1200 BCM is flowing into the sea unutilized. In the Peninsular India both from Mahanadi and Godavri about 30,000 Mm³ of water will be surplus, which is going unutilised to the Bay of Bengal. Further rivers in Western Ghats such as Par, Damanganga, Pamba, Achanakovil, Neravati & Bedti flow westwards and are draining into Arabian Sea.

While appreciating the measures taken by the Ministry of Water Resources. Sir, I request the Hon'ble Prime Minister to bestow his attention for the nationalisation of

rivers and establish a National Waterways Project for linking Ganga, Peninsular rivers and west flowing rivers so that people in South, particularly Tamil Nadu will get uninterrupted drinking water besides assured cultivation in agricultural land, better navigation, tourism, economic system and above all 50,000 MW hydro power and job opportunities.

(II) Need to clear the proposal to implement Pension Scheme for the employees of Panjab University

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh): Panjab University is one of the pioneering and most prestigious Universities of the country whose alumni have won laurels in different fields. However, this is one University which does not have a Pension Scheme for its teachers and employees who have contributed immensely in winning for its present status. A scheme to this effect was prepared and notified in the year 1993, but it could not be implemented because of some misgivings of the serving employees. These have been sorted out now.

During the period of last 10 years, the University has raised its internal revenue from Rs. 5 crores to Rs. 54 crores per year. This needs to be recognised and appreciated. This should also entitle the employees to be granted their due in the form of pension so that those who have given the best of their lives in building up the institution and to the cause of quality education, are not left in wilderness in the evening of their lives. The implementation of the Pension Scheme with only slight modification will not cause any new burden on the Government. Further, it will not cover the employees joining after 1.1.2004, the date fixed by the Government for the new Pension Policy for Government employees. The Board of Finance of the University in its recent meeting on 21st February, 2005 already has accepted this genuine and just demand.

I urge the Government to clear the Pension Scheme immediately for the employees of Panjab University.

(III) Need to broadcast programmes in Bishnupriya Manipuri language by AIR and Doordarshan centres at Slicher in Assam

SHRI LALIT MOHAN SUKLABAIYA (Karimganj): 'Bishnupriya Manipuri'—a linguistic minority community—constitutes a sizeable portion of the population of Assam and Tripura. The approximate population of the community only in Barak valley districts exceed 3 lakhs besides a substantial number in other adjoining areas.

*Treated as laid on the Table.

[Shri Lalit Mohan Suklabaidya]

'Bishnupriya Manipuri' with their very rich cultural heritage specially in their classical dance and music have been further enriched by being included in the Indian mainstream in the form of dance, music and drama. They greatly contribute to the richness and variety of Indian culture. The Bishnupriya Manipuris Gurus played a significant part in propagating the Indian Manipuri Dance since long throughout the world.

As an outcome of prolonged struggle by the community, the Government of India, vide its Notification No. 13/73-B-(P) dated 29.4.1975 issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, was pleased to decide in principle to introduce broadcasting through AIR daily programmes of 15 minute 'Bishnupriya' through AIR, Silchar in 1975.

However, the community failed to welcome the decision because of non-inclusion of 'Manipuri' being suffix with 'Bishnupriya' although it has been corroborated in the Census Report of 1981 and onwards. The Government of Tripura and Assam have already introduce Bishnupriya Manipuri language in 1995 and 2001 respectively in elementary level of education.

I request the Hon'ble Minister of Information and Broadcasting to take suitable action for broadcasting programmes in Bishnupriya Manipuri language through AIR and Doordarshan centres at Silchar in Assam.

(iv) Need to ensure remunerative prices for cotton growers and early settlement of crop Insurance claims of groundnut farmers in Gujarat

[Translation]

SHRI V.K. THUMMAR (Amreli): Mr. Speaker, Sir, cotton growers are facing many difficulties this year. The cotton growers of Gujarat are getting less price for their produce vis-a-vis the support price which is much less in comparison to its cost of production. The cotton growers of Maharashtra are getting remunerative price for their produce but the cotton of Gujarat cotton growers is being purchased at a lower price. Several cotton growers have committed suicide on account of increasing loan burden on them as well as getting less price for their produce. Along with this the groundnut crop in my Parliamentary Constituency did not mature due to scanty rainfall and no relief has been provided so far to the farmers under the crop insurance scheme.

Through the House, I request the Central Government to ensure that cotton growers of Gujarat do not get a price less than the support price and the insurance claims of groundnut farmers of Gujarat are settled at the earliest under the crop insurance scheme.

(v) Need to set up an oil refinery in Rajasthan

[English]

SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH (Jhalawar): The people of Rajasthan are very much agitated due to the delay in the establishment of Oil Refinery in the State. Large deposits of Oil and Gas have been discovered in that State and investment to the tune of Rs. 2573 crores has been made till date in the Oil and Gas exploration. The exploration has proved that there has been large reserves of petroleum, heavy oil and bitumen.

Most of the new Oil Refineries have been located in the Coastal Region. But the proposal to set up the Refinery in Rajasthan has not been considered so far. Now, HPCL has evinced keen interest in establishing Oil Refinery in Rajasthan with proposed investment of about 8,000 crores; at Lunkaransar, in Bikaner was identified for the location of the Refinery. The proposed Refinery will provide direct employment to at least 10,000 people and indirect employment to many more.

As such, in the interest of people of my State, I demand that the Oil refinery be set up in Rajasthan without further delay.

(vi) Need to address the problems faced by the ancillary units set up around Rourkela Steel Plant in Sundergarh district, Orissa due to lack of work orders

SHRI JUAL ORAM (Sundergarh): The ancillary units in Orissa, particularly Sundergarh district are facing crisis due to non-placement of orders by Rourkela Steel Plant. Most of these units were set up around Rourkela with a hope that adequate work orders will be received by them from the steel plant after it has been modernized and expanded. But it is regrettable that even the ancillary units in Sundergarh district have not been given priority and several work orders have been withdrawn by Rourkela Steel Plant on some pretext or the other. As a result of that several units in that district have either been closed down or are on the verge of closure resulting into large scale retrenchment particularly of local youths, most of whose families are displaced due to the establishment of

the Rourkela Steel Plant. Now they have no other means of livelihood.

I request the Government to instruct the Steel Authority of India to intervene in the matter and issue necessary instruction to Rourkela Steel Plant to extend help to local ancillary units without any further delay.

- (vii) **Need to grant environmental clearance for construction of a bridge at Chankighat in Maharajganj Parliamentary constituency**

[*Translation*]

SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY (Maharajganj, U.P.): Mr. Speaker, Sir, one pillar of Chankighat bridge in my Parliamentary Constituency Maharajganj, Uttar Pradesh could not be constructed due to non issuance of No Objection Certificate by the forest department and as a result of this general public is facing difficulty in movement from one place to another. Rs. 1 crore has already been spent on the construction of three pillars and the Government of Uttar Pradesh has also requested for the issuance of No Objection Certificate for the construction of the said bridge.

So, I urge upon the Government to give instructions for issuance of No Objection Certificate for the construction of remaining one pillar of the bridge at Chankighat so that traffic on this important road may start.

- (viii) **Need to check the illegal activities of Bangladeshi intruders in the country**

YOGI ADITYA NATH (Gorakhpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir today the problem of Bangladeshi intruders is not limited to only Indo-Bangladesh border. Their illegal activities are a matter of concern not only from the view point of law and order but in respect of other aspects as well. Today, nearly two and a half crore illegal Bangladeshi migrants are living in our country. These infiltrators have disturbed the population balance in all the North Eastern States, West Bengal and West Bihar. It is due to infiltration that Purnea, Kishanganj, Araria, Katihar, Saharsa etc. districts of Bihar and Murshidabad and North Dinajpur districts of West Bengal have become muslim majority districts. The situation in Assam is more explosive. The population in Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram including Assam has registered 13 to 31 percent increase between the year 1991 and 2001. These illegal migrants have even got their names registered in electoral rolls and have managed their ration

cards also. Now, they are in a position to influence the electoral result in 20 Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituencies and 125 Assembly Constituencies all over the country. Their population in the capital Delhi is in lakhs and day by day they are becoming a law and order problem in the capital. Several illegal Bangladeshi migrants have been found involved in various crimes and anti-national activities in the country.

So I urge upon the Government to take necessary action to check their anti-national activities and to repatriate them to Bangladesh.

- (ix) **Need to lay a new rail line between Chandrakona Road and Panskura v/a Ghatal in West Bengal**

[*English*]

SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU (Jhargram): There is a great public demand for laying a new rail line between Chandrakona Road and Panskura via Ghatal. Thousands of inhabitants of Chandrakona Road, Chandrakona Town, Ghatal, Daspur depend on buses only. Birsingha of Ghatal, the birthplace of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, is a famous tourist spot. Thousands of tourists, across the country come here to pay their homage. There is rail link between Chandrakona Road station and Panskura via Kharagpur which is 94 km. But Chandrakona Road to Panskura Station via Ghatal is less than 60 km. So thousands of daily passengers will be benefited if a rail line is laid between Chandrakona Road to Panskura via Ghatal.

I urge upon the hon'ble Minister of Railways to fulfil the long standing demand of the people of Midnapore as early as possible.

- (x) **Need to open branches of Allahabad Bank in Salempur and Deoria districts of U.P.**

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD (Salempur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had raised in the House the issue of lack of banks in several areas of my Parliamentary Constituency, Salempur and as a result of this a survey was conducted regarding opening of branches of Allahabad Bank in several areas of my Constituency. After the survey, it was recommended to open branches of Allahabad Bank at Shivdharua and Mehrauna of Deoria district and other areas of Bankata, Rampur Bujurg,

[Shri Harikewal Prasad]

Itchhua-Chandauli. In the survey report it was also recommended that the said places are most suitable for opening bank branches. There are no bank branches in the surrounding area and as a result of this it is adversely affecting the saving of farmers and poor people and the social and economic development of people are getting obstructed.

Through the House, I would like to request the Central Government to start the process of opening branches of Allahabad Bank in the above mentioned areas at the earliest.

(xi) Need to expeditiously complete the work, inclusive of building bridges on National Highway No. 104 between Chakia and Sitamarhi via Madhuban and Sheohar in Bihar

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister of National Highway towards dilapidated condition of National Highway No. 104 between Chakia and Sitamarhi via Madhuban and Sheohar. The proposal for the building of 22 k.m. road between Chakia and Krishna Nagar chowk has been approved and the funds for the said work has been allocated, however only six k.m. road could be constructed. The money for the construction of the remaining stretch of road is lying with the contractor and the construction work is suspended despite the availability of funds. Besides, in second stage, the road from Krishna Nagar to Sitamarhi via Sheohar is proposed to be constructed, however no any positive action has been taken by the department in this regard. Many potholes have developed on the said road and traffic on that road is badly affected.

It is to be noted that earlier there was screw pipe bridge at Dubba Ghat on the Bagmati river on this road between Sheohar and Sitamarhi which collapsed two year back due to floods. Exactly beside this bridge, four pillars have been constructed by the State Bridge Construction Corporation and keeping in view the flow of the river the irrigation department of Bihar has already sent a proposal for increasing two more spail on each side of the bridge to the Ministry of Road Transport and National Highway, however, no action has been taken in this regard.

So, I would like to request the Minister to give instruction to the Department for the construction of the said National Highway No. 104 and a bridge at Dubba Ghat at the earliest.

(xii) Need to constitute 'Bundelkhand Development Council' for enabling the all round development of the Region

SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD NISHAD (Fatehpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the House and the Government towards the lack of basic facilities like education, road, electricity, drinking water, irrigation, communications and the lack of industries in Banda, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Jhansi, Lalitpur, Jalaun and Chitrakut Dham districts under the extremely backward region of Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh. The railway department is also not unaffected by this.

So, I would like to request the hon'ble Prime Minister to constitute 'Bundelkhand Development Council' for the development of basic infrastructure in the extremely backward area of Bundelkhand and Rs. 5 thousand crore should be provided to the Council at the earliest so that backward Bundelkhand Region may be developed.

(xiii) Need to take effective steps to check the menace caused by wild elephants in Godda, Sahebganj, Pakud and Dumka districts in Jharkhand

SHRI HEMMAL MURMU (Rajmahal): 'Mr. Speaker, Sir, herds of violent wild elephants are causing heavy damage to the life and property of the people of Godda, Sahebganj, Pakud and Dumka etc. districts in Jharkhand. The hon'ble Minister of Environment and Forests has told in reply to my letter in this regard that the State Government is unable to catch these elephants, as no particular elephant is responsible for the loss of property, and it is not practicable to catch the entire herd of elephants. The State Government has constituted a special team for launching a drive for capturing elephants in the affected areas.

There are many contradictions in the hon'ble Minister's reply because on one hand Rs. 58.50 Lakh for anti-loot work, Rs. 25 Lakh of grant-in-aid and Rs. 151.31 Lakh have been sanctioned by the Government for the State of Jharkhand, whereas the panic stricken people of this area, patrol overnight for the fear of elephants. In the month of February, elephants damaged a house in Godda district whereas the Government is not agreeing that any loss is being caused.

Therefore, I urge upon the Union Government to constitute a parliamentary committee and expert

committees with immediate effect in order to ensure the physical utilization of the funds allocated to Jharkhand Government for the purpose of checking the menace of wild elephants in the said districts of Jharkhand and to save the people of this area from the menace of elephants.

- (xiv) **Need to amend the Constitution to enable uniform distribution of the benefits of reservations to all sub-castes of Scheduled Castes, particularly in Andhra Pradesh**

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool): The reservation facilities for the Scheduled Castes is not reaching uniformly to all the sub castes of the people of Scheduled Castes in various States and particularly in Andhra Pradesh.

In Andhra Pradesh, the Scheduled Caste population was divided into four sub groups A, B, C, D, depending on castes. The 15% of reservation in proportion to their population which had helped all sub castes to Scheduled Castes to get the opportunities uniformly and there was marked differences after the categorization. Recently, on technical ground the Supreme Court had struck down the action taken by the Government of Andhra Pradesh dividing the 59 sub castes of Scheduled Castes into four groups and Supreme Court had opined that only the Parliament is the competent authority to do so and not the State Legislature.

I request the Government of India to take up the matter and amend the Constitution to categorise the SC population into A, B, C, D groups so as to give sub-castes of Scheduled Castes in India, particularly in Andhra Pradesh uniform opportunities in respect of reservations.

- (xv) **Need to develop Infrastructural and other facilities at Sunderbans wild life area with a view to promote eco-tourism**

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (Joynagar): I wish to bring to the notice of the Government regarding the importance of developing the Sundarbans Wildlife area/ National Park in the perspective of eco-tourism as it has an immense potential to bring in both national/International tourists as well as revenue in foreign exchange.

Though Sundarbans Wildlife area, the core of the largest delta/largest mangrove forest in the planet is

declared as a National Park, the infrastructural and other facilities available for the visiting tourists, are not at par with other National Parks of the country. If developed in the eco-tourism point of view, it would be a pride of India.

Therefore, I request the Government to take steps to provide all the facilities, which should be available at a National Park, at Sundarbans Wildlife area and also to develop the same into a world-class eco-tourism spot of the planet.

[English]

...(Interruptions)

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (Barrackpore): Sir, in view of the Supreme Court ruling, the President's rule should be imposed. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): We have given notice. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have already announced in the morning.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. Please try to listen to me:

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I have already announced in the morning that it is a matter, I feel, of importance. I have already called a meeting of the hon. Leaders today this evening. I am sure, after discussions, we will be able to decide.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: I am on a different type of situation. I demand that the Presidential rule should be imposed immediately. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Now, we will take up further consideration of the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing can be decided now. I cannot decide anything. Whatever I have to say, I have said. I cannot compel anybody to make a statement.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: Sir, we cannot allow this to happen. This cannot be allowed. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please sit down. Shri Adhir Chowdhary, I do not know what has happened to you today. Shri Topdar, please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: We have to proceed with the important discussion. Hon. Leader of the Opposition has to speak. I have already said it in the morning.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I will not have anything recorded. Anything spoken without my permission will not be recorded—this is the standard practice.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: We are not speaking; we are expressing our views! ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: There is no provision for expressing your opinion like this. Shri Topdar, please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: What are you doing?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK (Ahmedabad): Sir, he is referring to me. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Should it therefore be decided on the floor of the House?

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: I have decided, what I would do if you people would not listen to me. I have said it earlier too.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): Please tell us.

MR. SPEAKER: I may or may not tell you, but how can I say right now?

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I have said that we are going to sit with the Leaders and discuss.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I do not need your help, Shri Topdar.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not being recorded. Except my statement, nothing is being recorded. Why are you exhausting yourself? Please do not do this.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have myself said in the morning that I consider this matter as important. Therefore, I have called a meeting of the hon. Leaders to discuss this. I want to hear everybody's views, and then whatever is to be decided, I shall decide; I will see what is to be done and what is not to be done. Please wait and have some patience. Let us hold the meeting.

Now, Shri Advani may speak on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: If you hear us now, it will help the meeting of the Leaders. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am sure that these are matters which are to be dealt with in a serious manner.

...(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, what do you want to do now?
Tell me what do you want to do?

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Discussion cannot be continued now.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, let this discussion be over. I will consider—I am not saying that I will concede—what is to be done.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded. Only the speech of the Leader of the Opposition would be recorded.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: This is not the way.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am not permitting you. You cannot do anything without notice. I do not know what are you talking.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: There is a method for everything. No notice has been given to me. I know nothing about it. You are just wanting something. I would not allow.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Do not show any papers.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is going on record.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What are you doing?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Do not record anything.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is very improper. You cannot show anything.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry. Mr. Bansal, you are a very responsible Member.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is unfortunate. I am standing and you are disturbing me. Nothing will be allowed.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is very unfortunate.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Adhir Chowdhary, I am sorry. I am repeatedly requesting you since morning not to disturb.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, I do not know what is happening. I will take action against them.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is very unfortunate that from this side, the House is not allowed to function because of what the Ruling Party or their supporters are doing.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am not going to allow you.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Ram Kripal Yadav, if you stand there, I will take action against you.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: What is happening?

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry I have to take action. Please go back to your seats. Do not behave in this manner.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet again at 12.30 P.M.

12.21 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Thirty Minutes past Twelve of the Clock.

12.30 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled at Thirty Minutes past Twelve of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS—Contd.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I appeal to all the sections of this honourable House to please cooperate. If there are issues to be discussed, let us do it in a proper manner. Please give notice to me. I cannot promise as to what will happen but I will consider it. Give me an opportunity.

We will now take up the discussion on Motion of Thanks on the President's Address. Hon. Leader of Opposition, Shri L.K. Advani, may speak now.

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI (Gandhinagar): Hon'ble Mr. Speaker, Sir, the discussion on the Motion of Thanks regarding the President's Address continued till late last night. I have got the information from the Secretariat that 48 Members have participated in it so far. I am thankful to you for giving me an opportunity to express my views before the Prime Minister's reply.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as per the tradition this motion is passed unanimously. We all, the Government and the

opposition thank the President. This discussion provides an opportunity to take a close look at the situation in the country, the progress made, the mistakes that were committed and the achievements of the Government during the period from the President's last address and today's address, and it also gives an opportunity to preview the future plans of the Government. That is why, when the Government prepares the President's Address, it is discussed at length in a full cabinet meeting and then it is presented before the Members. First of all, I attach myself with the House in expressing condolence to the affected families hit by recent devastating calamities like tsunami which finds a mention in the President's address. I congratulate all those who have served the country and the public during the time of tsunami, particularly our armed forces like the Navy, the Coast Guard and other paramilitary forces, the policy and the security forces deployed in the areas affected by tsunami.

Their contribution has built up credibility for us all over the world that our country can take charge of the situation even in the times of disasters like tsunami and I would also like to mention the valued contribution of NGOs in the relief operations. The hon. Home Minister has given a statement in this regard today itself that the Government is going to create a statutory Disaster Management Authority. I remember how much we were concerned when Orissa was hit by a devastating cyclone and Gujarat was devastated by an earthquake and after deliberation, the NDA Government had constituted a Committee under the leadership of Shri Sharad Pawar. You were its Deputy Chairman, and the Prime Minister was its Chairman and I believe one of its most important recommendations was, as mentioned by Shivratriji, regarding constitution of a Disaster Management Authority as a statutory body and today, they are going to constitute it. I welcome this step. I would like to mention that this kind of a statutory body was not envisaged only for the Centre but it should be constituted at the State level, too. I am happy that Gujarat has taken initiative in this regard and the Disaster Management Authority that has been constituted in Gujarat after the earthquake has done a commendable job, its performance has also been praised by many people in foreign countries who have witnessed its work.

Friends, I welcome this decision of the Government that later on foreign assistance may be needed for the task of reconstruction ...(Interruptions), but as far as relief or rescue work is concerned, we are capable of doing it on our own, we do not need any foreign assistance. I

support the Government's decision. I submit that we not only handled the situation well in our country after tsunami but helped other neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka which were badly affected, though the worst hit area was Andaman and Nicobar Islands apart from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala in our country but Sri Lanka and other neighbouring countries too. ... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

PROF. M. RAMADASS (Pondicherry): Pondicherry was also affected.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Yes, Pondicherry was also affected. I had occasion to visit Pondicherry when it happened.

[*Translation*]

One section of the society has been affected the most and that is the section of fishermen. This change was made during the time of NDA Government, before that

[*English*]

disaster control, disaster mitigation and disaster management used to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture

[*Translation*]

because it has been seen that disasters like droughts or floods occur frequently in India, and it was decided on the basis of the experiences, that disaster management should be within the purview of the Home Ministry and if needed assistance might be taken from the rest of the Ministries. Then afterwards this change is in place.

I think that the law that we are formulating about disaster management should be referred to the Standing Committee and it would be appropriate if it is brought here after the Standing Committee has deliberated upon it. The Standing Committee may decide about the law keeping in view the analogous laws all over the world. As such similar laws were taken into consideration when this law was formulated.

North-East finds a mention in the President's Address wherein it has been stated that.

[*English*]

"My Government have infused a new sense of belonging among the various disaffected groups, especially in the North Eastern States and among the tribal communities across the country".

[*Translation*]

I do not know whether the Government too believe in this claim, because I know that the affected groups whom I have met in the North-Eastern States or in other places like Jammu and Kashmir, have expressed dissatisfaction. The people of the North-East too have expressed dissatisfaction time and again and everybody is aware of the deteriorating situation in the region. I want to know from the Prime Minister the progress made through the dialogues being held with the NSCN (I-M). The people of NSCN (I-M) met me recently when they were in Delhi. They seemed to be dissatisfied as discussions were not proving fruitful. I hope the Prime Minister would throw some light on this issue. Dialogues were initiated on Jammu and Kashmir, rounds of dialogues were held with the Hurriyat Conference and at least they accepted it publicly that their talks with the NDA Government were satisfactory. I do not know what the situation is at present. We get to know through newspapers only. We would be satisfied when the Prime Minister would officially apprise the House of the progress of the dialogues not with just one section but all the sections of the society including the people of Jammu, Laddakh and the Kashmiri Pandits. Whenever we talk of a dialogue on Jammu and Kashmir, the attention of the people instantly turn to the Indo-Pak relations. I think that the NDA Government understood it that opinions were divided on this issue even within Jammu and Kashmir. There are several opinions. Some people have this opinion particularly in Jammu that Article 370 should not be there. Some others say that Article 370 is sacrosanct and it should not be touched. On the whole we thought that we would hold dialogues with everybody and then take such action as would suit the internal situation and then hold dialogues with Pakistan in the backdrop of the proposal that has been moved in the Parliament regarding India and Pakistan. I would like the Prime Minister to elaborate upon the stance of the Government in this regard.

The President has said in his address that the Government would offer a new deal to the rural India. It is a very good thing. I welcome this statement; although at times it seems that 'rural India' are mere words. I am happy that the NDA Government laid emphasis on

[Shri L.K. Advani]

infrastructure which mainly had two components—first, constitution of national highways all over the country, and secondly, creation of a golden triangle. It was on our agenda to construct the North West, North-South and East-West corridors so that we could say that there are highways in our country which meet international standards. Considerable progress was made in this regard and it is still moving at a good pace. I noticed that it finds mention in the President's Address wherein it has been stated:

[English]

"The Government has decided to grant greater autonomy to the National Highways Authority of India while taking steps to make it more professional and efficient. The rate of the completion of road construction under the national highways programmes especially the Golden Quadrilateral and the North-South and East-West corridors, has been speeded up".

[Translation]

I welcome it but I regret to say that on the one hand they talk of offering a new deal to rural India and on the other they have not even mentioned the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana. I accord importance to the highways programme but Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana is more important than it regarding which the Government had resolved that we would link each village of India by concrete roads before 2007. At times I think why it happens. It is Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana. This too was one of the NDA Government's scheme which has been mentioned but the other scheme's name is Pradhan Mantri Sadak Yojana. Don't they like the word Pradhan Mantri? ...*(Interruptions)* I am not aware but I would like to know about the progress made regarding certain decisions taken in relation to Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana and financial assistance was also provided to the States in this regard as I believe

[English]

that in-so-far-as road construction is concerned, in-so-far-as infrastructure is concerned, that is far more important than even these Golden Quadrilateral and North-South and East-West corridors.

[Translation]

I have mentioned it just casually. I respect the Prime Minister a lot but his absence is not good thing.

I was going through an article in the *Indian Express* this morning only and it pained me. Had you gone through that article or if you would read that article in future, it would hurt you too as comparisons were made with Deuba and it was said in it that tigers are vanishing and so is the Prime Minister. This kind of language has an impact of its own in journalistic style but

[English]

this kind of writing that continues throughout is something that, I would think, Dr. Manmohan Singh must think about it and a person who has such a high credibility in the country must think about it.

[Translation]

As an honest, talented leader, he should affirm his authority and it would put an end to this kind of writings.

[English]

He is the Prime Minister, the supreme executive in the country.

[Translation]

It should not be that he should come up with a reply like 'he does not know'. It has happened. Such replies have been given in the recent past that 'I would have to gather information and as yet I do not know. Now whom should I get in touch with, the hon. Home Minister or anyone else' ...*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my responsibility within the NDA Government was mainly related to internal security and it was stated clearly in the President's Address

[English]

That the three main areas of challenge to our national security are cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, insurgency in the North-East region and Naxalite violence in some States.

[Translation]

It has been claimed that situation is under control. I do not agree with this. I believe a basic mistake was committed when the Government took over the charge and they accepted Naxalite violence as merely a law and order related problem and decided that the States

should deal with it in whatever manner they choose to. It has been mentioned in the President's Address too that it is States' problem and they should deal with it in whatever way they like. If they want to hold dialogues, they can do so, if they want to lift restrictions imposed on them, they can do so, and they have done it. Naxalite violence assumed such proportions in Andhra Pradesh that an attempt to assassinate the then Chief Minister was made but he had a narrow escape. Thereafter, the Party which is in power at present, in a way took help from them during the elections and it seems that in lieu of it they promised them to lift the ban in case they came to power. Jaipal Ji denies it. It is very good, you did not do it. But all that happened at that time when it was threatened that none of the TDP and BJP workers would be allowed to campaign. If anyone does it, he would be killed—this statement was given and it happened as well. There were attacks on people, due to which they won the elections or we lost it. If support is taken from such elements from political point of view, be it in Andhra Pradesh ...(*Interruptions*) or Assam, the natural adverse effects shall have to be borne by the next Government coming to power, which we are bearing these days, it shall not confine to that area only.

[*English*]

Naxalite violence is a phenomenon.

[*Translation*]

I do not think that law and order problem is related to this phenomenon only and there is no other dimension. Rather it has other dimensions also. While dealing with those other dimensions nothing like this should be stated which may give respectability to such elements.

Their colleagues from West Bengal are sitting here, they should learn something from them. Whatever is happening there is called Naxalite violence. Naxalite violence is not in Naxalbadi. The people against whom they rebelled had some reasons. I admit initially they rebelled against Marxists, not against the State. They tackled it very bravely, otherwise the naxalite ideology was so popular among the masses that a good number of students from universities and colleges, used to join naxalite movements. Today, I feel that a similar situation has been created in Andhra Pradesh. It is very dangerous. I would reiterate that in such matters.

[*English*]

Do not take partisan decision. Always take the advice of all political parties, what should be done and what should not be done.

[*Translation*]

Not only this, there are internal security problems, be it terrorism or insurgency in North-East or the problem of ISI agents in Jammu-Kashmir, in all these matters.

[*English*]

Always take the advice of those who are fighting against them.

[*Translation*]

Advice of the officers, security forces who are fighting against them must be sought. They have to take the decision. There is no doubt that the Government takes a decision. I would like to submit that during the regime of the NDA Government during the last six years the decisions in regard to internal issues, like the problem of Terrorism or Illegal Immigration were taken after consultation with the D.G.'s Police, Chiefs of Intelligence Forces, Chief Minister, Home Minister all over the country. It never happened that a state had taken decision on itself. In 1998 the NDA Government had taken a decision

[*English*]

In respect of Naxalite violence which was to hold a conference of all Naxalite affected states in Hyderabad. All of them were called there.

[*Translation*]

And we evolved a coordinated strategy. Not only we formulated a strategy. ...(*Interruptions*) but set up a co-ordination Committee also in which the Director General of Police of all these States were included. It was headed by the Union Home Secretary in respect of all the States and

[*English*]

Without fail, every three months, this Coordination Committee used to meet to take account of what has transpired,

[Shri L.K. Advani]

[Translation]

how far things have been brought under control and the areas where there has been no control. During this period suddenly

[English]

Naxalite violence spreads to Karnataka, Policemen are killed there. Naxalite violence spreads to Uttar Pradesh, policemen are killed there.

[Translation]

Since it was announced that it is a State matter and they should handle it themselves, as a result, ban on People's War Group in Andhra Pradesh was lifted.

[English]

Even without insisting

[Translation]

they started talks with People's War Group. They will continue to kill people and we will not have talks with them.

[English]

This is the minimum the world over any Government that has talked to people who are on the path of violence, the minimum

[Translation]

that dialogues can be held.

They should hold talks on the condition that first they should give up arms, shun violence. It is necessary to hold talks, I am not against it. I am in favour of holding talks but minimum caution should be taken while holding talks and they are not ready to do that also. It is alright that they will carry their A.K. 47, I do not think that there is any underground organisation in the world like People's War Group in Andhra Pradesh that organise their rally immediately after the lifting of ban wherein lakhs of people participate. Such a thing has never happened. Therefore, I feel that the approach of this Government has completely failed in matters of internal security.

[English]

It has completely failed. There is a need to review it again.

[Translation]

Hon'ble Prime Minister should review it. At the same time I would advise him to consult other parties as well while reviewing it.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): May I intervene?

[Translation]

Whatever he is saying it totally correct. I am not opposing it. But I would like to tell the hon. Member that a meeting of the Chief Ministers of Naxalite affected States has been held in Hyderabad. Our Home Secretary hold talks with the Home Secretaries of all those States. Apart from that he also holds talks with our special Secretary of Internal Security. It is correct that talks should be held but no one should carry arms during talks, as stated by him. The measures suggested by him are already being adopted. It would be incorrect to state otherwise. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEE RAMESH (Kanakapura): Even your NDA partners are attacked in Andhra Pradesh. Do not forget this. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Mumbai South-Central): Mr. Speaker, Sir, 48 people of Telgu Desham Party were killed. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Do you think you are helping him?

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, basically my objection is that we had evolved a coordinated strategy to tackle this issue but after assuming power, this Government has changed it immediately and is describing it as a State subject that would be solved by them only. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: He is giving his view. He is entitled to give his view.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Otherwise, how do you explain that the People's War Group is legalized in one State and not in the other States? I know Chhattisgarh. I know States like Jharkhand where they will not legalize it. They continue the ban because you decided that it would be a State-wise issue. We decided this is not a State-wise issue. This is something that has application to all the States affected by naxalism.

[Translation]

Mr. Prime Minister, under the present scenario this situation has become more critical because the incident which occurred in Nepal has made Maoists more powerful. Nepal is not the only target of Maoists. It is on account of this that their power has extended from Bihar to Andhra Pradesh and is now being extended to Karnataka that the entire region is Naxalite affected. As such if we decide to lift a ban on People's War Group, it would be totally wrong. Such a decision should not have been taken.

I will talk about Nepal later on. We should accept such policy regarding Nepal that does not strengthen Maoists there, of course, in my opinion Constitutional Monarchy is the solution there.

[English]

Constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy are the two pillars of peace and security of Nepal. Both should be strengthened.

[Translation]

If we weaken monarchy in the name of multi-party democracy we would be only strengthening the Maoists. It should never happen. Caution should be taken in this regard.

Mr. Speaker Sir, this issue is such which concerns me personally. I was born in Karachi, I am a native of Sindh. I came to India after the partition. After partition when Jana-Gana-Mana written by Shri Rabindranath Tagore was accepted as our national anthem, there were voices of protest from either sides of the borders as to why it should now contain word like Punjab, Sindh, Gujarat, Maratha etc.

13.00 hrs.

Why should the word 'Sindh' be there as it is no more a part of Hindustan? I do remember very well that when for the first time someone raised his voice in this regard, Pandit Nehru himself had replied to that and said that there cannot be Hind without Sindh. Though, right now I do not have a copy of that statement, but I can quote from what he has written in the *Discovery of India*.

[English]

"The word 'Hindu' is clearly derived from 'Sindh', the old as well as the present name for the Indus. From this, 'Sindhu' came the words 'Hindu' and 'Hindustan' as well as 'Indus' and 'India'."

[Translation]

Not only this, I am of the opinion that Indus Valley civilization is the oldest civilization in the world. Therefore, the word Sindhu does not relate to the name of a State, it relates to a civilization. When a gentleman, Shri Sanjeev Bhatnagar filed a PIL in the Supreme Court on 20 September demanding deletion of word 'Sindh' from the national anthem, the Supreme Court asked that gentleman whether he has written to the Government in this regard. He was asked to write to the Government. Then he wrote letters separately to the Home Ministry, Ministry of Law, Ministry of Human Resource Development and Ministry of External Affairs. He received no reply to his letter. Subsequently, he again took up the matter with the Supreme Court. He, again filed a petition in the Supreme Court on 4 December. Then on 14th December, the Ministry of Home Affairs stated only that, that there can be no change or amendment in it. He again took up the matter with the Supreme Court and the court was sad to note that the Government gave no satisfactory reply to it.

I remember, when I read it in the newspaper, I myself wrote a letter to the Prime Minister on 10th January and requested him to state quite categorically as to why the word 'Sindh' will not be deleted from it. On 7 March, it again came up with the Supreme Court and the court was sad to note that the Government did not respond to it properly. The Govt. requested for 4 weeks' time but the court asked the government to reply within two weeks. The court asked to view it seriously. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister as to what the opinion of the Government is in this regard or has it left everything to the court to decide? It is wrong to leave everything to the Supreme Court. When the executive takes a wrong

[Shri L.K. Advani]

decision it becomes the duty of the Supreme Court to intervene and when the Supreme Court comes forward for the rescue of democracy, friends on the treasury benches get upset. They are so much agitated today. Today, it is for the first time that the House has been adjourned because of treasury benches and within first 5-10 minutes. ...*(Interruptions)*. The House might have been adjourned earlier also because of treasury benches, so now you can't blame the opposition. ...*(Interruptions)*

MD. SALIM (Kolkata-North East): Mr. Speaker, Sir, you did not allow us to raise Jharkhand issue today but he is raising the same issue through his speech. ...*(Interruptions)* I need your protection?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: But Mr. Advani I am sure you would agree that all organs of the State should conduct themselves within their powers.

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: But, so far, has my side, any political party or any Member raised a question on judiciary? ...*(Interruptions)* It is better to treat some of such institutions as holy-cow. We can have discussion about some of the institutions but if we take lightly about the armed forces or the judiciary,

[English]

I don't think, it is right.

[Translation]

You did a right thing by not permitting anyone and you have said that you would call the leaders and have talks with them. It is an appropriate way. But if we treat any organ as a holy-cow, we are not harming it. There are certain things about which we should not take lightly and generally their criticism should be avoided ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah): He, too, would be benefitted by it. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): You cannot decide that. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: The Speaker has said that he would decide.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is mentioned in the Presidential Address:

[English]

"A Ministry for Overseas Indian Affairs has been created to give focused attention to issues related to the large diaspora of persons of Indian origin in different parts of the World".

[Translation]

It is right to create a Ministry. We gave special attention to diaspora. We, even started organising an annual convention of Indians overseas. This year, a grand, third convention of this kind was held in Mumbai. It has several benefits. It has been a long outstanding demand of Indians staying abroad that they should be accorded dual citizenship. A law was enacted to this effect in 2003. It has been ensured therein that the security of our country will not be compromised. Therefore, it was felt inappropriate to grant dual citizenship to all Indians, overseas. A committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Singhvi was constituted in this regard and the Committee also gave the same recommendations. The committee said that keeping four aspects in mind, namely, countries where Indians are staying in very large number, where similar laws already exist, from where there has been such demand, and our national security. So keeping these four aspects in mind Indians residing only in some specified countries only should be granted dual citizenship. I was surprised when the hon. Prime Minister while criticising it asked as to why it should be specified and everybody should be granted dual citizenship. Today, if we grant dual citizenship to every person coming from Bangladesh or Pakistan and also to such people coming to India from some other countries, it will not be in the interest of our national security, we got to be concerned and cautious about it and that is why we have been in favour of granting it to Indian overseas in respect of some specified countries only.

Sir, when I was laying it in the Rajya Sabha, Dr. Manmohan Singh was leader of the opposition there. Sir, with your leave, I would like to read it out.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri L.K. Advani, I hope you know the rules.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: I know the rules. But because it is a substantial point which is relevant, I welcome what he said.

[Translation]

When I was about to move the resolution Deputy Chairman, Madam Nazama told me that Dr. Manmohan Singh wanted to say something on this issue as it was already decided to get it passed without debate. Welcoming the resolution, Dr. Manmohan Singh said that:

[English]

"While I am on this subject, Madam, I would like to say something. About the treatment of refugees after the partition of our country, the minorities in countries like Bangladesh have faced persecution and it is our moral obligation that if circumstances force people—these unfortunate people—to seek refuge in our country, our approach in granting citizenship to these unfortunate persons should be more liberal. I sincerely hope that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister will bear this in mind in charting out the future course of action with regard to the Citizenship Act."

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): I still stand by it.

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, Shri Shankar Roy Chowdhury had submitted the same thing and in reply to that I said:

[English]

Madam, I have taken note of what the Leader of the Opposition and Shri Shankar Roy Chowdhury have said and I am fully in agreement with the views that they have expressed. Very often in the past, we have faced this kind of criticism when we have adopted an approach of that kind.

I said that when we say that so and so is an illegal migrant and he should be sent back, but so and so has been persecuted there because he belonged to the minorities and, therefore, in his case we would be willing to consider granting him citizenship, we were told that 'you are being communal, you are discriminating between one migrant and another migrant'. I said 'yes'. In this case, so far as the minorities of Bangladesh are concerned—and someone else later mentions that

Pakistan also—I said 'yes' I take into cognizance of the fact that when partition took place, we undertook that so far as the Minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh—Bangladesh came much later—are concerned, it will be their responsibility to look after them. If they have failed, then we owe it to the minorities in those areas to accept them as citizens here.

This is what I would like to say. I fully endorse this point. I hope that now, after coming to the Government, the hon. Prime Minister continues to hold the same view and would be willing to grant citizenship to all such minorities who have come to West Bengal or Assam or other places, and make a difference between them. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, now, I would like to come to the topic on which the discussion was initiated by many of my colleagues in the morning. Hon'ble President in his address had quoted a Tamil Poem. Some of the members may say that Tamil Poem would not have been approved by the Cabinet. Especially those who held legal view usually say like this. I do not know Tamil however, I have been told that the first line of the poem is—*Nam enge irikkidrom*. ...*(Interruptions)* where have we reached?

[English]

Where are we? ...*(Interruptions)* Am I right?

This is the question that the Government ask itself.

[Translation]

Where has the Government reached in nine-ten months. The Government have been defending a Governor for the last four-five days and ultimately the Supreme Court has to intervene* why are they defending him? We have time and again made this submission before the Prime Minister that if any one has done this the Government will have to find out. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (Barrackpore): When it has been forbidden by you to hold discussion about the Governor then why is he speaking about that. ...*(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

MD. SALIM: If one has to speak on it then discussion on it should be held in the House. You have already told that there will be no discussion on it, even then he is speaking on it. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Ever before in the political history of India, has a court made—the Supreme Court, not any other court—the Supreme Court made an observation of this kind in respect of a constitutional authority like the Governor? ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, this is not correct. ...*(Interruptions)* He cannot say it. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, I am not yielding. ...*(Interruptions)*

MD. SALIM: Sir, this is not correct. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Advani, you may like to yield to the Leader of the House.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Sir, he has made a remark against the Governor. ...*(Interruptions)* It is not correct. Shri Advani, please correct your statement. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, the Governor should not be dragged here. ...*(Interruptions)*

MD. SALIM: Sir, I need your protection. Please permit me to speak for a minute. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will certainly look into it. No derogatory reference should be made to a constitutional authority like Governor.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, a ruling of the Supreme Court cannot be wrongly interpreted here and the position of a constitutional authority cannot be challenged in this manner without giving a proper notice to you. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I said that I have omitted it. It is out of record.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY (Berhampore, West Bengal): Sir, the apex court has made some other observations also. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: For the first time in the political history of this country. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Advani, how long will you take?

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Several times we have complained in this regard to the hon'ble President. We told him that it is wrong so it should be stopped".

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: No reference to Rashtrapati. I have deleted it. You cannot make any reference to the Rashtrapati.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I show you the rule? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: No. It has been deleted. I have expunged it.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not trying to influence the debate, if I use the Rashtrapati's name. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You are such an experienced person.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: This is a matter of fact that he summoned. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Maybe, but reference to him is not relevant. I have given my ruling.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: I accept your ruling. I accept all your rulings even though I may not agree with them. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi):

MR. SPEAKER: That will also not go on record.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: All the members presently sitting in front have distanced themselves from the decision of the Government. They say that they have nothing to do with it. I have not told them to say so. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Let Shri Advani ji finish his speech. You please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: You have taken 45 minutes.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, I will conclude.
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have always been saying that we need not agree with each other's views. He is expressing his view. The Prime Minister will reply. I am sure, he will deal with this.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Shri Sibt-e Razi who is Governor of Jharkhand is a resident of Uttar Pradesh. Probably he is originally from Raebareilly. He had gone to Lucknow. While he went to Lucknow he talked to journalists. I have paper cuttings of 'Dainik Jagaran' about whatever he told to the journalists. He told them that since he was on the post of the Governor he would talk within limit. He could make out the meaning only yesterday whatever he said within limit. When he called journalists I thought that something unusual was going to happen. However, later on he carefully gave signal that*

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: That is not binding on anybody.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: No. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This cannot go on record. The Governor's statement cannot go on record.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, this is not correct.
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: On the basis of a newspaper, you cannot make an imputation on the Governor.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Since when has this rule been there? ...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: On the basis of newspaper, one cannot make any comment on a constitutional authority.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: You know that you cannot quote the newspaper. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have given my ruling.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: You cannot rely upon the newspaper. ...(Interruptions)

[*Translation*]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: I do not have objection whatever ruling will be given by you, however I hope that the hon'ble Prime Minister will ponder over my speech. Those who never praised BJP and always criticised BJP have now suddenly started praising it....*

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Without notice, you cannot mention these names. I am trying to protect ethics.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, I know that you are protecting ethics. I know the procedure. I know why it is being protected.

MR. SPEAKER: You mentioned some well-known journalists.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You can say that many people have expressed similar views.

...(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

*Not recorded.

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Only this much I would like to say that I wrote a detailed letter to the Prime Minister regarding the Jharkhand issue. I did get a reply from the Prime Minister. In this reply he has suggested me to ask all these questions in the Parliament. I would like to submit that the present episode reminds me of 1975. I have seen that all the journalists of the country who normally criticize us after the emergency period whenever they feel that the democratic process is being stalled by the Government or democracy is being attacked then they all ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What are you doing?

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: First of all you please sit down. Advani Ji you please continue. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I am controlling them also. How should I do it? You kindly tell me the method to do it. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: You please sit down. You leader is speaking. All right. It is not for the first time that it has happened. They are refusing.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Mistry, please sit down. You please speak.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: All right, He is concluding his speech. He has already said that he is going to conclude his speech.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, I am concluding my speech.

[Translation]

Today Pranab Ji has come, he is in a pensive mood. I would like to tell him that if the Congress party think that the country may prosper only when they are in power in all the States then they will repeat the same mistake that they are doing. It seems that their aim is to install Congress governments in all the States by hook or by crook. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): What did you do in Arunachal Pradesh?

MR. SPEAKER: Please keep quiet.

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: A few days back the India Today Conclave was held and the Prime Minister had also participated in that and I was also invited. The subject matter was quite unusual. I was asked a question and I was told to speak on that theme.

[English]

"Is good economics bad politics?"

[Translation]

It was asked whether good economics was bad politics? I replied that it is the year 2005,

[English]

and this marks two anniversaries. The 50th anniversary of the resolution passed by the AICC in respect of economic policy—commanding heights of the economy,

[Translation]

which was undone by our present Prime Minister in 1992 ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (Panskura): It is commanding heights of the economy of India.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Yes, I know it. secondly, this is the 30th anniversary also of the emergency. The first

was bad economics, and the second was bad politics. Today, I feel that while so far as economics is concerned the then Finance Minister continues to do what he proposed at that time. It is something, which we pursued, and you are continuing it.

[Translation]

All right its nuisance will creep in Budget speech, faults do creep in

[English]

But so far as bad politics is concerned, I have a feeling that even though after the emergency nobody again dare to impose an emergency, but the basic mindset which brought about the emergency that

[Translation]

the entire country should remain under our control. The similar mindset is also existing today and it will be used against BJP. I would like to submit to the alliance it will be used against all ...*(Interruptions)* Lalu Prasad ji is victim to it. Donot worry ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

Therefore, I plead with the hon. Prime Minister to pursue on the same lines. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: He is concluding. This is his last sentence.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Let him pursue the same line, which we developed, in so far as the economy is concerned, but he should completely abandon this politics, if he has the power to do it; otherwise distance himself from it.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, hon. Prime Minister. Please, let us give each other a proper hearing.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I deem it a great privilege to be standing here today to express the gratitude of our Government to the respected Rashtrapati for his address to Members of both Houses of Parliament.

Sir, this is a hard earned privilege for me since I have had to wait out the entire year to perform this happy task. I would like to take this opportunity to doubly thank the President—for his Address last year and his Address this year.

Sir, last year, the Rashtrapati ji outlined the nature of the historic mandate the constituents of the United Progressive Alliance had received from the people of our country. He also outlined the vision underlying the National Common Minimum Programme: A vision of share prosperity, of an inclusive society, of a caring polity. The President captured the essence of this philosophy in his Address to Parliament this year when he said that we want India to shine, but that it must shine for all.

Sir, this year, the President has outlined the many steps we have taken in office in a brief period of nine months to fulfil some of the most important promises we have made in the National Common Minimum Programme. Read together, the two Addresses of the President offer an overview of the political revolution that the United Progressive Alliance has authored in translating the mandate of the elections of 2004.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the President has paid an eloquent tribute to all those who acted heroically in dealing with this disaster called 'Tsunami'. Our Armed Forces, our paramilitary forces, our State Governments and our own Central Government authorities acted with great speed to provide relief and then thereon from relief and succour to move on to the task of rehabilitation. I wish to join the hon. Leader of Opposition in paying tributes particularly to our Armed Forces, our Coast Guard, and our paramilitary forces for the heroic task that they have accomplished.

Before I go further, I listened very carefully to the advice of the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I respect him. He is a seasoned politician who has been in politics much longer than I have been. When he advised me that I was becoming an invisible Prime Minister, I must solemnly say that, that is a charge I do not plead guilty to. Whether a Prime Minister is visible or not visible should be judged from the conduct of our Government, and when I outline what we have achieved in nine months, it is for the House to judge.

However, I must say, Sir, wherever people of India were in distress in the last nine months, I along with Sonia ji went there. When our Government was faced with a drought, I went to those areas where the intensity of the drought was so severe that farmers were committing suicides. When there were floods, I was there with the people of Bihar; I was there with the people of Assam. Similarly, I had been to Jammu and Kashmir twice in the last six or seven months. I was there in Andamans; I was there in Tamil Nadu; I was there in Kerala, and I

[Dr. Manmohan Singh]

was there in Andhra Pradesh when our people were faced with this Tsunami disaster. Therefore, our record speaks for itself.

If you permit me, Mr. Speaker, I will outline what we have achieved in the last nine months.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, many hon. Members who were able to participate in the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President on his Address have made very important points. I have taken note of their sentiments. Due to shortage of time, I may not be able to reply to all the points but hon. Members have my assurance that the suggestions that have been made on the floor of this House will receive our most serious attention.

A question has been asked in this House as to what exactly we have done in these past nine months to redeem our pledge to the people. Let me say at the very outset that the President's Address should be read along with the Budget Speech of the Union Finance Minister and the Action Taken Report laid on the Table of the House by the hon. Finance Minister to fully appreciate the enormous work done by our Government in such a short period of time. To supplement this, our Government has also prepared a 'Report to the People', for the first time ever, that informs the general public as to what steps have been taken to implement the National Common Minimum Programme. Copies of this Report are being made available to every Member of Parliament. They are also being sent to every media organisation. Never before I believe has a Government been so transparent and proactive in keeping the public informed. I will be the last one to say that we have achieved everything. I recognise that we have miles to go but we will persevere and we shall overcome.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Advaniji talked about the economic policies. Lot of things have happened in our country in the last 50 years. It is my sincere conviction that but for the solid foundation of our economy—the scientific infrastructure that Panditji created, the temples of learning Universities, Institutes of Management and Technology that Panditji created, the public sector investments that were made to promote self-reliance—we would not be where we are today.

Changes have been made in the economic policies. In every living society these changes have to be made. Panditji himself used to say that we are living in a dynamic world and we cannot be slaves all the time of the past. So we have made changes, but the basic thrust

of our economic policy remains what was conceived at the time of our Independence—to promote a self-reliant, progressive, humane and egalitarian society.

On the economic front, our efforts to steer Indian economy on to a high-growth path are bearing fruit. Rashtrapatiji has referred to this in his address and this has been further elaborated upon in the Finance Minister's Budget Speech. Our Government was elected on the basis of the mandate that reflected dissatisfaction of '*aam admi*' with the way his concerns were being addressed. That is why we have made fighting inflation and generating employment the two most important goals of our economic policy. I am happy to report that the rate of inflation has dipped below five per cent despite the drought and despite the sharp increase in international prices of petroleum products.

We have, at the same time, managed to create a growth momentum which has not only delivered a growth of almost seven per cent this year, but is likely to deliver equally impressive growth in the coming years. Our external profile is robust and International Credit Rating Agencies are upgrading our sovereign rating. The balance of payment position is as comfortable as never before. International trade is booming with exports rising at over 25 per cent in dollar terms in April-January, 2005.

Sir, what is more impressive is after many years of investment famine under the NDA regime, we see a clear revival of investment activities and consequently, there is a fine degree of confidence in the future of our economy. This confidence has been bolstered by the growing recognition of the fact that our politics of inclusiveness is creating a more humane social basis for more equitable economic growth. The one area of concern is the high level of fiscal and revenue deficits of State and Central Governments and I sincerely hope that we can, by working together, evolve a national political consensus in dealing with this fiscal challenge. I am sure, Sir, that hon. Members will have an opportunity to debate further on this in the debate on the Union Budget.

Sir, to sustain this sense of optimism our Government has taken steps to create a more equitable economic framework, a framework within which all regions and classes will participate in growth process. There is no point in having a high rate of growth if the benefits are not shared by all sections of society, particularly the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, backward classes, minorities and women. This requires taking steps to empower them, investing in their skill enhancement to

enable them to be active participants in the economy, providing a social-legal framework where their rights are recognised and protected and creating an atmosphere of belonging and inclusiveness.

Sir, the results of our efforts will, I am certain, bear fruit to the satisfaction of the people of this country. The foundation of a successful country is a healthy economy, a sound polity, strong institutions and a harmonious society. We are committed to strengthen all these basic foundations of our Republic.

Sir, I have outlined the broad parameters of our economic policy framework. The President's Address refers to seven priority areas and I will draw the attention of the House to these priority areas to give you an idea of what we have been doing and what we plan to do. I recognised yesterday Shri George Fernandesji referred to this matter and said that he did not find a match between what is stated in the President's Address and the Finance Minister's Budget speech. I do not share that perception and I do want to show what we have done and what we proposed to do to get this country once again moving on to a high growth path, strong growth in output and employment and a stronger commitment to social equity.

Sir, the Rashtrapatiji has referred to the seven priority areas of our Government—agriculture, employment, education, health care, water, urban renewal and infrastructure. Hon. Members will notice the correlation between these high priority areas and our vision of a prosperous, equitable India. Nobody can deny that it is only by focusing on public and private investment in these seven critical areas can we realise sustainable, equitable growth.

Sir, as I had stated earlier, investment in human capital is essential for an inclusive growth process. The importance we attach to elementary education is apparent from the imposition of an education cess and the priority we give to educational programmes. Simultaneously, we are about to launch the National Rural Health Mission which will not only revamp the public health delivery system but which along with the initiatives in nutrition and education, represents our commitment to human capital formation.

Sir, hon. Members, and even Advaniji referred to the fact that the President's Address makes no mention of rural growth. Sir that perception is also not correct. We have outlined a programme, a comprehensive programme—*Bharat Nirman*—which attaches high priority

to the most important area which can have a bearing on the polity of rural India.

The "Bharat Nirman" programme outlined both in the President's Address and the Budget speech gives concrete shape to our commitment to achieving tangible outcomes in irrigation, housing, rural roads, drinking water, electricity and telecommunication connectivity by 2009.

Hon. Shri George Fernandesji appeared to have been disappointed that the Budget speech did not adequately elaborate on the reference to "Bharat Nirman" in the President's Address. Sir, "Bharat Nirman" is not a scheme and is not about "Outlays" but about "Outcomes". This is a four year programme of rural infrastructure development. The Finance Minister has identified the following outcomes: namely,

- To bring an additional one crore hectares under assured irrigation;
- To connect all villages that have a population of 1000 (or 500 in hilly/tribal areas) with a road;
- To construct 80 lakh additional houses for the poor;
- To provide drinking water to the remaining 74,000 habitations that are uncovered;
- To reach electricity to the remaining 1,25,000 villages and offer electricity connection to 2.3 crore households; and
- To give telephone connectivity to the remaining 66,822 villages.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Where is the allocation? ...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: You speak on this issue during discussions on the budget.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: This is not fair. So many hon. Members have spoken.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: What is going on?

[English]

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir the Budget contains enhanced allocations for each of these crucial areas. Having outlined these outcomes, we are committed to making the required outlays.

On the infrastructure front, we face an enormous task. Poor quality infrastructure is the biggest barrier to the growth of industry and trade. We have been working relentlessly in improving the policy regime for investment in infrastructure—be it power, roads, ports, railways, civil aviation, telecommunications. We will increase public investment in crucial areas and supplement that with private investment. Public-Private Partnership will be attempted where possible and appropriate. The Rural Health Care Mission and the Urban Renewal Mission will facilitate such partnerships. The Urban Renewal Mission will enable the provision of basic amenities in urban areas while at the same time providing world class infrastructure in our cities.

We have outlined water as a priority area. I think, Shri Suresh Prabhu yesterday mentioned about the neglect of water. I plead not guilty. I have listened to the many points raised by hon. Members regarding policies pertaining to water availability and utilization. Sir, I would like to urge hon. Members to impress upon our political leaders at all levels of our democratic governance that we should resist the temptation of playing politics with water. Our Government is committed to providing access to water to all. We have to renew the spirit of cooperation in dealing with this massive challenge.

Sir, an important area of our policy focus is education. Many hon. Members have drawn our attention to the many challenges of access and excellence in education. The National Knowledge Commission that we propose to constitute will focus attention on the quality of our educational system. The issue of access is being addressed by the various programmes we are funding with the Education Cess. Our emphasis on mid-day meals programme is also aimed at improving access to education.

Our Government has been in office now for nine months. And I do wish to point out, as a matter of pride, that India's prestige in the world has never been as high as it is today.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the last nine months, the world has been fascinated by the strength and vigour of our democratic process. We are seen as a shining example of a successful democracy, a polity which periodically redistributes power to reflect the aspirations of our people.

India is today a role model in many ways in managing a multi-racial, multi-religious and a multi-lingual society through effective democratic processes. This is a strength we must all cherish and nurture for this is the strength that enables us to cross all challenges in fulfilling the vision of our founding fathers, a vision, as I said, of an inclusive, just and humane society. The election of the UPA Government last year was a manifestation of the people's mandate for change. We need to respect that and permit our institutions to function effectively.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI (Bhagalpur): What happened about naxalites? *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What is going on?

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. You are all senior Members, behaving in this irresponsible manner! Nothing will be recorded unless the Prime Minister yields.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Unless the Prime Minister yields, no comments will be recorded.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: I would now like to come to internal security issues the North-East and Jammu and Kashmir issues, which have been raised by the hon. Members of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the nine months in Office, our Government has also worked hard to improve the internal security situation in our country. We have been purposeful but humane in bolstering the security environment. We have developed a comprehensive and systematic approach to all internal security issues, whether they be related to Left-wing extremism or militancy in the North-East and Jammu and Kashmir.

We are concerned about the spread of Left-wing extremism and it is our sincere assurance that we will work with State Governments in tackling this problem in all its dimensions—political, economic, social and administrative. We will address the underlying causes for disaffection and alienation among sections which tilt towards such extremism. The Union Government is providing assistance to States to meet some of their security-related expenditure and has also decided to bear the cost of deployment of additional Central forces.

Developments in our neighbourhood are also a matter of concern in this regard. Our Government will be taking a lead role in developing a coordinated approach to this problem. Our Government's policy is to engage militants in a dialogue if they abjure the path of violence, to have appropriate and just laws and to modernise security forces so that they can be effective instruments of State action. In this, the Union Government will be a partner with all affected Governments in finding enduring solutions.

Our commitment to a caring society based on the rule of law was reflected in our approach to the situation in the North Eastern region, particularly the State of Manipur. We have reached out to the people with a helping hand, a hand committed to understanding their genuine grievances. The joy, which I saw, on the faces of an unprecedented crowd of Manipuris on the occasion of the handing over of the Kangla Fort gives me the necessary confidence that we are on the right track and that the State can move forward towards normalcy.

Shri Advaniji asked me about the discussions with the NSCN. The negotiations are going on and moving at a pace which is satisfactory. We are in the process of discussing each other's point of view. I am confident that these discussions will be brought to a successful conclusion.

I should also say that until our Government came to power, all these discussions were being held outside the country. Our Government took the view that these discussions must take place within our own country and in that we have succeeded. That alone is a positive development in dealing with problems of the Nagaland.

Sir, our approach to the problems in Jammu and Kashmir has reaped a rich harvest in the manner in which the people of the State came forward to participate in local government election held very recently. The forces of democracy were greatly encouraged by the turn out

and the verdict. There has been a perceptibly lower level of violence in the State of Jammu and Kashmir this year. The people are yearning for peace and normalcy. I myself have been twice to the Jammu and Kashmir State. Considerable enthusiasm has been generated by the effective manner in which the reconstruction package has been grounded. The infiltration level has come down by more than 60 per cent during 2004. There is a hope on the horizon and if we keep up the tempo of economic activity there, we may see further improvement in the scenario.

Sir, given the external dimension of terrorism and other trans-border crimes like smuggling of arms, counterfeit currency, drug trafficking, it is very vital to strengthen our international borders. The Government has taken various measures which include fencing of borders, improving road networks in border areas, and deployment of hitech electronic surveillance equipment on the borders.

Sir, I would like to reiterate once again that our Government is not soft on terrorism and militancy. It is, however, willing to realise the inhuman situation created by some of our laws and therefore willing to modify them. We are committed to the National Common Minimum Programme which states that there will be no compromise on terrorism. However, we were equally concerned about the misuse of POTA and we decided to repeal it while enforcing the existing laws more strictly. However, the existing legal framework has been substantially strengthened by amending the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 to handle terrorism related issues more effectively.

Sir, I could go on but in the House no Member has brought up issues of foreign policy. Therefore, I will skip that because of the lateness of the hour. There is, however, one matter that I do wish to refer to and that is our relations with Pakistan. After my meeting with Gen. Musharraf on the side lines of the United Nations General Assembly, all items of composite dialogue are under discussion. We are moving forward and I must say that nothing brings the people of our sub-continent more together than our love for cricket and Bollywood cinema. I am equally conscious of the fact today that even as I speak in this House I am competing for the nation's attention with young men like Sehwag and Kamal. Perhaps that is how it should be. Indeed how nice it would be if we conduct our affairs in this august House with the same spirit of sportsmanship that our young cricketers exhibit on the playing field of the subcontinent.

[Dr. Manmohan Singh]

Sir, when our citizens went to Pakistan for the last Test Series, they returned with tale of bonhomie and warm hospitality. I am delighted to say that our people have returned this hospitality to the thousands of visitors from Pakistan. Relations between nations are after all nothing more than relations between their people. I am sure that time will work to heal our wounds and create an environment of shared prosperity and peace in this subcontinent in which we can all live and work for the greater good of our subcontinent.

Sir, I am happy to inform the hon. Members of the House that I have decided to invite President Musharraf to come to India to watch the cricket match between our two teams. It is my earnest desire that the people in our neighbouring country and their leaders should feel free to visit us whenever they wish to do so. Be it to watch a cricket match; be it to do some shopping; or be it to meet friends and families—India is proud to be an open society and an open economy. I do hope that President Musharraf and his family will enjoy their visit to our country. ...*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will be failing in my duty if I do not express my sincere regret at the fact that the proceedings of the House have once again been disrupted in a manner that does not do this House proud. ...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: What happened today morning? ...*(Interruptions)*

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: I share the sentiments expressed by some Members that our democracy gives us the freedom and the right to express our views without fear or favour and we must make use of these freedoms in a proper manner. We cannot allow cynicism to grow about the relevance and role of democratic institutions and of elected representatives. There is so much work before us and we have not been able to give our time to it. I share the sentiment of our revered Rashtrapatiiji when he said, and I quote:

"The people of India anxiously await your views and your decisions on these crucial economic and social legislation. I urge you, hon. Members, to repay the trust and confidence that the people have reposed in you by dedicating yourselves to the orderly consideration of these Bills. Every minute of Parliament's time is precious and every citizen and taxpayer values it greatly. I sincerely hope you will make the most economical use of the time at your

disposal and meet the voter's and the citizen's expectations and fulfil their aspirations."

These were the words of our Rashtrapatiiji.

Hon. Members may have genuine concerns that they wish to give expression to in the House. After all, that is what their voters would want them to do. I would be the last one to chastise hon. Members for giving vent to their heartfelt concerns. Yet, there are ways in which we can express these sentiments without disrupting the proceedings of the House. ...*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I must compliment you in all sincerity for your extreme patience and good humour in dealing with the situation in the House. I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition agrees with me that we must all try our best to uphold the dignity and decorum of this august House and never allow anything to happen that would demean it in the eyes of our citizens and the world at large. I appeal once again to all hon. Members to participate actively and effectively in the proceedings of the House, putting forward their views in an appropriate manner.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your indulgence and would like to once again express my gratitude to the President for his thoughtful address. I would like this vote of thanks to the President's Address to be passed unanimously....*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, now we are going to take up the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address.

A number of amendments have been moved by the hon. Members on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address. Can I put all the amendments to vote of the House together? Or, does any hon. Member want any particular amendment to be moved separately?

14.00 hrs.

I shall now put all the amendments together to the vote of the House.

All the amendments were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER: I shall now put the main motion to the vote of the House.

The question is:

"That an Address be presented to the President in the following terms:

'That the Members of the Lok Sabha assembled in this Session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which he has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on February 25, 2005'."

The motion was adopted.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for your cooperation.

The House stands adjourned to meet again at 3 p.m.

14.01 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Fifteen of the Clock.

15.04 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled at Four minutes past Fifteen of the Clock.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[*English*]

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (Barrackpore): Sir I wanted to raise the important issue of yesterday's Supreme Court judgement, its fallout and implication. Hon. Speaker had assured me that after the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, he would allow me to speak.

If you allow me two or three minutes, I will be able to submit my views. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please allow him to make his submission.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

YOGI ADITYA NATH (Gorakhpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is totally wrong, no subjudice matter can be raised here ...(*Interruptions*). By raising this issue here he is clearly violating the Parliamentary Conventions. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: The Supreme Court cannot extrapolate its own jurisdiction and step into the areas chosen by its own. ...(*Interruptions*) Parliament, in its wisdom, can easily discuss the issue. ...(*Interruptions*) So, the Supreme Court cannot extrapolate its jurisdiction. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I support his view. It is a fact that due to weakness of the Government, the Supreme Court is interfering in the functioning of the Election Commission as well as the legislature. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please listen to me.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I fully support what the hon'ble member is saying. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded except Shri Topdar's version.

...(*Interruptions*)*

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: At this stage, it is neither advisable to disobey the Supreme court nor to allow the Supreme Court to take over the charge of the political executive. ...(*Interruptions*) Therefore, to come out of this *impasse*, the Government should come out with a suggestion before the Rashtrapatiji issues a proclamation of President's Rule in Jharkhand. This *impasse* has been created by the judgement of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has changed its jurisdiction. This is my humble suggestion. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please listen to me. Our hon. Speaker has already stated in this House that he has called a meeting of all the leaders and he would discuss the matter.

...(*Interruptions*)

*Not recorded.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please listen to me.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: Not only the political parties which are agitated but also Parliament is very much agitated over it. ...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded except Shri Topdar's version.

...(Interruptions)*

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: "...* ...(Interruptions) If the Supreme Court's judgement is implemented, it would amount to provision and misdirection of the constitutional process. ...(Interruptions) We are Parliamentarians. We cannot allow such words and such type of acts by the Supreme Court without our concern being expressed. ...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing should be recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please listen to me. Nothing is going to be recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: These things are not to be recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please sit down. Our hon. Speaker has already stated in the House that he has called a meeting of all the hon. Leaders of the parties. After consulting all the Leaders of the parties, he will make his own observation. So, I think, now we should wait for that meeting. Then, the hon. Speaker will make his own observation.

Now, the General Discussion on the Budget (Railway) 2005-06 will be taken up. The time allotted is 10 hours.

If the House agrees, Items 11 to 13 will be taken up together. Now I would request Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan to speak.

...(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

**Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I may be permitted to point out a general principle ...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I cannot listen to anything regarding this matter now.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: Under article 212 of the Constitution, State Legislatures have complete freedom. ...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are a very senior Member. The hon. Speaker has already made his observations on this. You cannot speak on that now. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shrimati Sumitra Mahajanji, now you speak.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded now. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Bansal, what are you doing? You are a very senior Member. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record except the speech of Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan.

...(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are all responsible persons and very senior Members. If you are disturbing the House, it is very sad. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Bansal, you are yourself a member of the Panel of Chairmen and you are disturbing the House now. This is not correct. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time allotted for budget discussion is being wasted due to this, so you please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing should be recorded except the speech of Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A member of your party is going to speak now and you are disturbing the House now. You are wasting the time allotted for discussing the Railway Budget. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are simply wasting the time of the House.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now that the members from one side have become quiet you have started speaking. You please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded, there is no use in speaking like this.

...(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing is going on record.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have wasted more than 16 minutes. Please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded except the speech of Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan.

...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Radhakrishnanji, you yourself are on the Panel of Chairmen.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal, nothing is being recorded, neither your submission nor theirs. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Members, nothing is going into the records.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Bansal, you can discuss this matter with the hon. Speaker.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have listened to all the hon. Members.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing should be recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, let us start the business of the House, please.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing is going to be recorded. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have taken up discussion on Railway Budget. Please take your seats.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sorry to say that some hon. Members who are on the Panel of Chairmen are disturbing the House.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sumitraji, you please start your speech.

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN (Indore): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot shout like them. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please maintain peace.

15.18 hrs.

**RAILWAY BUDGET, 2005-06—GENERAL
DISCUSSION
DEMANDS FOR GRANTS ON ACCOUNT
(RAILWAYS)-2005-06
DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY
GRANTS—2004-05**

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Motions moved:

"That the respective sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the Order Paper, be granted to the President of India, out of the Consolidated Fund of India, on account, for or towards defraying the charges during the year ending the 31st day of March, 2006, in respect of Heads of Demands entered in the second column thereof against demand Nos. 1 to 16."

Demands for Grants on Accounts (Railways) for 2005-06 submitted to the Vote of Lok Sabha

No. of Demand	Name of Demand	Amount of Demand for Grants on Account submitted to the vote of the Lok Sabha (Rs.)
1	2	3
1	Railway Board	13,21,69,000
2	Miscellaneous Expenditure (General)	43,33,47,000
3	General Superintendence and Services on Railways	317,04,48,000
4	Repairs and Maintenance of Permanent Way and Works	600,90,72,000
5	Repairs and Maintenance of Motive Power	314,44,50,000
6	Repairs and Maintenance of Carriages and Wagons	629,47,29,000
7	Repairs and Maintenance of Plant and Equipment	340,36,75,000

*Not recorded.

1	2	3
8	Operating Expenses—Rolling Stock and Equipment	500,36,82,000
9	Operating Expenses—Traffic	2445,70,12,000
10	Operating Expenses—Fuel	1529,19,59,000
11	Staff Welfare and Amenities	253,98,89,000
12	Miscellaneous Working Expenses	298,70,04,000
13	Provident Fund, Pension and Other Retirement Benefits	1200,11,75,000
14	Appropriation to Funds	2212,91,33,000
15	Dividend to General Revenues, Repayment of Loans taken from General Revenues and Amortization of Over-Capitalisation	12,22,61,000
16	Assets-Acquisition, Construction and Replacement	
	Revenue	7,50,00,000
	Other Expenditure	
	Capital	3520,80,51,000
	Railway Funds	773,61,50,000
	Railway Safety Fund	118,46,17,000
	Special Railway Safety Fund	638,83,33,000
Total		15771,21,56,000

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That the respective supplementary sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the Order Paper be granted to the President of India, out of the Consolidated Fund of India to defray the

charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 2005, in respect of the Heads of Demands entered in the second column thereof against demand Nos. 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 16."

Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 2004-05 submitted to the Vote of Lok Sabha

No. of Demand	Name of Demand	Amount of Supplementary Demands for Grants submitted to the vote of the House (Rs.)
1	2	3
3	General Superintendence and Services on Railways	52,54,22,000

1	2	3
4	Repairs and Maintenance of Permanent Way and Works	46,73,47,000
10	Operating Expenses—Fuel	482,64,82,000
11	Staff Welfare and Amenities	13,86,31,000
13	Provident, Fund, Pension and Other Retirement Benefits	319,08,64,000
14	Appropriation to Funds	1514,30,00,000
16	Assets—Acquisition, Construction and Replacement	
	Revenue	9,98,61,000
	Other Expenditure	
	Capital	201,59,88,000
	Railways Funds	110,00,00,000
	Railway Safety Fund	1,000
	Total	2750,75,96,000

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN (Indore): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the Indian Railways, the hon'ble Minister of Railways has stated in the Rail Budget that the Government would give international standards to the Indian Railways. The hon'ble Minister received some poems also in the beginning of the Budget speech. He spoke enough for Railways but he should have spoken a bit more which got omitted. After he read out the whole Budget I felt, I would have to add something to it. The hon'ble Minister has stated that the Indian Railways have ample scope. Therefore, he said:

"Uthana hai aur bhi upar, hain unchaiyan pukarti,
 baat sahi hai, hai apaar kehmta".

No doubt, it is all right. Of course, the Indian Railways have ample scope for expansion. But the inabilities and incapacities of the Government are hampering it. Such is the condition of our railways today.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah): It was not part of the Budget.

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN: I have added it on my own. But, please tell if it is wrong.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Jha ji, please do not interrupt in between.

[English]

Your name is also in the list.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN: The budget has certain good things also. People were happy that passenger fares and freight rates have not been hiked. But it is somewhat wrong. Some good announcements have also been made. Concessions have been given to students of Government Schools and also to girl students going for higher studies. Milk producers and milk vendors have also been given a few concessions as he has been closely associated with dairy and milk. Announcements are good but sometimes, the intended benefits do not reach the real beneficiaries. Earlier also, announcements were made for providing cattle and fodder to the poor in various States, but nothing happened. Similarly, tall claims have been made in the Budget but I fail to understand as to what measures have been taken to materialise the announcements. Several things have been said such as

efforts will be made to increase the volume of goods carriage and the speed of goods train will also be increased, there would be double container trains on the lines of double-decker buses which will run at the speed of over 150 kms per hour. But, I would like to ask—whether we have the required infrastructure for all this and whether our Railways have the capacity. He has stated that the Railways will increase the volume of goods carriage and earn revenue to the tune of Rs. 650 crore. Freight rates, except of foodgrains under PDS, have also been increased. The carriage of foodgrains is declining day by day. If we compare last year's rail budget speech with the current one, we would see that even some of the paragraphs have been reproduced. There is nothing new in it. So far as infrastructure is concerned almost 50 percent of the bridges are in bad shape. He has mentioned the same figures in this regard as he mentioned last year. The same sentence that work on 1306 bridges, out of a total of 2700 bridges, was undertaken in the year 2004 has been reproduced in current year's Budget. Last year, work on 411 bridges was stated to be undertaken. The same figure has been repeated this year also. I am not talking of bridges alone, be it inter-locking system, signalling system or the stations, the condition remains the same and the progress of work is too slow. Allocation is declining each year. Minor increase has been made for mere name sake and that too is not commensurate with the requirement.

No efforts seem to have been made for improving the inter-locking signalling system. I mean to say if we set a target for carriage of more goods we will have to increase the speed of goods trains and for this we would need more wagons also. Today, we find 10-12 metric tonnes of iron ore just lying on a number of stations for want of wagons. The current rail Budget makes no mention as to how they will provide more wagons, how they would enhance the carriage capacity. For example, take the case of Indore railway station. Although the Railways claim that they would increase the volume of good carriage at Indore Railway station and also increase the speed of goods train, but we see 'Dora Chura' which is loaded at Indore, remains unladen at the railway station for months. We do not have adequate number of wagons. It does not seem that any effort is being made in this regard. The claim of increasing the number of freight carriers is mere rhetoric and the claim of increasing the income from freight is also rhetoric.

It is a good thing that the fares have not been increased. However, I would like to know as to how the

Railways would earn an additional 1,000 crore rupees. It has been stated that the Railways will earn 650 crore rupees from freight charges and increase the volume of freight. All these are hollow claims which I have stated in a few words because I know Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, that you will be ringing the bell in a while. That is why I am expressing my views point-wise.

The Hon'ble Minister is saying that fares will not be increased. But on being asked how the Railways would earn an additional 250 crore rupees, he replies that they will do monitoring. Was monitoring not being done earlier? Were they running the Railways without monitoring? Today we are talking about monitoring. I would like to know which special scheme you have implemented for monitoring. Have the Government started or proposed to start any training programme for Railway employees? Are the Government taking any measures to increase their efficiency? There is no scheme for this. Have they formulated any scheme to connect the industrial sectors so as to increase the transportation of goods? Nothing has been done in this regard. It has been stated that additional revenue will be generated from parcels. The courier service is being more reliable. The NDA Government has constructed highways and formulated the golden quadrilateral scheme. Work in this field is in progress. Many national highways are in such a condition that people prefer to transport their goods through roadways instead of Railways because the condition of Railways has deteriorated. Parcels remain on railway stations for years and the Railways claim that it will earn revenue from transportation of goods. Can the Railways compete with courier services in India. The most important point is railway safety which was stated in the previous budget and which I have been hearing of for the last two years. However, many accidents are taking place. The issue of railway safety is raised time and again but the railway safety fund for this purpose is shrinking gradually. No special scheme is there for railway safety. The Government planned to send a fast train and rescue vehicles for assistance after an accident took place. All right, the speed needs to be increased. They have spoken about it at large. They have also talked about a track side bogie monitoring system. That is also fine. That should happen but along with that budgetary allocation also needs to be done which is not seen anywhere. Nothing has been done for increasing the budget allocation for signalling system from the safety point of view. No such special project is seen therein. How will you take proper care of Railway safety? Despite repeated discussion upon this project many time during the year,

[Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan]

the safety money is reducing and it is getting no attention at all.

One more thing I would like to mention is that modernisation has been talked largely over here. The hon'ble Prime Minister also talks about modernisation, and the hon'ble Railway Minister also should pay attention towards this. But merely talking about modernisation will not help, allocation is also required for that. Modernisation, reservation, computerisation are being talked about but at the same time the budget has been reduced by 20 crore rupees. Dial 139 or any other number for reservation or other inquiries, it will be functioning day and night and this facility will be available at every station including the enquiry offices. But the budgetary allocations have been reduced approximately by more than one and a half crore rupees and still it is said that there will be modernisation. I do not understand this.

The next thing is about cleanliness. The hon'ble Minister has used words like platform, clean train system etc. and this system will be introduced at Ratlam but nothing has been mentioned in the budget as to how where they will do this at 50 stations. The allocation for this is only Rs. four crores.

The hon. Minister has presented a very ambitious budget but budgetary allocations should also have been made accordingly. He did not get any time. I will not blame him because the Railway Minister has exhausted his energy and power both. All the effects were bound to reflect in the Rail Budget and it is quite conspicuous. ...*(Interruptions)* Has he made allocations according to what he has said about budgetary allocations in his budget? Please reply on the basis of what you are doing. Wherever he has talked about budget allocations the same is being reduced. Nothing has been said about the budget and increasing the income. When we talk about the Indian Railways in a broader way, we should have a wider view that this links the whole country and it also transports goods from one place to another in the country. It will take passengers from East to West and from North to South. If you look at all the States, you will find that Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Orissa and Gujarat have been neglected as if they were not on the Railway map. This may have been done due to some differences but it is a fact that the entire railway budget has been prepared like this only. If we talk about Madhya Pradesh only, we see that Chhattisgarh has been given only one train while Madhya Pradesh has got four out of which three are passenger trains, which means they would

like to keep Madhya Pradesh under the category of passenger train.

I would like to say one more thing that at least you have raised the issue of complete electrification, you have mentioned the electrification of the Indore-Ujjain sector in Madhya Pradesh. The 80 kms sector between Indore and Ujjain is the only one remaining to be electrified, which is being demanded for the last many years. You talk about complete electrification, but even then it is not mentioned anywhere in the budget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Madhya Pradesh is such a big State which connects 5-6 States by trains. If we have to go from one State to another we cannot do so without touching Madhya Pradesh. If we talk about the entire rail budget then what has been provided for Madhya Pradesh? There is a project of 350 crore rupees for Indore-Dahod Rail line which is increasing day by day. If we do not complete the project each year, the cost of the project will keep in doubling every year. Last year the allocation for this was Rs. 15 crore. Which was not utilised. Again 15 crore rupees have been allocated this year. Similarly 25 crore rupees have been kept for the Guna-Itawa, and Lalitpur-Satna rail lines. All these projects involve an expenditure of 200-300 crore rupees. It is not only about Madhya Pradesh, rather the situation in States like Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Orissa is no different. I do not know where they have provided this much money in the rail budget. It is a mockery that there is a plan of 5 crore rupees for maintaining the station whereas only 5 lakh rupees have been provided for this. I do not know how they have calculated. The work at 6 stations in the Nagda block of Madhya Pradesh is near completion but only 10 lakh rupees have been allocated for this. Similarly 4 crore rupees have been given for gauge conversion of Chindwara-Nagpur rail line. You imagine if this much of funds will suffice in the coming years.

Deputy Speaker, Sir, Itarsi is a big and important junction in Madhya Pradesh. Rs. 2 crore have been allocated for the extension of Itarsi shed. Only 5 lakh rupees have been allocated for increasing the capacity and maintenance of passenger bogies in Bhopal. I wonder if even a hall could be constructed with this 5 lakh rupees? All the passenger bogies are connected to Bhopal and only 5 lakh rupees have been provided for their repairs. I fail to understand in what mood the hon'ble Railway Minister has prepared this budget. Madhya Pradesh is such a big State. I had talked about infrastructure in the beginning itself. The hon'ble Minister

is talking about increasing the speed of trains, revenue collection of 650 crore rupees through goods loading, running long trains, running double decker trains but only Rs. 12 crores has been allocated for construction of bridges and culverts. He has talked about improving the signalling system. Only 11 crore rupees have been provided for the signal work in Bhopal-Satna-Jabalpur zone. Hardly a total of 125 crore rupees have been allocated for rail works in Madhya Pradesh. I am saying that the preparation of the rail budget has been a mere jugglery of figures, just like the game of cricket being played these days. The Minister of Railways is showing as if he were doing a really big job. All the projects announced by the hon'ble Railway Minister, be it computerisation, modernisation transportation of goods or increasing the speed of trains, the issue of doubling the Ramganj Mandi-Bhopal in Rajasthan and Bhopal-Ujjain line is no where on the railway map.

Five States are not there on their railway map—be it improvement in infrastructure, improvement in signalling system, construction of platforms of repair of bogies. If all these things are missing, then I fail to understand on what path of progress the Indian railways will run. Sir the entire rail budget is based merely on figures. There have been talks about crores of rupees in this, but there is nothing concrete about projects in it. In the entire budget the hon'ble Railway Minister have not mentioned anything regarding the completion of pending projects as to how and in how many years these will be completed. I will not oppose the budget because they have to pass it. But I would like them to consider these prints once more. Now he must be at peace, now he does to have to go to Bihar therefore the entire Rail Budget should be reviewed once more to strengthen the Indian railways.

[English]

SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU (Salem):* Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am happy to express my support and participate in the discussion on the Railway Budget for the year 2005-06 in this august House as presented by Shri Lalu Prasad, our Hon. Railway Minister.

The United Progressive Alliance led by Smt. Sonia Gandhi has formed a Government under the stewardship of our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and has presented its second Railway Budget after assuming power.

This Budget takes note of the past in a historical perspective and looks ahead into the future to pave way

for a growth oriented plan of action for the Railways. This Budget seeks to overcome the hurdles that come in the way of our economic strides. Railways contribute to the preservation of our unity and integrity as its vast network ensures the networking of people. Cutting across geographical barriers, caste and creed barriers, religious and linguistic barriers Railways link regions and thereby its people. Railways is our life line. It extends its service to all people from all walks of life especially the underprivileged, downtrodden, backward class people, minorities and weaker sections of the society. We can rightly feel proud that Railways take its service to all.

Our Hon. Lalu Prasad as a Railway Minister has ensured on both the occasions of his presenting the Railway Budget both last year and this year that there is no fare increase that may affect the poor and the weaker sections. He has extended the benefits further and I welcome expressing my happiness over his determination to continue to serve the masses without a pinch while maneuvering to bring about an effective Budget.

In order to extend its transportation service, Indian Railways operate about 9000 trains everyday through the length and breadth of the country. More than a crore of people commute and travel each day. Such a service provider has a human face in its methodical operation. I salute the Railways.

We find in this Railway Budget their concern not to add burden to the common man while taking care to add to the efficiency in a growth oriented manner. This needs to be congratulated and I would like to reiterate my heart felt appreciation for the endeavour of the Railways to keep people in mind in all their plans and schemes.

There is a demand from the Railways to increase the fund allocation from the General Budget of the country. Hon. Prime Minister and our Finance Minister are also enthusiastic about Railways achievements and I notice that they have made efforts to increase the allocation to Railways by about Rs. 5000 to 6000 crore. I feel proud to share in this august House their care and concern. Hon. Railway Minister has indicated several measures to improve the Railways as a progressive organisation. About 70% of the revenues earned by the Railways come from freight movement and the remaining of the income is from the travellers, passengers and commuters who pay in the form of ticket fares to Railways' kitty. This money is ploughed back in continuing with the Railway operations. Only about 20% of the earnings could be set apart for renovation and about 30 to 40% is spent on

*English Translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

[Shri K.V. Thangka Balu]

overhead expenses to pay wages and salaries to its employees all over the country.

Laying of new tracks, extension of existing railway lines and renovation are some of the ever continuing modernising work pertaining to Railways for which its revenue is spent cyclically. Amidst all this Railways would prefer to spend considerably on safety, to enhance safety standards thereby ensuring the safety and security of the rail travelling public.

In order to spend on measures for public safety especially the safety both on tracks and trains a 'Railway Safety Fund' was formed. From last year till next year for a 3 year period an amount of Rs. 17000 crore was apportioned. Till now about Rs. 12000 crore have been released and the balance amount of Rs. 5000 crore needs to be allocated further. Various wings of the Railways are going about with the implementation of safety measures and I am happy to notice that the mission is in full swing. Our Railway Minister has brought to the notice of this august House the steps that are being taken to enhance safety and security.

As far as our Railways are concerned, distant States like North-eastern States and Jammu & Kashmir region have been identified as still to be developed States. Railways' growth and development in these States are gaining momentum now as spelt out in the Budget. With this all the States will have equally poised progress and it would lead to better social progress and prosperity and enough of social security in a uniform fashion throughout the country.

Our Railway Ministry's commendable efforts towards extending service and increasing passengers' amenities are quite enthrusting. At the same time we have to analyse the accident rate and death rate due to that. Last year the number of deaths due to railway accidents were 1071. Though it is 40% less than what it was for the corresponding period during the tenure of the previous Government, I would still urge upon the present Railway Minister and through him the Railways to work on it continuously to bring down the accident rate further. You may do well to strive and achieve an accident free operation. I wish them all success in that endeavour.

What are the reasons for these accidents? Most of these accidents as we gather are due to unmanned level crossings. Our enquiry reports and the findings highlighted

there point out to this. Railways try in many ways to circumvent this particular challenge that come in its way.

In order to phase out such unmanned level crossings the existing method adopted is to invite proposals from the State Government for alternative arrangements like replacing unmanned level crossings with RoBs as collaborative projects with a 50:50 participation. I would like to suggest to the Railway Minister that he may consider a proposal I am mooted now. For want of funds, many State Governments do not pay up towards the construction of road over bridges that may replace unmanned level crossings. Hence Railways may spend entirely on these RoBs and later on recover the money so spent from the funds to be released to the State Governments on various heads like land acquisition charges that are paid to the States. I am pained to point out that the financial status of many States are in poor shape and they are not in a position to give priority to Railway related projects. Many States are not in a position to pay Railways or the Centre. Hence a bold initiative must come from the Railways to ensure mutual benefits.

We the members of Parliament from Tamil Nadu collectively met our hon. Railway Minister Shri Lalu Prasad and our Minister of State Shri R. Velu to apprise them personally of the need to take up pending projects pertaining to Tamil Nadu. We reiterated at that point of time that Railways can take upon itself the commissioning of road over bridge projects. I would like to re-emphasise the same through this august House. Let the Railways spend on RoBs first and later on take the funds back when land compensation funds are released. This new policy change can benefit the public immediately in many parts of the country. To contain accident rate this bold step is necessary especially while phasing out the unmanned level crossings.

In this year, 46 new trains have been introduced. 27 extensions have been announced. Increase in frequency of trains has been announced in the case of 10 trains. Orders have been issued to carry out survey work for laying of new railway lines. 20 new survey projects will be taken up. With the ongoing survey work in 76 intended new rail routes, this year's announcement for survey for 20 new rail lines make it 96 in all. I wish to let the Railway service extend further. Many left over places in remote parts of the country in several States could be linked to the vast railway network. We wish our Railway Minister to succeed in extending Railway network further.

As part of Railways growth, gauge conversion will be taken up in 935 kms of existing rail track this year. In about 4 years from now all the States would have been linked still better to give an impetus to economic development and industrial growth.

Sir, the Lok Sabha MPs of Tamil Nadu all the 40 of them including 12 Ministers met the Railway Minister to submit a memorandum about the pending Railway projects in Tamil Nadu.

Our UPA leader in Tamil Nadu Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi on behalf of our MPs team presented the memorandum as early as on 4.10.2004. It was followed up by him again on 16.2.2005. I have also taken it up on 21.2.2005. But we are disappointed to find out that only Rs. 400 crore have been set apart for Tamil Nadu this year in the Railway Budget we discuss now. Though the amount is less you have included some of the notable projects and I would like to thank the hon. Railway Minister for trying to adjust the ways and means.

Salem-Vridhachalam section gets Rs. 40 crore as earmarked. Manamadurai-Pudukottai project has also been taken up. Many other gauge conversion works have been indicated. Still we are not very enthusiastic because the fund allocation is much less than our expectation based on our combined demand for various projects already submitted to you.

Our long pending demands for the creation of 'Salem Division' is at least 50 years old. This Salem Division will include Salem, Erode, Coimbatore, Nilgiris, Namakkal, Dharmapuri, Vilupuram, Cuddalore, Thiruvannamalai, Vridhachalam and Vellore. Nine revenue districts of Tamil Nadu will come under the proposed Salem division. Why and how this creation of Salem division is necessary needs to be considered in its totality. Now three divisional headquarters is in Palghat and it is quite far off beyond a pass in the neighbouring State. We do not insist on shifting the Palghat division once and for all. Let it continue. We do not suggest the abolition of Palghat division. Let there be Palghat division and let Palghat be its divisional headquarters. We do not interfere in the rights of the people of Kerala. We are only insisting on the restoration of rights of the people of Tamil Nadu. Only then industrial growth in Salem region in Tamil Nadu could be enhanced further. Our UPA leaders and MPS led by Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi have taken up this with the Railways and even now we want to believe that it is still under your active consideration. All the 40 MPs from

Tamil Nadu have untiedly impressed upon hon. Railway Minister. We again request you to fulfil our demand for the creation of the Salem division.

Salem-Karur gauge conversion has been put in cold storage this year. No fund allocation is there. Five MPs from that area have taken steps to have the stay against its implementation vacated. Still the work is not being carried out. Hence I urge upon you to immediately allocate additional funds to carry out this gauge conversion work from this year itself. Salem-Vridhachalam work may not be completed this year. Hence I request you to extend it and take up the Salem-Athur work also with the additional provision of funds.

In my Salem constituency near Salem and its surrounding areas three RoB projects have to be completed. I took it up with our Minister of State for Railways Shri R. Velu personally. He has seen for himself the sufferings people undergo for want of RoBs. Muthampatty, Ayodhya Pattinam and Sivathapuram RoBs along with Mullavadi Gate flyover bridge must be attended to at the earliest preferably this year itself. Omalur RoB work has come to a standstill. Sorting out the contractual bottlenecks, hon. Minister may issue orders to complete this work soon. Salem junction is an important one considering the business travel ever on the increase in this area. It needs to be improved and modernised, to be made a model station in this region.

I understand that instructions have been given to close all the unmanned level crossings. This will cause great inconvenience to people living on either side of the tracks. It would be better they are converted to be manned level crossings with the participation of local authorities and panchayats. Of course some of the panchayats are not in a position to pay Rs. 1 lakh even. Such level crossings can be converted to be subways or RoBs. In a zeal to put an end to rail accidents, railways must not curb economic activities of the area concerned. In my constituency alone at least in 5 places. People have become restive in the wake of closure of unmanned level crossings that come as a hurdle to agriculturists and workers to get to their work places, students and public to reach schools, hospitals and markets. We have taken up with the authorities there and in turn they want instructions from you here in Delhi. Hence I urge upon you to issue suitable orders in this regard at the earliest. Unmanned level crossings must not be closed without making alternative arrangements. Better you convert them to be manned level crossings and enable the public to go about with their occupation.

[Shri K.V. Thangka Balu]

Our Railway Minister has spelt out the grand plans to commercially utilise the unused lands lying with the Railways. It is a welcome step to earn more for Railways and overcome financial crunch. You have proposed that private sector will join hands with Railways and as a joint sector venture the unutilised lands of the Railways will be commercially utilised. It is a welcome announcement. This may work. This viable plan would fetch expected yield. I urge upon the Railways to pursue the scheme successfully and achieve your aimed target to augment the revenues for the Railways.

Every State must get its due share from the Indian Railways. The rights of every State must be protected. The Railway Budget must be prepared to take along with it people from all the States together. States must get their due share directly proportionate to their population. You must ensure equal growth of all the States. This is my fervent appeal to you.

We have a target to achieve 8% growth rate during the 10th Plan period. Railways must expand its operations to help our economy to reach the intended target level. Railways must contribute to our vibrant economy.

Congratulating the Railway Minister for his efforts to make UPA governance a success through his dynamic Budget and expressing my support to Railway Budget, let me conclude.

16.00 hrs.

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA (Mavelikaara): Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I appreciate the Railway Minister for presenting a common man friendly budget. The passengers were spared of the burden of increase in the fares. I welcome the Minister's decision not to increase the freight charges too. Laluji, has taken special caution, as he did in the Interim Railway Budget also, not to put any additional financial burden on the shoulders of the common people and the rail commuters by not increasing the passenger fares and freight tariffs.

Sir, Railway is the lifeline of any nation. Railway development is the most imperative part of the development of a nation and any region. Indian Railways during the last many decades have made great strides in the development of railway system in our country. India has a vast rail network with 16 railway zones. It has rail links to almost all the States in the country. It is the biggest organisation in the country by way of providing employment to lakhs of citizens.

The role played by the railways in the economic and social development of our country is commendable. But, we cannot be complacent. We should do retrospection as to whether this development was evenly distributed to all regions and to all the people of our great nation. I am constrained to say that it was not so. It is a fact that some regions even today stand un-represented by the railways and also some regions, for want of adequate development, are putting impediment to the socio-economic development of these regions.

Sir, my State Kerala is an example of inadequate rail development. As you are aware, Kerala's literacy rate is the highest in the country. But the irony is that it tops in the unemployment ratio too which is well above the national average. The industrial development in the State is very little when compared to other States barring the North-Eastern States. The major hurdle for this definitely is the lack of adequate rail facilities. Although the people of the State and the representatives and the State Government have been continuously demanding a fair share of railway allocation to the State, yet our experience on this count is very disappointing. The Governments which came to power at the Centre continuously ignored this region. I fail to understand why is there this indifferent attitude. The MPs from the State as well as the State Government during the initial days of the present Government had drawn the attention of the Railway Minister as well as the hon. Prime Minister to these issues and presented memoranda with detailed demands. The people of Kerala were, this time, definitely expecting a fair deal, but the Budget disappointed them utterly.

Sir, now look at the following figures. The required amount for the completion of the ongoing railway projects for the doubling of railway line spread over eight sections in the State is Rs. 225.93 crores but the Budget allocation is a mere Rs. 53.60 crores. With this meagre amount, none of the projects could be completed. For example for the doubling work of the Mavelikkara-Chengannur, Kollam-Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode-Mangalapuram the requirement is Rs. 26 crores, Rs. 33.12 crores and Rs. 76.25 crores respectively but the allocation is only Rs. 5.60 crores, Rs. 2.00 crores and Rs. 10.00 crores respectively. The doubling of rail line in the State is most important. For the full utilization of the Konkan Railway for increasing the number of trains in the northern part of the State in tune with the ever increasing passenger and freight demand, the doubling in the sector of Shomur-Kozhikode is a must. The Ernakulam-Mulanthuruthy sector which was scheduled to be completed in the 2003-04

period should have to be simultaneously taken up and completed along with Shornur-Kozhikodu sector.

Sir, when we take up the issue of rail development in the State, we should also consider the vast potential of the State for development in the coming years too. With the establishment of the Vallarpadam trans-shipment Terminal, the freight movement into Cochin may increase manifold. After completion of ICTT Vallarpadam and for the peak utilization, 78 goods trains are to move up and down on a daily basis. This situation would require not just two lanes but to accommodate the increase in the freight movement, it would require a four-lane railway. Therefore, the doubling of railway line must be given prime importance in the present Budget itself and allocate adequate funds for the same.

There are many pending projects in the State for electrification, but here too, the Budget allocation is inadequate. Survey for the new lines, Thrissur-Kollangode sector found its place in the Budget. Other important sectors like Kollam-Chengotta were ignored.

There are 46 new trains introduced in the new Budget, but not a single train was allotted to Kerala. Our State Kerala contributes immensely to the revenue earnings of the Railways. But when it comes to introducing new trains, Kerala has always been neglected. This time, not only no new trains have been introduced but also the decision to extend the existing New Delhi-Thiruvananthapuram Kerala Express to Chandigarh has caused widespread resentment and protest from various sections, as this has only aggravated the problem. A train from Chandigarh is a long pending demand. Instead of the present step, the Government could have introduced a new train from Chandigarh while maintaining New Delhi-Thiruvananthapuram Kerala Express as it is now.

Sir, I now come to a specific area. This area comprises my Constituency Mavelikkara. I have been, for the last many months, communicating with the Railway authorities regarding certain developmental projects of urgent nature to be taken up in this area. I have even met the hon. Minister and apprised him of the importance of these projects.

Sir, Thiruvalla, Mavelikkara, Chengannur and Kayamkulam are the important stations in this area. Chengannur and Kayamkulam are important centres of trade and economic activities in the central part of Kerala. Hence, a comprehensive development of these stations is much needed for keeping up with the increased demand

for the economic development of this region. The previous Government had declared Kayamkulam as a junction. But nothing has been done in this regard. Chengannur is another important station. It is a transit point for the lakhs of pilgrims who visit the famous Shrine at Shabarimala every year. The facilities at the station are not sufficient enough to cater to the needs of the volumes of commuters and also for the effective handling of the trade and commerce related activities. Cheriyanad station is placed between the two important stations Kayamkulam and Chengannur. The Railways owns more than 36 acres of land besides Cheriyanad station, which is at present lying vacant. It is an ideal place for setting up of an industry under the Railways. There is a proposal for expanding the existing Rail Neer Factory network. By all means, Cheriyanad is an ideal location for setting up the Rail Neer Factory looking at especially its closeness to the Shabarimala Shrine. So, I strongly demand the establishment of a new Rail Neer Factory at Cheriyanad. Besides, this station would be developed into a crossing station.

For a comprehensive development of the Railway facilities in these areas, the most important work is the doubling of lines. The on-going projects of rail doubling from Kayamkulam-Emakulam *via* Kottayam and Alappuzha have to be expedited, and adequate funds be allocated in the present Budget itself. Apart from that, more funds should be allocated to the electrification. Also, a new survey project Kayamkulam-Panalur *via* Adoor sector has to be introduced.

Sir, the Railways had allotted STD booths on the platforms to physically challenged persons. There are approximately 6,000 such booths under operation in the country. Thousands of disabled persons and their hapless families are dependent on these telephone booths. During the tenure of the previous NDA Government, the Railways took a decision to float open tender for manning these booths keeping just two per cent reservation for the handicapped. This is most inhuman. It shows how insensitive our system is. It is not justifiable by any means. So, I strongly demand the restoration of the previous status and withdrawal of the decision for floating open tender.

Another issue is that the NDA Government had privatised the parcel booking services in the trains. This had diminished the employment opportunities for lakhs of licensed porters in the country. The recent decision of the Railways to limit the parcel booking facilities to stations

[Shrimati C.S. Sujatha]

where trains stop for five minutes or more, has aggravated the situation causing serious inconvenience to the local traders and farmers.

Sir, I have already said, in detail about the projects and works, which have to be given prime importance for the overall development in the State of Kerala. I strongly feel that for the comprehensive development, it is necessary that a new Railway Zone is created comprising specific areas of Kerala State.

I urge upon the Ministry to have a re-look at the above matters and take a positive stand.

With these few words, I conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House is discussing the Rail Budget for the year 2005-2006. Our colleagues have given many important suggestions. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The work has just started.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: In the beginning of his speech the Railway Minister had said that our railway's potentials are immense and that it needs to be upgraded to have international standards. I want to urge politely that if we want to improve the condition of the railways and make it reliable amongst the public, both money and commitment are required for it. I understand that the issues we are discussing in the House regarding the language of Budget, figures of the Budget, are quite different questions but a more important question is what the common man thinks of the railways. I believe what is important is that people should be attracted towards the railways, they should have safe and reliable journeys.

I would like to request the hon'ble Minister of Railways that when the question of providing a special economic package to Bihar came up, Shri Prabhunath Singh and Shri Raghunath Jhaji are sitting over here, the entire House supported this is one voice that in view of the poor economic condition of Bihar a special package should be given. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajanji, Bihar): Where have we got the special package? ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Please listen.

if the rail services do not reach the backward areas then I do not believe the development work can be done rapidly.

Just now Sumitraji talked about Madhya Pradesh. Sumitraji, the condition of Uttar Pradesh is also similar. Uttar Pradesh is a big State of the country. Had it been a separate country, then it would have been the seventh nation of the world. Rail Mantriji, it is my submission to you that Uttar Pradesh has been neglected in the rail budget. I would expect from you to reply after speaking to the officials of your Ministry as to how justice can be done to Uttar Pradesh. It will be kind of you to talk positively about that.

Minister of State for Railways is sitting behind the Minister of Railways. There was an inaugural speech by him in the last week of January during a survey programme in Erode district. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to request that at present railway projects of approximately 46 thousand crore rupees are under construction in the country, out of which 443 are over bridges and under bridges and 1252 level crossings for which the construction cost would be around 15 thousand crore rupees. I know that State Governments too have a share in the construction of bridges. If we put aside the States' contribution then approximately 7500 crore rupees are to be spent by the railways on the projects under construction.

I would like to submit one more thing to you. Sometimes it happens that we new projects without viewing whether the old projects have been completed or not. When we talk about projects under construction, we should also try to find out the extent to which the announcements made earlier by us have been achieved. I would like to request that until we set a target for completion of a project, I do not believe that good results can be achieved out of it.

Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, funds received from the Central road fund during last few years has also been reducing gradually. The question is, on one hand it is being said that there is no shortage of funds while on the other the projects under construction are lying in their middle due to shortage of funds. I would like to say that when the Rail Minister replies after this discussion, he should talk about a particular period for completion of all the railway projects because until a target is set for completing these projects under construction, the announcement of new projects would remain to be mere rhetoric.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, out of the total 63 thousand kilometres long railway track of the Indian railway, only 16 thousand kilometres have been electrified. In China out of 73 thousand kilometres 19 thousand kilometres have been electrified but even then they are earning profit because the Indian Railways deliver 580 million tonnes of goods while the Chinese Railways deliver 2204 million tonnes of goods. The most important thing is that the budgetary assistance received for the support of Railway budget has been reduced. It has been reduced by 23 percent. Probably this amount was 8,456 crore rupees last time but in comparison to that the budgetary support this year is 6,520 crore rupees. How we can complete the projects under construction by reducing the budgetary support that the railway gets from the budget? The budget has brought a cut of 23 per cent in place of the help and economic assistance the railways should have got in this regard to strengthen its financial position. The result would be that all the projects like new rail lines, broad gauge conversion, electrification would be stalled.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Rail Minister had announced in his speech at the time of presenting the interim budget that Rail Sampark projects would run in far-flung areas. What happened to the Sampark projects announced in the year 2005 upon which 20 thousand crore rupees were to be spent? Out of those Sampark projects 250 were major projects, and 150 projects out of which were to be completed on priority basis, but I have received the information that those projects are lying in cold storage. Besides, the proposal which was to be sent to the Cabinet, was also not sent to it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, on the one hand the Minister of State for Railways says that there is no shortage of money and on the other hand there has been a cut of 23 percent in the budgetary support received by the railways. I fail to understand how the under construction projects of the railways could be completed even after setting a time limit.

The biggest reason for the losses incurred by the railways in our country is the high operating cost. These losses can be made up by increasing freight charges. Because of constant increase in freight rates the share of the railways in respect of carriage of goods which was 80 percent during the 50's has come down to just 40 percent now. The reality is that the operational cost of the Indian Railway is very high in comparison to other countries. Comparatively the railway lines over here are less used. In China 120 trains pass on a track in a

single day whereas this number is half in our country. The freight rates in India are 30 per cent more in comparison to China. I believe that we should definitely study the railways around the world to improvise and make our railway system more useful. We should definitely analyse the condition of railways over there. In America the freight rates for transportation of steel upto 1 kilometre is 24 paise whereas it is 79 paise in India. 94 per cent share of the revenue earned by the railways goes into its operations and pensions whereas it is 62 percent in China. How can the railways become viable in this way? Earlier also discussions have been held in the House regarding rail accidents and various inquiry committees constituted have also inferred that human error is one of the prime causes of rail accidents. I do not know as to what extent improvements have been made in this regard. It is not possible to check rail accidents merely by making budget allocations, it can be checked only by putting psychological pressure on the officers and until and unless we fix responsibility in this regard we cannot check constant increase in accidents.

The target set for electrification of railways in 10 years was 2,600 kilometres. 5100 kilometres of electrification had been done during the 8th and 9th plan and in a way this is certainly not a big achievement on the front of electrification. If electrification work is accelerated it can save 256 crore rupees of the Government under the operational cost.

I had told it in the beginning and through you I would like to tell the hon'ble Minister of Railways that Uttar Pradesh is a big State and if we go through the whole budget, I can definitely say that Uttar Pradesh has been grossly neglected. The electrification work proposed this year includes electrification of 350 kilometres out of which not even a single line in Uttar Pradesh is to be electrified.

In the previous budget the target set for electrification was 375 kilometres under which electrification of Lucknow, Moradabad and Uttarethia was sanctioned but not even a single penny was allotted in this budget for electrification in these areas. The budget mentions only about introducing 4-5 trains from small places in the entire states. I would like to submit to the hon. Minister of Railways as I said earlier that Uttar Pradesh is a neglected State. First of all this Government itself is doing injustice to us. The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh had met the Prime Minister and Finance Minister on a number of occasions and presented a comparative statement that

[Shri Ramjilal Suman]

we needed a financial package. Even after repeated demands the Government is not willing to help us and adding to that Laluji has also done injustice to us by not providing railway services to Uttar Pradesh which it deserves, we have been deprived of our rights. I would like to request that before delivering his speech the hon. Minister of Railways, should discuss it with his officials as to how justice can be done to Uttar Pradesh.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Raghunath Jhaji, you now speak as much as and as loud as you wish, but let the House run.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah): Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak on the Rail Budget. First of all I would like to congratulate the Rail Minister for increasing neither passenger fare nor freight rates in the previous two budgets presented by him. Still it is commendable that the revenue earning of the Railways has increased and I would like to congratulate him for this. After last year's budget people expected that there would be an increase in the rail fares and freight rates in the rail budget after elections were over. The work the hon. Minister has done by proving them wrong, is commendable. During the NDA Government where the operating cost was 98 rupees, you have brought the operating cost to 90 rupees without increasing passenger fares or freight rates, I congratulate you for this.

Sir, just now my sister was speaking that you have not given any details as to how much money the Government propose to spend on modernisation. Sir, in the budget presented by the hon'ble Minister 24,000 crore rupees are to be spent on modernisation of railways. The utilisation capacity of railways has been at the best level during the last eight years, and that too without increasing passenger fares during the last two years. A resolve has been expressed to bring it from the level of 83 to 90 percent to the level of 75 to 85 percent and I wish this resolve is made good.

Sir, In comparison to last years 580 million tonnes, this year a record loading of 600 million tonnes has been done. I would like to congratulate the hon'ble Minister and the railway officials for this. In the budget this year it has been proposed to convert 1400 to 1692 kilometres of line into broad gauge, to lay 205 to 219 kilometres of new railway lines, gauge conversion of 885 to 935 kilometres, doubling of 207 to 538 kms long railway line and the electrification of 350 kilometre railway line. The

Railways have earned a profit of Rs. 4200 crore rupees from freight this year and the operating cost is at its lowest during the last eight years. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Only the speech of Mr. Raghunath Jha should be recorded and nothing else.

...*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

YOGI ADITYA NATH (Gorakhpur): The Rail Budget is being read out again.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: What else should I talk about except facilities provided in the rail budget, shall I talk about you? I have already talked about you.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Jha, please address the Chair. Mr. Aditya Nath Yogi, no running commentary please.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Sir, the decision to run trains at a speed of 150 kilometres per hour between Delhi to Howrah *via* Patna is praiseworthy. They are going to run goods trains at a speed of 100 kms. on major rail routes. Rs. 24,000 crores are to be invested for this during the next five years. I thank the hon. Minister for this.

Sir, it is proposed in the budget to extend the Saptkranti Express upto Darbhanga, I would like to thank the hon. Minister for this, but there are only 18 bogies attached to it, which needs to be increased. Earlier when 24 bogies were attached to it, the waiting list used to be between 200 to 300 in normal times. A bridge is being constructed over the Ganga river but it seems that this bridge will not be completed on time because of inadequate funds allocated for it. It is my request to you to provide more funds for this and to complete it on time. ...*(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Jha, please address the Chair and nobody else. Mr. Yogi, the next Member to speak belongs to your party. So, please maintain silence. ...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: There is a distance of only 36 kilometre railway line between my constituency and Muzaffarpur but we have to travel 200 kms *via* Darbhanga, Samastipur to reach Muzaffarpur. The work on this rail line is going on for the last ten years, but it is lying incomplete. There is a need to increase allocation for this. Similarly, there is a need to complete the work of big railway lines of Jainagar, Darbhanga, Narkatiaganj, Sitamarhi by providing phase-wise funds to these. The work is lying incomplete due to lack of funds. You should complete it by beginning from Jainagar to Darbhanga, then Darbhanga to Sitamarhi and later further from Sitamarhi.

In Bihar he has provided 32 RoB but the work is going on only two out of them and has come to a standstill on the others. There is a need to expedite work on RoB in Sagauli, Bettiah, Narkatiaganj and Bagaha. The traffic is held up at two places between Muzaffarpur and Patna. Therefore, bridges should be constructed there over both these railway lines.

Survey has been conducted in this regard but there is a mistake in printing. Some other name has been printed in place of Bettiah. Earlier Chakia was at first place, but it has been brought to second place. Darbhanga has also been replaced by Chakia, Madhubani and Sitamarhi.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): Survey is being conducted. Correction will be made in that and it will be put in order.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: In a meeting he mentioned of a new rail line between Tamkuhi and Dhanha *via* Bodh Gaya, but nothing has been done in this regard. There is a need to expand and modernise Jamalpur rail factory. I would like to say something about Munger. Danvir Karan belonged to that place. A Danvir Karan Express from Bhagalpur to Delhi should be introduced in his name. It would add a new feather in the cap of the hon. Minister.

I hope that he would soon complete the work that I have mentioned because a lot of rail work is lying incomplete in Bihar. ...(*Interruptions*) I have told many things about Patna. I have spoken about Jainagar and Narkatiaganj also. Please do not disturb me.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Raghunath Jhaji, you have not said anything about Patna to Amritsar.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: A lot of work has already been done there. A station has been named after Patna Saheb. Every train stops there. A lot of work has been done. A train goes to Swarn Mandir from there. I congratulate the hon'ble Railway Minister for that and conclude.

SHRI RAJESH VERMA (Sitapur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise for discussion on the rail budget on behalf of Bahujan Samaj Party. The hon'ble Minister of Railways has announced many concessions in his rail budget. I praise him for that. He has announced many concessions between Para 59 to 64 for rail journey to unemployed youth for education, to milkmen, to students of village schools for educational tour once in a year, to government school girls of rural areas for examinations and for dead bodies of patients who die during treatment. I welcome it. The announcements of concession for these people in rail journeys will make these facilities available to the people belonging to rural area as well as to these sections in the society.

Last year, when the hon'ble Minister was delivering his speech, he repeated many times in his speech that he had made utmost efforts to pay attention to the villages in that year's Rail Budget.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: Of course, I had mentioned of Bharat Darshan.

SHRI RAJESH VERMA: He is right. He had told that trains would go to villages and that would lead to Bharat Darshan.

When I was delivering my speech, the hon'ble Railway Minister interrupted me and said that it will lead to Bharat Darshan. My Parliamentary Constituency, Sitapur is in Uttar Pradesh, after that Lakhimpur district comes and then border of Nepal comes. There are 8 sugar mills in Sitapur and one plywood factory that is famous in Asia from where plywood is supplied to many Asian countries. There is one famous eye hospital in Sitapur, which is famous throughout Asia and people from our

[Shri Rajesh Verma]

country as well as from other countries visit this hospital for eye surgery. The distance from Lucknow to Sitapur is only 85 kilometres but even after so many years of independence metre gauge has not been converted into broad gauge. Last year the hon'ble Railway Minister had said in his speech that order has been issued for survey of gauge conversion of the Sitapur, Lakhimpur, Gonda and Mailaniganj rail line. This brought us hopes that in the coming year the survey work would be completed and funds would be allocated for converting this rail line of our district into broad gauge. But it is very sad that last year you talked about that line but this year that rail line was not even mentioned, we have been disappointed by this.

Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to demand the hon'ble Minister to convert the Sitapur-Lakhimpur-Mailani rail line that is adjacent to Pilibhit into broad gauge so that this border area could avail the facilities of broad gauge. The distance of Sitapur from Lucknow is merely 85 kilometres. If this line is converted in the first phase then the rail routes that are 3 at present between Delhi and Patna would become four—first, from Delhi to Patna *via* Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi and Lucknow. Secondly, Delhi to Patna *via* Aligarh, Kanpur and Lucknow. Third route passes thorough my district which goes to Patna *via* Kanpur. It is unfortunate that rail facility has not been provided between Sitapur and Lucknow. If provision is made for converting this 85 kms stretch into broad gauge in the first phase then there will be four routes instead of three. I hope that the hon'ble Minister would consider my views seriously. I had written in this regard to the hon'ble Railway Minister as well as to all the senior officers of the railways during the Thirteen Lok Sabha also but my request has not been accepted. This is an issue of public interest. I hope that the hon'ble Railway Minister would include my demand in this budget.

In Para 44 he has talked of making Indian railways a world class railways. Indian Railways is the biggest in the world and his dream to make it world class is really praiseworthy. But his rail would become world class only when he covers backward areas under his scheme.

I would again like to refer to his previous budget. In his previous budget speech he had said that a 'dischargeable system' is being developed to remove filth caused by toilets at stations. I do not understand if such system has been developed at any station or train during the last one year for facilitating the public. I would demand the hon'ble Minister to introduce this 'dischargeable

system' announced last year in order to provide facility to the people.

I would like to thank the hon'ble Minister for not increasing any fares or freight rates in the rail budget. He has not increased any rail fares for passengers. The masses have appreciated this. With these words I conclude.

[English]

SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY (Karan):* Hon. Deputy Speaker Sir, at the outset I would like to thank our leader Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi for selecting me to represent Karur Lok Sabha constituency and the electorate of my constituency who have elected me to represent them in this august House. I thank the Chair for giving me an opportunity to participate in the discussion on the Railway Budget for the year 2005-06.

I would like to congratulate hon. Railway Minister for his commendable Budget which does not seek to burden the public especially the poor in any manner. It is a good Budget and I welcome it while supporting it. I thank both Shri Lalu and Shri Velu on my behalf and on behalf of my party Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

Sir, we used to reiterate that there must be State autonomy and a federal governance at the Centre. Our UPA Government gives us a feeling that such an era has been ushered in, in an appreciable way winning accolades from all concerned we have established a governance through our alliance. Railway reservation and departure/arrival enquiry available over phone to the urban dwellers was extended to the rural people. To begin with on an experimental basis this was introduced in Bihar and public could get information by way of dialing 139. Now it is proposed to be introduced all over the country through an announcement in this year's Budget. It is a welcome move and put on record my appreciations.

Railway reservation enquiry can now be made round the clock over internet and it is sought to be extended to mobile and cellular phone users. Thereafter it is proposed to extend this facility to get information over phone. This is an appreciable measure to benefit the public.

Advance booking of railway reservation that can be made between 8 AM and 10 PM through internet is not sought to be extended from 4 AM to 11.30 PM. I would like to convey my appreciation for this step too.

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

Unemployed youth who are to attend Central job interviews were provided with free journey concession and it has been extended to those who attend State Government job interviews too. Milk producers and farmers who are to attend national level seminars and training programmes will get 50% fare concession to undertake rail journey to go places anywhere in India. This is a welcome step.

There is a significant commendable aspect in this Budget. 75% travel concession has been announced for students from Government schools in rural areas to go on all India educational tour to any part of the country. Similarly girl students from Government schools in rural areas have been made eligible to avail themselves of 75% fare concession to attend interviews for admission in professional colleges. This will help improve the education in rural areas.

Priority and fee waiver has been announced for relief material taken as railway freight to tsunami disaster affected areas. It is a commendable humanitarian gesture of the Railways. I appreciate it. Second class fare train travel facility has been extended to displaced tsunami affected people to reach safe places to live. It is a praiseworthy move.

Special recruitment drive to fill the vacancies reserved for SC and ST sections of the people is also an appreciable measures.

In order to reduce the running time of trains between Chennai and New Delhi, it has been stated that trains would now be run at a speed of 150 kmph. It is a welcome step I appreciate it.

In the Railway Budget for the year 2005-06, about 14 new trains and increased frequency of trains have been announced for Tamil Nadu and I welcome it.

Chennai MRTS that is run between Mylapore and Thiruvannamiyur now is to be extended upto Velacherry in this year is a welcome announcement and it is heartening to note that pending work will be completed on this section.

I also deem it my bounden duty to put forth certain demands before hon. Railway Minister on behalf of the people of my constituency.

Salem-Karur gauge conversion has been shelved as pointed out by hon. Colleague Shri Thangka Balu. I urge upon you that it must be taken up and completed expeditiously.

This scheme is pending for long. It was started in 1996-97 with an earmarked allocation of Rs. 230 crores. So far only Rs. 64-69 crore have been allocated for the scheme. Unfortunately no money has been earmarked for release this year. The court cases that are pending before the courts of law may not come in the way of going ahead with the scheme as the 'stay' on work has been vacated at the intervention of MPs of the area. Hence I urge upon you to take it up and complete it at the earliest.

In Karur near Vengamedu an RoB is to be constructed. Court stay on that is no more there and hence steps may be taken to complete the same.

As pointed out by Shri Thangka Balu who spoke ahead of me, the creation of Salem division is important to all the nine districts that will come under its jurisdiction. This demand is there for the past 50 years. Let Palghat division continue as it is. Since Palghat division is very far from these districts in the Salem region, let Salem division be evolved soon to avoid inconvenience to many.

Chennai Central and Chennai Egmore are to be linked is a welcome announcement and I urge upon the Railways to implement it at the earliest it will be very helpful to passengers from the southern districts of Tamil Nadu. Suburban train terminal in Chennai Central is having just 4 platforms now and to ease congestion it needs to be expanded. As such trains are stopped at the outer for 10 to 15 minutes for want of platform clearance. Hon. Railway Minister may kindly take up laying of Pondy-Mahabalipuram railway line.

Similarly trains from Mumbai, Bangalore, Coimbatore and Kerala to Chennai may be given a stoppage at Avadi as Perambalur stoppage does not meet the needs of passengers. Avadi is little far from Chennai Central and hence Avadi stoppage may be considered.

The announcement by the hon. Railway Minister regarding the commercial utilisation of unutilised railway land joining hands with the private sector, if implemented could help railways better. I appreciate the hon. Minister on behalf of DMK.

[Shri K.C. Palanisamy]

At this juncture I would like to specially thank hon. Minister of State for Railways Shri Velu who is accessible easily lending patiently his ears to listen to our grievances any time even over phone. With such dynamic Railway Minister in the form of Lalu and Velu you may make great strides and let me wish you all success.

As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned the unmanned level crossings be converted either as subways thoroughfares or RoBs. Let them not be closed causing great hardship to people in big way. Let them be made manned level crossings.

Let me conclude my speech placing on record our appreciation both of our members and of our leader Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE (Aurangabad, Maharashtra): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me time to speak on the Rail Budget. I rise to speak on behalf of the Shiv Sena. Though Maharashtra and Mumbai contribute 44 percent revenue to the country, as far as providing railway facilities is concerned the people of Maharashtra are a neglected lot. While asked to give his reaction to the Railway Budget our hon. Chief Minister, Shri Vilas Rao Deshmukh had stated that Maharashtra has not been given anything. I wished for the presence of Railway Minister Shri Lalu Prasad ji during my speech, but he has left the House on three occasions since then. Being a Minister he should have stayed here. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): The State Minister is sitting here.

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: Leave aside the State Minister, the Railway Minister should have stayed here to listen for himself the woes of Maharashtra. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: We are listening.

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: You are listening, but you are not a Minister yet. Raghunath Jhaji is also in the list, but he has also not become Minister yet. I want to say that Maharashtra has not been given anything in this rail budget. The hon'ble Prime Minister had talked about converting Mumbai into Shanghai. 60 lakh passengers commute in Mumbai local trains everyday. All the people travel through local trains. People belonging

to all strata of society, whether they are common people or senior officials, rich or poor, commute through these local trains. But no facilities have been provided for Maharashtra in the budget. It was said that Mumbai stations would be made like airports but they were not upgraded at all. Only one or two trains have been introduced for Mumbai, including one from Chennai.

Sir, five new rail lines have been started in Maharashtra, I would like to thank you for that but I would like to add that facilities have not been provided at many places.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I hail from Marathwada region of Maharashtra. Many freedom fighters of Marathwada held big demonstration in the Marathwada region. Even after 50-55 years of independence, not even a single kilometre of new line has been laid in this part of the country, all the freedom fighters held a big demonstration in protest. Late Shri Govindbhaiji Sharaf and Kabraji had also agitated. We are unhappy because of this. I feel proud to say that the NDA Government contributed immensely by earmarking five new projects for our Marathwada region and helped us in starting these projects. Be it Mamtaji or Nitish Kumarji, they have helped us a lot under the leadership of hon'ble Atalji. We had written a letter on the 17th February to Shri Lalu Prasadji before the rail budget was prepared. Again we wrote a second letter on 1st of March.

17.00 hrs.

It's fine, it was not included in the budget but it should be considered for approval when the demands for grants are taken up for discussion. There are 5 projects for Maharashtra and Marathwada region. I would like to say that the Mudkhed, Adilabad route is 167 kilometres long Rs. 194 crore and 81 lakh Rs. were allocated for this and the project is near completion. At present Rs. 30 crore have been given but we still need 57 crore rupees more. If we get 57 crore rupees we will be able to complete this long route pending from 50 years. The other route is Sikandrabad-Mudkhed and Jankampad, Bodha. 21 crore rupees have been allocated for this and Rs. 35 crore are still remaining to be released. This line can be started if additional 35 crore rupees are provided. The length of Akolapoorma line that connects Marathwada and Vidharbha is 210 kilometres. Rs. 25 crore have been provided for this. This line can be completed if Rs. 181 crore and 48 lakh are provided. Miraj-Latur line connects Marathwada with Western Maharashtra. Rs. 35 crore have been provided for this, but it is inadequate, Rs. 123 crore

49 lakh are required to complete the Miraj-Latur route. We have taken 4 old and 4 new projects. There is the only route that connects Ahmadnagar, Beed, Parlibajinath, Marathwada and Uttar Maharashtra. Till today the Beed district of Maharashtra is still devoid of any rail facility. Politicians visit there, lay foundations there but nothing has happened so far. It is a part of the South Central Railway. I would like to say that Rs. 10 crore sanctioned for this is very meagre. I would like to say that this line falls under the constituencies of Shri Pramod Mahajanji, Shri Mude Saheb and Shri Shivsagar Bhalji, who have been representing the area for the last several years and no progress has been made on this line. Through you I would like to say that only 121 crore 44 lakh rupees have been provided for five projects which means last year it was 120 crore rupees and this year additional 1 crore 44 lakh rupees have been given, we thank the hon'ble Minister for this. But I would like to say that we had expected 709 crore rupees to complete these 5 projects. This has been a long pending demand of Marathwada region. It can be granted. We would like the Indian Railway Finance Corporation to complete this work. Shri Lalu Prasadji has called this budget a Charismatic Budget. The only Charismatic factor in this budget is that there has not been any increase in fares. But I would like to say that if we allow FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) which is being allowed in all other sectors, the undergoing rail projects would be completed in two years and the money will be recovered in the remaining four years. You should collect money from the Indian Railway Finance Corporation through this. There are five projects in our Marathwada region and if we get such a meagre amount of Rs. 120-125 crore each year then it would take 6-7 years to complete these projects. We request the hon'ble Railway Minister to provide Rs. 709 crore so that these projects could be completed within two years. To complete this work after finding FDI the remaining money can be recovered till next four years. Our Marathwada region has been connected with Andhra Pradesh and with South Railway. We have been demanding from several years to remove Marathwada region from Nanded division and to place it with Dharmabad and Mudkhed. We i.e., MP's, MLA's, Industrialists and common people are connected with Mumbai and this is a Marathi speaking region. You will have to think about it. You had also tried to bring such a proposal in your Cabinet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, owing to the ongoing controversy over the issue of creating railway zone in Bihar Shri Nitish Kumar, the then Railway Minister had said that he would pursue this issue later. We had

expected that we will form the Government but it did not happen so. Therefore, I would like to request Lalu Prasadji that the entire Nanded section which is to be extended further from Mathegrah and Dharmabad, should be connected with Central railway so that all of its offices could come under Central railway.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, You have also visited our Marathwada region and the holy Nanded Gurudwara Saheb. I had requested the hon'ble Governor of Bihar, Shri Buta Singh and now I am also requesting Shri Lalu Prasadji that a world religious festival of Sikh Community is going to take place in the year 2008 in which people of Sikh community from around the world are going to assemble in Nanded. At present the Sachkhand Express runs only five times a week. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, you also came by the same train. There is only a single train from there to Delhi therefore I request you that it should be run seven days a week instead of five days. I was expecting the hon'ble Railway Minister to announce this is the rail Budget but the hon'ble Minister did not make any such announcement. Therefore, I request hon'ble Lalu Prasadji to connect the Nanded Gurudwara to the Patna Saheb Gurudwara in Patna. I have requested the hon'ble Governor of Bihar in this regard. He is the Governor of Bihar and the hon'ble Minister of Railways Shri Lalu Prasad also belongs to Bihar I request that both of you should try to link Nanded to Patna because the people of Sikh Community travel between Nanded and Patna as has just been stated by our colleague Shri Raghunath Jha.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Guru Govind Singhji was born in Patna and he died at Nanded Sahib. Hence both Patna Sahib and Nanded Sahib are of great religious importance. Therefore, I request that both these holy places be interconnected.

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, through you, I request the hon'ble Minister of Railways to pay special attention towards connecting Patna and Nanded Sahib and issue directives to his ministry in this regard. It would entail that Marathwada is connected with Bihar and if it takes place then not only the Sikh community but the entire country would be greatly benefited.

Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, there was an incident at Kalyan in Maharashtra in which several unemployed persons who had come there to give recruitment examination, lost their lives in a scramble. In this regard

[Shri Chandrakant Khaire]

I had requested the then Minister of Railways Shri Nitish Kumar that all the railway recruitment examinations to be conducted through regional Recruitment Board should take place at Mumbai. The then Minister agreed to our demand that any recruitment examination for Nanded Division in South Central Railway would take place in Mumbai. This would make it easy for our Marathi speaking unemployed youth of Maharashtra to take the examination. This is the demand of our party Shiv Sena. Our party Chief Shri Bala Saheb Thakare had also put forward this demand. I would like to thank Shri Lalu Prasad for considering the demand of our party Chief to conduct recruitment examination of Nanded Division of Marathwada Region at Mumbai.

Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I had presented a proposal before the then Minister of Railways Shri Nitish Kumar to convert Sambhaji Nagar, Aurangabad railway Station of my constituency into a model railway station. That place is very important from tourism point of view and a large number of foreign tourists come here to visit the Ajanta-Allora Caves. The Chairman of Railway Board had also visited the place. I had also met and requested him in this regard. The then Minister of Railways had allocated an amount of Rs. 5 crore for the modernization of Sambhaji Nagar, Aurangabad railway station but I am very sorry to say that the work has not yet commenced. I request that the work of modernisation of that Railway Station be started immediately because the team from Japan is to visit there. Your work can prove very helpful. Mukhandwari station be upgraded so that Chikalthana and Shendra which is known as five star industrial area and Shendra industrial area which is likely to be converted into a special economic zone would stand to benefit to a great extent from it. This has been our demand since 1965. Sholapur, Tulzapur, Dharashiv, Osmanabad, Beed, Paithan, Sambhaji Nagar, Shilod, Ajanta, and Jalgaon, should be covered through a new route. As this route is near Ajanta and Allora, it can be beneficial for the tourists coming there. The people of my State Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh visit Shirdi for the Darshan of Saalbaba and they have to get down at Nagarsool railway station near Manmad and have to travel through taxi to reach Shirdi. It causes a lot of inconvenience when this question was raised in the meeting of GM in Secunderabad, I was supported by all the MPs of Andhra Pradesh to immediately start a new train upto Shirdi. Krishna Express running between Thirupati to Secunderabad has been extended upto Nizamabad. I demand that it should be extended upto Sambhaji Nagar, Aurangabad and further upto Rotegaon and Puntamba. The work from Puntamba

to Shirdi is going on and it is likely to be completed within year and then it would be possible to run a direct train from Thirupati to Shirdi. One of our former MLAs late Shri Shaligram Basiye Bandhu had tried hard for ten years to get a new rail route started between Rotegaon and Puntamba by requesting and meeting different railway Ministers.

Sir, I request that a new rail route Janna-Khamgaon connecting Marathwada and Vidarbha and another rail route connecting Ghatnador-Ambejogoi be started. I also demand that a new passenger train each from Nanded to Mumbai and Sambhajnagar, Aurangabad to Ahmedabad, Jodhpur and Bangalore be started. A new Shatabdi Express Should also be started from Sambhaji Nagar, Aurangabad which should also include the return journey. Several trains are running on the route but still they are inadequate hence I request that a Shatabdi Express be started there. Some new trains should be introduced because it is a business area. I request that the number of bogies in Devgiri Express 1003-1004 running between Mumbai and Nanded and extended upto Nizamabad and old route of Kanchigura, be increased from the existing 18 to 21. We have staged a demonstration in this regard many times and also gone to jail. Several other parties besides the Shiv Sena have also taken part in the agitation.

Mr. Speaker Sir, through you I demand from the hon. Minister that the route from Manmad to Nanded be electrified besides doubling the said rail line. Recently an accident had taken place at this line near Rotegaon.

Through you, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister of Railways towards Mukundwari station between new station Maltakadi and Nanded. It is correct that you did not effect any hike in fares but the intention to open up the sector for foreign direct investment shows that you are also inclined towards privatisation.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: You give it in writing.

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: What should I give in writing I am speaking right now. I had given in writing on 1st of March but does it make any difference. The hon. Minister went to Bihar to take care of the political affairs there and now he has returned. Through you, I would like to request the hon. Minister to start a Shatabdi Express and other trains from Nanded and ensure the development of Marathwada region. The hon'ble Minister should ensure the development of Maharashtra as he

has not done anything for Mumbai as on date. No adequate budget allocation has been made for Maharashtra. Therefore, through you, I would like to apprise the hon. Minister of my sentiments and request him to fulfil my demands.

[English]

SHRIMATI PARAMJIT KAUR GULSHAN: *Hon. Deputy Speaker sir, I am thankful to you that you have allowed me to speak on the Railway Budget. I rise on behalf of Shiromani Akali Dal. The Union Railway Minister presented the Railway Budget in Lok Sabha on 28th February 2005. People started prasing the Railway Budget. But this is a populist Budget and the Minister has played to the gallery. But when the people read between the lines, they found out the reality. The Railway Minister has talked about 8% economic growth rate and has mentioned infrastructure as his priority area. He thinks that Railways will play a major role in the 8% economic growth rate. But the 8% growth rate cannot be achieved by doling out concessions and introducing new trains only for Bihar. The Minister wants to strengthen the Railways and improve its working. Can this be done only by reducing train fares? Not increasing train fares cannot be considered a good step towards achieving this goal. Common man feels that if safety and security is provided to them during their travel on trains, they can even withstand a nominal increase in passenger fares. Today, inflation rate is at an all time low of 5%. But, Sir, inflation directly influences prices and interest rates. Not increasing the passenger fares will only harm the economy of the country. A nominal increase in passenger fares would have been good for the economy of the country. The hon. Minister takes credit for increase in the volume of passengers who travel by train. But, the entire country knows that this increase is natural and has nothing to do with the efforts of the Minister.

In our country, supply is less and demand is more. So, even a nominal increase seems significant. This does not reflect the hard work or merit of the concerned Minister. It is because the Railway Minister was more busy in the elections in Bihar and hence could not put in any hard work for preparation of the Railway Budget. So he has over-looked several aspects. The hon. Minister has taken no steps to improve the condition of goods train. The mere proclamation that he will give priority to defence sector and natural calamities is not enough to improve the condition of goods trains. The need of the

hour is to increase the capacity of the goods trains. Corruption in this sector should be checked so that the Railway Department gets the income and revenue earned from this sector, not the corrupt people. The Railway Minister has talked in the Budget about using fiber optics technology in Railways, giving priority to information technology in Railways, allowing private companies in this sector and opening a call centre in Patna. But his seriousness can be considered from the fact that he has said nothing as to how he will generate the resources and money needed to fulfil these schemes. It seems as if the hon. Minister has a magic wand which he will wield and get things done.

Hon. Minister should pay attention towards cleanliness and create hygienic conditions on railway platforms. Long distance trains do have drinking water facilities and hygienic conditions for passengers but in ordinary passenger trains, the condition of passengers is miserable. At railway stations, cleanliness is a casualty. Drinking water facility is absent for passengers and their relatives who come to receive or see them off. Toilets remain dirty and filthy. Trains are generally late and passengers suffer a lot. If corrective measures are taken, the prestige of Railways will improve. The railway staff should cooperate with passengers and behave well with them. Booking counters should be increased and their working should be improved. Corruption and taking of intoxicants among railway staff should be checked and reined in.

There is an urgent need to change the railway time table at various places. There are places where lots of trains ply. Such a large number of trains are not needed there. I would like to draw your attention towards my constituency. Whenever I have to come to Delhi, I have to board a train at Bathinda at 11.45 in the night. It is not safe for a woman to board a train at that unearthly hour. Many a time, I find that even the railway employees are drunk and this is not safe for a woman. When I board a train from Delhi, the train reaches Bathinda railway station at 2.45 AM. Those family members who come to receive me find it very difficult. So, changes should be made in the railway time table also.

Security of passengers should have been accorded top priority in the railway budget because cases of train dacoities and murders on trains are on the rise. As such, common people are avoiding travelling by train. Signal system, communication system and track system should

*English Translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

[Shrimati Paramjit Kaur Gulshan]

have been revamped and improved so that accidents could be avoided. Anti-collision device should have been installed soon on all trains. But nothing has been mentioned about them in the Railway Budget.

The hon. Minister claims to be the messiah of the poor. But in the Railway Budget, there has been no mention of filling the backlog for SC/STs in the Railways. It would have been better if the recruitment committees had been formed at the district level and their working made more transparent. The poor people should have benefited by reaching the recruitment centres easily.

Hon. Minister, I want to draw your attention to the fact that Punjab and Bihar share a deep bond. Both the States are dependent on each other. Lakhs of migrant labourers commute to Punjab for employment purpose but you have given a step motherly treatment to Punjab, as you had done last year. Sumitراج had said in here speech that five States could not find place on the railway map. I would like to say that Punjab should be added in that list as Sixth State. Only a DMU train has been started between Amritsar and Attari. The distance between Amritsar and Attari is hardly 20 to 25 kms and a person can cycle from one place to the other. So, this is a bad joke that has been played upon Punjab. No new railway lines are to be laid, no new trains are being introduced. Punjab has been totally ignored in this Budget. So much so that last year, my constituency Bathinda had been declared a model railway station. But uptill now, nothing has been done at that railway station. The demands of lakhs of people of Mansa have been conveniently ignored. the Chandigarh-Mohali-Ludhiana rail line is yet to be completed. It is a long standing demand of the people. Two Shatabdi trains should have been started—one between Ferozepur and Delhi and another between Delhi and Pathankot. Patiala should have been connected with Ludhiana and Ambala. Jalandhar-Pathankot doubling of track is yet to be completed. It is a sad state of affairs. In the December session, I had appealed to the hon. Minister that the Sachkhand Express should be provided a stoppage at Sirhind railway station in memory of the two martyred sons of Guru Gobind Singh here aged 7 and 9 years. But it is sad to note that nothing has been done in this matter uptill now. This step motherly treatment against Punjab should be stopped. At least those schemes should be completed that were started by the previous NDA Government. You have said in the Budget that you will accord top priority to Defence sector and areas hit

by natural calamities. Punjab should also be accorded top priority as Punjab is a border State. Now, we are trying to improve our relations with Pakistan. Business opportunities will increase. For this to happen, Punjab should be connected with various parts of India through trains that run at high speed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, in the end, I would like to say that if attention is not given to all these issues, then this Railway Budget will become a big flop, a big cipher. There is nothing new in this Budget. Innocent people are being misled through this Budget.

[Translation]

YOGI ADITYA NATH (Gorakhpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on behalf of my party on the rail budget of 2005-06. Indian Railways celebrated its 150th anniversary two years back. Indian Railways have witnessed many ups and downs in its long journey during these 150 years. Several functions were held all over the country to mark the 150th anniversary of the Indian Railways. We had before us the glorious history of 150 years of Indian railways. Several challenges were also there. The credibility of Indian Railways in which the public reposed faith in the yesteryears has diminished today. Safety, Security and not letting any political narrowness impede the implementation of other ongoing schemes in public interest and profitable from the point of view of revenue have been the main reasons for which the public had reposed faith in the Indian Railways. The contemporary NDA Government felt that 24 thousand crore rupees would be required under the safety and security head for the modernisation of the old rail lines and repair of dilapidated bridges all over the country. Regarding the projects which were started by various railway ministers at various points of time on behalf of the Ministry of Railways and which are still incomplete and the projects foundations of which had been laid but work could not be started, it was decided at the survey stage that approximately one and a half lakh crore rupees would be required for starting every project. That is why it is important that projects which are important from the point of view of revenue and which are in public interest should be undertaken on priority basis and a good initiative to go ahead with the ongoing projects was taken during the time of NDA Government under the leadership of hon. Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

17.30 hrs.

(SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN *in the Chair*)

It is surprising that there is a constant downfall in freight earnings which is the main source of revenue for railways. There was a time when the ratio of passenger traffic and freight was 60 and 40 percent which today has reduced to 80 and 20 percent. I think that given the poor condition of the railways and the Government not paying any attention towards modernisation with safety and security being questioned, the situation will further worsen and any shortfall in freight earnings, the most important source of revenue collection would prevent the Indian Railways from moving on the path of progress.

Sir, it is the second railway budget of Railway Minister since the UPA Government came to power. The hon. Minister of Railways could not decide how to improve the situation of Indian railways during the last 9 months and in what direction it would move. This year's railway budget reflects political prejudice and narrow mindedness. The railway budget presented by the Minister of Railways which seems to be imbued with political narrow mindedness would be beneficial neither to the Indian Railways and Railways Ministry nor to the country because if regional imbalance is created from financial point of view then it would affect the development of the country and the country would have to suffer and pay for it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Railway Minister has made several announcements in this railway budget but I do not think he would be able to fulfil them. A total of 16 thousand 538 kilometre rail line was to be renovated out of which work on 5 thousand kilometre of rail lines is yet to be completed. Out of the 2700 bridges one thousand bridges are yet to be renovated. Similarly 16 thousand 741 level crossings were to be linked with inter-locking system out of which more than 8 thousand level crossings are yet to be linked with interlocking system. Despite all this if we promise to provide world class rail services and if we claim to put Indian Railways on the first place in the whole world then it is pure rhetoric. Indian railway budget also is mere rhetoric. I believe that an attempt to divert the attention of the House and public from the facts has been made through this budget.

The hon. Minister of Railways has not specified if he has not increased freight rates and passenger fares to gain cheap publicity as to how he would mobilise Rs. 24000 crore required for railway security and modernisation and how he would arrange for Rs. 1700 crore for the Railways Safety and Security Head. What

would happen to the announcements he made last time? All these things have not been mentioned in the budget. It is commendable that one important issue of using the railways surplus land for commercial purposes by the Railway Land Development Authority which was also highlighted prominently during the last four or five railways budgets, has been discussed here. I sent a proposal regarding my constituency too in this connection to the Ministry of Railways but I regret to say that announcement was made in this regard by his Ministry four months back and it was announced in the budget too but I doubt whether it would ever be implemented.

Last time a new zone was created by carving out a big area from Gorakhpur, the Headquarters of the North Eastern Railways. We objected to that. The NDA was in power then. Certain announcements were made for the development of Gorakhpur zone and the North Eastern Railways to compensate for its division to create a new zone during the NDA regime, and implementation of those announcements had begun too. It mainly included gauge conversion of Gorakhpur-Nautanwa-Gonda loopline, doubling of railway line upto Gorakhpur-Sahjanwa on the Gorakhpur-Lucknow section. Important announcements were made like new city station for Gorakhpur, plying Gorakhdham Express from Gorakhpur to New Delhi everyday and change in its time schedule. Important announcements like Gorakhpur-Lucknow Inter-city Express, Gorakhpur-Mumbai Godan Express and an Express train from Gorakhpur to Durg etc. had been made and work had also begun regarding these announcements but today they are out to put these schemes on the back burner. The post of Deputy General Manager in Gorakhpur North-Eastern Railways has been abolished.

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. Your time is over.

[*Translation*]

YOGI ADITYA NATH: One main issue is about the publicity and promotion of our official language. The hon. Minister of Railways has repeatedly announced that Hindi is our national language but the post of the Rajbhasha officer deputed for the promotion of the national language in the eastern railways has been abolished and he has been transferred elsewhere. Attempts are being made to dismantle the divisional officers of North-Eastern railways in Chapra and at other places in Bihar and the Gorakhpur Headquarters of North-Eastern railways. Despite this show of narrow political thinking, if we claim to make Indian

[Yogi Aditya Nath]

railways number one in the whole world, then it would not be in the interest of Indian railways. Through you I would like to request the hon. Minister of Railways to leave alone the announcements he made last year, nobody knows what happened to them and when those schemes would be completed, but the ongoing schemes under Gorakhpur headquarters should be completed.

We are well aware of what is going on within the border areas of India and Nepal. Keeping in view the Maoist activities going on in Nepal. I would like to request the hon. Minister of Railways that funds should be allocated urgently for gauge conversion of Gorakhpur-Nautanwa-Gonda loopline linking the bordering areas which was approved during the time of NDA Government and this work should be completed at the earliest. Electrification of rail line between Lucknow-Gorakhpur should also be completed soon. With the electrification of railway line not only the distance between Gorakhpur and Lucknow would be covered within 3 to 4 hours but 17 percent revenue of the railways would also be saved.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now.

[Translation]

YOGI ADITYA NATH: Sir, I would like to raise another two-three issues. I am only the second person to speak from my party. Other people have taken too much time. The demand for doubling of Gorakhpur-Gonda line was also raised when a major train accident took place in Domingarh of Gorakhpur in the year 1996. The doubling of rail line from Gorakhpur to Sahajanwa was approved but required funds have not been allocated for this work since the formation of UPA Government due to which the work has come to a halt. It is my request that funds should be released immediately. Apart from it, demand for the construction of overbridges at four places in Gorakhpur has been made repeatedly as the traffic gets disrupted due to busy rail line of Gorakhpur. There is a need to construct overbridges at Kudaghat on NH 28, Char Phatak, Humayunpur railway crossing and Surajkund railway crossing.

Sir, demand for upgradation of Ghughali railway station has been made along with the construction of rail line upto Ghughali *via* Maharaiganj district headquarters. As of now work has not begun in this regard. I have given proposal to the Ministry for giving stoppage to

important trains at main railway stations linked to Gorakhpur *i.e.* Domingarh, Sahajanwa, Pipraich and Ghughali but it has not been mentioned in the budget.

Sir, there is an important scheme in Uttar Pradesh. Former Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee inaugurated the railway bridge constructed on the Sarayu in Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Rama. Although bridge was open for traffic but no express train has piled on it since the change of Government. A new train should be started from Gorakhpur to New Delhi *via* Ayodhya. I request the Minister of Railways to allocate sufficient funds for the said work in the interest of the nation. With these words, I express my gratitude for you.

[English]

SHRI SACHIN PILOT (Dausa): Sir, I rise today in support of the Railway Budget-2005-06 presented by the hon. Railway Minister.

Sir, it is a well-known fact that the Railway Department with more than 14,26,000 employees is one of the oldest and the most widespread Government undertaking not only in India but also in the world. Railways is the lifeline of the nation. I would like to compliment the hon. Minister. Like many other hon. Members have pointed out, I too would share their feelings and want to compliment him for not increasing the fares either of the freight or the passengers in the Railway Budget.

Another important aspect which I would like to say is on the concession that the hon. Minister has granted especially to the farmers and the various sections of the society that produce milk and agro products. There is 50 per cent concession in second class rates. There is 75 per cent concession for girl children in the rural areas to go and take part in national competitive examinations and also 75 per cent concession in the second class fare for students in the rural areas for them to undertake school trips once a year. It is a commendable step and I congratulate the hon. Minister on that.

If we look at the Railway Budget, you will realise that there is one thing that is usually gone unnoticed and that is, achieving of the prescribed percentage reservation of people belonging to the Scheduled Castes in all classes of Railway services. That is one aspect of the Railway Budget which is usually gone unnoticed and I want to underline that fact. There is also 49.5 per cent

reservation in the contract for small catering given to the Scheduled Castes, OBCs, freedom fighters, Muslims, widows and widows of Railway employees and a 25 per cent concession in the contract for book stall allocation.

One of the hon. Members pointed out earlier a very important aspect namely, the safety of the passengers of our railways. In 2002-03, the number of accidents was 325. In the corresponding year, between April, 2003 and December, 2004, there were 175 train accidents. It shows that there is 33 per cent reduction in the accidents than the previous years. I agree that even one accident is not acceptable but it does show that the Department and the Minister are very conscious about making our Railway a secure way of travelling.

The Special Railway Security Fund has already spent Rs. 6540 crore and they are also going to spend another Rs. 3645 crore taking the total expenditure in the current year to Rs. 10,149 crore which is a commendable step in ensuring the safety of all the passengers of our Railways.

About 12,138 kilometres of track have been renewed upto 31st March, 2005 and of the 2700 bridges that were to be undertaken to be repaired or renewed, work in 1306 bridges have already been done.

Another important aspect on which I want to compliment him on the Railway Budget is that the meeting of the *World Executive Council* of the Union of the International Railways is being held for the first time under the chairmanship of the Indian Railways in April, 2005. It is a matter of great pride not only for the Railway Ministry but also the people of this nation.

In this country, we have 9000 passenger trains. In the Railway Budget, there is a proposal for introducing 46 new trains, extending 27 train routes and increasing the frequency of ten trains. The hon. Minister, in his speech, also pointed out that his Ministry is going to make available 400 additional coaches and put them on commercially and financially viable routes.

In the Budget, there is a proposal for allocating Rs. 1365 crore for Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla line. This line has received the highest priority of the Government of UPA and of the Railway Ministry. It is now a national project and despite the flooding in the tunnel on that route, the Government and the Ministry are working earnestly to expedite this project to finish it as soon as possible.

As regards railway electrification, the target of electrifying 375 kilometres for the current year is likely to be achieved. I want to compliment the Ministry and all the employees for that.

On new lines, 219 kilometres of new lines are to be completed in 2005-06. The Minister has not increased the rates of freight or passenger travel. In spite of that, the earnings through the freight have gone up in the current year because of the efficiency of the Ministry and the hard work of the employees. The target for freight was increased from 580 million tonnes to 600 million tonnes. It is going to go up to 635 million tonnes in the next year. The passenger traffic has increased by four per cent and the gross traffic receipts of the Railway Ministry have gone up to Rs. 50,968 crore which is an increase of Rs. 4,189 crore.

In the current year, the working ratio of the Ministry is 87 per cent of the Budget. This is likely to improve to 83 per cent. After the implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission, this is the first time in eight years, that the ratio has come down to 87 per cent.

There is a step to simplify the goods traffic. The classification which had 4,000 commodities has been shrunk to 80. This will simplify the freight traffic. It will be beneficial for the people who do business through freight. I would like to point out that the intention of the UPA Government, of the Minister and of the Ministry clearly lies with the underprivileged and the poor of this country. This is magnified if you look at the fact that the Minister has taken steps to ensure that there is reduction in the freight rates of products such as kerosene and LPG. Due to reduction in freight rates, the price of kerosene has come down from Rs. 135 to Rs. 130, which is a reduction of 3.7 per cent; and there is a reduction of 2.7 per cent in the price of LPG. This is again reflective of the thoughts and intentions behind making the current Budget.

The Railway Budget shows us that 12.17 lakh random checks were conducted by the Railway Ministry to catch ticket less and irregular travellers. This has fetched the Government of India or the Ministry a sum of Rs. 226.88 crore.

It is important that if the functioning of the Ministry of Railways needs to be made more transparent, people of this country should utilise the railway services and also pay for their travel and tickets.

[Shri Sachin Pilot]

I have a few suggestions for the hon. Minister. It is clear to us that almost every Member of this House wants a station and a railway line in his constituency or area. Railways are connected with the travel of poor of our country. Rich can own cars and travel, the richer can travel by air. But railways are the one nervous system in our country which connects every part of our nation. Everyone's life is somehow related to railways. As there is always shortage of resources in the Ministry, I would like to make a suggestion. We have been successful in the system of toll roads and bridges. Maybe some such plan can be adopted here also where we can have a policy of extending these physical assets of the railways through the partnership of public and private sector on BOT lines or BOOT lines, keeping the existing structure as it is. It is only to enhance the capital investment in the Ministry.

Now, let me come to Railtel. They have now installed optical fibre for 26,000 kilometres in our nation. This is likely to go up to 40,000 kilometres. The fibre optic will not only enhance the working efficiency of the railways but it can also be used as a platform to earn and generate extra revenue by leasing part of it to other Ministries or private entrepreneurs.

There is a proposal mentioned in the Budget. The hon. Minister has mentioned about Rail Land Development Authorities Bill. It is a commendable step. I would like to make a suggestion here. Once we start using the extra land that we have in the railways, my suggestion would be to ensure that part of the land is kept aside in the rural areas and be handed over to either *gram panchayats* or *nagar palikas* so that the farmers of that area can store their produce. When the produce has to be transported from the stations to the *mandis* or to the markets, it can be used as storage house and be under the supervision of the *gram panchayats* so that local bodies could be empowered, and the part of railways' assets in terms of land available can be used by the agriculturists and farmers. ...*(Interruptions)*

In Railways, there are a few vacancies for Scheduled Tribes and OBCs, which have not been filled up. Vacancies in respect of Scheduled Castes have been filled up. But there is shortfall in the vacancies of Scheduled Tribes and OBCs. I would like to earnestly make a request to the hon. Minister, who is not present here now, that he should fill up these vacancies.

When I travel by train in India, I have noticed that there is no facility for handicapped people to board the

train. There are no facilities for them in the platforms or in the railway stations. Maybe in the coming year, we must earmark some part of the Budget to make sure that people who are physically challenged, who are handicapped, who have trouble getting on to the train and off the train—our trains are generally crowded—get some facilities. A Bill can be introduced to facilitate their travel. They need our support.

I think the Budget is commendable. It is people-friendly. It shows that the Government of the day is very sincere in its efforts to serve the common man of this country. The poorest of the poor will benefit through this Budget.

I once again thank you for the opportunity given to me. I once again support the Budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Tathagata Satpathy to speak now.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Shri Pilot, in the Railways, there is something called operating ratio. But, I think, you mentioned something about the working ratio. ...*(Interruptions)* Did you mention about operating ratio or working ratio? ...*(Interruptions)* Why did you not mention about it?

SHRI SACHIN PILOT: This Budget is much better than the Budgets you made all these years. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has completed his speech. There is no question and answer session now. There is no such discussion on that.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Shri Pilot, you mentioned about the working ratio. There is something called operating ratio in the Railways. So, you mention about the operating ratio also. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no question and answer session now. It will not come on record. When a Member is called to speak and he is speaking, only his speech goes on record. He has completed his speech. After completion of his speech, these questions will not arise. Why do you put questions?

Shri Tathagata Satpathy to speak now.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY (Dhenkanal): Sir, on behalf of the Biju Janata Dal, I have got an opportunity to speak on the Railway Budget. The Biju Janata Dal represents the true spirit of Orissa. My State of Utkal is historically known as the land of Kalinga and now it is known as Orissa.

We are today discussing the Railway Budget for the year 2005-06. Sir, you are my inspiration because when you are amongst us in the Benches, with the *hai pollai* of this House, you go on speaking. No matter who says what, no matter even if the hon. Speaker stands up, you go on speaking. So, holding you as my inspiration and my leader, I have dared to stand up today and speak, no matter who says what, including you. ...*(Interruptions)*

There are supposedly three ways; the right way, the wrong way and the Rail Way. Now, I assume that this is an old saying of the Victorian times. But it now seems that there are only two ways. Of course, there is the right way which sits on this side of the House and there is the wrong rail way which sits on the other side of the House! But, nevertheless, along with the national Budget, this nation lays enough stress on the Railways that we are probably the only country in the world which has an independent Railway Budget. This shows the importance given by the nation to the Railways.

Let us have a moment to ponder. We are all aware that the famous Shri Lalu ji has ruled an unruly State like Bihar for 15 long years. I think he has proven his political victory already. Losing the recent elections must have disheartened him. We believe so. Miscalculations in politics can always be set right. But when similar miscalculations take place in the operations of the Railways, they result in loss of thousands of lives and much money. Our hon. Railway Minister, the State Minister, the Cabinet Ministers and the whole nation know that loss of lives runs into thousands in one single crash and in terms of money, it runs into crores. So, if we look back at the present UPA Government's rule, one thing is clear. I would not like to use the word "regime" because "regime" is not appropriate for a democratic country. But during the rule of the UPA Government, in the first nine to ten months, the number of accidents in respect of the Railways has gone up incredibly. It is a pity that in spite of so many major accidents in the past year, there has been no special thrust in the safety sector of the Railways that we see in this Budget. We were told that the Railways would be putting up Electronic Early Warning System or Signals—whatever the technical details may

be. But if you see the Budget, we find no special mention about it. This sector has been completely neglected. It is a great concern for all middle-class and low-class travellers of this nation like me who travel in Railways normally. Of course, because of the kindness of the people of India, we get 32 air fares in a year. But, anyway, we are grateful to the people for giving us this opportunity. But I normally travel by rail.

18.00 hrs.

I know, every moment, every time I step on to a rail carriage, my life is threatened because I am stepping on to somebody else's world and we do not know where we will reach or if we will reach at all or not.

Now, let us admit it, time is running out for all of us, including the time you will allow me to speak, so I shall not lengthen this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, if the House agrees, I shall extend the time of the House. If the House is of the opinion that the time should be extended, I have no objection.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. I presume that the House agrees. The time of the House is extended up to 7 o'clock.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY: Now, let us get to the brass tacks because eventually it is Orissa, the State whose all round development is of great importance to all of us, even to you, Sir because it is a State you have admired and you have always told us in personal conversation that you like Orissa.

You know my Chief Minister, Shri Naveen Patnaik has brought in an era of transparency, honesty and responsiveness in the field of governance in Orissa. Although, Orissa is a rich State, it desperately needs infrastructure development and to develop infrastructure you need to invest in it, which has not been done by the Railways.

I given you a few examples. I shall make my speech very short, but you are my inspiration. Against a national average of 19 kms. per 1,000 sq. kms, Orissa has only 15.03 kms. per 1,000 sq. kms. During the year 2003-04, the East-Coast Railway made an income of Rs. 2,258 crore due to enormous movement of traffic and has

[Shri Tathagata Satpathy]

surpassed the income by another Rs. 105 crore during the first nine months of 2004-05. The East-Coast Railway was made operational in April 2003. The Railway had transported 64 million tonnes of freight in the year 2003-04, in the very first year of its inception. The operating ratio is 63 per cent, perhaps one of the lowest in Indian Railways. Therefore, with so much potential, it is essential that the requirement of infrastructure development for East-Coast Railway is given prime importance.

Let us go to the other side. Let us see how neglect is exemplified in the instance of Orissa. Sir, a simple over-bridge, at a place called Chainpal, crosses the National Highway No. 42, the highway that goes through Bhubaneswar to Mumbai. The over-bridge needs only Rs. 7 crore. But it is probably a joke for the Railway authorities to sanction Rs. 2 crore in this year's budget. Sir, you can imagine, you are a man of great learning and you can understand very well. Do you assume that the over-bridge will be built half-way and left there so that in the next two-three years they will build it and bring it to the other side of the national highway. This is the way the thought works with this Government and the bureaucracy performs in this Government.

Similarly, in Lanjipalli in Berhampore, there is a need of an over-bridge and this over-bridge needs only Rs. 1.85 crore. But this year, Rs. 26 lakh have been given to this over-bridge for pillars or for base works, whatever it is.

So, when it comes to neglect, Sir, you can understand that. Kerala is lucky. You are lucky enough to have a high level of education in your State. We are a rich State, but we are constantly neglected. So, to make matters shorter and quicker, I will just read out a few points where special attention is required for the State of Orissa to develop as an ultramodern and capable State. So, can I take five more minutes?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are many other Members to speak.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY: I thank you for giving me five minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Today it is up to seven o' clock. There are a number of speakers.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY: I will conclude it in five minutes.

Sir, the doubling of the existing railway line from Khurda to Puri has been phased into 15-kilometre stretches. Probably, the total length of the line is 56 kilometres. They are taking it up in stretches of 15 kilometres. The first phase has got a mere Rs. 10 crore and it needs Rs. 3 crore more. There is a need of Rs. 13 crore for a 15-kilometre stretch, that is also in a line which is totally on the beach. You know Puri is on the beach. So, the line cannot go on forever. It ends there. So, a line of approximately 56 kilometres has been phased into 15-kilometre stretches. That first phase also has got only Rs. 10 crore whereas it needs Rs. 13 crore. This is the situation. In the last four years, this is all that has happened.

Similarly, Daitari-Bansapani is a broad gauge rail link of 155 kilometres. There is Talcher-Sambalpur broad gauge rail link. A second bridge over Mahanadhi has received only Rs. 28.60 crore through the RVNL. It needs another Rs. 50 crore. This rail link connects Kolkata to Chennai.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY: I am just quickly mentioning the points.

Similarly, about the new lines, Haridashpur-Paradeep has extreme economic relevance to the State. It has been given Rs. 20 crore through the RVNL whereas it needs Rs. 233 crore. Similarly, Angul-Duburi-Sukinda road, which will be used for carrying iron ore, has been given Rs. 10 lakh and it needs Rs. 242 crore. Talcher-Bimlagarh is a 154-kilometre stretch. It has been given Rs. 5 crore whereas it needs Rs. 727 crore. Daitari-Bansapani rail link of 155 kilometres needs Rs. 128 crore. Money has been given to the RVNL, but a few crores of rupees only have been given.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. Please co-operate. There are so many speakers. We have only 50 minutes.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY: Sir, we like you. In the morning I said you are my inspiration. You are my leader.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have taken more than 20 minutes. Please conclude.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY: The lines of Rupsa-Bangiriposi and Nuapara-Gunupur need gauge conversion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have only 50 minutes before us. We have about 10 speakers. Let others also say something.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY: The new lines of Jeypore-Malkangiri, Talcher-Gopalpur, Bargarh-Nuapada via Padampur, Gopalpur-Rayagada, Jaleswar-Digha, Jaipur Keonjhar Road-Jaipur, Gorumahisani to Buramara need survey immediately.

Then, we need some new trains to be introduced. We need a Bhubaneswar-New Delhi train through Sambalpur, which would help develop the western part of Orissa. That has been completely neglected. There are a few more points that need to be highlighted here.

Sir, you are showing tolerance towards Orissa. I am very sorry to say that in spite of all the ill feeling that they have towards Orissa, we will still fight for our rights.

The Congress have neglected the State of Orissa for 50 long years. When it ruled at the Centre and ruled in the State, it only gave pain and it was bothersome for the poor people of Orissa. Nobody spoke on our behalf in this august House earlier. When we have come to this august House, we need your protection to put the demands of our people before you so that the Government will listen to us and the State of Orissa will get a chance to stand shoulder to shoulder with other developed States.

We are not proud of our poverty. Ours is one of the fighting races. The Kalinga war was fought by the Oriyas against Ashoka who came from Patilaputra, which is now Patna. We are the sons of that Kalinga war.
...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record now.

*...(Interruptions)**

SHRI ALKESH DAS (Nawadwip): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to congratulate, through you, the hon. Minister of Railways Shri Lalu Prasad as he has again restrained himself from raising passenger fares. Commuters across all segments have been spared from paying more fare for their travel.

There are many good sides to the Railway Budget. For instance, 54 pairs of new train services have been introduced; 28 pairs of train routes have been extended; and the frequency has been increased in respect of ten

pairs of trains. A universal enquiry number, '139' has been introduced; landline telephone booking has also been introduced. The Internet booking time has been extended and now it is between four o'clock in the morning and 11.30 in the night. In 45 district headquarters, PRS is going to be introduced. Fare concession has also been announced for those seeking jobs in State Government services. So, the hon. Minister of Railways deserves thanks from the people.

But there is also another side of this Budget. The first slogan of the Railways is 'safety' and then comes 'punctuality'. What was the safety report of the last year? There had been 325 accidents and 294 passengers died. The money allocated in the Railway Budget for safety is only three paise per rupee. In the Budget, for primary track renewal, the allocation has been decreased while it should be phased out by 2007. So, the Budget allocation in this head should be increased.

I would give thanks to the hon. Minister since the freight rates have not affected coal, cement, iron and steel, pig iron, clinkers and limestone. Petrol and naphtha, freight rates have been reduced. For kerosene, LPG; and the freight rate for milk transported in private tankers has also been lowered.

In the case of non-PDS foodgrains, the freight rate has been hiked to 33 per cent. The poor families cannot survive only on PDS foodgrains and so they would be affected. Therefore, I appeal to the hon. Minister to take remedial measures on this aspect.

The next issue is of punctuality. There has been a steady passenger growth of six per cent. The trains are overcrowded. The Standing Committee had recommended that all suburban trains should be of twelve coaches. There is no trace of any assurance on that recommendation in the Budget. Now, the number of coaches are expected to rise by 3.1 per cent in this Budget and there would be an increase from 2,596 coaches to 2,679 coaches this year. The allocation for locomotive rail engines has been lowered by 39.4 per cent while the requirement for locomotive engines has increased by twelve per cent.

The UPA Government has been telling us that they are for reforms of the economy with a human face but it remains absent when thousands of hawkers who had been compelled to join that profession are being tortured by railway police and administration. There was no space

[Shri Alkesh Das]

In the Budget for giving licences to them. I am appealing to the hon. Minister to give licences to these hawkers and to make a provision for that in this Budget.

Construction of rail overbridges is very essential in various points in the country. But there is a policy of share matching in the ratio of 50:50 with the State Governments. The State Governments do not have the economic ability and so the Railways should construct rail overbridges by providing the whole share.

In the North-Eastern region, the seven State capitals are not linked with railway lines at present. Some sort of surveys have been done but in this Budget there is no light provided on that. Thirty North-Eastern railway stations have been considered for development as model stations and annual earnings is less than Rs. 1 crore. But, where are the funds for development for that? The progress of modernisation of railways in the North-Eastern region is very slow. So, targets for completion of the projects should be fixed and ten per cent allocation should be made for new initiatives in the North-Eastern region. I am sorry to say here that in this Railway Budget, the State of West Bengal has been deprived. I am again repeating that West Bengal State has been deprived in this Railway Budget.

As you know, how many terminals are there in Mumbai and Delhi? But we have only two terminals in West Bengal, that is, Sealdah and Howrah. We proposed for another terminal, that is, Shalimar. But where is the funding for that in this Railway Budget? We also told about the interim arrangement, about short-term policy for establishing additional five platforms in Howrah Station. But no signal is there now in the Railway Budget about the establishment of five additional platforms in Howrah. So, people are facing a lot of problems in this regard.

Fifty-four pairs of new train services have been introduced. Twenty-eight pairs of train track extended and ten pairs of trains' frequencies have been extended. But in this extension of Railways, West Bengal portion is actually amounts to 'Nil'. In West Bengal, Siliguri is one of the important places after Kolkata and this is becoming very important after the 'Look-East Policy' has been accepted. Darjeeling Mail and Kanchan Kanya is there, but we opted for a straight train from Sealdah to Siliguri, that is 'Janasatabdi Express'. But we are disheartened in this Railway Budget because there is no provision for Janasatabdi Express from Sealdah to Darjeeling.

In our State, three gauge conversions are required from narrow gauge to broad gauge, that is, Shantipur to Navadwip, Ahmedpur to Katoa and from Burdwan to Katoa. But there is no provision in this Budget for these gauge conversions. It has been mentioned once, but no money has been provided.

As far as Majherhat-Coaching terminal Santipur to Krishnagar is there, this provision is absent in the Railway Budget. This is our demand. This is the fourth terminal. As far as Jhargram to Purulia new line is concerned, we opted for it because it is a tribal zone. The survey has been completed, but no fund has been allocated in this Budget.

As far as doubling from Panskura to Haldia is concerned, there is no trace in this Railway Budget. As far as doubling from Bandel to Katoa is concerned, small amount has been allocated in this Railway Budget and it will not serve up to Jeerat. As far as doubling from Bongaon to Sealdah is concerned, it has not been mentioned in the Railway Budget.

As far as electrification from Katoa to Azimganj is concerned, there is no provision in this Railway Budget. We also told about the rail-bridge over Bhagirathi. But only Rs. 1 crore has been sanctioned and nothing will be done with this money. As far as direct train from Azimganj to Howrah is concerned, there is no provision in this Railway Budget.

We also demanded extension of metro from Dumdum to Barakpur. However, there is no provision in this Railway Budget.

As far as new train line from Krishna Nagar to Karimpur (80 kilometer) is concerned, only 13 kilometer has been surveyed, but no money has been sanctioned in this Railway Budget.

We demanded the upgradation of Jalpaiguri Road Station, but this is absent in this Railway Budget.

We also demanded the doubling plus electrification of Andal-Saithia line, but that is also absent in this Railway Budget.

Again, I would like to point out here that there should have been some proposal in the Railway Budget about using of railway land which is lying without use. So, from this speech, through you, Sir, I would like to request the hon. Minister that in this Budget there should be some provision so that West Bengal should get some facilities in the railway services, in the new trains and in the communication, etc.

So, with these few words, I conclude my speech.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI (Pilibhit): Mr. Chairman, Sir I thank you very much. I have a very short speech to make. I believe that when the Budget is announced it has got some sanctity.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman Sir, the hon. Minister gave us assurance last year that a survey is being conducted under which Bareilly-Tanakpur meter gauge line would be converted into broadgauge and it was said that we would have the survey report by 31 December, 2004 but now it is March, 2005 and we have still not been informed what happened to that survey, whether the report has been presented or not.

Sir, we have been informally informed that the said rail line would not be converted into broadgauge as its rate of return is not good. I would like to ask which rail lines rate of return is good in Bihar that so much of money is being invested there.

Sir, my constituency of Pilibhit falls entirely in terai region. It registers highest transportation of foodgrains and other goods. Transportation of maximum number of goods takes place here. Thousands of trucks pass through this area everyday then why Bareilly-Tanakpur metergauge line be not converted into broadgauge.

[English]

If you feel that you do not have enough money for this, then I am happy to put my MPLADS funds at your service so that you can build a part of it. If you believe that you still need more money—it is just 30 kilometres—we will do *shramdaan* so that you save on labour also.

I agree with Shri Pilot's contention that you put it on BOT, do something; but if you do not give us a broad gauge, everything in the *terai* area, especially Pilibhit-Lakhimpur section, will be completely held up because of this one line. I would request you that as you promised in your last Budget, please get on with it and give us a broad gauge.

SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN (Dhubri): Sir, in the context of the Railway Budget as presented by Shri Lalu Prasad, the hon. Railway Minister, I congratulate him and thank him for presenting a progressive Budget with so many concessions and developmental proposals. I do not like to repeat what our friends have already expressed here. I would only point out some of the difficulties about the North-Eastern region. I am happy that two of our friends have already expressed their concern about the problems of the North-Eastern region.

The hon. President of India, in his first Address to both the Houses of Parliament, had remarked that regional imbalances are being created due to historical negligence of the Government. It is written in his speech that due to historical negligence, regional imbalances are being created. In respect of the North-Eastern region, the States were really neglected and as a result of that, the popular UPA Government in its Common Minimum Programme has promised that ten per cent of its budgetary allocations in all Departments concerning developmental works will go to the North-Eastern region, the eight States. Similarly, the Finance Minister also promised the same thing that ten per cent would go for the North-Eastern region in his Budget speech.

Sir, I regret that it is very unfortunate that in this Budget, which has been presented, ten per cent has not been given, even three per cent has not been given to the North-Eastern region. So, it is quite unfortunate that the Railway Ministry has not carried the Govt.'s promise, that is, what has been incorporated in the Common Minimum Programme. As such, I would request and pray to the Railway Ministry to review the matter and see that at least ten per cent is provided for the development of the North-Eastern region.

In brief, I would like to presentsome of the burning problems of the North-Eastern region. First, in the North-Eastern region, there is no factory or industry of the Railway Department. I am very grateful to the Railway Ministry that this year, there is a proposal to establish a rail factory there, but in the second phase.

I would request the Ministry of Railways to consider the establishment of the proposed factory in the first phase and not in the second phase. Second, the Bogibeel project is a mega-project. The Government has allocated Rs. 12 crore for this work this year. This project was started many years ago, but adequate funds have not been provided to carry out the work. I do not know how much time or how many more decades it will take to complete this work. I, therefore, urge upon the Government to increase the allocation for this Bogibeel mega-project.

Third, from the deference point of view, the North-Eastern region is a strategic part of our country, but it does not have a double line. I, therefore, urge upon the Government to make the New Jalpaiguri-Tinsukia line into a double line as early as possible. Fourth, a survey was conducted by the Railway Department to construct a BG line from Moran to Dibrugarh covering a stretch of only 40 kilometers, but nothing has been sanctioned in this Budget. I urge upon the Government to allocate funds for this.

[Shri Anwar Hussain]

Fifth, Dhubri District, in my constituency, has 17 lakhs population. But as on today, there is not even a single effective railway line in this District which is very unfortunate. In the year 2002, due to a breach by the flood, railway line was closed. It was not restored due to the incompetency and inactiveness of the then NDA Government. In this Budget, I do not see any funds being allocated to resume this Dhubri-Fakiragram railway line. I, therefore, request the Ministry of Railways to take up the restoration of this railway line on a priority basis. It is very unfortunate that this District does not have even a single inch of railway network. Sixth, strategically and from the defence point of view, Rangia-Rangapara-Morkokcheleng railway line is very important and it should be converted into a BG line. It is a long pending demand of the people and I urge upon the Government to take it up on a priority basis.

Seventh, it is very gratifying to learn that the Government is taking up the Kumarghat-Agartala-Lumding-Silchar-Jiribam-Imphal project as a national project. Unless the work on the Lumding-Badarpur portion is completed on a priority basis, this national project cannot function. Therefore, the work on the Lumding-Badarpur should be taken up on a priority basis.

Eighth, in the last Budget, the Ministry of Railways promised that a rail from Guwahati to Delhi *via* Jogighopa would run. It is very unfortunate that though another Budget has been presented still that commitment of the earlier Budget has not been fulfilled. I, therefore, urge upon the Government to see that their commitment in the Budget is translated into action immediately. Ninth, it is disappointing that allocation made for the new Moinaguri-Jalpaiguri railway project, which was started a few years back, is a meagre Rs. 50 crore. If money is sanctioned in this way. It will take decades for the project to be completed. This matter should be considered.

Tenth, the North-Eastern region has no other means of transportation than the road network for transportation of goods. Therefore, express goods trains should be run from different parts of the country to more points in the North-East.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now. You have already crossed the time limit.

SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN: Sir, these are problems of the North-East. I am the third speaker from the Party.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your time is over.

SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN: Okay, Sir, I conclude my speech.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (Midnapore): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it was my expectation that during the debate on the Railway Budget, hon. Minister of Railways, Shri Lalu Prasad, would be present in the House all along. However, I must now thank not Laluji but Shri Velu who is present here. I think he will listen to me and ponder over the issues which I would try my level best to put forward.

I rise to support the positive aspects of the Railway Budget that is before us. At the same time, I would like to register my dissatisfaction on some issues which have not been mentioned in the Railway Budget and which have not been addressed.

Indian Railways might be the second in the world in respect of the size of its network, in respect of its passenger traffic, etc. Indian Railways is a powerful symbol of national integrity. This is the largest public sector utility in the country. This is the only public sector utility which can provide affordable means of passenger and freight movement in the country. In spite of development of roads like the East-West corridor, or South-North corridors or Golden Quadrilateral, there is an alternative to Railways.

The Railway Budget narrates the most welcome and praiseworthy achievements on the passenger and freight traffic front. Freight sector registered a growth of 7.67 per cent from the last year's target of 580 million tonnes to 600 million tonnes, surpassing the 10th Plan target two years before. Passenger traffic registered a growth of six per cent compared to the budget target of three per cent, a total of 8.3 per cent growth over the last year. There is a significant increase in internal generation during the current fiscal.

It is a good thing. I must compliment the Railway Minister for not increasing the passenger fares and freight charges. Unemployed youth who travel to attend interviews for selection to the Central Government and State Government jobs are given concession. Fifty per cent concession has been given in the second class fares to farmers and milk producers for attending training courses. This is all right. Seventy-five per cent concession is given to the school students. There is a provision for free transport of relief materials to the disaster affected areas during natural calamities. I would like to know as to why only 50 per cent concession of the normal tariff rate is

given for carrying dead bodies. He should allow free of cost for carrying dead bodies. Why is he giving only 50 per cent concession?

We have raised several times in this august House about the recruitment policy of the Railways. Earlier or existing recruitment policy is very wrong as it created havoc in different places. We witnessed as to what happened in Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra and other places. We demanded that at least recruitment of Group 'D' posts should not be done by the Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) but by the local units. It is all right. So, I welcome it. There are other aspects also for which we must thank the Railway Minister.

Sir, I have dissatisfaction in regard to the safety and security because meagre money has been allotted to the safety and security. They should have allotted more money for the security and safety as there is an increase in the number of accidents. What about the assurance given by the hon. Minister in the last Railway Budget about the recycling of the scrap iron? Nothing is mentioned in his Budget speech. It was stated that to abolish mafia in different areas, Railways is planning recycling of the scrap iron but this time in the Budget itself there is no mention of it.

Many things have been said in the earlier budget. It was said that free pass will be given to the spouse of the porter but it is not yet been implemented. I would like to mention specially all the Divisions in the South Eastern Railway, in general, and Kharagpur Division, in particular, where this has not been implemented. I do not know as to what happened in other zones.

In the speech of the Minister, it is correctly noted that with the untiring efforts of the lakhs of Railway employees, the fiscal and financial performance of Railways in the first nine months of the current financial year has been excellent. But what has been done for the employees? What is the strength of the employees? In the White Paper released by the Ministry of Railways in April, 2003, it is stated—there is need for more and more staff in the field commensurate with the increase in the infrastructure so that the basic goal of Railways serving the national economy and safety is not compromised. The Railway Board has become instrumental in reducing the staff strength from 18.7 lakh in 1999 to 15.1 lakh in 2002. It has been reducing right from 1996 to 2002. Therefore, reducing process is continuing. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA: I have got lot of points to make. I would not take much time.

Another point is about the land management. Lakhs and lakhs of people are staying in the Railway land. They are unauthorisedly staying there. They have no other place to stay. They are working in the Railways. They are related to the Railways. They are the construction workers of the Railways. They have been staying there from the time of the formation of the station. So far as land management is concerned, please make some provision for that. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time for your Party is over.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA: I am very thankful to the hon. Minister as he is going to introduce indigenous system of medicine in the Railways. Homeopathy and Ayurvedic doctors who are working in the Railway dispensaries are not recognised as regular doctors. Please do it. About the ratio of ROB, please review it. Almost all the State Governments are suffering due to financial constraints. This ratio should be reviewed and at least 75 per cent from the Railways and 25 per cent from the State Governments should be given. ...(*Interruptions*) My last point is this. In the last Railway Budget, hon. Railway Minister asked all of us to send our proposal to the Minister so that he could think over it. But this time, it has not happened. We are deprived of that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA: I have so many points to make. I will give the details later on. Please think about the masses who are living in the Railway land. Think about the passengers, think about the safety and security problem.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA (Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support the railway budget. I welcome this decision of not making any hike in the passenger fares and I appreciate the proposal to introduce new trains. However, I would like to say that my constituency, Hamirpur and Mahoba in Uttar Pradesh have been neglected in the railway budget. Through you, I want to apprise the hon. Minister of Railways that in 1997-98 Railways conducted a survey to lay 216 kilometer long rail line from Bhind to Mahoba via Urai and Raath

[Shri Rajnarayan Budholia]

and a 6 kilometer long line from Hamirpur Road to Hamirpur. At that time the cost of rail line from Hamirpur Road to Hamirpur was Rs. 15 crore and that of Bhind to Mahoba via Urai was Rs. 422 crore rupees. There is an immediate need to lay the said rail lines by getting the survey conducted in 2005-2006. Besides, there is a need to lay rail line from Hamirpur Road to Hamirpur, Harpalur, Madhya Pradesh via Vivar Muskara-Raath. Similarly there is a need for doubling and electrification of Jhansi-Manikpur railway line.

There is a need to construct overbridges at Raath-Jhansi Road crossing at railway station under Harpalpur, Madhya Pradesh on Jhansi-Manikpur Railway line, Supa railway crossing, Kidari crossing and Raath-Urai crossing on Jhansi-Kanpur rail line and there is a need to make arrangements for sanitation, electricity, pure drinking water, sheds, security, retiring room and toilets at the railway stations of Belataal, Kabrai, Mahoba, Ragaul and Sumerpur alongwith their beautification. Computerised railway reservation should be set up immediately in Raath city of Hamirpur. Arrangements should be made so that the route of the Utkal Express to Jagannath Puri should, once in a week, be changed to make it ply via Mahoba-Banda instead of its usual route from Jhansi via Bina for the convenience of the people of Hamirpur-Mahoba. The said change in route only makes a difference of 60 kilometers. Another issue is that there is no train from Mahoba to Lucknow. Arrangements should be made to run a new train. Tulsi Express and Chambal Express should be plied daily and no change should be made in their stoppage.

I thank him for giving stoppage to train no. 8203/8204 Kanpur-Durg biweekly Express at Ragaul railway station. A reserve quota of 60 berths should be provided for Ragaul station in Kanpur-Durg Express and a reserve quota of 40 berths should be provided for Mahoba station in Mahakaushal Express immediately and Mahoba station should be extended so that at least two trains can stand there.

Another demand is that Rewa-Delhi Express should be run once in a week via Banda-Ragaul, Sumerpur and Kanpur to Delhi and stoppage should be given at Sumerpur station. At present this train takes direct route of Kanpur-Delhi via Allahabad. The change in the route would result in addition of only a few kilometers of journey.

Lastly, I would like to thank the hon. Minister of Railways as he had promised to ply the proposed Hazrat Nijamuddin-Chitrakoot Sampark Kranti Express in 2004-

2005. I request him to start it soon and get the work relating to new Mahoba-Khajuraho rail line completed soon. I conclude with these words.

[English]

SHRI PRAHLAD JOSHI (Dharwad North): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is being very much spread that 'the fare has not increased and the freight has not increased much has been done and it is a good budget.' But the most important thing is that what kind of services we are providing.

If we take the figures, from 1951 to 2005-06, the volume of passenger traffic as well as the goods transportation has increased seven to eight times. But I am sorry to say that the wagon carriages, during this period, has not even doubled.

In my State, a large amount of iron ore is transported. But I am sorry to submit that the Railways are not able to provide wagons for these iron ore to be transported. This is the state of affairs!

Sir, the annual outlay during 1991 was Rs. 1,632 crore and this time for 2005-06, the annual outlay is around 48 per cent, that is, Rs. 7.343 crore.

[Translation]

No provision has been made to increase internal resources which is not a good thing.

[English]

But there is no increase shown the mobilisation of funds from internal sources.

Sir, as regards Karnataka, I think, Karnataka has never been deprived as far as the Railway Budget is concerned. A total of six new trains have been given to Karnataka. But the thing is that out of these six trains, three trains will be on track only after the gauge conversion is completed. But I think, till the next one and half years, this gauge conversion is not going to be completed.

As far as safety is concerned, there is a lot of problem. It was mentioned last time that gauge conversion between Gadag-Bijapur would be taken up. When we went to the Railway Minister and the Railway officials, they said that there is a cost-sharing problem. The point is that ultimately people are suffering, and the Railways are losing revenue. Due to cost sharing, if the passengers

are not given services, what is the use? What is the fault of the people? It may be the fault of the State Government or the Railway Ministry. Ultimately, this particular section has become a metre-gauge island.

For the last ten years, that is not being connected. During the NDA regime, there was some improvement and money was also allocated. But now again, we are being deprived. An amount of only Rs. 15 crore is allocated. I would request the hon. Railway Minister to immediately allocate more money, whether Karnataka Government gives its share or not, so that this gauge conversion is completed.

As far as Ankola new railway line project is concerned, this is going on for some time. Only an amount of Rs. 5 crore or Rs. 10 crore or Rs. 15 crore is allocated. Another problem here is that the Environment and Forests Ministry has rejected the proposal. The MPs from Karnataka met the Environment and Forests Ministry officials and the Railway Board has also written a letter to them, so that it is reopened. After the meeting of our delegation, the Environment and Forests Ministry said that it would reopen it, but so far, the Karnataka Government and the Railway Board—the South Western Railway—have not given a fresh proposal or presentation to the Forest Advisory Committee. Due to this, clearance is not given so far and people do not know whether this project is ultimately going to be cleared or not. In this, according to me, the Railways have invested more than Rs. 60 crore. After investing Rs. 60 crore the South Western Railway and the Karnataka Government are not bothered to give momentum. The Forest Advisory Committee is telling that if a fresh presentation is given, that project will be cleared. But it is most unfortunate that in the first meeting which was held on 25th October 2004, the Karnataka Government officials and the South Western Railway officials went to the Forest Advisory Committee and asked for adjournment. So far, they have not given a fresh proposal or presentation in the case of Ankola railway project. So, this project is getting delayed and Budget allocation is also not being made.

As far as new Bijapur-Bangalore railway line was concerned, it was demanded by the people. Last time, the Railway Minister had sent us a letter asking for the proposal. We also had sent a letter. In that letter, we had sent many proposals. We were under the impression that since only one new train was introduced last time, this time they would consider other proposals and they

would be included in the Budget. But it is most unfortunate that they are not included now. There are other specific proposals like Kottur-Harihar new railway line. ...*(Interruptions)* I will conclude. I will give the last point and present it or lay it on the Table of the House.

Totally, Karnataka has 20 railway projects coming under the jurisdiction of South Western Railway and South Central Railway.

According to the present estimate made by the Railways, around Rs. 4293 crore are required to be invested. Going by the rate at which investment is being made, it will take more than 20 years to complete the existing projects, leave alone the new projects. This time Rs. 20 crore have been given. Out of this, Rs. 15 crore have been given for Gadag-Sholapur project and Rs. 5 crore for Ankola Railway project. Out of a total of Rs. 4293 crore, only Rs. 253 crore have been given. Last year Rs. 300 crore were given.

They have spoken about transparency in purchase and sale. I do not want to elaborate on this. As far as transparency, especially in purchases is concerned, in my area of Hubli Division, a few contractors are there. Only they give the tenders and they do not allow the new persons to participate in the tender process. This rigging is going on for the last so many years. This has not been curtailed. We have requested the officers to look into it but nothing is being done. There is a lot of corruption in this.

Recently, a tender was awarded for the supply of ballast material worth Rs. 4 crore. In this tender process, L-1 was Mr. Kini and L-2 was Mr. Veer Raju. The second tenderer quoted Rs. 39 lakh more. Even then, he was awarded the tender. I want that there should be a CBI inquiry into this matter.

As far as the State of Karnataka is concerned, a lot of injustice is being done and especially northern Karnataka is totally neglected.

With these words, I would once again request that a CBI inquiry should be made into this matter.

"Sir, it is quite vociferously claimed by the Railway Minister plan size of the Budget is about Rs. 15,000/- crores. It indicates just about 5.5% more than the previous years plan investment. I take into consideration the inflation which was about 6% last year, the red plan

..... This part of the speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Prahlad Joshi]

investment has gone down alarmingly which alone suggests it is not a progressive Budget of UPA vision. There is no constructive mention about a clear cut policy to be adopted for safety and security, which is indicated by a meagre Rs. 3500 crore provision made this year. The previous regime had established Rs. 24,000 crores Railway Special Safety Fund to be spent till the end of 2007 and the present Rs. 3500/-crores accounting just 12% to 13% of it. It is a clear indication this Budget has not taken the safety of the passengers and the Railways. Here again, I am constrained to say that the Government is more worried about the security and safety of Railway Minister than the Railway and travelling public.

Further I would like to ask the Railway Minister through you Sir as he has claimed Rs. 4,800/-crores Budgetary support is taken from the Railways itself, the freight tariffs and passenger fares remaining stagnant, how it is going to be accomplished, the Railway Minister owes an explanation. It indicates that the Railway Minister had upper most in the mind was elections that he may be seeing all round the corner. But what turned out to be in the results of Bihar Elections is already the history. This reminds me of Mahatmaji once said "Section of the voters in our country may be illiterate but certainly are not unintelligent". Hence, Sir, there is nothing in the Budget that can excite the people.

After this birds view of Budget as a whole now let us look to what Karnataka as State is enthused. From the point of view of Karnataka it is quite disappointing. The investments show a decline with the Railways bringing down the outlays for the State to mere Rs. 156.43 crores. It looks as though the Railway Minister has not seen the Karnataka in the Indian Map. I like to draw the attention of Railway Minister one by one through you Sir.

Of the seven gauge conversion projects excepting few lines most of the works are at initial stages and no sufficient Budgetary allocation is made. The reasons for the snails pace of these works are due to non-functioning of cost sharing agreements. I strongly ask the Railway Minister through you Sir, why the Railway is not serious in realizing the practicality of these agreements and why Railway is avoiding the speedy implementation of these projects under the plea that the concerned State Government has not paid its share. Is it not the full responsibility of Railway to complete these projects with the proper fund raising arrangements with State Governments. Otherwise the Railways will be losing the

revenues besides the people of the region being put to great hardships. This should be seriously looked into by the Government in view of the fact that the Bagalkot-Gadag region becoming metre gauge island bring the developmental activities to a complete standstill in the region.

Once again the Karnataka State is completely neglected in Track Doubling projects. Bangalore-Hubli Track Doubling is a long-standing demand for the last many years. Once again this demand is not given its due attention. Even the Bangalore-Tumkur Doubling project as meagre of Rs. 16/-crores is provided. Compared to the Doubling projects taken up in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and other northern States Karnataka is not only let down seems to be treated step-motherly. I would like to draw attention of Railway Minister through you, Sir, a newly formed SWR zone having the administrative jurisdiction over most the part of the State is not enthusiastic in sending the proposals of this projects and convinced the Railways for speedy approval and implementation of the projects. People of the region are having apprehensions about the Hubli city maintaining its status as headquarters of SWR. Owing to the attitudes of its senior officers reportedly making strategical moves to see that somehow SWR is shifted back to Bangalore.

Considering the very encouraging factor of the State contributing nearly 12% of the traffic generation, the number of new trains announced for the State in sheer rejection of demands for many more important new trains. There was a long-standing demand for Bijapur-Pandharapur-Shimoga-Hospet, Gadag-Sholapur via Guntkal, Mangalore-Karwar and direct trains from Hubli-Mumbai, Hubli-Puna and one more night train from Hubli-Bangalore. It is quite disgusting for the people of this region. I request the Railway Minister to run Yeshwantpur Nizamuddin Samparka Kranti Express Train via Hubli and Belgaum with necessary halts instead of the present route. None of these demands is taken note by the Railway Minister.

I like to express my concerns through you, Sir, about the treatment of northern part of the State. From the north Karnataka point of view, it is hardly anything to feel happy.

Acquiring the land shifting of Railway Good shed in Hubli. The Railway Minister had discussed about the role of RLDs for surplus Railway land. It is ironical to mention here that 100 acres of land was promised by the Government of Karnataka to Railways for shifting Hubli Goodshed which if materialized provides more space for

Hubli station to be upgraded and modernisation is neglected. It is learnt despite the proposal sent to State Government by SWR for handing over of the land, there is no specific assurance given by the State with regard to the proposal. Hubli being the headquarters of SWR needs to be given its due attention for upgradation of Railway Station. Presently there are only three platforms in the station which is not at all enough for the number of trains running through the station. In this regard, I press the Government through you, Sir, to take the serious note of this fact and to take immediate action for transfer of land.

The long-standing demands of Davangere people like upgradation of Davangere-Chikjaajur Railway Stations, over bridge in Davangree city new railway line from Davangere-Bangalore via Chitradurga, Hiriur-Sira Railway level crossing between Harihar and Davangere.

In Karnataka many level crossings are being closed for reasons known to Railway leading to a lot of inconvenience for the farmers to reach the respective lands. In this regard, I urge the Railways to formulate a clear cut policy.

An attractive package was announced for improvement of a Century old Hubli Railway Workshop way back in 1997. But this Budget has no definite proposals in this regard."

[Translation]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH (Hissar): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to welcome the railway budget, 2005-2006 presented by the hon'ble Minister of Railways, Shri Lalu Prasad. Shri Lalu Prasad had also presented the last year's rail budget. He had told the people of the country and the Members of the House that the next rail budget would be good for the unemployed youth, farmers and labourers. Therefore, I express my gratitude towards Shri Lalu Prasad and his associates, because the facilities provided to the unemployed youth in this rail budget have never been given before. The people in the former NDA

Government used to say that they had done a lot for the development of railways. But I would like to tell my colleagues that the kind of concessions provided to the educated unemployed youth going for job interviews, farmers and milk vendors have never been given before. People from neighbouring areas of all the metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai etc. go there to sell milk. They cannot supply milk upto 100-150 kilometers by cycle. The UPA Government is the first Government which has encouraged them by providing concessions to them.

The former NDA Government never provided any facility to the farmers and milk producers. Our Railway Minister has provided concession to middle and lower class school children going on educational tours. The way the UPA Government have encouraged school children by giving concession in rail fares is highly commendable.

19.00 hrs.

The children of rich families can be sent on an all India tour by their parents, but this Government have done a commendable job by giving 75 percent concession to students residing in rural areas. ...(*Interruptions*) I will continue my speech tomorrow.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Jai Prakash, if you are not concluding today, then you may continue your speech tomorrow.

The House stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow at 11 A.M.

19.01 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, March 11, 2005/Phalguna 20, 1926 (Saka).

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