

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(English Version)

Thirteenth Session
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)




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LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Monday, March 17, 2008/Phalguna 27, 1929 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock

[Mr. Chairman (SHRI MOHAN SINGH) in the Chair]

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Mr. Chairman, Sir, in Indo-Tibet. ...(Interruptions)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): Sir, more than 100 persons have been killed in Tibet. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Malhotraji, you raise it during Zero Hour.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You will be given an opportunity after the Question Hour.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Question Hour continue. It would be taken up during the Zero Hour.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, we have also given notice. It is a very important issue. It should be taken up in 'Zero Hour'.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: What will happen after that? ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would be taken up in Zero Hour. It will be taken up after the Question Hour.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ANANT KUMAR (Bangalore, South): Sir, I have given notice for suspension of the Question Hour. ...(Interruptions) It should be taken up immediately. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, under the rules, there is no provision for suspension of Question Hour. It is my

compulsion. I will take it up during Zero Hour. It is a matter involving human rights. It will be taken up.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sumanji, please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

YOGI ADITYA NATH (Gorakhpur): Sir, please listen to me for two minutes. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Swamiji, please sit down. Try to raise the matter during Zero Hour. Nothing is being recorded. Nothing is being recorded except Question Hour proceedings.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You wait for an Hour. Whatever is spoken without permission will not go on record. Now the Question Hour starts.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: It will be taken up during Zero Hour, after one hour.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA (Hoshiarpur): I had also given notice for suspension of Question Hour.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If everything is suspended, who will sit here?

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Sir, it is a very important matter. If there is no employment then. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You will be heard during Zero Hour.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Sir, will you allow us during Zero Hour?

[English]

I have given notice for suspension of Question Hour. It is a very important issue and it should be discussed by the House.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are a senior Member. If you are not heard, who else will be heard. You, please take your seat.

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Sir, I also have a submission to make. ...(Interruptions)

* Not recorded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, it will be heard during Zero Hour.

Question No. 241, Shri Rakesh Singh.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Share of Public Sector Telecom Companies

*241. SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any concrete steps during the last year and in 2007-08 to improve the share of Public Sector Companies in providing Basic and Mobile Telephone Services in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the house.

Statement

The total number of telephone connections of Public Sector Companies have increased from 61.07 million as on 31/03/2006 to 76.46 million as on 31/01/2008. However, their market share has declined steadily during the last few years because of increased competition in the market. The following concrete steps have been taken to improve the market share of Public Sector Companies:

- i) Expansion of Cellular Mobile Network and Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) network to overcome the network congestion and take care of ever growing demand.
- ii) Deployment of mobile network along all the Highways to give incidental coverage to large parts of rural areas.
- iii) In order to give more attention to telecom services in rural areas, Government has undertaken the following Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) schemes:-
 - Provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in 66,822 uncovered villages.
 - Setting up of 7,871 sharable Infrastructure sites in phase-I and plan for 11,049 sites in phase-II.
 - Subsidy support for Rural Direct Exchange lines (RDELs).
- iv) Expansion of Broadband network in all the major cities and induction of broadband in about 1000 rural blocks.

v) BSNL and MTNL are being permitted usage of dual technology spectrum.

vi) Providing number of Value Added Services for both mobile and landline subscribers such as news, songs, astrology, e-ticketing, Short Message Service (SMS), voice SMS, internet, Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) etc. in line with emerging trends.

vii) BSNL/MTNL are regularly reviewing their tariff and introducing new plans for various products and services so as to make them competitive and customer oriented.

[Translation]

SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the reply given to me, a mention has been made about the share of the Public Sector Companies in the telecommunication sector. The reply does mention about the various facilities, but is silent about the reasons for declining share of the said companies.

Sir, through you, I would like to say that most of the countries have a national service which is generally better than the service provided by private operators but in our country, the quality of BSNL is deteriorating continuously. Firstly it is hard to make a call through BSNL and even if one is able to call through its network, call dropping is a common problem. Through you, I would like to apprise the House that recently Railways has decided to surrender all its Sim Cards and it is going to surrender more than one lakh Sim Cards.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put the question.

SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Sir, all this is happening due to lack of network optimization. I would like to ask the hon'ble Minister as to when the work of network optimization should be done at periodic intervals; whether any work of network optimization has been done recently? If so, the level up to which it has been done.

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not agree to the hon'ble Member's assertion that we have lost all our market shares. It is true that we have lost share in landline because people have been opting for mobile phones. However so far as wireless system is concerned, our share was 21.23 per cent as on 31 March, 2006 which increased to 24.13 per cent as on March 2007. Hon'ble Member has raised a very valid question about procurement and optimization. Alongwith Public Sector Enterprises, BSNL, there are several private operators providing the service. I am of the view that there are certain practical difficulties due to the fact that we have to follow certain rules. A private operator with a single call can change all its orders,

tenders and the entire paraphernalia in a day if there is any change in demand pattern. However, we have to follow a defined procedure, we are bound by rules and depend on the movement of files; We are accountable to Parliament, answerable to CAG and vigilance as well. Keeping in view all these things, procurement of equipments has been delayed. I would like to state the reason for delay. BSNL opened a tender for approximately four and a half crore new telephone lines in March, 2006. Tender of one company was rejected. That company moved the court. The Court granted stay and ordered that we cannot invite tenders till the court allows us to do so. In April, 2007 that case was withdrawn. Thereafter, paraphernalia was created and in November we placed a new order. But regarding the period about which the hon'ble Member has asked the question he would be happy to know that MTNL and BSNL, which are public sector companies of Government of India have released one and half crore new connections during this period. It is true that there is decline in our landline connections but it is not true that only surrenders are taking place, however, at the same time, new connections are also being released. Overall, there is a decline in our landline connections. We have issued more than one and half crore mobile connections. As soon as we receive new equipments which was delayed due to rules and regulations of the Government and Court's ruling, we will optimize it and try to improve our services by making them more efficient. ...*(Interruptions)*

I want to mention one more thing that TRAI, which is a regulator and quality benchmark of services has not given us good marks in all spheres in its report submitted in the month of September. In some cases it has praised us and in some others it has pointed out our shortcomings but overall in comparison to private companies we have not been shown far behind. TRAI is an independent body which regulates it.

SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have not got satisfactory reply to my question however, I ask another supplementary question. When GSM technology has been introduced in the World, India was the first country which had adopted that technology, however, we slipped back to fifth or sixth position in its implementation. Today, there are 60-70 countries in the world which are adopting Three G technology while China is going to adopt 4 G technology. ...*(Interruptions)* and we are still moving slowly toward 3 G technology. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put your question.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, my question is related to it. Without mentioning it my question cannot stand. My question is: why there is unnecessary delay in the

allocation of spectrum for 3 G technology? Is it happening to give benefit to the private companies? If it is not so, then whether the Government will issue any statement in regard to fixing any time frame for it?

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to mention about the difference between 2G and 3G to the House. It is about third and second generation mobile network. It is about providing more facilities in the facilities which are being offered now. But I do not hesitate to say that most of the people of our country still use voice and SMS facility. Only a few people talk about 3G. Our first and foremost responsibility is to make telephone facility available to the common man in the country. Keeping this in view, we are working on 3G technology.

As far as spectrum allocation and issuing licence is concerned, the question is not related to the basic question. However, through you, I want to inform the House and the hon'ble member that the Government has decided to allocate spectrum for 3G. In a way, we would auction spectrum through tender and bids. The Government will allocate it to the private operator who gives more money but as far as facilities for common man are concerned, today, they are still in need of 2G. This is our thrust area and we will provide this facility. MTNL has also planned about WIMAX in the year 2008-09. Alongwith it, MTNL has also proposed to release seven and half lakh new telephone connections for which we are trying our best. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have not talked about this. Instead, I have only talked about the time limit. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have asked your two questions, so you cannot ask any more question. Nothing is going on record, so you please sit down.

...*(Interruptions)**

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: It is not a fact that the public sector telecom companies' share has increased during these years; rather, the total share of BSNL has reduced from 20 per cent to 17 per cent. Moreover, BSNL is not getting the entire USO Fund for providing telephone connections in rural areas.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ask your question.

...*(Interruptions)*

* Not recorded.

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I am coming to the question. A question has been raised and I have also written a letter to the hon. Minister of Railways Shri Lalu Ji, asking him why one lakh GSM mobile connections under CUG to Indian Railways have been given to Airtel. Due to our request, in the Eastern Railway, 10,000 connections were given to BSNL. Now, the Eastern Railway has decided to hand over these 10,000 connections to Airtel. The public sector companies should be supported by the Indian Railways also.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put your question.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Another fact is this. For this year 2007-2008, out of 80 lakh mobile connections, BSNL is able to provide only eight lakh connections.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are yourself providing information to him. What question are you asking?

...(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): To Which Minister are you asking this question?

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I am asking to both you and him. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put your question.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: May I know from the hon. Minister, in order to increase the share of BSNL, whether the Government will provide sufficient assistance from the USO Fund by providing various equipments which are not available with the BSNL?

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put question. This is the problem.

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I would like to know whether such steps will be taken by the Government so that the share of BSNL increases from 17 per cent today to some substantial percentage.

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD: Sir, the Government is taking all steps to increase the share of public sector telephone companies, both BSNL and MTNL. As I have said, we have recently passed an order and very soon we will be asking for tender for another 4.5 million telephone connections both in BSNL and MTNL put together. I would like to inform the House through you that in recent times there is a very dangerous tendency. People with vested interests are trying or doing unwanted things, like cutting the cables of BSNL and MTNL. Law and order is not in the hands of Department of Telecom. So, I would request the hon. Members of this House to ask their respective State Governments to help BSNL and MTNL in this regard because law and order is in the hands of the State Government.

[Translation]

SHRI GURUDAS GUPTA: Sir, the hon'ble Minister delivers a very good speech. I appreciate his oratory skills. In India, the share of public sector is declining.

[English]

He has admitted that it is declining steadily.

[Translation]

We should be told what measures are to be taken after three years or five years. What are the reasons of the irregularities? What are the reasons for the regularities others are committing. We are not involved in it.

[English]

All these are lame excuses to defend a palpable collusion. I charge that all this is done to cover up a palpable collusion between. ...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put your question. This is not the time to level charges.

[English]

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: I am coming to it, I will demand an inquiry. I am saying that there is collusion between many of the people who are there. I do not know their names. I would like to know whether the Government will agree to conduct an inquiry to find out whether there is an attempt to scuttle the public sector to give benefit to the private sector. I would like to know whether the Government will agree to commence an impartial inquiry without sharing the blame on telephone authority and State Governments.

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD: Sir, I am in total disagreement with the aspersion cast by the hon. Member on the officers and personnel of BSNL or MTNL.

[Translation]

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Obviously, we will be in disagreement. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, you have expressed your views; now the hon'ble Minister is expressing his views.

[English]

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD: Sir, I have already admitted in my statement that the share of public sector undertaking in Telecom field is reducing. But I have ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon'ble Minister has a right to express his views, you please sit down.

[English]

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD: But, I have separated the mobile phones and the land-line phones. In wireless phones, we have increased the share and in land-line phones it is decreased and that is why I have asked for the help from the hon. Members of this House.

[Translation]

Foodgrains Production in the Eleventh Plan

+

*242. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":
SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has made any assessment regarding the expected demand and production of foodgrains in the country during the Eleventh Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has worked out the modalities to ensure adequate production of foodgrains;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Table below presents the projected demand and estimated production based on the growth rate as observed in the past and the new initiatives taken by the Government:

Year	Foodgrains (Million Tonnes)	
	Projected Demand	Projected Production
2007-08	214.02	219.32*
2011-12	234.26	230.01#

* Estimated.

Takes into account the targets of the National Food Security Mission.

The production of foodgrains during 2007-08 is estimated at 219.32 million tonnes (as per 2nd advance estimates released on 7th February 2008) and the availability of foodgrains for the year 2007-08 will be more than the demand by about five million tonnes. It is expected that except for pulses the country would remain self-sufficient in foodgrains during the 11th Plan period.

(c) to (e) In order to increase the production of rice, wheat and pulses, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme "National Food Security Mission" (NFSM) has been launched in the country from Rabi 2007-08. It aims at adding the production of rice by 10 million tonnes, wheat by 8 million tonnes and pulses by 2 million tonnes by the end of the Eleventh Plan, i.e., by 2011-12 through area increase and productivity enhancement in targeted districts. Besides, the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) with an objective to incentives the States to increase public investment in agricultural and allied sector has been launched. The RKVY aims at achieving 4% annual growth in the agriculture sector during the Eleventh Five Year Plan by ensuring a holistic development of agriculture and allied sector.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has admitted in his written reply that the 'National Food Security Mission' has been launched to augment food production. He has announced to start work in targeted districts under this Mission. I want to say that agriculture is the mainstay of India.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put your question.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': I will put my question too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is here to reply and you are here to put your question. Therefore, please put your question.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': Unless I give the background, the question will not be clear and a right answer can not be expected.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question hour is not for preparing background.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': He has talked about initiating this work in targeted districts. I want to say

that today agriculture has not remained a remunerative vocation and people are migrating from villages. Therefore, there is no sense of targeted districts. Therefore, there is no sense in taking up work in targeted districts under the National Food Security Mission. The hon'ble Minister has admitted in his reply that production has to be increased by 5 million tones in the year 2007-2008 but it will decrease by 4 million tonnes by the year 2011-2012. If this situation continues to prevail, then agricultural production will come down and it will become unremunerative. I want to know from the hon. Minister as to what is the basis for selection of targeted districts and the number of States alongwith names of districts which have been considered as target districts by him?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Mr. Chairman, Sir, essentially, the basis of targeted districts is crop producing states, and in every state crop growing districts are limited. There are three items in the National Food Security Mission – first is wheat, second is rice and third is pulses. These items are not produced in every district of India. As, for example, wheat is not cultivated in every district. It is not cultivated in coastal states like Kerala. Therefore, there is no point in cultivation of wheat at these places. While formulating this programme we have paid attention to those districts of various states which lag behind in wheat cultivation vis-a-vis state average and national average of wheat production. Such districts have been included in this scheme in order to bring them at par with the national average so that attention could be paid to them. Thirdly, the area of a district under cultivation should be 50 per cent for wheat or paddy. This criteria has been fixed for those districts. As far as rice is concerned, 11 districts in Andhra Pradesh, 13 districts in Assam, in Bihar. ...*(Interruptions)* 18 districts, 5 districts in Jharkhand, 6 districts in Maharashtra, 7 districts in Karnataka, 9 districts in Madhya Pradesh, 12 districts in Orissa and 10 districts in Chhattisgarh produce rice. Tamil Nadu also has 5 rice producing districts. They have been selected on this basis.

[English]

Districts having 50,000 hectares area under rice productivity, less than the State average, less productivity has been identified. These are the criteria. Similarly, if you want, I can give you lists of wheat and pulses also.

[Translation]

List of districts is very long therefore, I lay it on the Table of the House.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Not a single district of Bengal is there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You should approach the Minister.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Eight districts of Bengal are there.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' : The National Food Security Mission one is to envisages two ways to boost agricultural development in the country - one is to increase food production and second to increase food productivity. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the area of arable land in our country and the area to be made arable by the end of this five year plan i.e. 2011-2012? Besides, what is the rate of productivity today?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It has been given in Economic Survey, please go through it.

[English]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: I will require a separate notice for this.

[Translation]

SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Mr. Chairman, Sir, at present, the growth rate of agriculture is around 2.7 percent. The National Agriculture Development Commission has initiated different schemes to achieve annual growth rate of four per cent during the 11th five year plan.

Our objective in the 11th plan is to increase the production of horticulture and fruits alongwith promotion of their export to other countries of the world. For exporting the fruits to developed countries, these need to be treated by boiling water at 45 degree temperature. Saurashtra region of my state, Gujarat, produces high yield of mangoes. About 8 lakh metric tonnes mangoes have been produced during the year 2003-04.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This Question is about food security and you are talking about production of mangoes.

SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: I am talking about agricultural produce only. When yield is high and they do not get maximum price then how their economic development can be possible?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can give a separate notice for it. This is not related to this question. For it you should give a notice separately.

SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Sir, I had talked to the hon'ble Minister and drawn his attention towards it. I want to know that since mango yield in Saurashtra is about 8 lakh metric tonnes and whether there is a provision for its

export in the 11th Five year plan. It has to be given treatment before export but there is not a single treatment plant in the whole of Gujarat. It is in Maharashtra only. I want to ask as to what steps the Government is going to take for installation of such a plant in Gujarat?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon'ble Minister may give the information if he has it.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: No. Sir, this question is restricted to demand and production of foodgrains in the 11th Plan period. The hon'ble Member has asked a question that there is a high yield of mangoes in his region and he wants to export that yield. His complaint is that there is no treatment plant in his region to facilitate treatment required for exporting it. The Government of India has introduced a separate scheme named the National Horticulture Mission. Under that scheme facilities are given on the lines as provided for plantation programme. Similar provision for financial assistance has been made by the Government of India—be it for marketing, development of basic infrastructure—whether it is a cold house or treatment plant or other things related to export. If such a proposal comes from that area then I will be happy to provide assistance for that proposal.

[English]

ADV. SURESH KURUP: Sir, Q. 248 is of similar nature. So can you club it?

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN : No.

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, he told during the year 2007-08 that projected production is more than the demand. He must be aware that even during this year we have imported wheat for supplying foodgrains. I would like to know, through you, from the hon'ble Minister the target and measures taken for 11th Five Year Plan. Recently it has come to my notice which may be wrong that our need for foodgrains will be 247 million tonnes by the year 2010 and 296 million tonnes by the year 2020. Today, only 40 per cent agricultural land is covered under irrigation and the area of cultivable land is decreasing due to various factors, be it SEZ or any other factor. The irrigated area is decreasing continuously and we have not been able to increase it. The demand of foodgrains is increasing constantly. The hon'ble Minister has not given any blueprint in his reply so that we come to know whether we would actually be able to meet the demand or we have to depend on other countries for the supply of foodgrains for the coming 10 to 20 years. The hon'ble Minister has accepted this in regard to oilseeds but we also have to accept the same in regard to wheat. The hon'ble Minister is a very capable

person and knows about the agriculture system of the entire country. I want that he should formulate such a scheme that in 2011, our production remains adequate and we do not need to import foodgrains from abroad. Can the hon'ble Minister make a promise that we will not import wheat at all from abroad?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: As far as wheat, Paddy and Rice are concerned, we have already chalked out a programme according to which we have decided to produce rice and wheat as per their year-wise requirement by the year 2011-2012 and we hope we would be able to produce that much. Now the question arises why do we import from abroad? To import from abroad is not a matter of happiness, rather it is our compulsion to do that. We import when there is inadequate stock with the Government or there is some problem or we have drought situation. If we do not have any strategic reserve in such an emergency, perhaps the country will have to face a grave situation. In such a situation we have a clear-cut policy that we should pay attention towards the measures to increase productivity as well as area of irrigation. It is a fact that we have only 40 per cent irrigated area but if you see this year's budget you will find that such a provision has never been made. The purpose behind it is that we want to increase area of irrigation. We have included all such steps in our programmes that are necessary to increase the productivity. Despite that if the position of crop is not up to the mark the country would have to face a grave problem. Therefore, we do not want to import but if required it is also the duty of the Government to solve the problem of starvation.

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Sir, decline in food production particularly of cereals and pulses has been widely accepted by several quarters and that is because of the neglect of agriculture by both the previous as well as this Government. It is being said in the reply that the projected production of food grains will be 219.32 million tonnes. But it is estimated that the Rabi production will be far too less and that there will be decline in the availability of food grains. May I know from the hon. Minister, will the Government again be compelled to import food grains?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: I would like to make one thing very clear that it is very difficult to accept the charge that this Government is neglecting agriculture. That is not the factual position. I can explain the total production of food grains. In the year 2004-05, the total production of food grains in the country was 198 million tonnes; in 2005-06

[Translation]

it has improved by ten million tonnes and production has gone to 208 million tonnes. In 2006-07 the production

was 217 million tonnes i.e. 19 million tonnes more than the previous year. In 2007-08 the production has reached 219.32, it means the production has increased by 21 million tonnes. Clearly, the production is increasing every year but it is also evident that production of pulses and cereals, especially in-rain fed areas is not as much as it should have been. Farmers do not grow pulses in irrigated areas, they grow it in rainfed areas. Hence, production of both is less. If we concentrate on developing a new variety, the production will increase and the problem will be solved. As far as import is concerned, I have made it clear that we do not like to import but when the problem of food security arises, the Government has to do something.

Textiles Production

[English]

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*243. SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:
SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of labourers/workers engaged in the textile industry in the country during each of the last five years and thereafter, till date, State-wise;

(b) whether the textile production has increased during the said period giving a boost to its ancillary industries; and

(c) if so, the details of the production, export and growth rate in each year of the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Information in respect of employment in cotton/ Man-made fibre Textile Mills is at Annexure-I and for Powerlooms sector is at Annexure-II. Statewise and yearwise information in respect of unorganised sectors like Handlooms is not maintained.

(b) and (c) The production of textiles items and the percentage change, as compared to the previous year, for the last five years is at Annexure-III. The details of export of textiles items and percentage change, as compared to the previous year for the last five years is at Annexure-IV.

Annexure-I

Employment in Cotton/ Man-made Fibre Textiles Mills (Non-SSI) consisting of Spinning Non-SSI and Composite Mills

(In Nos.)

States	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Andhra Pradesh	38,059	36,237	36,528	36,580	36,842	34,611
Assam	4,080	4,046	4,046	4,046	4,046	3,955
Bihar	3,189	2,771	2,771	2,771	2,396	2,350
Chhattisgarh	2,461	1,225	1,225	1,225	1,225	1,225
Delhi	1,318	1,318	1,318	1,318	0	0
Goa	72	72	72	72	72	72
Gujarat	165,570	101,136	99,657	95,274	94,332	72,993
Haryana	21,931	19,117	18,880	18,722	13,226	13,721
Himachal Pradesh	14,077	13,628	13,292	13,527	13,923	13,698
Jammu & Kashmir	4,158	3,776	3,861	5,798	5,142	6,607
Jharkhand	712	707	707	707	707	707
Karnataka	37,088	29,578	29,478	29,429	27,142	27,131
Kerala	16,799	15,998	16,098	14,600	14,096	13,462

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Madhya Pradesh	58,069	49,902	49,568	48,544	48,624	49,777
Maharashtra	180,682	169,049	164,859	158,098	148,700	111,927
Manipur	350	350	350	350	350	350
Orissa	16,080	16,080	16,108	16,108	16,108	15,196
Punjab	59,852	52,507	52,916	55,318	57,649	53,424
Rajasthan	57,970	55,469	55,039	55,398	58,053	61,300
Tamil Nadu	199,353	194,903	192,917	198,973	210,598	216,486
Uttar Pradesh	70,110	70,660	68,028	58,387	55,156	54,355
Uttaranchal	3,228	3,333	3,333	3,447	3,644	2,148
West Bengal	38,006	36,160	36,075	34,284	32,178	32,045
Union Territories						
Dadra Nagar Haveli	2,251	2,307	2,307	2,350	2,356	2,463
Daman and Diu	180	180	180	180	180	180
Pondicherry	7,672	7,662	7,559	7,377	6,675	6,411
Grand Total	1,003,317	888,171	877,170	862,883	853,420	796,594

Annexure-II**Statewise employment in Powerloom sector**

(In Nos.)

Sl.No.	State	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Andhra Pradesh	109,940	110,035	110,436	110,953	111,648	112,404
2	Assam	6,815	6,815	6,815	6,815	6,815	6,815
3	Bihar	7,235	7,235	7,235	7,235	7,235	7,235
4	Goa	305	305	305	305	305	305
5	Gujarat	795,658	801,009	805,922	806,807	807,527	807,882
6	Haryana	24,705	24,705	24,753	24,788	24,803	24,833
7	Himachal Pradesh	3,653	3,653	3,653	3,653	3,653	3,653
8	Jammu and Kashmir	163	163	163	163	163	163
9	Karnataka	204,580	204,672	204,672	204,672	204,705	204,725
10	Kerala	6,758	6,828	6,828	6,970	6,980	6,980
11	Madhya Pradesh	113,995	166,915	189,335	216,853	235,360	261,317
12	Maharashtra	1,827,362	2,092,912	2,150,707	2,202,159	2,286,379	2,503,159

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13	Orissa	8,298	8,298	8,303	8,303	8,303	8,303
14	Punjab	59,015	59,015	59,050	59,050	59,050	59,050
15	Rajasthan	79,875	80,623	80,772	83,105	83,215	83,660
16	Tamil Nadu	800,489	835,929	914,492	933,801	944,937	953,712
17	Uttar Pradesh	164,834	164,835	164,910	164,930	164,974	164,983
18	West Bengal	10,903	10,933	11,663	11,828	12,376	13,663
19	Delhi	2,755	2,755	2,755	2,755	2,755	2,755
20	Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0	0
Union Territory							
21	Chandigarh	105	105	105	105	105	105
22	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	2,325	2,325	2,405	2,405	2,405	2,405
23	Pondicherry	2,075	2,075	2,075	2,075	2,075	2,075
24	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		4,231,843	4,592,140	4,757,383	4,859,730	4,975,770	5,230,182

Annexure-III*Production of Textiles Items*

Item	Unit	2002- 03	2003- 04	% change	2004- 05	% change	2005- 06	% change	2006- 07	% change	April-Jan		
											2007- 08	2006- 07	% change
Cotton*	Lakh bales	136	179	32	243	36	241	-0.8	280#	16	-	-	-
Man Made Fibre Yarn	Mn. Kg.	914	953	4	1023	7	968	-5	1139	18	1047	952	10
Filament yarn	Mn. Kg.	1100	1118	2	1109	-1	1179	6	1370	16	1260	1137	11
Spun yarn	Mn. Kg.	3081	3052	-1	3223	6	3458	7	3813	10	3335	3174	5
Fabrics													
All Fabrics	Mn. Sq. Mtr.	41311	41721	1	44685	7	48808	9	52665	8	56767 (Anticipated - 2007-08)		8

Annexure-IV
India's Export of Textiles Items

(Value in MN US\$)

Items	April-October											
	2002-03	2003-04	% change	2004-05	% change	2005-06	% change	2006-07	% change	2006-07	2007-08	% change
Readymade Garments	5705	6248	9.52	6575	5.23	8634	31.32	8687	0.61	5115	4914	-3.93
Cotton Textiles	3370	3609	7.09	3551	-1.61	4609	29.79	5480	18.90	2878	2818	-2.08
Man-made textiles	1421	1826	28.50	2055	12.54	2043	-0.58	2359	15.47	1357	1691	24.61
Wollen Yarn, Fabrics Madeups Etc.	51	58	13.73	70	20.69	85	21.43	84	-1.18	51	48	-5.88
Silk Textiles	315	381	20.95	406	6.56	433	6.65	432	-0.23	260	217	-16.54
Total	10862	12122	11.60	12657	4.41	15804	24.86	17042	7.83	9661	9688	0.28

Source: Foreign Trade Statistics of India (Principal Commodities & Countries)

[Translation]

SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the importance of textile industry can be judged from the fact that it constitutes 14 per cent of the total production and 16 per cent of the total exports. After Agriculture, this industry has provided maximum employment to people. Earlier the products of Indian textile industry were in great demand but now it is not so. The textile production in Vietnam, China and Bangladesh is increasing at the rate of 25 per cent whereas the Indian textile production is not getting so much priority. Even after declaring it as a priority sector during the 11th Five Year Plan, the production is not as much as it should have been. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether the present scenario is better or worse as compared to the previous production, and what is our share in the world market and presently where it stands quality wise alongwith the reaction of the Government?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the required modernization work of textile industry did not take place after independence. After that, quota regime came to an end in December 2004. The production and export has increased after that. It is not right to say that the production has decreased. Our production has increased but the value of rupee has increased too. The value of rupee has increased almost 14-15 per cent. So, in terms of rupee and dollar, the export of some readymade garments has decreased but total production has not decreased at all.

SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, have any

steps been taken in India to increase the growth rate of textile production as has been done in Vietnam, China and Bangladesh? If so, the results thereof?

SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have taken several steps to strengthen the rupee. I do not like to go into it but the currency of Bangladesh has not strengthened as much as the Indian rupee. Rather it has decreased. The value of Pakistani and Vietnami currency has increased marginally but the value of Indian rupee has increased by about 15 per cent. So, this is a problem otherwise there is no problem.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has said that our export has increased. In regard to his reply, I would like to say that the Government has fixed export target at 25 billion dollar per year whereas the figures given from April to October of the year 2006-07 and 2007-08 show that the export is decreasing.

According to that export is decreasing. It seems that we will not be able to achieve 25 billion dollar mark. Our export will not exceed 17-18 billion dollar because our fabric production is declining while in the year 2002-03, there were ten lakh persons employed in this sector, presently there are only eight lakh persons. Thus, whether it is cotton or the man made fabric, all the sectors have shown negative trend. As is the case of readymade. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Everyone has this information. You ask your question.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Whether it is silk man made cloth or cotton, the export of all these things has decreased.

So far as the question of textile industry is concerned, it is running only on 40 to 50 per cent capacity. My question is as to what steps are being taken by the Government to meet the export targets and what steps are being taken to address the problem of the persons being rendered jobless.

SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I don't agree with views that our production has declined. We have the figures of increase in production in the year 2007-08. Of course, the export of silk, ready made garments has registered a decline trend but it has increased in case of manmade fabric. The export of several items has increased but the whole problem is that of valuation of rupee. Had the value of rupee not been so strong, today we would have not reached this level. America and Europe are the main export markets. After end of quota regime we have increased our exports in America by 24 per cent itself. In the whole market our increase was 18 per cent here the export has definitely decreased. The total import there is also declining. The import in America has also come down. The import in the European market including textile production is also less. From this point of view, the problem is there. Taking into consideration the demands of exporters the Government of India has taken several steps whether it be the issue of service tax or DPAP or the rate of interest. We have tried to provide several facilities to maintain the exports so that they don't feel any problem.

[English]

Implementation of Agricultural Plan Schemes

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*244. SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:
SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the pace of implementation of certain agricultural plan schemes being run by the Union Government is very slow;

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

(c) whether the Government has held consultations with the farmers' organisations to effectively implement and expedite the said schemes; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Pace of implementation of important agricultural plan schemes implemented by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, including the recently launched schemes of 'National Food Security Mission' and 'Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana' is not slow. Approval of Government for these two recently launched schemes was obtained expeditiously and the implementation of these schemes commenced in record time.

(c) and (d) State Governments are consulted by the Ministry of Agriculture on important Policy measures. For example, while considering the recommendations of the National Commission on Farmers, States were consulted in a Conference of State Ministers of Agriculture and Allied Sectors on 23.12.2006. The Farmers' Advisory Committees at the Block level is a formal mechanism to provide farmer's feedback under the scheme of Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms. For building consensus on agricultural market reforms to be implemented through State Governments, farmers and farmers organizations have been consulted through Regional Consultative Conferences organized by the Ministry of Agriculture in four regions of the country during this year.

SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI: Sir, the Minister had been asked whether the agricultural schemes being run by the Union Government are moving at snail's pace? If their progress is slow, then details thereof? Hon'ble Minister, has told in his reply that presently only two schemes are running namely National Food Security Mission and National Agriculture Development Scheme. Instead of giving details, he has only mentioned that these schemes have been started in haste and got approval very late. Then work on them started. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister since when these schemes are running and what is the progress in this regard as on date?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): It is true that these two schemes have been mentioned in the reply but when the decision was taken which got implemented in the whole country, it was not limited to these two schemes only. After the formation of UPA government, several schemes like National Horticulture Mission, Micro irrigation, National Bamboo Mission, Micro management and agriculture, Marketing Infrastructure scheme, National Food Security Scheme, National Agriculture Development Scheme have been started in the country. Initially it takes some time to commence them and it has been taken into account as to what should be the state of progress in this regard. So far as the progress with regard to two schemes namely National Food Security Mission and National Agriculture Development

Scheme is concerned, I would like to state about National Food Security Mission that is in its first year and all the states and districts which have been selected in the first year have done a fine job in achieving the targets given to them and utilising the money provided to them and their response is good. I am sure that the way the State Governments are paying attention to it, there will be change in the situation.

SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI: Sir, you are formulating a number of schemes but farmers are unable to get any remunerative price. Today, due to unavailability of remunerative price to farmers, farming has become a loss making occupation and that is why farmers want to get rid of it. Whether the Union Government has any scheme to ensure that farmers get remunerative prices? In this regard, the opinion of farmers should also be sought apart from bureaucrats because farmers understand the root of the problem while the bureaucrats are not aware of it. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister as to what action is being taken in this regard?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, a system is in place for the past 40 years to determine the prices in this country, which is being adopted and is called CAPC. Through it, total cost of cultivation is analysed and then prices are recommended. The recommendation about prices is forwarded to the Department of Agriculture of every State. After receiving the final comments of the State Governments in this regard, a final decision is taken and it is taken into account as to how will the farmers' interests be protected and the cost of cultivation be recovered. I would like to give two examples of this government. The total increase for wheat in the last five years was around Rs. 60 and in these four years, there has been an increase of Rs. 360 per quintal in the prices of wheat. The Government has prepared to give so much of prices. Similarly, steps have been taken to increase the prices for paddy also. I admit that today the prices of foodgrains are skyrocketing worldwide and the problem of foodgrains is taking place all over the world and we cannot ignore it. In these circumstances, the Government is watching the whole scenario and a policy has been so made as to see how we could increase production and progress in this field and what prices we shall offer to the farmers so that they pay attention towards farming.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister and say that no doubt the schemes made by you are benefiting the farmers and this time it will bring even more benefits. But several times, I have said that. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put the question.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH: Several times, I have said that even when you fix the prices, there is no procurement

centre after the price fixation. In this situation where will farmers sell their produce. Then they are compelled to approach middlemen. I would like to say that Government of Jammu-Kashmir has also submitted in writing that they have certain areas like Kathua, R.S. Pura, Hiranagar, Akhnour, achieving bumper crop of paddy but no procurement centre is available there. Simultaneously, there is no procurement centre for wheat which is going to be produced this year. Your department is the custodian of farmers. Therefore, I would like to know whether the Government is going to open procurement centre or formulate some scheme through FCI to protect the farmers there?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Procurement Centres are opened by the State Governments.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, you have correctly replied that it is the responsibility of State Governments to start these centers and their supporting work is done by the Food Corporation of India. As far as the responsibility of Food Corporation of India is concerned it procures only rice and wheat in the country. It is the responsibility of the State Governments to procure the rest of the crops from the market if their prices fall below the Minimum Support Price. If it causes any loss to the State Governments then the responsibility of the Government of India is to compensate fifty percent of the loss incurred. This has been done by some States. Two years ago the Government of Rajasthan procured mustard on a large scale since FCI does not procure mustard. Therefore, such procurement is done by some States themselves. As and when the crops produced in States fall below the MSP then the concerned State Government takes steps in this regard.

As far as the problem of Jammu and Kashmir raised here is concerned, I will discuss with the State Government and if there is need and we find sufficient production there, then we will also ask Food Corporation of India to open a center there.

[English]

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: It has been reported in the Press and also in the Kerala State Assembly that the State Government in consultation with Shri M.S. Swaminathan had prepared an agricultural development plan with reference to Kuttanad in Alleppey District and that was submitted. But the Government had not approved a plan prepared by Shri M.S. Swaminathan. The Government is eager to develop the agricultural production. What was the difficulty in accepting the plan submitted by Shri M.S. Swaminathan for development of paddy cultivation in Kuttanad? The State Government is forced to take up the plan for itself. It is too much on the part of the hon. Minister of Agriculture.

So, I would request him to take up that plan and see that it is implemented so that the deficit areas in the State of Kerala will be very much relieved. Can the hon. Minister do it?

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please accept his request.

[English]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: When that particular district's issue was raised from Kerala, the Kerala Government has also communicated to us; and the hon. Members from Kerala also have written to me and met also. Then, we had deputed that job to Swaminathan Foundation and that Foundation has prepared a detailed plan for this district. The plan has been submitted to the Government of India. The Ministry of Agriculture has given approval to that plan. Now, we are going to the Cabinet to take a final approval and for budgetary provisions. We are quite eager to implement that plan for the State of Kerala.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 245. Shri Naveen Jinda—not present. Q. No. 246, Shri J.M. Aaron Rashid.

Corporatisation of Retail Market of Fruits and Vegetables

*246. SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the profit due to the farmers from the sale of their agriculture produce is being appropriated by the middlemen in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to check this tendency and to allow maximum profit to the farmers;

(d) whether the production and retail market of fruits and vegetables is also being monopolised by the corporate sector leading to huge losses to farmers and retailers alike; and

(e) if so, the remedial steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The buying and selling of agricultural produce mostly takes place in the market yards where a number of market functionaries are participating in transactions. There are a number of intermediaries operating in the supply chain of agricultural produce to the retailers or processors or exporters, in the name of commission agents, traders, wholesalers, distributors, dealers etc. who retain their share in the consumer spending before determining prices which are passed on to the farmers. It has been observed that the number of intermediaries ranges from 6 to 8 in case of most of the agricultural produce. Studies indicate that the share of producers in consumer spending

varies from 56% to 88% in foodgrains and 79 to 95% in pulses, 65 to 96% in oilseeds and 33 to 75% in case of fruit and vegetables.

(c) In order to facilitate better price realization by the farmers, Government has taken initiative to implement market reforms in agriculture. Government of India has, with a view to shortening of the supply chains and improving farmers' share in consumer spending, formulated a Model Agricultural Produce Market Regulation (APMR) Act and circulated to all the States/UTs in 2003 for making necessary amendments in their respective APMR Acts for bringing efficiency in the existing marketing system and allowing the private markets and development of alternative marketing channels, such as, direct marketing, contract farming, e-trading etc. To facilitate the implementation of the amended provisions, the Central Government has also formulated Model APMR Rules and circulated to the States/UTs for adoption in November, 2007. Government has launched a reform-linked scheme to develop/strengthen marketing infrastructure and has requested State Government to set up Terminal Market Complexes with suitable backward and forward linkages under the National Horticulture Mission, so that farmers get better farm returns through value addition and efficient marketing. Government has also permitted trading of agricultural commodities in futures market which is helping in stabilization of prices in the market and facilitating better price discovery. Various Commodity Exchanges have also initiated setting up of electronic spot exchanges for e-trading of agricultural commodities.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Question does not arise.

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID: Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the information regarding the following question. The point is that the agricultural produces like cardamom, pepper, grapes and potatoes from the hilly terrains have been sold to the big chains through middlemen. Is there any plan to open the Government-sponsored retail outlets and procurement centres and then to sell also? In the same way, the Tamil Nadu Government has opened the Ozhavar Sandai, the farmers' market. Likewise, is the Central Government having any plan to open such markets to sell the produces of the agriculturists at good prices?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: The Government of India has called a meeting of the Marketing Departments of various States along with the Minister for Agriculture and Cooperation and took a decision to make certain amendments in the Agricultural Produce Market Regulation Act where there will be more opportunities to farmers to get a proper price. A particular scheme has been prepared and sent to all the States. There are 16 States in this country which have taken a decision to amend their Agricultural Produce Market Regulation Act. In that Act, there is also a provision to encourage setting up of new markets. The Horticulture Mission has also provided a certain money for opening new

markets. The Government of India also approved a scheme to open Terminal Markets in this country where the State Governments have to take a decision. The Government of India provided some financial support. A number of States have taken proper steps. They are in the process of opening new Terminal Markets practically in each and every State. So, that process has already been expedited. All types of support have already been provided to the States. But, ultimately, about the acquisition of land and setting up of the market, the responsibility has to be taken by the respective State Governments. They are taking action on that.

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID: I would like to know when the Act will be amended. The agricultural produces are sold at very low prices. So, the farmers are in great distress. When will it be amended? When will the Production Centres be opened? Is there any plan to have a cold storage facility at the purchasing points? Is the Government having any plan to open cold storage centres because, in the hilly areas, they have adequate cold storage facilities? That is there. When they come to the plains, they do not have any cold storage facilities. The produces get spoiled. For example, in Theni itself, they are producing about thousand tonnes of grape and all other produces, particularly vegetables, in a day. They are going to all parts of the State as also to the adjoining States. The temperature-controlled vans must be provided and cold storage facilities have to be opened in those areas. Is the Government having any plans for this?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: I have already said that in the Horticulture Mission, there is a scheme where the Government of India provides money to the State Governments which are interested in setting up the cold storage and other facilities for the farming community.

Regarding the Terminal Market System, there are a number of States which have taken the initiative. In Andhra Pradesh, three places - Hyderabad, Tirupati and Visakhapatnam - have been selected. In Bihar, for instance, Patna has been selected. In Madhya Pradesh, for instance, Bhopal and Indore have been selected. Like this, they are setting up the Terminal Markets. In the Terminal markets, there is a provision for the Grading Centre. There is a provision for cold storage. There are provisions to provide refrigerated-vans also. The Government of India is providing the financial support.

[Translation]

MD. SALIM: Mr. Chairman Sir, with regard to the question raised by Shri Aaroonji, hon'ble Minister of Agriculture is passing the responsibility on State Governments. I have returned from Kashmir yesterday only. The people of far flung villages in hilly areas are solely dependent on horticulture. Even after so many years there is no arrangement for storage, transportation and packaging of

their produce. In spite of getting bumper crop every year they are in distress. Every year they do not get facilities of storage and transportation to sell their produce in the market. All these works are in the hands of middlemen. The Government is claiming so much. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are running short of time, keep some time for the reply of your question also.

MD. SALIM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, Same is the case with other states also. Himachal Pradesh also is facing the same problem. The Government have schemes but how to implement them? The UPA Government have said that special efforts are needed for providing facilities in nearby backward areas, backward regions and hilly terrains. I would like to ask the hon'ble Minister through you as to which steps government would like to take in consultation with the State Governments?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please reply in brief.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, earlier there was a provision in Agriculture Produce Market Act that the farmers could sell their produce to the licensee of the area but now an improvement has been made in the Act. Now the farmers can sell their produce to anybody anywhere. They can set up their own market. The Government of India provides financial assistance or subsidy to those who want to create their own infrastructure besides setting up their own markets. As far as the hilly States including Jammu and Kashmir are concerned, there is a separate scheme for horticulture and maximum amount has been given to these States under this head.

Beneficiaries under the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme

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*247. SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA:
SHRI GHURAN RAM:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of beneficiaries covered under the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) at present, State-wise;

(b) the criteria regarding the payment of premium under the said scheme indicating the share of Union Government, the State Governments and the farmers;

(c) the details of the payments made to the farmers under the scheme during the last three years;

(d) whether the Union and State Governments have paid their share in the above scheme;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor alongwith the time by which it is likely to be paid?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE

MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (f) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) State-wise details of farmers covered and benefited during 2006-07 under the scheme is at Annexure-I.

(b) As per provision of the scheme flat rates ranging between 1.5% and 3.5% per cent (of sum insured) for food and oilseed crop and actuarial rates for annual commercial/horticultural crops, are charge from the farmers under the scheme. Small and marginal farmers, at present, are entitled

for 10% subsidy in premium which is being shared by the Central and respective State Government on 50:50 basis.

(c) A Statement regarding details of the payments made to the farmers under NAIS during last three years is at Annexure-II.

(d) to (f) Details of payments made by Government (both Centre and State) during last three years are given in Annexure-II. Claims amounting to Rs. 31442.28 lakh are pending on account of non-availability of shares of funds either of Government of India or the concerned States. These claims would be settled as soon as the funds are made available to Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. which is the Implementing Agency of NAIS.

Annexure-I

Farmers covered & benefited under NAIS: 2006-07

S.No.	Kharif 2006		Rabi 2006-07		Total 2006-07	
	Farmers covered	Farmers benefited	Farmers covered	Farmers benefited	Farmers covered	Farmers benefited
1. Andhra Pradesh	1964838	638773	35440	40588	2270278	679361
2. Assam	8800	3882	5818	491	14618	4373
3. Bihar	344686	75896	339749	65927	684435	141823
4. Chhattisgarh	716118	22213	13202	4	729320	22217
5. Goa	544	1	0	0	544	1
6. Gujarat	863802	761536	14080	3984	877882	765520
7. Haryana	53482	2474	45261	6918	98743	9392
8. Himachal Pradesh	5211		14061	0	19272	0
9. Jharkhand	1198520	49043	64161	8842	1262681	57885
10. Karnataka	792498	314259	547839	301318	1340337	615577
11. Kerala	13341	1797	16871	487	30212	2284
12. Madhya Pradesh	1277350	135926	581758	17	1859108	135943
13. Maharashtra	1638409	620044	37655	504	1676064	620548
14. Meghalaya	703	11	2399	0	3102	11
15. Orissa	880330	68532	199887	12521	1080217	81053
16. Rajasthan	1805504	353650	813676	121616	2619180	475266
17. Sikkim	0		38	0	38	0
18. Tamil Nadu	46153	7415	269218	12379	315371	19794
19. Tripura	398	9	2074	0	2472	9
20. Uttar Pradesh	886961	223621	1111041	336142	1998002	559763
21. Uttarakhand	5635	379	14500	987	20135	1366
22. West Bengal	426820	42868	574501	306344	1001321	349212
23. Andaman and Nicobar Islands	78	0			78	0
24. Puducherry	570		2254	0	2824	0
25. Jammu & Kashmir	3303	524	2467	0	5770	524
Total	12934054	3322853	4977950	1219069	17912004	4541922

Annexure-II

State-wise season-wise claims paid and sharing of claims

Sl.No.	State	Claims paid 2004-05	AIC	State share	GOI share	Claims- paid 2005-06	AIC	State Share	GOI share	Claims paid 2006-07	AIC.	State share	GOI share
1.	Andhra Pradesh	9296.85	8770.11	263.37	263.37	49692.97	8455.01	20618.98	20618.98	52941.90	8236.51	22302.69	22302.70
2.	Assam	68.94	22.79	23.08	23.07	1.31	1.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3.	Bihar	23988.71	1100.63	11444.04	11444.04	15392.55	1274.04	7059.25	7059.26	4018.74	1494.54	1262.10	1262.10
4.	Chhattisgarh	504.64	356.92	73.86	73.86	12.21	12.21	0.00	0.00	461.04	461.04	0.00	0.00
5.	Goa	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6.	Gujarat	28906.21	5605.46	11649.88	11649.88	813.04	813.04	0.00	0.00	48407.42	7083.94	25552.29	15771.19
7.	Haryana	133.36	108.44	12.46	12.46	1594.13	230.59	681.77	681.77	32.14	32.14	0.00	0.00
8.	Himachal Pradesh	2.55	2.55	0.00	0.00	104.42	13.16	45.63	45.63	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9.	Jharkhand	1060.54	136.55	461.99	461.99	10738.46	721.75	5008.35	5008.36	493.64	493.64	0.00	0.00
10.	Karnataka	3050.40	2925.95	124.45	0.00	4536.60	4536.60	0.00	0.00	15028.09	3047.61	5990.24	5990.24
11.	Kerala	39.17	39.17	0.00	0.00	149.32	52.42	48.45	48.45	41.17	41.17	0.00	0.00
12.	Madhya Pradesh	5969.41	4476.49	746.46	746.46	2000.88	1895.92	52.48	52.48	3552.52	3552.52	0.00	0.00
13.	Maharashtra	13005.76	2924.64	5040.56	5040.56	3251.09	3086.96	82.07	82.06	14067.59	2211.67	5927.96	5927.96
14.	Meghalaya	1.46	0.76	0.35	0.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.00
15.	Orissa	1504.79	1504.79	0.00	0.00	594.63	414.04	90.29	90.29	2793.72	2765.40	14.16	14.16
16.	Rajasthan	14333.79	5374.48	4479.66	4479.65	30057.02	6536.02	15024.01	8496.99	23302.35	7404.20	7949.08	7949.07
17.	Sikkim	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
18.	Tamil Nadu	3854.22	533.02	1660.60	1660.60	4827.34	506.33	2160.50	2160.50	555.79	555.79	0.00	0.00
19.	Tripura	3.85	3.23	0.31	0.31	36.16	10.93	12.61	12.61	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.00
20.	Uttar Pradesh	12200.77	3228.57	4486.10	4486.11	7926.66	3322.89	2301.89	2301.89	11242.50	5966.38	2638.06	2638.06
21.	Uttarakhand	1.87	1.39	0.24	0.24	235.52	16.31	109.60	109.60	17.28	10.86	3.21	3.21
22.	West Bengal	1861.73	1554.79	153.47	153.47	7713.46	2308.66	2702.40	2702.41	12827.52	3037.41	9732.48	57.63
23.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
24.	Puducherry	34.75	14.67	10.04	10.04	7.93	7.93	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
25.	Jammu & Kashmir	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.56	5.15	1.70	1.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total		119823.78	38686.42	40630.91	40506.45	138694.24	34221.27	55999.99	49472.99	189683.53	46394.95	81372.27	61916.32

SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon'ble Minister has told in reply to the question that at present the small and marginal farmers are entitled for 10 percent subsidy in the premium which is being shared by the Union Government and the respective state Government on 50:50 basis. Not a single thing is correct in the replies given by the hon'ble Minister.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the year wise number of farmers entitled is totally different. As far as the share of 50 percent is concerned, I will give data for only one year i.e. 2006-07. The share of Union Government is Rs. 61916.07 lakh and the share of the State Governments is Rs. 81372.27 lakh. There is a difference of Rs. 20 thousand lakh. I want to know from the hon'ble Minister as to which reply out of these two is correct.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Mr. Chairman, Sir, both the answers are correct. As far as the number of farmer's covered are concerned, there is a difference in figures of every year. It is also correct that all the farmers do not take insurance. Some farmers take insurance in a year whereas some do not. As far as the kharif season of 2006 is concerned practically, the amount of insurance coverage is Rs. 1,293 crore. Thirty three lakh farmers got the benefit of it. The reply reflects the state-wise total figures of rabi crop for the year 2006-07. We have collected these figures from the insurance companies and according to them financial assistance has also been provided. Both of these figures are correct.

SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this answer may be correct from hon'ble Minister's point of view but it is not correct according to me. It seems the officers do not want to say. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put another question, there is paucity of time.

SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, my second question is that the hon'ble Minister has said in his reply that the claims worth Rs. 31442.28 lakh are pending with the Government of India or concerned State Governments due to non availability of share amount during one year. What is the present position regarding the number of pending cases of claim and the time by which these would be disposed of?

12.00 hrs.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: As far as the Government of India is concerned the funds earmarked for this purpose fall short before the work could be completed. But a provision was made in the Supplementary Demands passed by the

House yesterday. This amount has been sanctioned by the Parliament. Now, I understand that it would not take more than two months for releasing the funds.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ghuran Ram-Not present. Shri Karunakaran - Not present. Shri Rajnarayan Budholla.

SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, whether the Government would contemplate to formulate any scheme to provide amount for National Agriculture Insurance separately for the areas where farmers have been continuously ruined for the last four-five years due to flood, drought, frost or hail storm.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, now we have changed the old insurance scheme and a new scheme called wager wage insurance scheme has been introduced details of which were given by the Finance Minister in his speech. It will be helpful in all types of cases where crops have been damaged due to rains, low rain fall, drought, temperature difference, snowfall, humidity, flood etc. This scheme has been introduced from this year in all the states of the country. ...*(Interruptions)*. Kharif and Rabi crops would be covered from this year.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Production of Oilseeds and Pulses

*245. **SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the varieties of oilseeds and pulses notified by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) during the last three years;
- (b) whether these varieties are being grown by the farmers;
- (c) if so, the total area under cultivation of these varieties, crop-wise alongwith the percentage increase in production of oilseeds and pulses;
- (d) whether the amount spent by the ICAR on research is commensurate with the increase in production of these varieties in the country during the above period; and
- (e) if not, the remedial measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) 138 varieties of oilseeds (64) and pulses (74) have been notified by

Government of India under Seed Act 1966 during the last three years as under:-

Oilseeds: Groundnut-11; Soybean-11; Rapeseed & Mustard-16; Sunflower-8; Safflower-4; Castor-1; Linseed-5; Sesame-6; Niger-2

Pulses: Chickpea-20; Pigeonpea-8; Urdbean-8; Mungbean-11; Fieldpea-9; Lentil-7; Rajmash-5; Horsegram-3; Guar-1; Mothbean-2

(b) and (c) The seed chain of production from nucleus to breeder to foundation to certified seeds takes four years before it is available to the farmers for large scale cultivation.

(d) and (e) In the Front Line Demonstrations (FLDs) conducted by the Council at farmers' fields an increase in yield ranging from 20-25% in oilseeds and 25-30% in case of pulses has been observed. It shows that these varieties and matching production and protection technologies are likely to pay dividends.

Prices of Foodgrains across the World

*248. ADV. SURESH KURUP: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of foodgrains have shown an increasing trend across the world during the last one year;

(b) if so, whether the Government has made any assessment regarding its likely impact on prices and availability of foodgrains in the country;

(c) if so, the details and outcome thereof; and

(d) the remedial steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes Sir. International prices of all major cereals have substantially increased during the last one year.

(b) and (c) Yes Sir. Government is closely monitoring the scenario of prices and availability of foodgrains in different major producing countries of the world. In the assessment of the Government, high global prices and tight supply position would make imports both difficult and costly. So far the domestic production of foodgrains (Rice, wheat and pulses) has been such as to substantially meet the domestic needs.

(d) The Government has been taking effective steps to moderate the prices and contain inflation. It has taken a number of steps which are listed in the statement enclosed.

Statement

Steps taken by Government

- (i) To augment availability of wheat Public Sector Agencies STC, MMTC, PEC are in the process of importing 23.0 lakh Mts) (+/-5%) during 2007-08. About 18.0 lakh tonnes of wheat have been contracted and almost the entire quantity has arrived in India as of 27.02.2008. STC had been authorized to import 13.06 lakh tonnes of wheat; MMTC and PEC had placed orders for import of 3.425 lakh tonnes and 1.5 lakh tonnes of wheat respectively. Period of validity of import of wheat at zero duty was extended from 31.12.06 to 28.2.2007 and further to 31.12.07. It is now extended until further orders.
- (ii) Export of wheat has been banned w.e.f. 09.02.2007. The ban will remain in force up to 31.12.2007. The ban is now extended until further orders.
- (iii) In order to maximize procurement of wheat and paddy, the Government has been increasing MSPs and announcing bonuses in the last 5 years. The Government has on 9.10.2007 made a decision to fix the MSP of wheat for Crop Year 2007-08 (to be marketed in RMS 2008-09) at Rs. 1000 per quintal. It also approved an incentive bonus of Rs. 100 per quintal during the Kharif Marketing Season 2007-08 for Paddy. Similarly, the export of non-basmati rice below Minimum Export Price of \$650 per MT has been banned by the Government w.e.f 5th March, 2008 and export of basmati and non-basmati rice will be restricted through the ports namely Kandla, Kakinada, Kolkata and JNPT, Mumbai.
- (iv) Government has protected vulnerable sections of society through Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and Antodaya Anna Yojna (AAY). Under the TPDS, wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene oils are allocated to State Governments for distribution through the Fair Price Shops. The off take of wheat and rice under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other welfare schemes (OWS) has, however, been going up. For TPDS, wheat and rice off take have gone up from 242 lakh tonnes in 2003-04 to 316 lakh tonnes in 2006-07. During the period April-November 2007, 242.96 lakh tonnes wheat and rice has been allocated under TPDS.
- (v) The Central Issue Price for rice and wheat has not been revised since 1.7.2002. For wheat it remains at Rs 4.15 per kg for BPL and Rs 2 per kg for AAY. For rice, it is Rs 5.65 per kg for BPL and Rs 3 per kg for AAY.

- (vi) Customs duty on import of pulses was reduced to zero on June 8, 2006 and the period of validity of import of pulses at zero duty has been extended from 31.3.07 to 1.8.2007 and further to 31.3.09.
- (vii) A ban was imposed on export of pulses with effect from June 22, 2006 (except export of kabuli chana w.e.f. 7.3.07). The period of validity of prohibition on exports of pulses, which was initially upto 31.3.07 was further extended upto 31.3.2008.
- (viii) As per initiative of Government, the State agencies (NAFED, PEC Ltd, MMTC and STC) are targeted to import 1.5 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) of pulses. Out of the total contracts of 14.01 lakh tonnes made by these agencies, 10.86 lakh tonnes have arrived up to 28.02.2008. Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) had been asked to import edible oils and to augment edible oils availability in the domestic market. They have currently placed orders for import of 46,500 tons of palm oils and the entire quantity has arrived at Indian ports.
- (ix) W.e.f. 1.3.07, the import duty on crude sunflower oil was reduced from 65% to 50% and that of refined sunflower oil from 75% to 60%. Again, with effect from 23.7.07, the import duty on sunflower oil, both crude and refined, has been reduced and now stands at 40% and 50% respectively.
- (x) With effect from 13.4.07, the import duty on CPO was reduced from 60% to 50% and that on refined palm oil from 67.5% to 57.5%. W.e.f. 23.7.2007 the import duty on crude palm oil (CPO) has been further reduced to 45% and that on refined palm oil to 52.5%. The Government has also withdrawn the 4% additional countervailing duty on all edible oils. Prior to 24.1.07 the import duties were 70% and 80% respectively.
- (xi) With effect from 23.07.07, import duty on Soya oils has been reduced from 45% to 40%.
- (xii) When the onion, prices started flaring up, NAFED increased the MEP from USD 250 PMT in March/April 2007 to US\$ 495 PMT in October 2007 to increase the domestic availability of onion. The export of onion was also put under license through designated canalizing agencies vide Notification No.22 (RE-2007)/2004-2009 dated 4th October 2007. Furthermore, Government also organised sale of onion through mobile centres operated by Delhi Government, NAFED, Kendriya Bhandar as well as Mother Dairy. These outlets numbering around 375, sold onion at Rs 17-18 per kg when the outside price was Rs 22-24 per kg. Since domestic prices of onion now show a declining trend, MEP has been successively reduced. Currently, MEP of onion is US\$ 180 PMT. This restriction has now been lifted w.e.f. 16.11.07 having regard to the increased availability of kharif onion.
- (xiii) Steps were taken by Reserve Bank of India to reduce liquidity in the system by increasing the cash reserve ratio, first to 7% w.e.f. 6 August 2007 and then to 7.5% on 30 October 2007. These steps have mopped up liquidity in the market of more than Rs. 30,000 crores.
- (xiv) As a measure of abundant precaution, Forward Markets Commission (FMC) has on 23.01.07, directed the three National Exchanges, namely (a) Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd., (b) National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Ltd., (c) National Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd., to delist all contracts of tur and urad and to close out all outstanding positions in all Tur and Urad contracts at the closing price on 23.01.07. FMC has also stated that no further contract shall be launched without its prior approval and permission already granted to launch contracts in Urad and Tur stands withdrawn.
- (xv) Similarly, FMC has on, 27.2.2007, directed all the three National Exchanges that no new futures contracts in wheat and rice shall be launched.
- (xvi) To contain volatility in the futures prices of wheat, pulses, etc. Forward Markets Commission (FMC) has taken required regulatory measures such as imposition of limits on open position, reduction in limits on daily price fluctuations and imposition of additional/special margins.
- (xvii) An Expert Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Shri Abhijit Sen, Member, Planning Commission to study impact, if any, of the trading in forward markets on the prices of the commodities.
- (xviii) Keeping in view the prevailing price situation, the Central Government had issued a Central Order dated 29.08.2006 under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to enable the State Governments to invoke Stock Limits in respect of wheat and pulses for a period of 6 months. By virtue of this Order, the State Governments/ UT Administrations have been empowered to take effective action to bring out the hoarded stock of these items to ensure their availability to the common people at reasonable prices. Government has, on 1.9.2007, extended the validity of the Central Order by another six months. It has now been extended further by six months from 1.3.08 till 31-8-2008.

[Translation]

Parthenium Weed

*249. SHRI THAWARCHAND GEHLOT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the growth of Parthenium Weed that grows with red wheat is harmful for the crop and causes heavy losses to farmers in the wheat producing areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to check the growth of such weeds?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Parthenium weed, which grows in different types of soils and habitat, causes crops losses also in wheat producing areas, depending upon intensity of the weed and agro-climatic conditions.

(c) The Government has prepared strategies to control and check this weed through extensive research in the National Research Centre for Weed Science, Jabalpur and different State Agricultural Universities, which, inter alia, are application of physical, biological and chemical control measures; educating the farmers on its ill effects and its management such as through application of herbicides, bio-agents etc. and providing basic and strategic weed management technologies, through National Research Centre for Weed Science, Jabalpur.

[English]

Protection of Seeds

*250. SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has launched any scheme or project to protect the seeds of distinct crops, many of which are getting extinct, for the benefit of future generations;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the number of such protected crop-seeds, State-wise;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government is aware of a Global Seed Vault (GSV) being, maintained in Norway;

(e) if so, whether the Government has taken any steps to store seeds of distinct crops of the country with the GSV; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has the national mandate of collecting, characterizing and safely conserving in its National Genebank the seeds of landraces and folk varieties of crop plants available in traditional production systems of farmers before their extinction.

Besides, the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority has a mandate to register new, extant and farmers' varieties to give exclusive rights to owner of the variety as per provisions of Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Right Act, 2001. During the protection period the seeds of Registered Varieties is to be kept in National Gene Bank.

(b) and (c) The Indian National Seed Genebank located at NBPGR is one of the largest genebank in the world with a total holding of 3,56,471 accessions representing germplasm of 1,324 crop/plant species. The State-wise breakup of indigenous accessions in National Genebank are in the enclosed statement.

(d) to (f) Yes, Sir. Government of India is aware of Global Seed Vault (GSV) in Norway inaugurated on February 26, 2008.

Statement

The state-wise breakup of accessions in National Genebank collected by NBPGR is as follows:

State	No. of accessions
1	2
Jammu and Kashmir	516
Himachal Pradesh	2393
Uttarakhand	2869
Sikkim	371
Arunchal Pradesh	693
Assam	2264
Meghalaya	787
Manipur	716
Nagaland	474
Mizoram	194
Tripura	233

1	2
Rajasthan	3115
Madhya Pradesh	18744
Gujarat	2226
Uttar pradesh	9651
Bihar	3339
West Bengal	816
Jharkhand	933
Chhattisgarh	4002
Orissa	4421
Andhra Pradesh	5773
Karnataka	2773
Tamil Nadu	3406
Maharashtra	6634
Goa	98
Kerala	1182
Andaman and Nicobar	25
Total	78648

Rest of the accessions in National Genebank are from national system and exotic sources.

[Translation]

Labour Disputes

*251. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of labour disputes pending in various labour courts during each of the last three years and the current year, State-wise;

(b) the number of disputes settled during the said period alongwith the time taken in settling the said disputes, State-wise and year-wise; and

(c) the number of disputes wherein the employers were held responsible for the violations of the provisions of the existing Industrial Labour Laws in the country during the said period, State-wise and year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY

OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) As per the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, an Appropriate Government can set up Labour Courts and Industrial Tribunals for resolution of Industrial Disputes. In respect of Industrial Disputes arising in the Central Sphere, Central Government is the Appropriate Government for setting up the Central Government Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Courts (CGIT-cum-LCs). There are 22 CGIT-cum-Labour Courts in different parts of the Country. The details of the number of labour disputes pending and disposal in various CGIT-cum-Labour, Courts during the year 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 are given in the statement. The details of State Labour Courts are not centrally maintained.

An attempt is made by the conciliation machinery to settle the disputes to the extent possible. Those conciliation proceedings which result in failure and are referred for adjudication, are taken up by the labour courts. The time taken to dispose of an industrial dispute in labour courts varies from case to case and, inter-alia, depends on the cooperation of the parties to the dispute, with the result that most cases take considerably longer than the stipulated norm of three months.

(c) The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 provides framework for maintaining harmonious industrial relations. The Act facilitates intervention, mediation and conciliation by the Industrial Relations Machinery of the Appropriate Government for resolution of Industrial Disputes. If the conciliation proceedings fail to settle the dispute, then such dispute, if the appropriate Government is of the opinion that an industrial dispute exists or is apprehended, are referred to various Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Courts for adjudication. As per the provisions of the I.D. Act, 1947, where an industrial dispute has been referred to the Labour Court, Tribunal or National Tribunal for adjudication, it shall hold its proceedings expeditiously and submit its award to the appropriate Government. The spirit behind the provisions in respect of mediation, conciliation and adjudication in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 is to provide relief to the aggrieved party rather than fixing responsibility on individual parties to the dispute. Industrial Disputes generally arise (i) due to demands raised collectively by a group of workmen and (ii) due to disputes, including those of punishment awarded to individual workmen. Therefore, the specific information on number of disputes, wherein the employers were held responsible for violations of the provisions of the existing industrial labour laws, cannot be ascertained.

Statement**Year-wise Pendency/Disposal figure in the CGITs cum Labour Courts (Centre Sphere)**

Sl.No.	CGIT	2004-05				2005-06				2006-07			
		Cases		Applications		Cases		Applications		Cases		Applications	
		D	P	D	P	D	P	D	P	D	P	D	P
1	Mumbai I	25	240	13	81	63	213	28	64	75	193	38	35
2	Mumbai II	8	405	4	410	20	456	9	438	97	410	26	506
3	Dhanbad I	33	1,784	9	364	150	1745	31	367	73	1746	17	358
4	Dhanbad II	221	1,022	1	52	195	929	0	36	45	949	0	36
5	Asansol	32	472	2	93	50	562	14	79	64	606	17	62
6	Kolkata*	19	219	39	130	8	269	0	133	9	281	8	95
7	Chandigarh I	180	2,005	29	324	1,162	911	162	212	148	846	123	98
8	Chandigarh II	5	62	0	10	72	1178	10	144	275	946	67	112
9	New Delhi I	126	552	18	288	94	492	39	451	72	540	29	469
10	New Delhi II	237	537	95	98	192	493	74	57	242	333	38	82
11	Kanpur	42	679	150	250	96	663	188	184	158	560	55	154
12	Jabalpur	177	1,459	29	639	126	1454	52	597	107	1438	115	489
13	Chennai*	170	588	21	22	131	584	24	35	379	293	4	30
14	Bangalore	83	368	138	35	95	352	20	82	113	288	19	95
15	Hyderabad	186	1,205	10	768	659	780	187	631	156	856	556	199
16	Nagpur	5	848	0	7	19	912	0	15	178	836	3	18
17	Bhubneshwar	4	433	2	111	41	424	38	99	41	412	36	136
18	Lucknow	71	436	28	29	75	408	13	36	60	379	8	38
19	Jaipur*	74	123	24	57	108	154	24	24	51	228	0	0
20	Guwahati	2	23	0	7	13	33	3	7	8	37	1	7
21	Ernakulam	0	7	0	0	18	22	0	58	122	247	96	29
22	Ahmedabad*	115	1,666	15	833	208	1818	71	1037	49	1947	40	1473
Total		1,815	15,133	627	4,608	3,595	14852	987	4786	2,522	14371	1,296	4521

D - disposed during the year

P - pending at the end of the year

* figure shown under 04-05 & 05-06 are from to Jan- Dec. 2004 & 2005 respectively

Cases: Cases are those that are referred under Section 10 of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 to the CGIT-cum-Labour Courts for adjudication consequent upon the failure of conciliation made by the RLC (c)s or the ALC(c)s.

Applications: Applications are those that are filed by the workers directly under Section 33-A and 33-C of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 before the CGIT-cum-Labour Courts.

Year-wise Pendency/Disposal Figure in the CGITs cum Labour Courts (Centre Sphere) up to Dec. 07

Sl.No.	CGIT	2007-08			
		Cases		Applications	
		D	P	D	P
1	Mumbai I	14	228	14	37
2	Mumbai II	55	420	101	525
3	Dhanbad I*	4	1,792	0	363
4	Dhanbad II**	5	994	0	64
5	Asansol	37	660	4	65
6	Kolkata**	13	291	0	102
7	Chandigarh I#	43	868	22	102
8	New Delhi I	36	538	10	468
9	Kanpur	52	553	15	150
10	Jabalpur	77	1,453	104	387
11	Chennai	68	307	1	37
12	Bangalore	84	365	13	77
13	Hyderabad	39	955	5	198
14	Nagpur**	39	904	0	21
15	Bhubneshwar ^^	10	402	1	136
16	Lucknow	70	374	12	29
17	Jaipur**	0	270	0	0
18	New Delhi II	146	253	18	75
19	Guwahati	17	28	0	7
20	Ernakulam	87	192	42	27
21	Ahmedabad**	10	2,014	11	1 583
22	Chandigarh II^	104	877	5	135
Total		1,010	14,738	378	4,588

D - disposed during the year

P - pending at the end of the year

* up to Nov. 07 ** up to Sep. 07

up to July 07 ^ ^ up to April 07

^ upto Oct 07

Cases: Cases are those that are referred under Section 10 of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 to the CGIT-cum-Labour Courts for adjudication consequent upon the failure of conciliation made by the RLC(c)s or the ALC(c)s.

Applications: Applications are those that are filed by the workers directly under Section 33-A and 33-C of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 before the CGIT-cum-Labour Courts.

World Bank Assistance to Agriculture Sector

*252. SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:
SHRI V.K. THUMMAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the World Bank assistance provided for the agricultural sector during each of the last three years;

(b) whether the agricultural sector is not getting the entire benefit of the above assistance;

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

(d) whether the Government has conducted any inquiry into the underutilization of the World Bank assistance in the agricultural sector;

(e) if so, the details and outcome thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The details of the World Bank assistance provided for the agricultural sector during the last three years is given at the statement enclosed.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) to (f) Monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the projects is a regular feature. While utilization under all the three ongoing watershed projects in Karnataka, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh has been satisfactory, the utilization under Assam Agricultural Competitive Project has been found to be only moderately satisfactory because of slow disbursement and implementation. The National Agricultural Innovation Project has also been behind schedule. The reasons for slow disbursement and implementation are being addressed.

Statement

World Bank Aided Agriculture Sector projects

(US\$ Million)

S. No.	Project's Name	States	L.N./C.R. No.	Signing Date	Effective From	Closing Date	Project Cost	L.N./C.R. Amount	Cum. Disb. Upto Jan.08#
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Assam Agricultural Competitiveness Project	Assam	4013-IN	14.1.2005	24.2.2005	31.3.2010	214.25	154	28.411

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2.	Uttarakhand Decentralised Watershed Development Project	Uttarakhand	3907- IN	30.07.2004	10.9.2004	31.3.2012	89.35	69.62	17.254
3.	Karnataka Watershed Development Project	Karnataka	3528-IN	26.7.2001	10.9.2001	31.3.2008	107.6	*80.4	55.26
4.	HP Mid-Himalayan Watershed Development Project	Himachal Pradesh	4133-IN	19.1.2006	24.2.2006	31.3.2013	75	60	15.818
5.	National Agricultural Innovation Project	Central	4161-IN/ 4162-IN	24.7.2006	18.9.2006	31.12.2012	250	200	21.089

Figures are from O/o CAA&A

[English]

Shortage of Water for Irrigation

*253. SHRI G. M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the States facing shortage of water for irrigation during the last three years and the extent to which the shortage has been found; and

(b) the remedial action taken to improve irrigation facilities in the affected areas?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZI) (a) and (b) For the country as whole, the monsoon rainfall during the last three years i.e. in the years 2005, 2006 and 2007 were observed to be 99%, 99% and 105% of the long period average. However, deficient rainfall was observed in (a) Jharkhand, Bihar, Assam & Meghalaya and Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur & Tripura during 2005 (b) Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam & Meghalaya and Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur & Tripura, West Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttranchal, East Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu & Pondicherry during 2006, and (c) West Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, East Madhya Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh during 2007. However, for the country as a whole, overall live storage in the 81 monitored reservoirs at the end of the monsoon period of 2005, 2006 and 2007 were 115%, 129% and 119% respectively of the average of the last 10 years.

With a view to optimally utilize the available resources, several measures for development and management of water resources are undertaken by the respective State Governments which include creation of storages, restoration of water bodies, rain water harvesting, artificial recharge to

ground water and adoption of better management practices etc. Storage capacity of about 225 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) has been created so far. As per present assessment, the total estimated storage capacity of the various projects under construction is about 64 BCM. Further, the State Governments have identified various other schemes for investigation and planning and the estimated storage for such schemes is about 108 BCM. Major and medium irrigation projects and minor irrigation schemes (both surface and ground water) are conceived, planned and implemented by the respective State Governments. Government of India also provides assistance/ grants to the State Governments through various schemes/programmes, such as Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP); Command Area Development and Water Management (CADWM) Programme; National Project for Repair, Renovation and Restoration of Water Bodies directly linked to Agriculture. The Government of India have formulated a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for Water Resources Development which comprises two components viz. (i) Peninsular Rivers Development and (ii) Himalayan Rivers Development. The NPP envisages construction of storages on various river systems along with interlinking canal systems to transfer water from water surplus areas to water deficit regions.

[Translation]

Telephone Exchanges and Mobile Towers

*254. SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDLIKRAO GAWALI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of telephone exchanges and mobile towers alongwith their installed capacity set up in the country so far in each State during the last three years;

(b) whether the Government proposes to set up more telephone exchanges and enhance the installed capacity of the existing exchanges in the country during 2008-09;

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

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, BSNL has installed 546 telephone exchanges with 5,00,996 lines capacity and 22,368 mobile towers in its network during the last three years (i.e. 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 upto 31/01/2008). While MTNL has installed 28 telephone exchanges with 1,27,500 lines capacity and 975 mobile towers in its network during the same period. The details for BSNL/MTNL are given in statement-I enclosed. The total number of Mobile towers cleared by Wireless Planning & Co-ordination wing in the country, state wise is given in statement-IV enclosed.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. BSNL and MTNL have proposed to set up 92 and 24 telephone exchanges in their respective network during 2008-09. The details are given in statement-II enclosed. Since enough capacity is available in existing telephone exchanges of BSNL there is no proposal to enhance the same. MTNL has proposed to enhance the installed capacity of its existing exchanges by 1,54,000 lines in 2008-09. The Circle wise Exchange capacity and working connections is given in statement-III enclosed.

Statement-I

Circle-wise list of Telephone Exchanges and Mobile Towers Installed during the last three years (2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 till 31.01.08)

S. No.	Name of Circle	Number of new exchanges installed	Capacity installed	Number of Mobile Towers Installed
1	2	3	4	5
1	Andaman and Nicobar	2	282	68
2	Andhra Pradesh	8	16976	1051
3	Assam	14	3824	521
4	Bihar	59	27176	507
5	Chhattisgarh	5	1472	592
6	Gujarat	8	5306	1509
7	Haryana	18	18128	792

1	2	3	4	5
8	Himachal Pradesh	5	1480	387
9	Jammu and Kashmir	8	2020	403
10	Jharkhand	43	34440	354
11	Karnataka	29	38952	909
12	Kerala	27	37000	1306
13	Madhya Pradesh	12	5866	969
14	Maharashtra	27	43728	2213
15	North East-I	5	2320	260
16	North East-II	16	6736	212
17	Orissa	25	11956	743
18	Punjab	20	9216	1045
19	Rajasthan	16	9544	1678
20	Tamil Nadu	64	79116	1328
21	Uttar Pradesh (E)	9	3064	2111
22	Uttar Pradesh (W)	2	2336	1111
23	Uttaranchal	5	1524	325
24	West Bengal	21	13128	730
25	Kolkata	82	93220	568
26	Chennai	16	32186	676
	Total BSNL	546	500996	22368
27	Delhi	5	23500	597
28	Mumbai	23	104000	378
	Total MTNL	28	127500	975

Statement-II

Details of New Telephone Exchanges proposed to be set up during 2008-09

S.No.	Name of Circle	Number of new exchanges proposed
1	2	3
1	Andhra Pradesh	11
2	Chhattisgarh	8
3	Haryana	2
4	Jammu and Kashmir	5

1	2	3
5	Karnataka	15
6	Madhya Pradesh	2
7	North East-I	7
8	North East-II	1
9	Uttar Pradesh (W)	24
10	Uttaranchal	9
11	Chennai	8
	Total BSNL	92
12	Delhi	14
13	Mumbai	10
	Total MTNL	24

Statement-III

Details of Circle-wise Exchange capacity and working connections

S.No.	Circle	Total Capacity	Total Connections
1	2	3	4
1	Andaman and Nicobar	60096	25158
2	Andhra Pradesh	3890032	2495739
3	Assam	714684	433488
4	Bihar	1339816	965447
5	Chhattisgarh	429659	257268
6	Gujarat	3632182	2147111
7	Haryana	1522200	908859
8	Himachal Pradesh	642682	419851
9	Jammu and Kashmir	417056	261984
10	Jharkhand	650721	443400
11	Karnataka	3374233	2334194
12	Kerala	4269075	3586236
13	Madhya Pradesh	1652330	1203672
14	Maharashtra	5138608	3481345
15	North East-I	282800	207365
16	North East-II	211264	129385

1	2	3	4
17	Orissa	968420	764941
18	Punjab	2725017	1451696
19	Rajasthan	2266070	1564375
20	Tamilnadu	3511038	2363584
21	Uttar Pradesh (E)	2311572	1451165
22	Uttar Pradesh (W)	1727874	937532
23	Uttaranchal	498524	325396
24	West Bengal	1704895	1126103
25	Kolkata	1664671	1328096
26	Chennai	1313833	993920
	Total BSNL	46919352	31607310
27	Delhi	2780129	1575597
28	Mumbai	2766872	2134713
	Total MTNL	5547001	3710310

Statement-IV

State-wise details of Mobile Towers cleared by Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing

S.No.	Name of States	Total No. of Towers cleared by Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing up to 31.12.2007
1	2	3
1	Rajasthan	11,100
2	Gujarat	12,580
3	Maharashtra and Goa, Daman and Diu	19,040
4	Karnataka	10,729
5	Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh	8,293
6	West Bengal, Orissa, Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar Islands	15,378
7	Assam and Arunachal Pradesh	3025
8	Delhi and Haryana	12,813
9	Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal	21,460

1	2	3
10	Andhra Pradesh	11,233
11	Punjab and Himachal Pradesh	12,032
12	Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry	15,230
13	Bihar and Jharkhand	6,239
14	Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura	1,420
15	Kerala and Lakshdweep	8,565
16	Jammu and Kashmir	1,944
Total No. of mobile towers		1,71,081

[English]

Foreign Collaboration of Ordnance Factories

*255. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Ordnance Factories seek tie-ups with multinational companies to compete with the foreign companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has received any proposal from the Ordnance Factory Board to undertake upgradation of 155 mm (Bofors) and 105 mm artillery guns in collaboration with Indian and foreign companies; and

(d) if so, the response of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) and (b) Ordnance Factories have entered into arrangements with the following advanced technology providers to develop products required by the Indian Armed Forces:-

- (i) Oerlikon Contraves, Switzerland.
- (ii) BAE SWS Defence, Sweden.
- (iii) Flyer Defense, USA.
- (iv) Israel Military Industries, Israel.

(c) Ordnance Factories have already developed an upgraded version of 155 mm Bofors gun along with Bharat Electronics Limited. Ordnance Factories have also developed a vehicle mounted variant of 105 mm Artillery gun along with Tata Power.

(d) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Slump in the Textiles Industry

*256. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE:

SHRI SRICHAND KRIPLANI:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the handloom, powerloom and other textile related industries in the country are facing severe slump at present;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and whether the Union Government has conducted any survey regarding the condition of such industries in the country;

(c) if so, the details and outcome thereof, industry-wise;

(d) the steps taken by the Union Government to promote such industries in the country;

(e) the funds allocated, released and utilised for the development and improvement of the condition of such industries during each year of the Tenth Five Year Plan, industry-wise?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) The production by the handlooms and powerlooms sectors, and manufacture of spun yam, Man-made filament yam and fabrics during the last three years, indicated in the statement-I shows an overall increase.

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

(d) The Action Plan drawn up for the growth of textiles industry has identified the following thrust areas:

- Apparel and Garments;
- Fibre Availability;
- Manpower Development;
- Textiles Machinery; and
- Technical Textiles.

In addition to the ongoing schemes, the two flagship schemes, viz. Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme and the Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks have been approved for continuation in the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Some new initiatives proposed by the Government will go a long way in the overall development of the textile sector. These include the Scheme for Market Development and Product Diversi-

fication, the Manpower Development Scheme - known as the "Neighbourhood Apparel & Textile Training Institutes for Job Assurance (NATIJA)", the proposal to create Investment Regions, and the Technology Mission on Technical Textiles. In the Budget 2008-09, a provision has been made to establish six mega-clusters in the country in the handlooms, powerlooms and handicrafts sub-sectors to ensure economies of scale and a focused thrust in these areas.

(e) A statement-II showing sector-wise fund allocation and actual expenditure during 10th Five Year Plan, Year-wise, is enclosed.

Statement-I

Production of spun yarn (SSI & Non-SSI)

(In Mn. Kgs)

Month/Year	Production of yarn			
	Cotton	Blended	100% Non-Cotton	Grand Total
1999-00	2203.70	620.77	221.10	3045.57
2000-01	2266.87	645.80	247.55	3160.22
2001-02	2211.88	609.03	280.15	3101.06
2002-03	2177.16	584.61	319.61	3081.37
2003-04	2120.71	589.33	341.76	3051.80
2004-05	2272.28	584.97	366.29	3223.52
2005-06	2520.87	588.11	349.31	3458.29
2006-07 (P)	2823.59	635.10	354.60	3813.39
2007-08 (A)	2617.67	604.41	338.33	3560.41

P - Provisional

A - Anticipated

Production of Man-made Filament Yarn

(in mn. kg.)

Month	Viscose Filament yarn	Polyester Filament yarn	Nylon Filament yarn	Poly Propylene Filament yarn	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
1999-00	49.48	801.02	26.05	17.21	893.76
2000-01	55.26	819.70	26.27	18.49	919.72

1	2	3	4	5	6
2001-02	48.35	866.16	27.83	19.84	962.18
2002-03	50.80	995.37	29.73	24.41	1100.31
2003-04	53.17	1013.00	30.99	20.82	1117.98
2004-05	53.56	1003.63	35.41	16.30	1108.90
2005-06	53.09	1075.82	36.84	13.58	1179.33
2006-07(P)	53.98	1270.83	32.25	13.41	1370.48
2007-08(A)	46.63	1223.57	28.13	9.84	1308.17

P - Provisional A - Anticipated

Production of Fabrics in different Sectors

(Mn. Sq. Mtrs.)

Period	Mill Sector	Decen- tralized Powerlooms Sector	Decen- tralized Hosiery	Hand- loom Sector	Total
1999-00	17.14	23187	6374	7852	38627
2000-01	1670	23803	6696	7506	39675
2001-02	1546	25192	7067	7585	41390
2002-03	1496	25954	7881	5980	41311
2003-04	1434	26947	7847	5493	41721
2004-05	1526	28325	9112	5722	44685
2005-06	1656	30626	10418	6108	48808
2006-07 (P)	1746	32879	11504	6536	5286
2007-08 (A)	1744	35304	12845	7074	56787

P - Provisional

A - Anticipated

Cloth Production in the Handlooms and Powerlooms Sub-sectors

(In Mn. Sq. Mtr.)

Sector	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	April-January (Provisional)
Handlooms	5722	6108	6536	5377
Powerlooms	28325	30626	32879	27406

Statement-II

Outlay and Expenditure (Progressive) during Tenth Five Year Plan

S.No.Sector/Scheme Plan Outlay (Approved)	10th Plan Outlay (Approved)	Total Exp. (upto 02.02.07)	Annual Plan 2002-03		Annual Plan 2003-04		Annual Plan 2004-05		Annual Plan 2005-06		Annual Plan 2006-07		(In Rs. Crore)			
			BE	Actual Exp.												
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		14	15	16
A. Village & Small Industry																
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
1	Handlooms	625.00	730.38	140.00	130.66	156.77	128.86	154.56	152.40	156.00	205.64	192.88	185.00	221.45	125.58	
2	Powerlooms	60.00	22.78	12.00	4.52	14.00	8.26	12.28	4.01	8.00	7.50	5.52	8.00	6.00	0.47	
3	Sericulture	450.00	511.94	87.50	90.59	92.68	89.68	102.46	102.66	110.00	136.42	131.41	142.00	132.37	97.60	
4	Handicrafts	425.00	340.96	88.00	64.98	103.55	63.73	103.00	78.69	105.00	105.00	97.24	110.00	104.65	36.32	
5	Wool & woolen	40.00	25.12	8.00	6.29	13.00	10.00	12.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	6.09	5.00	10.25	3.75	
Sub Total (A)			1600.00	1632.19	335.50	297.04	380.00	300.53	384.30	337.76	384.00	459.56	433.14	450.00	474.72	263.72
B. Industry & Minerals																
6	NIFT	30.00	97.73	8.00	13.73	18.00	23.00	32.71	25.00	12.78	25.00	25.00	11.00	16.00	11.00	
7	NTC	1.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	
8	BIC	1.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	
9	IDMC	1.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	
10	NCJD	30.00	27.15	6.00	5.33	7.00	6.95	7.00	7.48	7.00	7.40	7.40	9.00	9.00	6.30	
11	JMDC	5.00	11.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.73	0.70	0.70	0.74	1.35	1.35	9.00	9.00	6.30	
12	R&D Including TRAS	50.00	12.34	10.00	7.71	10.00	2.56	2.00	0.92	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.00	1.00	1.00	
13	Export Promotion Studies	5.00	1.91	2.00	0.75	2.00	0.62	1.00	0.17	0.50	1.00	0.37	1.00	1.00	1.00	
14	CTM	150.00	165.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	40.00	40.00	80.00	70.00	40.00	100.00	50.00	25.00	

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
15 Sect Economic Service		5.00	1.93	1.00	0.30	1.00	0.49	1.00	0.32	1.05	0.90	0.61	1.00	0.80	0.26	
a Integrated Schemes for Apparel Park(N)		118.37									60.00	27.58	209.00	190.00	90.69	
b Apparel Parts	75.00	71.56	14.50	0.00	25.00	10.14	30.00	22.00	100.00	50.00		39.42				
Infrastructural Development Scheme	75.00	39.99	15.00	0.00	22.00	10.93	30.00	10.00	100.00	50.00		39.06				
18 Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS)	150.00	42.75	30.00	42.75												
19 Export Market Support Scheme (N)	9.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01				
20 Technical Textiles (N)	3.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01					
21 SJDF (including Jute Technology Mission)	40.00	3.04	7.97	0.00	7.97	0.64	5.00	1.00	11.83	6.37	1.40	12.50	12.50			
22 TUFS	1270.00	2019.30	250.00	202.59	250.00	248.97	340.00	283.61	450.00	450.53	485.00	550.00	894.48	799.13		
23 O/o T&C		0.00	0.16*													
24 Institute of Textile Management Coimbatore		9.00	0.00	0.09	3.00	3.00	3.25	0.91	1.00	2.00	2.00	5.00	5.00	3.00		
Sub Total (B)	1900.00	2641.37	379.50	305.41	380.00	338.13	493.70	392.11	766.00	725.65	670.34	899.50	1179.78	935.38		
Grand Total (A+B)	3500.00	4273.56	715.00	602.45	760.00@	638.66	878.00\$	729.87	1150.00	1185.21	1103.48	1349.50	1654.50	1199.10		

N - New Scheme

@ Included additional Rs. 45 crores for J & K package.

\$ Includes Rs. 13 crore for J & K and Rs. 29.85 crores for schemes under PM's Package

Based on actual releases from PAO

* Provided in 2002-03 (RE)

Hiring of Godowns by FCI

*257. DR DHIRENDRA AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the number and storage capacity of private godowns hired by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) during each of the last three years and in the current year along with the rent paid therefor;

(b) whether the Government had taken required action for ensuring reduction in rent at the time of hiring these godowns;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the storage capacity likely to be hired during 2008-09 along with the rent to be paid therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The number and storage capacity hired by FCI directly from private parties during the last three years and current year along with rent paid is as under:-

Year	Number of Godowns	Capacity (In Lakh MT)	Rent paid (Rs. In Crores)
2004-05	124	14.13	12.05
2005-06	91	8.83	9.54
2006-07	88	6.77	7.02 (Provisional)
2007-08 (As on 31.1.2008)	76	6.58	7.25 (Revised Estimate)

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The following steps have been taken for reduction in rent of private godowns:

(i) Powers for hiring of private godowns have been withdrawn from EDs(Zone)/GMs(Region) and for hiring of these godowns, approval of CMD, FCI is now necessary.

(ii) Periodical review is made to examine the need for hiring private godowns. The godowns are taken only in such areas where no CWC/SWC godowns are available.

(iii) The godowns are taken for minimum required period.

(iv) Before taking over the godowns, the cost effectiveness is examined in detail.

(v) Efforts are made to hire godown nearest to the railhead or national/state highway so as to minimize the cost of transportation.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Present storage capacity utilization as on 31.1.2008 is 69% and further hiring of the godowns will depend upon the trend of procurement and off-take. Private godowns can be hired only when absolutely necessary with the approval of CMD, FCI.

[English]

Social Audits for Elimination of Child Labour

*258. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has finalised a proposal for social audit of those exporting industries which could be vulnerable to international bans on grounds of employing child labour with a view to eliminate child labour from these industries;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the time by which such audits are likely to be conducted; and

(c) the regulations currently in place to ensure elimination of child labour particularly from export-oriented industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) to (c) While there is no specific proposal for social audit in export oriented industries, with a view to eliminating child labour from such industries, necessary steps are taken under the existing laws to prevent child labour in prohibited occupations and processes.

For the rehabilitation of Child Labour, Government is implementing the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme in 250 districts of the country which includes districts with high concentration of child labour in export oriented industries. Under the Scheme, Children withdrawn from work are admitted to Special Schools where they are provided with accelerated bridging education, vocational training, stipend, nutrition and health care facilities etc. Further, various export promotion councils have been requested to raise awareness campaigns as part of an action plan among their member-industries for the elimination of child labour.

[Translation]

Revision of Below Poverty Line List

*259. SHRI RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA:

SHRI HEMMAL MURMU:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether some States have recently submitted a revised list of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families to the Union Government in order to increase the number of BPL families presently represented in the central data and have urged to allocate more foodgrains and kerosene oil as per the revised list;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the quantum of foodgrains and kerosene oil allocated for distribution under the public distribution system in each State of the country during each of the last three years and in the current year;

(d) whether some of the States have failed to lift foodgrains and kerosene oil allocated to them for BPL and Above Poverty Line (APL) families; and

(e) If so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under joint responsibility of the Government of India and State/UT Governments. The Government of India carries out procurement of foodgrains for the TPDS, their storage, transportation and allocation to the State/UT Governments. Similarly allocation of PDS Subsidized Kerosene Oil (SKO) is made by the Government of India to different States/Union Territories (UTs) on a quarterly basis for distribution under PDS for cooking and illumination only.

The responsibility for identification of eligible BPL and AAY families within the respective number of BPL households estimated by the Planning Commission and issuance of ration cards to them, allocation of food grains within the State/UT and proper distribution of allocated TPDS foodgrains as well as kerosene to eligible families through fair price shops/kerosene dealers rests with State/UT Governments. Statement-I indicating State-wise numbers of households, BPL households accepted by the Government of India and ration cards actually issued by State/UT Governments is enclosed.

The statement shows that 18 State-UTs have issued ration cards within limits accepted by Government of India and 17 State/UT Governments have issued ration cards in excess of limits approved by Government of India for allocation of foodgrains under TPDS. A number of State Governments have requested to enhance allocation of Foodgrains to their States on the basis of the higher number of BPL cards issued by them. Statement-II mentioning States and UT requesting for higher allocation of foodgrains for BPL families is enclosed.

Such requests received earlier were referred to Planning Commission. However, the Planning Commission

has informed that refixing the number of BPL households for TPDS should involve not only growth in population but also change in incidence of poverty, so there is no justification to revise the support under TPDS.

At present, foodgrains are allocated to the States on the basis of number of BPL households based on poverty estimates of Planning Commission for 1993-94 and population estimates of Registrar General of India as on 01-03-2000. As per poverty estimates released by the Planning Commission in March, 2007, the percentage of below poverty population has come down to 27.5% in 2004-05, from 36% in 1993-94. Government of India is continuing allocations based on 1993-94 poverty estimates and March, 2000 population only.

There has been no reduction in the PDS SKO to States/UTs after the financial year 2004-05, including additional allocation made during that year. Allocations for 2007-08 have also been maintained at the same level.

For ensuring availability and distribution of essential commodities to targeted families, the Government issued the Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001. As provided under it, State and UT Governments are mandated to ensure that the commodities (foodgrains etc.) allocated under the TPDS reach the targeted families and no leakages/diversions take place.

(c) to (e) Allocation and offtake of foodgrains (Rice & Wheat) under Targeted Public Distribution System during last three years as well as in current year (upto January, 2008) are given in statement-III to VI enclosed. Offtake of foodgrains under TPDS in some States/UTs has been less than the allocation made. State-wise details of PDS SKO allocated during the years 2005-06 to 2007-08 State-wise details of PDS SKO uplifted by the State/UTs during the years 2005-06 and 2006-07 are enclosed as statement-VII and VIII respectively.

Statement-I

State-wise no. of Households BPL Households and Ration Cards Issued

(Prepared as on 29.02.08)

State/UT	Projected Population in 2000 (in Lakhs)	% of BPL Population	Size of Households	No. of Households in 2000 (in Lakhs)	No. of BPL Households in 2000 (in Lakhs)	Ration Cards (in Lakhs)		
						BPL	AAY	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Andhra Pradesh	754.66	25.68	4.77	158.21	40.63	170.43	15.58	186.01
Arunachal Pradesh	11.92	40.86	4.93	2.42	0.99	0.61	0.38	0.99
Assam	261.96	40.86	5.83	44.93	18.36	12.02	7.04	19.06
Bihar	731.11	54.96	6.16	118.79	65.23	40.70	24.29	64.99
Chhattisgarh	249.25	42.52	5.65	44.11	18.75	15.53	7.19	22.72
Delhi	139.64	14.69	5.02	27.82	4.09	2.90	1.50	4.40
Goa	15.95	14.92	4.99	3.20	0.48	0.13	0.15	0.28
Gujarat	482.52	24.21	5.51	87.57	21.20	26.60	8.10	34.70
Haryana	196.31	25.05	6.30	31.48	7.89	5.38	2.92	8.30
Himachal Pradesh	67.11	40.86	5.34	12.57	5.14	3.17	1.97	5.14
Jammu and Kashmir	99.45	40.86	5.52	18.02	7.36	4.80	2.56	7.36

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Jharkhand	268.31	54.96	6.16	43.56	23.94	14.77	9.18	23.95
Karnataka	520.91	33.16	5.52	94.37	31.29	59.23	12.00	71.23
Kerala	322.62	25.43	5.28	61.10	15.54	14.89	5.96	20.85
Madhya Pradesh	548.22	42.52	5.65	97.03	41.25	44.03	15.82	59.85
Maharashtra	911.15	36.86	5.14	177.27	65.34	48.35	24.64	72.99
Manipur	25.18	40.86	5.19	4.07	1.66	1.02	0.64	1.66
Meghalaya	24.34	40.86	5.42	4.49	1.83	1.13	0.70	1.83
Mizoram	9.52	40.86	5.70	1.67	0.68	0.42	0.26	0.68
Nagaland	16.84	40.86	5.57	3.02	1.24	0.77	0.47	1.24
Orissa	358.57	48.56	5.28	67.91	32.98	37.59	12.65	50.24
Punjab	235.36	11.77	5.92	39.76	4.68	3.49	1.79	5.28
Rajasthan	535.59	27.41	6.04	88.67	24.31	16.53	9.32	25.85
Sikkim	5.59	41.43	5.33	1.05	0.43	0.27	0.16	0.43
Tamil Nadu*	617.74	35.03	4.45	138.82	48.83	149.65	18.65	168.30
Tripura	37.82	40.86	5.24	7.22	2.95	1.82	1.13	2.95
Uttar Pradesh	1628.04	40.85	6.22	261.42	106.79	65.84	40.95	106.79
Uttaranchal	75.84	40.85	6.22	12.19	4.98	3.37	1.51	4.88
West Bengal	790.06	35.66	5.44	145.23	51.79	37.67	14.80	52.47
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	3.86	34.47	4.75	0.81	0.28	0.12	0.04	0.16
Chandigarh	8.88	11.35	4.38	2.03	0.23	0.06	0.02	0.08
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	1.90	50.84	5.28	0.36	0.18	0.12	0.05	0.17
Daman and Diu	1.40	15.80	5.30	0.26	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.02
Lakshadweep	0.71	25.04	6.23	0.11	0.03	0.02	0.012	0.03
Pondicherry	11.11	37.40	4.97	2.24	0.84	1.12	0.32	1.44
Total	9969.44		5.51	1803.78	652.03	784.56	242.76	1027.32

1. * Separate figures of APL/BPL cards in Tamil Nadu are not available as there is no categorisation on the basis of APL/BPL in the State.

2. AAY figures are as on 7.1.2008. BPL figures have been reduced correspondingly.

Statement-II

Requests from State/UT Governments for accepting higher number of BPL families for TPDS allocations

S.No.	States and requests	BPL families accepted by GOI for TPDS allocations (lakh)	Requested BPL families for allocations (lakh)
1.	Bihar, February 2008	65.23	121.00
2.	Kerala, July 2007	15.54	20.22
3.	Orissa, May 2007	32.98	57.50
4.	Karnataka, May 2004	31.29	63.00
5.	West Bengal, February 2006	51.79	52.47
6.	Daman and Diu, November 2007	0.04	0.057
7.	Madhya Pradesh, December 2007	41.25	60.00
8.	Punjab, August 2007	4.68	14.00
9.	Chhattisgarh, September 2007	18.75	32.90*

* 14.15 lakh additional families identified under Chief Minister's Khadyan Sahayata Yojna for distribution of foodgrains at BPL rates.

Statement-III

Allocation and Offtake of Rice & Wheat for the year 2004-05 (P) under TPDS

S.No.	State/UTs	Allotment						Offtake						%Offtake						
		BPL		APL		Total		BPL		APL		Total		BPL		APL		Total		
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
1	Andhra Pradesh	1,230.128	2,266.740	476.248	3,973.116	1,261.816	1,137.642	456.115	2,855.573	102.576	50.188	95.773	71.870							
2	Arunachal Pradesh	31.680	76.680	9.816	118.176	31.610	54.709	8.661	94.980	99.779	71.347	88.233	80.370							
3	Assam	650.434	885.140	150.086	1,685.660	623.762	521.126	139.178	1,284.066	95.899	58.875	92.732	76.180							
4	Bihar	2,219.184	2,291.520	420.000	4,930.704	809.910	10.312	382.079	1,202.301	36.496	0.450	90.971	24.380							
5	Chhattisgarh	586.635	1,045.800	200.997	1,833.432	556.720	42.368	180.399	779.487	94.901	4.051	89.752	42.520							
6	Delhi	155.270	996.516	16.510	1,168.296	148.735	410.117	13.984	572.836	95.791	41.155	84.700	49.030							
7	Goa	11.848	118.296	4.112	134.256	0.000	0.000	5.040	5.040	0.000	0.000	122.568	3.750							
8	Gujarat	716.567	2,787.564	167.081	3,671.212	556.091	93.809	114.301	764.201	77.605	3.365	68.411	20.820							
9	Haryana	257.040	1,014.204	71.532	1,342.776	217.587	154.641	65.097	437.325	84.651	15.248	91.004	32.570							
10	Himachal Pradesh	134.816	348.900	44.116	527.832	118.553	152.004	41.755	312.312	87.937	43.567	94.648	59.170							
11	Jammu and Kashmir	243.008	447.720	66.076	756.804	235.598	292.756	43.508	571.862	96.951	65.388	65.845	75.560							
12	Jharkhand	801.112	216.300	204.380	1,221.792	365.914	20.607	167.666	554.187	45.676	9.527	82.036	45.360							
13	Karnataka	987.813	2,070.600	326.463	3,384.876	972.701	848.631	300.882	2,122.214	98.470	40.985	92.164	62.700							
14	Kerala	487.048	1,808.940	165.560	2,461.548	493.640	264.047	156.714	914.401	101.353	14.597	94.657	37.150							
15	Madhya Pradesh	1,326.222	2,535.372	406.254	4,267.848	1,225.005	22.732	380.325	1,628.062	92.368	0.897	93.618	38.150							
16	Maharashtra	2,069.837	4,700.880	674.467	7,445.184	1,773.019	67.391	598.260	2,438.670	85.660	1.434	88.701	32.750							
17	Manipur	44.084	47.460	11.930	103.474	29.035	18.305	8.631	55.971	65.863	38.569	72.347	54.090							

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
18 Meghalaya	60.152	45.024	16.708	121.884	60.389	21.808	16.119	98.316	100.394	48.436	96.475	80.660		
19 Mizoram	21.241	93.840	7.439	122.520	21.644	70.007	7.098	98.749	101.897	74.603	95.416	80.600		
20 Nagaland	39.529	122.040	12.551	174.120	42.787	108.915	11.922	163.624	108.242	89.245	94.988	93.970		
21 Orissa	1,436.088	1,155.564	260.604	2,852.256	1,141.878	132.305	240.040	1,514.223	79.513	11.449	92.109	53.090		
22 Punjab	166.416	1,473.240	30.120	1,669.776	110.983	25.348	22.766	159.097	66.690	1.721	75.584	9.530		
23 Rajasthan	708.868	2,763.756	251.672	3,724.296	651.375	301.545	230.951	1,183.871	91.889	10.911	91.767	31.790		
24 Sikkim	14.076	25.812	4.164	44.052	14.022	18.532	4.058	36.612	99.616	71.796	97.454	83.110		
25 Tamil Nadu	1,608,365	3,787,980	434.011	5,830,356	1,665,081	630,638	424,791	2,720,510	103,526	16,648	97,876	46,660		
26 Tripura	100.929	179.232	22.971	303.132	104.670	60.168	21.376	186.214	103,707	33,570	93,056	61,430		
27 Uttar Pradesh	3,316.042	6,494,460	1,169,138	10,979,640	2,777,114	7,763	1,126,056	3,910,933	83,748	0.120	96,315	35,620		
28 Uttaranchal	177.120	333.552	32.052	542.724	178.697	16.772	41.620	237.089	100,890	5,028	129,851	43,690		
29 West Bengal	1,618,945	4,089,180	391,595	6,099,720	1,259,800	924,827	260,473	2,445,100	77,816	22,616	66,516	40,090		
30 Andaman and Nicobar Islands	7.430	36.360	1.800	45.590	0.887	2.023	0.000	2.910	11,938	5,564	0.000	6,380		
31 Chandigarh	8.748	75.516	0.888	85.152	0.170	0.000	0.191	0.361	1,943	0.000	21,509	0.420		
32 Dadra and Nagar Haveli	5.544	7.140	1.176	13.860	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		
33 Daman and Diu	1.428	9.420	0.252	11.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		
34 Lakshadweep	0.372	3.708	0.168	4.248	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		
35 Pondicherry	28.238	13.200	6.874	48.312	2.620	0.085	1.235	3.940	9,278	0.644	17,966	8,160		
Total	21,272,257	44,367,656	6,059,811	71,699,724	17,451,813	6,431,933	5,471,291	29,355,037	82,040	14,497	90,288	40,942		

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
18	Meghalaya	53.568	45.024	23.292	121.884	54.700	22.610	22.720	100.030	102.113	50.218	97.544	82.070	
19	Mizoram	18.279	72.020	10.401	100.700	17.650	55.890	10.010	83.550	96.559	77.603	96.241	82.970	
20	Nagaland	35.817	102.400	16.263	154.480	35.610	94.660	16.440	146.710	99.422	92.441	101.088	94.970	
21	Orissa	1261.907	1155.564	434.785	2852.256	797.408	109.770	450.493	1357.671	63.191	9.499	103.613	47.600	
22	Punjab	164.067	1473.240	32.469	1669.776	71.110	8.840	18.240	98.190	43.342	0.600	56.177	5.880	
23	Rajasthan	593.382	2763.756	340.018	3697.156	469.570	204.170	300.570	974.310	79.135	7.387	88.398	26.350	
24	Sikkim	14.076	25.812	4.164	44.052	14.050	24.040	4.320	42.410	99.815	93.135	103.746	96.270	
25	Tamil Nadu	1397.697	3787.980	644.679	5830.356	1391.600	1663.797	657.630	3713.027	99.564	43.923	102.009	63.680	
26	Tripura	95.364	179.232	28.536	303.132	92.770	66.960	28.530	188.260	97.280	37.359	99.979	62.100	
27	Uttar Pradesh	2945.106	6494.460	1539.686	10979.252	2560.263	40.166	1438.289	4038.718	86.933	0.618	93.414	36.790	
28	Uttaranchal	162.413	333.552	46.759	542.724	166.282	53.316	34.615	254.213	102.382	15.984	74.029	46.840	
29	West Bengal	1447.969	4089.180	562.571	6099.720	1294.459	1029.410	454.300	2778.169	89.398	25.174	80.754	45.550	
30	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	7.428	36.360	1.800	45.588	1.810	15.790	0.530	18.130	24.367	43.427	29.444	39.770	
31	Chandigarh	8.748	75.516	0.888	85.152	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
32	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	5.192	7.140	1.528	13.860	1.670	0.890	0.720	3.280	32.165	12.465	47.120	23.670	
33	Daman and Diu	1.236	9.420	0.444	11.100	0.440	0.150	0.220	0.810	35.599	1.592	49.550	7.300	
34	Lakshadweep	0.372	3.360	0.168	3.900	0.470	2.980	0.330	3.780	126.344	88.690	196.429	96.920	
35	Pondicherry	22.862	13.200	12.250	48.312	12.530	5.200	7.910	25.640	54.807	39.394	64.571	53.070	
	Total	19200.962	44353.332	8067.219	71621.513	15642.518	8020.494	7442.335	31105.347	81.467	18.083	92.254	43.430	

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
18 Meghalaya	53.508	44.944	23.352	121.804	53.435	38.895	23.352	115.682	99.864	86.541	100.000	94.97	100.000	94.97
19 Mizoram	17.640	43.662	10.920	72.222	17.64	40.158	11.246	69.044	100.000	91.975	102.985	95.60	102.985	95.60
20 Nagaland	32.112	77.004	19.968	129.084	37.656	87.041	22.976	147.673	117.27	113.034	115.64	114.40	115.64	114.40
21 Orissa	1,165.976	838.990	530.716	2535.682	676.998	137.985	433.288	1248.271	58.063	16.447	81.642	49.23	81.642	49.23
22 Punjab	138.228	672.410	58.308	868.946	62.856	53.848	33.563	150.267	45.473	8.008	57.562	17.29	57.562	17.29
23 Rajasthan	635.306	1,337.890	385.714	2358.910	516.875	160.975	348.024	1025.874	81.358	12.032	90.229	43.49	90.229	43.49
24 Sikkim	11.766	26.447	6.474	44.687	11.766	25.948	6.474	44.188	100	98.113	100.000	98.88	100.000	98.88
25 Tamil Nadu	1,259.232	3,763.560	783.144	5805.936	1159.002	1505.038	775.366	3439.406	92.04	39.990	99.007	59.24	99.007	59.24
26 Tripura	95.364	176.858	28.536	300.758	83.159	116.723	25.458	225.340	87.202	65.998	89.214	74.92	89.214	74.92
27 Uttar Pradesh	2,766.663	3,842.700	1,720.01	8329.377	2481.039	325.775	1692.331	4499.145	89.676	8.478	98.391	54.02	98.391	54.02
28 Uttaranchal	149.511	287.770	59.661	496.942	134.665	102.360	47.404	284.429	90.07	35.570	79.456	57.24	79.456	57.24
29 West Bengal	1,522.066	3,473.76	621.684	5617.510	1044.249	838.775	515.641	2398.665	68.607	24.146	82.943	42.7	82.943	42.7
30 Andaman and Nicobar Islands	5.040	22.070	1.800	28.910	2.640	13.670	0.820	17.130	52.381	61.939	45.556	59.25	45.556	59.25
31 Chandigarh	2.512	31.806	0.888	35.206	0.210	0.000	0.070	0.280	8.360	0	7.883	0.8	7.883	0.8
32 Dadra and Nagar Haveli	4.948	6.650	1.772	13.370	2.540	1.520	0.380	4.440	51.334	22.857	21.445	33.21	21.445	33.21
33 Daman and Diu	1.044	8.900	0.636	10.580	0.460	0.250	0.370	1.080	44.061	2.809	58.176	10.21	58.176	10.21
34 Lakshadweep	0.295	3.698	0.161	4.154	0.240	2.830	0.160	3.230	81.356	76.528	99.379	77.76	99.379	77.76
35 Pondicherry	21.564	50.050	13.548	85.162	9.590	1.810	7.140	18.540	44.472	3.616	52.702	21.77	52.702	21.77
Total	18,004,192	30,282,763	9,369,101	57,656,056	14,239,274	8,468,499	8,661,684	31,369,457	79,089	27,965	92,449	54,408	92,449	54,408

Statement-VI

Allocation and Offtake of Rice & Wheat for the year 2007-08 (P) under TPDS (Upto Jan., 2008)

S.No.	State/UTs	Allotment						Offtake						(in '000 Tonnes)			
		BPL			AAY			BPL			AAY				%Offtake		
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14				
1	Andhra Pradesh	876.740	1817.962	545.240	3239.942	882.081	1487.599	549.379	2919.059	100.609	81.828	100.759	90.100				
2	Arunachal Pradesh	21.270	52.042	13.310	86.622	13.480	32.764	8.188	54.432	63.376	62.957	61.518	62.840				
3	Assam	396.266	480.817	246.164	1123.247	398.032	515.759	248.142	1161.933	100.446	107.267	100.804	103.440				
4	Bihar	1433.170	25.791	849.990	2308.951	616.220	7.999	719.747	1343.966	42.997	31.015	84.677	58.210				
5	Chhattisgarh	391.740	43.096	251.620	686.456	362.819	26.426	257.844	647.089	92.617	61.319	102.474	94.270				
6	Delhi	107.758	476.283	35.392	619.433	110.913	431.066	29.049	571.028	102.928	90.506	82.078	92.190				
7	Goa	4.550	18.212	5.090	27.852	4.528	17.490	4.132	26.150	99.516	96.036	81.179	93.890				
8	Gujarat	440.640	229.623	283.400	953.663	403.607	65.974	247.272	716.853	91.596	28.731	87.252	75.170				
9	Haryana	173.810	98.243	102.350	374.403	164.562	0.764	97.369	262.695	94.679	0.778	95.133	70.160				
10	Himachal Pradesh	110.950	221.602	68.950	401.502	101.964	211.544	66.089	379.597	91.901	95.461	95.851	94.540				
11	Jammu and Kashmir	168.080	429.891	89.490	687.461	168.335	360.355	89.416	618.106	100.152	83.825	99.917	89.910				
12	Jharkhand	550.075	42.714	287.835	880.624	406.412	8.102	257.321	671.835	73.883	18.968	89.399	76.290				
13	Karnataka	635.320	1145.263	419.910	2200.493	627.814	546.468	402.250	1576.532	98.819	47.716	95.794	71.640				
14	Kerala	335.290	433.777	208.550	977.617	335.333	400.170	208.570	944.073	100.013	92.252	100.010	96.570				
15	Madhya Pradesh	861.778	107.810	552.952	1522.540	861.721	86.022	534.879	1482.622	99.993	79.790	96.732	97.380				
16	Maharashtra	1397.729	154.271	849.191	2401.191	1192.084	102.994	706.807	2001.885	85.287	66.762	83.233	83.370				
17	Manipur	39.998	31.165	18.112	89.275	38.147	27.901	16.954	83.002	95.372	89.527	93.606	92.970				

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
18 Meghalaya	39.480	51.377	24.570	115.427	37.955	45.870	23.821	107.646	96.137	89.281	96.952	93.260		
19 Mizoram	14.700	46.719	9.100	70.519	14.109	43.031	8.911	66.091	95.980	92.106	97.923	93.660		
20 Nagaland	26.760	66.347	16.640	109.747	26.678	70.714	17.650	115.042	99.694	106.582	106.070	104.820		
21 Orissa	971.310	168.761	442.600	1582.671	814.927	119.851	359.875	1294.653	83.900	71.018	81.309	81.800		
22 Punjab	110.927	63.489	52.853	227.269	53.641	33.884	29.198	116.723	48.357	53.370	55.244	51.360		
23 Rajasthan	504.610	237.030	326.240	1067.880	458.559	187.168	303.322	949.049	90.874	78.964	92.975	88.870		
24 Sikkim	9.420	23.212	5.780	38.412	9.416	24.465	5.784	39.665	99.958	105.398	100.069	103.260		
25 Tamil Nadu	1049.360	2342.033	652.620	4044.013	1044.408	1355.635	653.334	3053.377	99.528	57.883	100.109	75.500		
26 Tripura	65.232	113.897	38.018	217.147	68.843	98.997	33.135	200.975	105.536	86.918	87.156	92.550		
27 Uttar Pradesh	2304.750	56.288	1432.900	3793.938	2049.442	44.945	1379.523	3473.910	88.923	79.848	96.275	91.560		
28 Uttaranchal	121.380	114.199	52.930	288.509	118.347	87.284	49.141	254.772	97.501	76.431	92.841	88.310		
29 West Bengal	1294.650	685.460	518.070	2498.180	1110.037	631.548	440.854	2182.439	85.740	92.135	85.095	87.360		
30 Andaman and Nicobar Islands	4.200	19.032	1.500	24.732	2.869	11.539	1.096	15.504	68.310	60.629	73.067	62.690		
31 Chandigarh	2.450	0.300	0.740	3.490	2.622	0.119	1.102	3.843	107.020	39.667	148.919	110.110		
32 Dadra and Nagar Haveli	3.770	4.154	1.830	9.754	0.423	0.781	0.243	1.447	11.220	18.801	13.279	14.830		
33 Daman and Diu	0.870	0.900	0.530	2.300	0.257	0.189	0.163	0.609	29.540	21.000	30.755	26.480		
34 Lakshadweep	0.587	3.100	0.382	4.069	0.525	2.220	0.632	3.377	89.438	71.613	165.445	82.990		
35 Pondicherry	17.970	25.750	11.290	55.010	9.379	2.346	6.240	17.965	52.193	9.111	55.270	32.660		
Total	14487.590	9830.610	8416.139	32734.339	12510.489	7089.983	7757.432	27357.904	86.353	72.121	92.173	83.576		

Statement-VII

State-wise and year-wise details of PDS SKO allocated during the year 2005-06 to 2007-08

(Quantity in Metric Tonnes)

Name of State/UTs	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
1	2	3	4
Andaman and Nicobar	5816	5816	5816
Andhra Pradesh	517158	517158	517158
Arunachal Pradesh	9257	9257	9257
Assam	258007	258007	258007
Bihar	647430	647430	647430
Chandigarh	13067	13067	13067
Chhattisgarh	146938	146938	146938
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	2782	2782	2782
Daman and Diu	2118	2118	2118
Delhi	168484	168484	168484
Goa	19212	19212	19212
Gujarat	743759	743759	743759
Haryana	145619	145619	145619
Himachal Pradesh	50537	50537	50537
Jammu and Kashmir	76044	76044	76044
Jharkhand	211175	211175	211175
Karnataka	461478	461478	461478
Kerala	216308	216308	216308
Lakshadweep	795	795	795
Madhya Pradesh	488609	488609	488609
Maharashtra	1276876	1276876	1276876
Manipur	19907	19907	19907
Meghalaya	20401	20401	20401
Mizoram	6217	6217	6217
Nagaland	13312	13312	13312
Orissa	314977	314977	314977
Puducherry	12257	12257	12257

1	2	3	4
Punjab	237192	237192	237192
Rajasthan	398913	398913	398913
Sikkim	5582	5582	5582
Tamil Nadu	558929	558929	558929
Tripura	30832	30832	30832
Uttar Pradesh	1241772	1241772	1241772
Uttarakhand	89849	89849	89849
West Bengal	752103	752103	752103
Total	9163712	9163712	9163712

Statement-VIII

State-wise and year-wise details of PDS SKO uplifted from 2005-06 to 2006-07

(Figures in MTs)

State	2006-07	2005-06
1	2	3
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	5971*	6582*
Andhra Pradesh	524075*	509495
Arunachal Pradesh	9141*	9102
Assam	257937	257174
Bihar	644582	647190
Chandigarh	10478	11619
Chhattisgarh	145420	145850
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	2540	2646
Daman and Diu	2031	1928
Delhi	160786	157365
Goa	19188*	19179
Gujarat	747385*	744499*
Haryana	145447	144513
Himachal Pradesh	48936	47904
Jammu and Kashmir	74536	71315
Jharkhand	210416	211960*
Karnataka	463239*	461576*

1	2	3
Kerala	216657*	215615
Lakshadweep	858*	532
Madhya Pradesh	488029	484609
Maharashtra	1280062*	1272009
Manipur	19467	19729
Meghalaya	19678	20265
Mizoram	6215	6206
Nagaland	13599*	13298
Orissa	316043*	312171
Pondicherry	12253	12344*
Punjab	236044	235267
Rajasthan	399988*	392790
Sikkim	5589*	5559
Tamil Nadu	569629*	568456*
Tripura	30641	30514
Uttar Pradesh	1242373*	1241148
Uttarakhand	93790*	86009
West Bengal	751894	748342
Grand Total	9174917	9114760

* Including additional allocation made to the State/UTs
 Offtake details of PDS SKO during 2007-08 are yet to be received.

Violation of Minimum Wages Act, 1948

*260. SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD;
 SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of minimum wages fixed for different class/category of workers/labourers alongwith the criteria followed in fixing the minimum wages in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether the workers/labourers engaged in the unorganised and organised sectors are denied their right to minimum wages and other facilities due to non-compliance of the relevant regulations and due to the negligence of officials concerned; and

(c) if so, the details thereof indicating the number of complaints/cases registered during each of the last three years and the current year and the reaction of the Government thereto, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) On the basis of the latest information available, a statement giving the minimum rates of wages for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labourers in the Central and State Spheres, is given in the statement-I enclosed.

Since the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 has not laid down any criteria for fixing the minimum wages, the norms recommended by the Indian Labour Conference, held in 1957 like (a) 3 consumption units for one earner, (b) Minimum food requirements of 2700 calories per average Indian Adult, (c) Clothing requirements of 72 yards per annum per family, (d) Rent corresponding to the minimum area provided for under Government's Industrial Housing Scheme and (e) Fuel, Lighting and other miscellaneous items of expenditure to constitute 20% of the total minimum wage and the judgement delivered by the Supreme Court of India in 1992 in the case of Raptakos Brett and Co. Vs. its workmen that children education, medical requirement, minimum recreation including festival/ceremonies and provision for old age, marriage, etc., should further constitute 25% of the total minimum wage, are taken into account by the appropriate Governments while fixing minimum wages.

(b) The minimum wages, fixed under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 have to be statutorily paid. The enforcement of the Act is secured at two levels. While in the Central Sphere, the enforcement is secured through the Inspecting Officers of the Chief Labour Commissioner(Central) commonly designated as Central Industrial Relations Machinery (CIRM), the compliance in the State Sphere is ensured through the State Enforcement Machinery. They conduct regular inspections and in the event of detection of any case of non-payment or under - payment of minimum wages, they advise the employers to make payment of the shortfall of wages. In case of non-compliance, penal provisions against the defaulting employers are invoked.

(c) The details regarding enforcement of Minimum Wages Act, 1948 in different States/Union Territories for the last three years i.e., 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06, as available, is enclosed as Statement-II (a, b and c)

Statement-I

Rates of Minimum Wages for Different Category of Workers in Different States/Union Territories

S.No.	State/Union Territory	Unskilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled Territory
1	2	3	4	5
1	Andhra Pradesh	100.00	110.00	120.00
2	Arunachal Pradesh	55.00	60.00	65.00

1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3	Assam	72.99	76.32	79.70	20	Orissa	70.00	80.00	90.00
4	Bihar	81.00	83.00	85.00	21	Punjab	96.90	101.35	107.50
5	Chhattisgarh	69.00	99.59	106.02	22	Rajasthan	73.00	77.00	81.00
6	Goa	93.00	99.00	105.00	23	Sikkim	85.00	-	-
7	Gujarat	55.00	65.00	100.00	24	Tamil Nadu	66.73	90.82	93.82
8	Haryana	135.00	140.00	150.00	25	Tripura	47.18	47.18	83.85
9	Himachal Pradesh	75.00	79.50	91.00	26	Uttar Pradesh	76.31	88.31	102.91
10	Jharkhand	67.72	-	-	27	Uttaranchal	70.82	83.21	95.60
11	Jammu and Kashmir	66.00	88.00	147.00	28	West Bengal	57.01	58.16	58.51
12	Karnataka	74.84	82.34	84.64	29	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	130.00	140.00	168.00
13	Kerala	97.52	99.02	101.12	30	Chandigarh	131.79	137.56	149.10
14	Madhya Pradesh	61.37	84.30	87.96	31	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	99.80	106.30	112.80
15	Maharashtra	65.00	72.92	75.33	32	Daman and Diu	87.00	97.00	104.00
16	Manipur	72.40	77.65	79.40	33	Delhi	140.00	146.00	156.00
17	Meghalaya	70.00	75.00	85.00	34	Lakshadweep	70.00	76.00	82.00
18	Mizoram	103.00	115.00	143.00	35	Puducherry	78.00	-	86.00
19	Nagaland	66.00	70.00	75.00		Central Sphere	72.24	85.20	108.12

Statement-II (a)*Details regarding enforcement of Minimum Wages Act, 1948 during 2003-04*

S.No.	Name of the State/UT	No. of Inspections made	No. of Irregularities detected	No. of Irregularities rectified	No. of Claims filed	No. of Claims Settled/Decided	No. of Persons Prosecuted	Amount of Fine Released (in '000 Rs.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Central Sphere	18,587	2,53,141	2,11,115	3,843	3,594	5,599	2,495
	State Sphere							
1.	Andhra Pradesh	52,204	506	404	19,820	15,293	1,185	135
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	120	35	32	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
3.	Assam	8,186	1,582	1,173	14	13	Nil	1
4.	Bihar	2,97,439	55,996	55,491	24,590	2,057	54	5
5.	Goa	1,038	3,202	140	9	15	36	30
6.	Gujarat	1,20,550	1,01,364	57,977	4,052	1,134	1,080	1,197
7.	Haryana	5,212	Nil	Nil	2,928	193	829	4,137
8.	Himachal Pradesh	2,476	1,267	1,056	122	91	211	56

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	1,802	382	170	Nil	Nil	230	14
10	Jharkhand	3,112	688	539	147	Nil	Nil	799
11.	Karnataka	43,687	NA	NA	2,145	NA	553	339
12.	Kerala	27,779	44,788	35,635	84	74	490	220
13.	Madhya Pradesh	7,408	1,004	6,404	231	461	1,004	Nil
14.	Maharashtra	1,13,043	1,25,776	79,623	33	117	287	280
15.	Manipur	118	31	9	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
16.	Meghalaya	633	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
17.	Mizoram	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
18.	Orissa	29,798	23,535	12,212	57	2	214	13
19.	Punjab	16,464	Nil	Nil	152	170	Nil	162
20.	Rajasthan	7,681	266	113	293	239	251	81
21.	Sikkim	The Minimum Wages Act has been extended to Sikkim w.e.f. 1.10.2004						
22.	Tamil Nadu	1,35,725	7,505	534	2,396	1,995	1,337	835
23.	Tripura	4,932	95	92	91	63	16	16
24.	Uttar Pradesh	39,710	10,512	NA	5,937	7,779	NA	1
25.	Uttaranchal	3,322	1,045	388	223	177	334	27
26.	West Bengal	28,478	6,710	6,340	215	2	1	64
27.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	234	1,170	1,124	24	21	3	8
28.	Chandigarh	62	23	23	38	33	11	8
29.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	71	28	28	1	Nil	4	Nil
30.	Daman and Diu	295	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
31.	Delhi**	8,101	6,460	4,880	NA	NA	1,223	NA
32.	Lakshadweep	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
33.	Pondicherry	8,589	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Total (Above States)	9,68,269	3,93,970	2,64,387	63,602	29,929	9,353	8,424
	Grand Total	9,86,856	6,47,111	4,75,502	67,445	33,523	14,952	10,919

Note:- 1. The information has not been received from the States of Chhattisgarh and Nagaland.

** Relates to the Calendar Year i.e. 2004

NA - Not Available

Statement-II (b)**Details regarding enforcement of Minimum Wages Act, 1948 during 2004-05**

S. No.	Name of the States/UTs	Inspection made	Irregularities		Claims		Prosecution Cases		Amount of Compensation Awarded	Amount of Fine (Rs. '000)		
			Detected	Rectified	Filed	Settled	Pending	Filed		Decided	Imposed	Recovered
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Central Sphere		17188	-	-	3471	4507	-	6267	3235	37684	-	-
State Sphere												
1.	Andhra Pradesh	123388	11293	7889	11694	9551	882	949	881	28337	156	500
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	20	35	32	Nil	Nil	Nil	3	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
3.	Assam	26962	3400	2343	143	78	9	4	Nil	173	Nil	Nil
4.	Bihar	200498	35356	30910	15376	7800	848	122	6	13841	13841	13841
5.	Goa	1859	5748	3817	45	22	7	34	19	210	8	1
6.	Gujarat	114556	68406	50059	75	-	29086	2540	950	2392	41	1119
7.	Haryana	2715	19	19	1174	346	2764	83	137	709	8085	-
8.	Himachal Pradesh	2353	1041	819	192	58	-	170	131	62	69	69
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	1618	473	291	9	9	-	-	187	-	-	22
10.	Karnataka	107898	-	-	-	-	-	2104	1172	-	1427	-
11.	Kerala	26675	38233	29067	111	89	548	641	503	319	505	72
12.	Maharashtra	139038	125986	107924	5	6	5831	527	474	28	757	-
13.	Manipur	449	28	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	Meghalaya	589	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
15.	Mizoram	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
16.	Orissa	24437	20660	11494	96	10	-	317	104	-	21	-
17.	Punjab	13974	300	-	331	334	-	247	1831	2163	187	-
18.	Rajasthan	7168	387	124	299	302	809	326	217	2951	82	NA
19.	Sikkim	The Minimum Wages Act has been extended to Sikkim w.e.f. 1.10.2004										
20.	Tamil Nadu	176625	4986	814	2645	2318	3993	2183	2423	210351	612	2595
21.	Tripura	6611	183	193	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
22.	Uttar Pradesh	212	187	196	893	2310	10944	29	2125	63649	259	259
23.	Uttarakhand	4363	834	366	140	136	42	296	229	383	110	110

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
13	Orissa	18501	16583	8833	98	-	8926	469	687	-	131	-
14	Punjab	12944	289	181	291	193	649	121	727	895	80	-
15	Rajasthan	8707	1436	1093	203	163	384	195	146	9002	47	35
16	Tamil Nadu	122059	1147	126	2259	1497	6521	1458	620	21741	223	223
17	Tripura	8639	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
18	Uttarakhand	3190	1091	682	223	171	25	201	121	203	37	37
19	Uttar Pradesh	12313	9488	-	1241	1479	8848	647	589	360	1	-
20	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	123	615	615	1	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	147	-	-
21	Chandigarh	222	144	85	-	-	70	39	24	10	13	-
22	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	78	27	27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	Delhi	7884	5406	6335	1028	503	478	1459	230	470	313	237
24	Lakshadweep	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
25	Puducherry	11895	740	740	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total Above (States)		725668	276218	218670	27608	22129	68007	10525	7201	48824	4754	3174

Note: The information from Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Sikkim, West Bengal and Daman & Diu are awaited.

[English]

Apparel Training and Design Centres

2369. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Apparel Training and Design Centres (ATDCs) presently functioning in the country, State-wise and Union Territory-wise;

(b) the number of persons trained in these centres during each of the last three years and thereafter, till date, centre-wise;

(c) whether the Government proposes to open more such ATDCs during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period;

(d) if so, the locations identified for setting up of ATDCs, State and Union Territory-wise; and

(e) the time by when these centres are likely to be set up alongwith the funds allocated for the purpose during the Eleventh Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Apparel Export

Promotion Council (AEPC) is running 39 Apparel Training and Design Centres (ATDCs) in 14 States. The course has already commenced in 35 centres and in the remaining 4 centres, the session would begin in the next academic session.

(b) 33314 persons have been trained in these centres till December 2007.

(c) to (e) AEPC has identified 70 locations to open new ATDCs in the first phase of the 11th Five Year Plan. These centres are likely to be operationalised in the academic session of 2008. The Government does not provide funds to AEPC for ATDCs.

[Translation]

Coal under Essential Commodities Act, 1955

2370. SHRIMATI RUPATAI D. PATIL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for exclusion of coal from the purview of Essential Commodities Act, 1955;

(b) whether requests have been received to re-include coal under the purview of Essential Commodities Act, 1955 being an important source of domestic fuel; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Pursuant to the notification of the Colliery Control Rules, 2004 under the Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 coal has been deleted from the list of commodities under the Essential Commodities Act on the recommendation of the Ministry of Coal.

(b) No such request has been received in this Department.

(c) Does not arise.

[English]

Unique Identification Number

2371. SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) proposes to provide unique identification numbers to all beneficiaries; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The Employees' State Insurance Corporation is examining the proposal to provide Unique Identification Numbers to Insured Persons covered under the ESI Scheme.

Setting up of New Veterinary Hospitals

2372. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWASI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the recommended number of veterinary surgeon per thousand population of livestock in the country;

(b) whether the current availability of surgeons is not as per the required norms;

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

(d) the new veterinary hospitals, dispensaries, polyclinics being set up in the country particularly in the areas rich in livestock?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) As per the recommendation of National Commission on Agriculture (1976) there should be at least one veterinarian for every 5,000 cattle unit by 2000 AD.

(b) and (c) As per information available from Indian Veterinary practitioners Registers (IVPR) maintained by Veterinary Council of India, a total of 50,650 registered veterinary practitioners are available in the country as on 31-3-2007 which is within the norms recommended by National Commission on Agriculture.

(d) Veterinary Services is a state subject and new veterinary hospitals, dispensaries, polyclinics are being set up by the respective State/Union Territory Governments depending upon livestock population in a particular area and availability of resources with the State/Union Territory Governments.

[Translation]

Timely Delivery of Courier Service

2373. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Department of Posts is making arrangements to deliver posts speedily as in the case of courier services;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether several departments of the Central Government are using the courier services;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the names of departments using such courier services;

(e) whether the Government proposes to make laws to that it becomes mandatory to Government departments to use services provided by department of posts; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Department of Posts has an extensive network across the country for transmission and delivery of mail using the air, rail and road links. Depending upon the category of mail, distance and connectivity through air, rail or road norms for delivery of mail have been fixed by the Department and circulated widely. The operations are closely watched and improved upon to ensure an efficient service.

(c) and (d) The required information is not maintained.

(e) and (f) Under Indian Post Office Act 1898, the Central Government has the exclusive privilege of conveying by post, all letters, and of performing all the incidental services of receiving, collecting, sending, dispatching and delivering all letters. Government Departments are, therefore, required to use these services provided by the Department of Posts only.

Production of Silk-Wormseed

2374. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the targets fixed and achieved regarding seed production under the Central Silk-worm Seed Committee during each of the last three years and thereafter, till date, State-wise;

(b) the amount provided for this purpose during the said period State-wise and Union-territory-wise;

(c) the demand and availability of silk-worm seed in the country, State-wise;

(d) whether the demand for silk-worm seed is more than its availability; and

(e) if so, the details thereof along with the measures taken by the Government to increase its production and achievements made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) Central Silkworm Seed Committee (CSSC) is an Apex body to oversee implementation of Seed Sector reforms in India. State-wise targets and achievements made by the Silkworm Seed Production Centres (SSPCs) functioning under National Silkworm Seed Organisation (NSSO) of CSB during the last three years (2004-05 to 2006-07) and during the current year (2007-08) are given below:

State	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08*	
	Target	Achmnt	Target	Achmnt	Target	Achmnt	Target	Achmnt
Karnataka	90.00	111.86	104.00	119.78	110.00	137.12	93.60	102.99
Tamil Nadu	17.00	10.03	29.00	20.32	25.00	28.13	21.80	14.51
Andhra Pradesh	28.50	18.99	24.00	19.67	24.00	22.14	20.30	20.39
Kerala	7.00	15.17	16.00	12.70	16.00	15.40	14.40	10.85
Maharashtra	5.00	2.56	-	0.26	-	-	-	-
West Bengal	60.00	67.82	60.00	62.82	64.00	79.63	61.35	50.96
Orissa	0.74	0.32	1.00	0.67	1.00	0.73	0.80	0.69
Jammu and Kashmir	5.06	5.98	5.54	6.18	5.10	7.35	7.00	5.53
Uttarakhand	10.00	6.42	8.10	7.40	9.56	9.37	12.00	7.95
Total	223.30	239.15	247.64	249.80	254.66	299.87	231.25	213.87

*till Jan-2008

(b) Amount provided for production of above given silkworm seed during the last three years (2004-05 to 2006-07) and during the current year (2007-08) are given below:

(Amt. in lakh Rs.)

State/Years	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08*
1	2	3	4	5
Karnataka	702.67	885.39	889.08	869.41
Tamil Nadu	110.95	145.88	179.43	142.56
Andhra Pradesh	157.28	207.37	218.28	199.81

	1	2	3	4	5
Kerala		53.29	60.90	88.29	58.37
Maharashtra		11.31	7.72	6.38	5.59
West Bengal		275.02	336.73	351.41	325.99
Orissa		25.64	27.64	31.28	35.07
Jammu and Kashmir		35.42	36.94	41.08	35.44
Uttarakhand		65.48	70.78	75.41	66.16
Total		1437.06	1779.35	1880.64	1738.40

* till Jan-2008

(c) and (d) Silkworm commercial dfls (Disease free egg layings) are prepared against the demand and are fully distributed, therefore demand for Seeds is fully met by three agencies viz., Central Silk Board, State Sericulture Departments and Private Licensed Seed Producers (LSPs). Statewise production of silkworm seeds through these agencies during 2006-07 is given in the statement enclosed.

(e) Government of India has taken-up various Schemes during XI Plan period to support private LSPs to increase their silkworm seed production. Support is also provided to State Sericulture Departments to become self sufficient in production of quality silkworm seed. The details of the Schemes are as follows:

Central Sector Schemes:

The Scheme entitled "Seed Organisation & HRD" has been sanctioned by the GovL of India with an outlay of Rs.7.86 crores for mulberry sector. The details of the 12 components of the Scheme are indicated below:

1. Support to Mulberry Seed Crop Rearers (Adopted Seed Rearer) for quality seed cocoon generation.
2. Empowerment of Licensed Seed Producers by skill development.
3. Franchise Support System in silkworm seed distribution through chawki rearing support.
4. Infrastructure improvement in Basic Seed Farms (BSFs) and Silkworm Seed Production Centres (SSPCs) of NSSO.
5. Infrastructure for implementation of provisions of the CSB (Amendment) Act, 2006 -Establishment of Office for Central Silkworm Seed Committee.
6. Publicity for quality silkworm seed production by LSPs.
7. Hiring of experts / professionals / Subject Matter Specialists for implementation of various schemes formulated under mulberry seed sector.
8. Hiring of experts for implementation of CSB (Amendment) Act, 2006.
9. Training of staff for quarantine testing of silkworm eggs under mulberry and non-mulberry sector.
10. Training of Seed Officers:
11. Support for up-grading skills of seed farmers in non-traditional states under Mulberry Sector.
12. Support for disease monitoring in the existing seed production network across the country.

Centrally sponsored Catalytic Development Programme:

Following Schemes have been sanctioned by the Govt. of India for implementation in different States in collaboration with the State Governments:

1. Support for upgrading existing Seed/Grainage Units under Mulberry Sector.
2. Support to establish large scale Bivoltine Seed production Grainages in Public & Private Sector.
3. Assistance of seed testing facilities in Public/Private Grainages (for quality seed production).
4. Assistance for mulberry silkworm seed production:
 - (a) 3 P1 Grainages
 - (b) 1 P2 Grainage

Statement

State-wise and Agency-wise Mulberry production or dgl's (as reported by DOS of States and NSSO) during the year 2006-07

(DfLs in Lakh Nos.)

States	2006-07			
	State	CSB	LSP's	Total
1	2	3	4	5
A. Traditional States				
Andhra Pradesh	65.95	22.14	813.35	901.44
Jammu and Kashmir	19.21	7.35	-	26.56
Karnataka	220.49	137.12	864.31	1221.92
Tamil Nadu	59.79	28.13	42.54	130.46
West Bengal	31.54	79.63	385.39	495.56
Sub Total (A)	396.97	274.37	2105.59	2776.93
B. Non-Traditional States				
Arunachal Pradesh	0.08	-	-	0.08
Assam	2.29	-	-	2.29
Bihar	1.72	-	-	1.72
Chhattisgarh	0.69	-	-	0.69
Gujarat	-	-	-	0.00
Haryana	-	-	-	0.00
Himachal Pradesh	0.00	-	-	0.00
Jharkhand	0.30	-	-	0.30

1	2	3	4	5
Kerala	0.00	15.40	-	15.40
Madhya Pradesh	6.03	-	-	6.03
Maharashtra	2.56	-	-	2.56
Manipur	10.00	-	-	10.00
Meghalaya	1.63	-	-	1.63
Mizoram	3.00	-	-	3.00
Nagaland	0.00	-	-	0.00
Orissa	0.00	0.73	-	0.73
Punjab	1.00	-	-	1.00
Rajasthan	-	-	-	0.00
Sikkim	0.08	-	-	0.08
Tripura	0.30	-	-	0.30
Uttarakhand	0.00	9.37	-	9.37
Uttar Pradesh	7.75	-	-	7.75
Sub-Total (B)	37.42	25.50	0.00	62.92
Grand Total	434.39	299.87	2105.59	2839.85
Percentage of Distribution	15.3	10.6	74.1	100.0

Source: DOS of all the States & NSSO
SS: 12.12.2007

[English]

Verification of Membership of Central Trade Unions

2375. SHRI GANESH SINGH: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent verification of membership of Central Trade Unions allegation were levelled regarding irregularities in the membership data submitted by some unions;

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

(c) whether the Government proposes to involve labour unions in management of Public Sector Undertakings; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Eight Central Trade

Unions namely; INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, UTUC(LS), UTUC, TUCC, NFITU-Kolkata had raised objections on membership claims of other unions on the following contentions:-

- (i) Basis of Membership being Inflated,
- (ii) Union not registered with Registrar of Trade Unions,
- (iii) No such union exists,
- (iv) Annual Return not submitted etc.

Thereafter, the membership of unions on whose claim objections were raised, was verified as per the procedure, by the Standing Committee on General Verification.

(c) and (d) A comprehensive scheme for Employees' Participation in Management is already in existence since 1983 which is applicable to all Central Public Sector Undertakings except those which are specifically exempted from operation of the scheme.

Objection on Dual Technology

2376. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Finance has objected to the dual technology mobile licences in the country;

(b) if so, whether it has been decided that both telecom and cable operators should offer network television;

(c) if so, whether the spectrum panel fails to resolve allocation issue;

(d) if so, whether the Ministry also briefed Prime Minister on telecom sector developments; and

(e) if so, the concrete measures taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Ministry of Finance had raised some queries on issues, inter-alia, related to usage of dual technology spectrum under the existing telecom access services licence(s) and necessary information was provided to the Ministry of Finance.

(b) Telecom service providers holding Unified Access Services (UAS) licence or Cellular Mobile Telecom Services (CMTS) licence as well as registered Cable TV operators can provide IPTV services without requiring any further licence subject to certain conditions.

(c) The "Committee on allocation of spectrum in a practicable and scientific manner" has given certain

recommendations and the Government has taken a decision on the Report of the Committee.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Spectrum to the CMTS/UAS licensees is allotted as per the relevant provisions of their licence agreement and eligibility criteria for additional spectrum, subject to availability. The present criteria for allocation of additional spectrum has been issued after review in January, 2008.

[Translation]

Vacant Post Dak Sewaks

2377. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of posts of Dak Sewaks lying vacant in the country especially in Sahdol Division of Madhya Pradesh, as on date;

(b) the reasons for not filling up the same;

(c) the number of Gramin Dak Sewak transferred in the Sahdol Division of Madhya Pradesh and the facilities provided to them;

(d) whether the Gramin Dak Sewaks have sent any Memorandum in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) the action taken/being taken by the Government thereon; and

(g) the number of Branch Post Offices in Sahdol Division were working in the year 2001-, 2002 alongwith the number of the Branch Post Offices which have been closed and existing at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) 25924 posts of Dak Sewaks are lying vacant in the country as on date. No post of Dak Sewak is lying vacant in Sahdol Division in Madhya Pradesh as on date.

(b) Review of existing establishment of Gramin Dak Sewak was under process. The recruitment against vacant posts has been initiated.

(c) No Gramin Dak Sewak has been transferred in Sahdol Division.

(d) No Memorandum has been received from Gramin Dak Sewak in respect of Sahdol Division in Madhya Pradesh Circle.

(e) and (f) Do not arise in view of (d) above.

(g) The information in respect of number of Branch Post Offices in Sahdol Division is as under:-

2001-2002	466
Closed	Nil
Existing at Present	470

[English]

Brahmaputra Board

2378. SHRI M.K. SUBBA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the dredging operations on the river Brahmaputra have been undertaken to avert floods during the coming season; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken so far in this regard alongwith the cost involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Agricultural Service Centres

2379. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:
SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to have Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to the extent of 51 per cent in agri-business;

(b) if so, the details thereof and action taken thereon;

(c) whether Agricultural Service Centres have been set up in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise particularly in Karnataka; and

(e) the details of the funds earmarked for this purpose during the Tenth and Eleventh Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The activities under Agriculture Sector where FDI has been permitted up to 100% under the automatic route are 'Floriculture, Horticulture, Development of Seeds, Animal Husbandry, Pisciculture, Aqua-culture and Cultivation of

Vegetables & Mushrooms under controlled conditions and services related to agro and allied sectors', since January, 2006.

Tea Plantation was opened for FDI in 2002. FDI up to 100% with prior Government approval is permitted in Tea plantation subject to the conditions of divestment of 26% equity of the company in favour of an Indian partner / Indian public within a period of five years; and prior approval of the State Government concerned in case of any future land use change.

Besides the above, FDI is not allowed in any other agricultural sector/ activity.

(c) to (e) The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC) is not implementing any scheme with the title 'Agriculture Service Centres'.

The DAC is, however, implementing a scheme with the title 'Agri-Clinics & Agri-Business Centres (ACABCs)'. Training and handholding supports are provided to agriculture graduates selected for coverage under the scheme.

The State-wise agri-ventures established in the country is enclosed as statement. In Karnataka, 642 agri-ventures have been established as on 12.3.2008. There is no state-wise allocation of funds under ACABCs scheme. However, during Tenth Five Year Plan Rs. 49.50 crore was allocated to ACABCs Scheme. It is proposed to allocate Rs. 187.13 crore to ACABCs Scheme during Eleventh Five Year Plan.

Statement

*State-wise Agri-ventures established
(from 1.4.2002 to 12.03.2008)*

Sl. No.	Name of the State	No. of Agri-ventures established
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	279
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1
3.	Assam	31
4.	Bihar	549
5.	Chandigarh	0
6.	Chhattisgarh	63
7.	Delhi	0
8.	Goa	1

1	2	3
9.	Gujarat	158
10.	Haryana	24
11.	Himachal Pradesh	54
12.	Jammu and Kashmir	30
13.	Jharkhand	18
14.	Karnataka	642
15.	Kerala	15
16.	Madhya Pradesh	137
17.	Maharashtra	910
18.	Manipur	41
19.	Meghalaya	0
20.	Mizoram	0
21.	Nagaland	2
22.	Orissa	74
23.	Pondicherry	1
24.	Punjab	31
25.	Rajasthan	579
26.	Sikkim	0
27.	Tamil Nadu	270
28.	Tripura	0
29.	Uttar Pradesh	1118
30.	Uttaranchal	49
31.	West Bengal	52
Total		5129

[Translation]

Cotton Production

2380. SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- whether the quality of the cotton produced in the country is not according to the international standards;
- if so, the details thereof; and
- the efforts being made by the Government for the production and research on high quality cotton?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE

MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir. The quality of cotton produced in the country is at par according to the International standards.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) To increase the production, productivity and quality of cotton, the Government of India is implementing a Technology Mission on Cotton (TMC) which consists of four Mini Missions. The Mini Mission-I deals with research aspects of cotton by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) while, Mini Mission-II is meant for development and extension activities and looked after by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation. Mini Mission-III is for improvement of Market yard and Mini Mission-IV is for modernization of ginning and pressing factories which are looked by the Ministry of Textiles.

The Mini Mission-I deals with research and development of improved cotton production and crop protection technology and is being implemented by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). The ICAR has initiated appropriate steps to evaluate new geno-type with high fibre quality as well as to restore the genetic potentiality of Extra Long Staple Cotton. The development of long linted diploid deshi cotton (PA 255, PA 402, NH 452) having high productivity, early maturity, excellent fibre quality and tolerance to biotic & abiotic stresses for cultivation under rainfed cotton which helped the marginal farmers to raise quality cotton.

Mini Mission-II deals with the developmental programmes for increasing production and productivity of the cotton and is being implemented by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. Under this Mini Mission assistance is provided for production and distributions of seeds of varieties / hybrids not older than 15 years, transfer of technology through demonstrations, training of farmers and extension workers, insecticides resistance management, plant protection measurement including IPM demonstrations, supply of sprayers, pheromone traps, bio agents as well as water saving devices like sprinklers and drip irrigation system etc.

The Mini Mission-III focuses on the development of marketing infrastructure by undertaking activities like constructions of market yards, auction centers, grading facilities, laboratories for testing of cotton qualities etc. The upgradation and modernization of ginning and pressing factories to improve quality of cotton is undertaken under Mini Mission-IV. Mini Mission-III & IV with the main aim to improve the quality of cotton, are implemented by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.

Pending Cases of EPF and Pension Accounts

2381. SHRI TEK LAL MAHTO: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of cases are pending for settlement of Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and Pension Accounts all over the country during each of the last three years and thereafter till date;

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

(c) the reasons for pendency of such large number of cases;

(d) whether the Government has taken any special/ effective steps for speedy disposal of said cases; and

(e) if so, the details thereof alongwith the time by which said cases are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The pendency in respect of Provident Fund and Monthly Pension claims is below one-month average receipt of claims.

The details of workload and pendency are enclosed as statement-I while the Region-wise details of pending cases as on 31st March for the last three years are given in the statement-II enclosed.

(c) to (e) As per Scheme provisions, the claims received complete in all respect are settled within 30 days. Settlement of cases is a continuous process. As there is a continuous inflow of fresh claims, certain claims are bound to be pending at any given point of time.

Statement-I

Comparative details of Provident Fund and Monthly Pension claims

Year	Total Workload	Provident Fund Claims		Monthly Pension Claims		
		Pendency	Pendency Ratio	Total Workload	Pendency	Pendency Ratio
2004-05	2924610	45225	1.55	527374	31524	5.98
2005-06	2816592	66717	2.37	559646	43838	7.83
2006-07	3224786	72002	2.23	597161	43679	7.31

Statement-II**Region-wise details of pending cases (year ending 31st March)**

Region	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	PF Claims	Monthly Pension	PF Claims	Monthly Pension	PF Claims	Monthly Pension
Andhra Pradesh	3194	916	4685	822	1732	2116
Bihar	2	7	287	725	991	2028
Chhattisgarh	999	1867	216	1798	53	708
Delhi	1820	1523	937	964	6842	1597
Goa	518	140	63	219	6	42
Gujarat	5354	3793	16040	328	16558	371
Haryana	0	0	20	22	3281	340
Himachal Pradesh	104	0	52	13	355	231
Jharkhand	752	1193	1144	577	563	516
Karnataka	6956	2649	8157	929	11819	1622
Kerala	2	26	87	126	101	156
Madhy Pradesh	54	51	202	329	834	537
Maharashtra	12509	10263	9973	27372	8220	23672
N.E. Region	0	0	20	20	427	222
Orissa	97	481	486	1093	84	2277
Punjab	42	710	1799	738	2920	1342
Rajasthan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	7091	1511	12194	2591	13592	3151
Uttaranchal	17	0	706	570	1054	798
Uttar Pradesh	67	958	3081	2200	321	793
West Bengal	5647	5436	6568	2402	2249	1160
Total	45225	31524	66717	43838	72002	43679

[English]

**Peripheral Development around
HAL in Orissa**

2382. SHRI GIRIDHAR GAMANG: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Koraput has constituted a Committee for Peripheral Development of Impact Zone of the company;

(b) If so, the year in which the Peripheral Develop-

ment Committee was constituted and the terms of reference of the Committee, and

(c) If not, the reasons for not having such Committee with this Public Sector Undertaking?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No need was felt.

[Translation]

NGO-run Schools in Air Force

2383. SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether instead of Kendriya Vidyalayas, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)-run schools function in Indian Air Force campus;

(b) if so, the name of this NGO and the number of such schools in the country;

(c) whether these schools are recognized by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE);

(d) the number of teachers employed in these schools and eligibility conditions for their recruitment; and

(e) the criteria for pay scales given to them?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) to (e) No, Sir. There are 98 Kendriya Vidyalayas functioning in the Indian Air Force (IAF) campuses. In addition, Air Force Educational and Cultural Society, a non-public fund venture of the IAF, runs 133 schools which include pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. Out of these 133 schools, 43 secondary schools are affiliated to CBSE. The total numbers of teachers in the schools run by Air Force Educational and Cultural Society is 1370. The eligibility conditions for their recruitment and the criteria for pay scales are regulated in accordance with Education code for Air Force School.

[English]

Water Charges for Agricultural Purpose

2384. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPAPARAI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether variable rates are being charged in various States from the farmers for the use of underground water for agricultural purpose;

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

(c) whether the Union Government has constituted an expert Committee to rationalise the water charged for agricultural purposes in various parts of the country; and

(d) if so, the recommendations made by the Committee and the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN

YADAV): (a) and (b) As per information available, variable rates are being charged by some States for water supply from State owned tubewells for agricultural purpose.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Water Resources has not constituted the "Expert Committee to rationalize the water charges for agricultural purposes in various parts of the country". However, the Planning Commission constituted an Expert Group headed by Member, Planning Commission on 'Ground Water Management and Ownership'. The Expert Group has inter-alia suggested measures for creating incentives for more efficient energy and water use.

[Translation]

Review of works done by National Research Centre for Citrus, Nagpur

2385. SHRI SURESH WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of work done with regard to plantation, production and quality, etc. of orange and citrus fruits by National Research Centre for Citrus (N.R.C.C.), Nagpur (Vidarbha Zone) which has been receiving grant from the Union Government for the last many years;

(b) the reasons for continuous decline in production as well as production area and quality during the last many years; and

(c) the contribution and responsibility of the above institute in view of the above situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The National Research Center for Citrus (NRCC), Nagpur established in 1985 under the name of the Central Citrus Research Station at Nagpur under the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bangalore and renamed as at present from April, 1986 has done excellent work with respect to the production of disease-free quality planting material, which includes shoot-tip grafting. The quality planting materials were distributed to the government/private nurseries and individual farmers in the form of elite mother plants for further multiplication. The centre has identified two clones of Nagpur mandarin, one early maturing and another with less number of seeds in the fruit. The centre has developed technologies on rejuvenation of old and unproductive trees, integrated nutrient and water management and control of various diseases and insect pests infesting citrus. The post harvest technologies developed by the centre has well been appreciated. The centre has also imparted training to extension functionaries and farmers.

(b) National Research Centre for Citrus (NRCC) has worked on causes for citrus decline, which is a complex problem. This problem can appear due to the use of wrong rootstock, improper production technologies and the occurrence of insect pests and diseases. Decline of many orchards in the Vidarbha region is associated with improper nutrients management, faulty drainage system and occurrence of insect pests and diseases. The technologies developed by NRC for Citrus, if adopted can check the problem.

(c) The National Research Centre for Citrus has contributed significantly in the improvement of planting material, which can be multiplied on a large scale by the extension agencies for increasing the plantation area and production of the fruit. The centre has also standardized the technologies for crop production, crop protection, and post harvest technology of Nagpur mandarin, acid lime and sweet orange. In transfer of technology, the center has contributed through organizing various training programmes and kisan melas and publication of extension literature in Marathi, Hindi and English languages. The Centre has also participated actively in agricultural exhibitions and technology demonstrations. The work of the centre has been highlighted through press media under Technology Mission on Citrus.

[English]

National Foodgrains Policy

2386. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:
PROF. M. RAMADASS:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to review the comprehensive National Foodgrains Policy for setting up of high-tech godowns as part of measures to decentralize food storage;

(b) if so, whether any Committee has been constituted to go into the entire gamut of food security and buffer stock;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to make National Foodgrains Policy more effective and result oriented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) Government had announced a National Policy of handling, storage and transportation of foodgrains in 2000, with a view to reduce storage and transit losses of foodgrains and to

modernize the handling of storage and transportation of foodgrains. Under this Policy integrated bulk handling, storage and transportation facilities are created through private sector participation on Build-own-Operate basis in the country. A technical Group under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Food and Public Distribution has been constituted to review the Buffer Stocking Policy of foodgrains. The Technical Group has entrusted the study to the National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research to review the buffer stocking policy of foodgrains.

The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation has also introduced a Capital Investment Subsidy Scheme namely "Gramin Bhandaran Yojana" for construction of Rural Godowns during 2001-02 to enable farmers to enhance their holding capacity to sell their produce at remunerative price. Under the scheme, Central Government is providing subsidy @ 25% of capital cost of the project. A higher subsidy of 33.33% of the capital cost is provided for beneficiaries belonging to SC/ST and for North Eastern States and hilly areas.

Effect of Tsunami on Marine Fishery

2387. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted any study on the effect of Tsunami on the marine fishery resources;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any proposal to create artificial cage in the sea to promote marine fishery growth is pending with the Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) No sir, the Government of India has not conducted any study on the effect of Tsunami on the marine fishery resources.

(c) and (d) A pilot project on sea cage culture for growing fin fish has been sanctioned by the Union Government to study its efficacy. The project is implemented through Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) at selected centres on east and west coasts.

Joint Military Exercise with France

2388. SHRI MILIND DEORA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India is likely to conduct joint military exercise with France in March, 2008;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the significance of holding such exercises;
- (d) the number of joint exercises conducted during the last one year and the countries with which conducted alongwith the total expenditure incurred on these exercises; and
- (e) the extent to which the Indian Army has gained from these joint exercises?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Joint exercises with friendly foreign countries are considered on case to case basis based on our need to engage them as directed by our National Security Guidelines. During the last one year joint exercises were conducted with France, USA, UK, Singapore, Russia, Thailand, China, Mongolia, Oman and Maldives. The expenses incurred on conduct of these exercises are determined by the nature and complexity of the exercise for which specific expenditure sanction is issued with the approval of the competent authority.

(e) Joint exercises benefit the Indian Army by enhancing its capability through exchange of best practices and procedures and exposure to advanced technologies. Joint exercises also build interoperability, mutual understanding and give impetus to the ongoing Military to Military Cooperation.

Funds under AIBP

2389. SHRI PRATIK P. PATIL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any request from State Government of Maharashtra for increasing the ceiling limit of Central assistance in respect of Minor Irrigation Project under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) particularly in Vidarbha region; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and reaction of the Government thereto alongwith the present status of request?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Ceiling for the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) is fixed by the Planning Commission during Plan discussions with the State Government and depending on availability of resources for the State as a whole. The original AIBP ceiling for

Maharashtra for the year 2007-08 was of Rs. 350 crore. As per information available in this Ministry the Government of Maharashtra approached Planning Commission to enhance the AIBP ceiling for the 2007-08 to Rs. 1600 crore in which provisions kept for Minor Irrigation Scheme was of Rs. 250.118 crore. The Planning Commission however enhanced the ceiling to Rs. 1100 crore providing additionality of Rs. 750 crore over the existing ceiling.

Award of Research Contracts

2390. SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry Award Research Contracts to consultants, Non- Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Academic and Research Organisations etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the list of Research contracts awarded during each of the last three years and the current year and the current status of these Research works;

(c) whether the Research Contracts are illustrated on the website of the Ministry;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the modus operandi and the criteria being followed in decision of topics and award of Research Contracts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Indian Institute of Public Administration has been appointed as Consultant to the Department of Consumer Affairs to implement the scheme "Promoting Involvement of Research Institutions, Universities, Colleges etc. in the Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare". Research proposals are sanctioned under this scheme to Universities, Colleges and NGOs.

(b) Details of the Research Studies awarded under the Scheme for last three years and the current year and their status is given in the enclosed statement.

(c) Details of Research study awarded are on the website www.consumereducation.in of the Consultancy Project which is maintained by Indian Institute of Public Administration, this is linked to the website of the Department of Consumer Affairs.

(d) In view of the explanation provided at part (c) this is not relevant.

(e) An Evaluation Committee set-up at the Indian Institute of Public Administration shortlists the topics and submits it for final approval of Monitoring Committee in the Department.

Statement***Details of Research Studies awarded by IIPA to Educational Institutions/NGOs under the Scheme of Department of Consumer Affairs.***

Sl.No.	Name of Institution	Year of sanction	Subject	Amount	Status
1	2	3	4	5	6
2005-2006					
1.	Govt. Medical College & Hospital, Sector-32, Chandigarh	2005-2006	To evaluate the level of rights in health delivery systems in college students of Chandigarh before and after consumer rights awareness.	50,000/-	Report submitted
2.	Government College, Quepam, Goa	2005-2006	An audit of Consumer Redressal Mechanism in Goa.	95,000/-	Report Submitted
3.	Nagpur University, Post Graduate Teaching Department of Economics, Nagpur	2005-2006	Consumer Protection with special reference to service sector "with special reference to Vidharbha Region of Maharashtra".	2,49,000/-	Report submitted
4.	Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar (Punjab)	2005-2006	Critical Evaluation of actual working of Distt. Consumer Disputes Redrsal (CDRE) in Punjab State.	4,50,000/-	Report submitted
5.	Govt. JDB Girls College, Kota (Rajasthan)	2005-2006	Impact of Consumer Protection Act and development of Educational programme for welfare of consumer.	1,50,000/-	Report submitted.
6.	West Bengal National University, Kolkatta.	2005-2006	Impact assessment / evaluation of the State Commission and District forums in West Bengal.	3,00,000/-	Report submitted
7.	Scottish Church College, Kolkatta.	2005-2006	Impact of Legislative and administrative measures with special reference to Consumer in Kolkatta.	2,20,000/-	Report submitted.
8.	Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi.	2005-2006	Consumer Protection and welfare problems of consumers and awareness of consumer rights.	3,56,400/-	Report submitted
9.	Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi.	2005-2006	Consumer Protection in a Competitive Telecommunication Market in India.	4,43,400/-	Report submitted
10.	CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hissar	2005-2006	Consumer Protection and welfare in rural Haryana – An exploratory study.	3,72,600/-	Report submitted

1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Raje Ramrao College, Jath (Distt. Sangli) Maharashtra.	2005-2006	Socio Economic impact of Consumer awareness and protection – Past, Present and Future	1,90,000/-	Not Received
12.	Rajiv Gandhi Govt. P.G. College, Mandsaur (MP).	2005-2006	Implementation of Consumer Welfare activities and its challenges in rural areas of MP.	3,25,000/-	Report submitted
13.	Centre for Urban Economic Studies, University of Kolkatta.	2005-2006	General awareness regarding rights and grievances of the consumers with special reference to Kolkatta.	1,84,000/-	Report submitted.
14.	Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur.	2005-2006	Economy, Consumerism and Market – Rural and Urban Dichotomy.	3,47,300/-	Report submitted
15.	Formative Research and Development Services, New Delhi	2005-2006	A situational analysis in the state of Uttar Pradesh.	3,47,000/-	Report submitted
16.	St. Teress College, Ernakulam, Cochin (Kerala)	2005-2006	Consumer Dis-satisfaction and Voicing - Issues for social policy.	2,50,000/-	Report submitted
17.	Council for Tribal and Rural Development, Bhubneshwar.	2005-2006	Contrastive study on Consumer's awareness on their rights and quality of life in rural and urban areas of Orissa.	2,20,000/-	Report submitted
18.	Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati.	2005-2006	Consumer Awareness and Buying Behaviour of women consumers.	70,000/-	Report submitted
19.	Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana.	2005-2006	Development and assessment of technical back-up for consumers of textiles and household durables.	4,31,250/-	Report submitted
20.	Janta Vidya Mandir (PG) College, Charkhi Dadri (Haryana).	2005-2006	Consumer problems in rural market of Haryana and framework for consumer protection.	1,40,000/-	Report submitted.
21.	Bharathidasan Govt. College for Women, Pondicherry.	2005-2006	An Exploratory study of Consumer behaviour among college students in Pondicherry.	2,50,000/-	Report received.
22.	Kautilaya Institute of Economic Administration, Patna (Bihar)	2005-2006	Awareness Programme among the masses.	67,000/-	Report received.
2006-2007					
23.	NYYS Institute of Management and Research, Nagpur.	2006-2007	Survey of awareness with special emphasis on rural area.	1,99,000/-	Report not due.

1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	Govt. College for Girls, Sector-11, Chandigarh.	2006-2007	Consumer and the Laws – Trends and challenges in the Food Industry.	1,10,000/-	Report received
25.	B.B. Kishan College, Barpeta, Assam.	2006-2007	Public Consciousness as a safeguard for Consumer Rights – A study of Barpeta District in Assam.	4,90,000/-	Report is not due.
26.	College of Home Science, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Hyderabad.	2006-2007	Evaluation of service providing Enterprises and Consumer Satisfaction.	3,55,000/-	Report is not due.
27.	Ginni Devi Modi Girls College, Modi Nagar (UP)	2006-2007	Consumer Behaviour – Communication and rural market.	3,61,000/-	Report submitted
28.	Shri Shikshan Prasarak Mandal's Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur.	2006-2007	Consumer Welfare and Consumer Protection activities in East Nagpur.	2,68,000/-	Report received.
2007-2008					
29.	Sardar Patel University, Ballabh Vidya Nagar, Konisi (Orissa).	2007-08	Research study on enhancement of awareness level.	2,42,000/-	Report is not due.
30.	Tamil University, Trichy (Tamilnadu).	2007-08	Consumer Awareness among Arts and Science college students in Tamilnadu.	3,83,000/-	Report is not due.
31.	National College, Dindigul (TN)	2007-08	Consumer Protection in essential commodities.	1,70,000/-	Report is not due

Research Studies Recommendation by Evaluation Committee Approved by Monitoring Committee (Funds not released)

1	Agarsen (PG) College, Sikanderabad (District. Bulandshahar), UP	2007-08	Rural consumer awareness and behavior-An empirical study of Bulandshahar District	3,33,000/-
2	Global Changes-Mapping for excellence	2007-08	Global Changes-Mapping for excellence	3,62,000/-
3	North Orissa University, Baripada	2007-08	Research Study on consumer protection-Distribution system	3,00,000/-
4	University of Calicut, Kerala	2007-08	A survey of consumer awareness of secondary school students and development of learning materials in consumer Rights for High School students in Kerala	3,25,000/-

Gregarious Flowering of Bamboo

2391. SHRI MANI CHARENAMEI:
SHRI MITRASEN YADAV:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether certain States particularly those in North East are affected by gregarious flowering of bamboos;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and steps taken thereon;
- (c) whether area under bamboo crop has been declining;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise particularly in Uttar Pradesh; and
- (e) the quantity of bamboo harvested during the last three years alongwith the consumption by different bamboo based industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The gregarious flowering of bamboos is being experienced in the North Eastern States. The State-wise area affected by bamboo flowering is enclosed as statement.

The Ministry of Environment & Forests have launched a scheme on Management of Prospective Gregarious Flowering of Bamboo in the North Eastern States with an allocation of Rs. 85 crores to manage the problem of bamboo flowering.

(c) and (d) No scientific information is available on the decline of bamboo crop in the country. However, the gregarious flowering of bamboo which is occurring in some parts of the North Eastern States (once in 30-40 years) results in death of all bamboo culms after profuse seeding.

(e) The National Bamboo Mission is a new programme of the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation which has been launched during the last quarter of 2006-07. One of the mandates of this Mission is to collect and compile the information on State-wise production of bamboo in the country.

However, it is estimated that 10,00,000 tons of bamboo is used in the paper and pulp industry whereas 1,90,000 tons of bamboo is utilized in non-paper industry.

Statement

The approximate area affected by Gregarious Flowering of Bamboo in the North Eastern States

State	Expected to be under Gregarious Flowering (sq. km.)
1	2
Arunachal Pradesh	1000
Assam	2950

1	2
Manipur	1592
Meghalaya	400
Mizoram	5100
Nagaland	250
Tripura	1677
Total	12969

Public Investment in Irrigation Sector

2392. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI:
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:
SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to enhance public investment in irrigation sector;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard;
- (c) the names of projects in which the Government has decided public investments in various States; and
- (d) the response received by the State Governments so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Government of India has laid due emphasis on the Irrigation Sector. The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) states that "UPA Government will ensure that public investment in irrigation is stepped up in a significant manner at the very earliest". The NCMP further states that "Irrigation will receive the highest investment priority and all on-going projects will be completed according to strict time schedule". An outlay of Rs.2,32,311 crore has been provided for the irrigation, command area development & water management and flood control in the XI Plan against the X Plan outlay of Rs.95,743 crore.

(c) and (d) Water being a State subject, the projects for irrigation development are conceived, planned and implemented by the State Government as per their own priority. The States submit the proposals for seeking central assistance under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP).

Allocation for Safety of Mines

2393. SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state the details of steps taken to ensure adequate financial allocation on safety of mines, risk assessment and risk management?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): Provisions for safety of persons employed in Mines are contained in the Mines Act, 1952 and the Rules and Regulations framed thereunder. The Directorate General of Mines Safety also issues guidelines in the form of circulars to the managements for improving Safety measures. However, it is the primary responsibility of the Mine Managements to allocate adequate funds regarding safety of mines, risk assessment and risk management.

Import of Palm Oil

2394. SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the quantity and value of palm oil imported during 2007-08;
- (b) the manner in which the said oil was utilised;
- (c) whether there is any restriction on the movement of imported palm oil in any of the Southern Ports; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) As per available information, details of the quantity and value of Crude Palm Oil imported during 2007-08 are as under:

Year 2007-08	Quantity in lakh MT	Value in (Rs.) crores
From April, 07 to July, 07	993	1881.14

Source: Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)

- (b) Palm Oil is refined and used in the manufacture of vanaspati and for edible purposes.
- (c) and (d) Import of Palm Oil is not permitted through any port in Kerala. This step was taken after receipt of representations from the State to protect the interest of coconut farmers in the State.

Working Conditions in Asbestos Factories

2395. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has recently conducted a study through National Institute of Occupational Health to assess the extent of improvement in working conditions in the asbestos factories in the country;

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof, State-wise; and

(c) the funds contributed by the private sector for conducting the said study alongwith the allocation made by the government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) A project titled: "A study of health hazards/environmental hazards resulting from the use of chrysotile asbestos in the country" is under way with National Institute of Occupational Health, Ahmedabad.

(c) The total cost of the project is Rs. 59.66 lakhs. Out of this, Government of India (Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers) is contributing Rs. 43.66 lakhs and the balance of Rs. 16 lakhs is contributed by the Asbestos Cement Product Manufacturer Association to ensure cooperation and involvement of the industry.

Effects of Organic Manure

2396. SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has studied the effects of the organic manure;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether there is any mechanism to monitor the quality of organic manure; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Under All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on 'long term fertilizer experiments' over the last few decades, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has concluded that only integrated use of optimal dose of Nitrogen, Phosphorous & Potash (NPK) and organic manure can maintain soil health and give higher sustainable yields. Organic manure, besides supplying essential plant nutrients, improves soil physical conditions and stimulates biological activities of soils through supply of energy to soil microbes.

(c) and (d) Organic manures are mostly produced on farm and used by the farmers. However, with commercialization of few type of organic manures, three organic manures have been brought under Fertilizer Control Order (FCO) namely (i) City waste compost (ii) Vermi-compost and (iii) Press-mud. The quality of the above organic manure is monitored as per the specifications / provisions of FCO.

[Translation]

Corporate Farming

2397. DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA:

SHRI HEMMAL MURMU:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to introduce corporate farming in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the policy formulated by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether the Government proposes to undertake fresh land consolidation to encourage corporate farming and protect the interest of farmers therein; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Question does not arise.

[English]

Grameen Bhandaran Yojana

2398. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has launched a new scheme Grameen Bhandaran Yojana to create storage capacity in rural areas;

(b) if so, the number of godowns set up in the rural areas under the scheme, State-wise;

(c) the total storage capacity created under the scheme during the last three years and thereafter, till date, State-wise;

(d) whether private parties are allowed to participate in creating storage capacity under the scheme;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the total amount sanctioned and spent under the scheme during the last three years and till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Government is implementing a Central Sector Scheme of Construction/ Renovation of Rural Godowns (Grameen Bhandaran Yojana) since 01.04.2001.

(b) As on 31st January, 2008, 16350 storage projects with a capacity of 208.57 lakh MTs have been sanctioned under the scheme. The State-wise details are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) The details of the godowns sanctioned during the last three years and thereafter, as on 31st January, 2008 are as under:

Year	No.	Capacity (in lakh M.T.)
2004-05	4554	34.81
2005-06	2120	24.61
2006-07	2483	17.01
2007-08 (As on 31st January, 2008)	1982	26.40

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) As on 31/3/2007, 8594 rural godowns with a capacity of 113.86 lakh MTs have been sanctioned in the private sector namely; individual farmers, agriculture graduates, SC/ST, women entrepreneurs, companies, corporations etc.

(f) The details of the funds sanctioned and spent under the scheme during the last three years are as under:

Year	Amount sanctioned (Rs.in crore)	Amount released (Rs. in crore)
2004-05	100	100
2005-06	90	90
2006-07	70	69.93
2007-08 (As on 31st January, 2008)	70	53.50

Statement

Progress of Rural Godown Scheme as on 31-1-2008 Cumulative (Physical)

S. No.	State	Sanctioned by NABARD		Sanctioned by NCDC (New)		Sanctioned by NCDC (Renovation)		Total	
		No. of Projects	Capacity in tonnes	No. of Projects	Capacity in tonnes	No. of Projects	Capacity in tonnes	No. of Projects	Capacity in tonnes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Andhra Pradesh	730	2916156	57	10300	51	4750	838	2931206
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1	945	0	0	0	0	1	945

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3.	Assam	132	176938	1	650	0	0	133	177588
4.	Bihar	22	62700	342	35350	6	1500	370	99550
5.	Chhattisgarh	210	602703	77	258350	0	0	287	861053
6.	Goa	3	290	0	0	0	0	3	290
7.	Gujarat	3047	902642	32	93600	19	19600	3098	1015842
8.	Haryana	236	1390128	201	24000	155	236017	592	1650145
9.	Himachal Pradesh	0	0	31	3600	0	0	31	3600
10.	Jammu and Kashmir	1	100	1	1950	0	0	2	2050
11.	Jharkhand	4	5848	0	0	0	0	4	5848
12.	Karnataka	1461	1157399	82	52140	2	240	1545	1209779
13.	Kerala	29	25645	43	13000	8	1570	80	40215
14.	Madhya Pradesh	1331	2703059	105	93000	120	72616	1556	2868675
15.	Maharashtra	1756	2087094	33	178500	129	261300	1918	2526894
16.	Meghalaya	3	9755	34	3450	3	300	40	13505
17.	Nagaland	1	4000	0	0	0	0	1	4000
18.	Orissa	204	418338	0	0	0	0	204	418338
19.	Punjab	1162	2639002	14	1790	208	385600	1384	3026392
20.	Rajasthan	416	284296	135	66650	116	11600	667	362546
21.	Tamil Nadu	81	262920	98	35650	185	26950	364	325520
22.	Uttar Pradesh	185	1125128	87	149100	693	955468	965	2229696
23.	Uttarakhand	78	151443	22	17950	4	18600	104	187993
24.	West Bengal	2050	839961	91	9100	15	1500	2156	850561
25.	UTs	0	0	01	4000	0	0	1	4000
26.	NAFED	0	0	05	30800	0	0	5	30800
27.	NCCF	0	0	01	10000	0	0	1	10000
Total		13143	17766490	1493	1092930	1714	1997611	16350	20857031

Production of Oilseeds and Pulses in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

2399. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment has been made regarding production and sowing of oilseeds and pulses for

the current year in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the decline in the sowing area after Tsunami devastations;

(c) whether the Government has formulated any schemes to provide financial assistance to the farmers of Andaman and Nicobar Islands; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) As per the assessment of Andaman and Nicobar Administration, an area coverage of 800 hectares under oilseeds and 2000 hectares under pulses with oilseeds and pulses production of 320 metric tonnes and 1000 metric tonnes respectively has been projected for the year 2007-08. There has not been any significant decline in the sowing area after Tsunami devastations.

(c) and (d) Government of India is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Macro Management of Agriculture" in the country including the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands for the benefit of farmers. Under the scheme, seed minikits of oilseeds and pulses are made available to the farmers of Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands free of cost besides financial assistance on supply of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides.

Further, the Government of Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands has also formulated various schemes under State Plan for benefit of the farmers. Under State Plan Schemes, assistance in the form of 20% cost subsidy and

100% transport subsidy on all seeds including seeds of oilseeds and pulses crops is provided to the farmers.

[Translation]

Filling up posts of SCs and STs

2400. SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the norms of reservation for filling up posts of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are being followed in the undertakings/corporations in the Department of Telecommunications;

(b) if so, the number of reserved posts lying vacant at present along with the number of years for which these posts have been lying vacant; and

(c) the time by which these posts are likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Undertaking / Corporation-wise details are as under:

Sl.No.	Name of Undertaking / Corporation	Number of Posts lying vacant		Number of years for which lying vacant
		Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	
1.	Telecommunications Consultants of India Limited (TCIL)	Nil	Nil	Nil
2.	ITI Limited	Nil	40	One to ten years.
3.	Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL)	17	16	Two years
4.	Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)	2548	2556	Six months to two years

(c) Efforts are made to fill up the posts whenever recruitment to the posts is made depending on the availability of eligible candidates. In so far ITI Limited is concerned, the Company has been declared as sick Company by Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) in the year 2004 and it has been approved in principle to exempt the Sick Central Public Section Enterprises from filling up the backlog vacancies through the Special Recruitment drive.

[English]

Laboratories for Animal Diseases

2401. SHRI RAMESH DUBE:
SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL:
Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of High Security Animal Disease laboratories functioning in the country as on date;

(b) whether there is an acute shortage of such laboratories in the country;

(c) if so, whether the Government proposes to establish more such laboratories in the country in view of frequent outbreak of animal diseases; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) One such

laboratory is functioning in the country at Bhopal - a unit of Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fishery is planning to set up/upgrade one more Bio-Safety Level (BSL)-IV laboratory. In addition, six BSL-III and 23 BSL-II laboratories are also proposed under enhancement and up-gradation under laboratory intelligence programme through World Bank assistance. Out of six BSL-III laboratories, 4 are pre-fabricated and proposed to be setup at Guwahati, Pune, Jalandhar and Bareilly and 2 are constructed BSL-III laboratories proposed at Kolkata and Bangalore.

BSL-II facilities are proposed to be created by addition/alteration and up gradation of existing laboratories in different States.

Subsidy to Postal Department

2402. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Posts is supported at present by massive subsidy infusion from the Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is planning to transform the loss-making department into a self-sustaining entity; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Department of Posts provides services with the basic objective of universal service obligation to cater to the common man, specially in the rural and remote areas of the country. The revenue earned by the Department in this process, therefore, falls short of the expenditure and there is a revenue deficit. The deficit of the Department is largely due to the following reasons:

- (i) Nearly 89% of the expenditure incurred on mandatory heads like salary, pension of staff etc.
- (ii) Rates of most of the services are fixed such as to cater to the common man as a part of universal service obligation as per the policy of the Government.
- (iii) The revenue deficit of the Department is furnished below:

Sl. No.	Year	Revenue Deficit (Rs. in crore)
1	2005-06	1209.88
2	2006-07	1249.52

(c) and (d) The Department has been taking steps to increase the revenue through introduction of new products, market development activities and adoption of customer oriented strategies. Speed Posts, Business Posts, Express Posts, Retail Posts, etc. as premium services have been constantly growing. The Department of Posts is also using its vast network for retailing of financial products and services, agency functions, thereby adding to the Department's revenue. Moreover, the Department has also included value added money transfer services to its portfolio like Instant Money Order Service and International Money Transfers.

Agricultural Research

2403. SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a conference of Vice-Chancellors of agricultural universities was held recently to discuss proposals to transform agricultural research and education;

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof;

(c) whether the agricultural universities have been asked to take concrete steps to make agriculture education learner centric and to enhance research and educational capabilities; and

(d) if so, the achievements made by the agricultural universities in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. This year's annual Vice-Chancellors' Conference was held on January 19-20, 2008.

(b) The major issues discussed in the conference were climate change, bio-resources, quality assurance in agricultural education, academic regulations, personnel policies, curricula revision, National Eligibility Test, faculty competence, intellectual property management and modernization of research infrastructures of agricultural universities.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A total of 183 experiential learning units have been established for facilitating experiential learning towards imparting an appropriate blend of knowledge, skill and attitude to the students and fostering need-based partnership and linkages. Also, 28 niche area of excellence units have been established in order to enhance the performance and visibility of agricultural universities by augmenting their strategic strength in specific niche area of

research and education. The revised course curricula as recommended by the 4th Deans' Committee has been largely implemented. Also, suggestions and recommendations made in the conference have been feasibly incorporated in the XIth five year plan document of the Education Division of Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

Allocation of Spectrum

2404. SHRI UDAY SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has asked the Department of Telecom to explain the reasons for allotting spectrum to some service providers beyond the eligibility;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is aware of the war between GSM and CDMA operators on spectrum;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/being taken by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (e) Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) had raised some queries on spectrum related issues and necessary information was provided to them.

The spectrum is allotted to the service providers, as per the relevant provisions of their license agreements, and eligibility criteria, subject to availability of spectrum. The eligibility criteria for CDMA and GSM systems have taken into account the respective spectrum efficiency of these technologies.

Agricultural Marketing

2405. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

SHRI SARVEY SATYANARAYANA:

SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:

SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI:

SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:

SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the recommendations made by the inter-ministerial task force set up for strengthening and developing agricultural marketing;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to decentralise the procurement process and enable the farmers to form small self-help groups for better marketing of their produce;

(d) if so, the details thereof and steps taken in this regard;

(e) whether the rates fixed by the future market is more scientific than the minimum support price fixed by the Government; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and steps taken to involve farmers in future trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The details of the recommendations made by the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Agricultural Marketing Reforms constituted by this Ministry in its report of 28.06.2002 are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) and (d) Government has introduced Decentralized Procurement Scheme for rice and wheat with an intent of extending the benefits of Minimum Support Price (MSP) to local farmers in non-traditional States under which State Government undertakes procurement on behalf of Government of India and also stores and distributes these foodgrains under public distribution system and other welfare schemes. Government is also encouraging farmers to form self-help groups/ common interest groups and commodity specific groups under the Support to State Extension Reforms Scheme through the District Level Agriculture Technology Management Agencies (ATMAs) and formation of such groups is expected to help farmers in aggregation/value addition and better marketing of their produce.

(e) and (f) The purpose of Minimum Support Price (MSP) is different from that of fixing the settlement price in a futures market. Hence the two are not comparable. MSP is not intended to reflect actual market price, but, as the name indicates, it is the minimum price which the producer would get under Government purchase, if the market prices rules below the fixed MSP. Settlement price in the futures market is intended to be a representative market price on a particular day and particular time. Mostly the settlement price is higher than the MSP fixed by the Government for various commodities but in practice the settlement price could even go below MSP. It is not possible to state which one is more scientific in view of the different methodologies of determination of price in both the systems and the different purpose for which MSP is fixed by the Government. Since futures market offers transparent mechanism of price

discovery and through hedging in the futures market the price risks can be mitigated, it is considered as an important platform for farmers in fetching remunerative prices for their produce. Forward Market Commission in association with other agencies including the Ministry of Agriculture has initiated various steps, such as, setting up of electronic price ticker boards in market yards/ rural post offices and conduct of farmers' awareness programmes for making farmers aware about the benefits of the futures market and to encourage them to participate in futures trading.

Statement

Details of the Recommendations of Inter-Ministerial Task Force

1. All the State Governments should amend the State Agricultural Produce Marketing Regulations Act (APMC Act) inter alia to provide specifically for the following:

- a) Enabling private and cooperative sectors to establish and operate (including levy of service charge) agricultural marketing infrastructure and supporting services.
- b) Direct marketing of agricultural commodities from producing areas and farmers' fields, without the necessity of going through licensed traders and regulated markets.
- c) Permitting 'Contract farming' programs by processing or marketing firms. The APMC within whose jurisdiction the area covered by contract farming agreement lies, should record the contract farming agreements and act as a protector of producer's and processor's interests with due legal support in its jurisdiction. Incidence of taxes by way of market fee, cess, duties, taxes etc. on procurement of agricultural or horticultural produce under the 'Contract farming' program should be waived or minimized.
- d) Rationalization of levy of market fee by introducing single point levy of market fee in the entire process of marketing in the State. Levy of market fee should be more in the nature of service charge based on the quality of services provided. The levy of fee can be at different slabs in consonance with the type of scale of services/ facilities provided to all market users
- e) To attract promoting agencies to take up the marketing infrastructure development projects, all the State Governments/UT Administrations and the concerned Departments of Central Government should be requested to additionally extend support in the following areas:-

- i) Deregulation of areas where new markets will be set up, along with forward and backward linkages from the purview of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Act.
 - ii) Allocation of suitable and sufficient land with necessary approvals to set up agricultural produce markets;
 - iii) Provision of village land for Farmers Associations and Collection centers;
 - iv) Fast approval for services like electricity, water, sewage, telephones etc.;
 - v) Long term credit for initial capital investment; and
 - vi) Declaration of the project as an infrastructure project within the meaning of Section 10(23G) of the Income-tax Act.
2. With a view to attract requisite investment for the development of marketing infrastructure in the country, a new central scheme should be formulated to provide credit linked assistance for development of general and commodity specific agricultural produce markets and for strengthening of existing agricultural markets, wholesale, rural periodic and in tribal areas. For the construction of storage, cold storage and cold chain infrastructure, the ongoing central schemes should be further expanded to create additional capacity of rural storage of 85 lakhs MT, cold storage of 56.00 lakhs MT and requisite cold chain infrastructure during the Xth Plan Period. Central assistance should be conditional and linked to reforms by the States in the APMC Acts and deregulation. Considering the magnitude of outlay required external funding should be sought, if need be, to augment the resources of Central and State Governments to support the infrastructure development program.
3. Credit for marketing of crops (pledge financing) should be substantially stepped up to reach a level of at least Rs.7000 crores by the end of 10th Five Year Plan Period in 2007. RBI need to formulate appropriate marketing credit policies and to introduce a separate MIS for loans given for pledge financing in order to monitor progress. NABARD need to augment the resources of State Marketing Cooperatives to provide pledge financing facilities to farmers and to provide 100% refinance to RRBs, on similar lines as that of cooperative banks. RBI should also consider evolving an appropriate arrangement to ensure that warehousing receipts/godown receipts issued by licensed

operators of rural godowns are acceptable to bankers for providing credit to farmers. To facilitate easy access to pledge loan, RBI should evolve a simplified procedure in consultation with commercial banks.

4. For the introduction of a system of negotiable warehousing receipt system in respect of agricultural commodities, the Central Warehousing Corporation and the State Warehousing Corporations should evolve commercially acceptable quality standards in respect of various commodities in order to ensure quality maintenance of the stored goods over a sufficiently longer period of time. The Warehousing Corporations should enforce standards both for quality and quantity at the warehouses, for which required infrastructure as to the measurement of grades and standards also need to be put in place, so as to reduce disputes on account of quality and quantity standards, and to improve the credibility of the Warehouse Receipt.
5. In order to grant the status of 'negotiability' to godown receipts issued by licensed godown operators, the Negotiable Instruments Act should be amended or in the alternative, a Central legislation on the pattern of The Multimodal Transportation of Goods Act, 1993, be enacted for the Warehouse Receipts to be made fully negotiable instrument. Law should be framed in such a way that it gives full enforceability and transparency of the Warehouse Receipts.
6. For the promotion of Forward and Futures markets in agricultural commodities, the following action is recommended:
 - a) The negative list under section 17 of the FC (R) Act may be given a fresh look so as to drastically prune it. Prohibition and regulation of NTSD contracts under the Act may also be discontinued.
 - b) Commodity specific approach to futures trading may be discontinued. Instead recognized associations /exchanges could apply for permission for trading in any 'contracts' other than for the commodities in the negative list from the Commodity Market Regulator under the overall rules, procedures and guidelines of the regulator.
 - c) Exchanges should come out with feasibility studies on commodities and products based on a cost benefit analysis of futures trading in such commodities/products. The system of piecemeal opening up and permission based on the Regulator's/Government's evaluation may be discontinued. Contracts proposed by the Exchanges based on proper feasibility studies should be studied and approved by the Regulator.
 - d) The design of contracts and the type of contracts (TSD, futures, options - (as and when statutorily permitted) should be left to the Exchanges to be decided. Only the appropriate regulatory mechanism and enabling provisions should be finalized with the approval of the market regulator.
 - e) The system of warehouse receipts need to be universalized in futures trading for enhancing volumes and for minimizing transaction costs.
 - f) The regulator (presently FMC) needs to be strengthened and made an autonomous organization similar to SEBI with adequate powers and professional capabilities to monitor and surveillance in an expanded and liberalized futures market in the country.
 - g) The role of commodity market regulator may be redefined to regulate all derivative products, not just for commodity futures – like CFTC in the US – so that their specialized expertise can be optimally used.
7. The Minimum Price Support Policy (MSP) has served the country well in the past three decades. However, in recent years it has started encountering problems mainly because of surpluses of several agricultural commodities and also the resultant excessive foodstocks with FCI. In the changing environment it is essential to think of an alternative policy delinking MSP from procurement particularly if the private sector is to be restored its rightful role in the marketing of agricultural produce. The alternative policy should allow market forces to determine the price and provide financial support through an insurance programme to farmers for protection of their incomes in falling markets. The income protection programme could be taken up initially in a few selected States for agricultural commodities like oilseeds, pulses, rice and wheat. Till the alternative policies are developed and implemented, the existing nodal/ central agencies and State organizations need to be strengthened to undertake decentralised procurement of foodgrains.
8. The Fair Average Quality (FAQ) norms fixed for different agricultural commodities should not be relaxed frequently, as such relaxation breeds inefficiency and difficulties in disposal of stocks. At present, there is no reliable and transparent system existing at the field level and the grading is done more or less on

discretionary basis. This system of subjective assessment needs to be replaced by a system of objective criteria by providing moisture measuring equipments and other equipments, which can help in measuring Fair Average Quality. FAQ norms have to be strictly enforced while providing wide publicity and educating the farmers on quality issues. The nodal agencies should decide, in consultation with the State Governments, the location and number of purchase centres to be set up much in advance of the marketing season. The information regarding number and location of purchase centres should be given wide publicity through media, radio, television, leaflets, etc.

9. The Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) needs to be reviewed to make it more flexible and easy. The provision of sharing of losses by the State Government(s) under the Scheme also needs to be re-examined.
10. Use of Information Technology need to be extensively promoted to provide market-led extension services to farmers and other market functionaries. The ongoing Central Sector Scheme of establishing 'market information network' should provide coverage to all the wholesale agricultural markets in the country during the 10th Plan period. It should also be diversified to promote nationally and internationally acceptable standards of grading and standardization, packaging and labelling, storage and warehousing and sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures and quality certification to enable trade and processing sector to undertake large scale agricultural marketing operations in domestic as well as international markets. In markets where there is manpower constraint to operate the scheme, services can be procured from private entrepreneurs with suitable incentives and provision of necessary infrastructure in the market yards.
11. Marketing Research, Training and Extension services to stake holders would aim to create an ambience of Good Marketing Practices in the country to protect the interest of farmers as well as consumers. The National Institute of Agricultural Marketing (NIAM), Jaipur should be the nodal agency for implementation of training, extension and research programs in Agricultural Marketing. For the purpose, the Institute will collaborate with State Agricultural Universities, State Agricultural Marketing Boards, Directorate of Marketing, Ministry of Agriculture & Cooperation and International Agencies involved in promoting agricultural Marketing.
12. The endeavour of the Government at the Central as well as State level should be to operationalize the

recommendations made in this report in a time bound manner. The measures relating to infrastructure development should be taken up for implementation during the X Plan period through appropriate schemes and programmes.

13. With a view to monitor the implementation of the aforesaid recommendations, a Monitoring Committee of officials may be constituted under the Chairmanship of the Joint Secretary (Agricultural Marketing), Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, along with representatives from the Department of Consumer Affairs, the Department of Food and Public Distribution, Ministry of Law, Ministry of Finance, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and National Co-operative Development Corporation (NCDC).
14. The agriculture markets have the potential to act as a powerful tool for improving the economic viability of agriculture, for reduction of rural poverty and for achieving sustainable agriculture development. The Task Force believes that with effective implementation of the recommended measures by the concerned Governments and the Agencies, agricultural markets will achieve nationwide integration enabling the country to meet the challenges posed by liberalization of trade. The reforms package would also enhance the competitiveness of the Indian farmer in the global market empowering him to take advantage of the emerging market access opportunities in the wake of WTO.
15. A marketing system backed by strong, adequate infrastructure is at the core of agricultural marketing. Market infrastructure is important not only for the performance of various marketing functions and expansion of the size of the market but also for transfer of appropriate price signals leading to improved marketing efficiency. High investment and entrepreneurial skills are required for creation and management of the agricultural marketing infrastructure. The situation of control by the state has to be eased to facilitate greater participation of the private sector, particularly to engender massive investments required for the development of marketing infrastructure and supporting services. Investment requirement for the development of marketing, storage and cold storage infrastructure in the country during 10th Plan has been estimated to be of the order of Rs. 12,230 crores.

[Translation]

Employment through Placement Agencies

2406. SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the employment exchanges have become defunct due to the privatisation of a number of Public Sector Undertakings and Direct Recruitment by Railways and Banks;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to assign the functions of employment exchange to private placement agencies; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the details of the agencies identified for forming the panel of employment agencies, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir. There were 947 employment exchanges functioning across the country as on 31.12.2006. The employment exchanges make registration of job seekers and sponsor them against the notified vacancies received from the employers. As on 31.12.2006, there were 41.5 million job seekers on the live register of employment exchanges. During 2006, 3.58 lakh vacancies were notified to employment exchanges against which names of 30.29 lakh job seekers were submitted out of which 1.77 lakh were placed. The employment exchanges also collect and compile employment market information under the provisions of Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act, 1959 and rules framed thereunder, for creating data-base, making assessment by the planners in respect of demand and supply of labour, preparing career literature for vocational guidance and counselling to the job-seekers to help them in shaping their careers.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. There is no such proposal under consideration of the Government.

[English]

New Consumer Law

2407. SHRI K.S. RAO:

SHRI PRABODH PANDA:

SHRI CHENGARA SURENDRAN:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment has been made regarding the impact of implementation of Consumer Protection Act, 1986 on the resolution of consumer problems in the country;

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof;

(c) the number of consumer complaints received and those dismissed on technical grounds, separately during each of the last three years;

(d) the nature and details of complaints received by the consumer fora and average time taken to pass a judgement;

(e) whether the Government proposes to enact a comprehensive law to ensure timely justice to consumers in a consumer friendly environment and make companies more responsive to consumers; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No Sir. The Department of Consumer Affairs has not conducted any study to assess the impact of the implementation of Consumer Protection Act, 1986 on the resolution of consumer problems in the country.

(b) In view of (a) above, the Question does not arise.

(c) As informed by National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (National Commission), the number of cases filed in the three-tier Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies (Consumer Fora) during each of the last three years, i.e. 2005, 2006 & 2007 is given below:

Sl. No.	Name of Agency	2005	2006	2007
1.	National Commission	3878	5222	4866
2.	State Commissions	33323	36613	34843
3.	District Fora	128764	131183	125689

The National Commission has informed that it has adopted a policy not to decide the matter on technicalities and there is a direction to the State Commissions as well as District Fora to dispose off cases on merits on the basis of documents produced on record by dispensing with pleadings, if required. According to the National Commission, the data regarding cases dismissed on technical ground by the Consumer Fora is not being maintained separately.

(d) As informed by National Commission, most of the cases filed before the Consumer Fora relate to Banking, Medical, Telephone, Insurance, Housing, Electricity, Airlines, Railways, etc. The Commission has further informed that no data with regard to average time taken for deciding the case by the Consumer Fora is being maintained.

(e) and (f) No Sir. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 is already comprehensive enough since the provisions of the Act covers all goods & services which a consumer has purchased or availed of for a consideration except those which are done for commercial purposes.

Use of Bio-diversity

2408. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:
SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to formulate a scheme for better use of biodiversity available in the country to improve farm production;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of incentives provided to State Governments for procurement of crops from farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology has established a National Bio-resource Development Board (NBDB) to decide the broad policy framework for effective application of biotechnological and related scientific approaches for research and development, sustainable utilization of bio-resources and promotion of other bioresources related developmental activities.

(c) On the recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), Government of India announces minimum support price (MSP) for mandated agricultural commodities and resorts to procurement as and when prices of that particular commodity falls below the MSP.

Besides, Government of India also implements a Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for horticultural commodities and other agricultural commodities, which are perishable in nature and which are not covered under the minimum price support scheme. In order to protect the growers of these horticultural/ agricultural commodities from making distress sale in the event of bumper crop during the peak arrival period when prices fall to very low level, Government implements MIS for a particular commodity on the request of the State Government concerned. Losses suffered are shared on 50:50 basis between Central Government and the State.

Time and Cost Overrun of Defence Imports

2409. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the defence imports suffer from cost and time overruns; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):
(a) and (b) Necessary provisions are included in contracts to

ensure that the defence equipment are received as per agreed delivery schedule and negotiated price. In some cases, problems arise due to various reasons which are examined for appropriate action. Divulging further details in this regard will not be in the national interest.

Revival of NTC Mills in Mumbai

2410. SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) was formed for revival of five sick/closed National Textile Corporation (NTC) Mills in Mumbai;

(b) if so, the details thereof, mill-wise;

(c) whether this plan was found successful;

(d) if so, whether the Government proposes to repeat this strategy for the revival of the remaining sick/ closed mills in the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and mill-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) has been formed for the revival of 5 National Textile Corporation (NTC) mills offered for Joint Venture to 3 reputed textile players. Out of these, 4 are situated in Mumbai. The name of these 4 SPV companies are given in the enclosed statement-I. This project will take one year to get the production.

(d) and (e) NTC has issued an advertisement on 11th February, 2008 to modernize and run 12 more mills through Joint Venture route. State-wise list of mills is given in the enclosed Statement-II.

Statement-I

Private partners finalized to run five NTC mills in Joint Venture

Name of the mill	Private partners identified
India United Mill No.1, Mumbai	Bhaskar Industries Ltd.
New City of Bombay Mfg. Mills, Mumbai	M/s Alok Industries Limited
Goldmohur Textile Mills, Mumbai	M/s Pantaloon Retail India Ltd.
Apollo Textile Mills, Mumbai	M/s Pantaloon Retail India Ltd.
Aurangabad Textile Mills, Aurangabad	M/s Alok Industries Limited

Statement-II**12 Mills to be modernised through J.V. Route**

S.No.	Name of the mills	Location
Andhra Pradesh		
1	Tirupathi Mills	Renigunta
Kerala		
2	Parvathi Mills	Quilon
Maharashtra		
3	R.B.B.A Mills	Hinganghat
4	Savatram, Akola	Akola
5	Dhule Mills	Dhule
6	Nanded Mills	Nanded
7	Chalisingaon Mills	Chalisingaon
Uttar Pradesh		
8	Swadeshi Mills, Mau	Maunathbhanjan
West Bengal		
9	Luxminarayan Cotton Mills	
10	Sodepore Mills	Sodepur
Orissa		
11	Orrisa Cotton Mills	Bhagatpur
Tamil Nadu		
12	Sri Sarda Mills	Coimbatore

- Closure of Chief Engineer's Office

2411. SHRI CHENGARA SURENDRAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has noticed closing down of the Chief Engineer's Office Kerala Postal Circle which has been functioning for the last thirty-seven years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government proposes to restrict closing down the office in Kerala in the interest of the people of Kerala; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) There is no Chief Engineer Office in Kerala Postal Circle.

(b) to (d) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Decline in Cashew Production

2412. SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production of cashew in the country has been decreasing over the year;

(b) if so, whether the Government has formulated any scheme to provide financial assistance through Horticulture Mission for expanding cashew cultivation;

(c) if so, whether Kerala State Agency for Cashew Cultivation (KSACC) has submitted proposal for financial assistance for enhancing cashew cultivation in the State of Kerala; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir. The production of cashew in the country is in an increasing trend except in, Kerala. Area and production of cashew for the last 5 years (2002-03 to 2006-07) is enclosed as statement.

(b) National Horticulture Mission is being implemented since 2005-06 to promote holistic growth of horticulture sector in India including cashew. New plantation, replanting old senile and uneconomical cashew gardens with high yielding varieties are the major activities undertaken in the Mission for increasing production and productivity of cashew in the country. The supporting programme like establishment of nurseries, frontline demonstrations, IPM/INM, organic farming are also undertaken under the Mission.

(c) Kerala State Agency for Cashew Cultivation (KSACC) has not submitted any proposal to Ministry of Agriculture for financial assistance for enhancing cashew production in the State of Kerala.

(d) Does not arise.

Statement**Area, Production and Productivity of Cashewnut in India**

State	2002-03			2003-04			2004-05			2005-06			2006-07		
	A	P	APY												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Kerala	100	90	890	101	95	890	102	64	900	80	67	900	80	72	900
Karnataka	92	40	470	94	46	500	95	43	680	100	45	700	102	52	700

A - Area in 000 Ha

P - Production in 000 MT

APY - Average Productivity per Hectare in Kg.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Goa	55	30	660	55	32	690	55	26	660	55	27	690	55	29	690
Maharashtra	148	110	1000	148	120	1100	160	174	1200	160	183	1300	164	197	1500
Tamil Nadu	92	50	570	95	51	600	105	53	610	121	56	640	123	60	670
Andhra Pradesh	136	90	740	136	95	750	150	88	840	170	92	880	171	99	890
Orissa	120	70	810	124	71	850	126	74	810	120	78	860	125	84	860
West Bengal	9	8	760	9	9	760	9	8	800	10	10	950	10	10	1000
Others	18	12	760	18	16	790	18	14	800	21	15	900	24	17	700
Total	770	500	760	780	535	800	820	544	810	837	573	815	854	620	820

Deployment of Army Personnel in Insurgency Affected States

2413. SHRI B. MAHTAB: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether prolonged deployment of the Army in insurgency affected States has diluted the focus on its primary role of defending the country;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard;

(c) whether Army has recommended for creation of a separate specialized force for internal security; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) and (b) While the primary role of the Army is to defend the territorial integrity of the nation against external aggression, counter insurgency operations as well as security against internal threats form part of its secondary role. Army, therefore, is adequately structured and trained to take on both the challenges. Efforts are made to keep such deployments minimal based on the principle of engaging Army as an instrument of last resort.

(c) and (d) Army has not recommended creation of any separate specialized force for Internal Security.

Demand of Flowers

2414. SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVRAJ:

SHRI M. SHIVANNA:

SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the demand for flowers in the domestic and international market is increasing rapidly;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the efforts made by the Government for increasing production of flowers in the country;

(c) whether some countries like Kenya and Ethiopia are producing better flowers by following a longer growth cycle in comparison to Indian flowers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the efforts of the Government to improve the quality of Indian flowers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The production of loose flowers increased from 0.66 million tones during 2004-05 to 0.92 million tones during 2006-07, while the production of cut flowers increased from 952 million nos. to 3290 million nos. The export of floriculture has increased from Rs.210.99 crores to Rs.649.84 crores during the same period. The Ministry of Agriculture is implementing two Centrally Sponsored Schemes namely Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern & Himalayan States and National Horticulture Mission, for increasing production & productivity of horticultural crops including flowers. Under these schemes, assistance is provided to the farmers for area expansion, production of quality planting materials of elite cultivars, adoption of new technologies, integrated pest management, integrated nutrient management, etc. Besides, National Horticulture Board is implementing schemes which provide assistance for production of horticultural crops including flowers. APEDA is also provided financial assistance to registered exporters for export of floriculture produce under the schemes for market development, infrastructure development, quality development, research & development and transport assistance.

(c) and (d) In the best growing periods (Nov. – Feb.) quality of the Indian flowers is comparable to the Kenyan flowers in the same segment. Some of the varieties grown in India has been rated to be of higher quality than their counterparts growing the same variety in Kenya. On a longer growing period Kenyan flowers are more consistent in

overall quality than flowers from Indian as Kenya enjoys a more stable climate.

Ethiopia grows flowers in higher altitudes which have a different quality (bigger buds and stronger stems) but suffer from low production due to the low temperatures.

APEDA has set up a market facilitation centre at the Netherlands and it is providing awareness amongst its registered growers of the possibilities and chances that exist in the market. APEDA has also introduced a scheme for recognition of floriculture units that covers all the quality parameters which an export floriculture unit should possess.

[Translation]

Difference between Estimated and Actual Production

2415. DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:

SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA:

SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a huge difference between the estimated and actual agricultural production;

(b) if so, the details thereof, crop-wise particularly in sugarcane;

(c) the details of foodgrains in which the country has become self-reliant alongwith the steps taken to export them;

(d) whether the Government has under taken any study to determine the problems being encountered by farmers; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Estimation of crop production is a continuous process and follows a well laid out methodology. The four successive advance estimates and the final estimates brought out for an agriculture year are infact improvements over the previous estimates, based on more firmed up reports on area coverage and yield levels. The table below presents the advance and final estimates of production in case of foodgrains, oilseeds, cotton and sugarcane for 2006-07:

(Million tones)

Crop	1st Advance Estimates* (As on 15.09.2007)	2nd Advance Estimates (As on 05.02.2007)	3rd Advance Estimates (As on 04.04.2007)	4th Advance Estimates (As on 05.02.2007)	Final Estimates* (As on 07.02.2008)
Foodgrains	105.22	209.17	211.78	216.13	217.28
Oilseeds	13.24	23.62	23.26	23.88	24.29
Cotton#	18.14	20.96	21.04	22.70	22.63
Sugarcane	283.40	315.53	322.94	345.31	355.52

* Kharif season only.

Lakh bales of 170 kg each.

(c) Country is self-reliant in case of rice, wheat and coarse cereals. Depending upon the domestic demand-supply and price situation, Government regulates their export through tariff and other measures.

(d) and (e) Government had constituted the National Commission on Farmers in 2004. Based on the recommendations of the Commission, the Government has approved the National Policy for Farmers 2007. The Policy, inter-alia, aims to improve the economic viability of farming by substantially increasing the net income of farmers through asset reforms in respect of land, water, livestock, fisheries and bio-resources; support services and inputs like application of frontier technologies for improving productivity, supply of good quality seeds and disease free planting

material, issue of soil health pass book and integrated nutrient and pest management system, among others. Further, Government has launched two new schemes (i) National Food Security Mission for increasing production and productivity of rice, wheat and pulses, and (ii) Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana to incentivise the States to increase public investment in Agriculture and Allied Sector. Besides, a number of initiatives, Plan Schemes and programmes including those announced in the Budget 2008-09 have been initiated to address the problems faced by the farmers and for development of agriculture sector.

[English]

Increase in MSP and Import Duty on Jute

2416. SHRI HITEN BARMAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is big gap between Minimum Support Price (MSP) and production cost of the jute;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to increase MSP and import duty on jute;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reason therefore; and

(d) the other steps taken/proposed to be taken to protect the interest of the jute grower?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Minimum Support Price (MSP) is fixed by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Government of India on the basis of recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) For recommending the MSP for raw jute, CACP takes into account a number of factors including the cost of production of jute.

For recommending the MSP for Raw Jute for ensuing production season, the CACP uses projected cost of production for Raw Jute for the reference year. Accordingly, the projected cost for Raw Jute (Weighted Average for the country as a whole) vis-a-vis the MSP for the last three years are as follows:-

Year	Projected Cost (C2 Cost) of Production for Raw Jute (Rs./Quintal)	Minimum Support Price (MSP) (Rs./Quintal)
2006-07	961.85	1000.00
2007-08	1010.00	1055.00
2008-09	1062.00	1250.00

As regards import duty on jute, Jute attracts 10% of general affective rate of basic Custom Duty. However, there is 'Nil' rate of basic Customs Duty on Import of Jute from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal. At present, there is no proposal under consideration to increase basic Customs Duty on Jute.

(d) Whenever the prices of raw jute have touched support level, Jute Corporation of India (JCI) and the Cooperative Societies as agents of JCI procure jute from the farmers at MSP so that the ruling market price of raw jute does not fall below the MSP level. In addition under Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory use in packing commodities) Act, 1987 the Government of India has reserved Foodgrains and sugar for 100% packing in Jute bags with a view to sustain the Jute Industry and thereby protect the interest of the jute growers.

Deaths in Drought Prone Areas

2417. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:

SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIYA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware about the suicide of people due to starvation in drought prone areas of the country;

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

(c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to check starvation deaths in drought prone areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) In view of deficit rainfall during South-West monsoon 2007 (1.6.2007 to 30.9.2007), the Governments of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan & Uttar Pradesh have declared parts of the State as drought affected. None of these States have reported deaths due to starvation in the context of drought. The primary responsibility for taking necessary measures in the wake of natural calamities including drought is that of the State Governments concerned. The State Governments take such measures from the funds available in the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF).

Shortage of Job in IT Sector

2418. SHRI S. AJAYA KUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether IT companies fears of large scale job cuts due to global slow down;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether IT/ITes market is expected to cross the business about Rs. 1,10,000 crores; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) No, Sir. As per National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), it is estimated that in Financial Year 2007-08 the industry will add 375,000 professionals to work force.

(c) and (d) As per National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) total revenue of IT industry in Financial Year 2007-08 is expected to reach USD 52.0 billion (Rs. 208000.00 crore @ 1USD= Rs. 40).

Flood in Ichhamati River

2419. SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to implement a programme to develop the river Ichhamati in West Bengal including increasing its depth and water carrying capacity;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government is aware that large number of people got affected every year due to recurrent floods in this river; and

(d) if so, the details of the steps taken by the Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Government of West Bengal has already completed resuscitation of the river for a length of 24.3 K.M. within Indian Territory in the district of North 24 Parganas at a cost of Rs. 24.88 Crore (Approx.). For the balance portion of approximate 20 km. length, from Angrail BSF Bridge to Kalanchi BSF Bridge, which forms common border between India and Bangladesh, Government of West Bengal prepared a scheme amounting to Rs. 23.59 crore for desilting/dredging of river Ichhamati for better drainage and flood management.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) As the river Ichhamati forms the international border between India and Bangladesh, the matter has already been taken up by Government of India with Bangladesh during 36th meeting of Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) held at Dhaka in September, 2005 to work out the modalities for undertaking desilting/dredging work. A joint field visit by Ministers of Water Resources of both the countries (India and Bangladesh) was also undertaken in September, 2006 to assess situation on the ground.

Import of Cotton

2420. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE:

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated requirement of cotton in Textile Industry particularly in the handloom sector at present sector-wise;

(b) whether cotton is being imported every year in large quantities due to low yields and inferior quality of the cotton grown in the country;

(c) if so, whether the quantum of import has increased over the year;

(d) if so, whether efforts have been made for cutting the costs of cotton by increasing its yield and enhancing the quality to bring it to the international standards; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) The estimated requirement of cotton in textile industry is enclosed as Statement-I. As far as Handloom sector is concerned, requirement is approximately, 24.5 lakh bales per annum.

(b) and (c) No Sir. Cotton to the extent of 5 to 6 lakh bales is imported in the country mainly in Extra Long Staple (ELS) varieties of cotton which are already in short supply in the country. This is not a large quantity in view of the domestic production at around 280 lakh bales. Import figures of cotton is as under:-

Cotton Year(Oct-Sept).	Import Quantity (in lakh bales of 170 kg each)*
2002-2003	17.67
2003-2004	07.21
2004-2005	12.17
2005-2006	05.00
2006-2007	05.53
2007-08 (P)*	06.50

*As per CAB estimated in its last meeting held on 11/01/2008.

(P) – Provisional

(d) and (e) The Government of India launched the Technology Mission on Cotton (TMC) in February, 2000 during 9th Five Year Plan, with the objective of improvement in the production, productivity and quality of cotton and reduction in cost of cultivation, in order to provide abundant supply of good quality cotton at competitive prices to the textile industry and to provide a remunerative return to the farmers. The Mission comprises four Mini Missions, which are jointly being implemented by the Ministries of Agriculture and Textiles. Research and Development on cotton and dissemination of technology to farmers are being undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture through Mini Missions I and II respectively. Improvement in Marketing Infrastructure and the Modernization of Ginning & Pressing factories are implemented by the Ministry of Textiles (Cotton Corporation of India) through Mini Mission III & IV respectively. TMC has improved production and productivity of cotton in various states in the country as given in the Statement-II enclosed.

Statement-I

Cotton Balance Sheet for the last few years drawn by the Cotton Advisory Board is as under:-

(Lakh bales of 170 kg. each)

	Cotton Year (October-September)				
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08 (as on 11.1.2008)
Supply					
Opening stock	24.00*	21.00	72.00	52.00	47.50*
Crop	79.00	243.00	241.00	280.00	310.00
Import	7.21	12.17	5.00	5.53	6.50
Total Supply	210.21	276.17	318.00	337.53	364.00
Demand					
Mill Consumption	150.39	163.98	180.00	194.89	207.00
Non-Mill Consumption	13.71	14.48	20.00	15.88	15.00
Consumption by SSI Units	13.00	16.57	19.00	21.26	23.00
Export	12.11	9.14	47.00	58.00	65.00
Total Demand	189.21	204.17	266.00	290.03	310.00
Closing Stock	21.00	72.00	52.00	47.50	54.00*

* The opening stock for 2007-08 is based on verified figure.

Statement-II

Year	2004-05			2005-06			2006-07			2007-08		
	Area	Production	Yield									
Punjab	5.09	16.50	551	5.57	20.00	610	5.88	26.00	752	06.48	24.00	630
Haryana	6.21	16.50	452	5.83	12.00	350	5.33	16.00	513	04.78	16.00	569
Rajasthan	4.38	10.00	388	4.71	9.00	325	3.50	8.00	389	03.68	09.00	416
Gujarat	19.06	73.00	651	19.06	89.00	794	23.90	101.00	718	25.16	110.0	743
Maharashtra	28.40	52.00	311	28.75	35.00	207	31.24	52.00	288	31.91	60.00	320
Madhya Pradesh	5.76	16.00	472	6.20	19.00	521	6.30	18.00	479	06.62	21.00	539
Andhra Pradesh	11.78	33.00	476	10.33	33.00	543	9.62	35.00	612	10.96	43.00	667
Karnataka	5.21	8.00	261	4.13	6.00	247	3.70	6.00	272	03.71	08.00	367
Tamil Nadu	1.29	5.00	659	1.40	5.00	607	1.33	5.00	697	01.23	05.00	691
Others	0.68	1.00	250	0.79	1.00	215	0.78	1.00	195	00.77	02.00	367
Loose Lint	12.00	12.00	—	12.00	—	—	12.00	—	12.00	—	12.00	—
Total	87.86	243.00	470	86.77	241.00	472	91.58	280.00	521	95.30	310.00	599

Source: Cotton Advisory Board (CAB)

[Translation]

Employment to Minorities

2421. DR. SHAFIQR RAHMAN BARQ: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ratio of minorities especially Muslims being provided employment by employment exchanges has declined;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor, State-wise; and

(c) the details of recruitment of minorities especially Muslims made through such employment exchange during each of the last three years and thereafter till date, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Placement effected through employment exchanges in respect of minority communities as a whole

and Muslims, in particular, as on 31st December for the years 2003-2004 and 2005 (latest available) is given below:

Year	Placement of job seekers of all categories	(in thousands)	
		Total	Muslims
2003	154.9	9.8	4.5
2004	132.6	8.3	5.0
2005	173.2	8.6	3.8

(b) Employment Exchanges sponsor the candidates against the vacancies notified to them by the employers. Employers in turn, shortlist the candidates as per their requirement and issue interview letters to them for making selection.

(c) Statewise details of placement effected through the employment exchanges for the last three years are given in the statement enclosed.

Statement

State-wise placement effected through employment exchanges in respect of Minority communities as on 31st December

S.No.	State/Union Territory	Minority Communities					
		2003		2004		2005	
		Muslims	Total	Muslims	Total	Muslims	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Andhra Pradesh	160	186	90	127	121	152
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	-	1	-	55	-	18
3.	Assam	92	212	443	445	3	7
4.	Bihar	3	3	2	2	5	5
5.	Chhattisgarh	5	11	3	11	4	7
6.	Delhi	3	23	1	1	1	1
7.	Goa	7	108	-	31	7	100
8.	Gujarat	608	663	647	670	525	575
9.	Haryana	3	17	4	8	3	3
10.	Himachal Pradesh	3	21	4	9	19	44
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	7	16	1	1	1	1
12.	Jharkhand	300	302	8	10	11	13
13.	Karnataka	123	154	89	101	69	83

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14.	Kerala	1231	2541	1608	2756	1635	3253
15.	Madhya Pradesh	573	616	299	342	28	34
16.	Maharashtra	314	745	199	661	298	795
17.	Manipur	-	-	-	-	46	47
18.	Meghalaya	-	35	-	3	-	18
19.	Mizoram	-	-	-	-	-	-
20.	Nagaland	-	51	-	44	-	4
21.	Orissa	1	2	1	3	19	97
22.	Punjab	7	1410	627	1025	1	1150
23.	Rajasthan	79	82	79	91	207	219
24.	Sikkim*	-	-	-	-	-	-
25.	Tami Nadu	412	1701	417	1201	345	1303
26.	Tripura	16	20	6	34	2	4
27.	Uttaranchal	34	43	15	20	34	37
28.	Uttar Pradesh	58	63	42	45	78	96
29.	West Bengal	455	497	425	458	324	381
30.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	-	-	-	-	-	-
31.	Chandigarh	16	250	2	113	3	78
32.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	-	-	-	-	-	-
33.	Daman and Diu	-	1	-	-	-	-
34.	Lakshadweep	-	-	-	-	-	-
35.	Pondicherry	1	6	-	-	11	41
All India		4511	9780	5012	8267	3800	8564

* No Employment Exchange is functioning in this State.

[English]

Use of Space for Defence Purposes

2422. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- whether the society of Defence Technologists has proposed the use of space for defence purposes;
- if so, the details thereof; and
- the Government's decision thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):
(a) to (c) Information can not be divulged in the interest of National Security.

Disbursal of Loans

2423. SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- whether the Government has entered into an agreement with World Bank to provide loans to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR);
- if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the total farm loan disbursed by the Government State-wise, particularly in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. National Agricultural Innovation Project with the development credit assistance of the World Bank is in operation since July, 2006 for a period of 6 years with an outlay of USD of 250 million (about Rs.1190 crore) of which Government of India contribution is USD 50 million. The main objective of the project is to facilitate accelerated and sustainable transformation of Indian agriculture for enhancing productivity, profitability, income generation and livelihood security. The project has four components, namely, ICAR as the catalyzing agent for management of change in the Indian agricultural research system, Research on production to consumption systems, Research on sustainable rural livelihood security, Basic & Strategic research in the frontier areas of agricultural science. The main features of the project include consortium of partners, competitive funding, market orientation, knowledge management etc.

(c) The details of state wise release made under different subprojects of National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) during the year 2007-08 (till February, 2008) are given in the enclosed Statement.

Statement

S.No.	State	Total amount released (Rs.)
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	6,88,29,101.00
2.	Haryana	1,06,95,000.00
3.	Himachal Pradesh	95,63,620.00
4.	Jammu and Kashmir	2,17,44,490.00
5.	Jharkhand	64,85,775.00
6.	Karnataka	39,16,000.00
7.	Kerala	71,40,440.00
8.	Maharashtra	6,23,49,438.00
9.	Madhya Pradesh	2,55,600.00
10.	NEH States	46,14,055.00
11.	New Delhi	9,80,81,320.00
12.	Orissa	4,34,2700.00
13.	Punjab	29,95,200.00

1	2	3
14.	Rajasthan	2,38,03,275.00
15.	Tamil Nadu	62,17,000.00
16.	Uttar Pradesh	1,22,42,500.00
17.	Uttarakhand	3,37,81,670.00
18.	West Bengal	5,59,29,300.00
19.	Gujarat	8,99,250.00
Total		47,24,17,029.00

Laying of Cables by Telecom Operators

2424. SHRI ABDULLAKUTTY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has given permission to private telecom companies especially Reliance Infocom to dig any road for laying cables without getting sanction from competent authority and without paying any charges;

(b) if so, whether such concessions are extended to Public Sector Units like Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) Right of Way facility is permitted to the Telecom Service Licensees and the Registered Infrastructure Providers for laying cables with the approval of the Competent Local/ Highway Authority on payment of applicable charges.

Fishing Harbour

2425. SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received proposals for setting up of new fishing harbours in the country, particularly in Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) State-wise details of the proposals received for setting up of new fishing harbours in the country including Kerala and the action taken thereon is given in the enclosed Statement.

Statement

State-wise details of proposals received for construction of new fishing harbours and action taken thereon.

S.No.	Name of the State	Name of the Fishing Harbour	Action taken
1	2	3	4
1.	Gujarat	1. Veraval Stage-II	The State Government has been requested to consider an alternate location for development of the fishing harbour as the existing one is already congested and over crowded.
		2. Umergaon	The State Government is to identify the land for development of proposed fishing harbour enabling the Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fisheries (CICEF), Bangalore to finalize the Techno Economic Feasibility Report (TEFR).
		3. Bhadeli Jagalala	The Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fisheries (CICEF), Bangalore has been requested to carry out investigations and to prepare Techno-Economic Feasibility Report.
		4. Porbandar Stage-II	The State Government has been requested to conduct post construction evaluation study to assess the utilization of the facilities already created.
		5. Jaffrabad	The Government of Gujarat has been requested to submit the project report together with confirmation on availability of land, environmental clearance and budgetary provision in the State budget.
		6. Mangrol Stage-III	The Government of Gujarat has been requested to formulate the proposal in accordance with the recommendations of the evaluation studies.
		7. Madhwad	The State Government has been requested to convey the acceptance of the layout prepared by with Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fisheries (CICEF), Bangalore.
2.	Orissa	1. Chandipur	The State Government has been requested to confirm availability of land, environmental clearance and adequate budgetary provision in the State budget.
		2. Chudamani	The Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fisheries (CICEF), Bangalore has been requested to carryout necessary investigations and formulation of the proposal.
3.	Karnataka	1. Alvekodi	The State Government is to take a final view on up-gradation of fish landing centre into fishing harbour, after completion of the fish landing centre project at this location.
		2. Malpe Stage-III	The State Government is to complete the investigations and formulate the proposal.
		3. Mangrol Stage-III	-do-

1	2	3	4
4.	Tamil Nadu	1. Rameshwaram	The State Government has been requested to confirm availability of land, environmental clearance and adequate budgetary provision in the State budget together with updating of the Techno-economic Feasibility Report.
		2. Poompuhar	The State Government has been requested to carry out detailed hydraulic model studies together with confirmation on availability of land, environmental clearance and budgetary provision in the State budget.
		3. Pazhyar Stage-III	The State Government has been requested to confirm availability of land, environmental clearance and adequate budgetary provision in the State budget.
		4. Mallipattinam Stage-II	The State Government has been requested to confirm availability of land, environmental clearance and adequate budgetary provision in the State budget.
		5. Thengapattinam	The Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fisheries (CICEF), Bangalore has been requested to scrutinize the estimate and update the economic evaluation of the project.
		6. Chinnamutton stage-II	Government of Tamil Nadu has been requested to formulate detailed Techno-Economic Feasibility Report.
		7. Colachel	The proposal has been received recently and is processed.
		8. Nagapattinam	Government of Tamil Nadu is to submit detailed project report.
		9. Muthupet	The proposal has been referred to the Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fisheries (CICEF), Bangalore for examination from techno-economic angle.
		10. Sethubhavachatram	-do-
		11. Thondi	The State Government is to submit the detailed project report
		12. Mookaiyur	-do-
5.	Andhra Pradesh	1. Nizamapatnam	The State Government has been requested to confirm availability of land, environmental clearance and adequate budgetary provision in the State budget.
6.	Kerala	1. Kasargod	The State Government has been requested to access the funds under the Rashtryas Krishi Vikas Yojana for development of the fishing harbour.
		2. Cheruvathur	The Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fisheries (CICEF), Bangalore has been requested to examine the proposal from techno economic angle.

1	2	3	4
		3. Chettuvai	The Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fisheries (CICEF), Bangalore has been requested to examine the proposal from techno economic angle.
7.	Maharashtra	1. Agardanda	The State Government has been requested to complete model studies and forward the findings to CICEF for finalization of Techno-Economic Feasibility Report.
		2. Deogad (Anandwadi)	This proposal has been approved under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme
		3. Jivana Bandar	The State Government has been requested to submit detailed project proposals after completion of techno economic feasibility studies/model studies together with confirmation on statutory clearances.
		4. Karanja	-do-
		5. Arnala	-do-
		6. Hamai	-do-
		7. Ratnagiri Stage-II	-do-
		8. Sakhrinate	-do-
8.	Daman & Diu	1. Vanakabara	The UT Administration has been requested to confirm availability of land and environmental clearance for the project.
		2. Nani Daman	The Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fisheries (CICEF), Bangalore has been requested to carry out investigation and to prepare Techno-Economic Feasibility Report.
9.	Pondicherry	3. Yanam	The Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fisheries (CICEF), Bangalore has been asked to carry out investigation and to prepare Techno-Economic Feasibility Report.

Loans through Post Offices

2426. SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Banks to provide loans to farmers in the country through post offices against National Savings Certificates and Kisan Vikas Patras; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Theft of ID Cards of Personnel

2427. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Identity Cards of Defence Personnel were stolen by various terrorist outfits all over the country last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any inquiry into these incidents; and

(d) if so, the details of the outcome of such inquiry?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) There is no reported instance of stealing of Identity Cards of Defence personnel during the year 2007.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Defaulting Units, Establishments and Employers

2428. SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI:

SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPAPARAI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of defaulting units, establishments and employers in depositing the Provident Fund with the authority though collected from the workers and employees during each of the last three years and thereafter, till date alongwith total amount involved therein, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government has taken any action to recover the such amount;

(c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the amount recovered from them during the said period, State-wise;

(d) whether the Government proposes to take stringent action against such defaulters apart from the steps already being taken; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) The number of defaulting establishments (un-exempted sector) as on 31st March 2005, 2006 & 2007 was 40608, 76476 & 72554 respectively. This include the establishments, which have defaulted in remittance of employee's share of contribution. The Region-wise details of the number of defaulters and amounts due during the last three years are given in the Statement-I enclosed.

(b) Recovery of dues is effected in accordance with the provisions of the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952. This includes attachment of bank accounts, movable/immovable properties, arrest of defaulters, etc.

(c) The details of amounts recovered during the last three years are given in the Statement-II enclosed.

(d) and (e) Besides launching of prosecution under section 14 of the Act against defaulters, complaints are also filed under section 406/409 of Indian Penal Code against those establishments which deduct employees' share but fail to remit the same to the Employees' Provident Fund Organization.

Statement-I**Region-wise details of the number of defaulters & amounts due (year ending 31st March) (un-exempted sector)**

Region	No. of Defaulters	Amount Involved (Rs. in Lakhs)	No. of Defaulters	Amount Involved (Rs. in Lakhs)	2006-07	
					No. of Defaulters	Amount Involved (Rs. in Lakhs)
	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Andhra Pradesh	4581	11062.33	12,025	11754.46	11556	11929.91
Bihar	752	4298.07	1966	4211.45	1406	5360.21
Chhattisgarh	347	1048.11	800	2095.26	727	4274.49
Delhi	690	2540.30	826	2419.17	775	2372.85
Goa	313	333.88	392	337.59	258	276.37
Gujarat	730	5288.23	4620	11415.28	4370	6577.99
Haryana	2495	5509.18	744	6110.85	1702	3930.11
Himachal Pradesh	197	434.14	137	357.03	118	259.43
Jharkhand	559	2631.25	733	3254.60	1165	2429.26
Karnataka	917	8150.23	3143	9444.15	2143	10144.29
Kerala	2017	8727.04	4627	8930.31	3602	11938.89
Madhya Pradesh	1751	11359.38	3656	12581.94	2892	14098.11

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Maharashtra	2257	22882.34	6639	25798.43	6169	30208.89
N.E. Region	651	4602.95	387	4056.27	715	3234.46
Orissa	2143	11686.90	5158	12569.45	2844	19547.60
Punjab	6672	5713.72	6186	7541.96	5413	7360.60
Rajasthan	1409	3408.46	425	3714.94	2516	4033.41
Tamil Nadu	8475	18349.06	17187	21094.83	17766	21357.11
Uttaranchal	265	1467.74	842	1316.06	312	749.44
Uttar Pradesh	3181	12308.92	3265	10572.69	3274	10733.08
West Bengal	206	11880.25	2718	12842.93	2831	12949.70
Total	40608	153682.48	76476	172419.65	72554	183766.20

Statement-II

(Rs. in lakhs)

Region	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	6447.42	4942.14	5695.57
Bihar	2138.07	3026.04	1161.67
Chhattisgarh	701.87	795.65	1764.22
Delhi	1803.75	1699.02	1465.09
Goa	351.33	456.08	432.94
Gujarat	3689.04	10722.44	8233.96
Haryana	2887.23	4307.23	4453.16
Himachal Pradesh	961.57	1028.05	666.05
Jharkhand	12618.62	1748.83	1668.62
Karnataka	6350.83	7278.64	7687.36
Kerala	5114.19	4616.82	5498.94
Madhya Pradesh	3985.98	6898.04	2460.48
Maharashtra	13652.93	19589.00	11674.46
N.E. Region	2097.64	2999.48	2508.86
Orissa	8717.73	3703.15	5980.69
Punjab	6806.06	10293.27	6654.17
Rajasthan	2032.62	1275.35	825.14

	1	2	3	4
Tamil Nadu	10725.41	7966.32	9706.22	
Uttaranchal	985.87	371.99	199.93	
Uttar Pradesh	7125.58	4840.51	2755.48	
West Bengal	6688.48	6875.61	8539.49	
Total	105882.22	105433.66	90032.50	

Mushroom Cultivation

2429. SHRI TAPIR GAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is huge potential for cultivation of mushroom in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the mushroom cultivators are deprived of facilities available to the farmers since mushroom cultivation has been included under industry by several States;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps being taken by the Government to provide these facilities to mushroom cultivators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. India, with varied agro-climatic, abundant raw materials (about 600 millions tones agro-waste/annum) and manpower, has huge potential for production of different types of mushrooms in various regions and seasons throughout the year. At present India is producing about 1,00,000 tonnes/annum.

(c) to (e) For enhancing horticulture production including mushroom, two Centrally Sponsored Schemes namely National Horticulture Mission and Horticulture Technology Mission for North Eastern and Himalayan States, are being implemented in the country. The schemes aimed at increasing production and productivity of horticultural produce including mushroom in the country to meet the growing demand in the domestic as well as export market. However, there is some variation in power tariffs and income tax on cultivation of mushrooms in different States depending upon the classification of mushrooms.

Defence Expo in New Delhi

2430. SHRIMATI JYOTIRMOYEE SIKDAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the outcome of the Defence Expo recently held in New Delhi including the number of defence deals finalised therein;

(b) whether his Ministry proposes to issue a white paper or introduce a Defence deals policy in view of the increasing role of middleman; and

(c) the total amount involved in defence deals during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) 475 Exhibitors from 31 countries including 273 international companies participated in the Defexpo India 2008. Approximately 40,000 business visitors visited the exhibition. 3,490 business inquiries were generated during the exhibition and 21 MoUs were signed. These are likely to further boost the export of defence items from India.

However, no purchase agreements were signed by the government during Defexpo India-2008.

(b) Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2006 and Defence Procurement Manual (DPM 2006) under implementation with effect from 1st September 2006, provide for direct dealing with Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) or Authorised Vendors or Government sponsored Export Agencies (applicable in case of countries where domestic laws do not permit direct export by OEMs). Further, the procedures inter-alia incorporate provisions for penalties being imposed if any seller engages any individual or firm, whether Indian or foreign whatsoever, to intercede, facilitate or in any way recommend to the Government of India or any of its functionaries, whether officially or unofficially, to the award of the Contract to the Seller.

(c) Actual Expenditure under Capital Acquisition Head for the last 3 years is as follows:

2004-2005	:	Rs.27208.57 Crores
2005-2006	:	Rs.25490.53 Crores
2006-2007	:	Rs.26900.44 Crores

Actual Expenditure under Revenue Head (Stores) for the Last 3 years is as follows:

2004-2005	:	Rs. 16032.49 Crores
2005-2006	:	Rs. 17475.31 Crores
2006-2007	:	Rs. 18902.36 Crores

Construction of Telecom Staff Quarters

2431. SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any proposal to provide funds for construction of thirty numbers of staff quarters immediately for the smooth running and good working conditions of the Telecom Circle of Kalahandi in the State of Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

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

(c) Kalahandi in the State of Orissa falls within the territorial jurisdiction of Orissa Telecom Circle under Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited. Generally BSNL construct quarters for their employees from their own resources.

[Translation]

Dispute of Acquisition

2432. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the dispute of acquisition of Hutch Essar by Vodaphone has come to the notice of the Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government so far to settle the said dispute?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) Vodafone International Holdings B. V. had submitted an application to the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) seeking permission of the Government for transfer of 51.96 % share held by M/s Hutchison Telecommunications International Ltd. (HTIL) in M/s Hutchison Essar Limited (HEL). The FIPB considered the request and approved the transfer of 51.96% shares from Hutchison to Vodafone subject to certain conditions.

[English]

Land under Possession of Navy

2433. SHRI SARDINHA FRANCISCO COSME: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Indian Navy is in possession of the Lands of Goa Government at the Old Airport and other places;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of the utilized lands?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):
(a) and (b) Indian Navy holds land measuring 1687.51 acres at Dabolim Airport in Goa. Post liberation of Goa in 1961, 249.67 acres of ex-Portuguese land which constituted Dabolim Airport was handed over to Ministry of Defence by an order of the then Military Governor of Goa on 9th April 1962. Rest of the land was acquired post Gazette Notification of 23rd February 1968 in different pieces.

(c) Out of 1687.51 acres of this land, the Airport Authority of India is using 25.696 acres and rest of the land is being utilized by the Indian Navy.

Sale of Milk Through DMS

2434. SHRI LALMANI PRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Delhi Milk Scheme (DMS) sales network is restricted to areas having high income population;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to expand DMS sales network to the areas having low income population during the last three years; and
- (d) the steps being taken by the Government to increase supply of DMS milk?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There are 1710 sale outlets, located all over Delhi to meet the demand of all income groups.

(c) and (d) In the last three years DMS has expanded its sales network by providing milk at private shops through distributors so that it is available to the consumers at nearby places. Further, more and more raw milk is procured to meet the demand of consumers.

Increase in PC Penetration

2435. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has noticed very low penetration of Personal Computer (PC) in rural areas of the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken to increase PC penetration in rural areas of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The cost of PC, access charge, non availability of suitable content in the local language, tools and interfaces and applications for the rural populace are some of the major reasons.

(c) (i) Government is in the process of establishment of 100,000 broadband Internet Enabled Kiosks called Common Service Centres in rural areas of the country in the ratio of 1 CSC for every 6 Census villages in a State. These will be established as Public Private Partnerships. The centres would create awareness about PC usage and its benefits in addition to reaching out government and other services at the doorstep of the citizen.

(ii) The DIT Government of India has a programme called the Technology Development for Indian Languages with the objectives:

— To develop information processing tools to facilitate human machine interaction, in Indian Languages and multi-lingual knowledge resources.

— To promote the use of information processing tools for language studies and research.

(iii) The Government is facilitating the Industry to make available computers at affordable prices in the country. The Government has taken a number of steps for promotion of Electronics / IT hardware manufacturing and cutting down the prices of electronics hardware, including computers. The details are given in the statement enclosed.

Statement

Steps taken for promotion of Electronics/IT Hardware Manufacturing

1. Customs Duty:
 - The general rate of excise duty (CENVAT) has been reduced from 16% to 14%.
 - To provide a level playing field to the domestic manufacturers, full exemption from basic customs duty available to specified raw materials/inputs for manufacture of specified electronic/IT products has been extended to:
 - raw materials and inputs for manufacture of plasma display panel/module and cable filling/flooding compounds (thixotropic jelly) for optical fibre cables, and
 - a few additional raw materials and inputs for manufacture of connectors, relays, cathode ray tubes, parts of CRT, semiconductors, electronic capacitor grade metallised plastic films for capacitors, and aluminum electrolytic capacitors.

- The peak rate of customs duty has been reduced from 35% in 2001-02 to 10% in 2007-08. Customs duty on 217 Information Technology Agreement (IT A-1) items has been abolished from 1.3.2005.
- All goods required in the manufacture of IT A-1 items have been exempted from customs duty subject to Actual user condition.
- Customs Duty on specified raw materials/inputs used for manufacture of electronic components and optical fibres /cables is 0%.
- Customs duty on specified capital goods used for manufacture of electronic goods is 0%.
- Central Sales Tax (CST) has been reduced from 3% to 2%.

2. Excise Duty:

- Excise duty on computers is 12%, whereas the median rate for most items is 16%.
- Microprocessors, Hard Disc Drives, Floppy Disc Drives, CD ROM Drives, DVD Drives/DVD Writers, Flash Memory, wireless data modem cards, SMPS power board, IR module and Combo-Drives have been exempted from excise duty.
- Two more items viz. have been added to the list of exempted parts, in order to remove inverted tariff structure.
- Packaged software hitherto attracted excise duty of 8%. This has been enhanced to 12%. There is no change in the excise duty on other software.
- The effective rate of duty applicable to clearance of goods to domestic tariff area from export oriented units, software technology park (STP) units and electronic hardware technology park (EHTP) units has been revised from '25% of the basic customs duty + excise duty payable on like goods' to '50% of the basic customs duty + excise duty payable on like goods'.

3. Export Promotion Capital Goods scheme (EPCG):

- Basic customs duty on project imports has been reduced from 7.5% to 5%. Export Promotion Capital Goods scheme (EPCG) allows import of capital goods on payment of 5% customs duty.
- The export obligation under EPCG Scheme can also be fulfilled by the supply of Information Technology Agreement (IT A-1) items to the DTA provided the realization is in free foreign exchange.
- Supplies of Information Technology Agreement (ITA-1) items and notified zero duty telecom/electronic items in the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA).
- Supplies of Information Technology Agreement (ITA-1) items and notified zero duty telecom/electronic items in the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA)

by Electronics Hardware Technology Park (EHTP)/Export Oriented Unit (EOU) units are counted for the purpose of fulfilment of positive Net Foreign Exchange Earnings (NFE).

4. Simplification of Procedures:

- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) has been implemented by customs and is under implementation.
- central excise. Applications related to Foreign Trade like IEC Code, EPCG, Advance License, etc. can be filed electronically with the DGFT.
- Information Technology (IT) software services provided for use in business or commerce have been covered under the list of taxable services.

5. Expenditure incurred on in-house R&D:

- Weighted deduction of 150% of expenditure incurred on in-house R&D in case of a company engaged in the business of electronic equipment, computers and telecommunication equipment is available under clause (1 of sub-section (2AB) of Section 35 of the Income Tax Act.

Price Support Scheme Operation

2436. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether C&AG has submitted two inspection reports regarding price support scheme operations in respect of mustard and other seeds for the Rabi 2005 season;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the salient findings thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether C&AG also plans to conduct inspections of price support scheme in respect of mustard and other seeds for the previous two Rabi seasons including the current season; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The C&AG conducted audit of mustard seed and other oilseeds & pulses procured during 2005-06 Rabi/Kharif seasons by NAFED as Central nodal agency under Price Support Scheme (PSS) and submitted its inspection reports on 31.10.2007 and 12.12.2007 respectively. The C&AG has pointed out several lapses like procurement in excess of norms for production, tampering of Girdawaries, procurement from persons non-resident of villages, no record of samples/moisture content, purchase of substandard stock, short recovery on processing, not following sale procedure in terms of security deposit or recovery of penal interest and wrong booking of expenses etc. The comments of NAFED on the audit observations are being examined.

(c) and (d) The office of C&AG has informed that the audit of 2006-07 and 2007-08 will be taken up during 2008-09 for which audit details have yet to be worked out.

State Farms Corporation of India

2437. SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:

SHRI ANIRUDH PRASAD alias SADHU YADAV:

SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:

SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the priorities of State Farms Corporation of India (SFCI), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Agriculture;

(b) whether the SFCI has examined the various reports of International/National agencies in regard to impact of climate change on farm sector;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the strategy chalked out by the SFCI to save the farm sector from the impact of climate change;

(e) whether a conference on impact of climate change in agriculture was organized by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) foundation; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The priorities of State Farms Corporation of India (SFCI) are to produce breeder and foundation seeds of cereals, pulses and oilseeds; certified seed production for State Seeds Corporations and other agencies; production of "Test Stock Seed" in respect of identified "pre-released varieties" and production and distribution of planting materials of outstanding horticultural plantation crops.

(b) and (c) SFCI has examined the reports of National agencies (Indian Council of Agricultural Research Institutes) about impact of climate change on farm sector and their recommendations have been adopted and action taken to the extent feasible. Indian Council of Agricultural Research Institutes have given recommendations for mitigating the effect of frost and reduced water availability to the Rabi crops.

(d) As per the recommendation of Indian Council of Agricultural Research Institutes, to mitigate the effect of frost and reduced water availability, application of Thio urea @ 350 grams in 700 liters water per hectare in pulses and @ 700 grams in 700 liters water per hectare in wheat and barley has been adopted. Sprays have been done twice at interval of 20 days. In rainfed areas, water conservation techniques like deep ploughing, impounding of flood/rain water have been adopted. In respect of horticulture nursery, green houses/ poly houses have been constructed.

(e) and (f) IFFCO Foundation in association with Ministry of Agriculture, Indian Council of Agricultural Research and IFFCO organized an International Conference on "Science-based Agricultural Transformation towards

Alleviations of Hunger and Poverty in SAARC Countries" during 5-7 March, 2008 at New Delhi. One of the areas of the Conference was "Climate Change, Risk Management and Bio-security". The impact of ongoing climate change on productivity and increased uncertainty of production in farm sector were discussed in the conference.

Internet-to-phone Facility

2438. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government proposes to introduce Internet-to-Phone facility for various countries including USA, U.K. and Australia;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for creating awareness about this facility among the people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Government issues Licences to Telecom Service Providers to provide various Telecom services including Internet Telephony Service. Provision of Internet-to-Phone facility for countries outside India including USA, U.K. and Australia has been permitted in Internet Telephony Service, within the framework of the conditions of the Licence.

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

[Translation]

Curtailment in RMS

2439. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Railway Mail Services (RMSs) in the country;

(b) whether any curtailment/revision done to RMS in the country during the last three years including current year;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the details of curtailment/revision in RM services in the country during the above mentioned period in the country, especially in Kota region of Rajasthan;

(e) whether the Government has made alternate arrangements to compensate it; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Details are given in the statement-I enclosed.

(b) and (c) Consolidation of mail network has been undertaken by the Department, as given in the statement-II and III enclosed.

(d) No services to public have been curtailed as a result of the consolidation of Railway Mail Services.

(e) and (f) Do not arise in view of (d) above.

Statement-I

*RMS functional units (Circle-wise)
as on 31.03.2006*

Circles	RMS Divisions	RMS Sorting / Mail offices
1. Andhra Pradesh	6	35
2. Assam	2	14
3. Bihar	5	26
4. Chhattisgarh	1	6
5. Delhi	3	16
6. Gujarat	3	33
7. Haryana	2	13
8. Himachal Pradesh	1	6
9. Jammu and Kashmir	1	2
10. Jharkhand	2	11
11. Kerala	3	29
12. Karnataka	3	26
13. Madhya Pradesh	3	21
14. Maharashtra	7	40
15. North East	0	0
16. Orissa	3	22
17. Punjab	2	11
18. Rajasthan	3	21
19. Tamil Nadu	6	51
20. Uttaranchal	0	0
21. Uttar Pradesh	7	60
22. West Bengal	6	44
Total	69	487

Statement-II

Circle-wise list of Mail Offices merged with other offices since April, 2007 status as on 29.2.2008

Name of Circle	Name of Mail Office merged
1	2
Andhra Pradesh	1) Chirala Stg
	2) KBU Secunderabad
	3) Anakapalle RMS
	4) Adoni RMS
	5) Nandyala RMS
	6) Hrudupur RMS
	7) Chittoor RMS
	8) Guddur RMS

1	2
Assam	9) TMO Kotakhal
	10) Karimganj RMS
	11) Mariani RMS
	12) Lumding RMS
	13) CRC Shillong
Bihar	14) Sonepur RMS
	15) Motihari RMS
	16) Nawada RMS
	17) Buxar RMS
	18) Khagaria RMS
	19) Jamalpur RMS
	20) Patna CSO
	21) Patna RMS Foreign Post
	22) Sasaram RMS
Chhattisgarh	23) Chindwara RMS
	24) Jagdalpur Stg.
Gujarat	25) Amreli
	26) Porbandar RMS
Haryana	Nil
H.P.	Nil
Jharkhand	27) Madhupur RMS
Karnataka	28) Arsikere RMS
Kerala	29) Neyyattinkara Stg.
	30) Kottarakara Stg.
	31) Kollam PSO
	32) Muvattupuzha Sorting
Madhya Pradesh	33) Betul RMS
	34) Bina RMS
	35) Neemuch Stg.
	36) Mandsaur RMS
	37) Nagda TMO
	38) Piparia RMS
	39) Khandwa RMS
	40) Chhatarpur Stg.
Maharashtra	41) Karad Stg.
	42) Manmad RMS
Orissa	43) CRC Cuttack
	44) Berhampur RMS PI Stg.
	45) Titilagarh RMS
	46) Paralakhemundi Sorting
	47) Phulbani Stg.
Punjab	48) Dhuri RMS
	49) Pathankot Stg.

1	2
Rajasthan	50) Dungarpur RMS 51) Pali Stg.
Tamil Nadu	52) Pattukotal Stg. 53) Madurai HO Stg. 54) Tenkasi Stg.
U.P.	55) Bulandshahar RMS 56) Unnao RMS 57) Lalitpur RMS 58) Hapur RMS 59) Orai RMS 60) Barabanki RMS 61) Shikohabad RMS 62) Balamau RMS 63) Ghaziabad RMS 64) Bahraich HO Stg. 65) Ghazipur RMS 66) Pratapgarh RMS 67) Fatehpur RMS 68) Ballia RMS 69) Sitapur RMS 70) Pilibhit RMS
West Bengal	71) Gangtok Stg. 72) Adra RMS 73) Contai Rd RMS 74) Midnapur RMS 75) Haldia RMS

Statement-III

*Details of merger of Mail Offices in Rajasthan
(During last three years)*

Mail Offices Merged

Sl. No.	Name of Sorting Office	Date of Closure/ Merger	Name of Mail Office in which merged
1.	Phulera RMS	11-04-2005	Jaipur RMS
2.	CBSSO Jaipur	11-4-2005	Jaipur RMS
3.	Dungarpur RMS	16-8-2007	Udaipur/ Chittorgarh
4.	Pali RMS	29-10-2007	Falna RMS/Ajmer RMS
5.	Marwar Jn. RMS	29-2-2008	Falna RMS/Ajmer RMS

Details of Alternative Arrangements made**Mail Offices:**

S.No.	Name of Sorting Office	Alternate arrangements made after closure
1.	Phulera RMS	Mail is being processed in Jaipur RMS
2.	CBSSO Jaipur	Mail is being processed in Jaipur RMS
3.	Dungarpur RMS	Mail is being processed in Udaipur/Chittorgarh
4.	Pali RMS	Mail is being processed in Falna RMS/Ajmer RMS
5.	Marwar Jn. RMS	Mail is being processed in Falna RMS/Ajmer RMS

Penalty on Telecom Companies

2440. SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:
SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR:
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:
SHRI KIREN RIJJU:
SHRIMATI RUPATAI D. PATIL:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a penalty of approximately more than rupees eight hundred crores has been imposed on various Telecom Companies of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of Telecom Companies on which penalty has been imposed alongwith the amount of penalty and the reasons for imposing of the said penalty;

(d) the action taken/being taken by the Government in this regard;

(e) the amount of penalty recovered by the Government from the aforesaid companies;

(f) the action taken so far by the Government against the companies guilty of no-payment of penalty; and

(g) the time by which the Government will recover the aforesaid penalty amount?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (g) As per the information available, the penalty of around Rs. 482 crores have been imposed on various Telecom Companies.

The due process for recovering the penalty amount has been followed and recovery of the order of Rs. 370 crores has been made except in some cases where the matter is sub-judice. Recovery of penalty depends on the outcome of the Court decision.

The names of the Telecom Companies on which the penalty has been imposed, the amount of penalty, the reasons for penalty and the status of recovery are indicated in the statement-I to IV enclosed.

Statement-I**Details of Penalty Imposed on Service Providers**

S.No.	Name of Service Provider	Service Area	Nature of violation	Financial Year	Whether penalty imposed
CMTS					
1	Hutchison Essar Cellular Ltd. (now Vodafone Essar Cellular Ltd.)	Maharashtra	Shortage of License Fee Paid on self-assessment to License Fee dues as per audited AGR statement by more than 10%	2004-05	Yes
2	Hutchison Essar Cellular Ltd. (now Vodafone Essar Cellular Ltd.)	Tamilnadu		2004-05	Yes
3	Idea Mobile Comm Ltd.	Haryana		2004-05	Yes
Total CMTS					
Basic/UASL					
1	Tata Teleservices Ltd.	UP (East)	Shortage of License Fee paid on self-assessment to License Fee dues as per audited AGR statement by more than 10%	2004-05	Yes
2	Tata Teleservices Ltd.	UP (West)		2004-05	Yes
3	Reliance Communications Ltd.	Kolkata		2004-05	Yes
4	Bharti Airtel Ltd.	Bihar		2004-05	Yes
5	Bharti Airtel Ltd.	Orissa		2004-05	Yes
6	Bharti Airtel Ltd.	Delhi		2004-05	Yes
7	Bharti Airtel Ltd.	Karnataka		2004-05	Yes
8	Bharti Airtel Ltd.	Tamilnadu		2004-05	Yes
9	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	Assam		2004-05	Yes
10	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	Assam		2005-06	Yes
11	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	Bihar		2004-05	Yes
12	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	Himachal Pd.		2004-05	Yes
13	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	J & K		2004-05	Yes
14	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	J & K		2005-06	Yes

(Amount in Rupees)

Total imposed amount	Penalty amount	Amount Interest amount	Recovered amount	Outstanding amount	Remarks
44,742,731	32,220,221	12,522,510	44,742,731	—	
22,560,217	16,246,107	6,314,110	22,560,217	-	
7,244,336	5,216,805	2,027,531	7,244,336	-	
74,547,284	53,683,133	20,864,151	74,547,284	-	
476,314	347,363	128,951	476,314	-	
523,074	381,464	141,610	523,074	-	
36,764,401	28,200,411	8,563,990	36,764,401	-	
2,476,135	1,738,648	737,487	2,476,135	-	
1,916,585	1,345,753	570,832	1,916,585	-	
20,552,414	14,431,122	6,121,292	20,552,414	-	
22,946,452	16,112,124	6,834,328	22,946,452	-	
28,889,941	20,285,416	8,604,525	28,889,941	-	
25,605,198	21,728,570	3,876,628	25,605,198	-	
21,358,670	19,691,855	1,666,815	21,358,670	-	
25,605,198	21,728,570	3,876,628	25,605,198	-	
25,605,198	21,728,570	3,876,628	25,605,198	-	
25,605,198	21,728,570	3,876,628	25,605,198	-	
2,168,189	1,998,985	169,204	2,168,189	-	

S.No.	Name of Service Provider	Service Area	Nature of violation	Financial Year	Whether penalty imposed
15	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	North East		2004-05	Yes
16	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	North East		2005-06	Yes
17	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	Orissa		2004-05	Yes
18	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	Orissa		2005-06	Yes
19	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	West Bengal		2004-05	Yes
20	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	West Bengal		2005-06	Yes
21	Shyam Telelink Ltd.	Rajaasthan		2004-05	Yes
Total Basic/UASL					
ILD					
1	VSNL	All India	Shortage of License Fee paid on self-assessment to license 'Fee dues as per audited AGR statement by more than 10%	2004-05	Yes
2	VSNL	All India		2005-06	Yes
Total ILD					
PMRTS					
1	Hofintel Ltd.	Chennai	Shortage of License Fee paid on self-assessment to license 'Fee dues as per audited AGR statement by more than 10%	2005-06	Yes
Total PMRTS					
Commercial VSAT					
1	HECL	All India	Shortage of License Fee paid on self-assessment to license 'Fee dues as per audited AGR statement by more than 10%	2004-05	Yes
2	HECL	All India	Shortage of License Fee paid on self-assessment to license 'Fee dues as per audited AGR statement by more than 10%	2005-06	Yes
Total Commercial VSAT					
Grant Total					

Total imposed amount	Penalty amount	Amount interest amount	Recovered amount	Outstanding amount	Remarks
25,605,198	21,728,570	3,876,628	25,605,198	-	
23,346,813	21,524,845	1,821,968	23,346,813	-	
25,605,198	21,728,570	3,876,628	25,605,198	-	
3,407,338	3,141,432	265,906	3,407,338	-	
34,140,264	28,971,427	5,168,837	34,140,264	-	
2,221,138	2,047,802	173,336	2,221,138	-	
181,929,145	126,140,675	55,788,470	181,929,145	-	
536,748,061	416,730,742	120,017,319	536,748,061	-	
1,046,053,856	772,553,983	273,499,873	1,046,053,856		
321,460,603	293,379,142	28,081,461	321,460,603	-	
1,367,514,459	1,065,933,125	301,581,334	1,367,514,459	-	
3,114	2,900	214	3,114	-	
3,114	2,900	214	3,114	-	
32,876,919	29,344,834	3,532,085	-	32,876,919	The matter is subjudice
8,947,230	8,083,122	864,108	-	8,947,230	The matter is subjudice
41,824,149	37,427,956	4,396,193	-	41,824,149	
2,020,637,067	1,573,777,858	446,859,211	1,978,812,918	41,824,149	

Statement-II*Details of reasons and amounts recovered from Service Provider*

Sl.No.	Name of Service Provider	Service Area	Amount	Reason	Amount Recovered
1.	Bharti Airtel Ltd.	Chennai	59638940	As per clause 20.8 of the UASL agreement, in case the total amount paid as quarterly spectrum charges for four quarters of the financial year falls short by more than 10% of the payable spectrum charges, it attracts a penalty @150% (50% from the Financial Year 2005-06)	
2.	Bharti Airtel Ltd.	Madhya Pradesh	67555214		
3.	Reliance Telecom Ltd.	North East	654694		654694
4.	Reliance Telecom Ltd.	Orissa	3625540		3625540
5.	Reliance Telecom Ltd.	M.P.	22841725		22841725
6.	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	Assam	7292748		7292748
7.	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	J & K	605586		605586
8.	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	NE	8013316		8013316
9.	Dishnet Wireless Ltd.	West Bengal	413625		413625
10.	M/s Spice Communication Pvt. Ltd.	Karnataka	87144763		87144763
11.	M/s Spice Communication Pvt. Ltd.	Punjab	98260693		98260693
CDMA Spectrum Users					
12.	M/s Tata Tele Services Ltd.	AP	109237529	do	
13.	M/s Tata Tele Services Ltd.	HP	12076935		
14.	M/s Tata Tele Services Ltd.	MP	69614696		
15.	M/s Bharti Infotel Ltd.	MP	15067883		
VSAT Service Providers					
16.	M/s Gujarat Narmada Valley Comm. Ltd.		796193	As per clause 1.8 of amended commercial VSAT license	796193
17.	M/s Tatanet Services Ltd.		437817	agreement along with para 1.5 of WPC order	437817
18.	M/s TVC India Pvt. Ltd.		2830679	,No. R-11014/9/2001-LR dated 16.04.03 penalty	Nil
19.	M/s Essel Shyam Comm. Ltd.		3673359	is recoverable from Licensee in case the total	Nil
20.	M/s Huges Escorts Comm. Ltd.		33315174	amount paid as quarterly spectrum charges for four quarters of the financial year falls short by more than 10% of the payable spectrum charges, it attracts a penalty @150% (50% from the Financial Year 2005-06)	Nil
Total			603,097,109		230,086,700

Statement-III**Details of action taken against Service Provider for violation**

1: Licenses have been terminated for following ISPs for violation.

- i. Shivarn Datatech Pvt Ltd
- ii. Sigma Online Ltd
- iii. Magnacorp India Ltd
- iv. Capital Online Pvt Ltd
- v. Trident Netcom Solutions Pvt Ltd

2. The following licences were terminated on 18.02.08 For default on account of non start of service within stipulated period:-

S.No.	Letter No.	Date	Name of company
1	2	3	4
1.	820-567/02-LR	18.02.08	M/s International Telephone & Satellite Corp. India Private Limited
2.	820-568/02-LR	-do-	M/s International Telephone & Satellite Corp. India Private Limited
3.	820-760/03-LR	-do-	M/s Base telecom Pvt. Ltd.
4.	820-726/03-LR	-do-	M/s Radix Integrated Systems Private Ltd.
5.	820-8/98-LR	-do-	M/s United Internet Communications Pvt. Ltd.
6.	820-35/98-LR	-do-	M/s S.K. Digital Technology Pvt. Ltd.
7.	820-125/98-LR	-do-	M/s Baldev Ship Breakers Ltd.
8.	820-78/98-LR	-do-	M/s J&K State Industrial Dev. Corp Ltd.
9.	820-30/98-LR	-do-	M/s. N.S. Net Source (I) Pvt. Ltd.
10.	820-249/99-LR	-do-	M/s Netconnect (India) Pvt. Ltd.
11.	820-269/99-LR	-do-	M/S Yenkey Network Pvt. Ltd.
12.	820-247/99-LR	-do-	M/S Neptune Cyberworld Pvt. Ltd.
13.	820-316/00-LR	-do-	M/S Discovery Infoways Ltd.
14.	820-360/00-LR	-do-	M/S Infinity.Com Financial Securities Ltd.
15.	820-513/00-LR	-do-	M/S C.N. Solutions Pvt. Ltd.
16.	820-520/00-LR	-do-	M/S Q-Net Infosystems Pvt. Ltd.
17.	820-573/01-LR	-do-	M/s Dombivli Internet Pvt. Ltd.
18.	820-547/00-LR	-do-	M/S Beacon Broadband Network Pvt Ltd
19.	820-602/01-LR	-do-	M/s Sikkanet Services Pvt Ltd
20.	820-641/02-LR	-do-	M/s star Airtel Broadband Info Pvt. Ltd.

1	2	3	4
21.	820-655/02-LR	-do-	M/s Kashmir Infonet Technologies Pvt. Ltd.
22.	820-588/01-LR	-do-	M/s Ali Trading Exposition India Pvt. Ltd.
23.	820-748/03-LR	-do-	M/s. Anjuman Computers Pvt. Ltd.
24.	820-690/03-LR	-do-	M/s. Voyager Infocom (India) Pvt. Ltd.
25.	820-693/03-LR	-do-	M/s. Mysore Broadband Services Pvt. Ltd.
26.	820-830/04-LR	-do-	M/s Orange city Broadband Services Pvt. Ltd.
27.	820-781/04-LR	-do-	M/s Barak Infotech Pvt. Ltd.
28.	820-787/04-LR	-do-	M/s KTV Net Private Limited
29.	820-821/04-LR	-do-	M/s PAMS Information Services Pvt. Ltd.
30.	820-790/04-LR	-do-	M/s Telnet Telecom India Pvt. Ltd.

3. Two Licencee namely M/s Primus Telecommunications India Ltd. and HFCL Infotel Ltd have paid the penalty imposed on them for violation of Licence Agreement as per following details.

Sl. No.	Name of the Company	Amount of Penalty Paid (Rs.)
1	M/s Primus Telecommunications India Ltd.	8,78,036
2	M/s HFCL Infotel Ltd.	16,94,288

4. A penalty of Rs. 50 Crore have been imposed on M/s Tata Teleservices (MH) Ltd and the case is subjudice.

A penalty of Rs. 50 lakh in the form of encashment of Performance Bank Guarantee was imposed on M/s HFCL Satellite Communication Limited for breach of terms & conditions of the Commercial CUG VSAT license held by the company.

The bank guarantee was encashed and the license was terminated in January 2005. Full Performance Bank Guarantee of Rs. 50 lakh was encashed by DoT.

No penalty amount is pending with VSAT licences for breach of terms & conditions of the license.

Statement-IV

Details of status of recovery of penalty

Sl.No.	Service Area	Name of Licensee	Penalty recovered	Reason (Rs. in crores)
1	Kolkata	Reliance Communications Ltd.	50	Wrong routing of International Long Distance (ILD) calls bypassing Access deficit Charges (ADC)
2	Mumbai	Reliance Communications Ltd.	50	do
3	Chennai	Reliance Communications Ltd.	50	do
Total			150	

Procurement of Aircraft from USA

2441. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR:
SHRI MILIND DEORA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has finalised the deal with United States of America for the procurement of C-130J Super Hercules Multi-role Transport Aircraft;

(b) if so, the number of aircraft likely to be procured

under the agreement and the expenditure likely to be incurred thereon; and

(c) the time by which the aircraft are likely to be delivered?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) The Government has signed a Letter of Offer & Acceptance with the US Government for the procurement of six C-130J-30 aircraft for the Indian Air Force. The estimated value of the aircraft along with associated ground support equipment, ground handling equipment and the role equipment is 962,454,677 USD.

(c) The delivery of these aircraft is likely to be completed by December 2011.

[English]

Manufacturing Units

2442. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated growth in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in manufacturing side of the Information Technology Sector in the country; and

(b) the major equipment manufacturing units expected to be established in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Based on the FDI inflow data available for the period April-December 2007, FDI in Computer Hardware sector is expected to decline as compared to the level of FDI in the financial year 2006-07.

(b) As per the information available, major companies that have invested or are expanding their manufacturing facilities in the country include Foxconn, Flextronics, Jabll Circuits, Sanmina, Compal, LG, Samsung, Motorola, Nokia, Dell, HP, HCL, Wipro Info tech, Lenovo, Hon Hai, Liteon, Delta Electronics etc..

Technology Mission for Sericulture Industry

2443. SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to launch a Technology Mission for Sericulture industry in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Central Silk Board has finalized a draft document on the proposed Technology Mission for silk industry;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Union Government has examined the said draft; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto alongwith the time by which, the said Mission is likely to be launched?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) to (f) The Central Silk Board had prepared a proposal for the Technology Mission for Indian Silks. The document on the proposed Technology Mission for Indian silks was examined and was not found satisfactory by the Government. The document has been returned to CSB for obtaining the comments of State Government. In the meantime, XI Plan document has been drawn for Sericulture development in the country including both Central Sector and Centrally sponsored schemes having majority of the components contemplated under the proposal of Technology Mission for Indian silks. The XI Plan schemes after approval of the Government are now being implemented through the Central Silk Board on a Project mode through a Cluster based approach.

Provision of employment by I.T. Companies

2444. SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of employment opportunities provided by the IT Companies during the last three years, as on date, State-wise;

(b) whether the IT Companies have projected more employment opportunities in the near future; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) As per National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) the total employment in the Indian IT-BPO sector (software and services) during last three years are as follows:

- 1.293 million in Financial Year 2005-06
 - 1.6 million in Financial Year 2006-07
 - 2 million in Financial Year 2007-08 (estimated).
- (State wise data not available)

Employment in the Indian IT-BPO sector is estimated to reach a total of 2.5 to 2.7 million by Financial Year 2009-10.

Employees Working in Private Security Agencies

2445. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of employees working in various private security agencies at present, State-wise;

(b) the details of employment generated in this field during each of the last three years and thereafter till date, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government has issued any directions to various security agencies to provide adequate training to employees engaged in this field and to promote their welfare and provide better working conditions; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Such information is not maintained by the Government centrally.

(c) and (d) The Ministry of Home Affairs has enacted the Private Security Agencies (Regulation) Act, 2005 and framed model rules thereunder with a view to assist the States in regulating the activities of private security agencies functioning in various States. As per Section 9(2) of the Act, every private security agency shall ensure imparting of training and skills to its private security guards and supervisors as may be prescribed. Further, under Section 11, the State Governments may frame rules and prescribe

conditions on which licence shall be granted to a security agency, and such rules may include provision to verify the requirements of training by the licensee.

[Translation]

Drip Irrigation

2446. SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the targets fixed and achievements made in drip and lift irrigation schemes in the country, State-wise; and

(b) the details of funds provided to the State Governments for the implementation of such schemes during the last three years, State-wise particularly in Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The Government of India is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Micro Irrigation (MI) including drip irrigation since January, 2006. The details of target and achievement under drip irrigation is given in the statement-I enclosed. The Government is not implementing any scheme on Lift Irrigation.

(b) The details of funds provided to the State Governments including Karnataka for implementation of drip system under Micro Irrigation scheme for the last three years is given in the statement-II enclosed.

Statement-I*Details of the Target and Achievement under Drip Irrigation - State-wise*

(Area in ha)

S.No.	State	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		Total	
		Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Andhra Pradesh	34371	15681	83657	60873	13325	30824	131353	107378
2.	Bihar	0	0	13433	0	0	0	13433	0
3.	Chhattisgarh	0	0	7436	0	0	381.74	7436	381.74
4.	Delhi	0	0	50	0	0	0	50	0
5.	Goa	0	0	53	0	0	0	53	0
6.	Gujarat	10680	4910.06	13995	12048.56	33706	16037.26	58381	32995.88
7.	Haryana	0	0	1722	1018.19	1671	815.5	3393	1833.69
8.	Jharkhand	0	0	934	0	0	0	934	0

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9.	Karnataka	20927	0	7256	24972.7	28833.72	12056.5	57016.72	37029.2
10.	Kerala	18542	0	3282	0	0	510.29	21824	510.29
11.	Madhya Pradesh	3122	0	1684	2705.01	2359	1796.26	7165	4501.27
12.	Maharashtra	23856	26971.39	36615	28286	61618	48568	122089	103825.39
13.	Orissa	0	0	1798	278.72	0	597.85	1798	876.57
14.	Punjab	3540	0	0	1123	2273	2599.25	5813	3722.25
15.	Rajasthan	3000	0	5067	2608	4400	1927	12467	4535
16.	Tamil Nadu	28550	0	5402	0	12118	6221.98	46070	6221.98
17.	Uttar Pradesh	8510	0	0	0	0	2139.00	8510	2139
18.	West Bengal	0	0	960	0	0	0	960	0
Total		155098	47562.45	183344	133913.18	160303.7	124474.63	498745.72	305950.26

Statement-II*Details of Funds provided under Drip Irrigation for last three years State-wise*

(Rs. in lakh)

S.No.	State	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08 (Upto Feb'08)	Total
1.	Andhra Pradesh	5380.72	12705.27	1802.05	19888.04
2.	Bihar	0	2347.83	0	2347.83
3.	Chhattisgarh	0	1693.00	0	1693.00
4.	Delhi	0	11.48	0	11.48
5.	Goa	0	6.38	0	6.38
6.	Gujarat	1760.95	3039.82	6582.65	11383.42
7.	Haryana	0	199.29	239.62	438.91
8.	Jharkhand	0	127.52	0	127.52
9.	Karnataka	3318.49	985.45	4639.85	8943.79
10.	Kerala	2800.00	504.00	0	3304.00
11.	Madhya Pradesh	547.89	312.98	487.77	1348.64
12.	Maharashtra	3772.37	6786.11	10999.33	21557.81
13.	Orissa	0	310.23	0	310.23
14.	Punjab	513.50	0	360.33	873.83
15.	Rajasthan	437.12	724.53	634.54	1796.19
16.	Tamil Nadu	4217.60	1188.75	2159.59	7565.94
17.	Uttar Pradesh	1205.45	0	0	1205.45
18.	West Bengal	0	119.33	0	119.33
Total		23954.09	31081.97	27905.73	82921.79

*[English]***Landmine Monitor Report**

2447. Ms. MEHBOOBA MUFTI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details about the Landmine Monitor Report, 2007;
- (b) the number of people killed in the landmines;
- (c) the steps taken to clear areas from landmines;
- (d) the areas still not cleared from landmines; and
- (e) the compensation paid to farmers and land-owners?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) Landmine Monitor Report of 2007 was released during the Ottawa Convention Meeting held at Amman, Jordan in November, 2007. The Report gives details about use and stockpile of anti-personnel mines of all countries in the World.

(b) to (e) Mines were laid as per operational plans dictated by need during Operation Parakaram. On demobilization of troops, demining operations for the mines laid during the Operation commenced in November, 2002. Demining operations have been completed in all areas, except those required for operational reasons. Cases of 353 civilian land mine casualties (61 killed and 292 injured) have been sanctioned ex-gratia compensation in accordance with the extant guidelines.

*[Translation]***Closure of Telecom Factories**

2448. SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Pollution Control Board has given instructions to close down some Telecom factories especially Reechal in Jabalpur;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any action has been taken for the arrangement of dangerous waste management in the said factory; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There is no instruction from Pollution Control Board to close down any of the Telecom Factories. However, Madhya Pradesh

Pollution Control Board had earlier served a Notice to Telecom Factory Richhai, Jabalpur vide letter No. 1733/HOPCB/HSMD/GWL/2007 dated 17.9.2007 asking for closure of the factory. On submission of an affidavit by Telecom Factory Richhai, stating a time bound action plan for management of stored and generated hazardous waste, Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board allowed the factory to run vide their letter No. 2169/HOPCB/HSMD/JBP-08(2)/2007 dated 29.10.2007.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Following action has been taken for the arrangement of dangerous waste management:

(i) Construction of Secured Land Fill i.e. Dumping Pit for disposal of hazardous waste is completed and made operational for the last 3 months. The solid waste is being kept in the Secured Land Fill.

(ii) There is Neutralization Plant in operation. The hazardous waste coming out of the factory is being neutralized.

*[English]***Inadequate Storage Facility**

2449. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:
PROF. M. RAMADASS:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) the total capacity for storage of foodgrains available with the Food Corporation of India and Central Warehousing Corporation as on date, Statewise;
- (b) whether the Government is facing serious problems in proper and safe storage of foodgrains due to inadequate storage facility in the country;
- (c) if so, the details thereof indicating the quantum of foodgrains lost due to lack of storage space during each of the last three years;
- (d) the total capacity proposed to be created during 2008-09 alongwith the allocation made for the said purpose;
- (e) the expenditure incurred on storage of foodgrains during the last one year, Statewise; and
- (f) the other remedial steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure proper storage of foodgrains during the ensuing Rabi season?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC

DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The total storage capacity available with the Food Corporation of India is 243.07 lakh tonnes as on 31st January, 2008. State-wise details are given in the enclosed statement-I.

The total storage capacity available with the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) as on 1.02.2008 is 6748970 MTs. Region/State-wise details are given in the enclosed statement-II.

(b) No Sir. The over all storage capacity available with FCI at present is quite adequate at macro level. Against the total storage capacity of 243.07 lakh tonnes held by FCI, 144.65 lakh tonnes capacity is lying vacant as on 31.01.2008.

Further under the National Policy of Bulk Handling, Storage & Transportation of foodgrains, a capacity of 5.5 lakh MTs is being created both in Procuring and Deficit States on Build Own & Operate (BOO) basis.

In addition, full powers have been vested with the General Managers (Region)/Executive Directors(Zone) of FCI to hire additional storage capacity for meeting the emergent requirement from CWC/S WC/State Govt. and with the approval of CMD for the private godowns.

(c) No, Sir. No foodgrains were lost on account of lack of storage space during the last three year.

(d) During the year 2008-09, an allocation of Rs.20.00 crore has been proposed under the Plan Scheme

for construction of storage godowns. The proposals for construction of storage godowns will be finalized in consultation with the FCI/Planning Commission.

During 2008-09, the CWC has proposed to create 1,18,800 MTs which involves a cost of Rs.4964 lakhs.

(e) The accounts of FCI for 2006-07 are not finalized. Hence, Region-wise details are not available. However, the All India Provisional estimates for 2006-07 (Prov.) is Rs. 1063,26 crores including staff salary of persons posted for storage operations.

(f) The following remedial steps have been taken by FCI to ensure proper storage of foodgrains are:

- i) Ensuring that all its own godowns are constructed and maintained on scientific lines for storage of foodgrains.
- ii) Provision for adequate dunnage and plinth for storage of foodgrains in open and in CAP storage with covering of specifically fabricated low density black polythene, water proof sheets with proper lashing by nylon ropes
- iii) Regular periodic inspections of the stocks/godowns by qualified and trained staff
- iv) Undertaking of prophylactic and curative treatment of the stocks regularly.
- v) Strict implementation of procedure of "First in, First out" (FIFO) so as to avoid longer retention of stocks;
- vi) Undertaking pre-monsoon fumigation.

Statement-I

The state-wise storage capacity with F.C.I.

As on 31.01.2008

(Fig. in Lac Tonnes)

Zone	Sl.No.	Region/U.T.	Covered					Cap (Open)			Grand Total	Stocks Held	Utiz. %Age		
			F.C.I. owned	State Govt.	Hired From C.W.C.	S.W.C.	Private Parties	Total Hired	Total Covered	Owned				Hired	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
East	1.	Bihar	3.66	0.03	0.46	0.68	0.48	1.65	5.31	0	0	0	5.31	3.04	57
	2.	Jharkhand	0.66	0.02	0.14	0.16	0.20	0.52	1.18	0	0	0	1.18	0.60	51
	3.	Orissa	2.93	0	0.45	2.41	0.15	3.01	5.94	0	0	0	5.94	1.90	32
	4.	West Bengal	8.64	0.18	0.63	0	0.56	1.37	10.01	0	0	0	10.01	2.80	28
	5.	Sikkim	0.10	0.01	0	0	0	0.01	0.11	0	0	0	0.11	0.08	73
Total (E. Zone)			15.99	0.24	1.68	3.25	1.39	6.58	22.55	0	0	0	22.55	8.42	37

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	30 Lakshadweep		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	31. Maharashtra		11.77	0.19	0.77	1.16	0.55	2.67	14.44	1.42	0	1.42	15.86	2.91	18
	32. Goa		0.15	0	0	0	0	0	0.15	0	0	0	0.15	0.08	53
	33. Madhya Pradesh		3.37	0	0.81	0.95	0.00	1.76	5.13	0.37	0	0.37	5.50	3.25	59
	34. Chhattisgarh		5.12	0.64	0.13	1.12	0.05	1.94	7.06	0.41	2.44	2.85	9.91	7.42	75
	Total (W. Zone)		25.41	0.97	1.92	3.23	0.60	6.72	32.13	2.50	2.44	4.94	37.07	16.24	41
	Grand Total		129.48	5.61	11.36	65.08	6.58	88.63	218.11	22.47	2.49	24.96	243.07	98.42	40

Statement-II

Region-wise/ State-wise no. of warehouses alongwith their capacity and % of utilisation as on 01.02.2008

(Figures in Metric Tonnes)

Region/State	No. of WHS	Capacity					% of Util	
		Constd	Hired	Open Plinth	Mgmt	Total	Util	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Ahmedabad								
Gujarat	26	338863	70058	181885	31600	622406	479961	77
Bangalore								
Karnataka	30	244466	90432	61191	10478	406567	338552	83
Bhopal								
Madhya Pradesh	28	456267	64092	6500	7826	534675	280008	52
Chhattisgarh	12	187700	39792	17400	22000	266892	217633	82
Total	40	543957	103884	23900	29826	801567	497641	62
Bhubaneshwar								
Orissa	11	179550	1500	8800	152312	340162	223409	66
Chandigarh								
Chandigarh U.T.	1	10550	1385	1667	0	13602	13272	98
Punjab	27	566450	67715	65992	0	700157	237106	34
Total	28	577000	69100	67659	0	713759	250378	35
Chennai								
Andaman & Nicobar	1	2700	0	0	0	2700	1350	50
Pondicherry	1	7350	0	0	3500	10850	11444	105
Tamil Nadu	25	542772	15895	65577	1000	625244	419912	67
Kerala	10	118939	5093	0	0	124032	126908	102
Total	37	671761	20988	65577	4500	762826	559614	73

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Delhi								
Delhi	11	113315	27504	12073	0	152892	190638	125
Haryana	3	23251	3174	14300	0	40725	21526	53
Uttar Pradesh	12	162749	11155	90638	17941	282483	220078	78
Total	26	299315	41833	117011	17941	476100	432242	91
Guwahati								
Assam	6	64200	0	0	0	64200	50576	79
Nagaland	1	13000	0	0	0	13000	8	0
Tripura	2	24000	0	0	0	24000	16118	67
Total	9	101200	00	0	0	101200	66702	66
Hyderabad								
Andhra Pradesh	48	1170242	69414	50070	40030	1329766	733724	55
Jaipur								
Rajasthan	37	251407	170866	27845	10137	460256	250460	54
Kolkata								
West Bengal	38	355559	156736	133885	69000	714980	556282	78
Lucknow								
Uttar Pradesh	39	807650	26926	22569	5953	863098	630525	73
Uttaranchal	6	63990	5500	0	0	69490	30735	44
Total	45	871640	32428	22569	5953	932588	661260	71
Mumbai								
Goa	2	21575	0	2350	14711	38636	42277	109
Maharashtra	57	361429	289136	350010	54772	1055347	817952	78
Total	59	383004	289136	352360	69483	1093983	8602129	79
Navi Mumbai								
Maharashtra	5	146428	0	272215	0	418643	315246	75
Panchkula								
Haryana	28	348290	122272	0	0	470562	376731	80
Himachal Pradesh	3	7040	00	0	0	7040	5150	73
Total	31	355330	122272	0	0	477602	381881	80
Patna								
Bihar	17	93407	30049	0	0	123456	103103	84
Jharkhand	4	33950	5000	1200	0	40150	38306	95
Total	21	127357	35049	1200	0	163606	141409	86
Grand Total	491	6717079	1273694	1383967	441260	9816000	6748970	69

Survey of Marine Fisheries

2450. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has completed the marine fishery resources survey;
- (b) if so, the details and outcome thereof;
- (c) whether the census has revealed any depletion or extinction of any species of fish in our territorial waters; and
- (d) if so, details thereof and the remedial action being taken by the Government to replenish the depleting marine fisheries resource?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) No Sir, Marine fisheries survey is an ongoing programme involving monitoring of fishery resources in the areas which are already surveyed within 200m depth, fresh survey of demersal and oceanic pelagic fish resources of our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), fish stock identification, fish biodiversity studies and application of remote sensing techniques for marine fisheries fore casting.

(c) and (d) The marine census was conducted to gather data on demographics of coastal inhabitants and the details of physical assets for fishing such as boats, nets etc and was not focused on the species composition of territorial waters. However, the desk study conducted for revalidation of marine fishery potential during October 2000 has revealed reduction in total landings of some commercial species and altered pattern in quantities landed in respect of some others, basically due to changes that are taking place in the fishing methods, area; and seasonal and climatic influence. Resource conservation and sustainable fishing practices are advocated as enshrined in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), with accent on increased stakeholder participation. Enforcement of provisions of Marine Fishing Regulation Act (MFRA), imposing uniform fishing ban are other measures implemented in coastal fisheries.

[Translation]

Exploitation of Child Labourers

2451. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Labour Commissioners have recently conducted an inspection regarding exploitation and atrocities against the child labourers in the country;

(b) if so, the number of persons found guilty alongwith the action taken against them, State-wise;

(c) whether the children engaged in the agriculture and farming sector and employed in more strenuous physical work in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken to free and rehabilitate such children?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Inspections and raids to detect cases of violation of Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986, are carried out from time to time by the State Governments who are appropriate authorities for enforcement of Act, in the areas that come under their jurisdiction. For the areas lying under the Central Jurisdiction, inspections are carried out by the Central Labour Commissioner's machinery. The information pertaining to inspections, violations, convictions and prosecutions during 2006-07 as provided by the State Governments is given in the statement enclosed.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Children are employed in agriculture and farming sector. However, employment of children in agriculture is not prohibited under the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 except in the processes where tractors, threshing and harvesting machines are used and chaff cutting is involved as also handling of insecticides and pesticides. For the rehabilitation of Child Labour, Government is implementing the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme. Under the Scheme, children withdrawn from work are put into special schools, where they are provided with accelerated bridging education, vocational training, nutrition, stipend and health care facilities etc.

Statement

Number of inspections, violations, convictions and prosecutions conducted during 2006-07

Sl. No.	Name of State / UT	Inspections	Violations	Convictions	Prosecution
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Andaman & Nicobar UT				
2	Andhra Pradesh	53843	53843	0	9228
3	Arunachal Pradesh				

1	2	3	4	5	6
4	Assam				
5	Bihar				
6	Chandigarh UT.	1454	0	0	0
7	Chhattisgarh	3648	19	0	19
8	Dadra & Nagar Haveli UT	69	0	0	0
9	Daman & Diu UT				
10	Delhi UT				
11	Goa				
12	Gujarat				
13	Haryana	1956	0	0	0
14	Himachal Pradesh	2287	0	0	0
15	Jammu & Kashmir	4378	64	1	60
16	Jharkhand	1704	67	0	4
17	Karnataka				
18	Kerala	6073	23	0	1
19	Lakshadweep UT				
20	Madhya Pradesh				
21	Maharashtra				
22	Manipur				
23	Meghalaya	425	0	0	0
24	Mizoram				
25	Nagaland				
26	Orissa				
27	Pondicherry UT				
28	Punjab				
29	Rajasthan				
30	Sikkim				
31	Tamil Nadu				
32	Tripura	157	0	0	0
33	Uttar Pradesh	3807	2513	19	117
34	Uttaranchal	2101	2	0	0
35	West Bengal	3821	112	0	7
Total		85723	56643	20	9436

*[English]***Hallmarking of Jewellery**

2452. SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any representations from the jewellers in the country against the Hallmarking scheme; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Hallmarking of gold jewellery scheme is not within the compulsory certification regime of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) since the existing provisions of the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986 do not enable implementation of such scheme. The jewellers and their associations throughout the country in their representations to the Government have broadly endorsed the proposal to make the Hallmarking of gold jewellery compulsory although they have voiced certain concerns regarding infrastructure etc. In order to facilitate establishing adequate infrastructure in the country, a Scheme is already under implementation to facilitate setting up of Gold Hallmarking & Assaying Centres by extending one time financial assistance @ 15% of cost of machinery and equipment subject to maximum of Rs. 15 lakh per centre for all States except locations of North-East and special category States namely Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand for which such financial assistance @ 30% of cost of machinery & equipment subject to maximum of Rs. 30 lakh per centre, is extended to the eligible applicants.

*[Translation]***Promotion of Khandasari Industry**

2453. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":
DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to promote Khandasari Industry in the country to meet the problem of overproduction of sugarcane; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the incentives provided to the Khandasari industry during the last one year and the current year, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) There is already a scheme in existence, monitored by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises to give incentives to khandsari industry, which uses sugarcane as raw material for production of khandsari. The Government has been implementing interalia the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for assisting the entrepreneurs in establishing village industry (V.I.) units, including khandsari units, in rural areas and small towns

with population upto 20,000, by availing of margin money assistance from KVIC and loans from public sector scheduled commercial banks, selected regional rural banks, cooperative banks, etc., for projects with a maximum cost of Rs. 25 lakh. Khandsari units are promoted under the 'Agro and food processing industry (AFPI) Group', which is one of the seven groups under which the village industries under the REGP are broadly categorized.

The State / Union Territory-wise details of projects/ V.I. units set up, and margin money assistance provided to the AFPI group of the village industries under REGP, during 2006-07 and 2007-08 (upto February, 2008) are given in the statement enclosed.

Statement

State/ Union Territory-wise details of projects/ V.I. units set up and margin money assistance provided to the AFPI group of the village industries under REGP, during 2006-07 and 2007-08 (upto February, 2008)

Sl. No.	State/UT	2006-07		2007-08	
		V.I units/ Projects (Number of Units)	Margin Money utilized (Rs. in lakh)	V.I units/ Projects (Number of Units)	Margin Money utilized (Rs. in lakh)
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Chandigarh	0	0.00	1	0.75
2.	Delhi	4	4.84	2	1.62
3.	Haryana	135	256.92	93	278.69
4.	Himachal Pradesh	176	234.58	134	184.13
5.	Jammu and Kashmir	270	172.42	217	188.51
6.	Punjab	221	556.78	274	773.94
7.	Rajasthan	474	681.86	232	327.93
8.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	45	7.97	11	4.50
9.	Bihar	349	352.75	156	210.60
10.	Jharkhand	34	50.23	36	63.21
11.	Orissa	342	422.21	112	167.57
12.	West Bengal	910	907.34	532	582.87
13.	Arunachal Pradesh	35	57.78	25	38.37
14.	Assam	639	686.94	461	536.46
15.	Manipur	39	38.57	8	7.50
16.	Meghalaya	39	56.32	45	71.04
17.	Mizoram	396	417.44	106	124.81

1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	Nagaland	24	37.31	19	29.55
19.	Sikkim	35	60.58	8	15.92
20.	Tripura	38	39.55	26	23.88
21.	Andhra Pradesh	360	918.81	324	770.00
22.	Karnataka	675	969.70	186	351.48
23.	Kerala	167	285.85	219	338.36
24.	Pondicherry	31	7.59	3	0.27
25.	Tamil Nadu	403	511.95	226	370.57
26.	Goa	65	20.18	5	6.96
27.	Gujarat	48	82.86	38	91.09
28.	Maharashtra	887	716.36	218	272.22
29.	Chhattisgarh	163	410.51	55	111.84
30.	Madhya Pradesh	387	469.36	151	293.75
31.	Uttarakhand	104	98.67	119	132.47
32.	Uttar Pradesh	620	1230.34	455	853.85
Grand Total		8015	10764.67	4497	7224.71

[English]

Technology in Agriculture

2454. SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated a new scheme to provide incentives to farmers for the optimum use of improved and modern agricultural technology and other inputs in order to increase production and to cut production cost;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the funds to be provided for the said scheme; and

(c) the benefits likely to accrue to the farmers from the said scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The following schemes have been launched:

A. The Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms" launched during 2005-06, aims at delivery of farmer driven

extension services for disseminating information on modern agriculture technologies and other support services, which may help increase production and productivity through a new institutional arrangements in the form of ATMA. ATMA have active participation of farmers/ farmer groups, NGOs, KVKs, PRIs and other stakeholders operating at the district level and below.

ATMAs have been established in 565 districts. Over 18 lakhs farmers have been benefited in different extension activities, so far. Farmer oriented activities under the scheme includes Trainings, Demonstrations, Exposure Visit, Group Mobilization & Capacity Building, Exhibition, Information Technology, Research-Extension-Farmer linkages.

An amount of Rs.240.65 Crore has been released so far during last 3 years and a provision of Rs.298.00 Crore has been made for 2008-09.

B. The Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "National Horticulture Mission (NHM)" is being implemented for the holistic development of horticulture sector duly ensuring forward and backward linkages with the active participation of all the stake holders. Under the scheme, assistance is being provided to the farmers for taking up various activities related to horticulture such as area coverage, rejuvenation of senile orchards, protected cultivation organic farming,

promotion of integrated nutrient management/integrated pest management and bee-keeping. Besides assistance is also being provided for creation of water resources and infrastructure for post harvest management and markets. An amount of Rs. 1575.29 Crore has been released to the State Horticulture Mission and National Level Agencies during 2005-06 and 2006-07. An outlay of Rs.1150.00 Crore was earmarked for implementing the scheme during 2008-09.

C. A Central Sector Scheme "Post Harvest Technology & Management" formulated to implementation during 11th Plan aims at establishment of units for transfer of primary processing, technology, value addition, low cost scientific storage, packaging units and technologies for bi-product management, demonstration of technologies, training of farmers, entrepreneurs and scientist. The outlay of the scheme for 11th Plan is Rs.40.00 Crore.

D. A Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "National Bamboo Mission" has been launched across the country for implementation in the last quarter of 2006-07 with 100% central assistance at a total cost of Rs.56,82,300/- thousand including a outlay of Rs.7,00,00/- thousand during 2006-08 (10th Plan) and next four years of the 11th Five Year Plan. The Mission activities are spread over a period of 5 years and they are at present implemented in 25 States.

E. A Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "Micro Irrigation" has been launched in January, 2008, during 10th Plan for covering a total area of 6.2 lakh hac. under Micro Irrigation. The scheme is launched to achieve greater Water Use Efficiency resulting in enhanced productivity and better quality of produce. Under this scheme drip and sprinkler irrigation is being promoted on a large scale. Assistance is provided to all categories of farmers @ 50% for drip/sprinkler system implementation and @ 75% for training and demonstration. The drip and sprinkler irrigation system is being implemented in each district of the State for both horticulture crops as well as non-horticulture crops.

F. A Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "National Food Security Mission (NFSM)" has been launched in the country to enhance the production of rice, wheat and pulses by 10, 8 and 2 million tones, respectively by the end of 11th Plan. The mission aims at increasing production of rice, wheat and pulses through area expansion and productivity enhancement, restoring soil fertility and productivity, creating employment opportunities, and enhancing farm level economy to restore confidence of farmers of targeted districts. Various activities of NFSM relate to demonstration of improved production technology, distribution of quality seeds of HYVs and hybrids, popularization of newly released varieties, support for micro nutrients, gypsum, zero tillage, rotavators, weeders and other farm implements, IPM, INM,

extension, water lifting and moisture saving devices training and mass media campaign including awards for best performing districts. Besides, the pilot projects on community generators, control of blue bulls and demonstration of ICRISAT technologies would also be implemented. An amount of Rs.39875.00 lakh has been allocated for implementation of various activities under NFSM during 2007-08, out of which Rs.38105.26 lakh has been released to various states.

G. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) has been launched with an approved outlay of Rs.25,000/- Crore for the 11th Five Year Plan. The main objective of the scheme is to incentivize the States to increase public investment in Agriculture & allied sectors. For the current year an outlay of Rs. 1500/- Crore has been approved under this scheme, which has been allocated to the States/UTs in consultation with the Planning Commission. The funds under the scheme would be provided to the States as 100% grant by the Central Government. The distribution of the funds among the States will be in two streams—Stream-I and Stream-II. Under Stream-I, at least 75% of the RKVY fund will be made available for specific projects/schemes/programmes proposed by the State which have been approved as part of the State and District Plans. Under Stream-II 25% of the total RKVY fund to a State in a year will be made available for strengthening existing State Sector schemes and implementing the Districts Agriculture Plans that will aggregate to the State Agriculture Plan. The purpose of the RKVY Scheme under this stream would be to fill the gaps in resources for such District/State Agriculture Plans. The funds will be routed through the State Agriculture Department which will be the nodal department for the scheme. Funds to the tune of about Rs.984.59 Crore have already been released under RKVY including Rs.46.90 Crore which have been released to the State Government for preparation of District Agriculture Plan (DAPs) @ Rs.10 lakh per district.

(c) The anticipated benefits to be accrued to the farmers under the Schemes are:

- Change of mind-set, awareness generation & knowledge-gain about the new modern agricultural technologies.
- Enhancement of skill performance level.
- Enhanced adoption of new/improved technologies.
- Reduction in on-farm production losses.
- On-farm value addition of produce.
- Higher employment and income for rural population, due to diversification of activities in the production catchments.

Illegal Occupation of Land in Port Blair

2455. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether parts of Defence land in Port Blair are under illegal occupation;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has formulated any time-bound plan to get the encroached land vacated from the illegal occupants;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) Yes, Sir.

- (b) (i) Sri Muthu Mariyamman Temple at Buniya-dabad since 1983 – 1653 sqm.
- (ii) By Smt. Kamla Narayan at Junglighat since 1998 – 190 sqm.
- (iii) A Public toilet of Municipal Council at Junglighat since 1989 – 200 sqm.
- (iv) A primary school and Anganawadi of A&N Administration at School Line – 4300 sqm.
- (v) A church at School Line – 300 sqm.

(c) to (e) The issue has been taken up with Andaman and Nicobar Administration which has agreed to allot alternate revenue land in lieu of encroached defence land.

ITs Courses in Urdu Medium

2456. SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to start some courses/trades of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in Urdu Medium in the country particularly in the Muslim concentrated areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (c) whether some State Governments particularly Government of Kerala have requested to the Union Government for relaxation in adopting Urdu Medium; and
- (d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR

FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Starting courses or deciding medium of instruction is under control of the State Governments. Instructions have already been issued to all the State Governments to impart training in Urdu wherever required.

(c) and (d) State Government does not require any permission or relaxation from Union Government for adopting Urdu as medium of instruction.

[Translation]

Mahatma Gandhi Haat Yojana

2457. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

- (a) the name of the locations where Mahatma Gandhi Haat Yojana has been implemented, State-wise;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to implement such scheme in more cities of the country during the Eleventh Plan period; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and location-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) There is no scheme titled Mahatma Gandhi Haat Yojana. However, the Government is implementing Urban Haat Scheme as one of the component of Marketing Support Service Scheme for providing of Marketing facilities to craft persons all over India on rotational / fortnightly basis. The details of Urban Haats set up, state-wise, so far is enclosed as statement-I.

(b) Yes, Sir. No State-wise, location-wise target are fixed. However, viable proposal will be sanctioned for approval as per parameter of the scheme.

(c) The details of Urban Haats proposed to be set up is enclosed as statement-II.

Statement-I

S. No.	Name of State / Union Territories	Location of Urban Haat
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Triputi
2.	Assam	Guwahati
3.	Bihar	Patna
4.	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
5.	Delhi	Pitampura & Dilli Haat
6.	Goa	Panaji

1	2	3
7.	Gujarat	Ahmedabad, Bhuj
8.	Haryana	Karnal
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	Jammu & Srinagar
10.	Jharkhand	Ranchi & Hazaribagh
11.	Karnataka	Mysore
12.	Madhya Pradesh	Gohar Mahal (Bhopal) & Indore
13.	Maharashtra	Pune & Navi Mumbai
14.	Nagaland	Dimapur
15.	Orissa	Bhubneshwar, Puri & Konark
16.	Pondicherry	Pondicherry
17.	Rajasthan	Jaipur, Jodhpur & Ajmer
18.	Tamil Nadu	Chennai & Kanyakumri
19.	Tripura	Agrtala
20.	Uttar Pradesh	Agra, Lucknow, Varanasi, Rampur, Jhansi, Bareilly & Meerut
21.	Uttranchal	Dehradun

Statement-II

S. No.	Name of State	Location of Urban Haat
1.	West Bengal	Durgapur
2.	Karnataka	Mangalore & Bagalkot

*[English]***Export of Sugar**

2458. DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:

SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to export white and raw sugar during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is a huge surplus stock of white sugar in the country;

(d) if so, the efforts being made to increase the export of sugar; and

(e) the details of the major buyers of sugar from India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The Central Government does not undertake export of white and raw sugar. Sugar exports are undertaken by export houses/sugar factories as per their commercial prudence.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) In order to promote export of sugar, the following measures have been taken by the Government:

(i) Export assistance is being provided to defray expenditure on internal transport, marketing and handling charges and ocean freight @ Rs. 1350/- per ton for sugar factories located in coastal States and Rs. 1450/- per ton for sugar factories located in non-coastal States (subject to actuals for export by road/rail to neighbouring countries) for a period of one year with effect from 19th April, 2007. The amount involved is Rs. 300 crore (approx.) which is to be borne from the Sugar Development Fund. This assistance shall be used for payment of cane price arrears of farmers as the first priority.

(ii) The requirement of obtaining release orders for the purpose of export has been dispensed with, with effect from 31st July, 2007 till 30th September, 2008. This would help the sugar factories to undertake exports expeditiously and improve their liquidity position.

(e) The name of major buyers of sugar from India is given in the statement enclosed [Source: Directorate General Commercial Intelligence & Statistic, Kolkata]

Statement**Major Buyers of Sugar from India**

Sl. No.	Country
1	2
1.	Afghanistan
2.	Bangladesh
3.	China
4.	Djibouti
5.	Egypt
6.	Indonesia
7.	Iran
8.	Kenya
9.	Pakistan

1	2
10.	Portugal
11.	Singapore
12.	Somalia
13.	Srilanka
14.	Syria
15.	Tanzania
16.	UAE
17.	Yemen Republic

Source: Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics, Kolkata.

[Translation]

Local Call Rate between Delhi to Mumbai

2459. SHRI RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA:
SHRI HEMMAL MURMU:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) has recently extended the facility to make call to Mumbai at a cost of only Re. 1.00 from PCOs and STD booths;

(b) if so, whether this facility is likely to benefit the mobile phone subscribers also;

(c) if so, whether the upgradation and development of this facility may cause extra load on the telephone and mobile services;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether teams of experts have been constituted to review the quality of the services and regular services being offered by MTNL and BSNL to their subscribers; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. MTNL Delhi has provided the facility of making a call from Delhi to MTNL Mumbai landline, Coded Division Multiple Access (CDMA) mobile and Fixed Wireless Terminals (FWT) only.

This facility is provided at the rate Re.1 per minute from Delhi's local landline Public Call Office (PCO) and Rs.1 .20 per minute from Delhi's landline STD PCO.

This facility is provided from local FWT prepaid PCO to MTNL Mumbai network at the rate of Re.1 per minute. For STD PCO, the call rate is Rs.1 .20 per minute.

(b) Yes, Sir. This facility will benefit CDMA FWT and mobile subscribers.

(c) and (d) The circuits/bandwidth between Delhi and Mumbai is adequately provided to handle the traffic.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. The services are monitored regularly by MTNL/BSNL and on quarterly basis by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

[English]

Average Annual Income of a Person

2460. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:
SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI:
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted any survey to find out the percentage and number of persons engaged in different sectors particularly agricultural, industrial and service sectors during each of the last three years and thereafter, till date, separately;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and sector-wise;

(c) the average annual income of a person in above sectors during the said period, separately, State-wise and sector-wise; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to increase the annual income of a person in the country particularly in rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Estimates of employment and unemployment in different sectors of the economy are obtained through quinquennial labour force surveys conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation. Percentage distribution of persons on usual status basis engaged in agriculture, industry and service sectors in major states is given in the statement-I enclosed.

(c) State-wise per capita Net State Domestic product (average annual income) at current prices for the year 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 is given in the statement-II enclosed.

(d) Eleventh Five Year Plan aims at creating 58 million job opportunities. The focus is also on productive employment at a faster pace than before, and target agriculture growth at 4% per annum in order to raise the incomes of the masses of the rural population to bring about a general improvement in their living conditions. Government

has also been implementing various employment generation and poverty alleviation programmes some of which the important ones are Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Yojana (PMRY); Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY);

Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY); Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) and National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (NREGA).

Statement-I

Percentage distribution of persons engaged in Agriculture, Industry and Service Sectors in major states on Usual Status Basis during 2004-05.

Major State	Rural Male			Rural Female			Urban Male			Urban Female		
	Agri- culture	Indus- try	Ser- vices									
India	66.5	15.5	18.0	83.3	10.2	6.6	6.1	34.4	59.5	18.1	32.4	49.5
Andhra Pradesh	66.4	14.6	19.2	78.5	11.6	10.0	6.9	31.2	62.1	17.7	27.3	55.1
Assam	69.6	6.4	23.8	88.3	4.5	7.1	4.3	21.4	74.5	7.3	8.7	84.1
Bihar	75.8	8.4	15.8	86.4	8.1	5.4	17.2	19.5	63.3	46.7	14.8	38.4
Chhattisgarh	80.3	9.6	10.0	93.3	4.1	2.5	8.2	28.7	63.1	29.9	25.2	44.9
Delhi	4.6	30.2	65.3	44.6	0.0	55.4	0.2	33.5	66.3	0.0	19.8	80.2
Gujarat	69.3	14.6	16.2	89.1	6.6	4.3	4.1	46.4	49.4	15.6	40.1	44.3
Haryana	49.4	25.4	25.2	90.6	4.2	5.2	7.3	37.3	55.1	29.3	19.0	51.7
Himachal Pradesh	49.4	28.3	22.2	91.0	3.5	5.6	2.6	41.4	56.0	28.4	23.5	48.2
Jammu & Kashmir	53.8	22.1	24.1	86.6	9.8	3.6	9.4	38.6	52.0	38.7	32.4	29.1
Jharkhand	61.5	24.2	14.2	85.3	11.3	3.5	6.7	33.9	59.5	32.0	30.0	37.8
Karnataka	77.7	9.0	13.3	65.5	8.5	5.8	6.0	32.9	61.1	16.0	31.4	52.7
Kerala	37.1	27.4	35.5	51.7	23.0	25.3	1.4	30.1	55.7	19.8	26.5	53.6
Madhya Pradesh	79.1	10.0	11.1	88.1	8.5	3.3	9.0	29.5	61.5	23.7	31.8	44.3
Maharashtra	71.4	12.4	16.2	90.7	4.5	4.9	4.6	35.5	59.8	14.2	30.3	55.6
Orissa	65.9	16.2	17.9	74.6	19.8	5.8	10.1	28.7	61.1	28.3	19.0	52.8
Punjab	54.7	24.1	21.1	89.7	3.8	6.4	4.1	36.6	59.3	15.2	25.1	59.6
Rajasthan	60.2	23.8	15.9	89.5	7.6	2.9	7.1	34.2	58.7	33.9	38.4	27.6
Tamil Nadu	58.7	22.8	18.6	73.8	16.6	9.8	6.2	38.1	55.8	13.7	40.7	45.7
Uttaranchal	63.3	16.5	20.2	96.0	1.8	2.1	7.2	25.7	67.0	33.4	13.5	53.1
Uttar Pradesh	66.3	17.3	16.3	86.5	8.2	5.1	7.2	35.3	57.5	26.5	41.2	32.3
West Bengal	63.9	14.3	21.9	58.8	29.5	11.8	2.7	34.8	62.3	3.1	36.9	59.8

Source: NSSO.

Totals may not tally due to rounding off and non response cases.

Statement-II

*Per Capita Net State Domestic Product
(Average Annual Income) at Current Prices.*

(in Rs.)

S.No.	State/UT	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	23755	26228	29582
2.	Arunchal Pradesh	22542	23788	NA
3.	Assam	17013	18211	20166
4.	Bihar	7467	7876	9214
5.	Jharkhand	17493	19068	20811
6.	Goa	66135	70112	NA
7.	Gujarat	29468	34157	NA
8.	Haryana	37648	41988	49038
9.	Himachal Pradesh	31139	33806	36782
10.	Jammu & Kashmir	18630	NA	NA
11.	Karnataka	23848	27101	NA
12.	Kerala	27864	30668	33509
13.	Madhya Pradesh	14476	15304	16578
14.	Chhattisgarh	18088	20151	NA
15.	Maharashtra	32979	37081	NA
16.	Manipur	18386	20326	22495
17.	Meghalaya	21915	23420	25141
18.	Mizoram	22417	23900	25679
19.	Nagaland	20998	NA	NA
20.	Orissa	16306	17610	20240
21.	Punjab	33158	36759	40566
22.	Rajasthan	16515	17306	19512
23.	Sikkim	23791	26412	29521
24.	Tamil Nadu	27137	29958	32733
25.	Tripura	22836	24706	NA

1	2	3	4	5
26.	Uttar Pradesh	12023	13316	14685
27.	Uttaranchal	22093	24585	27879
28.	West Bengal	22522	25223	NA
29.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	31004	34853	NA
30.	Chandigarh	75181	88629	NA
31.	Delhi	55215	61676	NA
32.	Pondicherry	44908	48477	52689
All-India Per Capita Net National Product		23199	25956	29642

NA: Not available.

*[Translation]***Evaluation on Handloom Schemes**

2461. SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted any survey/evaluation regarding implementation of ongoing various schemes for development of handloom;

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government on the basis of outcome of said survey/evaluation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOAN): (a) The Government of India had conducted evaluation of major Schemes implemented during the 10th Plan. The name of the schemes for which evaluation was done are as under:

1. Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana
2. Marketing Promotion Programme
3. Handloom Export Scheme
4. Thrift Fund Scheme
5. Workshed-cum-Housing Scheme
6. Integrated Handloom Training Project
7. Health Insurance Scheme.

(b) and (c) The aforesaid schemes were evaluated through National Institute of Small Industry Extension Training (NISJET), Hyderabad. Based on the recommendations of NISJET, Report of the Working Group on Textiles & Jute Industry for the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) and experience gained in the implementation of the schemes, various 10th Plan schemes have been merged, modified and amalgamated into five schemes for implementation during 11th Five Year Plan.

During the XI Plan the Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms has been implementing five schemes which are: (1) Integrated Handloom Development Scheme (IHDS) by merging the components with or without modification of Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana (DDHPY), Integrated Handloom Training Project (IHTP), Workshop-cum-Housing Scheme and Integrated Handloom Cluster Development Scheme (IHCD), (2) Marketing & Export Promotion Scheme by merging the components with or without modification of Marketing Promotion Programme and Handloom Export Scheme., (3) Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme by merging the components with or without modification of Health Insurance Scheme and Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana; (4) Mill Gate Price Scheme was introduced during 1992-93 with the objective of providing all types of yarn to the handloom weavers organizations at the price in which it is available at the place of manufacturing. The scheme is being continued during the XI Plan, and (5) Diversified Handloom Development Scheme envisages to give thrust towards design development, skill up-gradation, strengthening of Weavers Service Centres/Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology, training, R&D, Conducting Third Census and issue of Identity Cards to Handloom Weavers.

[English]

Fish Production

2462. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to increase the fisheries production in the country during 2007-08 and 2008-09;

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

(c) whether the Government has created a separate board for the said purpose;

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

(e) the extent to which the said board has been able to achieve its objectives so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government of India is implementing various Centrally Sponsored and Central Sector Schemes namely (i) Development of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture, (ii) Development of Marine Fisheries, Infrastructure and Post Harvest Operations, (iii) National Scheme of Welfare of Fishermen, Training and Extension, (iv) Strengthening of Database and Information Networking, (v) Assistance to the fisheries based Institutes of the Department to augment the fish production in the country. It is projected to achieve the fish production of 9.61 million tones by the end of the 11th Five Year Plan (2007-12).

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) was established as registered society under the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries in July 2006 with its headquarters at Hyderabad to realize the untapped potential of fisheries sector in inland and marine fish capture, culture, promotion of processing & marketing of fish, and over all growth of fisheries sector with the application of modern tools of research and development including biotechnology tools for optimizing production, productivity from fisheries. An amount of Rs.80 crore has been released to the NFDB so far.

(e) The board has so far provided financial assistance to the tune of Rs.27.30 crore to Governmental and non-Governmental agencies towards intensive aquaculture in ponds and tanks, training programmes for the farmers, stocking of fish seed in reservoirs, infrastructure development and commissioning studies in the area. Besides this, the NFDB has organized capacity building programmes for officers of the State Fisheries Departments aimed at training officials in new dimensions of fisheries management, extension and development.

Quota Policy for Telecom Equipment

2463. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the present quota policy in regard to placement of orders for telecom equipment to the loss-making Indian Telephone Industry (ITI) at Rai Bareilly has

caused disruption and delay in Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited's (MTNL) plans for capacity addition;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the ITI has been unable to cater to the requirements of MTNL and BSNL because of technical hitches over technology transfer from Alcatel International which has also suffered huge losses recently; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, ITI has executed orders given by MTNL in the last 3 years in time except GSM Mumbai order and ADSL order which was short closed on the ITI's request. These orders are executed by other units of ITI, not Rae Bareilly.

(c) and (d) ITI has incurred losses in execution of GSM project. The losses were basically due to execution delays and unviable infrastructure revenue and not due to technical hitches in transfer of technology of GSM.

[Translation]

Crash of MiG-27 Aircraft

2464. SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether MiG-27 Aircraft recently crashed at Hashimara Airbase in West Bengal;

(b) the number of MiG-27 Aircraft crashed during the last two years and the number of pilots and co-pilots who lost their lives in the accidents;

(c) whether any high-powered Committee has been constituted to look into the accidents;

(d) if so, the findings of the Committee; and

(e) the average financial loss incurred due to crash of one MiG-27 aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) Yes, Sir. A MiG-27 aircraft crashed at Hashimara airbase on 31st January, 2008.

(b) A total of two MiG-27 aircraft crashed during the last two financial years i.e. 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and the

current financial year i.e. 2007-2008 (till 10th March, 2008). No pilot or co-pilot lost their life in these accidents.

(c) and (d) Each crash is investigated through a Court of Inquiry and remedial measures are undertaken accordingly.

(e) The average financial loss incurred due to crash of one MiG-27 aircraft is Rs.6,79,00,000/-.

[English]

Refund of Losses

2465. SHRI HITEN BARMAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the various States particularly West Bengal have incurred huge loss while making payments to the jute growers for procurement of their jute under the Minimum Support Price Scheme during each of the last three years and current jute season;

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

(c) whether the certain States particularly West Bengal have made many request for getting refunds from Jute Corporation of India (JCI) or Union Government for their loss incurred on payment of Minimum Support Price for jute;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reaction of the Union Government thereto; and

(e) the steps taken by the Union Government on the request of States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) The JCI is the official agency of Government of India to purchase raw jute from jute growers at the Minimum Support Price time to time declared by the Government of India. West Bengal State Co-operative Marketing Federation Limited (BENFED) is also making the purchase under Minimum Support Price as an agent of JCI wherein all the jute purchased by them under MSP is delivered to the mills against linkage. The JCI is making payment of Minimum Support Price, conversion cost and actual transportation rate to the BENFED under this arrangement. Therefore, there is no loss to them in working as agent of JCI for purchase of MSP.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) No such request is pending with JCI for loss incurred at MSP by them.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

New Scheme in Postal Department

2466. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to introduce some new schemes to improve Postal Services and to meet losses in Postal Department of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the time by which these are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The Department of Posts is offering a few schemes and services other than postal services in collaboration with Government and Non Government agencies with an objective to leverage its network and to utilize its existing infrastructure optimally.

(b) and (c) These schemes are broadly as below:

- I. The Department has started a pilot to provide financial inclusion in rural area under the scheme of Business Correspondent in collaboration with the State Bank of India.
- II. A Pilot for extending disbursement of micro credit to self help groups has also been started in collaboration with the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development.
- III. The Department has started Passenger Reservation Service in collaboration with the Ministry of Railways.
- IV. The Department is providing a platform to facilitate payment of various bills by the customers for telecommunication companies and other utility service providers.
- V. The Department is distributing financial instruments like Mutual Funds etc on behalf of financial institutions like UTI, SBI, Franklin Templeton, Reliance Mutual Funds etc. The Department is also distributing the Non Life products of Oriental Insurance Company Ltd.
- VI. The Department provides the facility of receiving remittances from 205 countries through the International Money Transfer service.
- VII. The disbursement of wages to the beneficiaries of the NREG Act 2005, is done through the post offices in some States.
- VIII. The payment of Old Age Pension under the National Social Assistance Programme is being undertaken by the Department of Posts in some States.

Out-of-Turn Release of Spectrum

2467. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Spectrum controversy is set to escalate further with the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has been requested to probe the out-of-turn release of spectrum to some telecom operators;
- (b) if so, whether the telecom watchdog, a Non-Governmental Organisation, has requested the CVC to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the free distribution of spectrum beyond the contracted quantum to private telecom operators;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has considered the request of the NGO; and
- (e) if so, the time by which a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (e) Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) had raised some queries on spectrum related issues and necessary clarification/information was provided to them.

The spectrum is allotted to the telecom service providers, as per the relevant provisions of license agreements, and eligibility criteria, on first cum first served basis, subject to availability of spectrum.

The service providers pay spectrum charges as a percentage/share of their Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR), which increases with larger amount of spectrum with a service provider, as per orders in this regard.

Upgradation of ESI Hospitals and Dispensaries

2468. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to upgrade some Employees State Insurance (ESI) hospitals and dispensaries in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (c) the number of ESI hospitals/dispensaries being run in rented accommodations, State-wise;
- (d) the details of the funds spent over these hospitals/dispensaries during each of the last three years and thereafter till date, State-wise; and

(e) the number of the labourers/workers benefited by these hospitals/dispensaries during the said period alongwith the facilities provided to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Upgradation of ESIC hospitals and dispensaries is an ongoing process. Steps in this direction are taken from time to time, for upgradation of ESI hospitals and dispensaries in the country, so as to provide better facilities to the beneficiaries.

(c) The ESI hospitals are functioning from ESIC's own buildings except in Maharashtra where four hospitals are running in hospital buildings owned by the State Government and one in a hospital building owned by MGM Trust. The number of dispensaries run in rented accommodation, State-wise is enclosed as statement-I.

(d) The funds spent in hospitals and dispensaries during each of the last three years, State-wise is given in the enclosed statement-II.

(e) The number of labourers/workers benefited by these hospitals/dispensaries during the last three years is as enclosed. statement-III. The beneficiaries are provided all the medical facilities as per need through ESI hospitals and dispensaries. The facilities which are not available in the ESI hospitals and dispensaries, are being provided through tie-up arrangements with reputed Government and private institutions.

Statement-I

No. of ESI Dispensaries in Rented Accommodation as on 31.3.2007

Sl. No.	State	No. of Buildings
1	2	3
1	Andhra Pradesh	93
2	Assam	27
3	Bihar	17
4	Chandigarh Admn.	—
5	Chhattisgarh	08
6	Delhi	06
7	Goa	04
8	Gujarat	32
9	Himachal Pradesh	04

1	2	3
10	Haryana	41
11	Jammu & Kashmir	08
12	Jharkhand	23
13	Karnataka	63
14	Kerala	91
15	Madhya Pradesh	26
16	Maharashtra	56
17	Meghalaya	01
18	Orissa	38
19	Pondicherry	11
20	Punjab	25
21	Rajasthan	29
22	Tamil Nadu	54
23	Uttar Pradesh	79
24	Uttaranchal	10
25	West Bengal	19

Statement-II

State-wise Expenditure on Provision of Medical Care

(In lacs)

Sl. No.	State	2004-05	2005-05	2006-07
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	7,391.30	7280.10	9560.55
2.	Assam	373.54	386.92	64.58
3.	Bihar	409.78	446.01	434.52
4.	Chandigarh Admn	249.40	268.74	319.80
5.	Gujarat	6,980.71	6223.31	6091.49
6.	Goa	546.38	570.70	575.30
7.	Haryana	3,025.91	3587.56	3745.93
8.	Himachal Pradesh	223.65	292.73	230.67
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	84.98	97.93	148.30

1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Kerala	4,459.03	4139.65	5549.30	18.	Rajaethan	2,185.29	2554.11	2929.54
11.	Karnataka	5,565.16	5434.65	5137.10	19.	Tamil Nadu	7,965.75	8387.83	9060.08
12.	Madhya Pradesh	3,171.40	3332.47	3756.61	20.	Uttar Pradesh	5,355.63	5703.62	4971.57
13.	Maharashtra	11,474.56	10907.86	11596.3	21.	West Bengal	6,730.49	7349.04	9190.43
14.	Orissa	1,242.56	1232.82	1479.10	22.	Delhi	8,535.87	8938.83	9619.23
15.	Meghalaya	24.68	27.41	3087	23.	Chhattisgarh	319.38	316.72	284.87
16.	Punjab	3,194.16	4051.56	4529.86	24.	Jharkhand	421.34	541.29	568.28
17.	Pondicherry	558.95	659.25	1293.72	25.	Uttaranchal	102.57	112.11	164.91
Total							80592.45	82844.22	91312.91

Statement-III

Number of Workers/ Labourers benefitted by ESI Hospitals/ Dispensaries during the years 2004-05, 2005-06 & 2006-07

Sl. No.	State	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
		I.P.	Family	I.P.	Family	I.P.	Family
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2074349	2601390	1931255	3731590	1720731	2024335
2.	Assam	42128	42804	33836	28884	35622	32550
3.	Bihar	48384	42332	59091	55228	51153	63403
4.	Chandigarh Admn.	73929	45018	84360	74568	93798	67974
5.	Gujarat	1375622	1938928	1288410	1870454	1322899	1805675
6.	Goa	135100	145349	117330	152996		
7.	Haryana	632872	852521	742298	1073123	843320	1136842
8.	Himachal Pradesh	119118	140250	64104	N.A.	2059	1311
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	37944	16252	44990	25768	47299	25169
10.	Kerala	1892743	1741173	1825526	1381086	1960078	1608567
11.	Karnataka	973853	1084243	1021413	1157439	1034086	1192626
12.	Madhya Pradesh	710759	921615	648265	4610934	520863	824239
13.	Maharashtra	715862	766766	679693	769263	727856	828186
14.	Orissa	427744	516872	378879	438789	366832	446735
15.	Meghalaya	1792	1698	1362	1178	1179	842
16.	Punjab	711963	719496	677323	897982	641101	655854
17.	Pondicherry	181266	163160	150654	138700	167573	142358
18.	Rajasthan	993120	1311232	944471	1250516	977255	1335496

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
19.	Tamil Nadu	2299931	3031872	3063888	2142997	3258596	4575668
20.	Uttar Pradesh	597136	739245	625664	820115	650515	816069
21.	West Bengal	940233	600729	934273	1198223	1032679	691735
22.	Delhi	1861867	2786630	1907233	2746858	1877749	2813666
23.	Chhattisgarh	119126	144576	138354	172875	145428	176469
24.	Jharkhand	92533	96558	93987	101750	104999	204566
25.	Uttaranchal	29044	36126	32062	41542	39687	42307
Total		17088421	20486835	17488741	23223291	17622743	21512642

Availability of Water

2469. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the availability of water for farming is likely to become more scarce in the future;

(b) if so, whether the farmers have to shift to the sub-types of varieties that require less water; and

(c) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The Government is making all efforts to enhance the irrigation coverage through various programmes like Bharat Nirman. Under Bharat Nirman, additional irrigation potential of 10 million ha. by the year 2008-09 is to be created. The Centrally Sponsored Scheme Micro Irrigation has also been launched to promote water saving devices such as sprinkler and drip irrigation systems for economizing and enhancing water use efficiency. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed varieties and hybrids of different crops which can be grown successfully by the farmers under less irrigation of dryland/drought conditions. Besides, the resource conservation technologies like zero tillage and Furrow Irrigated Raised Bed (FIRB) system of planting are also promoted to conserve the natural resources especially water.

Opening of New Regional Offices of EPF

2470. SHRI N.N.KRISHNADAS:
SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to open new Employees Provident Fund Regional Offices in the country;

(b) If so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether the Union Government has received any request regarding opening of Regional Offices in various States;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken by the Government in this regard, State-wise and location-wise; and

(e) the locations identified by the Executive Committee for setting up EPF Regional Offices in the country, State and location-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir. Presently, no proposal for opening of new Regional Offices is under consideration.

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

(c) to (e) A request for opening of Regional Office of Employees Provident Fund Organisation at Haldia, West Bengal was received in 2005. The proposal for opening of field offices was placed before the Executive Committee, Central Board of Trustees (Employees' Provident Fund) in its meeting held on 25.9.2007. The matter was deferred as it was decided at the meeting that the issue of opening of new field offices of EPFO may be revisited after reconsidering the norms for opening of offices.

Veterinary Research Institute

2471. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to set up Central Veterinary Research Institute with Branches in all the States to identify and control communicable diseases among animals more effectively;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the strategy chalked out for its implementation during the current Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Economical Version of Computer

2472. SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the more economical versions of computers including Desk Tops and Laptops have been brought in the market by HCL or any other companies in the country; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard alongwith comparative features of the computers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) The more economical versions of laptop computers have been brought in the market by HCL Infosystems Ltd., Noida under HCL MiLeap brand. The details of the computers are as under:

HCL MiLeap Model MX 1001

HCL MiLeap Model MX 1001 range starts from Rs. 13,990/- plus VAT.

Specifications: HCL MiLeap X series powered by intel Celeron M 353 processor (900 MHz), Ubuntu Linux Operating System with open office, 512MB DDR2 RAM, 17.7cms (7") wide (800x480) TFT LCD, 2 in-built speakers, 2GB Flash Drive, DC-IN, Headphone, Mic-in, Built-in Mic, RJ-45, SD Card Slot, WiFi B/G, 2xUSB ver 2.0, 6 Cell Battery, Approx weight: 1.44 kg.

HCL MiLeap Model ML 0301

HCL MiLeap Model ML 0301 range starts from Rs. 15,990/- plus VAT.

Specifications: Same as the previous model, with the change that in place of 2GB Flash Drive, it has 30GB Hard Disk Drive.

HCL Mileap Model MS 0301

HCL Mileap Model MS 0301 range starts from Rs. 16,990/- plus VAT.

Specifications: Same as in the first model, with the following changes: (i) In place of 2GB Flash Drive, it has 30GB Hard Disk Drive and (ii) In place of Ubuntu Linux Operating System with open office, it has Microsoft Windows XP Starter Edition with Microsoft Works.

Postal Land Development Authority

2473. SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to set up a Postal Land Development Authority (PLDA) aimed at consolidating the vacant lands owned by Postal Department and for its commercial utilization; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) There is no proposal to set up a Postal Land Development Authority. However, a proposal for setting up a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), a wholly owned company with limited liability and 100% equity participation by the Government registered under the Companies Act, 1956, for optimum development and management of postal estates is under consideration of Government.

Upper Indravati Multipurpose Project

2474. SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of Upper Indravati Multipurpose Project alongwith the date on which it was conceived;

(b) the number of canals proposed under the original project plan; and

(c) the reasons for delay in completion of the project alongwith the steps taken for its early implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The present status of Upper Indravati Multipurpose Project is as under:

Sl. No.	Component	Present status
1.	Integrated Reservoir System with Gross Storage of 2300 hm ³ Main Dam across river Indravati, three other dams on tributaries, namely Podagada, Kapur and Muran.	Completed in 1999-2000
2.	117m long barrage at Mangalpur on the river Hati, a tributary of the Tel in Mahanadi basin, from where main canals take off	Completed in 1987
3.	Hydro Power Plant with 600 MW capacity	Completed in 1999-2000
4.	Irrigation Network	Refer para (b) below

(b) and (c) The number of canals proposed under the Original project plan is as under:

Sl. No	Canal System	CCA* (ha)	Present Status
1.	Left Canal System	49,076	Completed in 1999
2.	Right Canal System	27,192	Completed in 2005
3.	Lift Canal System	26,248	Not taken up yet.
Total		102,516	

Apart from the above, the following components have been included in the project in the year 2003-04 under Extension Scheme:

Sl. No	Canal System	CCA* (ha)	Present Status
4.	Extension of Right Canal System	15,260	Presently under AIBP Scheduled to be completed by 2010
5.	Extension of Left Canal System	10,224	Presently under AIBP Scheduled to be completed by 2010.
Total		25,484	

* Culturable Command Area

Irrigation development being a state subject, planning, funding, execution, operation and maintenance of irrigation projects are carried out by the State Government from their own resources and as per their own requirements and priority of works. Central Government provides assistance and guidance to the State Governments as and when necessary.

Check Dams

2475. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:
SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has requested the State Governments to prepare a detailed report on constructing check dams across the course of the rivers to store surplus water;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is considering to frame National Policy on the construction of check dams to increase the availability of water;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The Ministry of Water Resources has not made any specific request to the State Governments to prepare a detailed report on constructing check dams across the course of the rivers to store surplus water.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Ministry of Water Resources has no proposal for framing a "National Policy on the Check Dams to increase the availability of Water".

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Shortage of Skilled Man-power

2476. SHRI M. P. VEERENDRAKUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is acute shortage of skilled man power jobs in Information Technology sector in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to solve the problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir. As per National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) in Financial Year 2007-08, 375,000 more jobs are expected to be added in the IT Sector in comparison to Financial Year 2006-07.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Contract Labourers/ Workers

2477. SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:
SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:
SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:
SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPAPARAI:
SHRI ANIRUDH PRASAD ALIAS
SADHU YADAV:
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:
SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of contract labourers/workers engaged in Public Sector Undertakings, Central and State Governments and Organised Industry as on date, separately, State-wise;

(b) whether recently the trend of engaging unorganized and contract labourers/workers have been rising in comparison to organized labourers/workers;

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

(d) the details regarding the payment made to the

contractors/workers for engaging contract labourers alongwith the wages actually paid to the contract labourers/workers out of the above;

(e) whether the working conditions of such labourers/workers have been deteriorating due to rampant violation of Labour Laws;

(f) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken against violators during each of the last three years and thereafter till date, State-wise; and

(g) the steps including amendment of relevant laws proposed to be taken to safeguard the interest of such labourers/workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) State-wise information regarding contract workers employed in industries given in the Annual Survey of Industries, 2003-04 is enclosed as statement-I.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The details of Informal/Unorganized sector vis-a-vis organised sector employment are given below:

Sector/Worker	Informal/ Unorganised Workers	Formal/ Organised Worker	Total
1	2	3	4
1999-2000			
Informal/ Unorganized sector	341.3 (99.6)	1.4 (0.4)	342.6 (100.0)
Formal/Organised sector	20.5 (37.8)	33.7 (62.2)	54.1 (100.0)
Total	361.7 (91.2)	35.0 (8.8)	396.8 (100.0)

1	2	3	4
2004-2005			
Informal/ Unorganized sector	393.5 (99.6)	1.4 (0.4)	394.9 (100.0)
Formal/ Organised sector	29.1 (46.6)	33.4 (53.4)	62.6 (100.0)
Total	422.6 (92.4)	34.9 (7.6)	457.5 (100.0)

Figures in brackets are percentage. Employment figures are in millions. The main reasons appear to be the desire of organisations for cost reduction in an era of international competition and the ease of adjusting the strength of labour force to suit the immediate requirements.

(d) As per provisions Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act 1970, a workman shall be deemed to be employed as "contract labour" in or in connection with the work of an establishment when he is hired in or in connection with such work by or through a contractor, with or without the knowledge of the principal employer. The contract labour is paid by the contractor. No such data with respect to all establishments is centrally maintained.

(e) and (f) Information regarding prosecutions launched and convictions secured etc. under the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970 in the establishments for whom the Central Government is the appropriate Government is enclosed as statement-II. Data regarding establishments in which State Governments are the 'Appropriate Government' are not collected by Central Government.

(g) Provisions of various labour laws are applicable to the establishments who engage the contract labour and whenever any violation of labour laws is reported, necessary action is taken by the Industrial Relation machinery of the State Governments and the Central Government in their respective spheres.

Statement-I

Annual Survey of Industries 2003-04

Percentage of Contract Workers Employed in States by Sectors during the Year 2003-04

Sl.No.	State	Total Number of Contract Workers	Percentage of Contract Workers to Total Contract Workers by Sectors			Percentage of Contract Workers to Total Workers by Sectors			
			Pub.	Joint	Pvt.	Pub.	Joint	Pvt.	Overall
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Jammu & Kashmir	5216	0.96	1.09	97.97	1.36	47.90	28.08	23.72
2	Himachal Pradesh	4657	5.45	17.11	77.43	36.08	67.03	14.01	16.85
3	Punjab	54920	2.67	2.28	95.05	16.22	15.79	21.08	20.76

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Chandigarh	300	—	1.67	98.33	—	100.00	5.43	5.39
5	Uttaranchal	6161	4.19	25.58	70.23	8.84	18.70	26.63	22.33
6	Haryana	85804	0.72	1.09	98.19	25.22	16.96	37.14	36.54
7	Delhi	3920	—	—	100.00	—	—	4.96	4.94
8	Rajasthan	61320	3.42	2.19	94.39	33.11	19.31	32.46	32.01
9	Uttar Pradesh	126501	1.52	4.33	94.14	9.81	22.54	30.13	28.80
10	Bihar	22697	1.87	3.46	94.67	18.42	27.50	51.62	48.51
11	Nagaland	1362	—	—	100.00	—	—	58.81	57.81
12	Manipur	8	—	—	100.00	—	—	0.78	0.73
13	Tripura	6415	—	0.16	99.84	—	0.81	54.11	48.95
14	Meghalaya	687	—	10.19	89.81	—	34.15	40.46	38.75
15	Assam	13063	3.18	18.06	78.76	7.02	37.22	12.30	13.62
16	West Bengal	59201	18.28	3.30	78.42	19.42	13.92	13.69	14.48
17	Jharkhand	14129	18.82	0.91	80.27	6.19	0.74	22.34	12.72
18	Orissa	37706	2.42	14.00	83.59	29.64	20.52	45.26	38.31
19	Chhattisgarh	21881	19.92	4.43	75.65	22.34	41.61	33.26	30.56
20	Madhya Pradesh	33960	0.58	7.35	92.08	4.78	21.26	21.54	21.10
21	Gujarat	181556	0.71	2.20	97.09	26.46	38.81	33.71	33.74
22	Daman & Diu	8670	—	0.43	99.57	—	47.44	19.32	19.37
23	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	13926	—	—	100.00	—	—	36.58	36.58
24	Maharashtra	187317	0.86	4.74	94.40	6.75	17.19	25.32	24.20
25	Andhra Pradesh	360147	0.36	1.12	98.52	6.84	21.95	51.77	49.83
26	Karnataka	45557	2.03	7.03	90.94	9.22	20.82	11.42	11.73
27	Goa	7600	—	8.14	91.86	—	43.29	29.88	30.39
28	Kerala	15817	11.94	9.21	78.85	7.17	9.84	5.39	5.81
29	Tamil Nadu	108084	1.36	2.93	95.71	8.58	16.36	11.35	11.41
30	Pondicherry	7060	—	0.06	99.94	—	0.81	26.57	22.54
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	27	—	—	100.00	—	—	24.11	13.43
	All India	1495671	2.34	3.40	94.26	12.29	18.94	25.48	24.57

Statement-II**Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970
Data on Central Sphere**

Sl.No.	Particulars	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1.	No. of Registration Certificates issued to principal employers.	590	747	752
2.	No. of licences issued to Contractors	7277	7317	9280
3.	No. of Inspections conducted	4540	5759	5365
4.	No. of irregularities detected	59301	60206	77422
5.	No. of prosecutions launched	3356	2991	2648
6.	No. of convictions secured	2018	1017	887
7.	No. of contract labourers covered by licences	988792	983707	1001947
8.	No. of licences revoked/cancelled/ expired	6601	7632	8186
9.	No. of registration certificates revoked/ cancelled	08	211	51

Postage Stamps

2478. SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Posts has any proposal to introduce Personalised Postage Stamps with Pictures on Cards;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) At present there is no such proposal.

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

Textile Upgradation Fund Scheme

2479. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Textile Upgradation Fund Scheme is likely to be down sized;

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

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to help the textile sector;

(d) whether the banks have refused to reimburse 5 per cent interest subsidy under Textile Upgradation Fund Scheme;

(e) if so, the reasons therefore; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) and (b) Under the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme, which is being implemented by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, enhanced budget provisions have been made in the successive financial years i.e. Rs 485 crore in 2005-06, Rs. 835.00 crore in 2006-07, Rs. 945 crore in 2007-08 and Rs. 1140 crore in 2008-09 etc. Accordingly, this Scheme is not likely to be downsized.

(c) The major steps taken by Government to help the textile sector is given in the statement enclosed.

(d) to (f) No, Sir. Banks cannot refuse to reimburse interest subsidy under the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme. As mentioned above, there exists budget provision and Government is committed to provide funds to banks.

Statement**Important measures taken by Government in recent past to help Indian textile sector**

- (i) To improve productivity and quality of cotton for manufacture and export of competitive downstream textile products, Government has launched the Technology Mission on Cotton (TMC).
- (ii) To facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of the textile industry both in the organised and unorganized

sectors, Government has launched the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS). The Scheme has been further fine tuned to increase rapid investments in the targeted sub-sectors of the textile industry. The cost of machinery has been further brought down by reducing the customs duty on imports.

- (iii) To provide the textile industry with world-class infrastructure facilities for setting up their textile units meeting international environmental and social standards, a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) based Scheme known as the "Scheme for Integrated Textile Park (SITP)" has been introduced in August 2005.
- (iv) In 2004-05 Budget, the entire textile sector, except for man-made fibre and filament yarn was provided optional exemption from excise duty.
- (v) Government has launched the Debt Restructuring Scheme w.e.f. Sept., 2003 with the principal objective to permit banks to lend to the textile sector at 8-9% rate of interest.
- (vi) In order to cater to the growing skilled manpower requirements at shop floor level, Government is providing assistance for strengthening existing and opening new Apparel Training and Design Centres (ATDCs).
- (vii) Government has allowed 100% Foreign Direct Investment in the textile sector under automatic route.
- (viii) Government has de-reserved the readymade garments, hosiery and knitwear from SSI sector so that large scale investments may be encouraged in these sectors.
- (ix) National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) has been set up to provide the leadership role in sensitizing the Industry to the concept of value addition by inducting trained professionals to manage the industry. This has resulted in an increased demand for trained professionals in various sectors servicing the industry.
- (x) In order to promote the Technical textiles, Government has approved a Scheme, which aims at baseline survey of technical textiles units and for setting up of four Centers of Excellence, one each for Agrotech, Buildtech, Meditech and Geotech with the total outlay of Rs.48 crore for 11th Plan period.

[Translation]

Production System in Ordnance Factory

2480. SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the production system of the ordnance factory, situated in Khamaria, Jabalpur has been adversely affected due to non-supply of furnace oil;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the action taken for uninterrupted manufacturing in the ordnance factory?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

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

[English]

Financial Package to Exporters

2481. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of financial package so far provided to the exporter due to appreciation of rupee;
- (b) whether the Government has any proposal to provide 500 crore fresh package to exporters;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to enable the exporters to achieve their targets and to make them internationally competitive?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The Government, has announced several relief measures to support the textiles industry, which has been representing that textile exports have been affected by the appreciation of the value of rupee vis-a-vis the US Dollar. These measures include the following:-

- I (a) Reduction in custom duty on Polyester filament yarns and polyester staple fibres from 7.5% to 5%.
- (b) Reduction in custom duty on other man made filament yarns namely, acrylic, viscose etc (excluding nylon filament yarns) from 10% to 5%.
- (c) Reduction in custom duty on other man made staples fibres namely, acrylic viscose etc (excluding nylon staple fibres) from 10% to 5%.
- (d) Reduction in custom duty on spun yarns of man made staple fibres and filament yarns (excluding nylon fibres) from 10% to 5%.
- (e) Reduction in custom duty on Polyester chips from 7.5% to 5%.

- (f) Fibre intermediates viz Dimethyl terephthalate (DMT), Pure terephthalic acid (PTA), and Mono ethylene glycol (MEG) from 7.5% to 5%; and
- (g) Para-xylsne from 2% to zero.
- (h) Exemptions have been granted on service tax in respect of cleaning services (fumigation) and warehousing services.
- II. DEPB rates were enhanced by 3% for 9 sectors including textiles (also handlooms), RMGs and handicrafts. For other items, DEPB rates were enhanced by 2%.
- III. ECGC premium reduced by 10%.
- IV. Immediate refund of terminal Excise Duty has been ordered.
- V. Concessional export credit with extended periodical coverage has been effected.
- VI. Refund of Service Tax in various sectors related to exports of goods, have been notified.
- VII. Amount of Rs.600 crore released for clearing arrears of CST reimbursement and terminal excise duty.
- VIII. Duty drawback rates enhanced by 10-40% of the existing rates.
- IX. Subvention on credit rate allowed upto 2%.

(b) and (c) There is no such proposal.

(d) The following steps have been taken to enable the exporters to achieve their targets and to make them internationally competitive:-

- (i) The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) has been made operational from 1-4-1999 to facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of the sector. The TUFS has been extended to cover the XI five year Plan period. For the speedy modernisation of the textiles processing sector, Government has introduced, w.e.f 20.4.2005, a credit linked capital subsidy scheme @10% under TUFS, in addition to the existing 5% interest reimbursement.
- (ii) The fiscal duty structure has been generally rationalised to achieve growth and maximum value addition within the country. Except for mandatory excise duty on man-made filament yarns and man-made staple fibres, the whole value addition chain has been given the option of excise exemption.
- (iii) The import of specified textiles and garment machinery has been allowed at a concessional rate of customs

duty to encourage investment and to make our textiles product competitive in the global market. The cost of machinery has also been reduced through fiscal policy measures.

- (iv) The duty-free import of 21 items of trimmings and embellishment items is allowed to garment exporters. This can be upto 3% of their actual export performance during the previous year.
- (v) The entire textile sector, except for man-made fibre and filament yarn was provided optional exemption from excise duty in 2004-05. In 2005-06 Central Value-added Tax (CENVAT) on Polyester Filament Yarn has been reduced from 24% to 16%. These modifications in fiscal levies aim at attracting more investments for modernization of textile sector.
- (vi) To facilitate import of state of the art textiles machinery for manufacturing internationally competitive product in post quota regime, the customs duty on textile machinery has been brought down to 10% in 2005-06 except 23 machinery appearing in List 49 which attracts Basic Customs Duty (BCD) of 15%.
- (vii) Government has launched the Debt Restructuring Scheme w.e.f. Sept., 2003 with the principal objective to permit banks to lend to the textile sector at concessional rates of interest.

Incentive to Cotton Growers and Handloom Weavers

2482. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:
PROF. M. RAMADASS:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the cotton and handloom textiles are becoming fashionable and acceptable to the western markets;
- (b) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to secure the Indian share in international market;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to give incentives to cotton growers and handloom weavers to increase the production of said textiles; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof along with the funds allocated for the purpose during the Eleventh Plan, separately?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) India is emerging as an important source for a wide range of home textile products, categorized as linens and domestic use textiles products, for markets around the globe.

(b) In order to secure the share of Indian handlooms textiles in international markets, the Government has launched the Marketing & Export Promotion Scheme, which facilitates the designated handlooms agencies to develop an exportable range of handlooms products and market them internationally. Apart from the above Scheme, the Government has also been facilitating promotion of exports from the country, including exports of handlooms through schemes like Market Development Assistance (MDA), the Market Access Initiative Scheme (MAI), the Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme (DEPB), the Focus Product Scheme (FPS), the Focus Market Scheme (FMS) etc.

(c) and (d) The Technology Mission on Cotton (TMC) was launched by the Government in February 2000 with the objective of improving cotton production, productivity and the quality of indigenous cotton and a reduction in the cost of cotton cultivation. The Mission consists of four mini-missions, which focus on the development of improved varieties, the transfer of technology to farmers to ensure better returns, the improvement of marketing infrastructure and the modernization of ginning and processing factories. An amount of Rs.241.35 crore has been provided in the 11th Five Year Plan for mini mission III and IV for which the nodal Ministry is the Ministry of Textiles.

The Marketing & Export Promotion Scheme has been launched for the production of an exportable range of handloom products for domestic as well as international marketing. A sum of Rs. 230 crore has been allocated for the Scheme during the 11th Plan period.

Re-employment to Ex-servicemen

2483. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether many organizations including State Governments and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) are not providing re-employment to the Ex-servicemen;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of Ex-servicemen recruited in various PSUs and State Government jobs during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) and (b) As per the existing policy, reservation for Ex-Servicemen (ESM) in Group C and Group D posts in Central Government and Central PSUs is as indicated below:

	Group C	Group D
Ministry/ Department	10%	20%
Public Sector Undertakings/ Banks	14.5%	24.5%

Similarly, 10% of the posts of Assistant Commandants in Central Paramilitary Forces are also reserved for ESM. Besides, various State Governments also have provided for 10-14% reservation for Ex-Servicemen in their Police Force. Moreover, Department of Public Enterprises has issued guidelines to all Central Ministries/Departments to the effect that security services contracts of PSUs under their administrative control should be awarded to ESM Security Agencies. However, in absence of a comprehensive data base on the subject, it is not possible either to confirm or deny that many organizations including State Governments and Public Sector Undertakings are not providing re-employment to Ex-Servicemen.

(c) As per the information available with the office of the Director General of Resettlement, the number of Ex-servicemen recruited by various PSUs/Banks/State Governments during the last three years is as given below:

	2005	2006	2007
Central PSUs	785	1522	435
Nationalised Banks	798	398	406
State PSUs	673	2255	613
State Government	1421	3055	2768
Total	3677	7230	4222

Eradication of Unemployment

2484. SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any programme to eradicate unemployment by promoting labour based industries during the Eleventh Five Year Plan; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The 11th Five Year Plan contains following important policy initiatives for generation of employment:

- (i) In order to make growth more inclusive, it is vital that more people gain access to more productive assets with which they can themselves generate decent incomes and also that GDP growth generates sufficient demand for wage labour so that those who cannot be self-employed are employed at decent wages.
- (ii) Targeting faster growth in GDP and doubling of agriculture growth will help in this process. Besides,

additional employment opportunities would be generated in the services and manufacturing sectors. Measures would need be taken to boost labour intensive manufacturing sectors such as food processing, leather products, footwear and textiles and service sectors such as tourism and construction.

- (iii) Village and small scale enterprises (VSE) will provide most of the new employment opportunities during the 11th Plan.

Besides, the Government of India is implementing a number of schemes for employment generation of which the important ones are: (i) Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP); (ii) Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY); (iii) Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY); (iv) Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY); (v) Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and (vi) National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005.

Water Management

2485. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated a new policy on water management with a view to preserve water resources in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the policy is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No, Sir. The Government has not formulated any new policy on water management with view to preserve water resources in the country. The related issues are duly addressed in the National Water Policy.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

ICAR Vigyan Mela

2486. SHRI RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA:
SHRI HEMMAL MURMU:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Krishi Vigyan Mela (KVM) has been organized by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR) recently in Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the new varieties of crops and latest agricultural equipments exhibited therein; and

(c) to what extent such KVMs benefit the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FODD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) recently organized Krishi Vigyan Mela (KVM) from February, 21-23, 2008 in Delhi. Large number of farmers/other stakeholders from different parts of the Country participated and took the advantage of the Mela. The theme of this Mela was "IARI marches towards Higher Productivity and Commercialization". Some of the major displays during this Krishi Vigyan Mela was on improved varieties of crops, vegetables and flowers. Field demonstration of various cereals, oilseeds, pulses, vegetables and flowers. Protected cultivation of vegetables and flower for high return were also made for the benefit of farmers. During this Krishi Vigyan Mela facilities of free soil and water analysis were also provided.

(c) The live demonstration of various crops provided an opportunity to the farmers for seeing and interacting with Scientists and fellow farmers. The farmers across the country purchased seeds of High Yielding Varieties, farm machinery and other farm products. The Krishi Vigyan Mela also provided an opportunity to the farmers and other stake holders for display of their products and also sale of the produce. The Kisan Mela has been very useful to the farmers/other stakeholders across the Country.

[English]

Supply of Dhruv Helicopters

2487. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:
SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI:
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has received order from the Army and the Air Force for supply of Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopters;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of contracts signed by HAL and the customers in this regard; and

(d) the details of the steps taken by the HAL for delivery in time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has concluded contract for supply of Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopters to Army and Air Force. Deliveries to Air Force are to be completed by 2012-2013 and to Army by 2015-2016.

(d) Infrastructure and capacity have been augmented at HAL to deliver the helicopters in time.

Repair and overhaul activities have been entrusted to a separate Division of HAL so that production of helicopters can be completed in a dedicated facility.

[Translation]

Law for Organising the Unorganised Labourers

2488. SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Law has been formulated for organising the women labourers and the labourers in the unorganised sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the time by which the said Law is likely to be implemented; and

(c) the details of benefits likely to accrue to the said labourers therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Investment in Land Development

2489. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR:

SHRIMATI RUPATAI D. PATIL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether investment in the development of agricultural land has declined over the years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken to increase investment in land development during the Eleventh Five Year Plan;

(d) whether National Commission on farmers has recommended for provision of one acre of land to every landless labourer; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture is implementing Watershed Development Programmes for development of degraded lands including agricultural land in the country. These programmes are: (i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPR), (ii) Soil

Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR), (iii) Reclamation of Alkali Soil (RAS) and (iv) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA). The investment under these programmes in 2004-05 was Rs. 397.74 crore and increased to Rs. 627.37 crore in 2006-07, as per details given below:

Name of programme	Investment (Rs. crore)		
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
NWDPR	235.58	267.86	356.54
RVP & FPR	136.84	146.52	222.00
RAS	6.06	9.30	10.26
WDPSCA	19.26	29.16	38.57
Total	397.74	452.84	627.37

The Working Group of the Sub Committee of National Development Council (NDC) on Agriculture and related Issues on Dryland/Rainfed Farming System including Regeneration of Degraded/Wasteland, Watershed Development Programmes has recommended for development of about 38 million ha. land out of Rs. 32095.00 crore during Eleventh Five Year Plan.

(d) and (e) Based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Farmers, Government of India has approved the National Policy for Farmers 2007, which is already under implementation through various schemes and programmes of various Central Ministries and Departments. The Commission's recommendation relating to asset reforms in respect of land, as accepted by the Government, has been incorporated in the National Policy for Farmers 2007. The policy provides for ensuring that every farmer household in villages possess and/or has access to productive assets like land, livestock, fish pond, homestead farm, and/or income through an enterprise and/or market driven skills, so that the household income is increased substantially on a sustainable basis. This in turn would ensure nutrition and livelihood security and their education and health requirements.

Landless Farmers

2490. SHRI RAGHUVeer SINGH KOSHAL:

DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted any survey/study on the number and conditions of landless farmers in the country;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof;

- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and
 (d) the concrete measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to improve the condition of such landless farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Agriculture Census is conducted by Government of India on quinquennial basis which collects data on various parameters of agricultural operational holdings. As per the Agriculture Census 2000-01, the estimated number of landless farmers (operational holders cultivating wholly leased-in land and wholly otherwise operated land) excluding the States of Bihar, Jharkhand and Meghalaya in the country was 6,60,991.

(c) The National Policy for Farmers, brought out in 2007, contains policy prescriptions regarding landless farm households. These provisions include, inter-alia, ensuring that every farmer household in villages possesses or has access to productive assets like land, livestock, fish pond, homestead farm or income through an enterprise or market driven skills so that the household income is increased substantially on a sustainable basis; implementation of laws relating to land reforms; coverage of farmers, particularly small and marginal farmers and landless agricultural workers under a comprehensive national social security scheme.

(d) The Government is monitoring distribution of ceiling surplus land, Bhoodan land and wasteland to the landless rural poor. Besides, several employment generation schemes, like, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Integrated Wastelands Development Programme, Drought Prone Area Programme, Desert Development Programme and National Watershed Development Programme for Rainfed Areas etc. are being implemented to benefit the rural poor including landless farmers.

Promotion of Export of Handicrafts

2491. SHRI GIRDHARILAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the facilities being provided by the Government to the exporters to promote export of handicrafts;

(b) whether the Government proposes to formulate a new policy/scheme for promotion and development of handicrafts industry during the Eleventh Plan period;

(c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the funds allocated for the purpose during the Eleventh Plan;

(d) whether the Government has set up Export Promotion Council/Special Economic Zones to promote export of handicrafts; and

(e) if so, the details and achievements thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) The Government has been providing facilities to the exporters through Export Promotion Councils for Handicrafts and Carpet Export Promotion Council under Market Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme and Market Access Initiative (MAI) Scheme

(b) and (c) During the 11th Five Year Plan, Government is implementing six schemes for promotion and development of handicrafts which includes: Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY) for integrated development of identified craft clusters; Handicraft Artisans Comprehensive Welfare Scheme; Marketing Support & Service Scheme; Design & Technology Upgradation Scheme; Human Resource Development Scheme and Research and Development Scheme. An allocation of Rs. 1257.01 crores has been made under these schemes for the 11th Plan period.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The two export promotion councils i.e. Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts and Carpet Export Promotion Council are already functioning for handicrafts & carpets separately. So far as Special Economic Zones (SEZ) are concerned, 3 formal approvals have been granted under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005 for handicrafts sector by the Ministry of Commerce; only 1 SEZ has been notified as; per details given below:-

Sl. No.	Name of Developer	Location of SEZ (in hectares)	Sector	Area	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Mansarovar Industrial Development Corporation	Jodhpur, Rajasthan	RJ	131	Notified
	Gujarat Growth Centres Development Corporation Limited (GGDCL)	Moti Chiral GGDCL Estate, Village Moti Chiral, District Kutch, Gujarat	GJ	131-59-62	

1	2	3	4	5	6
Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Corporation (UPSIDC)		Bhadohi, District Sant Ravidas Nagar, Uttar Pradesh	UP	103.96	

[English]

Availability of Water

2492. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) the present water availability in the country;
- (b) whether the Government has identified the new water resources and water scarcity regions in the country; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) The average annual precipitation is estimated as 4000 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) in the country. After accounting for the natural process of evaporation etc., the average annual water availability in the country is assessed as 1869 BCM. Owing to topographic, hydrological and other constraints, the utilizable water is assessed as 1123 BCM.

With a view to augment the utilizable water resources, various measures such as utilization of surplus flood water by transfer to water short area through inter-linking of rivers, rainwater harvesting and ground water recharge have been envisaged.

Postal Service in Border Areas

2493. SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Department of Posts has been assuring quality services within the country and across the borders as per the requirement of the customers; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. The Department assures Quality services being provided to its customers across the country including border areas.

(b) The Department has assured Quality service to its customers. To achieve this a constant watch on the operations related to various services is maintained to ensure quality of service. This is done through a system of

reports generated from one level to the other, surprise checks, constitution of special squads etc. For better customer care, 1116 computerized customer care centers have been set up all over the country and connected through a web-based software to ensure speedy response to customer enquiries. The Department has recently revised Citizen Charter and the same is available on the India Post website to facilitate better understanding by the customers.

The satisfaction of the customers is gauged by meetings at Post Forums, Dak Adalats and analysis of complaints to traffic ratio for various services. In an analysis carried out recently the complaint to traffic ratio for various services over the last seven years is indicative of a downward trend. Moreover, the revenue generated by the Department has been constantly going up and the deficit has also been reduced.

The other proactive steps taken up by the Department for improving customer satisfaction and ensuring consistent quality of service is through implementation of 'Sevottam' – Excellence in Public Service Delivery, wherein emphasis is being placed for improvement in the areas of Citizen Charter, public grievance mechanism and service delivery capabilities. Further, during the Xth Five Year Plan the Department has computerized 8263 post offices. This has cut down the time of waiting in the queues with computer-generated receipts to the customers for their transactions at the counters and improved level of customer satisfaction.

Proposal to Amend Indian Post Office (Amendment) Act

2494. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has turned down the proposal from Postal Department to amend the Indian Post Office (Amendment) Act, as the Finance Ministry has expressed reservations on capping of Foreign Direct Investment to forty nine percent and providing exclusive rights to Indian Post on letters, parcels and packets weighing up to 150 gram as proposed by the Postal Department;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the main points mentioned by the Finance Ministry in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir. The proposal for amending the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 has not been turned down by the Government.

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

Health Condition of Unorganised Workers

2495. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted any study on the health condition of the unorganised/unskilled labourers of the country;

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

(c) the steps taken by the Government to improve the health condition of the unorganised/unskilled labourers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) No such study has been conducted by the Government.

(c) The 'Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana' for BPL families in unorganised sector has been launched on 1st October, 2007. The unorganized sector worker and his family (a unit of five) will be covered under the scheme. The total sum insured will be Rs. 30,000/- per family per annum on a family floater basis. The benefits under the scheme will start accruing from 1st April, 2008.

Setting up of Defence Production Units

2496. SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to create more defence production units in addition to the existing public sector enterprises;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Palakkad Unit of Indian Telephone Industries Limited has made any request for its conversion into a defence production unit;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A representation has been received from the Chairman, Committee on Subordinate Legislation, Lok

Sabha for considering Palakkad unit of Indian Telephone Industries Limited as a preferred production unit for defence production and to bestow Raksha Udyog Ratna status to Indian Telephone Industries Limited.

(e) There is no concept of preferred production unit in the Ministry of Defence. The status of Raksha Udyog Ratna has not been granted to any industry.

Commercial Utilisation of FCI Property

2497. SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for commercial utilization of the unutilized land and buildings of Food Corporation of India is under the consideration of the Government; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Food Corporation of India (FCI) has constituted a Task Force to examine and propose strategies and measures for proper use of land and property resources of the Corporation for revenue generation. The Task Force constituted for this purpose has submitted its report, in March 2008.

[Translation]

Theft Cases in Ordnance Factory

2498. SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the incidents of theft cases of cartridges of bombs have been reported from the Ordnance Factory, Khamaria in Jabalpur;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon; and

(c) the security arrangements being maintained in the movements of labourers and contractors in the factory?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) On 9th February 2008, 253 Nos of Brass Cartridges were reported to be missing from Ordnance Factory, Khamaria in Jabalpur. On 11th February 2008, FIR was lodged with Police Station, Khamaria, Jabalpur District.

(c) The contract labourers wear identifiable apparel and stay at one place during lunch hours under the supervision of in-charge of the section. The contractors are allowed to visit designated officers/offices only and their movements are restricted.

[English]

State Assisted Scheme of Provident Fund for Unorganised Workers

2499. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has started a scheme State Assisted Scheme of Provident Fund for Unorganised Workers (SASPFUW);

(b) if so, the details and salient features thereof;

(c) whether all the States have accepted the said scheme; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor alongwith the objections, if any, raised by the State Governments in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The State Government of West Bengal has launched the State Assisted Scheme of Provident Fund for Unorganised Workers (SASPFUW) for both employed and self-employed workers in the Unorganised Sector which commenced with effect from 01-01-2001. As reported by the State Government, the salient features of the scheme are as under:

At present 13 employments and 8 self employment occupations are covered under the scheme and the scheme would be extended to some more areas shortly.

A worker is eligible to come under the purview of the scheme if he/she fulfils the following criteria:-

- (i) He/she should be employed in the listed employments/ or be self-employed in the listed occupations in West Bengal.
- (ii) He/she should be between 18 & 55 years of age.
- (iii) His/her average family income from all sources should not exceed Rs. 3500/- p.m.
- (iv) He/she should not be covered under the Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.

Each beneficiary contributes a sum of Rs. 20/- per month into the account under the scheme. The State

Government contributes an equal amount into the account. The State Government also pays interest on the total amount. The total contribution along with the interest will be paid to the beneficiary on attaining the age of 55 years. In the event of death of the beneficiary before attaining of age of 55 years, the total amount including interest will be paid to his/her nominee/legal heir soon after his/her death.

(c) and (d) The State Assisted Scheme of Provident Fund for Unorganised Workers (SASPFUW) is specific to the State of West Bengal. Hence, each state has to take a view whether they would want to adopt the scheme or not.

Army Welfare Housing Organisation

2500. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Army Welfare Housing Organisation (AWHO) had purchased land in Shatabdi Nagar, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh in the year, 1989 from the Meerut Development Authority for construction of houses for serving/retired army personnel and their widows;

(b) if so, the amount paid by the Army Welfare Housing Organisation to Meerut Development Authority for the same;

(c) whether the construction work of houses has commenced on the land;

(d) if not, the reasons for delay;

(e) whether any responsibility has been fixed for such delay in construction of houses; and

(f) the time by which the construction of houses on the said land is likely to begin?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Army Welfare Housing Organisation was allotted 30 acres of land by Meerut Development Authority at Shatabdi Nagar, Meerut in October, 1989.

(b) Army Welfare Housing Organisation paid an amount of Rs.3,82,41,541/- to Meerut Development Authority.

(c) The construction on the land has not yet commenced as the possession of the land has not been handed over by Meerut Development Authority.

(d) External services like road, electric line, water supply and sewage lines have not been developed. Further the entire plot was under occupation of local farmers and was being cultivated by them as Meerut Development Authority had apparently not paid compensation to the land owners. Even now the plot is not fully developed and is not entirely in the possession of Meerut Development Authority.

(e) Army Welfare Housing Organisation has filed a case against Meerut Development Authority in the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, New Delhi.

(f) No time frame for construction of houses can be set at present as the possession of land has not been handed over.

Committee on Deep Sea Fishing

2501. SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Empowered Committee on Deep Sea Fishing has been formed by the Government;

(b) if so, the details of Members alongwith its role in Deep Sea Fishing; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to submit its report to the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) Yes. Sir. An Empowered Committee on Marine Fisheries was constituted in November, 2004. Its composition and terms of reference are given in the statement enclosed. This is a standing committee which takes decisions on important issues relating to the development of Deep Sea Fishing and meets at least twice a year.

Statement

Composition of the Inter-Ministerial Empowered Committee on Marine Fisheries

1. Secretary, Deptt. of Animal Husbandry & Dairying	Chairperson
2. Adviser (Agri), Planning Commission	Member
3. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance, D/o Economic Affairs	Member
4. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs	Member
5. Joint Secretary, (Navy), Ministry of Defence	Member
6. Chairman, MPEDA, Ministry of Commerce	Member
7. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Shipping	Member
8. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Communications	Member
9. Joint Secretary (Fisheries), DAH&D	Member
10. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas	Member

11. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests	Member
12. Director General of Foreign Trade or his representative	Member
13. Director General, Coast Guard or his representative	Member
14. Director General, Fishery Survey of India, Mumbai	Member
15. Director General of Shipping or his representative	Member
16. Fisheries Development Commissioner, DAH&D	Member Secretary

Terms of Reference

- (i) To consider proposals of Indian entrepreneurs for deep sea fishing by acquisition through construction/import of deep sea fishing vessels for issuance of Letter of Permission;
- (ii) To prescribe norms for joint venture, development of post harvest technologies, infrastructure and human resource development in the sector; and
- (iii) To advise the Government on implementation of any other aspects of Comprehensive Marine Fishing Policy as and when referred to it.

Agreement of HAL with Boeing

2502. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:
SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has signed a MoU with Boeing to source sub-system for fighter aircraft and helicopters;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether negotiations are also going on with Boeing for purchase of Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance (LRMR) patrol aircraft for Indian Navy;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the details of new areas of cooperations likely to come up after the operation of such MoU?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An MoU has been signed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) with Boeing in December, 2007

which envisages exploration of business opportunities principally relating to defence related work packages.

(c) and (d) The proposal regarding procurement of Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance (LRMR) aircraft is in progress.

(e) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is expected to be benefited through enhanced export opportunities, development of new technologies and processes; and implementation of best practices and skills for global competitiveness.

[Translation]

Vacant Posts in BSNL

2503. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of posts in Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) are vacant and the recruitment has not been made for a long time;

(b) if so, the details thereof, circle-wise;

(c) the telecom, location-wise, details of vacant posts in Rajasthan thereof; and

(d) the comparative details of vacant posts and the number of customers increased during the last three years and the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir. Creation and filling up of the posts are continuous processes. Due to declining trend in work load as well as fixed lines, strictly need based internal promotions as well as outside recruitments are being considered, particularly keeping in view the fast changing business as well as technological scenario. Consequent to restructuring of cadres in Group 'C' and 'D' the posts occupied by pre-restructured wasting cadre officials are to be abolished on being vacated by pre-restructured cadre officials due to promotions, retirement etc. Further, vacant posts in Group 'D' are to be used for regularization of eligible Casual Laborers, compassionate ground appointment and re-deployment of Group 'D' level staff rendered surplus due to any reason.

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

(c) Location wise posts are not sanctioned. However, Group-wise vacancies are:

Group 'A'	Group 'B'	Group 'C'	Group 'D'	Total
214	1577	2388	149	4328

(d) Details are given in the statement enclosed.

Statement

Details of Subscriber's base during the last 3 years till date

Sl.No.	As on	Wired DELs	WLL Connections	Cellular	Grand Total	Vacant** Posts	Working Staff
1	Jan-2008	31607310	4237841	33748599	69593750	39,472	309683
2	Mar-2007	33738604	3556263	27428658	64723525	33,687	320506
3	Mar-2006	35422889	2572525	17163761	55159175	36,339	326948
4	Mar-2005	35859482	1628111	9447357	46934950	38,888	339853

** Note:

1. Creation and filling up of the posts are continuous processes. Due to declining trend of fixed lines, total as well as category-wise vacant posts in all the categories are liable to change as majority of the posts relate to fixed line scenario.
2. The available posts in Group 'D' are to be used for regularization of eligible Casual Labourers, compassionate ground appointments and re-deployment of Group 'D' level staff rendered surplus due to any reason.
3. Consequent to restructuring of cadres in Group 'C' and 'D', the posts occupied by pre-restructured wasting cadre officials are to be abolished on being vacated by pre-restructured cadre officials due to promotions, retirement etc.

[English]

Storage Facilities for Fruits and Vegetables

2504. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN:
SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN:
SHRI UDAY SINGH:
SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware the large quantities of fruits and vegetables in the country going waste due to lack of proper storage facilities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has any proposal to assist the State Governments in organised marketing of fruits and vegetables to help the farmers to get a fair price for their produce and also for storage facilities;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE

MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The estimated loss/wastage of fruits and vegetables in the country ranges from 10-30% of production, due to lack of proper storage facilities.

(c) and (d) The Government is implementing two Centrally Sponsored scheme viz. (i) Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in Northern Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand (TMNE); and (ii) National Horticulture Mission (NHM), under which assistance is provided to the States for taking up various activities including development of infrastructure facilities for marketing of horticultural produce which include fruits and vegetables. The assistance is also provided for setting up of post harvest facilities such as pack houses, cold storages, Controlled Atmosphere Storages etc. The assistance is in the form of credit linked back ended subsidy @ 25% of the capital cost for general areas and @ 33.33% of the capital cost for hilly and tribal areas. Under the marketing infrastructure assistance is provided for development of rural markets/apni mandies, wholesale markets and terminal markets.

(e) Does not arise.

Computerization in Panchayats

2505. SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether 2.5 lakhs Panchayats will become computerize for the benefit of the rural areas in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the number of Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh that have been computerized during the year 2007-08 and the projections likely to be made next financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is formulating a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) to computerize all the village Panchayats during the next year.

(b) Government of Andhra Pradesh has taken initiative to computerize 475 Gram Panchayats in the State. Proposals are under consideration to take up the computerization of about 855 Gram Panchayats in a phased manner.

Food Parks

2506. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether various Government agencies have formed a special purpose vehicle to set up agri-services food parks in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the time frame for its implementation; and

(c) the extent to which such food parks will help to check the prices of agricultural produce?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MFPI) had been providing financial assistance in the form of grant-in-aid for setting up of Food Parks under its Plan scheme @ 25% of project cost in general areas and 33.33% of project cost in difficult areas, subject to maximum of Rs. 4.00 crore for creation of common facilities such as power supply, water supply, cold storage, warehousing facility, effluent treatment plant, food testing analytical laboratory, common processing facility etc. The Ministry does not set up Food Parks on its own. The Ministry has approved financial assistance in respect of 56 Food Parks in the country (Statement in enclosed).

MFPI has submitted a scheme to Planning Commission, which envisages providing financial assistance for setting up of mega Food Parks in the country during 11th Five Year Plan period. The scheme, which is project oriented, aims to provide a mechanism to bring together farmers, processors and retailers and link agricultural production to the market so as to ensure maximization of value addition, minimization of wastages and improving farmers' income. Mega Food Park envisages a well-defined agri/horticultural-processing zone containing state of the art processing facilities with support infrastructure and well established supply chain. The scheme envisages formation of Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) by the Stakeholders/Users for implementation, operation and maintenance of Mega Food Parks. The primary objective of the scheme is to facilitate establishment of an integrated value chain, with processing at the core and supported by requisite forward and backward linkages.

Statement**Ministry of Food Processing Industries
Food Parks Approved for Financial Assistance**

S. No.	State	Location of the Project	Implementing agency	Year of approval
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Kuppam, Dist-Chittoor	Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation Ltd.	2000-01
2.	Assam	Chaygaon, Distt. Kamrup	Assam small Industries Development Corporation Ltd.	2000-01
3.	Bihar	Hajipur, District Vaishali	North Bihar Ind. Area Dev. Authority, C/o Department of Industries	2002-03
4.	Chhattisgarh	Vill: Teadesara, Distt. Rajnandgaon	Chhattisgarh State Industrial Development Corporation	2001-02
5.	Haryana	Saha, Distt. Ambala	Haryana State Ind. Dev. Corporation Ltd.	2001-02
6.	Haryana	Raj. Dist. Sonipat	Haryana State Ind. Dev. Corporation Ltd.	2001-02
7.	Jammu & Kashmir	Khunmoh, Distt. Srinagar	J&K State Industrial Development Corporation Ltd.	2000-01
8.	Jammu & Kashmir	Sopore, Baramulla	J&K State Industrial Development Corporation Ltd. (J&K SIDCO)	2002-03
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	Jammu	Jammu Agro Industrial Food Park	2001-02
10.	Karnataka	Malur, Distt. Kolar	M/s Innova Agri-Bio Park Ltd.	2000-01
11.	Karnataka	Bagalkot	M/s Green Food Park Limited	2000-01
12.	Karnataka	Jevargi	M/s Jewargi Agro Food Park	2002-03
13.	Karnataka	Hirriyur	M/s Akshay Food Park Limited	2006-07
14.	Kerala	Distt, Mallapuram	Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation	1996-97
15.	Kerala	Aroor, Distt. Alappuzha	Marine Products Infrastructure Development Corporation P. Ltd. (MIDCON) / Seafood Park India Ltd.	2001-02
16.	Kerala	Mazhuvannur, Ernakulam	Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA)	2002-03
17.	Kerala	Adoor	Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA)	2005-06
18.	Madhya Pradesh	Jaggakhedi, Distt. Mandasaur	Madhya Pradesh Audyogic Kendra Vikas Nigam (Indore) Ltd.	2000-01
19.	Madhya Pradesh	Nimrani, Dist. Khargone,	Madhya Pradesh Audyogic Kendra Vikas Nigam (Indore) Ltd.	2001-02
20.	Madhya Pradesh	Piparia, Babai, Distt. Hoshangabad	Madhya Pradesh Audyogic Kendra Vikas Nigam (Bhopal) Ltd.	2001-02

1	2	3	4	5
21.	Madhya Pradesh	Borgaon, Distt. Chhindwara	M.P. Audyogik Kendra, Vikas Nigam (Jabalpur) Ltd.	2001-02
22.	Madhya Pradesh	Malanpur, Ghirongi, District Bhind (M.P).	M.P. Audyogik Kendra, Vikas Nigam (Gwalior) Ltd.	2002-03
23.	Madhya Pradesh	Maneri, Distt, Mandla	M.P. Audyogik Kendra, Vikas Nigam (Jabalpur) Ltd.	2002-03
24.	Maharashtra	Butibori, Distt. Nagpur	Maharashtra Agro Industries Development Corporation Ltd.	2000-01
25.	Maharashtra	Vinchur, Distt. Nashik	Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation	2001-02
26.	Maharashtra	Mouza Gumthala, Bhandara Road, Dist. Nagpur.	M/s Haldiram Krishi Udyog Pvt. Ltd., Dist. Nagpur.	2002-03
27.	Maharashtra	Village Sangvi, Distt. Satara	M/s Agrifood Informatics (India) Ltd. Pune-411013	2002-03
28.	Maharashtra	Palus, Distt. Sangli	Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation	2003-04
29.	Maharashtra	Kapsi, Taluka Kamtee, Distt. Nagpur	M/s Maa Umiya Audyogic Sahakari Vasahat Maryadit	2005-06
30.	Maharashtra	MIDC Industrial Area, Shendra, Aurangabad	M/s Laxmi Nirmal Pratisthan	2006-07
31.	Manipur	Lamphelpat, Imphal	Manipur Food Industries Corporation Ltd.	2000-01
32.	Manipur	Distt.-Ukhrul	Rishang Keishing Foundation for Management of Tribal Areas	2001-02
33.	Mizoram	Chhingchip	Mizoram Food and Allied Industries	2001-02
34.	Nagaland	Bamunpukri, Dimapur	Progressive Rural Development Society	2006-07
35.	Orissa	Khurda	Orissa Indl. Infrastructure Development Corporation	2001-02
36.	Punjab	Sirhind, Distt. Fatehgarh Sahib	Punjab Agri Export Corporation	2000-01
37.	Rajasthan	Ranpur, Distt. Kota.	Rajasthan State Industrial Development & Investment Corporation Ltd., (RIICO)	2002-03
38.	Rajasthan	Boranada, District Jodhpur	Rajasthan State Industrial Development & Investment Corporation Ltd., (RIICO)	2002-03
39.	Rajasthan	Sri Ganganagar	Rajasthan State Industrial Development & Investment Corporation Ltd. (RIICO)	2003-04
40.	Rajasthan	Alwar	Rajasthan State Industrial Development & Investment Corporation Ltd., (RIICO)	2006-07
41.	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar, Distt. Madurai	V.P.S Ayyemperumal Nadar & Sons.	2000-01
42.	Tamil Nadu	Dindigul District	Nilakottai Food Park Ltd.	2004-05

1	2	3	4	5
43.	Tripura	Bodhjunnagar, West Tripura	Tripura Industrial Development Corporation Ltd.	2000-01
44.	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad	Wise Industrial Park Ltd.	1999-00
45.	Uttar Pradesh	Kharkion, Distt. Varanasi	U.P State Industrial Development Corporation Ltd.	2000-01
46.	Uttar Pradesh	Shahajanwa, Gorakhpur	Gorakhpur Industrial Dev. Authority.	2004-05
47.	Uttar Pradesh	Village Kushalipur, District Saharanpur	M/s Kushal International Limited	2002-03
48.	Uttar Pradesh	Kursi Road, Distt. Barabanki	U.P State Industrial Development Corporation Ltd.	2000-01
49.	West Bengal	Chakgaria 24 Parganas (South)	State Fishermen's Cooperative Ltd., (BENFISH), Kolkata	1998-99
50.	West Bengal	Dankuni, Distt. Hooghly	Modular Consultants Pvt. Ltd.	1996-97
51.	West Bengal	Haldia District Midnapore	Haldia Development Authority, Haldia	2002-03
52.	West Bengal	Sultanpur, South 24 Parganas	State Fishermen's Cooperative Ltd., (BENFISH), Kolkata	2003-04
53.	West Bengal	Malda	Deptt. of Food Processing Industries and Horticulture, Govt. of West Bengal	2003-04
54.	West Bengal	Shankarapur, Dist. Purba Medinipur	Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture, Aquatic Resources, Govt. of West Bengal	2004-05
55.	West Bengal	Sankhrail, Howrah	West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC)	2004-05
56.	West Bengal	Murshidabad	M/s Pataka Industries Limited	2005-06

MSP of Red Chilly

2507. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Minimum Support Price (MSP) provided by the Government for red chilly to the farmers in the country at present, State-wise;

(b) the details of Central share therein;

(c) whether the Government of Karnataka has submitted any proposal to the Union Government to review the MSP for red chilly; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Under the Price Support Scheme (PSS), Government of India fixes the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for fair average quality (FAQ) varieties of 25 commodities for the country as

a whole and not by States. Government does not fix MSP for red chilly.

In the case of other crops including red chilly, the Government implements the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) that aim at protecting the interest of the farmers in the event of distress sale of their produce. The decision to launch MIS for a particular commodity is taken by the Central Government on receipt of specific request from the State Government. The MIS for a commodity is implemented for a specified period for procurement operations at a pre-determined price fixed by the Central and the State Government concerned. Profit/ loss incurred, if any, is borne on sharing basis by the Central and State Government.

(c) No proposal from the Government of Karnataka has been received for the procurement of red chilly under MIS.

(d) Does not arise.

Discontinuation of EPF Pension Scheme

2508. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to discontinue the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Pension Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the annual increment and full pension was not paid to the pensioners even after the commutation period is over;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government proposes to give option to employees to exempt from the EPF Pension Scheme; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

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

(c) and (d) The Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 is an actuary designed scheme in which benefits are given by following the actuarial principles. The scheme as such has no provision for pre-fixed annual increment/restoration of original pension.

(e) No, Sir.

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

Super Speciality Hospitals

2509. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN:

SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has set up super-speciality hospitals in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the facilities available to the beneficiaries in these hospitals, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government proposes to set up more such hospitals in the country particularly in Tamil Nadu;

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

(e) the time by which the such hospitals are likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) ESIC has set up one super speciality hospital at ESIC Model Hospital Complex, Kollam,

Kerala. It is proposed to start Cardiology and nephrology super-specialty services in this Hospital. Rest of the super specialties will be added as per the need.

(c) to (e) ESI Corporation proposes to set up zonal super-specialty hospitals in various parts of the country. As a pilot project, zonal super specialty hospital for South Zone is being set up at ESI hospital, Sanath Nagar Complex, Hyderabad (A.P.). Based on the experience, super specialty hospitals will be set up in other parts of the country. At present, there is no proposal for setting up of super specialty hospital in Tamil Nadu.

Super specialty hospital at Sanath nagar, Hyderabad is likely to be operational after three years. Based on the experience of Sanath Nagar Super Specialty Hospital, decision regarding setting up of more super specialty hospitals will be taken.

Poor Telecom Service

2510. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a rapid deterioration in service quality in telecom sector over the past few months;

(b) if so, the reasons for the same; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) As per Performance Monitoring Report (PMR) of Basic & Cellular Mobile Telephone Service and Point of Interconnection (POI) Congestion Reports for the quarter ending September 2007 and December 2007 submitted by the telecom service providers to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), there is no rapid deterioration in service quality in telecom sector over the past few months.

(c) The following steps are taken to ensure quality of telecom service:

i. TRAI had issued a Quality of Service (QoS) Regulation in July, 2000 and subsequently modified in July, 2005 so as to benchmark the various QoS parameters including POI congestion for Basic and Cellular Mobile services.

ii. The performance of Basic & Cellular Mobile Telephone Services through quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports (PMRs) and monthly congestion reports are monitored.

- iii. An objective assessment of the Quality of Service of Basic and Cellular Mobile Services through an independent agency is undertaken. The results of these audit and survey are widely published for public/stakeholders knowledge.
- iv. TRAI follows up with the service providers for addressing deficiencies in meeting the QOS benchmarks in various meetings held with the service providers.

Compensation and Pension Benefits to Daily Wage Workers

2511. SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Labour Welfare Board rules envisage that once the death is established of a daily wage earner, the contractor is supposed to pay a suitable compensation and pension benefits to the victim's family;

(b) If so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has formulated any scheme to inform the workers about their rights under the rules particularly in case of casualty; and

(d) If so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) There are the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 including the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 (in the specified establishments and employing 20 or more persons) and The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 (for persons employed in factories, mines, plantations, mechanically propelled vehicles, construction works and certain other hazardous occupations) for the social and economic security of the workers.

There is no distinction between a regular and a casual worker under both the Acts. However in the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970 there is no provision for any compensation to the victims of the family in case of death of the former.

(b) The Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 aims at providing social and economic security to industrial and other workers covered under the Act and their dependents in case of their premature death.

Under the said Act the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 provides for pensionary benefits to the victims family. The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 provides for payment of compensation to workmen and their dependents

in case of injury and accident (including certain occupational disease) arising out of and in the course of employment and resulting in disablement or death. The Act applies to railway servants and persons employed in any such capacity including persons employed in factories, mines, plantations, mechanically propelled vehicles, construction works and certain other hazardous occupations. Minimum rates of compensation for permanent total disablement and death have been fixed at Rs. 90,000/- and Rs. 80,000/- respectively. Maximum amount for death and permanent total disablement can go up to Rs. 4.56 lakh and Rs. 5.48 lakh respectively depending on age and wages of workmen.

(c) and (d) Though there is no specific scheme to inform the workers, there are various tripartite fora through which such messages are discussed and disseminated.

[Translation]

Irrigation Facilities

2512. SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has identified the suicide prone areas of Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh for providing adequate irrigation facilities; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the time by when it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) An Inter-Ministerial Central Study Team has visited the Bundelkhand areas and some tehsils in Allahabad district of Uttar Pradesh in the 4th Week of January, 2008 and the Bundelkhand areas of Madhya Pradesh in the 1st week of February, 2008, to study the drought like situation in these areas with a view to assessing the ground situation and the scale of implementation of various medium-term and long-term drought mitigation programmes/schemes and to recommend strategy and various measures that are required for agriculture development suitable for the areas to ameliorate the current situation. Further action would be taken after receipt of the Team's report.

[English]

Report of Naval Intelligence about Security Threat

2513. DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any report of the Naval Intelligence indicating security threat caused by the unregulated ship-breaking pursuits in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any report of possible involvement of some anti-national elements in this lucrative ship-breaking business;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to scrutinize such activities by the security agencies?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) to (e) There had been a report in the past indicating possible security concerns caused by un-regulated ship breaking activities at Alang. However, since the Indian Navy does not deal with ship-breaking activities, the report was shared with other intelligence agencies in the country for necessary action.

**Funds for Protective Measures In
Flood Affected Areas**

2514. SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has been releasing the necessary funds to take up protective measures before the start of every rainy season both in the Brahmaputra and Barak Valley in Assam during each of the last three years and in 2007-08 also;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the names of Agencies entrusted with the responsibility to execute the works in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Central Government has provided central assistance to the Govt. of Assam in the funding pattern of 90:10 (90% Central share and 10% State share) during the last 3 (Three) years under the scheme "Critical Flood Control and Anti-erosion Scheme in Brahmaputra & Barak Valley under State Sector". The funds made available to Assam during the last 3 (three) years are as below:

(Rs. in Crore)

2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total
9.3000	30.2400	39.2782	78.8182

During the year 2007-08, 75 eligible schemes of Government of Assam have been submitted for central

assistance of Rs. 97.83 crore towards release of 1st installment for consideration of Empowered Committee under the "Flood Management Programme"—a State sector scheme for taking up flood control and river management works.

In addition to the above the Brahmaputra Board has taken up the following flood control and anti erosion works in Assam from the fund provided by the Govt. of India.

1. Avulsion of river Brahmaputra at Dhola-Hatighuli
2. Protection of Majuli Island Phase-I
3. Protection of Nagrijuli, Rangia town, Mukalmua-Borbhag area from flood and erosion of river Bornadi/Puthimari Nagrijuli

The expenditure incurred against the above schemes during the last three years as well as during current year are as below:

(Rs. in crore)			
2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08 (till Jan/08)
10.12	10.25	13.56	12.89

(c) Does not arise.

Subsidy for Farmers

2515. SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number and percentage of farmers including small and medium farmers benefited with subsidy on power for agriculture;

(b) whether the Government proposes to introduce metering and tariff for big farmers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Section 65 of the Electricity Act, 2003, provides the State Governments the discretion to grant any subsidy to any consumer or class of consumers in the tariff determined by the State Commission by paying the amount of such subsidy to compensate the distribution utility. The distribution of electricity is the responsibility of the State Governments. The information compiled by the Central Statistical Organization on Subsidies in Agricultural Sector does not contain details on number and percentage of farmers including small and medium farmers benefited with subsidy on power for agriculture.

(b) and (c) Section 55 of the Electricity Act, 2003 provides that no licensee shall supply electricity after the expiry of two years from the appointed date i.e. 10.06.03, except through installation of a correct meter in accordance with the regulations to be made in this behalf by the Authority. However, the State Electricity Regulatory Commission may, by notification, extend the said period of two years for a class or classes of persons or for such area as may be specified.

Shrimp/Prawn Farms

2516. DR. K. DHANARAJU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Aquaculture Authority of India has been closely monitoring the shrimp/prawn farms in the coastal areas of our country;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the number of licences issued so far for shrimp/prawn farms during the last three years;

(c) whether the incidents of encroachment of Government lands for illegal shrimp/prawn farms in the coastal districts of the States like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, Kerala, etc. has been noticed recently; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the remedial action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Coastal Aquaculture Authority monitors the farming of shrimp/prawn in the coastal areas as per the provisions of the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005 and the rules framed thereunder. The Authority has registered 3292 shrimp farms so far since its inception in December, 2005 till February, 2008.

(c) and (d) As per the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005, no person shall carry on coastal aquaculture including shrimp/prawn farming unless he has registered his farm with the Authority. Applications for registration of shrimp farms in coastal areas are scrutinized by the District and State level Committees and shrimp farms without clear title of ownership of the land cannot be registered with the Authority.

Policy on use of Water by Industries

2517. SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has set up a high level Committee for use of raw water by industries;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the outcome thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Union Government on the recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) A Sub-Committee was constituted as per decision of the Artificial Recharge of Ground Water Advisory Council to suggest a policy for water for Industries having the framework for regulation as well as incentives for economic use for large users of ground water. Workshops have been held to discuss various recommendations of the Sub-Committee.

Levying of Service Tax

2518. SHRI G. NIZAMUDDIN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for Levying Service Tax for Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) Land Line and Broad Band subscribers in the country;

(b) whether the subscribers are already paying the price for their utilisation of the facilities;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there is any proposal to the Government to do away with the service tax;

(e) if so, the time by which it is likely to be implemented; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (f) Sir, Service Tax is leviable on taxable services including telecommunication services specified under section 65 (105) read with section 66 of the Finance Act, 1994. Accordingly, telecommunication services provided by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) are leviable to service tax. At present, there is no proposal under the consideration of the Government to do away the levy of service tax on the said taxable services.

Development of Critical Missile Technology

2519. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed Composite Rocket Motor Casing for missile system;

(b) If so, the details thereof; and

(c) the benefits likely to accrue from this breakthrough in missile technology?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) One meter diameter composite material rocket motor has been developed and tested statically by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for missile propulsion system.

(c) Composite material rocket motor is lighter in weight and easier to fabricate.

NSSO Study on Food Adequacy

2520. SHRI M.K. SUBBA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a recent survey by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) has listed Assam, Orissa and West Bengal among top few States with rampant food inadequacy, especially among the rural house-holds;

(b) if so, the details and outcome of the food inadequacy survey conducted by NSSO both for urban and rural households, separately, State-wise,

(c) the main cause of inadequacy revealed by the said survey; and

(d) the remedial steps taken by the Government to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) Sir, Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House on its receipt.

Naval Event Milan 2008

2521. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Naval event Milan 2008 was organized by the Indian Navy in Port Blair in January, 2008;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the countries which attended the event; and

(c) the issues discussed during the event?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) to (c) A joint naval exercise, Milan 2008, was conducted by the Indian Navy with the navies of some foreign countries at Port Blair in January, 2008. Ships and delegates from eleven countries, viz., Australia, Brunei, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam participated in 'Milan 2008'. A seminar was also held during this period, which raised issues of common concern relating to maritime security, maritime environment and disaster management.

Impact of Hike in Petrol Prices

2522. SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent hike in Petrol and Diesel prices has led to a further rise in prices of consumer items, services and other essential commodities;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the prices of said commodities and services before and after the hike in petroleum prices; and

(c) the steps taken to offset the effects of hike in petroleum prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) It is difficult to precisely segregate the impact of hike in Petrol and Diesel prices from those of other factors on the prices of consumer items, services and other essential commodities as impact of some of the factors, including hike in prices of Diesel and Petrol could be felt only with a time-lag. The data show that there is no immediate impact of the hike in Petroleum prices (effected on 15-2-2008) on prices of essential commodities as may be seen from the statement enclosed.

(c) In view of the above, does not arise.

Statement

Impact of hike in petroleum prices (as on 15.2.08) on essential commodities at Delhi

(Rs per kg)

	Before hike		Price hike w.e.f. 15.2.2008	After hike	
	7.2.2008	14.2.2008		18.2.2008	22.2.2008
1	2	3	4	5	6
Rice	17.00	17.50	17.50	17.50	18.00
Wheat	13.00	13.00	13.00	13.00	13.00

1	2	3	4	5	6
Atta	14.00	14.00	14.00	14.00	14.00
Gram Dal	35.00	34.00	34.00	34.00	34.00
Tur Dal	42.00	41.00	41.00	41.00	41.00
Moong Dal Chhilka	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	37.00
Urad Dal Chhilka	37.00	37.00	37.00	38.00	37.00
Masur Dal Chhilka	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00
Sugar	17.00	17.00	17.00	17.00	17.00
Groundnut Oil	121.00	121.00	121.00	121.00	121.00
Mustard Oil	69.00	70.00	70.00	69.00	70.00
Vanaspati	68.00	68.00	68.00	68.00	68.00
Tea (Loose)	107.00	108.00	108.00	107.00	107.00
Milk	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
Potato	8.50	7.00	7.00	8.00	8.00
Onion	9.00	8.00	8.00	9.00	8.00
Salt (Pack)	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00

Source: Delhi State Civil Supplies Department.

[Translation]

Stock of Foodgrains

2523. SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:
SHRI V. K. THUMMAR:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any inquiry is conducted whenever any case regarding poor maintenance of stock of foodgrains in godowns comes to notice;

(b) if so, the number of such inquiries conducted during the last three years;

(c) the number of such cases which escaped notice and the foodgrains rotted; and

(d) the number of persons who were held accountable and action was taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 5 such inquiries were conducted during last 3 years.

(c) There are no such cases.

(d) Action has been initiated against 14 delinquent officials/officers of FCI.

[English]

Sharing of Infrastructure

2524. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM:
Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of mobile towers set up by the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL)/Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in the country especially in the State of Gujarat, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government has any proposal for sharing of passive infrastructure, including sharing of towers for mobile services in the country; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, BSNL has set up 30,595 mobile towers including 1,873 towers in the State of Gujarat. Details are given in the statement-I enclosed. MTNL has set up mobile towers 897 in Delhi and 746 in Mumbai as on date.

(b) and (c) BSNL Gujarat circle has shared 7 towers on reciprocal basis with Airtel and in Maharashtra 14 towers have been shared with Airtel, Vodaphone & Idea on reciprocal basis. Details are given in the statement-II enclosed.

BSNL has entered into an agreement for sharing of passive infrastructure with six Infrastructure providers viz; M/s GTL, M/s Essar, M/s Quipo, M/s XCEL, M/s TVS and M/s ASTER, for mobile services in the various parts of the country. So far no tower has been taken on sharing.

Besides this, BSNL has entered into agreement with Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), DOT for provisioning of 6175 mobile towers, which shall be shared with other mobile service providers to provide mobile/wireless services in the various parts of the country as per USO guidelines.

In Delhi, MTNL has shared 21 BTS sites of different private operators till date and similarly infrastructure at 6 Base Transceiver Station (BTS) sites of MTNL Delhi has been shared by different private operators.

In Mumbai, MTNL is pursuing the sharing of passive infrastructure for BTS sites with other mobile operators and independent infrastructure providers. MTNL has already shared 1 site erected by M/s GTL Infra Ltd. At Afzal Compound, Mumbai MTNL has already entered into agreement for sharing sites with M/s Reliance Infrastructure Ltd. MTNL is also in talks with other operators for sharing of passive infrastructure of BTS sites.

Statement-I

Circle-wise List of BSNL's Mobile Tower

Sl. No.	Circle	No. of mobile towers set up by BSNL
1	2	3
1	Andaman and Nicobar	70
2	Andhra Pradesh	1859
3	Assam	741
4	Bihar	1039
5	Chhattisgarh	605

1	2	3
6	Gujarat	1873
7	Haryana	1014
8	Himachal Pradesh	481
9	Jammu and Kashmir	524
10	Jharkhand	554
11	Karnataka	1683
12	Kerala	2017
13	Madhya Pradesh	1168
14	Maharashtra	2857
15	North East-I	281
16	North East-II	212
17	Orissa	1034
18	Punjab	1459
19	Rajasthan	2030
20	Tamil Nadu	2012
21	Uttaranchal	440
22	Uttar Pradesh (East)	2751
23	Uttar Pradesh (West)	1218
24	West Bengal	1244
25	Kolkata	754
26	Chennai	675
	Total BSNL	30595
27	Delhi	897
28	Mumbai	746
	Total MTNL	1643

Statement-II

Details of Towers Shared with Private Operators Maharashtra and Gujarat Circles

S. No.	Name of the shared site	Name of the Private Operator
1	2	3
1	Arambol	Airtel
2	Majorda	Airtel
3	Goa Vellah	Airtel
4	Vasco Airport	Airtel
5	Orlim (Varca)	Airtel
6	Joshii Bldg (Vasco)	Idea

1	2	3
7	Ponda - Madgao - H/W (Betim)	Idea
8	Fatorda	Idea
9	Curtorim	Idea
10	Maruti Mandir	Hutch Vodafone

1	2	3
11	Bhuthnath Temple	Hutch Vodafone
12	Kranti Nagar Porvorim	Hutch Vodafone
13	Calangute Plant Leaf	Hutch Vodafone
14	Chavdi (Cancona)	Hutch Vodafone

Gujarat Telecom Circle

S.No.	SSA	SDCA	Town or City	Name of BTS	Urban / Rural	Tower Type
1	AHM	Ahmedabad	City	Krutika Vidyalaya Thakkarbapa Nagar	Urban	AIRTEL
2	AHM	Ahmedabad	City	Nav Chetan School	Urban	AIRTEL
3	AHM	Ahmedabad	City	Prasad Avenue	Urban	AIRTEL
4	AHM	Ahmedabad	City	Sayona Plaza	Urban	AIRTEL
5	AHM	Ahmedabad	City	Shivaj Village Ahmedabad	Rural	AIRTEL
6	BHUJ	Bhuj	City	Chandramoli Apartment	Urban	AIRTEL
7	BHUJ	Bhuj	Town	Mirzapur	Rural	AIRTEL

Utilisation of Water

2525. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether huge quantity of water is lost due to lack of proper technology for making this water fit for use; and

(b) if so, the steps taken for development of appropriate technologies to use this unutilized water?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The average annual water availability in the country is assessed as 1869 billion cubic metre (BCM) but the utilizable water is estimated to be about 1123 BCM. Full utilization of all the available water is not possible primarily due to topographic, hydrological and other constraints. With a view to augment the utilizable water resources, various measures such as utilization of surplus flood water by transfer to water short area through inter-linking of rivers, rainwater harvesting and ground water recharge have been envisaged.

[Translation]

World Food Programme

2526. SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ongoing World Food Programme conducted in some States of the country with assistance of United Nations is likely to be discontinued in the coming financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor indicating the States likely to be affected by discontinuation of the said programme;

(c) whether the Government has formulated any programme to ensure that the benefits of the said scheme continue to reach the affected people; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) is implemented as a five year programme. The current one comes to an end in March 2008. Then a new quinquennial UNWFP, 2008-2012 would start w.e.f. 1.4.2008, excluding two components of the present one, namely Food -for-Work Forestry and Food-for-Education activities.

(b) On account of agreed change in strategy from Food Delivery to Technical Assistance, duplication with Government Programmes (Mid-Day Meal, NREG etc.), decreasing level of external resources and recommendation by a Mid-Term Evaluation Mission (which led to disconti-

uation of the two components of UNWFP Programmes), seven States, namely, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh and five States, namely, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand under Food-for-Work Forestry and Food-for-Education programmes, respectively, would be affected.

(c) and (d) The next UNWFP Country Programme, 2008-12 has been jointly envisaged by Government and UNWFP comprising three components viz. (i) Capacity Development for Food Security, (ii) Support to ICDS and (iii) and Support to Livelihood Activity with emphasis on the following:-

- (i) Optimizing Technical Assistance to ensure efficient functioning of national food based welfare schemes like fortification of ICDS food and locally cooked Mid-Day food, Village Grain Bank Management and Training, Atta fortification through village mills and strengthening of PDS
- (ii) Continuation of limited food delivery in support of ICDS in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan.
- (iii) Continuation of activities generating funds in the seven States affected by closure of Food-for-Work Forestry activity till March 2010.
- (iv) Continuation of assistance to tribal communities in Orissa, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh in partnership with International Fund for Agriculture Development.
- (v) Targeting National Food based welfare scheme in States with above-average malnutrition rates for providing technical assistance, subject to fund availability.

[English]

Joint Forum of Navy with other Countries

2527. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI:

SHRI DEVIDAS PINGLE:

SHRI SHISHUPAL N. PATLE:

SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE:

SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE:

SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDALIKRAO GAWALI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any plan to launch a joint forum of Navy with other countries to make the coastal areas of the country safe; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the number of countries with which the said Maritime Cooperation treaty is being signed?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):
(a) and (b) With a view to achieving a state of security, safety and stability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) has been launched by the Indian Navy with navies (and maritime security organizations in respect of countries who do not have any formal Navy) of the IOR. Indian Navy organized an inaugural seminar, 'IONS Seminar, 2008', in New Delhi in February 2008, which was attended by 26 Heads/Chiefs of Navy/their representatives from majority of IOR littoral countries, including India.

Memorandum of Understanding between India and Canada

2528. SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India and Canada have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in the agriculture sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, both India and Canada are in discussion for negotiating an MoU for cooperation in the field of agriculture and allied sectors which includes areas such as – Knowledge exchange on emerging technologies; Agriculture marketing and Animal Development.

Akash Missile System

2529. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

SHRI K.S. RAO:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a nine-day Akash missile campaign was held in December, 2007;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) whether there are any apprehensions/doubts in the minds of the users like the Army and the Air Force on the readiness and effectiveness of the Akash missile system;

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

(e) the extent to which this campaign has been able to clear such apprehensions/doubts?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Air Force user flight trials were conducted during 11-20 December 2007 at Interim Test Range (ITR), Chandipur and all trial objectives were met completely. Air

Force is processing the case for procurement of Akash Missile System from the designated Production Agency.

(c) and (d) Air Force is processing the case for procurement of Akash Missile Systems based on their user trials. Army has informed that they will take a final view on inducting the Akash Weapon System after studying the report of Air Force User trials.

(e) The campaign has conclusively established the readiness and effectiveness of Akash Weapon System in area defence role against flying targets under various flying condition including engaging target in "ripple" mode.

[Translation]

Bio-Fertilizers

2530. SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the efforts being made to increase the use of bio-fertilizers;

(b) whether the Government proposes to provide subsidy on bio-fertilizers;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be implemented; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Under the National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF) efforts are being made to promote the use of organic inputs including bio-fertilizers through training courses, field demonstrations, farmers fairs, exhibitions, seminars and publicity through print and electronic media.

(b) to (d) Under NPOF, credit linked and back ended subsidy is being provided for setting up of bio-fertilizer production units @ 25% of the project cost, up to a maximum of Rs. 20.00 lakh per unit through National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC). Financial assistance is also being provided directly to the State Governments, State Government agencies and State Agricultural Universities for setting up bio-fertilizer production units.

[English]

North East Valley Authority

2531. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Committee of experts to examine the feasibility of setting up a North-East Valley Authority has since submitted its report;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the recommendations of the said Committee and the action taken by the Government thereon;

(c) whether the Government has taken any steps to support water harvesting to farmers of North Eastern States particularly those belonging to SC/ST community; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The proposal for constitution of North East Water Resources Authority (NEWRA) was prepared by the Ministry of Water Resources during 2005 and the same was circulated to the concerned Ministries and State Governments. The State Government of Arunachal Pradesh (AP) had some reservations on the jurisdiction, structure etc. of the proposed authority. Accordingly, a Working Group consisting members from Prime Minister's Office, Planning Commission, Ministry of Power and Ministry of Water Resources was constituted in Feb. 2006 to prepare a set of options taking into consideration the objections of the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh to NEWRA and provide an adequate compensatory mechanism to the state. The report of Working Group giving its recommendations for modification in structure, functions and incentives considering reservations of the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh was submitted in July, 2006. The report was discussed in an inter-ministerial meeting on 18.8.2006 convened by the Principal Secretary to the Hon'ble Prime Minister. Subsequently, a High Level Group (HLG) chaired by the Hon'ble Minister of Water Resources and consisting of Hon'ble Chief Ministers of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission and the Hon'ble Member (Water Resources and Energy), Planning Commission was constituted in December 2006 to hold discussions and develop a consensus on utilizing the hydro power potential of Arunachal Pradesh and integrated development of the region through the setting up of NEWRA. A meeting of HLG has been held. It has been decided to continue the discussions on the issue.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir. In accordance with the Budget Speech 2004-05 of Hon'ble Finance Minister, a "Water Harvesting Scheme for SC/ST farmers" was approved for Rs. 49 crores to provide 24,500 water harvesting structures at an average cost of Rs. 20,000/- in the country which inter-alia included North Eastern States. The main objective of the scheme was to provide irrigation facilities to SC/ST farmers in their farmlands. The details about year wise physical and financial progress of the scheme related to the eight North Eastern States are given in the statement enclosed.

Statement

Year wise physical and financial progress in respect of the Water Harvesting Schemes for SC/ST farmers of the North Eastern States. (As on 30.09.2007)

Sl. No.	Name of the State	Year 2005-06		Year 2006-07		Year 2007-08 (units sanctioned by NABARD before 31.3.2007)		Total	
		Physical (No. of Units)	Financial (Amt. of subsidy released by NABARD (Rs. Lakh))	Physical (No. of Units)	Financial (Amt. of subsidy released by NABARD (Rs. Lakh))	Physical (No. of Units)	Financial (Amt. of subsidy released by NABARD (Rs. Lakh))	Physical (No. of Units)	Financial (Amt. of subsidy released by NABARD (Rs. Lakh))
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	49	6.8000	0	0	0	0	49	6.8000
2.	Assam	0	0	1094	159.53857	1331	200.75613	2425	360.29470
3.	Manipur	0	0	69	16.04	50	11.50	119	27.54
4.	Meghalaya	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5.	Mizoram	11	1.65	0	0	150	22.5	161	24.15
6.	Nagaland	31	4.65	9	1.35	391	58.65	431	64.65
7.	Sikkim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8.	Tripura	515	51.55	180	18.61	1	0.15	696	70.31

Note:-

- All the above figures are net figures i.e. after accounting for refunds. Refunds have been accounted for claim no. wise, so that the year wise physical figures are appropriate.
- No of SC/ST farmers benefited = No. of units financed.

Recruitment of VSNL Employees

2532. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) has recruited new employees recently with no representation to SC/ST employees who are on the verge of retrenchment;

(b) if so, whether the VSNL had given an assurance to the Union Government at the time of disinvestment to protect the SC/ST employees on roll at that time;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether VSNL has now reneged on its assurance to the Government on this issue; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. The employment of new employees is done as per the needs of the business and the same is purely on merits and qualifications after a thorough and objective selection process.

(b) and (c) There is no undertaking given by VSNL to the Government at the time of disinvestment to protect SC/ST employees on roll at that time. However, at the time of disinvestment, an assurance was given in writing by Panatone the Strategic Partner, that no employee in VSNL would be retrenched for a period of 2 years instead of 1 year as provided in the Shareholders Agreement, and that the present salary, wages and perquisites would not be altered and no adverse change would be made in the retirement benefits which the employees on the rolls of VSNL were eligible. These assurances have been fulfilled and complied with.

(d) and (e) Do not arise in view of (b) & (c) above.

12.01 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Bureau of Indian Standards, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Bureau of Indian Standards, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.
- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8302/08]

- (3) A copy each of the following Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions):-

- (i) Ministry of Agriculture for the year 2008-2009.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8303/08]

- (ii) Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution for the year 2008-2009.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8304/08]

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Urban Development for the year 2008-2009.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8305/08]

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demand for Grants (Hindi and English Versions) of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, for the year 2008-2009.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8306/08]

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI

PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, on behalf of Shri P.R. Kyndiah, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for the year 2008-2009.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8307/08]

- (2) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for the year 2008-2009.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8308/08]

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Water Resources for the year 2008-2009.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8309/08]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): Sir, on behalf of Shrimati Meira Kumar, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2008-2009.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8310/08]

- (2) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2008-2009.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8310A/08]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) A copy of the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Central (Amendment) Rules, 2007 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R.655 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 10th October, 2007, under sub-section (3) of section 15 of the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, together with a Corrigendum thereto published in Notification No. G.S.R.708 (E) dated the 13th November, 2007.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8311/08]

- (2) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (3) of section 37 of the Apprenticeship Act, 1961:-

- (i) **The Apprenticeship (Amendment) Rules, 2008** published in Notification No. G.S. R.17(E) in Gazette of India dated 8th January, 2008.
- (ii) **The Apprenticeship (Ninth Amendment) Rules, 2007** published in Notification No. G.S.R.264(E) in Gazette of India dated 1st December, 2007.
- (iii) **The Apprenticeship (Seventh Amendment) Rules, 2007** (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R.696(E) in Gazette of India dated the 7th November, 2007.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8312/08]

- (3) **A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Labour and Employment for the year 2008-2009.**

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8313/08]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) **A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, for the year 2008-2009.**

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8314/08]

- (2) **A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, for the year 2008-2009.**

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8315/08]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) **A copy each of the following Detailed Demand for Grants (Hindi and English versions):-**

- (i) **Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology for the year 2008-2009.**

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8316/08]

- (ii) **Department of Posts, for the year 2008-2009.**

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8317/08]

- (2) **A copy each of the following Outcome Budgets (Hindi and English versions):-**

- (i) **Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, for the year 2008-2009.**

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8318/08]

- (ii) **Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, for the year 2008-2009.**

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8319/08]

- (iii) **Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, for the year 2008-2009.**

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8320/08]

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) **A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:-**

- (i) **Review by the Government of the working of the Kerala Agro Industries Corporation Limited, Thiruvananthapuram, for the year 2002-2003.**

- (ii) **Annual Report of the Kerala Agro Industries Corporation Limited, Thiruvananthapuram, for the year 2002-03, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.**

- (2) **Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.**

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8321/08]

- (3) (i) **A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Horticulture Board, Gurgaon, for the year 2005-06, alongwith Audited Accounts.**

- (ii) **A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Horticulture Board, Gurgaon, for the year 2005-06.**

- (4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8322/08]

- (5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Council for Cooperative Training, New Delhi, for the year 2006-07.

- (ii) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the National Council for Cooperative Training, New Delhi, for the year 2006-07, together with Audit Report thereon.

- (iii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of National Council for Cooperative Training, New Delhi, for the year 2006-07.

- (6) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (5) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8323/08]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): Sir on behalf of Shri Taslimuddin, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-07, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

- (2) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:-

- (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Karnataka Meat and Poultry Marketing Corporation Limited, Bangalore, for the year 2006-2007.

- (ii) Annual Report of the Karnataka Meat and Poultry Marketing Corporation Limited,

Bangalore, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8324/08]

- (3) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (2) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8325/08]

- (4) A copy of the Removal of (Licensing Requirements, Stock Limits and Movement Restrictions) on Specified Foodstuffs (Amendment) Order, 2008 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. S.O. 400(E) in Gazette of India dated the 28th February, 2008 under sub-section (6) of section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8326/08]

- (5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Federation of Fishermen's Cooperative Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Federation of Fishermen's Cooperative Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8327/08]

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) A copy of the Detailed Demand for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Textiles for the year 2008-2009.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8328/08]

- (2) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:-

- (i) Review by the Government of the working of the National Textile Corporation Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

- (ii) Annual Report of the National Textile Corporation Limited, New Delhi, for

the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

- (3) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (2) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8329/08]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) A copy of the Sugar Development Fund (4th Amendment) Rules, 2007 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 749 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 5th December, 2007 under sub-section (3) of section 9 of the Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8330/08]

- (2) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (3) of section 6 of the Sugar Cess Act, 1982:-

- (i) S.O. 1(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 1st January, 2008 notifying levy of Excise duty, with immediate effect, on all sugar produced by any sugar factory in India at a rate of fifteen rupees per quintal of sugar.
- (ii) S.O. 392(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 25th February, 2008 notifying levy of Excise duty with effect from 1st March, 2008, on all sugar produced by any sugar factory in India at a rate of twenty four rupees per quintal of sugar.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8331/08]

- (3) A copy of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Rules, 2007 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 717(E) in Gazette of India dated 15th November, 2007, under sub-section (3) of section 124 of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.
- (4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8332/08]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): Sir, on behalf of Shri Jay Prakash Narayan Yadav, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee, for the year 2006-2007.

- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8333/08]

12.05 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Status of Implementation of Recommendations contained in 49th Report of Standing Committee on Information Technology on functioning of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), pertaining to the Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): I am making this statement, in pursuance of Direction 73A by the hon. Speaker, Lok Sabha, on the status of implementation of recommendations contained in the 49th Report of the Department related Standing Committee on Information Technology (2006-07) (14th Lok Sabha), in respect of Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications & Information Technology.

- i. The Standing Committee on Information Technology examined the Functioning of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), an autonomous scientific society of the Department, and report was presented in the Lok Sabha on 21st August 2007.
- ii. Department of Information Technology has noted all the 23 recommendations and has taken requisite steps towards their implementation as per enclosed Action Taken Report (Annexure).

[Placed in Library, See No. L.T. 8334/08]

[Translation]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have to raise an important matter. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You will get time to speak after the discussion on Calling Attention motion is over because this is the practice. You will get an opportunity to speak after ten minutes. You are well versed with rules; you will be heard after the discussion on Calling attention is over. Calling Attention is very important, therefore, let it be completed first. It will take only ten minutes and after that all of you would get time to speak.

...*(Interruptions)*

AN HON'BLE MEMBER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have given notice. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I, myself, have given a notice but now you please sit down. You may speak after ten minutes; let the Calling Attention be over first.

YOGI ADITYA NATH (Gorakhpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Tibet issue should be taken first, it is a very important issue. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Swami ji, I understand the importance of this issue. It would be taken up.

YOGI ADITYA NATH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a very important matter, time should be given to discuss this matter. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: The matter is important one and you too are very important for us. Swami ji, kindly accept my request and have patience for ten minutes.

12.07 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Need to Overhaul the Education System in the country with a view to reducing the burden of the children and giving them a healthy environment*

[English]

SHRI SANDEEP DIKSHIT (East Delhi): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Human Resource Development to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The need to overhaul the education system in the country with a view to reducing the burden of the children and giving them a healthy environment."

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, you may please lay it on the Table.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M.A.A. FATMI): Sir, I am laying my statement.

*The National Policy on Education 1986 (as modified in 1992) recognizes the need to develop a system of education to express and promote the country's unique socio cultural identity and to meet the challenges of the times. Education has been recognized as fundamental to all round development, contributing to national cohesion, scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit. The National System of Education envisages a common educational structure (10+2+3) and is based on a national curricular framework.

A new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) has been prepared in 2005. The guiding principles of NCF-2005 are:

- Connecting knowledge to life outside the school,
- Ensuring that learning is shifted away from rote methods,
- Enriching the curriculum to provide for overall development of children rather than remain textbook centric,
- Making examinations more flexible and integrated into classroom life and,
- Nurturing an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic policy of the country.

Based on NCF-2005, NCERT has prepared school curriculum, syllabi and new textbooks which are in the right direction in reducing curricular burden while making the learning child friendly. NCF-2005 makes use of a constructivist approach of learning. Physical and Health education, and Art and Music have been made integral part of the curriculum.

NCF-2005 also suggests continuous pupil assessment and feedback.

There are recommendations towards improvement of learning environment in the school with a focus on primacy of the children and inculcation of values of equality, diversity, dignity and right of children.

* Laid on the Table and also placed in Library See No. L.T. 8335/08]

NCF-2005 also suggests a paradigm shift from teacher centered to learner centered pedagogy with the teacher assuming a greater role as facilitator rather than mere transmitter of information.

NCF-2005 also recommends provision of psychological counseling and career guidance as critical tools.

NCF-2005 has been implemented in all Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) affiliated schools in the country. CBSE has already implemented several reforms related to curriculum and examinations, some of which are as follows:

- (i) The examination system has been reconstructed to test more of conceptual knowledge and understanding rather than rote memory,
- (ii) Continuous and comprehensive evaluation has already been introduced with marks assigned for internal assessment,
- (iii) No home work for children of classes I - V.
- (iv) Additional 15 minutes time in class X and XII examinations to enable students to read question papers thoroughly.
- (v) Examination help-line and making available sample question papers.
- (vi) Designing question papers so that all the questions can be answered in 2½ hours even though the total period of the examination is 3 hours.
- (vii) Shift from content based testing to problem solving and competency based testing.
- (viii) Higher weightage to practicals.
- (ix) Introduction of Mathematics labs in schools to improve conceptual understanding.
- (x) Allowing students to appear in compartmental examination immediately after the declaration of the result of the main examination.

All the States and State Examination Boards are also expected to take similar action on the basis of recommendations of NCF-2005 and many of them have already done so.

It needs to be recognized that social, parental and peer pressure are also responsible for increase of stress among the school children, particularly as they have to compete for the few places available in premium academic institutions. Also, during the process of growing up in the adolescent stage, the change in body and mind adds to

stress. There is need for psychological counseling of students who are under extreme stress. At the same time teachers in schools are also being trained under the Adolescence Education Programme to act as part time counselors.

This Ministry has already issued an advisory to all State Governments to ban corporal punishment in schools. Also, physical education, sports and yoga are compulsory in all CBSE affiliated schools and in many State schools from class I to class X.

It is expected that adoption of NCF-2005 in letter and spirit would reduce the burden on the children and provide them a healthy environment. All the stakeholders in the process including parents, teachers, academicians, teacher trainers and society at large, have a role to play in providing such a healthy environment to the children in schools.

[Translation]

SHRI SANDEEP DIKSHIT : Mr. Chairman, Sir, first of all, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on this matter of urgent public importance. I have thoroughly gone through the statement issued by the Government. In this regard, I would like to say that I am very upset to read out this statement. ...*(Interruptions)* I would like to seek protection of the House for five minutes, I am aware that the House is eager to discuss the Tibet issue, but I would like to seek protection just for five-seven minutes only.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, some points have been mentioned in National Curriculum Framework because we all are associated with education, our children, grandchildren or one or the other member of our family is either engaged in getting education at present or might have remained engaged in getting education in the past. Please go through these sentences very carefully, in the National Curriculum Framework, it has been mentioned that the Government have been making efforts through C.B.S.E and N.C.E.R.T towards

[English]

connecting knowledge to life outside the schools.

[Translation]

It means that they want to provide education focusing on all aspects of life. How far it is true? At least I do not see any truth and reality in the objectives of this Government as far as this sentence is concerned. It has been mentioned

[English]

ensuring that learning is shifted away from rote methods.

[Translation]

It means we should remove the practice of cramming from our education system. Today, there is hardly any child who could appear in the exam without cramming. If he tries to apply his own mind in examination, he is not awarded better marks.

In the 10th and 12th standard examination of CBSE the teachers are clearly directed to award full marks in Mathematics or Science only to those students who attempt their questions in a specified manner.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, If answer are not written in the specified manner, the students are not awarded good marks. It means the student would get good marks if they write the answers in line with what they have crammed. In the present examination system, the real talent of the children is not tested. The third point they have mentioned is that

[English]

"Enriching the curriculum to provide for overall development of children rather than remain textbook centric. ..."

[Translation]

In one of the analysis of NCERT, it has been mentioned that other things except reading, that we want to teach the students, is not important for them as in this way he is not being given scholastic input. Whatever you want to teach the child, be it art or game or sports, he will learn only if he has interest in that field. We are talking about all round development leaving the reading aside. But it has got no place in the present education system. In the national curriculum framework, it has also been mentioned:

[English]

"Nurturing an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic policy of the country...."

[Translation]

Apart from it, whatever answers have been mentioned in the curriculum, it has been provided therein:

[English]

"The examination system has been reconstructed to test more of conceptual knowledge and understanding rather than rote memory...."

[Translation]

It has been mentioned therein

[English]

"No homework for classes I to V."

[Translation]

My own daughter has passed class-V and is studying in class-VI now and throughout the year she has done a lot of homework. Is there any Member of Parliament whose children are studying in class-III or IV or V or VI or VIII? Can he or she tell me that their children do not do homework and spend two to four hours in doing homework or in receiving tuition? Today, the Government have given a statement here that:

[English]

No homework for classes I to V."

[Translation]

Perhaps no one knows whether homework is given or not. I think the officers have not given correct information to the ministers in this regard. Many things are said in this regard. For example, the students were given 15 minutes more time to solve the paper in the examination or we have given higher weightage to practical. Today, I would like to draw your kind attention towards a very alarming situation as well as the consequences of all these things. When I came across this subject, I read out some papers in this regard. In one of the papers, it was stated; perhaps you would also like to read out that thing. There is a famous psychologist in Delhi and there is an institution named as Vimhans in Delhi as well as in Bangalore. I was surprised to read out the report. There is a topic in the report

[English]

"Intake of anti-depression drugs by children."

[Translation]

I would like to read out the statement of Dr. K.K. Agrawal of that institute:

[English]

"We have seen stressed children indulging in smoking, tobacco, drinking tea, coffee and taking drugs to keep themselves awake during the exams. But what is alarming these days is, apart from these routine indulgence some students have now started eating lizards and its tail to beat their exam stress. ..."

[Translation]

The condition of the children is alarming these days. It was reported that the children of Kalahandi were eating mango seeds. I remember that the entire country was horrified when it heard the news. Now, the children eat lizards to remove stress. The report further states that the children eat iodex pasted sandwiches. They eat toothpastes.

and take anti-fit drugs. We have transformed our world to such an extent. Under stress and fear of studies, the children indulge in such acts which we can't even imagine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Dikshit, please be quick and ask your question.

SHRI SANDEEP DIKSHIT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to mention another issue quickly; I want your protection. I will take two to four minutes. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please sit down. He does not need your help.

SHRI SANDEEP DIKSHIT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, Dr. Bruta is a psychiatrist based in Delhi. I would like to express his opinion as he works on child psychology. He said that out of those children who sought his advice, there were 6 children who committed suicide and 300 attempted it. What would have happened to the country if those 300 children had died? Within a short span of 15 days, 300 children of Delhi wanted to commit suicide. Is it the society which we had imagined? Is this our self created education system? I am telling about the above mentioned things which were told by a doctor.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Dikshit, you ask your question.

SHRI SANDEEP DIKSHIT: In Delhi alone there are 300 innocent children who want to commit suicide due to pressure of examination.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Dikshit, please ask whatever you want from the Government.

SHRI SANDEEP DIKSHIT: Sir, I want to tell one more thing which will make the entire situation clear. The British Government and some of the Indian institutions conducted a joint survey. I read out here the statement Mr. Pater Foster. Kindly listen to this sentence.

[English]

"Adolescent girls are upto 70 times more likely to kill themselves than in Britain...."

[Translation]

that research shows that suicide rate is 70 times more in India in comparison to Britain.

[English]

A study in Vellore, South India, published in The Lancet last year, showed that suicides among young women (15 to 18) are running at 148 per 100,000 population. This is compared to 2.1 per 100,000 in Britain and 14.5 per 100,000 worldwide.

[Translation]

It is such a grim situation. I just want to say that our objectives are good. "They talk about value education, about enhancing feelings of nationalism and about a sensitive approach towards all in an integrated society. But, the examination system have taken such a demonic form that as I said earlier the children appear in their examination in a fearful mood. Their parents and teachers remain in constant worry. Most of the parents remain worried 6 months from January to May, June till the declaration of the result. If the child does not reach home 2 hours after school time, many parents become so worried that they start thinking about the worst scenario regarding their children.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please ask your question.

SHRI SANDEEP DIKSHIT: Sir, I want to know whether the Government understands this matter. It appears from the answer given that the Govt. is not aware of the matter. I say that this should be taken in right perspective. All the experts of the country should be called in to review the examination system. I had heard about discontinuation of the exams of class 10. I request that entire system of examination should be reviewed.

Sir, we are heading towards such an India where we want everyone to be connected to the mainstream and where the society should be free of all types of fears. But our children are turning into a tool for achieving that goal. I again request the Government to take this matter very seriously and the entire education system, especially the examination system should be reviewed thoroughly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Minister, I think that he has expressed the feelings of the entire House.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have not given any notice. The notice is given by Mrs. Priya Dutt, kindly listen to her.

[English]

SHRIMATI PRIYA DUTT (Mumbai North-East): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me this opportunity to speak on this very, very grave situation, which is being faced by our nation today, of our children who have been committing suicides due to exam stress.

Sir, in the past two weeks itself, 12 children have committed suicides in Delhi alone; 15 children have committed suicides in the past three months in the State of Gujarat; and today, a leading newspaper has given statistics showing that 6,000 students have committed suicides in the year 2006. This trend, a very dangerous trend, is increasing

every year. And, it is very clear that it is due to the exams, the stress of the exams and the burden of the system today, which is causing our children to take such extreme measures.

We wonder what drives the persons so young and so innocent, to take this extreme step. It is the constant expectation, not living up to the expectation of their parents, their teachers, their peers – and most of all the system, which we all are responsible for, which is causing them to take such extreme steps. We all are sitting here. Each life that is lost, we must sit and take responsibility for it.

Sir, 'children are our country's future'. This phrase we use over and over again in our speeches, in our lectures, and in articles. But I am very sorry to say that we have done very little for these torchbearers of the future. We are crushing their confidence; we are crushing their hope; and we are crushing their will.

Therefore, I would like to ask the hon. Minister: Does or should one exam determine the lives of these children? Thirteen years of grueling, intense school education means nothing that one exam has to determine if he can or she can pursue their dreams. Just there and then, we are killing that hope; we are killing our children by giving them that kind of a choice. We have to give them the freedom; we have to give them the freedom of creativity.

But the answers that have been given to us, like my colleague mentioned, are not satisfying because everything is very well on paper but implementation is nil. I would request each and every hon. Member here to take cognizance of this very, very important matter and cutting across party lines, let us take a conscience decision to make a difference to our children's life. *...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: You may give notice. Kindly let the debate on this important subject be completed first.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record except the statement of Hon'ble Minister.

*...(Interruptions)**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. Your Minister is standing, please listen to his reply.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK (Ahmedabad): Everyone in the House wants that the restrictions being imposed on our children should be lifted. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You give notice under Rule 193. Please sit down; let the replies be completed. Many important questions are still remaining.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not today, still there are so many important questions. Please give the notice.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record except the statement of the Hon. Minister.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: First of all, I thank Shri Sandeep Dikshit and Mrs. Priya Dutt as they have raised a very important subject in the House through Calling Attention and there is no doubt that our children do not get that type of environment in the schools which we as well as their guardians expect. That's why the whole House is concerned about this matter and I associate myself with the feelings of everyone present here.

But, so far as the Government is concerned, it has made constant efforts and keeping in view all these things, including the views just expressed by Salim Bhai, a new national curriculum framework was presented in 2005. Many steps have been taken under that. *...(Interruptions)* now, please be patient enough to listen to me for a while.

Many steps have been taken at various stages like Primary Level, Upper Primary Level, Secondary Level and at Higher Secondary Level also. The efforts have been made with the aim of making education enjoyable for children inside the school, in the Examination hall and also to make them less stressed. NCERT has also prepared some good books for that specific purpose. We have also made efforts with the specific aim that a child carries minimum number of books to his school. *...(Interruptions)* Kindly listen to me. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Only the statement of the hon. Minister will be recorded.

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: Please listen to me for just five minutes. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon, Minister please address the Chair.

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: Yes Sir, I said that N.C.F. has made efforts to make education enjoyable and meaningful. The curriculum prepared by us for that purpose is friendly and comprehensive also. Now, we have added sports, dance and music also to it so that children come to school in light mood, and get education as well as. *...(Interruptions)* You please listen to me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please listen to the hon. Minister.

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: The question papers and system should be formulated in such a way that it could replace the older Indian system of cramming that was prevalent in our times and in your times also. *...(Interruptions)* Please sit down and listen to me and then ask questions if you want so. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: You please sit down for two minutes. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down.

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: NCERT has prepared good books keeping in view NCF so that children could read these books with interest. Now the problem is that *...(Interruptions)* Please listen to me. Under this system of schools some of the schools are under our control and these are controlled by CBSE but a large number of schools are run by the State Governments also. *...(Interruptions)* We are making efforts in the direction that the States accept NCERT books and adopt NCF. The States should comply with our recommendations in the way we want them to. For this we have taken many steps, for example, at Primary level, children in class I and II do not need to bring many books from their homes to school. Further children of these classes are not given homework. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kindly listen to the hon. Minister.

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: Only three books are prescribed for class-I & II. Similarly, only four books have been proposed for class III and IV. Under that provision there is no homework for class I and II. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please listen to his statement. Let him conclude.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister, kindly be brief.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing is going on record. He is not yielding nothing else will be recorded except the statement of the hon. Minister.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record. You too are standing and speaking. Please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: You should not think that only you are concerned. All are concerned.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister, please continue.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: Sir, how can I speak, if they continue to disturb during the speech again and again?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister, kindly be brief now.

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: I want to tell in brief about the steps we have taken in various States and the difficulties which we are encountering. It is necessary to understand these things. We can't take further steps until we understand the whole matter. It is not only a central subject but also a State subject and if today from somewhere. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are wasting time, listen to him.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister, please conclude now.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: Should I conclude.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Be brief.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI M.A.A. FATMI: I just want to say that we are taking many steps at Primary, Upper Primary, Secondly and Higher secondary level so that the examination system becomes less complex and the questions become easier. Many steps have been taken in this regard for example, a High School student studying under CBSE system will be given 15 minutes extra time to read the question paper in the Examination Hall. *...(Interruptions)* It has already been implemented. Please note this information. *...(Interruptions)* Half an hour extra time is given to students for assessing the question paper solved by them so that they can recheck their answers. This is the new examination system.

First of all, book burden was reduced and through N.C.E.R.T. books, such system was introduced in C.B.S.E. schools that does not require learning by rote. *...(Interruptions)* and students do not feel examination pressure. Apart from defective examination system, there are so many factors responsible for it. Today, parents or guardians and school environment put pressure on the students for better performance namely, for securing 95 per cent or 90 per cent marks? Competition among parents and stress of schools exert pressure on students. *...(Interruptions)* Moreover, the teachers and the principal of the school expect for better performance from their students, so that the school could compete with other schools. It also puts pressure on the students. It is not correct to say that the system is defective but there are so many factors responsible for it and we have to ponder over all of them.

While preparing next programme of C.B.S.E. and N.C.E.R.T., we would certainly keep in mind the concerns and the issues raised by hon'ble Members of Parliament after due deliberation. We want that school going children should be stress free, they should have good books and examination system should also be good ...*(Interruptions)* Further, I request to make arrangement also for the counseling of guardians and parents. Today, there is a shortage of such teachers who can give right direction to the students. We should pay attention towards all these things. ...*(Interruptions)*

I once again thank my both colleagues – Shri Sandeep Dixit and Shrimati Priya Dutt – who raised this sensitive issue here. They have brought before this country, through this House, a very important issue. It is our responsibility to consider the concerns of the entire House comprehensively and carry out required reforms be it through CBSE or NCERT or have to streamline examination system and improve school environment, government would certainly take all necessary steps for the improvement of the system so that students' stress could be reduced. We assure the House. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think, the feelings of hon'ble Members of Parliament have not been expressed in full through Calling Attention Motion. If a Notice is given, I would consider to have a detailed discussion on it. I want that an all party meeting should be called by the Government to consider the changes to be carried out in education system and examination system.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we would like to take up some more important issue. I have received many important notices, one of them regarding violation of human rights in Tibet has been given by many hon'ble Members. It is given by Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra, Yogi Adityanath, Shri Mehtab Saheb, Shri Ramji Lal Suman and Shri Mohan Singh. Therefore, I would like to urge Prof. Malhotra to be brief.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have also given notice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will take up your notice also. Many hon'ble Members have given this notice, therefore, I take up it first.

12.33 hrs.

SUBMISSION BY MEMBERS

Killing of Buddhist Monks in Lhasa, Tibet

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the incidents of genocide have been taking

place in Tibet for last one week. As per latest information Government of China has killed more than hundred people of Tibet there. It is not only genocide but also an attack on their culture, There has been tradition with Chinese Government that they eliminate their opponents through violent means. Earlier, at Thienenmen square, thousands of people were killed by tanks. A conspiracy has been hatched to destroy Tibetan culture and the people of Tibet particularly followers of Buddhism over the last 50 years. Presently, peaceful demonstrations were being held there. An attempt was made to destroy Tibetan culture through settlement of Chinese people there and when the people of Tibet raised their voice against it, there was genocide and more than hundred people were killed to suppress their voice. In this regard, the Government of India did not issue any strong statement.

Governments all over the world have condemned this act. But the Government of India has not condemned it so far. Government of India has special responsibility in this matter because Tibet is not only our neighbouring country but we have cultural relations with them also. The religious leader, Dalai Lama has said that they do not want to separate from China but their autonomy and cultural autonomy should not be destroyed. Therefore, I want that entire House should condemn this genocide. The Government of India should issue its statement in this regard and urge upon the Government of China to stop this genocide immediately.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a very serious matter. China has declared war against people in Tibet, however what kind of stand the Government of China takes on violence in the capital of Tibet, is a different issue. But as per statement of the religious leader Dalai Lama published in newspapers, at least 100 Buddhist Monks have been killed there. Tibet has been independent for a long time. In 1950 when China invaded Tibet, Dr. Lohia termed it as infantide. Religious leader Dalai Lama has taken shelter in our country since 1959. Pandit Nehru had said that he was our guest.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, whatever is happening there is very serious. The people of Tibet have awakened. They are spearheading the movement of their independence from all nooks and corners of the world. So far as the question of autonomy is concerned the statement of Dalai Lama in this regard has appeared in the newspapers. There is no interaction with the people there on the question of economic development and other issues. None is able to have an access to information in the name of autonomy. 10th of March was 49th year of their struggle for independence since then they have been constantly demanding their independence.

Sir, not only in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet but also in every part of the world including the U.N.O., Tibetan people have held demonstration on this issue. The people are lodging their protest. America, Britain, France, Germany and Sweden etc., are the countries which have protested that it is not fair at any rate the way China is trampling upon the human rights. George Bush has also stated that the Government of China should talk to Dalai Lama and desist from suppression. The United Nations has cautioned China that action would be taken against it if it did not stop suppressing supporters of independence in the name of maintaining law and order in Tibet.

Sir, through you, I would like to submit only one thing which I have seen in the newspapers. Where as on one hand, such developments are taking place, a circular has been issued to the Ministries by Cabinet Secretary prohibiting them to attend functions held in the honour of Dalai Lama. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have concluded your speech.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a very serious matter. ...(*Interruptions*) On one hand, a circular is issued by the Cabinet Secretary that the Ministers will not attend functions of Dalai Lama and on the other the Government of India have asked to maintain law and order during demonstrations before the Chinese embassy and avoid such political activities which affect relations with friendly countries.

Sir, it is not justified at all. We would like to know about India's response on this issue in view of concern expressed by all countries of the world. The Government of India should apprise the Parliament of its stand on this issue.

YOGI ADITYA NATH (Gorakhpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is very shameful what China has been doing in Tibet for the last week. That is not only a violation of human rights but a sort of genocide also. Not from today but for a long time, China has been following its expansionist policy. We ourselves had observed that expansionist policy of China when our Prime Minister paid a visit to Arunachal Pradesh. The statements given at that time by the Chinese Government were highly objectionable. The Government of India should register their strong protest on the issue of Tibet as we will not be able to stop China intruding into Nepal in view of what is being done by China in Tibet. As it has been reported in the news that Chinese army and officers have intruded into Nepal and in future Nepal is also likely to be a victim of Chinese expansionist policy. North Eastern States and all areas will also become its victims. The Government of India should strongly protest against it. I would like to

point out in particular those people who play politics in India in the name of China their silence in India over the issue of Tibet is surprising. These people play politics over trivial incidents. A genocide of such proportion is being perpetrated and an alarm is being sounded in Tibet.

It is being announced in Lhasa that the people would be brought out forcibly from their houses and crushed under guns and armoured vehicles if they did not surrender. Such warnings are being given there. It is a very shameful situation. I would therefore, urge upon those supporters of China who keep on criticizing national policies but are now silent on the shameful act and genocide being committed by China in Tibet, to make their stand clear before the people of this country. This operation of China should be strongly condemned. The Government of India should raise the demand of the U.N. intervention there. An international team should visit that place. A joint action against China should be made after having examined its operations which it has been continuing by way of its attempts being made there to suppress humanity and commit genocide.

[*English*]

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I stand here to refer to the massacre of Buddhist monks in Tibet and continued oppression in Lhasa by Chinese authorities. I have two points to make relating to Tibet.

First, I condemn the use of brutal force by China on the peaceful demonstration of Buddhist monks which has led to killings of more than hundreds of people. The mass upsurge is not confined to Lhasa only; China's North-West Gansu Province near Tibet has also witnessed mass protest. Tibetans are protesting and are out on the streets to protect their cultural identity and to preserve their distinctiveness. What is happening today in Tibet and Gansu is that the Hans are imposing their culture on Tibet. For more than a decade, China has launched accelerating waves of campaign to force the Buddhist clergy to distance themselves from the Dalai Lama. Monks are ordered to renounce him while the common people are dissuaded not to pray to him. India should stand up against any type of ethnic cleansing in any part of the world. We should join international community not only to express our concern but should also tell China to exercise restraint and immediately stop its vitriolic attack on His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. Cultural genocide should stop.

Secondly, China is our neighbour and undoubtedly, it is in our national interest to maintain friendly relations with China. Our country has a tradition of permitting peaceful and non-violent protest against the ruling authorities in India and elsewhere. Criticism of some activities of Chinese

Government in Tibet, particularly in Lhasa, cannot be termed as indulgence in political activities. The return march to Tibet, a non-violent peace march, is mainly intended to arouse the conscience of the international community to the plight of the Tibetan people. It is truly disturbing to witness the over-eagerness of this Government not to raffle Chinese susceptibilities even after provocative Chinese statements regarding Arunachal Pradesh. I urge upon this Government not to disrespect the basic right of expression of protest in a peaceful, non-violent manner in our country. We should join the world community to denounce the use of brutal force by the Chinese Government on Tibetans. India should stand up and demand UN intervention in Tibet immediately.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not mix up all the issues. Right now we shall discuss the issue of human rights.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Leader of the House is sitting here. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Alright. Please take your seat.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur): Sir, genocide is being committed in Tibet by China. Monks are being attacked. This has led to the killing of 100 monks. China is trying to let loose repression there. The spiritual leader Dalai Lama has demanded autonomy and not absolute freedom. He has demanded autonomy for Republic of China on Tibet on the lines of Taiwan. The Government of India needs to mediate in it. If the time demands, China needs to be challenged also. The Government of India should mediate. Tibetan religious leader Dalai Lama has been living in exile in India for the last 50 years. Therefore, greater responsibility lies on India and India should hold talks with China.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Several hon'ble Members have given notices to speak on this topic. I would, therefore, like to say that names of Shri Swain, Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav and Shri Vijay Krishan be associated with it. Now, we take up another issue and I give an opportunity Shri Gurudas Dasgupta to speak.

...*(Interruptions)*

YOGI ADITYA NATH: The Leader of the House is sitting here. He should respond to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Government cannot be compelled for this. The Government has heard what you have spoken. The Government cannot be compelled to make a statement.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record except the speech of Shri Gurudas Dasguptaji.

...*(Interruptions)**

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair can not ask the Government to make statement. You have made your submission and the Government have listened to it. Now, the another issue has been taken up. Therefore, nothing except the speech of Shri Gurudas Dasgupta will go on record.

...*(Interruptions)**

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please take your seats, you have made your submission.

[English]

SHRI THUPSTAN CHHEWANG (Ladakh): Sir, I want to associate with this matter.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): The Minister of External Affairs is sitting here, he is going to read out his statement.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Sir, I have listened to the observations made by the hon. Members on Tibet. Yesterday we have expressed our concern. So, it is not correct to say that we have not responded to the situation. I am quoting the statement which has been made. I quote:

"We are distressed by reports of the unsettled situation and violence in Lhasa, and by the deaths of innocent people. We would hope that all those involved will work to improve the situation and remove the causes of such trouble in Tibet, which is an autonomous region of China, through dialogue and non-violent means."

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, now the issue is over. The Minister of External Affairs has made his statement.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please give a notice in this regard.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Is a statement made like this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Only statement is made during zero hour. You are a very senior member. You are very well acquainted with the zero hour.

* Not recorded.

SHRI TAPIR GAO (Arunachal East): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I may also be allowed to speak on this issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No discussion on this issue will be held after the hon'ble Minister has made his statement. You have not even given the notice. If you want to speak, give a notice first for the same. The hon'ble Minister has made his statement. If you want a discussion to be held on this issue, give a notice under rule 193 to this effect. That shall be considered. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR (Bangalore South): We are not satisfied with the Minister's reply.

SHRI VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: A large scale massacre has taken place there and the Govt. have not even condemned that. We are not satisfied with the reply of the Minister of External Affairs and therefore we walk out of the House in protest.

12.49 hrs.

Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra and some other hon. Members then left the House.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: They have every right to protest. But, the constituent parties of the NDA should first prepare a statement as to how it is to be condemned and a copy of the same may be sent to me. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: What did they do when they were in Government from 1998 to 2004? Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Minister of External Affairs from 1977 to 1979. So far as China and Tibet are concerned, the policy is being formulated from 1959, and all the incumbent Governments of India since then have not changed any policy in respect of China and Tibet.

[English]

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (Panskura): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is a Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for the year ended March 2007. On page 14 of the said Report a serious indictment has been made of the defence purchase made by the Government of India. If you kindly allow me to quote:

"Navy acquired an aging foreign ship after refurbishment at a cost of USD 50.63 million without physical assessment of the ship. Poor condition of the ship entails significant changes in the scope of the repair work with the cost for repairs going up from USD 15 million to USD 36.94 million."

Navy did not bring all the cost for consideration of the competent authority while seeking approval. It is a very serious question, which involves politics, corruption, economics, and everything. The ship was 36 years old, and this 36 years old ship was purchased.

Secondly, the American Navy decided to abandon the ship by 2006 if nobody purchases the ship. There was not only a price of US Dollars (USD) 50.63 million, but the cost of repair had shot up to USD 36.94 million from USD 15 million, and this was done without physical verification of the ship. It is a vintage ship and it was an abandoned ship, which was of no use to the American Navy. At a time when they were all going to decide to abandon the ship, suddenly a contract of purchase and sale was entered into by the Government of India with the Government of United States through the Defence Department.

Therefore, a number of questions arise from this. Why such a poor-conditioned ship was purchased? Why was a 36 year old ship purchased from them? Why was so much money spent from the foreign exchequer? Why notice of the competent authority was not drawn to it? Why did the Government of India take the liberty of taking over a vintage ship from the American Navy?

What is the next development? The next development is that six Indian sailors have died because of chlorine exit from the ship. Earlier, when this ship was in the custody of American Navy, three sailors had died in a similar fashion. Therefore, it was a recurrence of a similar incident. Was all this not known while the purchase was being made? How could this happen? The basic question to which I would like to draw your notice is this. How this irresponsible, ... *, uneconomic, ... * was done by the Government of India? It needs a statement from the Government of India.

Sir, two things emerge from it. ...*(Interruptions)* Was it an economic decision? Was it a political decision to come close to America? Is it a part and parcel of strategic defence partnership between India and the Bush Administration? The main question is that our defence requirement has been undermined. At a time when we need a strong defence to protect our freedom and sovereignty, a vintage ship had been dumped on us to the great detriment of the India's defence preparedness. ...* I charge the Government, and I wish the Government ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The charges will not go in the proceedings.

* Not recorded.

[English]

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Sir, I charge the Government for not doing its job. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MD. SALIM (Calcutta-North East): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the CAG's report contains the charge. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Sir, I charge the Government for not doing its job, and doing something that is against the national interest of the country.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, it will be examined.

Achariaji, four members have given notice. I would like you to be very brief.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would try to be very brief.

[English]

There is a C&AG's Report on the purchase of US Naval Ship USS Trantton. ...*(Interruptions)* Now, it is known as *Jalaswa*, which is a damning indictment that puts a question as to why this ship was at all bought. This ship is a 1971 vintage ship that was bought when the US Naval itself concluded in 2003 that it was not suitable for modernization, and should be decommissioned in the year 2006. The ship was bought by paying USD 50 million and without doing any visual inspection. Why the visual inspection was not done? Why did the Government of India hurriedly take a decision to purchase it when the Government of India was aware that in 2003 itself the US Navy decided to decommission it in the year 2006? Why was it decided to purchase this ship in spite of knowing this situation?

A restriction was also imposed by the US that there should not be an offensive deployment of that particular ship. Why did the Government of India accept this condition that this particular ship would not be deployed for offensive? I would like to know this. Was the Government of India not aware at the time of purchase of this ship that three sailors had died earlier because of gas leak? Further, six sailors of our country including one official also met with the same fate and died because of gas leak. ... *(Interruptions)* We would like to know this. Why is the Government going for such a defence deal with the United States of America?

13.00 hrs.

Sir, it is because of the ... * that Government of India is buying. We are forced to buy military hardware, arms and defence equipment.

* Not recorded.

Sir, I demand that Government of India should order a probe and also assure this House that such dubious purchase of arms and equipment will not be resorted to in future. This is because of result of Defence Framework Agreement and Strategic Relation Agreement with the United States of America. We demand that a statement should be made. The Government of India owes an explanation to this House. I demand that the Prime Minister should come and make a statement to this House. ... *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is not going on record.

...*(Interruptions)**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do not write down without permission.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, other Members have also given notices.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Achariaji, you have made your submission. Please take your seat.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, you allow at least four Members to speak.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are a number of notices. Please listen to the speech of the hon'ble Member.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, it is a very serious matter. We have raised a very serious matter. You at least allow four Members to speak.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Sir, you have given me an assurance during the beginning of the Question Hour that I shall be allowed to speak after the Question Hour. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA (Hoshiarpur): Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, today, I would like to draw the attention of the

* Not recorded.

Govt. to the issue due to which the industries of the country are on the brink of closure. There is a very big conspiracy behind this. ...*(Interruptions)* The prices of steel are rising everyday. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has associated himself.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many Members are going to speak on the same issue?

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has associated himself.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, don't compare yourself with him.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, we demand a statement from the Government. It is a very serious matter. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Sir, why are you not allowing me to speak, when you have given me an assurance during the Question Hour? ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA (Hoshiarpur): No industry is likely to be saved in Punjab. The Government had assured that prices of steel would not rise. But, it is very sad that the prices of steel have gone up thrice within two months. If an industrialist places orders for steel. ...*(Interruptions)* to manufacture any item, he comes to know that prices of steel have doubled. Due to this trend, Punjab based industries and Phagwara based four thousand units are on the brink of closure. ...*(Interruptions)* The steel industry should be saved and the Government should stabilise the prices of steel, otherwise, there will be substantial increase in unemployment. Owing to the closure of industries, the country has to face very big crisis. Therefore, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will be recorded now.

...*(Interruptions)**

MR. CHAIRMAN: All the remaining notice shall be taken up in the evening. Now, the House is adjourned for lunch.

13.03 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for lunch till Fourteen of the Clock.

14.04 hrs.

The Lok Sabha reassembled after lunch at four minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

(MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER in the Chair)

FELICITATIONS TO DEPUTY SPEAKER
ON HIS BIRTHDAY

[Translation]

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA (Hoshiarpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, your birthday was on 15th which was a holiday. Since today you are here I wish you a belated happy birthday. May you live long and lead a healthy life and serve the country for long.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Many-many thanks.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Sir, we too extend our good wishes.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha): Sir, we didn't know about it otherwise we would have brought sweets in the House.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI (Jodhpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, lot of good wishes to you on behalf of Rajasthan.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhanjharpur): Sir, we also wish you on your Birthday.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH (Udhampur): Sir, may you live long.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): Sir, please accept our wishes also.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY: Sir, sweets should have been distributed today but there are no sweets.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You just say how much sweets are required. The same will be arranged.

14.05 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, Matters under Rule 377 may be treated as laid on the Table of the House.

* Not recorded.

*Treated as laid on the Table.

...(Interruptions)

- (i) **Need to provide adequate wages to the teaching staff employed in the schools run by Coal India Ltd.**

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR DUBEY (Dhanbad): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to draw the kind attention of the hon'ble Minister of Coal towards the pay given to thousands of teachers working in the schools run by Coal India. These teachers are being given Rs. 3000 per month i.e. even less than the minimum wages of a skilled labourer Shiksha Mitras working under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan get Rs. 4000 per month as honorarium. But these teachers are getting pay less than these Shiksha Mitras.

Therefore, I would like to request the hon'ble Minister of coal to direct the public sector coal companies to provide monthly pay to these teachers equal to the pay given to teachers of the State Government keeping in view their educational qualification.

- (ii) **Need to sanction proposals of the Government of Karnataka for development of Auto Cluster at Hubli-Dharwad and Food Cluster for Women Entrepreneurs in Gulbarga**

[English]

SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI (Gulbarga): The State Government of Karnataka has submitted two proposals to the Government of India under Small Industries Cluster Development Programme for development of (i) Auto Cluster at Hubli-Dharwad at an estimated cost of Rs. 500 lakhs; and (ii) Food Cluster for Women Entrepreneurs in Gulbarga at an estimated cost of Rs. 23 lakhs. These proposals were submitted on 2.8.2007 and 12.9.2007 respectively.

As the proposals are pending for long and one of the proposal relates to my Parliamentary Constituency, I urge upon the Government to sanction the proposals immediately.

- (iii) **Need to construct a Railway Over Bridge in Berhampore, district Murshidabad, West Bengal, for decongestion of traffic**

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY (Berhampore, West Bengal): The City Berhampur is the headquarters of the district Murshidabad in West Bengal. The population of the city has reached to 2 lacs. People all over the district visit the city everyday for various purposes. The Railway line between Kolkata and Lalgola has passed through the heart of city and has resulted in huge traffic congestion.

All the main Roads leading to the city pass over the Rail line. Serious Patients who are supposed to be admitted

to the city hospital are often stranded due to Congestion which even resulted in death.

Over the years the people of Murshidabad have been demanding a Railway Over Bridge in the city Berhampur which is yet to be considered. In view of the acute traffic congestion which has become a regular feature, I would urge upon the Railway Ministry to construct one Railways Over Bridge in the city in order to reduce the traffic congestion so as to ensure hassle free movement of the people in the district.

- (iv) **Need to repair the National Highway between Junagadh and Una and construct a bye-pass for Keshod city in Gujarat**

[Translation]

SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD (Junagarh): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the National Highway located in my constituency extending from Junagarh to Una via Keshod, Verawal, Koshinar in a dilapidated condition at present. This Highway is about 200 kms. long and about 125 kms of it is in a dilapidated condition. There is heavy traffic on this highway.

Keeping in view the condition and importance of this National Highway from Junagarh to Una, it should be repaired at the earliest otherwise so many problems can crop up during the coming rainy season.

Construction of a Bye-pass has already been approved for Keshod city on this National Highway but the work has not been started yet. It is requested to get the work of this bye-pass started at the earliest.

Therefore, I would like to request the Hon. Minister of Shipping, Road transport and Highways to take proper action keeping in view the importance of my said proposals. These works are very important in Public interest.

- (v) **Need to address the problems of NRIs living in Singapore, Malaysia and Bahrain**

[English]

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID (Periyakulam): I rise to bring to the notice of the Government few areas of concern, expressed by representative of various associations of Indian Origin Tamils/NRI citizens living in Singapore, Malaysia and Bahrain.

Embassies in Singapore and Malaysia remain close on Saturdays and Sundays. The NRI's living there face difficulties in getting Visa to visit their near one's in emergencies like accidents or death. Providing 24 hr. visa system or visa on-net (like in UAE and Saudi Arabia) in our embassies would mitigate their difficulties.

Further, they face problems in getting loans/advances from Indian Banks most of the times as they insist on many formalities. Also, there are no Indian Embassy schools in these countries. As a result of which, NRI's are forced to get their children admitted in private schools having no Indian culture and languages curriculum.

If they come to India to visit relatives by airlines other than Air India, face problem of exorbitant fare if they return by Air India. So Air India Express facility may be provided to such people as they are not affluent.

I request the Government through concerned ministries to take immediate corrective/remedial measures in this regard.

(vi) Need to provide a rail link between Dindigul in Tamil Nadu and Kumull in Kerala

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (Palani): Dindigul in Tamil Nadu is the hub of textile industries having nearly 130 spinning mills. Dindigul is the gateway of Kerala. But there is no rail connectivity between Dindigul and Kumull, the border of Kerala. The places like Vathlakundu, Periakulam, Theni, Bodi, Chinnamanoor, Uthamapalaym, Cumbam, Goodaloor, Lower Camp all are important towns and famous for cardamom, pepper, coconut, paddy, beetle leaf, beetle nut, grapes, tea and all types of grains. All these items are exported from here through lorries and wagons.

HIGH VAIVISH Tea Estate is connecting the Munnar Tea Estate. Moreover, tourist places like Thekkadi, Munnar, Kumaraham, Kottayam, Kodaikanal are nearer to this area. Large number of devotees after visiting Palani Hill Temple and visiting Sabarimalai prefer this route only. The people of this region have preferred to board train through Dindigul Railway Station since it is nearer than Madurai. There is a proposal to connect Dindigul - Kumull by train which is long pending. If this route is sanctioned, it will yield rich dividends to the Railways and more convenient to the general public and tourists. This line connects both the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Hence, I urge upon the Union Government to sanction this Dindigul-Kumull railway project on priority basis.

(vii) Need to upgrade N.H. 29(E) between Gorakhpur and Sonauli

[Translation]

YOGI ADITYA NATH (Gorakhpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Nepal is the nearest friendly neighbour of India. Gorakhpur-Sonauli is the main road connecting Nepal and Uttar Pradesh. Keeping in view the national and international importance of this road, the Government of India has

recognized it as National Highway No. 29 (E). The Mahsera bridge near Gorakhpur city at milestone 86 kms was damaged third time on 14th August 2007. Since then traffic is crippled on this route. Although, as a result of frequently raising this issue in Parliament, the Ministry of shipping, Road Transport and Highways has sanctioned the required funds for the repair of this bridge but construction of a new bridge at this site is the need of the hour. Gorakhpur-Sonauli road comes under the Buddhist circuit which connects the main pilgrimage centres related to lord Buddha. Lakhs of domestic and foreign tourists use this route. Therefore, upgradation of this road is very necessary.

It is, therefore, requested that construction of a new bridge at Mahsera and widening and upgradation of Gorakhpur-Sonauli road should be taken up urgently.

(viii) Need to declare Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh as a tourist site of India.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY (Mandsaur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, various districts of Madhya Pradesh have a number of places which are worth seeing and important from the historical, archaeological, natural bounty and tourism points of view. Out of these districts, Mandsaur district also has several marvelous historical forts of archaeological importance and the famous Pashupatinath temple, the Saundhani district has the famous pillar and the Bhadawa Mata Mandir etc. well-renowned in the country. Mandsaur, known as Dashpur, is an ancient and historical city where a gigantic and grand eight-faced statue of Pashupatinathji is located and lakhs of people from every nook and corner of India visit here each year to have the 'darshan'. The State Government has made a demand to declare Mandsaur a tourist place because it has various other worth-seeing places including the big dam of Gandhi Sagar, sanctuaries and rock edicts inscribed on mountains etc. Earlier also the State Government had requested the Central Government to declare it a tourist place.

Keeping in view the historical importance of Mandsaur district, I request the Minister of Tourism and Culture to declare it a tourist place as early as possible.

(ix) Need to extend the time-limit for commissioning Industrial projects in Gujarat

[English]

SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR (Vadodara): With vigorous efforts of the State Government of Gujarat 180 projects with investment of Rs. 7900 crore have been Commissioned, while 409 projects with total investment of about 32,000 crores are yet under implementation as on 31.12.2005 and could not commence production within the

time frame set up by the Government of India. The Government of Gujarat have urged Central Government on 3.3.2006 to Dec' 2007 extend the time limit upto Dec. 2007 as also to make available the liberal provisions of declaring a package for Excise and Sales Tax benefits for setting up industries in Kutch, Gujarat.

I urge the Government to review the position and extend the time limit upto December, 2007 as desired by the State Government and oblige.

- (x) **Need to maintain the historical 'Surya Kund' site in Jalaun Parliamentary Constituency, Uttar Pradesh**

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA (Jalaun): Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a 'Surya Kund' in village Madralalpur, block Kadaura, Tehsil Kalapi in my parliamentary constituency Jalaun Garautha, which is a historical heritage of the country. During lunar and soiar eclipses astronomers from across the country and abroad come with their telescopes to study here. This 'Surya Kund' is in a dilapidated condition at present and there is not even a pucca (metalled) road to reach the spot. Under such circumstances tourists, research scholars and astronomers have to face a lot of difficulties in reaching there and as a result the importance of this historical heritage is waning.

Therefore, I request the Government to renovate the Surya Kund and construct a pucca (metalled) road from Kalapi to Vavina via Madralalpur.

- (xi) **Need to sanction the proposal of the Government of Gujarat for development of Magdalla and other ports**

[*English*]

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA (Surat): India is blessed with a long coastline of 7500 kilometers with 13 major Ports and 187 Non-Major Ports which can be provided with energy efficient mode of transportation and is environment-friendly too. Coastal shipping plays an important role in transportation of cargo. This mode of transportation is safe and also approachable by small traders who can send their parcels along with the coast of India. Though potential is high, still we find coastal shipping in India has not really picked up and the percentage is around 8-10%

Government of India has identified certain minor ports for handling coastal cargo in the States of Orissa, Kerala, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Coastal traffic handled by GMB ports during the year 2004-05 was 202.75 lakh M.T. and in 2006-07 it was approximately 230 lakh M.T.

The Government of Gujarat has sent proposal, to develop Magdalla and other ports to D.G. Shipping and again as required by Government of India, revised proposal was sent by Government of Gujarat. Till now, no decision has been taken by the Government.

Sir, I urge upon the Government to sanction the proposal immediately.

- (xii) **Need to revive the Instrumentation Limited, a Central Public Sector Undertaking**

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (Palghat): The Instrumentation Ltd. a Union Public Sector Company is in deep crisis due to the accumulated loss from 1993. It has been declared a sick industry and referred before BIFR in 1993. There was a package for its revival, but it was not yet materialized. Even though the company as a whole faced deep crisis, its Palakkad unit is making profit even today. The BHEL and other PSUs has expressed its interest to make Instrumentation Unit as its own Production unit. So I urge upon the Government to either make Instrumentation Limited as the production Unit of BHEL or merge with BHEL.

- (xiii) **Need to establish a block railway station at Medical College hospital, Vandanam, Alappuzha in Kerala**

DR. K.S. MANOJ (Alleppey): The Medical College hospital Alappuzha located in Alappuzha town has been shifted to Vandanam which is around twenty five kilometers away from the town. Medical college, Nursing college, Paramedical Institute, and National Institute of Virology are located here. People from various parts of the district come here for treatment. There is a famous temple here. People have to alight at Punnapra railway station which is three kilometer away from the hospital to reach the hospital. But this is a non-block station. If a new block station is established at Vandanam it would be very beneficial to the patients and their attendants. Hence I, urge upon the Railways Ministry to establish a new block railway at Vandanam, along Alappuzha-Kayamkulam line.

- (xiv) **Need to improve Railway connectivity in Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh**

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA (Hamirpur, U.P.): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Department of Railway has not taken up any work of any type after independence in my parliamentary constituency Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh. New rail lines should be laid from Harpalpur to headquarters Hamirpur via Panbadi, Rath, Muskara, Vivar, and from Mahoba to Urai via Charkhari, Rath, Gohand and from Harpalpur to Kalapi via Rath-Gohand-Sarila-Chandout. Khajuraho Mahoba railline

is almost complete and there is a need to inaugurate it at the earliest and start trains like Garib Rath and Shatabdi along with the essential trains on that rail-line like from Khajuraho to Delhi via Mahoba and from Delhi to Khajuraho.

A Garib Rath Express train from Delhi to Patna via Jhansi-Mahoba-Banda-Chitrakut-Allahabad be introduced. Responding to my demand the hon'ble Minister of Railways had announced in the House to start a Uttar Pradesh Sampark Kranti train five days a week which should be introduced with immediate effect. The Garib Rath plying from Raipur to Lucknow needs to be provided stoppages at Ragaul, Hamirpur railway stations.

Therefore, through this House, I request hon'ble Minister of Railways to issue necessary instructions for laying new railway lines at above locations, inaugurating Mahoba-Khajuraho rail line and running all the said trains to fulfil the needs of the people, remove the backwardness of the area and provide means of transport. Also provide stoppage of Garib Rath at Ragaul.

- (xv) **Need to ensure habitation rights to 'Saharias' – a Scheduled Caste Community evicted from forest areas in Lalitpur, Uttar Pradesh**

SHRI CHANDRAPAL SINGH YADAV (Jhansi): The life of Saharia caste, a scheduled tribe living in different parts of the country is very miserable. This tribe was living in the forest areas of the country. The objective of the Scheduled Tribes and other Aborigines Forest Dwellers Act, 2006 is to give right to forest produce and possession of the land to the tribals who were deprived of forest rights, whereas as per the forest laws aboriginal tribes or tribal people can no longer live inside the forest area. Almost 70,000 to one lakh people of Saharia caste were evicted from forest areas falling in my constituency. They are neither getting their right under Scheduled Tribe Act, nor are they getting benefit under the Forest Right Act, 2006. Earlier this caste came under Scheduled Caste, now this caste has been included under the Scheduled Tribe.

I request you, through this house, that the people of Saharia caste living in my constituency, Lalitpur may be allowed to live in forest areas or their rights should be ensured even then they live outside the forest area.

- (xvi) **Need to construct a Foot-Over-Bridge between Jamaluddin Chak village and Khagaul Naubatpur on Danapur main railway line in Bihar**

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): There is no road for traveling from Jamaluddin Chak village on Dhanapur (Patna) main line and Khagaul-Naubatpur main road

opposite the rail line. The population of this mohalla is approx. 25-30 thousand. There are six lines on this route and thousand years old tomb is also there in the midst of the rail lines. People stand in queue to visit the tomb. Urs is also organized there once a year. The villagers have a long-standing demand for constructing a foot overbridge to go across the rail line. While crossing the rail line, accidents often take place in which many people have already lost their lives.

Therefore, I want to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister of Railways, through this House and urge him to give permission for construction of a foot overbridge across the main rail line urgently to connect the Khagaul-Naubatpur main road and Jamaluddin Chak village near the tomb. This will also benefit people living in many other villages such as Gurgava, Mohammedpur, Babuchak etc.

- (xvii) **Need to make all the languages in the Eighth Schedule as official languages of the Union Government**

[English]

SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (Tiruppattur): The Official languages of all the States including Hindi can be used during the hearings of cases before the High courts as provided for in Article 348(2) of our Constitution. It also states that the judgments shall be delivered only in English. Promoting all the official languages of all the States would be necessary to enable crores of our common people who approach High Courts to conduct the proceedings and get judgments in their respective languages of their States. This stated spirit of our Constitution and it's provision would be violated if Hindi alone is recommended to be used in the judgments and orders of the courts. The official languages of various States cannot be ignored and it would be harming the interest of all the States if Hindi alone is chosen for pronouncements of judgments in the High Courts. Hence, I urge upon the Union Government to institute suitable steps including seeking of opinion by the Union Law Ministry from the Law Commission and also the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Official languages about the urgent need to use all the official languages of all the States in the Indian Union to benefit all the citizens of India and make all the languages in the Eighth Schedule as Official Languages of the Union Government.

- (xviii) **Need to restore the medical facilities extended by C.G.H.S. to the accredited journalists**

[Translation]

SHRI MITRASEN YADAV (Faizabad): Sir, through you, I would like to draw attention of the Government to the treatment being meted out to the accredited journalists and specially to free-lance journalists by the Press Information Bureau hqrs. New Delhi. The Government of India was

providing only two facilities to these journalists. One is fifty per cent concession in rail fare by the Ministry of Railways and another, some medical facilities under Central Government Health Scheme by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Now, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has stopped this facility. Earlier this facility was being provided to the accredited journalists and to their family members viz. their parents, spouse and children on payment of Rs. 600 per annum. Later, it was increased and fixed at about Rs. 1100 per annum. But, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has stopped this facility altogether. On the other hand, State Governments are providing facilities of bus pass, railways coupons, residential facilities and complete free medical treatment in well-equipped hospitals of Delhi. Similarly, other State Governments have also, provided facilities like tour, residence of Press Information by the Headquarters Bureau and free of cost treatment. But, the Government of India has stopped even the few facilities, which were being given to the accredited journalists. This action on the part of Government is an act of injustice to journalists, who are otherwise called the fourth pillar of democracy.

Therefore, through you, I demand that the Government should restore the medical facilities to the accredited journalists of Press Information Bureau so that they are able to work without any anxiety.

(xix) Need to expedite 'Usha Mehra' Commission Report on categorization of Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool): In Andhra Pradesh an agitation was carried out for the last 14 years by "Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi" for the categorisation of 59 castes of Scheduled Castes into A B C D groups depending upon the social, cultural proximity of Sub Castes. After 60 years of Independence, the fruits of reservations are not uniformly enjoyed by the 59 sub castes of Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh.

The Government of India had constituted USHA MEHRA Commission to enquire into and submit a report for the categorization of Scheduled Castes of Andhra Pradesh into ABCD groups.

The Usha Mehra Commission had conducted many sittings in Andhra Pradesh to elicit the opinion of the people and the Report is to be submitted yet.

As the process is on, Government of Andhra Pradesh had taken up the process of recruitment to the vacant posts in the A.P. Government. If this is allowed before the Commission report is submitted to the Central Government,

the Madigas and allied caste people will loose opportunity as they are not in a position to compete with the 'MALAS' and its allied caste as they are very backward.

Through you, Sir, I request the Government of India to hasten up the process of submission of Usha Mehra Report to the Government and take further necessary steps to amend the Constitution to categorise Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh into ABCD groups.

(xx) Need to connect Ladakh with Northern Grid through 220 K.V. transmission line

SHRI CHHEWANG THUPSTAN (Ladakh): The entire Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir State has virtually no power supply. Even the two major towns of Leh and Kargil are supplied electricity for only 4 to 5 hours during winter months as the two micro hydel projects have to be shut down during winter as the water freezes. Although two power projects, one each at Leh and Kargil are under construction but it will take at least 5 years to complete. It has been demanded that Ladakh region be connected with the Northern Grid through a 220 KV transmission line and the project be approved by Central Electricity Authority. Also an amount of Rs. 634 crores was approved, but the project was deferred. To ensure constant power supply to Ladakh region, it has to be connected with Northern Grid. The two power projects under construction in Ladakh even when completed will not meet with the demand during winter months as the power generation will go down due to reduced water discharge. I, therefore, request Government of India to consider connecting Ladakh with Northern Grid through 220 KV transmission line on priority basis so as to provide uninterrupted power supply in this strategically sensitive border region of our country.

[English]

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): I have given notice, Sir. ...*(Interruptions)* It have assured that I would raise it on Monday. But today also, since morning it has been postponed.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not zero hour; it may be taken in the evening.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Sir, I shall conclude within two minutes. I shall not take much time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If I allow you, other hon. Members will also seek time; then how shall I deny them. Tripathiji, in that condition I would have to give time to other Members also.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does anyone want to request for time? He has to go.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): Demand will come from all sections of the House. ...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, we shall take up Item No. 19.

Shri Mohan Singh – not present.

Shri Prabodh Panda – not present.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may speak in the evening. Now I have taken up next item.

[English]

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: The Cabinet has approved the National Mineral Policy. Parliament is on Session. We are learning from the newspaper and media. Cabinet has approved such an important subject like National Mineral Policy but the House is not aware of it. What has happened actually? ...(Interruptions) This is an election year and because of the pressure of international mining people, this Government has approved this Mining Policy. ...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please sit down. You have made your point.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Mohan Singhji has come. I had called you, but you were not present.

[English]

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Only five Chief Ministers of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa. ...(Interruptions) have given a joint memorandum. ...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Mistry, please sit down now.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Tripathy, this is not going on record.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Tripathy, please sit down.

[Translation]

Only the speech of Shri Mohan Singhji will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Tripathy, this is not going on record.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is not the time of 'Zero Hour'.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have given the floor to Shri Mohan Singh.

...(Interruptions)

14.10 hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE: DISAPPROVAL OF SUGAR DEVELOPMENT FUND (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE, 2008

AND

SUGAR DEVELOPMENT FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2008

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission I beg to move:

"That this House disapproves of the Sugar Development Fund (Amendment) Ordinance, 2008 (No. 4 of 2008) promulgated by the President on 5th February, 2008." ...(Interruptions)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Deputy Speaker, Sir, please give me one minute. ...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Tripathiji, you may express your views during 'Zero Hour'.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing is going on record except what Shri Mohan Singh says.

* Not recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Sir, I beg to move**:

"That the Bill further to amend the Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982 and the Sugar Cess Act, 1982 be taken into consideration."

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Motions moved:

"That this House disapproves of the Sugar Development Fund (Amendment) Ordinance, 2008 (No. 4 of 2008) promulgated by the President on 5 February, 2008."

"That the Bill further to amend the Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982 and the Sugar Cess Act, 1982, be taken into consideration."

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I wish to inform the House that the sugar season 2006-07 had unprecedented surplus production of sugarcane, which resulted in an all time high production of about 283 lakh tonnes of sugar against an estimated domestic consumption of about 190 lakh tonnes.

The surplus production of over 90 lakh tonnes in 2006-07 coupled with an unviable international market where sugar prices were quite low because of an international surplus of about 110 lakh tonnes and an expected surplus production of cane and sugar in 2007-08 sugar season in India and abroad resulted in depressed sugar prices to the tune of Rs.450 to Rs. 600 per quintal in the country. The sugar factories incurred substantial losses and were unable to pay cane dues resulting in accretion of cane price arrears of farmers.

The cane price arrears in June 2007 were Rs.4964 crore. Under the circumstances, the Central Government had to intervene to dispose of the large surplus of sugar. The Government announced a) financial incentives for exports of sugar and b) creation of buffer stock of 50 lakh tonnes and announcement of buffer subsidy for maintenance of the same, with the objective to stabilize prices and improve liquidity position of the factories, so that the arrears of farmers could be cleared.

However, since the sugar surplus was so high and international market still unviable, the cane price arrears of cane farmers continued to be alarmingly high, despite the

steps taken by the Government. There was, therefore, urgent need to further assist the factories with more liquidity support so that the cane dues of farmers could be further cleared.

Decision was accordingly taken by the Government to give loans from banks to the factories against notional excise duty on total production of sugar in 2006-07 and likely production in 2007-08 sugar seasons, with the condition that the loan would be used to pay the cane arrears/dues of farmers. Interest rates of 12 per cent per annum made the loans unattractive and considering that the scheme would be a non-starter, the Government decided to provide full interest subvention on the loans. Without the assurance from the Government regarding the interest subvention and payments of the same within the financial year, the banks seemed reluctant to extend the loans to avoid the liability from appearing in their balance sheet for 2007-08.

Considering the importance of the scheme and its implications for the cane farmers, the Government decided to provide the amount on account interest subvention to the extent of 5 per cent per annum from the budget, and allowed payment of the balance of interest subvention up to 7 per cent per annum from the SDF.

Due to heavy losses incurred by the sugar industry during 2006-07 sugar season, the factories did not have adequate working capital or funds to start their factories in time for the 2007-08 season. The delay resulted in diversion of cane to gur or khandsari manufacturers - where the farmers got lesser price for their cane - and in delayed harvesting, which resulted in delayed sowing of wheat crop. The Parliament was not in Session and the farmers were agitating for their dues, and the factories needed funds quite badly, sometimes to even start crushing of cane.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, enabling legislative amendments to defray interest subvention and augment the SDF corpus right from 2007-08 financial year, were accomplished through the Ordinance. The Government decided to promulgate the Ordinance without further delay so that the loans get released without actually waiting for the Parliament to meet and pass the necessary legislative amendments.

With the steps taken by the Government by way of buffer subsidy, export assistance and now the loans from banks including interest subvention, the sugar mills have been able to clear a substantial amount of the cane arrears of the farmers. As per latest figures received from the States in 2008, the arrears, excluding current year's dues is about Rs.1090 crore.

I wish to submit that the Ordinance was promulgated by the President of India on 5th February 2008. Banks have

* Not recorded.

** Moved with the recommendation of the President

already sanctioned about Rs.2482 crore from then with another Rs.464 crore of loan proposals in the pipeline for sanction. Payments have already begun being made to the farmers for the arrears against the sugar season of 2006-07 as also for the cane supplied in the 2007-08 season.

Had the Government not promulgated the Ordinance, about crucial two months would have passed with further accumulation of the cane dues of the farmers. Some sugar factories would not have got started or started later, resulting in loss of cane crop and loss of time to farmers to sow another crop.

Sir, in the end, I may emphasise that the Ordinance has been promulgated in public interest with the sole objective of clearing cane price arrears of farmers, mostly small and marginal, and also ensure timely payments against cane supplies in 2007-08 sugar season.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): After this legislative business is disposed of, we have two other items in the List of Business; Forward Contracts Regulation (Amendment) Bill and Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill. On behalf of the Government I have today requested the hon. Speaker in writing that Forward Contracts Regulation Bill we would not like to take it up today and the last item regarding Prasar Bharati we would like to take up today.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will see that later after this Bill is disposed of.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the rules and parliamentary tradition under which a motion for disapproval of an ordinance is moved when that is brought before House as a bill, I move disapproval motion but my intention is not to 'disapprove' it. I think it is responsibility of a Government to pay special attention to sugarcane growers, but the interests of sugar mills should also be kept in mind. If the entire sugar industry is opened to market forces, then no sugar mill of public, co-operative or private sector, in any way, will pay remunerative prices to farmers. Apart from sugarcane if we see records of sugar producers, we would find that on every third year there is decrease in production of sugarcane, the price of sugar increases in market. It means that the theory of demand and supply applies to every sector but this theory has special significance with reference to sugarcane and sugar industry. When there is decrease in production of sugarcane on every third year, the price of sugarcane starts going up. The sugar mills earn profit and in that condition these are in a position

to pay even increased price to sugarcane producers because the sugarcane in sufficient quantity becomes available for crushing and sugarcane farmers get better prices. It results in an increase in acreage for sugarcane cultivation. It results in large-scale production of sugar due to increased production of sugarcane, and availability of more sugar in market causes decrease in its price and this brings difficulties for sugar mills. A sugar fund was constituted to solve this problem and to do something when the sugar mills are facing problems. Sugar mills with higher capacity have been established in Uttar Pradesh during last two years. Sugarcane price fixed by Government of Uttar Pradesh is Rs. 125 per quintal which is the maximum till date. But, if we see the market trend of last year we would find that there is an agreed price of sugarcane fixed by the Government. Government of India circulates a statutory price for entire country. But, some state Governments decide agreed price after consultation with sugar mills. It has been a practice in Uttar Pradesh. The Government of India circulated price at the rate of Rs. 80-85 per quintal but, Government of Uttar Pradesh fixed the price at Rs. 125 per quintal. But, in practice, sugar mills paid Rs. 135-136 per quintal for sugarcane to the farmers in their fields itself. As the Agriculture Minister has himself said that 19 thousand crores of rupees were paid to the sugarcane producers by the sugar mills of Uttar Pradesh during the last one year as a result thereof. Uttar Pradesh became the number one sugar producing state of the country by putting Maharashtra at number two. But what was the loss? This year due to the vast increase in the area of sugarcane production and as the Minister himself has admitted that we have produced 80 to 90 tonnes of more sugar last year than our consumption. Since we have linked our economy with world's economy, therefore we are directly affected by any sluggishness in the world economy and if the world economy makes rapid strides we also move on and the Government of India takes its credit by maintaining it as the result of its policies but in a sluggish economy the Government of India is unwilling to take its responsibility. If you go through the records you would find that industrial production of our country has come down by five and half per cent in the last three months and it has become static. Likewise the Government of India projected four per cent growth in agriculture production but it became zero in the year 2001-2002 and now it is hovering around two to two and a half per cent. When sugar is produced more than its consumption in India its prices fall in international market. When we get less yield of wheat, rice, mustard or sugar or anything else then its prices rise in the international market because foodgrains are consumed in India in maximum quantity. The Agriculture Minister has admitted it while replying to my question that the Government of India had to

[Shri Mohan Singh]

purchase wheat at the rate of Rs. 2100 per quintal in the last shipment. The reason being that sensing the shortage of wheat in India its price in International market went skyrocketing. The price of sugar in international market fell by sensing its additional production in India, which resulted in the near insolvency position of our sugar mills and sugarcane producers have not been paid for their produce. The matter was raised sometimes before in the House and the Minister concerned had admitted this, the Government have tried to help them. This is not the first time that efforts are being made to help them through this fund, when Shri Rajnath Singh ji was the Agriculture Minister of India, he too had tried to help them through this fund so that they could be paid timely. As I have said, sluggishness and fall in the production and price of sugar and sugarcane come after every three years, its impact was also evident three years earlier. The Government at that time had tried that the sugar mills should pay by taking money from us and the Government of India would make its payment to us in instalments for three years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a complaint against the government. The Agriculture Minister and the Government of India have tried to provide interest free loan from this fund. The Government of India cares about the farmers, it is providing loans to the farmers at 7 per cent interest rate, it is commendable but it has given zero per cent loans to sugar mill owners! The Government of India would pay 5 per cent interest from its budget and 7 per cent interest from the sugar fund on the loans given to such sugar mills and the Minister himself has admitted this. The sugar mills would bear no interest cost. The Government of India's helping hand towards the farmers is limited only while it is wider towards the sugar mills. It is providing zero percent interest loan to sugar mills to make them survive and farmers would pay seven percent interest for their survival. They would propagate that they are deeply involved in the service of farmers but the other side is not interested to accept the same. We are not challenging your intention, our only intention was that the sugar mills should pay sugarcane farmers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am saying it with regret that the sugarcane farmers have not been paid a penny during this year by the sugar mills nevertheless of the efforts of Government of India. The Agriculture Minister has himself admitted that the situation in Uttar Pradesh is worse. According to the statement given by him in the House last week, the sugar mills owe one thousand and nine crore rupees of the sugarcane farmers as on date. This is half the money of the season, and I think that at the end of the season more than two thousand and five crore rupees would remain unpaid of the sugarcane farmers in Uttar Pradesh alone.
...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Same is the situation in Punjab.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I only request the Agriculture Minister, through you, that the Government of India being a generous one should take a guarantee from the sugar mills that they would pay the farmers within 15 days of their getting money from this fund. If the payment is made late by one month than the owner's of the sugar mills should pay the amount alongwith the interests to the sugarcane farmers. The Agriculture Minister should make this provision for the welfare of the farmers of the country. With these suggestions, I would like to get an assurance from the Minister that the sugarcane farmers of Uttar Pradesh and the entire country as well get their payment within one month. If the Minister would give such an assurance to us I promise him that we would extend our full support to this bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Punjab should also be included alongwith U.P.

YOGI ADITYA NATH (Gorakhpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Sugar Development Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2008 has been presented before this House by the Hon'ble Minister, which is being considered by this House. We don't have any doubt about the intention of the Hon'ble Minister. But as said by our colleague, hon'ble Mohan Singh ji that hon'ble Minister is favouring the Sugar Mills, but the farmers of this country, for whose protection this kind of policies were made, is nowhere visible in this Bill. We are sorry to say that only because of such wrong policies of the Government, more than one lakh fifty thousand farmers of the country have committed suicides during the last ten years and that is happening even today and it is also happening in Vidarbha which falls in the home state of hon'ble Minister of Agriculture. Farmers are committing suicides unabatedly in Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh. Eastern Uttar Pradesh, fro where we get elected, is really one of the largest sugarcane producing regions of the country.

Sir, before independence, in the decade of 1920 and 1930 sugar mills were established over there. Almost all the small and big towns of eastern Uttar Pradesh have been benefited from sugar mills. In the name of these sugar mills, these towns were chiustened and development of those regions took place. We are sorry to say that the farmers of that area are living in distress and the Governments are doing little. Surgarcane growers are sitting on fire then ready to harvest crops, because they know their earlier sugarcane arrears were not paid and this time also they will not be paid.

Sir, Sugar Development Fund came into existence for the revival, expansion and modernization of sugar mills but

it could not achieve the desired objectives. All the sugar mills, running under Uttar Pradesh State Sugar Corporation have become either old or lying closed or they do not have so much capacity with which they may compete with modern sugar mills. This has resulted into arrears worth crores of rupees payable to sugarcane growers outstanding against these sugar mills - irrespective of whether they are Public Sector Sugar Mills, cooperative sector sugar mills or private sector sugar mills. There is a private sector sugar mill in Gorakhpur which have arrears of thirty crores rupees to be paid to sugarcane growers for the last six years. Nobody has expressed desire to pay these arrears, no interest is being paid to the sugarcane growers on this amount. So far no provision has been made to pay that. No provision has been made by the Government so to enable these sugar mills to pay arrears to these sugarcane growers. This is surprising that these sugar mills are not paying the arrears to the sugarcane growers. Due to the wrong policies of the Government, most of the sugar mills of eastern UP are either in dilapidated condition or they are closed. It was informed that more sugarcane has been produced during last two years. Farmers of that region produced sugarcane as per the demand thereof. But along with sugarcane production, the kind of situations that has emerged is not good. The Government declares sugarcane price. The Supreme Court also said that sugar mills should pay the growers at the rate of Rs. 125 per quintal but the truth is different. If today sugarcane growers are taking their produce to sugar mills, he is hardly being paid Rs. 80 to 82 per quintal. Even this much amount is paid to those farmers, who have resources, strength and power. The common man and poor farmers are facing a lot of problems because he is not even getting the receipt of sugarcane delivered. In case he does not get the receipt of his sugarcane, he will be compelled to sell off his produce to the sugarcane mafias at the rate of Rs. 35 to 40 per quintal because no arrangement has been made by the administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government has made no arrangement to purchase the sugarcane at the rate of Rs. 125 per quintal from the farmers as per instructions of the Government and the Supreme Court. So, the farmers has no way except to set fire to the remaining sugarcane produce in the fields. Hon'ble Minister has made some provisions but as long as farmers are not benefited by these provisions, there is no use of amending and bringing in such policies. That is why, I would like to request him and would like to know from him that when we formulate policies in favour of farmers, why they are not directly benefited by our policies? Ultimately, why sugar mill owners and big farmers are only benefited. We do waive off loans but we don't see as to who are the people being benefited by the bank loans. Only those

people are benefited who take loans from banks. From where does a poor farmer get a loan? This is impossible or very difficult. In such circumstances, hon'ble Minister had stated that earlier Rs. 15 were paid towards Sugar Development Fund, now it will be increased upto Rs. 25. Besides, he has made other provisions as well like that the banks will give loans to sugar mills. Then the revival of those mills should take place. We believe that sugar mills should be revived and modernized. But alongwith it the Hon'ble Minister has made this provision that the money which they take as loan should be paid to the farmers, but that is not being done. Actually, it is not taking place anywhere, and especially in Eastern Uttar Pradesh we have witnessed that farmers are not being paid by the sugar mills.

Sir, I would like to make a strong appeal to the Hon'ble Minister that if such a provision is to be made, then whether it is 10 paise per kg per person burden, at least consumers and farmers should be exempted from its domain and it should be borne by the sugar mills because now it is certain that on the one side sugar mills are not able to pay the farmers arrears and on the other side they weigh their sugarcane less. Nobody is there to check it. Ultimately farmers become the victim, whether he is misbehaved by the sugar mills through less weighing or by not paying the farmers. As I said, what is the guarantee that sugar mills will pay at the rate of Rs. 1.25 per quintal for their cane produce because it is not being done despite the orders of the Supreme Court. Not a single sugar mill is paying to the farmers at this rate. So, I would like to request the hon'ble Minister that you may have brought this Bill with good intentions, but you should make such an arrangement that not only sugar mill owners but farmers also are benefited in this domain. Such a system should be made through amendment. I would request the hon'ble Minister for this. I would also request that it should be ensured that sugar mill owners get loans from Sugar Development Fund, Financial Institutions, or banks. Further it should also be ensured that farmers must be paid their sugarcane arrears. With these words, I conclude.

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL (Kopergaon): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on this bill. I rise to speak in support of the bill and against the resolution. Shri Manmohan Singhji has also said and I also do not hesitate to say that this bill has been introduced at right time and for the right purpose. I am not opposing this bill but honourable Minister should assure us that outstanding dues of sugarcane farmers would be paid on time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, everybody knows that Sugarcane Development Fund has been effective since

[Shri Balasaheb Vikhe Patil]

1982. Around 4,400 crores of rupees have been deposited in this fund so far and out of that around 3500 crores of rupees have been transferred in this fund. There is technical upgradation every year and sugarcane farmers increase their production due to this and technology is transferred in farming sector. I would like to welcome our Agriculture Minister, Chairperson of UPA, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi and Shri Manmohan Singh, because two years back the Government had fixed the rate of sugarcane at the price of 1300, 1400 and 1500 rupees but they were getting only 1000 rupees and 900 rupees. It was rupees 16 in 2004-05, rupees 18 in 2005-06 and rupees 17 in 2006-07. You will be surprised to know that stock of sugar is so less in our country. nocarryover stock was 40 lac ton in 2005-06 whereas other production was 113, sugar production was 101 lac ton, import of sugar was 41 lac ton, total availability was 314.92 lac ton and internal consumption was 183. Therefore, it was 115 lac ton and our closing stock was 116. Our carryover stock was 40 lac ton in 2005-06, production of sugar was 59 lac ton, import of sugar was 3.62 lac ton and total availability was 233.21 ton. Internal consumption was 183.21 and export was 13.61. There was 2 lack 87 thousand production of sugarcane during the last year. There will be less than 2 lac ton production of sugar during this year. The reason is that farmers are not getting their dues in time. The farmers started sowing pulses in addition to cane on Manmohan Singhji's advice. The outstanding amount payable to farmers had been increasing for the last three years. Thereafter came the sugar package. Term loan was taken but it did not serve the purpose. Here the sugar prices were much less in comparison to international market. There was loss even in export because price was rupees 1300-1400 per quintal in other countries in 2000 whereas, here the price of sugar was rupees 900 per quintal. The Government had also given subsidy on sugar. But that subsidy did not work due to appreciation of rupee in comparison to dollar. As a result the export of sugar came down as exporters suffered losses.

Again you have increased excise duty by nine rupees this year. In addition to it, the Govt. have imposed cess of three rupees. It works out to 97 rupees. Cane Development Fund has increased from rupees 14 to rupees 25. We take money of sugar from farmers, and try to give it back to farmers. We do not have any objection to it. But Manmohan Singhji is not right, he is wrong because he is giving loan of 12 rupees without interest on sugar and the Government of India is giving seven per cent from its budget, but, who is getting seven per cent from Sugarcane Development Fund. The whole amount is being given to sugar mills and they are being given on a condition that outstanding amounts and arrears be paid. Apart from that, labourers and banks have

outstanding against them. So farmers, labourers and banks should be paid.

Sir, this fund is for modernization. There are 552 sugar mills in India as per data available and perhaps there are 242 private sugar mills out of them. I think there is some mistake in this data. In my opinion out of 552 mills there are 500 cooperative mills and 42 mills are in public sector. There are two types of sugar mills in co-operative sector and they are private sugar mills and co-operative sugar mills. I would like to say that co-operative sugar mills do not have ways and means like private sugar mills. Private mills mobilize funds through IPO. They go to stock exchange and price of shares of those sugar mills increased after going to stock exchange and they invest money in expansion. They set up power plants and ethanol plants although that fund does not go to Sugar Development Fund but the co-operative sugar mills do not accept any money from any one else than members. In Punjab also, there are sugar mills of co-operative movement but we do not have any support other than Sugarcane Development Fund.

The rate of ethanol is fixed at rupees Rs. 21.50 across the country. The honourable Minister is aware that in these days petroleum companies do not purchase ethanol on this rate. They say that our tender is of Rs. 19. It has been decided in cabinet. The Government has taken decision to this effect but mostly the companies are not taking supply of ethanol. I would like to draw the attention of honourable Minister towards this fact. We are talking about generating power from bagasse and we are providing fund from SDF. It is a right thing that there should be an integrated project for sugar mills. When we will set up sugar mill then we will not produce sugar only but we will generate power, ethanol and set up high pressure boiler. There are so many old sugar mills which need high-pressure boiler, technology transfer, new system policy but its costs rise and its price increased due to high cost. Such sugar mills became sick due to high production cost and I am particularly talking about sugar mills.

Secondly, there should be another fund like agro processing sugar mills and farmers should get right prices by making some package in agro processing cooperative. Today farmers are committing suicide because they are not getting right prices. Now farmers are getting right price for sugarcane. Sugar prices are also appropriate this time, but sugar prices in international market are very low in comparison to domestic market. That is why we do not get desired prices. It is right. I do not know what price the sugar mills in Bihar and UP are giving to farmers but the Government of India have set up a technology mission for this as we have to move towards high technology. There

should be some accountability as regards the technology mission. How much technology they have transferred to sugar mills and how much production has been raised after giving funds to sugar mills and how much recovery has increased because our recovery should increase after technology transfer and upgradation.

The price of levy sugar is fixed in our 16 zones. Today, it happens a number of times that prices of levy sugar is less than market price. The Government do not take levy sugar due to high prices in market. Even the contractors do not take it. When price of sugar in market decrease and price of levy sugar increase, all State Governments and private contractors take levy sugar as it happened during the last year. It is because that sugar goes to below poverty line or public distribution system and everybody knows about this. I would like to know about minimum prices when this situation arises. During the last year and even this year the price is 81 rupees and some paise and it will increase more also. I want that price of levy sugar should be fixed according to the prices of free sale sugar when prices of levy sugar is minimum. The Government should at least give compensation in this regard when the prices fall.

I would, therefore, like to submit that there should be a ten-year policy for export and import of sugar. Import and export of sugar is made arbitrarily in an inconsistent manner which causes loss to both sugar industry and the farmers. There comes a cycle in respect of sugarcane production after every three years and sometimes after five years. Every time, two years prove to be good and third one turns out to be bad for farmers. The Sugar mills and the farmers have to suffer loss for two years on this account and the production comes to a very low level, which drives the mills to a competition as to who will purchase sugarcane in maximum quantity and from whom. Therefore, there should be a long-term policy for ten or fifteen years with regard to sugar and sugarcane. Sugar has always been an issue of politics. The prices of sugar and sugarcane have always been issue of politics. We should formulate a long-term policy for sugar mills, sugar and sugarcane. Earlier, there was dual pricing control system. Under this system, the ratio of quota for free sale and levy sugar was 40:60 and gradually it came to 50:50 and therefore, it stood at 60:40, and 70:30. Now it is 90% and 10% for free sale and levy sugar respectively.

Sir, I have read in a newspaper that ISMA which is an organization of private industries, seeks complete decontrol and deregulation of sugar industry and the formulation of a long term policy. But I would like to submit that it is not appropriate time to decontrol and deregulate it because we do not know what will be the next cycle. The prices of sugar are recently witnessing rising trend globally and at present

these are moderate in India. All sugar mills have been working in the same way. They are getting the funds from the package. They have got funds of the last year too and will get the amount of this year also. But it is incumbent upon the State Government to monitor whether the funds reach the farmer or not.

Sir, the Central Government provides funds to a Sugar mill but when the State Government constitutes an Advisory Price Committee it becomes its duty to see whether the farmers are getting the prices in accordance with the packages given by the Government of India or not. How will it do if they do not see all these things? Our Minister of Agriculture is fully conversant with all these things. He is fully aware of the conditions prevailing in Sugar mills but at the same time the State Government should also shoulder some responsibility.

Sir, you have pressed the bell, I shall not take much time. I would like to say that it is essential to support this Bill and the Sugarcane Development Fund should be further enlarged because we carry out amendments whenever these are required. It has been amended a number of times. A Comprehensive Bill should be brought in so as to fully empower the Government. Through this Bill we are to achieve an important objective of addressing the problems of Sugar Mills and Sugarcane growers and I would like to request the Minister to work it out well. I would again like to thank the hon'ble Minister for promulgating the Ordinance at a very right time. You know and the Minister has also stated that the Mills were started with a delay of two months because they were not aware of their fate. The Mills would have been further delayed by another one month if the Ordinance had not been promulgated in December. It would have further aggravated the condition of farmers. My friends were saying that farmers were burning their crops of Sugarcane. The Mills have been started with the delay of two months. They should have been started in October or November but they were started in the end of December or beginning of January. That is why the ordinance was promulgated at right time. I heartily welcome him for the decision and as you have pressed the bell, while giving respect to you, I conclude my speech.

[English]

DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM (Bhadrachalam): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this Bill. I oppose the Statutory Resolution disapproving the Ordinance and I would like to support the Sugar Development Fund (Amendment) Bill. This is a welcome measure. While supporting this Bill, I would like to voice some doubts and also give some suggestions to the Government.

[Dr. Babu Rao Mediyam]

Sir, production of sugar and sugarcane has increased during the last two crop seasons, but the market price of sugar has decreased. This goes against the market rule and so, between the end product sugar and sugarcane which is the raw material, the farmer is the worst sufferer because he is being linked with the industrial interests. The Sugar Development Fund which is intended to help the farmer is primarily given to the sugarcane crushing units and that too at the market price of the end product, not at the buying price of sugarcane.

Today, the condition of sugarcane growers is very miserable. For example, in my own State of Andhra Pradesh there are about 4,25,000 sugarcane growers. This year they are not able to plant sugarcane and almost out of 6 lakh acres usually planted, this time in 90,000 acres they are not able to plant sugarcane. They are in indebtedness and there are over dues for the last two crop years. They have not been given their dues properly by the industries. So, almost Rs.65,000 crores are due to the sugarcane farmers in my State.

While, in almost 38 units, where sugarcane crushing is going on, people are getting loans, subsidies on transport, etc. and so many other benefits, the actual grower is at a loss. He is not able to grow more now. He is almost on the verge of indebtedness and burning his own crop instead of sending it to the factory. The factory people are not giving cutting permission at the right season and are also deceiving the sugarcane growers. In this respect, I would like to humbly submit that a separate fund should be allocated for the growers and this should be separated from the crushing units. That will be very useful to the growers.

Secondly, the Minimum Support Price, which is being promised, is not being observed by the crushing units. They are paying less than Rs.950 per tonne, whereas the recommended amount is Rs. 1,500 per tonne. The M.S. Swaminathan Committee recommended for Rs. 1,800 per tonne, but it was never followed in any part of the country. Hence, the remunerative price should be ensured and should be given in time to the cane growers. This should be given separately.

While supporting this amendment Bill, I would like to submit that the 'L' Formula, which is supposed to help the cane growers and is not being declared so far, should be declared as early as possible. The farmer is still at a loss. So, I would like the Agriculture Ministry to look into this formula and declare it immediately and thereby help the farmers.

[Translation]

SHRI SITA RAM SINGH (Sheohar): Sir, I heartily support the Sugar Development Fund Bill moved by the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture in the House. His thinking is very good and the objectives of this bill are laudable. That is why I support it. I would like to specifically mention a few things, which are about farmers and Mills. First of all under the system put in place the Sugar Development Fund since 1982, whenever the Government of India provided funds to the Mill owners whether they be in the Private sector, Public sector or corporate sector, it could not be ensured that the funds will reach the farmers. Secondly if funds are provided to farmers, no time limit has been fixed for making such payment. It depends upon mill owners. They do not bother if even one year is taken for making payment. I would like to urge upon the Minister through you, Sir, that an assurance be made in the House while giving reply to the debate and getting this bill passed to ensure a time limit for making payments to farmers who are in a miserable condition throughout the country after funds are released to the Mills by the Centre so as to fulfill objective of the Bill.

15.00 hrs.

Secondly, I would like to speak about prices of Sugarcane. The State Governments fix prices of sugarcane in consultation with the Mill owners on the basis of directions given by the Government of India. These rates vary in various states and they do not have any uniformity at national level. Hon'ble Member Shri Mohan Singh ji was speaking just now that rate of sugarcane is different in Uttar Pradesh. Now, there is no rate in Bihar. Sugar Mill owners in consultation with the State Government decide the future of sugarcane growers. There is no representative of farmers in this meeting. I would like to ask the Minister, if they are well wishers of farmers, whether they propose to allow a representative of farmers to attend that meeting and whether there would be any uniformity in fixation of prices.

Thirdly, I would like to know the circumstances in which sugar mill owners are not mentioning prices of sugarcane on the slips which they are buying this year. This price of sugarcane is not being mentioned by many mills in Bihar. Fourthly, sugarcane of sugarcane growers in Bihar got damaged by the month of June last year. Their sugarcane was not purchased by the Mill owners. They could neither burn nor dry up their sugarcane. We are not able to understand what kind of policy is this? I am speaking this as a farmer. What would happen to the farmer if his crops of sugarcane is not purchased by the mill of his area? The owners of sugar mills do not take care of it and have no accountability to it. What type of law is this and what type of rule is this? I would like the Government to be serious about

it.

Fifthly, a farmer will get loan whether it is given by sugar mill owner or by the banks and in turn interest will be charged from them on that loan. I would like to ask what is the law under which money of the farmers is kept with the mill owners for the years together and the farmers are not paid even a single penny as interest for the same.

Sixthly, a provision was made in this Bill that the mill owners would not have to pay any interest and the farmers tilling the farm by taking loans would have to pay interest. An ordinary person fails to understand this. I would like to make a submission categorically that it should be made clear on behalf of Government so that something may be brought in the favour of a peasant. Whatever Bill you have brought in, you should take measures in connection with making some provision in this regard. When you have given the title to the Bill as "Bill on Sugar Development Fund", again there is no Bill without farmer or no sugar without mill. That will favour the sugar mills. As such, the mills should run because if the mills do not run how the sugarcane can be grown. But, the second aspect of the matter is that some provision should be made in the Bill for the farmers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to take some more time. I hail from Motihari district in Bihar. In Bihar, there used to be most of the sugar mills in my district. All these sugar mills have closed down altogether. When I discussed about this with the hon'ble Minister, the Minister assured me to reopen them in my district. The Minister visited there and worked very hard. But the Minister visited there at the time when the code of conduct was in force there due to elections. In this connection, a frivolous case was also filed against the hon'ble Minister. But, no sugar mill was reopened even after this. An amount to the tune of Rs. 15 crore has been outstanding against the sole Motihari sugar mill for the last ten years.

Sir, through this Bill, I would like to draw the attention of hon'ble Minister to this point that he has done a very good job by getting this Bill passed and getting an ordinance issued by the President on 5th February in this connection. But when will the farmers get their due amount of 15 crores. The payment to the farmers for the last year is outstanding against the Roza sugar mill in my Lok Sabha constituency. Due to this, the farmers are not getting money for marriages of their wards. The procurement of sugarcane is being made this year too, but the farmers are not being paid for their produce. The objective of introducing this Bill is very clear, but I would like to repeatedly urge upon the hon'ble Minister to make it clear in the Bill being passed by him through this House as to within what duration the farmers are likely to be paid the amount which is meant for sugar mills, farmers and

new technology. He should ensure this while giving reply in the House. It should be made clear in this House. The concerned State Government, in connivance with the Mill owners, keep the amount of money with them which remains unspent and the Millers manage that money. In this case, the farmer cannot move the High Court or the Supreme Court. Only the wearer best knows where the shoe pinches. Only a farmer knows best about the condition of other farmers. Such a state of affairs is there today. The farmers have sold out their produce of sugarcane to the mills, and they have no food grains to eat and no money for marriage of their daughters and education for their wards. Today, such a state of affairs is in my constituency and the farmers are leading a very miserable life. I would like you to tell this House with so much bold intention with which you have introduced this Bill as to within what duration the farmers are likely to be paid their outstanding amount of money.

With these words, I welcome this Bill. I express my thanks to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are now discussing the Sugar Development Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2008.

The Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982 was enacted to provide for financing the activities for development of sugar industry and for matters -connected therewith or incidental thereto. Now, a proposal has come to provide loan from the Sugar Development Fund to the sugar mills and to the sugar industries. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how much money has been provided to the sugar industries after 1982 and also - 'incidental thereto' means indirectly assisting to the farmers - how much he has provided assistance to the farmers.

Sir, as per the latest Economic Survey that has been placed in Parliament, cane arrears, as a percentage of the price, have been increased to 6.2 per cent, and the outstanding dues has been estimated at Rs. 1,830 crore. The outstanding dues of the farmers who have not got their price is Rs. 1,830 crore are now in great difficulties. Now, the hon. Minister and the Government are very much interested to provide interest free loan to sugar industries. But, I think, they are not concerned about the farmers.

The loans from the Sugar Development Fund (SDF) are given to eligible sugar mills for expansion of capacity, modernization/rehabilitation of plant and machinery as well as technological upgradation. In order to make this Fund more popular and acceptable to sugar factories, the Government amended the SDF Rules in 2002 for better utilization of the important by-products by deciding to give loan from SDF for production of ethanol and bagasse based co-generation of power.

So, to produce ethanol and alcohol, which would ultimately help in generating power, the loans from the SDF was provided, and the Act was amended by this Parliament in the year 2002.

Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how much power has been generated by way of providing loans to this industry; and how much ethanol and alcohol have been produced by them, which would ultimately help in refining the petrol and diesel. I would also like to know whether the Government has made any estimate of all these things to see that this SDF has been better utilised for the purpose it has been provided for.

Sir, the Centre has increased the Excise Duty on sugar by Rs. 9 a quintal in this Budget. The additional duty would make the total excise levied on sugar as Rs. 95 a quintal. Together, with cess there would be a burden of Rs. 97.85 a quintal. But ultimately who is going to bear this burden? It is the consumers. It will not be borne by the sugar factories. It is the consumers, who would be taking the burden of Rs. 97.85 per quintal, by taking sugar. Now, this loan would be provided to the sugar industries.

The dues pending on farmers in the form of loans is about R.2,000 crore, which is not being paid to the farmers. They are also suffering greatly. They are also in a very distressing condition.

At the moment, as per the figures of 30th September, 2006, there are about 582 sugar factories in the country, of which, 317 are in the cooperative sector; 203 are in the private sector; and 62 are in the public sector. So, most of the sugar mills are in the cooperative sector. But the loans mostly that have been provided, are to the sugar factories in the private sector, so far. Of course, some sugar mills in cooperative sectors have also been provided, but most of the loans have been given to the private sectors. In one way, we are helping the sugar industry. Yes, it is also necessary, otherwise, this industry would not survive, the farmers would not be able to take the advantage of utilising their sugarcane. I do not say that it is not necessary. But if you see the answer to a Question put in the Parliament, it is replied that the loan from the SDF has been provided to a limited number of States only. Other States have not been provided with this loan from the SDF or for that matter, any other assistance. As far as Orissa is concerned, there is no such figure, which says that the loan has not been provided to Orissa, it is said in the answer. I do not say that Uttar Pradesh or Maharashtra should not be provided with such a loan. Of course, they are producing more sugarcane. My point is that there are other States like Punjab etc., which should also be given more. Similarly, other States also should

be given such a loan from the SDF, so that their sugar, industries and farmers are also benefited out of it.

Sir, the Central Government fixes the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) for sugarcane. Then, we have the State Advisory Boards, which are also doing price fixation. But if we look at the condition of the sugarcane farmers, it is very much pitiable and deplorable.

The present battle between the sugarcane farmers and the mill owners centres on price. The Government is providing so much of assistance to the sugar mill owners, with the sole intention that it would ultimately help the sugarcane farmers.

But so far as price is concerned, they are not providing the real price to the sugarcane farmers as per the Statutory Minimum Price that is fixed by the Government of India or at the State level, the State Advised Price Fixation Body which are fixing the price. That is why, of course, the sugarcane farmers are ultimately going to the Supreme Court, the apex court. A number of Hon'ble Members have also discussed this thing. But that price is also not being provided by the mill owners to the farmers.

While the farmers claim that they are not able to recover the cost of cultivation, the mill owners say that cane crushing is not viable after buying the crop. So, this is the situation. While farmers are telling that whatever they are investing, leaving apart their labour, they are not getting the price. They are investing in this crop but they are not getting the price so far as their investment is concerned.

As per the latest Economic Survey, I have already said that outstanding is pending to the tune of about Rs. 1,830 crore. There is one thing because this is happening. The network for the cane cooperative societies, which was working mainly for the farmers' interest, has now completely collapsed. The Government has not shown any interest. The State Governments are also equally not taking so much interest. This network could have ultimately helped the sugarcane farmers' interest. Since that cooperative society body has completely collapsed, they are not coming forward to purchase sugarcane from the farmers directly. So, naturally, the 4 farmers are selling to the middlemen. In U.P. alone, their farmers' organisation has told that they are in a position to sell only at the rate of Rs.50 per quintal. Where? It is to the middlemen because the mill owners are not purchasing directly from the sugarcane farmers. So, they are compelled to sell it to the middlemen in a very distress sale and at a very low price. It is because the network of cane cooperative societies has completely collapsed, and hence they are selling to the middlemen. That is the situation now.

So, I would like to know whether the Government will declare any package for the farmers also. They are not interested in this. Through this Sugar Development Fund, now we are providing all assistance to the sugar mill owners and their factories. But so far as the farmers' distressed condition is concerned, we have discussed that. We, all the Members cutting across Party, are discussing the pitiable condition of these farmers. They are not getting their price. Whatever price that is fixed, they are not getting that price. They are also not getting their arrear dues for years together. All these things are now compelling the farmers to shift to other crops. Some of the farmers' organisations have declared that in future they will shift their cultivation from sugarcane to either wheat or rice or any other crop. So, the situation will be like this. When the farmers of Brazil and other countries are completely competing with the farmers of our country quite well and they are selling at a very low price in the international market, our sugarcane farmers will not be in a position to face the farmers of other countries because whatever subsidies and incentives that the other countries; are providing to the sugarcane farmers of their countries are not being provided to our farmers.

That is why I want to know what type of package the Government is interested to declare for the farmers. I also want to know whether the other States, which are not availing the fund from the Sugar Development Fund, like Orissa, should also be provided from this Fund to develop their sugar mills and industries.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU (Rajapur): Sir, I have given a notice for disapproval of the Ordinance that was issued. Though I broadly support the contents of the Bill, I really fail to understand why there was a need for issuing an Ordinance on 4th of February. I just heard the statement of the Minister that it was issued because to protect the interests of the farmers who were agitating, who were demanding their dues for the cane supplied to the sugar factories and there was a law and order problem. The factories would have failed to start the crushing season, and therefore they had to do it.

If I recall, the last Session of the Parliament ended in the last week of December, almost close to that. Therefore, the Bill of this type could have been introduced in the last Session of the Parliament rather than issuing an Ordinance. Sir, I always feel that Ordinance should be used as a rarest of the rare occasion because Ordinance takes away the right of the Parliament to decide on an important issue like this, and if the Ordinance is issued, it is like a fait accompli for the Parliament to really convert it into a law. Therefore, I really oppose the promulgation of the Ordinance, and therefore, I had given the notice.

Sir, there is already a huge agrarian crisis engulfing our rural India. We have been worried about the fact that agricultural production is stopping. We are also worried that yields are falling and the farmers are not getting remunerative prices. As a result of which, the production is not increasing at the rate at which we wanted. It is also threatening our food security and creating a lot of other economic issues. As we discussed the other day, the share of agriculture in GDP has fallen to 18.5 per cent now. So, we need many ways to tide over this.

One of the ways we thought of doing is to do agro-processing. We thought that agricultural production need not be just sold in the market in the primary form but it should be processed and therefore, the farmers will be able to get a value for not just the produce that he is selling but also for the finished product which will be sold in the market as an agro-processed good.

It is also true that in India almost more than 30 per cent of our agricultural production is lost because of not being processed adequately. Therefore, sugar is one of the very important agro-processed products, and that is what we really started doing it many years ago and in a way we are successful in that. But we always have faced the problem in sugar industry. Therefore, sugar industry needs a different type of treatment.

It is true that sugar passes through a cyclical form. Every three years or four years, the production increases so much that the prices fall. Since the prices fall, therefore, the farmers do not plant sugarcane in the next following season. Then, over a period of time, again the production falls. The prices go up, and then again we have to provide such incentives. So, I think this is the time that we really need to think about re-vitalising sugar industry, not just in the form of this-which I will come to it later – but also in the form of making sugar, that is, cycleability through which the sugar industry always gets affected.

How do we get over that, is something the Government must see, and for that, probably, we need to look at the possibility of making the cropping pattern change, give proper notice to the farmers that you do not plant so much, so we will not have a problem. We also really need to look at that. For some time we are thinking that probably, we can import to tide over the problem. But that is not the solution because we need our own agricultural production. So, the Government must think about a long-term sustainable nature of making sugar so that the sugar industry will not pass through these phases like many other industries which pass through such cyclical form.

[Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu]

Sir, this particular Bill seeks to amend Section 4 of the Sugar Development Fund Act. It was passed in 1981. In 1982, we had amended this Act to bring buffer stock as one of the qualifying items to receive the funds from this. In 2002, it was amended for exporting the sugarcane and for that to provide internal transport and supports like that. Then, we also amended it for co-generation and for alcohol and ethanol. But this is the first time we are amending this Act for the purpose of paying money for the sugar factories to run their operations.

This is actually the law, the Act which was passed primarily for strengthening the sugar factories to do research and development, to increase the profitability, to bring in some sort of a capital expenditure, though as I mentioned, earlier we also mentioned the revenue expenditure. But to pay for actual working capital of the sugar factories by paying from the Sugar Fund is something which I think really defies the very purpose for this Act. Therefore, we should really try to find out how we can use this Sugar Fund to make sure that the sugar factories are strengthened on a long-term basis rather than paying for the revenue expenditure which will not be in the long-term interests of this country.

Sir, I was talking about making sure that sugar industry itself is re-vitalised. We had an Economic Survey which was presented to the Parliament on 20th of February in which we have seen that the Finance Minister talking about decontrol of the sugar industry.

In that Economic Survey, we have seen that the hon. Minister of Finance was talking about decontrol of the sugar industry. This is something which I would like to know from the hon. Minister who probably is one of the few persons in the country who knows the sugar industry on the palm of his hand. I do not think there are many other people who know this. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what is the long-term plan. Are we thinking about decontrolling the sugar industry which is what is mentioned in the Economic Survey? If it is so, then, is this the solution of providing a sugar fund? Is this a solution to that problem? We really need to know about it.

The other issue is to increase the amount of money from Rs. 15 to Rs. 25 to augment the sugar fund. It is absolutely required that we need support for the sugar industry. There is no doubt about it. There are no questions about it. But, who should fund that support? I want to know whether it should be from the consumers or whether it should be from the Government. I think that the Government has to provide for it and should not really talk of the charges on the consumers to make that happen. Therefore, I really think

that the Government should now really focus on how to diversify the portfolio of the sugar industry.

Sir, Brazil is one of the largest producers of sugar in the world. Brazil popularised one of the great bio-fuels called ethanol on a long-term basis which is now blended worldwide into the fuel that we use for transportation. I think ethanol is something which has now become one of the principal sources of revenue for the sugar industry in Brazil. You really need to do something like this in India to make sure that the sugar industry in India stands on a long-term footing, on a basis that will not suffer such type of cyclibility. That is what is really required to be done.

I know Cuba used to be, once upon a time, the largest producer of sugar in the world. What happened after a few years of the so-called new regime that was there? Now there is a change of regime in Cuba as well. Fidel Castro's brother has taken over. He is already talking about reforms. Suppose, for example, Cuba starts investing more into the sugar industry, then start bringing more sugar into the market, what will happen in the world market? We really need to look at that also and probably we need to be careful about drawing our strategies about the sugar industry in future.

Sir, sugar industry in India and predominantly in Maharashtra is controlled by cooperatives. That is a very welcome thing because cooperatives ensure that the farmer gets a share in the produced crop that goes into the sugar mill. Therefore, he is not only getting the price for sugarcane but he is also getting part of the profit that the sugar mills make in terms of selling the sugar. But, cooperatives, generally in India, are suffering a great deal these days. We need to revitalise these cooperatives. We need to bring the spirit of cooperative which drove this movement a great deal many years ago. Therefore, we need to find out how the cooperatives themselves can be revitalised. If that does not happen, then probably the structure through which the sugar industry operates will not also get the cooperation. Therefore, this is something which we will need to do.

Sir, I, therefore, support the Bill. I feel that some sort of support is required for the sugar industry. But I sincerely hope and wish that the hon. Minister, as I said earlier is one of the most qualified persons to look into the issues, will be able to apply his mind to make sure that the sugar industry is properly revitalised.

[Translation]

SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN (Deogarh): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I support the Sugar Development Fund (Amendment) Bill in-principle. When I was getting information for the same from the front and back seats holders and listening to the speeches of the hon'ble Members, I

came to know many other things. My State is a negligible player in the sugar economics, we are starting it in our area, at a small level. It was started in Orissa during the last 15-20 years. We are now gaining some experience from that. Shri Tathagatji, Member of Parliament from Orissa, was just with me. There is such an industry in his area but sugarcane is grown in my constituency. I would like to share my experience with you which I have gained from my adjoining areas. It would have been better if the hon'ble Minister had enacted this Bill keeping in mind the labourers engaged in farming. This bill has provision to provide loan to sugar mills at subsidized rate or interest-free rate. They have introduced it as an ordinance and today we are going to pass it. A sugar factory named Shakti from Tamilnadu has been set up there?

We have 55-56 years of experience in this field. I was just thinking about the sugar cycle. If the crop is good in a particular year, the rate of sugar come down in the subsequent year and after that, again, its cultivation increases. But this causes loss to the farmers. It is a welcome step that you make sugar mills the agencies for granting remunerative prices and compensation, and maintaining good crop yield. But both the Union and the State Governments do not have any big mechanism to ensure whether as per rule the said amount of money reaches the farmers or not. They face limitations and the State Government express its inability and the matter does not reach the Central Government. If any factory in my State gets the roads repaired to facilitate transportation of sugarcane, the burden of amount spent in such repairs is put on the farmers themselves. Besides, they are burdened with the expenditure incurred on the maintenance of canals. When guarantee is factory and an individual takes loan, then also the farmer does not get full amount of loan. If you make such an important announcement that you are going to give the sugar mills the interest-free or soft loans, I would like to request you that some provision should also be made in this regard. I observe that in state like Orissa, something wrong has happened to the districts of Kalahandi, Bolangir, Cuttack and Dhenkanal due to which they have been adversely affected. You should take care of the interest of the farmers so that whatever provision is made for the farmers through this House, may reach to them. If some provisions are made in the Bill itself and administrative or executive directions are issued accordingly then, I think it would be in the interest of the farmers and the poor.

I, through you, once again support the Bill introduced by the hon'ble Minister. I express my thanks to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would like to request all the Members to wind up their speeches within a few minutes as

the first round of all the Members is over and now second round is to be started.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): For this, a time of two hours was allotted and that time is over now.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, but five-seven members are yet to speak.

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool): Thank you Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I rise to support the Bill with a few reservations. The Bill is intended for the overall development of the sugar industry and matters concerned therewith and increasing the cess from Rs. 15 per quintal to Rs. 25 per quintal. It looks like that though the Bill has taken care of the cases of factories and other institutions, yet it has not exactly taken care of the farmers. I think the Bill does not have anything to say about the farmers.

As usual, like any other agricultural produce, the sugarcane producers have been neglected throughout the country as well as in my State of Andhra Pradesh, particularly in the areas of Telengana Medak, Nizamabad, Adilabad and Karimnagar districts where they grow sugarcane. It is because as no reasonable MSP is given either by the Central Government or the State Government to the sugarcane growers, they are distressed as usual like any other farmer and they are forced to commit suicide.

Apart from this, a strange thing is happening. In any agricultural produce, if anybody purchases it from the farmer, the price will be paid then and there itself to help the farmer. But a strange thing is happening with respect to the sugarcane growing farmers. The fact is any institution who purchases the sugarcane from the farmers, they do not make the payment on-the-spot. But they will ask the farmers to wait till such time that the crushing season is over. Depending upon the rate they get, they will be paying to the farmers. At times, it is happening that the investment that the farmer is making on the sugarcane growing, he is unable to get that much also and he is forced to commit suicide. This is happening.

It is alleged that nearly Rs. 65,000 crore are due to the farmers only in Andhra Pradesh. If that is the case, you can assess how much it could be throughout the country. This is a very wrong thing. In case of paddy, it is being paid. I would request the Government of India, and hon. Minister is also here, not to wait till such time the crushing season is over and to make payment, depending on the rate prevailing at that time. The farmer should be paid there itself at the prevailing rates.

[Dr. M. Jagannath]

Recently, Swaminathan Commission has submitted its report suggesting that Rs. 1,800 should be given to the farmers. There has been a long delay. If such type of things are accepted, based on that, the farmers should get payment there itself. Recently, the hon. Finance Minister has announced waiver of loans for farmers. This should also apply to sugarcane farmers. The MSP should be announced to the tune of Rs. 1,800. Only then the problem of sugarcane growers will be solved.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Kunwar Manvendra Singhji, you may speak now but please conclude your speech within three-four minutes.

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH (Mathura): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, you remind me about the allotted time of three minutes before I could start my speech.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have my own limits, time allotted to all the parties has been exhausted. The allotted time of two hours has been also utilized. What I can do? You may ask your party that any other.

...(Interruptions)

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH: Sir, please give me two minutes extra time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You first start your speech. I will see what I can do.

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH: If you allow me, can I speak from here?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can speak from here.

SHRI SURENDRA PRAKASH GOYAL (Hapur): Sir, today is your birthday. ...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Goyal, we will act as per your wish.

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH: Sir, I want to wish you happy birthday, I just came to know.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That was on 15th, it was a holiday. Thank you very much.

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH: Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to give hearty congratulations to the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture on behalf of myself and all sugarcane farmers. I congratulate you for bringing new amendment Bill for Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982 and the Sugar Levy Act, 1982 and Sugar Development Fund. If we look at sugarcane farmers, they have been facing a problem for many years that they do not get payments for

even two-three years for the sugarcane produced with lot of labour due to which their economic condition worsens day by day as a result they are unable to earn their livelihood, to look after their children, maintain their household expenditure and even to marry their daughters. I hope that the Hon'ble Minister will try to improve the economic condition of farmers through this Bill. There are so many factors in it. Firstly, the slips so distributed do not reach the farmers directly. These are distributed through the middlemen and farmers have to purchase these slips in black by paying extra amount to them. Their sugarcane is not weighed properly when they take their sugarcane for weighing after obtaining the slips. We have done on the spot inspection many a time and scolded the officials and got the action initiated against them but there is no improvement. Further, the farmers have held demonstrations many times to demand timely payment and they had to face bullets for that.

Many farmers were killed there. This House is fully aware that many farmers have committed suicide due to the problems related to farming. Not only farmers but their entire families have committed suicide, which is a matter of great sorrow for the House as well as the country because almost 80% population of our country is related to farming and they are called the bread providers. We should give special consideration to this issue. I would like to attract attention of the hon'ble Minister towards the problems related to farming as means of irrigation are very limited. There are power cuts for 18-18 hours, water is not available for irrigation. They have to use pumps to irrigate the fields, but sometimes diesel is not available on time and crops are destroyed for want of water. As a result, they do not get proper quality of crop and the required quantity of juice in the sugarcane. In addition to that, the canals which are means of irrigation are not cleaned and water is not able to reach the fields. This is the situation for the last twenty years. Even those farmers who cultivate sugarcane and whose fields are near the canals, are not getting adequate water to irrigate their fields which further compounds their problems. Therefore, I request you to provide facilities to the farmers keeping in view the above facts. As far as the disputes between farmers and factory owners are concerned, the Supreme Court had to interfere between them whether it is cooperative factories or private factories. I would like to quote the ruling of the Supreme Court published in Indian Express dated 28.02.2008, which is as under:

[English]

"...The hon. Supreme Court on Wednesday directed mill owners in Uttar Pradesh to pay cane growers their dues by fixing the price between Rs. 115 and Rs. 123 depending upon the quality for the season 2006-2007..."

[Translation]

It was the case related to season 2006-07 and the Supreme Court also interfered in the case. After that High Court in Uttar Pradesh also stated that 'HC scraps UP Governments price order'. The Court instructed that:-

[English]

"...the State Advised Price (SAP) of sugarcane for the 2006-2007 season of October-September. The court also recommended the constitution of a committee headed by a retired judge to calculate sugarcane prices afresh..."

[Translation]

The Supreme Court and the High Court had to interfere many a times in this matter but it is a matter of regret that even after their rulings, the farmers are not getting justice. Further High Court has ruled:-

[English]

"...In the 2006-2007 season, while cane prices were raised about 8 per cent, sugar prices fell 30 per cent due to a bumper harvest. As a result, all sugar mills in the State reported a loss for the first two quarters of the current financial year..."

[Translation]

Therefore, such problems like closure of sugar factories or farmers not getting remunerative prices for their sugarcane should be looked into.

As far as losses are concerned, our Finance Minister has said

[English]

Implement sugar package

[Translation]

Our Finance Minister has given this statement on 13th February, 2008.

[English]

In the Business Standard of 13 February 2008, Shri Chidambaram told banks to implement sugar package. It states:

"The Finance Minister Shri P. Chidambaram today asked public sector banks to implement the interest-free loan package announced for sugar mills..."

"Punjab National Bank, Indian Overseas Bank and the Indian Bank have implemented the package. Others have been advised to complete the exercise soon.

In December, Government notified a package allowing sugar mills to avail of interest-free loans."

[Translation]

He has stated about interest free loans so I would urge upon the hon'ble Minister that when he extends interest free loans to sugar industries why the same can't be extended to the farmers also? They have all along been given loans by the Government, banks and Ministry of Finance. The Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture Dr. Akhilesh Prasad Singh has said:

[English]

"Government disappointed with the response for Sugar Development Fund."

[Translation]

He has made his statement. He further said:

[English]

"The poor response from the sugar industry to the Sugar Development Fund for the modernization or expansion of plants has disappointed the Union Government."

[Translation]

If they are once again heading towards that then I would like to say through you that they must consider the condition of the farmers.

I can recall when there were sugar mills in our area. They used to build roads for the villages covered under the mills where they bought sugarcanes and used to erect shelter for the farmers where they come for weighing their sugar canes. But today, if it is winter or rainy season, the farmers have to keep on drenching while standing in a queue which is more than one kilometer long at the Sugar Factory. They neither have the facility of lavatory nor any shelter and the place to cook their food. They have to remain under the open sky in the rain for several days. The hon'ble Minister is well aware of the problems of sugar industries but I request that he should make arrangement for early payment to the farmers through this ordinance. Their economic condition is pathetic so, they should also be extended interest free loans from the banks so that they could spend their lives peacefully.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Shailendra Kumar, please be very brief and conclude your speech within three to four minutes.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAIENDRA KUMAR (Chall): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on the Sugar Development Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2008.

[Shri Shailendra Kumar]

The hon'ble Minister has come up with some amendments in the Bill of 1982 on which many suggestions for and against have been given. While supporting the Statutory Resolution moved by Shri Mohan Singh, I would like to say that it is true that in the House itself, hon'ble Minister himself asserted that Uttar Pradesh has made major contribution in sugar production. Yogi Aditya Nath has spoken about the plight of sugar farmers of the eastern region. Even the problems of sugar farmers in the western areas are big. Though I have been given less time, still I would like to elaborate upon it. The sugar farmers in Uttar Pradesh were leading in production and their outstanding amounts should be paid immediately by giving them special package so that they may not lag behind. There should be some proper arrangement for that. While I was reading this amendment bill just now, I found that the Government have given more focus on sugar factories whom it will extend loans but there is no mention of farmers which is a matter of concern.

Most of the suggestions given by the honourable members, are related to the problems of the farmers. As honourable members have rightly said that farmers sow sugarcane and later they carry it to the mills. Shri Manvendra Singh ji elaborately described the plight of the farmers which I won't repeat. It is true that weighing machines are installed at a number of places but still there is bungling in weighing sugarcane by the contractors who are awarded the contract to carry out this job. Farmers are the worst sufferer in this case as the farmers fail to get proper price for their produce. Somehow they manage to carry their produce to the mills and even obtain receipts, but do not get payment in time which paralyses them for the next crops. Their farming stops there. They cannot do anything. As the honourable Members said, they have to take loans to marry their daughters and to run their houses. That is the reason farmers are forced to commit suicide.

As the minister has said as well as it has come in light through the proposed amendment that several sugar factories which are closed till date should be revived be they are in Government, private or cooperative sectors. These mill owners shouldn't only encouraged and you will have to see as to how much help can be extended to the sugarcane growers. Shri Manvendra Singh has rightly said that we are giving them neither electricity nor water and yet we want them grow so much sugarcane to meet our domestic consumption as well as export obligation. Keeping all these things in view we are to consider it. We will also have to see where our balance is going awry. Sometimes due to bumper sugarcane production the farmers in the western Uttar

Pradesh burn their entire sugarcane crops. Hon'ble Ashok Pradhanji is present here, he knows it. It causes huge loss to them. So, it has to be considered. The Minister is laughing. I would like him not to laugh. The Minister hails from Maharashtra which is leading in sugarcane production but he must take this issue seriously and think over it. I have this objection that no mention about farmers has been made anywhere in this Bill. I would like him to at least give answers regarding encouraging farmers, providing facilities to them, facilitating payment of their outstanding dues. With these words I conclude.

SHRIMATI RUPATAI D. PATIL (Latur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on Sugar Development Fund (Amendment) Bill.

Sir, I want to say something on the Bill introduced by the hon'ble Minister. They want to provide certain facilities to sugar mill owners but something should also be done to provide relief to 800 to 900 crushers producing gur in my constituency. Nothing has been said in this Bill to augment production of the units producing Ethanol and power. There should also be a provision for this in the Bill. Many suicides are being committed in my constituency; so much so that even today is newspapers have reported that four-five people committed suicide in my Parliamentary constituency eight days after the waiver of loans. The reason for this is that the Government wants to protect sugar mill owners. I would like to request the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture that farmers should also be protected. The sugar mill owners take sugarcane from farmers. A little while ago an hon'ble Member was saying that there are so many problems for the farmers—there is no power, no water, even then they sow sugarcane. They believe that sugar mill owners will take their sugarcane and they (the farmers) will get some returns.

Despite so many problems they sow sugarcane and when the time to purchase the crop comes the sugar mill owners say that proper time has not come. When the right time comes, they still do not procure their sugarcane. This type of politics they indulge in must stop. The price of sugarcane should be fixed. Though the price of sugarcane is fixed, the sugar mill owners do not pay them as per the recovery. They act arbitrarily; they do not pay them properly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to request the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture that free power should be provided for at least the gur producers as has been contemplated for sugar mill owners. Compensation should also be paid to them to the extent possible. As many as nine hundred gur factories function in a single tehsil of my parliamentary constituency and the gur producing farmers carry out the same quantum of crushing in these factories as the sugar mill owners do. Therefore, we must

spare a thought for them so that they get some relief and incidence of suicides come down. Certain package etc. should be given to gur producers. With these words I conclude.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Jasubhai Barad is our last speaker. Please be very brief. Complete your speech within four minutes.

[Translation]

SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD (Junagarh): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. The Bill introduced by Shri Sharad Pawar ji today is a part of his continuous efforts to sort out the problems of the sugarcane farmers as a whole. The most important question is, what are the reasons behind the present financial condition of sugarcane mills? It is not that the cost of production of sugarcane is uniform throughout India. Different zones have been made for it. At some places there are low recovery zones and at others there are high recovery zones. At some places production is 40 tonnes per acre whereas other places are visited by droughts. Today, if a sugar mill with a capacity of 1250 metric tonnes does not run at 65 per cent of its capacity then it does not generate any profits at all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to bring two-three things to the notice of the hon'ble Minister that in such circumstances the prices have gone down in the international market from the year 1998 onwards. The production increased here but they started getting less amount to the extent of about three hundred rupees to four hundred rupees per tonne due to continuous fall in the prices of sugar. As a result the economic condition of sugar mills deteriorated and a big problem cropped up in the repayment of 'pledge' and 'clean' loans. The minimum price of sugarcane is fixed by the Central Government and that has to be paid. So far as the co-operative mills are concerned, these mills make payment in three parts. First, rupees two to three hundred are paid, and a later payment of rupees one hundred to rupees one hundred and fifty is made. After the closure of the mill, last payment is made. About the cooperative banks of the State Government I would say that pledge is given at the rate of 13.5 per cent. Banks take 14 to 15 per cent. So far as restructuring is concerned, I would like to say about Gujarat especially Saurashtra which is a drought prone area. Earlier six mills were operating there and today only two mills are functional. Four mills were closed due to this very reason. The Central Government formulates some policy, gives some special package.

16.00 hrs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Central Government have done this. Hon'ble Minister, Shri Sharad Pawarji had restructured the loan of sugar mills two years ago. Due to this, today the situation is that the Gujarat Government are giving no guarantee in it. If the Gujarat Government do not give guarantee, the relief of 3 per cent in the rate of interest to be given by the banks will not be provided. Five co-operative mills could get liquidity support loan but Gujarat Government has given this loan to four mills only. They are not giving in Saurashtra which has been hit by drought. These are certain things which should have been done. It is proposed to give interest-free loans to the mills in proportion to the amount of excise duty paid by them during the last two years. Who will keep 7 per cent; the Central Government will give 5 per cent through SDF. Even today the mills of Saurashtra area in Gujarat are still facing conversion which is being proposed in SDF. When State Co-operative Bank is contacted they reply that NABARD has formulated a policy that unless the Government of Gujarat gives guarantee they cannot make payment of interest as per percentage due to which liquidity support will not be given. So far as the common man is concerned, for whom Sharad Pawar ji has been continuously making efforts, I hope the hon. Minister will talk to State Governments, if it is required, and help in dealing with these problems. In the end, I support the Bill introduced by him and thanking you for giving me time, I conclude.

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir I am thankful to you for providing me an opportunity to speak. I will take only two minutes.

Sir, I would like to submit to the hon'ble Minister that in the Budget which has been recently introduced, the Government have announced to waive a loan amount of Rs. 60 thousand crores of the farmers i.e. provide them relief. Through this Bill you are providing benefit to the sugar mills. that the sugar mills will pay money to the farmers is this going to ensured? So, my request is that it should be directly paid to the sugarcane growers instead of giving this amount to the sugar mills. The amount, which is paid to the sugar mills by the banks, is delayed by one month and sometimes two months, due to which the sugar mills benefited with a handsome interest. The second thing is that this time in Uttar Pradesh, due to non-finalisation of the policy, the sugarcane farmers, in order to empty their fields so that they could sow wheat, sold their sugarcane at the rate of rupees 30 to rupees 50 per quintal in the beginning for two-three months. Due to our faulty policy the sugar mills could be started only in the month of December. My request to you is that you should decide the amount of money to be paid to the farmers by the

[Shri Santosh Gangwar]

Central Government and the State Government in the month of June and give a detailed account of that sum of money and fix a date for commencing operation of sugar mills in a particular area. You should also ensure that if the owner of a sugar mill does not pay the price of sugarcane within a week or 15 days, he will have to pay that amount with interest. If you implement this, it will create some pressure on the owners of the sugar mills and they will make payment to the farmers on time. You are providing interest-free money to the sugar mill owners. I, therefore, request you to consider this and while answering this question provide some information on this subject and issue some directions; only then it will be implemented. Thank you very much once again for providing me an opportunity to speak.

SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN (Khurja): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I associate myself with the hon'ble Member, Shri Santosh Gangwar ji.

SHRI SURENDRA PRAKASH GOYAL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir I also associate myself with Shri Santosh Gangwar ji.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let both of the hon'ble Members be associated with Shri Gangwarji.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am happy to note that many hon. Members spoke in favour of converting the ordinance into the law and that all of them have supported this. In addition to this, they have tried to put before the House and the Government some problems which are being faced by the sugar mills and the farmers.

Sir, in this country, after the textile industry, if there is any other industry which provides employment to the largest number of people, it is the sugar industry. This agro-based industry provides employment to rural poor across the country and mostly benefits people living in rural India. Our country is the second largest producer of sugar in the world. Six or seven years ago, our country enjoyed the first position in sugar production in the world, but today Brazil produces the maximum quantity of sugar in the world. There is a big difference in conditions prevailing in Brazil and those in our country. Brazil, there is vast area of land in comparison to the population, while in our country, 80 to 81 per cent of farmers have less than two hectares of land. I do not think there is any farmer in Brazil who has less than two hectares of land. There is also a difference in the production method of sugarcane in Brazil and in India. More than 70 per cent of sugarcane production there depends on rain, but here in our country, the farmers have to arrange for water to produce

sugarcane. The cost of producing sugarcane there is much less than that of ours. If we compare the price of sugarcane that is paid to the farmers there in Indian rupee, it will be about rupees four hundred per ton, that is about rupees forty for forty kilo. When the price of sugarcane was rupees 30 to 40 per 40 kilo, I remember that in Uttar Pradesh, there was an influential leader named Gainda Singh. He struggled a lot on this issue. But today it is impossible for the farmers to accept this price of rupees 30-40 per 40 kilo. In Brazil, the crushing capacity of the sugar mills is around 30 or 35 thousand tonnes, but in India, on an average it is around two thousand tonnes. In Brazil, maximum two hundred people work in a sugar mill of a crushing capacity of 30-35 thousand tonnes, but here in our country eight to nine hundred people work in a mill having crushing capacity of 1200 to 1500 tonnes. Therefore, it is not justifiable for the sugarcane farmers and sugar mills producing sugar in our country to compete with them. Nevertheless, the farmers of our country have created a record of getting second position in the production of sugar in the world. They have tried their best in order to meet the need of our country. In the beginning whatever Mohan Singh Ji said is true that the sugar industry is an industry where there is a cycle of a period of five years. That cycle depends on demand and supply and also on the cultivation habits of our farmers. During the first two years our farmers get a very good price. Due to good price, the production also gets a boost. In the third year, a process of the reduced prices starts, and in the fourth and fifth years the prices are so less that the farmer shifts to another crop. Hence, there is decrease in the production of sugarcane, leading to decrease in the production of sugar, after that there is rise in the prices of sugar, and this leads to the increased price of sugar and then sugarcane and the farmers once again grow sugarcane in their fields. This kind of trend is being observed by us for a number of years in this country.

There is no way we can impose any restriction on it, since we cannot dictate the farmers to grow a particular crop. In countries like America, the decision to grow any particular crop is many times taken by the Government. For example the Government decides a certain quantum of wheat to be produced the area of land on which wheat is to be cultivated and the quantum of wheat that each farmer should cultivate. Any law, any step, any order like that can be brought out by the Government there but this cannot be done in a country like ours, because, on one hand our farmers are very poor and their agricultural land is too meagre which makes it very difficult for them to maintain their family on it. A discussion has taken place many a time on this subject in the House also.

What happened during the last two years i.e. in 2004-2005, 2005-2006? The price which the sugarcane farmers

got in the country was never received by them during probably the last fifty to sixty years and hence the area of cultivation of the sugarcane increased. Since last year, the problem we are facing is what to do with this surplus sugarcane and how it is to be crushed. In many States, where the season of production of sugar by sugar mills is restricted upto April-May, the State Government issued directions compelling the owners of the sugar mills, asking the management of the mills that whether it is the month of June or of July, they should carry on their production even if there is a situation of huge recovery loss. But if we do not do such thing, then sugarcane crop would remain standing in the fields leading to the situation where farmers cannot cultivate another crop. This would have ultimately caused a great loss to the country. After such a situation, it seems to me now that next year, probably, the production of sugarcane would come down in the country. There has been less plantation during this year, and the process has started indicating that in the next two years the price of sugar will rise, as the prices of sugarcane rise, the farmers in order to get some extra money may cultivate the sugarcane on the larger scale.

We have to find a way out in this regard. How can we find the way out because our's is the only country where we make only sugar after the crop of sugarcane is reaped. Today everywhere in the world sugar Industry does not only make sugar but also generates electricity, they make ethanol, they make spirit and extra nutritional Alcohol and at some places they also make paper. The total cost of all these taken together can bring profits to the farmers and it can also be gainful for sugar Industry. Thus, the situation is changing all over the world except India.

So, when a law was enacted in this regard in the year 1982, it was before the country that the industry providing employment on such a large scale should continue to run, it should be modernised, favourable situation should be created here so as to allow the farmers to cultivate properly and they should get seeds properly to produce sugarcane. Investment is required for doing all this and there was a need to improve the production of sugarcane, so a sugarcane Development Fund was created. The money collected in that fund came from the consumers. Even today the proposal of increasing the price of sugar Rupees 15 to Rupees 25 is going to affect the common man or the family purchasing sugar will be affected by this and they have to shell out nine or ten paise more per kg. Mr. Prabhu has said here as to why you are putting this burden on them. If we won't increase the production, there will be less production of sugar which is ultimately going to make the consumers pay heavily for this. Two years back, we witnessed prices of sugar going up to more than Rupees 20 per kg. The consumers had to pay the price. If there will be a stable production of sugar, there will be no loot and the sugar will be available at reasonable

prices to them. Therefore, in order to serve the long term interest of the consumers, we needed to put a little bit of burden on the consumers also taking into account the need for production. There has been no change in the steps initiated since 1983. The whole responsibility lies with the consumers.

Why was this fund created? Firstly, the money in this fund should be available with the sugar mills so that they can make the water available in the area where sugarcane is produced or make proper arrangement for the same and they can use this fund for boring, for lift irrigation through rivers, for pipelines and for providing facilities to make the water available. Simultaneously, they can also arrange for seed farm and seedlings. All these works have been provided for in this fund. Out of the money provided to the sugar mills so far, Rupees 530 crores have been given for sugarcane development. The maximum portion of the fund has gone to the cooperative mills. Farmers themselves are the owners of cooperative mills and 10-15-20 thousand farmers get together to start their own mill and the whole profit goes to them. Therefore, this money has been provided for the sugarcane development.

Secondly, from here funds are released for modernisation and expansion of the sugar mill. Today, competition is taking place world over in this field. In order to compete with a country like Brazil, we have to pay attention on how can we reduce our manufacturing cost and modernise the sugar mills? How can the automation be stepped up in these mills and how can the allied industries grow side by side with it. When the situation of capital investment arises, there occurs a need to build up resources. In this way, assistance is also provided through the Sugarcane Development fund in this regard.

Thirdly, as I have stated in the beginning that we cannot face competition in the international market by making sugar only through one allied industry and if simultaneously we do not produce some other by-products, then it makes a loss for the whole country. Today, by co-generation we can carry out the work of generating electricity and make ethanol and spirit side by side. So far, Rupees 350 crores have been provided to several sugar mills from the Sugarcane Development Fund for facilitating co-generation, for making power and for generating electricity. A decision has been taken in case of ethanol projects also and Rupees 32 crores have been provided so far to establish the Ethanol plants. We have many applications pending in this regard. A new way is opening up through it. According to a study conducted in the country more than three thousand megawatts of electricity can be generated through sugar industry. Now, we are moving in this direction, therefore, we are making

[Shri Sharad Pawar]

investments in this regard. We can utilize this sugarcane Development Fund for assisting sugarcane plantation, plant modernisation and diversification. In a cycle of every five years when there is a bad phase of two or three years, it becomes highly desirable for the farmers to protect the sugar industry.

They need to be given some relief at that time. Last two years were very disappointing for this industry and several sugar mills could neither give remunerative prices to the farmers nor wages to the labourers. Even a situation arose, in which several mills couldn't pay dividends. Situation was so deplorable that even banks were not ready to bail them out. Why? Because there was a very large scale production. Their produce remained idle and had no demand in the international market. We cannot compete with countries like Brazil, Thailand, Australia, South Africa in the international market. Under such circumstances, the Government has to provide some assistance to save the industry and ultimately to save the farmers to save their job, to save their employment. It is not that the Government has provided assistance to sugar industry only. The Government of India has given relief to textile industry by preparing a project worth thousands of crores of rupees for the development of the industry. There are only a few steel factories in the country. When the steel factories were facing a big crisis, the Government of India chalked out a separate proposal for them by issuing instruments to the banks and tried to bail out the steel factories. This is the largest rural employment providing industry which has a direct connection with the farming. Something is required to be done to save this industry. The Government of India took some steps to save this industry before our production in a particular year increased tremendously. When we had a bumper production, the Government made a buffer stock of fifty lakh tonnes of sugar by acquiring directly from the sugar industry. The Government took the responsibility of interest and storing charges of the sugar stock. Besides, the Government has provided transport assistance of rupees 1450 per tonne to the states situated far away from sea ports that desire to compete in the international market, and export their sugar produce. The coastal States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh etc. were given hundred rupees less because their cost of transport is lower. The these states were given an assistance of Rs. 1350. Such steps have been taken. Besides, the financial institutions were also given directions to work out their rehabilitation programme. A financial institution like NABARD, which is assisting the farming and agriculture industry, was also given instructions to help the cooperative mills. They also chalked out a rehabilitation package. In spite

of doing all this, there is a need for 190 lakh tonnes of sugar in the country today and more than 280-290 lakh tonnes of sugar is available in the country. If such a situation persists, the sugar industry is going to be under severe crises in the near future. When the sugar mills will be closed no other way will be left for processing the sugar cane produced by the farmers. Jaggery can be made but Jaggery is not going to solve the problem in the country. If we do not process any agricultural produce, we will not be able to provide remunerative prices to the farmers. The country will also be unable to earn profits and the rural employment will cease to generate. Therefore, all steps required for processing any agricultural produce should be taken. Sugar industry belongs to this sector, therefore, the Government has taken a different approach to look at it.

What about the losses being incurred presently? As some hon'ble Members have stated that the Sugar Industry of Uttar Pradesh was neither in a position to start sugar mills at various places, nor it wanted to start them.

Being a Minister of the Ministry of Food, I was concerned that if sugarcane crop is not harvested on time, then land will not be available for the cultivation of wheat. It will affect wheat production which will lead to a situation of import of wheat. Today Uttar Pradesh, especially Western Uttar Pradesh produces large quantity of wheat after Punjab and Haryana. Hence, the crushing of sugarcane was required there. If mills are not made operational there, how will this happen. We have read in the newspapers that farmers have set their sugarcane crop on fire at a number of places. This also adversely affects our economy and it is a national loss. We shall have to pay attention towards all these things besides improving the condition of sugar mills. At the same time sugar mills have not been able to make payments of an amount of rupees four thousand crores to the farmers due to them. This amount was outstanding against them. We talked to the state Government to find out some solution and it was suggested that arrangement should be made for giving loan to these mills by banks. But banks were not ready to give any assistance to this industry, because the financial condition of this industry had deteriorated a lot and banks were not ready to take risk. Thereafter a suggestion was made that the Government of India should share some responsibility, State Government should share some responsibility and banks should take some risk. A number of States have waived off purchase tax on this and many other concessions were also given. The Government of India decided to raise this money from Sugar Development Fund. Sugar mills should now be ready to pay interest on the loan they propose to take from the banks. I would like to make it clear to all the hon'ble Members that whatever loan amount is given to these sugar mills by the

banks, it will be given on the condition that it can be used only for making payment towards the price of sugarcane to the farmers. We have also got suggestion that after making payments of dues to the farmers, we should also consider making payment of outstanding wages of the workers. Still if some amount is left, it can be used for making repayment of loan to the banks. But we have not taken any decision yet. The Government will certainly take notice of the information given by Vikhe Sahib. But our first priority is to make payment towards the price of sugarcane to the farmers. This is the situation now. Several Members have raised doubts that the funds meant for farmers may not actually reach them. Under the rules being framed for it, the amount will be released in two instalments. After the first instalment of subvention all the sugar mills will have to submit certificates to the effect the amount has been given to the farmers alone and then only second instalment will be released. Second instalment will be released only after submitting the certificates. Besides, under the section of sugarcane control order of the Government of India there is a provision that if a sugar mill does not make payment to the farmers within 14 days, it will have to pay 15 percent interest. If this interest and the outstanding amount are not paid, the Government of India has given powers to the state Governments and state Government have given powers to the District Magistrates to seize the property, machinery and sugar of these sugar mills.

All these powers have been given to the State Governments. I have been told that particularly the Uttar Pradesh Government has taken some steps. Even arrest warrants have been issued against some mill owners and when they approached court they were given stay orders. But due to this out of an outstanding amount of 4000 crore rupees 3000 crore rupees have been paid back, but still an amount of Rs. 1000 crore is outstanding. We are and will always be concerned about them. We have told them to make arrangements to recover the amount at the earliest and if the amount is not recovered, use all the powers, whatever powers you have been given, take strict action and ensure that the payments are made to the farmers. If it is not done, they will not get the benefit of the new facility we are providing. We will take all the precautions required in this respect.

A lot has been told about the sugar industry. Particularly, situation in Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand etc. is different from other States. Price of sugarcane is fixed by the Centre for the entire country which is called MSP. It is implemented by the States after the MSP is fixed by the Central Government. Three to four States in the country have framed different rules in this respect and Uttar Pradesh is one such State. In Uttar Pradesh price is fixed on the basis

of the price fixed by the Government of India. Though farmers get some more amount, but if two or three States adopt policies different from the policies framed for the whole country, it creates some trouble and in a way it results in a loss. I had convened a meeting of the heads of these States in this respect, though consensus couldn't emerge in this meeting. But as the hon'ble Supreme Court has recognised the powers of the State Government, we have no problem in this respect. Experiences of some of the sugar mills have been put before this House by the hon'ble Members. Sugar mills are not running properly at places. At some places payments are not made. Hon'ble Member has mentioned about Motihari Sugar mill. We looked into the matter. This mill is closed for the last three-four years. Such mills will not get any benefit. This facility is only for those mills which did crushing during the last year, produced sugar. Banks will provide them interest on the amount they have to pay as excise duty and thereafter we will pay interest. Those sugar mills will not get its benefit which didn't make production. For such mills, the respective State Governments need to take some steps for liquidation. So, far as Motihari mill is concerned, they didn't make payment to farmers and therefore, it was served a notice. Thereafter the organization of sugarcane farmers of that area submitted an application in the hon'ble High court of Patna. The hon'ble High court of Patna gave its decision in this case and asked Bihar Government to pay attention towards it. Order was given to recover the price. Bihar Government has still not paid any attention towards this order, therefore a case for contempt of court by the Bihar Government may arise.

Shri Sita Ram Singh has mentioned about Motihari sugar mill, the matter is in the court and this sugar mill is lying closed for many years. We are not in a position to give benefit in such a situation and we can't help. The Government of that state should take some steps in this respect. This necessary step has been taken to save the industry, jobs and farmers. I am sure that this House will accept it and we will be able to collect money in Sugar Development Fund through this law. This money can be used for providing relief to lakhs and crores of farmers of this country. At the same time we will be able to give assistance to sugar industry for making it competitive at the international level. I am sure that the House will consider this bill sympathetically and pass it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sharad Pawar jee, you please request Mohan Singh to withdraw his motion.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: He had said at the outset that he will not press for it. I request him to withdraw the motion, he had tabled.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has replied extensively to all the points. I think he will fulfil the assurance he has given to the House during his tenure. With this expectation I want to say that it was never my intention to get the Bill repealed and as the hon'ble Minister has shown goodwill, I seek leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Has the hon. Member Shri Mohan Singh leave of the House to withdraw his Statutory Resolution?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

The Statutory Resolution was, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Bill further to amend the Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982 and the Sugar Cess Act, 1982, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House will now take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"That clauses 2 to 4 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 to 4 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1

Short Title and Commencement

[Translation]

SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' (Almora): I beg to move:

Page 1, line 3 and 4

For "Sugar Development Fund (Amendment) Act, 2008"

Substitute "Sugar Funds (Amendment) Act, 2008" (1)

Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I have moved an amendment. It is a technical matter that is why I have to make this amendment. There is only one amendment. As per our established norms and the process of the legislative work, only one amendment is required in case of more than one legislation on the same subject. The Bills, which are moved here such as The Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill-

[Translation]

which has been moved by me;

[English]

The Produces Cess Laws (Amendment) Bill

[Translation]

which has also been moved by me;

[English]

The Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2001-

[Translation]

this has also been moved by me;

[English]

The Indian Divorce Act and Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act

[Translation]

which has also been moved by me; Hindu Marriage Act can be amended through a single Bill but the bill you have introduced amends two Acts-first, The Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982 and the second is The Sugar Cess Act and it would be amended in part three. But it has been named as The Sugar Development Fund Amendment Bill, 2008. When the Bill would be passed, it would have a single section. That section (one) is "The Sugar Development Fund Amendment Act, 1982". It is a grave mistake. I do not say this mistake has been committed by the hon. Minister. That mistake has occurred at vetting stage by the Ministry of Law and Justice. Since the hon. Minister of Law and Justice is the incharge of it, so it was his responsibility to see it. It is commendable that hon. Minister has promoted games and I extend my greetings for that, it must have been time consuming but if we introduce this bill in this Supreme House then it is established that this Cess Act may be withdrawn in future or if these are of similar nature, as I have given some examples and there are many more examples viz. Criminal Laws Amendment Bill was introduced in 1973, CrPC, IPC and Evidence Acts were amended and it is an established rule that if there is more than one Bill then laws have to be introduced. But you have introduced "The Sugar Development Fund". This is a grave mistake, it must be corrected and the amendment presented by me must be passed. I have cooperated so that it could help the Government and the House. You should introduce amendment on your own, because it would be on record that such a grave mistake took place. Prime-facie it indicates gross negligence. These directions from the House, the Chair must be given that before introducing a Bill in the house, its text must be scrutinised properly. It not only affects us and the treasury benches but all the Members sitting here and they would admit that whatever Bill is passed here should contain the relevant contents. This is a technical question, so either you take it to Rajya Sabha, bring amendment there or you can add "Sugar Development Fund Amendment Bill and Sugar Cess

Amendment Bill" to the heading of the said Bill or if you bring Section (1), you will have to add it there also. However, this defect has to be removed. I, therefore, press upon my amendment and hope that the hon'ble Minister will take a supporting view and accept my amendment, because whichever party brings the amendment, if the other party supports it, the procedure of the House will be completed and it will sustain dignity of the House and sanctity of legislative process and legislative procedure.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is difficult to accept this proposed suggestion. The suggestion is, "in page 1, line 2, 'for Sugar Development Act, 2008', substitute 'Sugar Law Amendment Act, 2008'" In fact, this particular law is there for a number of years with the same name. There is no law titled as Sugar Law Act. The proposed Bill seeks to amend the Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982 and the Sugar Cess Act, 1982. The Sugar Development Fund Act seeks to provide finance to the activities for the development of the sugar industry. The Sugar Cess Act, 1982 was enacted for the imposition of the cess on sugar for the development of the sugar industry. In other words, both the Acts have been enacted for the development of the sugar industry by way of providing the Sugar Development Fund. The sugar cess collected as provided by the Parliament was to constitute a fund for the development of the sugar industry.

Therefore, it was thought proper to keep the title of the Bill as Sugar Development Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2008. Moreover, after passing the Bill, the proposed amendment will be incorporated in the respective Acts. The proposed amendment at the title of the Bill would not affect the legislative intention and that is why it is very difficult for me to accept the hon. Member's suggestion. So, I appeal to him that he should withdraw this amendment.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now he has given a detailed reply. So, you may withdraw your amendment.

[Translation]

SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' (Almora): Hon'ble Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the statement given by you is not acceptable because our stand is that there is no existing Sugar Laws Act. Reply given by the hon'ble Minister is misleading and I do not agree with it. I press upon my motion and hope that you will make amendment.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I shall now put amendment No. 1 moved by Shri Bachi Singh Rawat 'Bachda' to the vote of the House.

The amendment was put and negatived.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"That Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title be added to the Bill."

The motion was added.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

16.46 hrs.

FORWARD CONTRACTS (REGULATION) AMENDMENT BILL, 2008

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, as I said in the morning, we conveyed in writing to the hon. Speaker that Items No. 21 and 22 listed in today's List of Business - Items No. 21, of course, is not a Government Business, it is a Statutory Resolution disapproving the Ordinance on the Forward Contracts Bill - could not be taken today, therefore it could be deferred. That is why, we said that Items No. 23 and 24 be taken up and not Items No. 21 and 22.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the House agrees, Item Nos. 21 and 22 may be postponed.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes, please.

16.46½ hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE: DISAPPROVAL OF PRASAR BHARATI (BROADCASTING CORPORATION OF INDIA) AMENDMENT ORDINANCE, 2008

AND

PRASAR BHARATI (BROADCASTING CORPORATION OF INDIA) AMENDMENT BILL, 2008

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House shall now take up Items No. 23 and 24 together. Shri Mohan Singh.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House disapproves of the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Ordinance, 2008 (No.5 of 2008) promulgated by the President on 7 February, 2008."

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990, be taken into consideration."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990 came into force on 15 September 1997. For the purpose of general superintendence, direction and management of the Corporation, sub-section (4) of 3 of the said Act has provided for constitution of a Prasar Bharati Board which exercises all such powers and do all such acts and thing as may be exercised or done by the Corporation under the Act. Sub-section (5) of section 3 of the Act provided that among other members of the Board, it shall also have a Chairman who is also a part time member of the Board.

16.48 hrs.

(Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey in the Chair)

The Chairman holds office for a term of six years from the date on which he enters upon this office. The Act does not provide for upper age limit for the Chairman as is stipulated for the Whole-time Members of the Board. A Whole-time Member of Prasar Bharati Board holds office for a term of six years from the date on which he enters upon his office or until he attains the age of sixty-two years, whichever is earlier. There is already an upper-age limit cap for the Whole-time Members namely, Chief Executive Officer, and Executive Member, Member (Personnel) and Member (Finance). Therefore, it is felt that in the case of Chairman also an upper age limit of seventy years may be fixed to ensure appointment of comparatively younger talent and experience. It is also felt that reducing the tenure of Chairman from the present six to three years shall help to bring diversity of experience at the top level for the benefit of the organization. Similarly need is also being felt for change in the tenure and upper age limit of the Chief Executive Officer from six to five years and from sixty two years to sixty five years respectively.

The Prasar Bharati has to compete with the private electronic media houses as well as to achieve the social objectives entrusted upon it by the Act of Parliament in letter and spirit. It is being felt necessary to rationalize such matters

in order to inject sectoral experience to rejuvenate Prasar Bharati and its Board by undertaking of immediate legislation.

Since the Parliament was not in Session and in view of the urgency explained above, it became necessary to give effect to the above proposal through an Ordinance. Therefore, President under article 123(1) of Constitution of India promulgated the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Ordinance, 2008 on 7 February, 2008.

In this context, we also introduced a legislation in this House to replace the Ordinance into a legislation. Therefore, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990, be taken into consideration."

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Mr. Chairman, Sir, Constitutional provisions in India empowers. His/Her Excellency President to enact a law through ordinance under special conditions when the Session of Parliament is not going on, so that official work does not suffer. I think it is a flagrant breach of the Constitutional system. I don't think that there is such an emergency before the country that compel us to bring an ordinance to reduce or raise the retirement age of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Prasar Bharati and its members. We don't want the misuse of the President's right to promulgate an ordinance by the cabinet. In such circumstances, questions are raised on rights of the cabinet and the President and we invite criticism by misusing such rights. The hon'ble Minister should have introduced it in the House as a general bill as he has done now, and he should have brought it for consideration after proper discussion in Standing Committee of Parliament on the whole set-up of Prasar Bharati in addition to the issue of reducing or raising the retirement age of Chief Executive Officer of the Prasar Bharati and some of its Members. Today, there is vast scope of changes in that and people also have great expectations. The Government have misused this section of the Constitution to avoid examination and healthy discussion in the Standing Committee of the Parliament. So, we are helpless. I have friendly relations with the hon'ble Minister and I am also not totally against the Government. Therefore, I oppose this Bill with a heavy heart.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motions moved:

"That this House disapproves of the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment

Ordinance, 2008 (No. 5 of 2008) promulgated by the President on 7 February, 2008."

"That the Bill further to amend the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990, be taken into consideration."

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI (Udaipur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it seems that the hon'ble Minister has brought the Ordinance regarding Prasar Bharati Board in a hurry. It has been said that this is an era of competition and the Board has to compete with private channels. Therefore, they want to raise the retirement age of Executive Officers from 62 to 70 years. How will we compete with private media by raising the age limit to 70 years? Today, young people are promoted more by private channels but in this case it seems that the decision to raise the age has been taken in a hurry.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the young faces look beautiful on television.

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: On the one hand they agree that keeping in view of era of competition, the retirement age is being raised from 62 years to 70 years, but on the other hand, they are reducing their tenure from 6 years to 3 years to bring in the changes. I think the tenure of 3 years is very short. If you want to develop anything or intend to bring a new scheme, the tenure of 6 years, defined in the paper was quite adequate.

A person can work effectively in this tenure. But the way, in which the ordinance has been promulgated, I would like to ask the hon'ble Minister, through you, whether the Chairman is selected through Selection Committee or selected totally on political considerations? The Parliamentary Standing Committee consider so many issues relating to Prasar Bharati but such promises are made through ordinance or some other way to make Prasar Bharati more popular. Now-a-days the viewership of Prasar Bharati is less than any other channel because it projects only development work of the Government, not the total image of the country. It is being said time and again that we want to live in the era of competition and make it more popular but on the other hand, only the programmes of leaders or ministers are highlighted on news channels and one do not find any mention about the problems of the country. Now Prasar Bharati ordinance has been brought. I would also like to draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister towards the fact that the image of women is being tarnished on channels. There should have been suggestions in the ordinance regarding the steps being taken to check such things on channels or whether these steps would act as deterrent not? Today channels are the medium, which have reached each and every home. One

has a choice as to whether or not go to see a film with one's family or but through TV channels unwanted things reach each and every home. Now, T.V. has reached every home and if something obscene is telecast, it affects our family as well as our culture in a negative manner. The ordinance has been brought in a hurry, as it does not mention the steps to stop such wrong doings. When we read the suggestions of the Standing Committee, we feel that these should be discussed in a proper way but instead of discussing those it seems it has been brought to the age limit of some Executive officer or to adjust some particular person it may be my allegation. Perhaps you may think that I am leveling an allegation. If you take it as an allegation then excuse me but I am not able to understand the rationale behind raising the age limit and reducing the tenure of the Board from six years to three years. Therefore, I oppose it.

[English]

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha): Sir, I rise to support the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill, 2008.

The Bill seeks to fix the upper age limit for the Chairman as well as to increase the upper age limit for CEO. It also reduces the tenures of CEO and individual members.

Prasar Bharati has a number of obligations. It has to compete with a number of channels which are thoroughly private and which have a large market. Besides this, it has a lot of social obligations. In fact, it is expected that it should have unbiased, balanced views and it should also respect the people's views as well as inform the people's views to the country. The people of the country must get a correct picture and also balanced views. That is what the main aim or the objective of the Prasar Bharati is.

In fact, I was reading the Report of the Standing Committee on Prasar Bharati. The kind of structure that it has is mind-boggling. For the information of the hon. Members, I would like to read a few lines from the Report of the Standing Committee. It says: "It is bewildering to note that with 225 radio stations ..." Prasar Bharati has AIR stations as well as Doordarshan.

17.00 hrs.

It says:

"It is bewildering to note that with 225 radio stations and 361 transmitters owned by AIR, covering 91.42 per cent of the country by area and 99.13 per cent by population, and despite broadcasting programmes, in as many as 24 languages and 143 dialects, the listenership of AIR as per the market report in 2004-05 stood at 53 per cent in case of urban areas, 58 per cent in

[Shri Madhusudan Mistry]

case of rural areas and paltry 30 per cent in the metro cities. Likewise, Doordarshan operates 26 channels with 64 Doordarshan Kendras and 1,400 transmitters covering 90 per cent of India by population, but the market share of DD-I is 47.4 per cent, DD News is 12.9 per cent; and DD Sports is 2.3 per cent as per IRS Survey. The market share of advertisement revenue of Doordarshan is only 20 per cent with the remaining 80 per cent being shared by private channels..."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mistry, please mention the Report Number and the Year also.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY: Sir, it is the Report of June, 2007, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The title is "Role of Prasar Bharati and its future status".

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR (Aurangabad, Bihar): It is the 47th Report.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY: Yes, it is the 47th Report. It looks like that you are the Chairman of that Standing Committee'...(Interruptions)

Sir, the objection is being raised on enhancing the age limit. Now, this is the time when the entire country thinks of a young people. It is very difficult to keep the age along with the new ideas, positive and dynamic ideas. That is why sometimes, people say that the more you have an age, the more it goes with, more people live in the past rather than in present and future. They always say: "...". But they do not see, how we look at the future and the present as well. Of course, those who are decision-makers in Prasar Bharati, I am pretty sure in AIR, quite dynamic. At one time, I used to do a listener survey for AIR, Ahmedabad and I know how the people react to the number of the programmes. Despite that, the kind of heritage that AIR has and Doordarshan have in this country is mind boggling. Now, you hear all those original voices and original programmes, and it just charges you, it sometimes puts you back, and entertains you so well that you like to keep that on. But none the less, this is a medium, which shapes the ideas; this is a medium, which provides you entertainment; this is a medium, which injects into your mind, some kind of views, which put the people into a kind of making debates among them and this is a medium, which creates a different mood altogether. But it is such a lively thing. As a result, you need a good and dynamic Board; you need a good and dynamic CEO as well as the Chairman. A lot more depends on the Chairman of the Board.

Sir, there are instances in the foreign channels, specially the British Broadcasting Corporations and others, where due to want of one programme, there were some

serious lapses on the part of the reporter in the programme and as a result of that, their Chairman had to resign. There have always been the biases. Some people say that the Board could be bias; some people say that the news could be bias. But AIR and Doordarshan could be such mediums. Whichever Government comes into power, there may be people complaining about showing some particular faces over Doordarshan all the time. I remember very well when Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad was the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, people from some of the regions were saying: "Instead of Doordarshan, it is Ravidarshan." That was a kind of comment, which was made. It is bound to happen. It is very difficult to keep that balancing by any public broadcasting system, specially where you have a Parliamentary Committee, who decides most of the things and makes recommendations.

The unfortunate part of Prasar Bharati is that you will have to pay for the entire staff of the Prasar Bharati from the Government side.

Almost 70 per cent of the finance goes from the Government. Naturally, the Government must have a say in that, in shaping those ideas. As a result, this has brought a change. I hope that this change under this Bill is brought to inject a new idea, new system, new work culture and so on to make Doordarshan and AIR much more relevant to the people's need of the present. As a result, I hope we all pass this Bill and I support fully these changes.

I was just looking at the commercial market that the private channel has as well as Doordarshan and especially, the news channel. Once I just tuned it and I found it so much informative partly because it has a less block, it has a less time for advertisement. In other channels, there is a lot more advertisement which is being covered.

Besides this, there are two or three points. Since I got this opportunity and especially when the Minister for Information and Broadcasting is here, I just cannot resist telling him that there is an AIR station in my constituency since four years. I request you to start that and inaugurate it. I have also given a notice under rule 377 on that.

The other thing is that in Gujarat very recently an Urdu Channel of AIR Rajkot is being closed down, and I am being flooded with letters from Rajkot. I do not know why. But I am flooded with letters from those who are listening to this Urdu Channel. I request you to start this Urdu Channel as well.

I have also seen that there are some biases as Madam Kiran was saying. Yes, there are biases among those who pick up the news. I did find it. I have my own reason of finding it out. They may have their own reasons to find out. But nonetheless it depends on the person who chooses.

This is not the reader who chooses. It is the editorial board which chooses which needs to be given prominence coverage. I do not know how you would change the attitude inside that. But nonetheless it needs a quite overhauling in the mechanism as well as in providing good, unbiased and balanced news in other Channels.

With this, I support this Bill and I hope that we will have still more good programmes on AIR and also on Doordarshan.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia): Mr. Chairman, Sir, as my predecessor spoke, it is a very innocuous and not a major amendment, though it is expected by everybody.

Sir, you know that Prasar Bharati existed almost for the last 10 years. This Board is never a full-fledged Board. It is always a truncated Board. Half of the Members or two-third Members are working. So, for such an important work if the Board is not fully appointed, it cannot give the desired result. Members from different fields come. If half of the fields are left, then a truncated Board cannot give the desired result. We have seen it in the past and I do not know whether we will have to continue to see it in the future also. So, that is one area of concern.

Now, the question of changing the ages and all that comes. One thing I do not understand. Just one week before the Parliament Session, the Minister said it is very urgent. I am not convinced with this argument. The age of the CEO is to be increased. I do not know whether it is necessary in the interest of the Prasar Bharati or in the interest of a particular person whom we want to keep or continue as CEA. I do not know why. Otherwise, there is no convincing reason why we have to bring this ordinance 10 days before the Session. We have to keep that person only for three years. I do not know the reason. These questions are in the minds of the people. Regarding Prasar Bharati Act, I can say we had a lot of hopes. I have been here for a long time. We fought for a long time for this Prasar Bharati.

We had a dream; we had a background behind our thinking about the role of the BBC and other organizations. But, as I found, actually the Prasar Bharati did not evolve as expected. It is a stereotype thing and is lagging behind. It is not evolving itself with imagination, with planning and covering newer areas. All these things are there. We want to discuss that these things are necessary to have a good discussion about the Prasar Bharati especially after one decade of its functioning.

Secondly, the financial viability is another thing. If it gets money only from the Government then they are forced to obey the Government's orders and its autonomy and independence is hampered. Though ten years have passed,

we could not complete that area as to how we can make it viable financially.

I then come to the status of the employees. That is another area. There are 40,000 employees. Where will they go? They are "Na Ghar ka", Na Ghat Ka. This is the situation. I donot know whether they will go to the Government or they will remain in the Prasar Bharati Board. The Prasar Bharati Board is incapable of paying. It is a financially deficit organization. They cannot pay their employees. How can organization, which cannot pay its employees, serve the institution in a proper way? It is an institution. You have to do it. I am raising these issues. It is our child. This House has created it. But it did not develop. It is becoming a handicap. It is suffering from different diseases. We have to cure it from all these diseases. That is one area of concern.

I now come to the content of the programme and the sort of programmes it is doing. The other commercial channels, throughout the day, they are not giving any information but they are propagating. They take one incident one day and for the whole day they show it and in the evening a public opinion is formed. Like that, it is not giving any information but it is becoming a channel for propaganda on a particular point and doing so many things. This modern media is playing a destructive role, specially the commercial channels, the modern channels. Sir, it is a destructive role. They are doing some good things. But they are also doing some things which are destructive. Sometimes they create confusion, sometimes rioting, sometimes hatred — all because of their repeating of the telecast items. If there is a good work, it is not a report. But if there is a particular item say a pothole, the whole day they will show the pothole as if there is no road for 100 kilometres and only one pothole is there. Sir, this way they spread half truth which is calculated.

But in the case of Doordarshan, they have played a good role. They have not given wrong reports. The All India Radio and Doordarshan are famous for their impartiality and good coverage. Though there is some partiality as hon. Member Shrimati Kiran Maheswari has complained, the Government, their people and their Ministers are unduly shown, but overall, we cannot compare All India Radio and Doordarshan with the other channels regarding the impartiality, their coverage, the sincerity and truthfulness with which they show the programmes. We cannot compare our Doordarshan with any private channel.

They may be colourful. They may spend money by using good cameras and all these things. But, content-wise, we cannot say that the Doordarshan is inferior. We all should stand by Doordarshan to protect its character. These are the points.

[Shri Hannan Mollah]

Now, coming to our style, we have to change our style with the change of age, change of viewership, modern generation viewers etc. We sometimes continue in a fossilised style, old style. People do not like that. We have to think about it and innovate. We have to imagine. Otherwise, what will happen sometimes is that instead of imaging new things, we are copying. We are trying to copy the private channels. That is becoming another wrong thing. We should not copy them. We should imagine and we should evolve new method of style so that it can be attractive and the common people can be attracted to it.

I now come to the quality of the content. We can think of having a channel for children. I request the hon. Minister. You know that the BBC has a channel for the children. Can we not imagine to have such a channel for our country? We discuss so many problems of the children. We should have a channel dedicated to the children of our country.

We have 24-hours channel, fashion channel, this channel, that channel etc. But we have to imagine and find out which is necessary for the country.

This is an area of concern. Now I come to the issue of priority. Our only priority is cricket. Every day, for whole day, for 24 hours, cricket is there as if there is nothing else in the society. So, the mental make up is also required to be changed, and especially the law-makers and others should be involved in changing it.

Regarding funding, the Ministry should plan how funding to it can be improved to keep its independence also. This Board should also always be not truncated. I would like to ask another question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing the total working of Prasar Bharati. This is only an amendment Bill.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: Sir, this is an amendment Bill, but it is very small Bill while there was a demand for a comprehensive amendment Bill. The Supreme Court gave instructions that there should be a comprehensive amendment. The Report of Standing Committee, he quoted also recommended that a comprehensive amendment should be brought. Everybody is demanding for a comprehensive amendment. The 40,000 employees are also demanding this. There are 8,000 posts lying vacant. Where will they go? Will they remain with the Government or go to Prasar Bharati? Everything should be taken into account. There is a necessity to bring a comprehensive amendment, but only this amendment to increase or decrease the age is brought. It should not be like this. Because of that, doubts arise. A Group of Ministers also sat

and recommended that there should be a comprehensive amendment. The Supreme Court, the Standing Committee, the Group of Ministers said that there should be a comprehensive amendment. Why is this piece-meal amendment brought? Why has this single-point amendment been brought? These things really raise questions in the minds of the people. So, I would request the hon. Minister that the Government should come clean and clarify all these things. He should also bring a comprehensive amendment as we are all demanding. He should also solve most of the problems on the basis of the review of the last one decade. I think, that will help. If we want to see only one person's interest, it will not help Prasar Bharati; and it will not fulfil the dream with which Prasar Bharati was born. With these words, I thank you.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY (Dhenkanal): Sir, I stand today to seriously oppose the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill, 2008. From the very manner in which this Bill has been prepared and the statement given by the Minister on July 1, there appears to be a huge contradiction. This Bill, if taken prima facie, is a very superficial Bill. It seems like someone in authority in Prasar Bharati probably did not please the powers that be, sufficiently enough that they considered the person eligible to continue in that post.

There was a mindset in the earlier days when AIR was called 'All India Radio'. There was also a mindset in the late '80s where people considered that the then Prime Minister, the Congress Prime Minister, had so much exposure on Doordarshan that the word 'burnt out' was used, that he burnt himself out, and the election results of 1989 showed to the nation that over-exposure through the media can definitely harm the person who is in power. But the desire of, I assume, every politician is that this red light should always be burning, should always be on and my voice should be the loudest in the House, my face should always be on the TV screen and my speeches should be always on AIR. So, this 'my' impression has willy-nilly demolished the credibility of both Doordarshan and AIR, as a result of which the creature that is coming out of these two organisations is the Prasar Bharati.

It is a welcome step, but it is again initiated by non-Congress Governments in the past of which one of the present Congress Ministers – who was earlier in the non-Congress Government, namely, Shri S. Jaipal Reddy – was one of the architects. The Prasar Bharati concept came about when people who loved democracy in this country considered that these strong media should be independent and should strive for the development of the country and not just promote a few individuals.

I come from a Constituency in Orissa, namely, Dhenkanal that has had the pride of giving two Information and Broadcasting Ministers to this nation. It is a pity that today we have come to a level where we — this august House — have to hit out and pass a Bill to omit certain individuals. When we talk of the Chairman and when we want to bring down his longevity in the Chair from six years to three years, we take his age limit — I assume the last person who was there was above 86 years of age, and we have to bring it down to 70 years — to ensure that certain people are thrown out of their seats. But a time has come when this House and the Government has to consider putting people in Prasar Bharati, who are of age that matches the majority age of this nation.

We are creating programmes in the Government media that nobody wants to watch. Many hon. Members who spoke before me have mentioned this point. Some of them have praised the Government media. Probably, they have felt that in crisis like Nandigram or some such event the Government media gave a very twisted version, which suited some people. But when everybody else was giving different versions and were listening to the people's voices, the impression that went out all over the country was probably more correct than what the Government media had tried to project.

I do not stand here as an apologist for private broadcasters, but today we have to admit that opening up our broadcasting system to private players has definitely brought in competition and better quality of programmes. People are definitely exposed to very many more things today than they were exposed to earlier. But it is a difficult thing ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Satpathy, the time allotted for this discussion is only two hours, and many more hon. Members have to speak on this subject. Therefore, please be brief.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Sir, please give him some more time to speak.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI-TATHAGATA SATPATHY: Thank you, Sir. I will be extremely brief. It is very difficult to be judgemental and to say that certain channel is bad or certain programmes are bad. I think that you have to offer today's youth everything that is available in this world, and it is for them to choose what they think is necessary for their growth. But, unfortunately, both your broadcasting arms under the Prasar Bharati have successfully failed to provide this for the youth of India.

It is necessary — when we see such Bills that are flimsy

and do not have much content — that the hon. Minister starts thinking on the lines of actually giving autonomy to the Prasar Bharati. It is very important that Doordarshan and AIR are made a profit centre by itself in every State.

You have to compel the people working there — Doordarshan directors, the All India Radio directors — that they are accountable not to the Government, but to this House. If the Government has given them money, it is the bounden duty of the Government to definitely finance these organizations till they come off age and become sufficiently economically viable. Till such stage, the Government should help them. But at the same time and as a parallel step, the Government has to ensure that the people who are in-charge of these broadcasting arms make an effort to ensure that it becomes an economically viable and a free profit centre whereby true freedom will be coming down on them. Until that happens, as long as Doordarshan and AIR are at the mercy of the Government, this kind of an interference by politicians and more so by bureaucrats who want to please the politicians for their own benefit will continue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY: I would like to lastly say one thing that although it is a good move to bring down the age, but even 70 years for the Chairman of Prasar Bharati is a very old age. The Government has to seriously consider how to hire private players or people who have experience, successful track records in private broadcasting companies, attract them with good salaries, with good perks, facilities and sufficient freedom so that in the foreseeable future, it will be possible to make both wings of Prasar Bharati competitive players in the field of broadcasting. This field is becoming more and more competitive. In future, it will be a cut-throat race, so it is essential that the Government wakes up to the existing system, instead of making cosmetic changes just for political benefits.

I reaffirm my opposition to this Bill, and thank you for giving me this opportunity.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU (Rajapur): Sir, my good friend, a good parliamentarian, and now the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, besides being the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, has issued an Ordinance which I very strongly oppose.

Sir, I really do not understand, first of all, the Government's wisdom of bringing out so many Ordinances during Inter-Session period. I do not understand this that suddenly why the Government should start thinking that now their job is not to govern but to legislate! This is basically an encroachment on the powers inherently provided to the Parliament and, therefore, any Ordinance that is issued

[Shri Tathagata Satapathy]

should be opposed. But I oppose it mainly because it was introduced by a person who is also the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. I request the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs – while he is replying on the Bill as the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, but on the Ordinance as the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs - to let us know whether he will agree that an Ordinance like this should be issued.

Sir, what is the urgency? An Ordinance can be issued on a very urgent matter. Here, the urgency, as has been explained, is that suddenly they realized that somebody who is occupying that office as the Chairman of Prasar Bharati is more than 70 years of age. They suddenly realized! Probably, his birth certificate was missing; it was produced and they suddenly realized that, that person who has been doing a good job and, therefore, he was not removed for all these years has started behaving in a manner that he cannot be the Chairman of the Prasar Bharati. So, when this suddenly realization came, it prompted the Government to immediately issue the Ordinance. What is the urgency in this? They are now replacing a person who is more than 70 years of age with a person up to 70 years of age.

First of all, I would like to know from my friend, Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni, what was the urgency in this matter. He should explain this because this is a very important issue. I know now that only efficient people get too many responsibilities. Mr. Priya Ranjan Dasmuni is so efficient that he has now been made the President of the West Bengal Congress Committee. I heard his speeches. Very eloquently he is talking about how they should have democracy in West Bengal. While he was talking about it, I know he would never like it, I wish to let him know that you cannot have democracy, unless you know the role of Parliament. Can we have democracy without Parliament? This is the fundamental issue and let him explain the urgency.

I read through the Statements of Objects and Reasons of the Bill very carefully. We are saying that we need younger people in the office. I would like to know the definition of younger here. Mr. Chairman, Sir, you are a talented person and that is why you are occupying such a high office. We need people with knowledge, talent, experience and all that. At the same time, we are saying that if you cross 70 years of age you are not good. I would like to know if Mr. M.V. Kamath – I do not know his age – is no longer young. Mr. Kamath is one of the very distinguished journalists. He has been the Editor of Illustrated Weekly of India. He worked as the Foreign Correspondent of Times of India in various countries. He has been one of the great columnists that we have known. I read his writings for a long time and I admire him. However, the Government suddenly wants him out of office.

I would like to know what the logic behind the Government wanting to have a 'younger' person in that office. What is the definition of 'younger'? Is 'younger than M.V. Kamath' the definition of your 'younger'? Younger in comparison to what? The retirement age of a Government Servant is 60 years. If you talk about a younger person, you can talk about a person of less than 60 years of age. If you talk about a younger person than the ones who have already been there as Chief Executives, etc., is their age limit going to be 65 years? So, I really do not know what exactly is meant by this. Therefore, this is something that should be clearly defined.

This Ordinance mentions a very important thing that any person holding office as the Chairman immediately before the commencement of the said Ordinance ceases to hold office as such Chairman, if his appointment is inconsistent with this Subsection, and is not entitled to any compensation because of ceasing to hold the office. So, it looks like that the Ordinance was issued primarily to get rid of one person. Is it so? If it is so, what are the reasons for it? If it was not so, what was the necessity of promulgating this Ordinance?

The history of Prasar Bharati Bill goes back to 1977 when it was introduced in Parliament after the Emergency. At that particular time there were not many private media channels, particularly electronic ones. So, we thought that we really needed public opinion to be generated through electronic media which should not be dominated by the Government. We really wanted that this organisation should function independently, professionally and that it should not be subject to meddling by politicians. That was how Prasar Bharati was created. If you start interfering in its functioning in this manner now, it would really defeat the very purpose of the Bill. I, therefore, would request the Minister to first of all take such steps which will insulate this organisation from political meddling. That will ensure that professional standards are maintained. That will make sure that Prasar Bharati becomes number one media organisation in the country. Despite the fact that we have got so many new channels coming up, this organisation has maintained its dominance. That shows that this organisation has some intrinsic professional strength. We should try to consolidate it and try to improve it. If you want that to happen, we should take necessary steps for that.

The Government is going to appoint a Chairman of Prasar Bharati. Do we have a formal process of appointing the Chairman of that organisation? Is it going to be an independent process? My request to the Minister would be that such appointments should really be kept above politics. A good example for us to follow is that of the BBC. BBC was

running a campaign against the Government of Mr. Tony Blair's. As Prime Minister of his country Mr. Blair was not happy with it but there was nothing he could do to stop it. That was because BBC is an independent organisation. I think the legacy Mr. Dasmunsi should leave behind is to create an organisation which will be totally bereft of any politics, which would be beyond any meddling by politicians. For that to happen, I would request the Minister to suggest to us the measures the he is planning to take for the appointment of a person to that position which will be totally away from political interference.

In today's modern world the media plays a very important role. Public opinion is formed on the basis of media reports. So, we have a great responsibility as Parliament of the country to ensure that the Fifth Estate is protected and promoted properly. In that, Prasar Bharati must play a very important role. I would request the Minister to ensure that the stature of that institution is not damaged in any manner.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (Midnapore): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I stand to support this bill. While going to support the Bill, I would like to say something. Let me first come to the Ordinance. When the hon. Minister for Information and Broadcasting, hon. Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi was sitting in the Opposition benches in the 13th Lok Sabha, I used to see him protesting or registered his objection with regard to the Ordinances, in regard to every Ordinance. But I am astonished and amazed to see that while he is the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, he has got this Ordinance. Ordinance has been promulgated. This is not the only Ordinance. In this Session, we have disposed of till today, I think, more than three Ordinances. Still more Ordinances are pending to be disposed of.

The other day, in this august House, the hon. Law Minister told that he was the last man to go for promulgating Ordinances but he himself piloted that Ordinance. What was the urgency? Whatever may be the explanation, it is not convincing to us. This Ordinance was promulgated on February 7, 2008 and this Budget Session was commenced on February 25, 2008. What was the urgency in between? If the Bill would come directly to this august House for deliberation, I think, heaven would not have fallen. I think, he will satisfy and explain to the hon. Members as to what was the urgency behind promulgating this Ordinance.

Now, I am going to the Bill itself. I do agree with the points which have been made by my predecessors like the hon. Hannan Mollah, even Shri Suresh Prabhu. What is the reason for raising the tenure of certain officers? It is quite clear that this Ordinance has been brought with the aim to protect some persons. This point should be made clear. The Prasar Bharati came into existence ten years before and it

is an autonomous body. I do not think that it is lagging behind or has not achieved any success. But more has to be done so that the interference of the Government would be less or nil and it should not be guided by a particular political idea. It is not understood as to why in the last ten years since its formation, this has not been fulfilled. Why has such a thing happened in the last ten years? This Bill has been brought before us for adoption but this needs a comprehensive legislation. The time has come to review everything and for bringing out a comprehensive legislation.

Sir, the Minister is aware of the problems of the administrative employees who are engaged or working or posted in Doordarshan, Akashvani and other allied offices. For years together, they have been putting forth their demands before the Government and the hon. Minister is aware of this.

They are agitating all over the country. They had conducted dharnas, satyagrahas and other such programmes. The Minister had assured them that something will be done and the matter is under the consideration of the GoM. But till today, no result has come out. I am confident that the Minister will consider their demands and before 31st March, he would do something because it is made known that by 31st March, the 6th Pay Commission Report would come out and if their demands are not settled before 31st March, the interests of the administrative workers of Doordarshan and Prasar Bharti would not be as was desired by them. So, I hope that the hon. Minister will think and ponder over it, and do the needful.

Lastly, I would like to say that there are other players globally and on the domestic sector. So, Prasar Bharti should be moving in such a manner that they can achieve better performance and acquire competitiveness.

With these words, I broadly support the Bill with the hope that the Minister would sort out and solve the problems with regard to the employees of Doordarshan and Prasar Bharti.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to submit, through you, that the Government has introduced this Bill with a malafided intention. We would have certainly supported the Bill if it intended to give more autonomy and power to Prasar Bharti so that it could compete with private electronic channels. Some days back, a Bill was introduced in this Parliament to remove Venu Gopalji of AIIMS and a situation similar to that seems to have been created through this Bill.

Sir, as our colleagues have also mentioned, Prasar Bharti Nigam was formed by merging Doordarshan and All

[Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat]

India Radio. The Government wants that the Chairman of the Corporation should be younger in age and of their ideology. The Government says that chairman should be young, active and diligent but it is only an excuse. Now the age of the present MD Shri Kamath ji, who was appointed by the previous Government, is 70 years, though his term is going to be completed in 2009. Nothing special is going to happen in a span of one year but the elections are approaching in the near future. In view of impending elections, UPA Government wants that such a person should be appointed chairman who is their 'yes man' and can sing to their tune.

Sir, this autonomous corporation was formed by passing a Bill in the Parliament and it controls All India Radio and Doordarshan in the whole country. The Government has invested thousands crores of rupees on it. Now, Government wants to control the entire country from East to West and North to South by using it as a puppet. Sir, through you, I deplore this move. In some quarters of Government it is alleged that he is close to BJP. Though under the guise of it, Government did not disturb him, but what excuse it should take now? Thus, keeping in view the nearing elections the Government has brought it through Parliament so that it could act in an arbitrary manner to enforce its anti democracy stance which we had witnessed during emergency. For this small purpose they have brought an ordinance. The Government wants that through this ordinance the retirement age of the chairman is reduced from 70 years and the person who is already occupying the office may be removed by terming his appointment irregular under the rules and a new person is appointed on that post. We would have wholeheartedly supported this Bill, had it been framed for achieving social objectives of Akashvani and Prasar Bharati to meet the expectations of people for information and entertainment and to make it stand the test of time. I am constrained to say that the Prasar Bharati is in a mess. The Bill which has been brought in after promulgating an ordinance is aimed at removing only one person.

I would like to quote with your permission. The Bill seeks to amend the Prasar Bharati Act and prescribes the maximum age limit for the post of the chairman of the Prasar Bharati at 70 years. Term of Shri Kamath expires next year in January, 2009. There is no restriction on the maximum age limit for the post of the chairman in the existing Prasar Bharati Act. There was no restriction regarding age limit under the existing provisions. Now, Shri Kamath Sahib is being sacked by imposing a restriction of age limit and a new stooge of their own is to be appointed. They have removed Shri Anupam Kher, who was chairman of the Censor Board. Shri Anupam Kher is a renowned personality in the country.

I have to say it with great regret that such persons have been removed. It was desirable that in order to regulate private channels and make a Code of Conduct, Telecasting and Regulatory Bill, which has been pending for a long time, should have been brought in. That Bill is not being brought in but an attempt is being made to remove the chairman and prune his powers. They have not made any effort to regulate the media. We were expecting from the Doordarshan good quality programmes keeping in view ethos of Indian culture and glory of India which would have set an example for other electronic channels but with a motive of minting money they are producing even more inferior programmes than the private channels. There is a great mismatch between the Government's social objective and gross commercialism. It is not right. ...*(Interruptions)*

Through you, I would like to ask the Government whether the Government are going to introduce the Telecasting and Regulatory Bill to fix accountability of the private channels during this Budget Session? I have to say with regret that at present inaction and corruption is rampant in the Prasar Bharti and as I have alleged that the Public Service Broadcaster was required to be made strong and better whereas its standard is being compromised. Due to laxity of the Government, the Prasar Bharti is being outstripped by the Private channels. The hon. Minister, is a young and righteous person. We had high hopes from him but I criticize and condemn the manner in which an attempt is being made to make it a Government mouthpiece despite your being at the helm of affairs in the Ministry. Through you, I would like to suggest that the Prasar Bharti be made professional but at the same time, its entertainment quotient, credibility, authenticity and autonomy should be maintained. Professional managers are welcome and let the Prasar Bharti thrive with autonomy and do not make it a puppet.

With these words, I am heartily grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY (Berhampore, West Bengal): Sir, I subscribe to the view inherent in the Bill under the nomenclature Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill, 2008.

At the outset, I must extend my compliments to the hon. Minister, Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni as he had earlier conceded to the demand that was aroused before the cricket season in our country. Sir, as you know, when cricket fever struck our countryside, young men and women were not able to get access to the media because private channels were reluctant to transmit their signals to the far-flung areas.

When young men and women — who are cricket loving people — were crazy to have accessibility to the media, at

that time, lakhs of people urged upon the hon. Minister to get it done and he had done it on his own initiative. Therefore, he deserves to be appreciated lavishly.

The Bill is aimed to amend Section 6 whereby it is stated that the Chairman shall be part-time member and shall hold office for a term of 3 years from the date on which he enters upon his office or until he attains the age of 70 years which ever is earlier. Second amendment is that the executive member shall be the whole time member and shall hold office for a term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office or until the age of 65 years which ever is earlier. That is why, the scope of discussion is very much limited in regard to the Bill. But somehow the Opposition is sniffing out the ulterior motive behind the introduction of this Bill which has been piloted by the hon. Minister. May I ask them why are they now projecting Mr. L.K. Advani as the Prime Minister in waiting instead of Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee? Someone may be biologically active but you have to consider the chronology for every human being. They are alleging that we are simply removing someone who is very dear to them. The Government does not nourish any envy to any personality whosoever he may be. But the fact is that now the age of Mr. Kamath, the present incumbent, has reached 86 years and 03 months and the age of retirement will go up to 89 years. So, in the age of 89 years, it is easy to assume that none is so competent at least to preside the Prasar Bharati Board which was established in the wake of Prasar Bharati Act and after the installation of Prasar Bharati Corporation.

If you see the other organisations in our country, you will find that insofar as CAT is concerned, the upper age limit of CAT Chairman is 68 years and the upper age limit of the Chairman of National Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum is 70 years. Simply, the Bill is intending to rationalise the age limit and the tenure of a personality who is supposed to preside over the Prasar Bharati Board as a part-time Chairman. I came to know that even during the Winter Session, the Prasar Bharati Board meeting used to be held in Mumbai instead of Delhi because of the on's laught of winter. We are all proud of Prasar Bharati.

[Translation]

The device through which poor people living in far flung villages can have a glimpse of entire India is called Doordarshan. We all are proud of Doordarshan.

[English]

Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that the Government should try and make the Prasar Bharati financially independent. It is because this organisation is being run by way of Grants-in-aid from the

Central Exchequer. As was being argued by Shri Prabhu, I would also like to make the point that the first condition for becoming an independent authority would be when this organisation would be able to augment its revenue; would be able to be financially independent; would be able to mobilise resources and furthermore, when it would be able to make optimal utilisation of resources.

Secondly, I would like to request the hon. Minister to digitalise the holdings of Doordarshan so that the national events of importance and also the historical speeches could be preserved for our posterity. I must thank the hon. Minister and also tell him that we all are with him in his venture to make Prasar Bharati and Doordarshan more accessible to the common people and also in his effort to improve upon the quality of production that we expect from him.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am one amongst those who have given notice of disapproval of this Statutory Resolution. On a previous occasion I had pointed out in this House that the Government is misusing this emergency provision in the Constitution. It so happened that when Ordinance on the Forward Contract Regulation was promulgated, the House was in possession of that Bill. That has been made perfectly clear. This also is a clear case of misuse. Why is it so?

This Prasar Bharati Act was passed in 1990. Since that time four Lok Sabhas have been constituted and dissolved. Several Sessions have been held in this House and even this Government has been in power for the last four years. We all knew that the age limit and the duration of the Chairman of Prasar Bharati has not been specified in the Act that was passed in 1990. Eighteen years have passed since then and no Government found any emergency and even this Government, for the last four years, did not find any emergency to come with any amendment in this regard. What is the emergency now for issuing an Ordinance for reducing the age and period of duration of Chairman of Prasar Bharati? I personally do not impute any motives behind this move, but if anybody does, then he cannot be blamed for it. The question is, what is the emergency? We have heard about the sleep of Kumbhakarna in the Ramayana, but this Government had a much longer sleep than him and took 18 years to find out any emergency about the fact that the age limit and the duration has not been fixed in the statute. This Government should have done it immediately after it came to power. Did this Government not find any emergency for all these four years?

Sir, I would say that the hon. Minister did not find any emergency for four years for reducing the age limit or for reducing the period of the duration of the Chairman. They did not think that here was a Chairman of an organization

[Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan]

who could be thrown out immediately without any Government sanction. That is also there in this Ordinance. It is a routine matter and even for routine matters Government is resorting to Ordinance. The attempt of the Government is to make this Legislature a rubber stamp of the Executive. In case of the Forward Contract Regulation also the same thing happened. Is it not a routine matter? Now, if such organizations would have to compete with the private sector, then the functioning of the Prasar Bharati would have to be improved upon. But the Government did not find any emergency.

18.00 hrs.

The Government did not think of bringing any legislation to make things better. Even the Standing Committee of this House had submitted a recommendation for overhauling this particular statute. My dear friend has no voice in this regard. They did not take any action. No amendment Bill was brought before this House. To make this organization a workable organization, we have thousands and thousands of news readers who are casual workers. Our hon. Minister did not find an emergency in that matter. On providing employment to poor people, he did not find any emergency. There were several recommendations before you. You did not find any emergency in that regard. The only emergency which he found is to curtail the age limit in the period of Chairman and that he should be thrown out without compensation. That is the emergency. All of a sudden, he had a dream and one fine morning, he thought that it is high time to issue an Ordinance. ...*(Interruptions)* Do not repeat such actions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please hear me. Hon. Members, it is 6 p.m. now and I have a list of more than seven Members to speak on this Bill. I would like to seek the opinion of the House on extending the time of the House. Is it the sense of the House to extend the time of the House by an hour?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): I propose that the time of the House may be extended by an hour. I think that the discussion shall be completed by an hour.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Yes Sir, we may extend the time of the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. It is agreed that the time of the House is extended by one hour and it will be followed by 'Zero Hour'.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: I am told that there are about 40,000 employees working in this institution. Casual labourers and people on deputation have no service

conditions. For the last many years, I have been representing before him. But nothing has been done. He did not find any emergency on those things. Even the Standing Committee submitted a report for reforming and overhauling this institution. But nothing has been done. The only emergency which he has found is that the age limit of Chairman should be curtailed. It is not only that. He must be removed without compensation. It is not only in the case of Chairman but this is the case for all the Executive Members also. There also, he has given a provision that they will not get any compensation if they get terminated. What is the purpose of this provision? Is it fair? The service conditions of the employees who are working there day and night are not improved. Their service conditions have not been changed. You do not find any emergency there. You have been there in the Ministry for the last four years. At least you could have given a thought on this matter. You did not find any time to improve the service conditions of the employees of Prasar Bharti numbering about 40,000. It is rather a pity. I am ashamed of it. ...*(Interruptions)* Chairman is an important post and there are Executive Members also. We all know their position. He wanted to terminate the services of these two gentlemen from this organization and for that purpose, he has resorted to article 123 of the Constitution. You see how far is the emergency provision of the Constitution misused. ...*(Interruptions)* With due respect, I once again appeal to you not to repeat such a thing hereafter. As one of your best friends, I support the Bill which you have moved but do not repeat again in future.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you. The basic purpose of this Bill has been propounded by various Members who spoke before me. I would dwell into paragraph three of the Statement of Objects and Reasons. It says:

"Since the Prasar Bharati has to compete with the private electronic media houses as well as to achieve the social objectives entrusted upon it by the said Act of Parliament in letter and spirit, it is being felt necessary to rationalize such matters in order to inject sectoral experience to rejuvenate Prasar Bharati and its Board by undertaking of immediate legislation."

This is the crux of introducing the Bill. I think it is the basic purpose of introducing this Bill. Of course, the age limit of the part-time Chairman has been focused upon; there is a mention about the reduction in the tenure of the Chairman from six to three years; and there is also a mention about fixing the upper age limit for the Chairman.

This is just tinkering with the Act. Though the Act was passed in 1990, it was promulgated only in 1997. Though it has been there for eighteen years, the promulgation took

place only ten years back. So, the Government and the people have some experience of how the Prasar Bharati has functioned during these ten years. When we say something about the Prasar Bharati, we have to also discuss how it has functioned. Has it lived up to the expectation of the people that the people had of the Prasar Bharati? I do not subscribe to the view that the Prasar Bharati should compete with private players. The Prasar Bharati has its own mandate; has its own clientele; and it has its own viewers. Those viewers who watch Doordarshan and hear All India Radio seldom see or hear what private television channels telecast. Doordarshan has its own clientele and viewers. Why can the Prasar Bharati not try to improve the clientele and viewers instead of competing with the private television channels?

Every functioning democracy in this world has its own public sector broadcasting organisation. Doordarshan or Prasar Bharati is a public sector broadcasting organization. The public broadcasting organization needs sufficient support from the Government.

18.09 hrs.

(SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN *in the Chair*)

I have certain queries to ask. There is a problem of regulation. Should the Government regulate the content? Should the Government regulate the administration? These are two things before the Government and the Parliament to deliberate. I am of the opinion that content should not be regulated by the Government. It should fix the policy. That policy has to be carried out by the Prasar Bharati as well as by the private channels. But the administration should be under its control.

The different public sector undertakings are independent in their functioning. But, at the same time, they are responsible to the Parliament and also to the Executive. Similarly, Prasar Bharati or this public service broadcaster should be responsible to the Executive and also to the Parliament. But content-wise, it should be independent. By saying this, I would ask the Government one thing. Does this Bill, in any way, create a situation where we are moving in that direction. I would say that we are not doing so. You see the manner in which this Ordinance was promulgated after the Cabinet had taken a decision as to what are the issues which will be discussed in the Budget Session. It has been reported in the media that when this Ordinance was sent to the hon. President for her signature, hardly three weeks' time was left in between. It was promulgated on 7th of February and the Parliament session commenced on 25th of February. Heavens would not have fallen if a regular Bill had come in this Budget Session, as has been reported,

and these are very serious matters which need a little bit of clarification from the hon. Minister. Is it true that the CEO wanted to appoint an IAS officer as a Director in the Prasar Bharati or in some posts which was not adhered to by the Chairman? That is why this Ordinance was promulgated in haste. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: I will tell you the answer is no.

SHRI B. MAHTAB: Thank you very much. This was reported in the media and I am thankful to the hon. Minister for clarifying this point.

The Chairman is a part-time member and that too for three years. We would like to get a categorical answer that the same Chairman may also be repeated again after completion of three years. There is no bar in the law. The responsibility and accountability are necessary. But through this amendment, is it not the CEO who is becoming more powerful in the Prasar Bharati set up?

I am of the opinion that the Bill does not make Prasar Bharati stronger to compete with private electronic media. But the basic question which is before this country and before this House is how the Prasar Bharati's financial viability be ensured: whether its employees be the Government servants or not, how will it safeguard its autonomy regardless of its financing; and what sort of programmes should its viewers see - who will determine these things? Will it be Prasar Bharati Board or will it be the Executive or the Government that will determine it?

Lastly, as has also been mentioned by one of our respected colleagues earlier, why is the Prasar Bharati Board still truncated? How long will it take to have a full-fledged Prasar Bharati Board? Already ten years have passed. I would urge upon this Government and also the hon. Minister should take sufficient steps to make Prasar Bharati independent in content, but should be responsible to the Executive and also to the Parliament.

[Translation]

SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI (Sarguja): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I had big hopes that Priyaranjan ji would bring in a very comprehensive and regulatory Bill on the Prasar Bharti. As many hon'ble Members have stated and the entire House is surprised as to what was the exigency in bringing the Bill which necessitated promulgation of the ordinance. I understand that he has brought in this Bill just to amuse the House. There are numerous problems facing the nation and the society which could have been addressed through the Prasar Bharti Bill. It would have been better if a Bill along with code of conduct would have been brought in for mass

[Shri Nand Kumar Sai]

awakening and it was also highly required. I had a question in this regard which could not be answered. It was reported in the newspapers that the Minister was to bring in a Comprehensive Bill. Are Big Media Houses opposed to it and have they not agreed? If the nation and society is to be built and preserved a legislation needs to be enacted to prevent the vices which are adversely affecting the society and young minds and it is urgently required. The people who commit suicide have different problems in the society but this situation is being created in almost every household. Some channels are showing such programmes that wife and husband have become estranged and children are also living apart. It should be shown through the media how public awareness programmes can be undertaken to inculcate patience and the power to face difficult circumstances of life. There are different aspects to it in the Indian literature. The Prasar Bharti should have become a very strong, powerful and comprehensive board as our friends have stated. That has also not come into existence. The instructions and definition of religion found in our scriptures and 'Puranas' is not a system of worship but enunciation of qualities to hold patience during the time of crisis. Manu Maharaj stated, "Dhriti Kshama Damo Asteyam Shouchmin-driya Nigraha, Dhir Vidya Satyam Akrodho Dasakam Dharam Lakshanam." First trait of 'Dharm' is patience. Now a days children are committing suicides due to fear of failure in examinations. However, there are discrepancies in the curriculum but how such circumstances were created in the society? The greatest resource of the country is human resource. The greatness of a nation can be reflected through its roads, crops etc. but the most important wealth of a nation is its human resource. The greatness of a nation can be gauged from its people. The task of public awareness can be done in a better way. I would like to say that a Bill in this regard should be brought in after due consultation and without any pressure. The Standing Committee have also given suggestions. A full-fledged board should be constituted and by depicting the Indian literature in the larger public interest and by initiating a new system of public education in the country such as Prasar Bharti Bill should be brought in so that private channels can be regulated. You should bring such a legislation which may deal with what should be and should not be telecast. They have shown haste in bringing the Bill. It does not contain anything but entertainment. Kunwar Singh had taken up sword at the age of 80. Age is not a restriction any more. The President had to promulgate the Ordinance to decrease and increase the age limit. You are the Minister in charge of the Prasar Bharti. That includes entertainment also. The Parliament is only entertained. There is nothing in this Bill and I think it is not required. You should take into consideration what I have

stated and bring such a Bill at the earliest. Thank you for giving me an opportunity.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon'ble Minister Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni has introduced this Bill in order to strengthen the Prasar Bharti and make it competitive. Age does not matter but whosoever has more experience can compete better and this Bill also seeks to increase the tenure of office of the Chairman of the Prasar Bharti. One has to face no problem in supporting a good person and similarly, such type of Bills require to be introduced if the Government is to be run. I must say that this Bill should have been introduced one or two years ago, it is too late on your part. Let the opposition oppose and condemn the Bill if they are doing so; I extend my co-operation to you to facilitate the passage of this Bill and support you. In the Bill, the retirement age of the Executive Officer is proposed to be increased from 62 years to 65 years, whereas the tenure of the officer is proposed to be reduced from six years. The tenure of an MP's office is five years whereas in case of the Executive Officer, it is six years. The introduction of this Bill is also aimed at reducing the period of tenure of the Executive Officer of the Prasar Bharti. The Prasar Bharti is required to be strengthened to keep the process of social upliftment dynamic and put an end to the bad practices prevailing in the society. The dispute on Hindi-Marathi languages and the taxi incident that took place in Mumbai were repeatedly telecast. We should not devold the Electronic Media of its freedom; rather we should give it more freedom. But if this freedom delivers bad results in the society, then it needs to be controlled to some extent and a Bill is required to be brought in this regard. I, on behalf of my Party, support this Bill on the Prasar Bharti.

[English]

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to speak on the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill. The hon. Minister had to bring this Bill just for shunting out somebody. Instead of this, a more comprehensive Bill could have been brought and the problems of the Prasar Bharati, Doordarshan and All India Radio could have been discussed in a better manner.

Sir, the emergency provision of the Constitution should not be used to promulgate an Ordinance in this manner. The Government should show some humanitarian consideration to the person whom they are shunting out and he is nearly 86 years of age. He is not an ordinary person. He has got rich experience in life, he has contributed a lot to the Press and he has written many articles. Right from the day the General Budget was presented in this House, we are discussing about senior citizens and how to give them more

and more facilities, but today the Government, through this legislation, is removing a senior citizen without giving him any compensation. This is quite inhuman. So, I think, the Government should think about giving him some compensation or some sort of relief. There is no doubt that they are going to put their own man there. I am reminded of the 1975 Ordinance when the Emergency was imposed in the country. During the Emergency, the Press was completely crushed. From that day, Ordinances are dangerous for the country. This Bill only shows that a kind of favouritism is being adopted.

Sir, I come from a backward area and we have got an All India Radio Station at Bhawanipatna which does not function totally. We require a generator for that. Then, that station is under the financial control of Kolkata. For the accounting work and all that, the people have to go to Kolkata. This should be looked into and changed.

Sir, after television, radio has become a low priority. I would request the hon. Minister that all those stations in the country should be upgraded with another station, higher transmitters and FM services, so that the Scheduled areas and remote areas could receive the benefits of the All India Radio and the news.

Sir, lastly, I oppose this Bill because the hon. Minister could have easily brought a comprehensive Bill as they are in power today and the Session is also quite long, it goes up to May. So, they could have easily brought a comprehensive Bill where it could have been discussed in detail.

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR (Aurangabad, Bihar): Sir, I support the amendment of the Prasar Bharati Act.

A lot is being said with regard to bringing about an Ordinance. I do not see anything unconstitutional in it. After all, the Government has brought a Bill to regularize the Ordinance and it has given a chance to everyone to air his views in the House. We have heard quite a lot of views on this. I see, therefore, no reason why the constitutional provision of introducing an Ordinance should be condemned here. It was a very wise move on the part of the Government to introduce an Ordinance and it has brought this Bill as soon as it can to regularize it.

Having said that, I must say that the Prasar Bharati today is a public service broadcaster and it has to compete with commercial service broadcasters. If the Prasar Bharati is to be expected to compete with the commercial broadcasters, then it also has to have at its disposal an efficient set of people, starting from the Chairman to the whole time Member and to the other Members of the Board.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR: Sir, I have just begun and you want me to stop. I will speak for two minutes. Kindly allow me to speak what I have to say. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): Sir, please allow him to speak, he is the Chairman of the concerned Standing Committee. ... *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, please just listen to me. I am just saying that the new provisions made in this Bill are absolutely right and necessary to improve the functioning of the Prasar Bharti that has been lacklustre. Its functioning may be improved only when the youth as well as the experienced persons are associated with it. I do not mean to say that the youth should be of the age of 18-20 years. I would like to point out that at present there are Chairmen of the age of over 70 or 80 years. It should not be so. It should have the persons having administrative experience. If an officer of the level of secretary joins the Prasar Bharti as the Chief Executive Officer, then that officer should be given time since an officer of secretary level retires at the age of 60 years. But at the time of formulation of this Bill, the retirement age for that level was 58 years. Therefore, if that officer is given a tenure of five years, it is but sure that officer would be over 62. Therefore, the age of 65 years has been prescribed for that officer. I think it is very rational and I appreciate the Government for this. So far as the Chairman is concerned, I do not want to name anyone but my dear colleagues have named a person. But when he has named that person, I would like to say that this Bill has not been introduced to sack that person, rather its introduction is aimed at making such a person the Chairman of it whose upper age limit is not more than 70 years, but it should be less than this and an experience of three years has been prescribed for the post. I think it is very good to do this.

[English]

This is similar to the situation that obtains in respect of the Disaster Management Authority. It is similar to the situation that obtains in respect of CAT. As Dev Bhajji has named Kamathji, I tell you that Kamathji was the Editor of a very important weekly and periodical in this country. The Illustrated Weekly of India.

[Translation]

And when he was the Editor of The Illustrated Weekly of India its circulation was maximum in the country but when he ceased to be the Editor of that, the concerned Weekly ended up. While praising that person, his background and track records should be kept in mind and this is what happened with the Prasar Bharti. The Prasar Bharti has been

[Shri Nikhil Kumar]

functioning lacklustrely for the last 7 years. The Standing Committee chaired by me has asked the Ministry to improve their performance and the way to improve it is bringing improvement in its personnel management. There are 40 Members in that standing committee and all of them have prepared this Report of which Madhu Bhai had made a mention, the 47th Report of the Standing Committee. The concerned Ministry has taken action thereon lately. They should have taken this action earlier. But it seems that they have been impressed by that Report and have introduced ordinance to take prompt action in this regard. I compliment them for this but they should have done this earlier. I would like to point out that whatever provisions have been made in this Bill are all suitable and rational. I support them fully and request the hon'ble Minister to implement the Bill at the earliest in order to improve the functioning of the Prasar Bharti. I express my thanks to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Kharbela Swain. Please be brief; there is no time.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Mr. Chairman, Sir, please do not get impatient; I shall be very brief.

Like most of my predecessors, I also fail to understand as to why an Ordinance at all is to be promulgated just to provide an upper-age limit to the Chairman of the Prasar Bharati. The Second provision, the main provision, of this Bill is to change the tenure and upper age limit of Chief Executive Officer from six to five years and from sixty-two years to sixty-five years respectively. But, in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, in Para 2, it is written:

"Therefore, it is felt that in the case of Chairman also an upper-age limit of seventy years may be fixed to ensure appointment of comparatively younger talent and experience."

Firstly, for the Chief Executive Officer, you enhanced the upper-age limit from sixty-two years to sixty-five years, and you say that you are bringing in younger talent. Is it not a juxtaposition? I fail to understand that. How can you say that you are bringing new talent by enhancing the age?

The second point is this. As hon. Mahtabji said, in Para 3 of the Statement of Objects and Reasons it has been provided that the Prasar Bharati has got social objectives and this Bill has been brought to inject sectoral experience to rejuvenate Prasar Bharati and its Board.

By merely enhancing and fixing an upper-age limit, I fail to understand how you are going to inject sectoral experience. The hon. Minister should reply to this question.

All the time, every year, the Prasar Bharati is running into loss. Its main source of income is Cricket and films. Always, all the time, while replying in most of the Committees, the Prasar Bharati officials say that they are incurring loss because they have got social obligations and they are broadcasting programmes on education, health, agriculture, and social development. But, my appeal to the hon. Minister is this. Cannot these programmes on education, health, agricultural and social development marketed? These could be marketed provided we have better professionals. All these programmes can also be marketed,

The Prasar Bharati does not have a sense of professionalism. I will give you just one example. One of the personnel from the NDTV told me that last year almost all the TV channels had gone to Mathura to direct-telecast the Janmashtami programme. Except the Prasar Bharati, the Doordarshan, the highest number of personnel, namely seven, were sent there by Aaj Tak. But, do you know how many persons had gone from Doordarshan? From Doordarshan, 50 persons went there! That is what he was telling me. Had they gone there for sight-seeing or for telecasting the programme?

This is the high sense of unprofessionalism. Due to this, Doordarshan is incurring loss. So, I would like to make an appeal that more professionals should be brought into Doordarshan and All India Radio.

I now come to the last point. Sir, in my constituency, Balasore in Orissa, there is a place called 'Soro', where the building for commissioning the All India Radio Centre has already been built ten years before but this is not yet being commissioned. During the regime of the NDA Government also, I had appealed to the then hon. Minister on this. If you do not want to commission it, then why did you construct that building at all? It is lying vacant for the last ten years. I would appeal to the hon. Minister that since you have constructed the building, you commission that Station so that people will get some benefit.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri Ram Kripal Yadav. Please make a short speech and on no account I will allow you to make a lengthy speech. It is very difficult to control you. Please start your speech now.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have risen to speak just now. I express my thanks to you that you have asked me to be very careful even before I have not yet started my speech.

I rise to speak in support of the Prasar Bharti (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill, 2008.

Many types of things have been said in the House that this Ordinance has been brought in hastily and quickly in order to sack a particular person or post in place of that person some other particular person as well as to decrease the tenure of a particular person etc. I think the Government has taken a fine step in order to make the Chairman such a person who is not aged but who is experienced. Everyone has some age limit, capacity to work and think. No person can work lifelong and every person has to retire at a particular age but there is no retirement age in politics. There should be a limit to this also. We, the politicians desire to be in politics till our death. When someone has the capacity to do work only then his/her work would be meaningful. If a person does not have the capacity to think and work, there is no justification to retain him/her in office. Therefore, the Government has very rightly taken this step.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I appeal to the hon'ble Minister to do so at the earliest and bring in some competent person to this office. I would like to bring to the notice of the hon'ble Minister a few points. The inception of the Prasar Bharti aimed at independent functioning, but I think, this idea has remained on paper only. Governments come to power one after the other but the office of the Chairman of the Prasar Bharti has always remained under the influence of the Government. Be it the C.E.O. of the Prasar Bharti. Such posts have been working as the organ of the Govt. This practice came into being during the regime of the Janata Party when the Leader of Opposition Shri Advaniji used to be the Minister of Information & Broadcasting. This practice started during that period. Only persons belonging to B.J.P. or R.S.S. continued to be on these posts as per their mindset. Therefore, persons sitting in front are levelling false charges. I think these persons are no exception to it. These posts work as a puppet under the influence of whatever Government is there in power. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: I am going to conclude. I have not spoken for even two minutes as yet.

[English]

Sir, you are so cooperative. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are supporting the Bill. What is more to speak?

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Mr. Chairman, Sir, today various private channels have come into picture. Door-

darshan and Radio channels are also there. I think with the existing infrastructure, our Doordarshan and AIR employees can't compete with private channels and it is a matter of concern. Government have issued licenses to private radio channels and at many places broadcasting has started. As Doordarshan and radio are Government owned entities, fewer people like to view and listen to them respectively in comparison to private channels. Our Prasar Bharati is running in loss.

Attention should be paid for its upgradation. We have also to see as to how to keep it in competition with private channels.

As I was telling you and hon'ble Minister should also be getting information how corruption is rampant in the department. This is in practice on a large scale in Prasar Bharati. Points have been raised on so many issues, definitely attention should be paid towards them. Our Prasar Bharati should try to increase the capacity of Doordarshan and All India Radio also to enable them to compete with private channels.

In the end after making one point I will sit down T.V. serials are showing obscene pictures and objectionable scenes on Doordarshan which shows that there is no control of Government over these programmes. Some channels are broadcasting cheap programmes which badly affect our society. Hon'ble Minister should pay attention to such things also. Strict laws should be made to be deal with this kind of problem. To gain popularity and money, private channels are misusing this medium, which should be controlled. There are some T.V. programmes which are inspiring large scale crime in the society which needs to checked forthwith. I hope you will take action against such channels by introducing some Bill in this regard. Doordarshan and All India radio are Government owned and are functioning under Prasar Bharati and I am sure, Government will make every effort to make them number one and check corruption from Prasar Bharati. They will also ensure that it functions efficiently. With these words I conclude my speech and support this Bill.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Mr. Abu Ayes Mondal. As a special case, I am allowing you. You may speak for a minute.

SHRI ABU AYES MONDAL (Katwa): Hon. Chairperson, I want to know an important information from the hon. Minister, which is as follows. In West Bengal, as I know, Prasar Bharati has decided to close down two Low Powered TV centres, namely, Ranaghat and Krishnanagar. I would also like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government has decided to close down all the Low Powered TV centres throughout the country. I want to know only this information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Mr. P.S. Gadhavi. You have also to be very pointed and finish your speech within a minute.

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI (Kutch): Sir, I would like to bring it to the notice of the hon. Minister, as many of my predecessors have said, that there is no need for bringing this Ordinance. You are bringing this Ordinance in haste. I do not want to repeat what others have already said.

Now, Mr. Minister, when you are going to make Prasar Bharati more competitive, let me submit that its competitiveness in the remote areas, particularly in the border areas is less, whereas the signals of the neighbouring country's TV are coming more easily there. Our transmitters are very, very low in our remote areas. I can particularly say about Barmer, Jaisalmer and Kutch districts where people have easy access to see Pakistani TV rather than our Indian TV. So, in order to make Prasar Bharati more competitive, the first and foremost thing is to make it more effective. So, to make Prasar Bharati more effective, what are the steps that the Government is going to take?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you for allowing me to reply to this debate. I am equally thankful to all the hon. Members of this august House who have expressed their views in favour and in opposition of this Bill.

Whoever may be in the Government, be it from this side or from that side, the Constitution has provided it the opportunity — I should not use the word 'power' — to take up the issue, if they feel it is very important and bring it in the form of an Ordinance. Every Opposition party in every Parliament equally finds very fine tuning to ask the Government to explain as to what was the urgency.

That is very traditionally welcomed. Sir, while they oppose, they express their concern and we answer, we fulfil our accountability.

There was an Ordinance called POTA which even the Government of that day failed, not even in one House but to bring it in two Houses to pass it. I do not question the competence.

Sir, the Ordinance route even in Prasar Bharati is not new. First of all, I would like to place this before you if my memory is all okay from the past. It is true that they claim that for democracy, independence, autonomy, objectivity, we brought Prasar Bharati. No, it is not. When was it brought? It was in 1990. Why the 1990 law had to wait for seven years to get its legislative exposure? Have we ever discussed that? Championing the cause of democracy is one and

understanding the viability of the employees involved there is the other. Prasar Bharati had to inherit lock, stock and barrel the people who used to work with All-India Radio and Doordarshan. It is huge. I do not say they have done wrong. They have done the good job. They tried their best. There was agitation. There were problems, this and that. Finally, in 1997, you found the light of the day.

In any way, I am not responding to all the issues today because it will be 10 o' clock in the night. But, Sir, I will appeal to you that if the House agrees to discuss the entire functioning of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry on the occasion of Demands for Grants, I will certainly respond again all the issues you have raised. I am limited, today, to two aspects. The first aspect is, what is the urgency to bring the Ordinance? The second aspect, it is the first effort to look into it.

First of all, I will have to make a few corrections. The first correction is that the Supreme Court never gave a judgement or direction to the Government for a comprehensive arrangement or amendment of the Prasar Bharati Act. I would like to correct that. The Supreme Court gave a direction to the Government about the status of the employees and other things to be disposed at the earliest. This is my first correction.

The second correction is that the Standing Committee very rightly observed about the entire functioning of Prasar Bharati and directed, I should say, recommended—and that is the spirit of this Parliament—for a comprehensive examination of the whole matter together appointing a Group of Ministers and to come out with a decision.

There, you are partly correct. Hannan Mollahji, a distinguished colleague of ours, always speaks out materially, with solid and transparent views of the whole object of Prasar Bharati. The GoM has not yet completed its final deliberation. I am really hopeful that by the end of this month or early April, the final deliberation will be concluded. Before that, for financial restructuring, how to accommodate the employees, this issue and that issue, in a comprehensive approach, I am having, this week the first meeting with the Finance Minister with our presentation and then we will be going for the final reporting to the GoM. I am absolutely hopeful that all the sufferings, misgivings and pains that the employees are having, whether they are in Prasar Bharati or they are in Government, if they are in Government, what is their final status—all these issues will be addressed. But before that, I would like to assure Prabodh Pandaji and Hannan Mollahji that we have already informed the GoM and informed the Finance Ministry that those who are enjoying the Government employee status or deemed position status, should be covered by the Sixth Pay Commission. We have already conveyed that.

Therefore, we are taking the whole thing in a very holistic manner. I would tell you, Sir, today in this House that I am one with everyone. Prasar Bharati has no future if it is not managed in a professional orientation of the day, right from its marketing, programming, administration, etc.

That needs a total overhauling and that overhauling step can only be taken after the GoM's recommendations are accepted by the Cabinet. I am confident that the UPA Government, before completing the term, shall come back to the House with this comprehensive announcement. I am telling you with authority. It will be done.

I will come to the matter of the employees. The distinguished colleagues are here both from that side and this side. Yes, Sir; the employees are in a great hardship. I am the Minister. I met, not less than five or seven times, with various kinds of employees' organizations. I understand their pain. I even visited a few Kendras where I found that the anchors, even the newsreaders who read the news in the night, even women, do not have proper toilet facility or they do not have place to sit. I know it. I know the inner problems. Accordingly, I am moving from one State after the other. But I, now, come back to the main crux of the issue of the Ordinance.

From this Ordinance, I do not know how Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat has suddenly discovered.

[Translation]

We have heard its Chairman was close to BJP. You were already having this information but I have received this information just now. If I had received this information earlier than on the very first day of coming to power, I would have said that we have no links with him. But now we have no such motive. By providing this information you have enhanced my knowledge. We did not have any such information that Kamaal ji is closer to BJP. By mentioning this, you yourself have told how you people were running this. But don't do like this. Our objective is different.

Sir, you see the cassette (VHS) on the occasion of flag hoisting ceremony 15th August and anniversary of sixtieth year of Independence day. On that day Dr. Manmohan Singh was to hoist the national flag because he happened to be the Prime Minister of the country neither we do dictate nor we interfere.

[English]

The Minister has no right to interfere in the autonomy of Prasar Bharati. In formally they came to ask — how do we celebrate tomorrow, alongwith children, I did say that the first job of yours is in the 60th anniversary of flag-hoisting ceremony, all the hon. Prime Minister of this country who had hoisted the flag, they should be shown first irrespective of the Party lines.

[Translation]

You see it carefully how Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee used to hoist the flag, how Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh used to hoist the flag and how Shri Deve Gowda has hoisted the flag and how Shri Deve Gowda has hoisted the flag. After showing all of them we have shown Dr. Manmohan Singh.

[English]

You try to understand the objectivity as to how we are trying to persuade them. Prof. Rasa Singh ji.

[Translation]

I will play the recorded bulletin of a lady announcer wherein you have at length on matters relating to sections 377 on Aakashwani. No other channel has shown you. Your name comes repeatedly. Sometimes it annoys your members and they complain why your name is repeatedly aired on Aakashwani. I told them as to why were they getting angry? I told them that it is because you speak little more than them which is why your name is aired repeatedly.

[English]

I tell you-do-not be under any impression that we are trying to politicise the whole thing Hon. Member Shri Suresh Prabhu is not here. I would Hon. Member Shri Suresh Prabhu is not here. I would have corrected him. He said that Mr. Tony Blair was not happy by BBC; even then nothing has happened. No.

Our Doordarshan is much better than BBC in terms of objectivity. The Doordarshan panel has a right to discuss the good or bad about the nuclear deal. But in BBC, I tell you today, on the issue of weapons of mass destruction, the news which came out in BBC was that it was dismissed lock, stock and barrel and not a single debate was held in the House of Commons. You try to understand -our objectivity is much greater. Naturally, let us not give a political input to it but come to the practical sense.

Let us now come to the issue of urgency. On the one hand we are talking to think of a professional orientation in Doordarshan. Hon. Member Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab is here. The country is going in a uniform world platform to fight the menace of the adverse campaign and to defend the public service obligation. The first motto of Prasar Bharati is public service obligation. You tell me. All of you are here. Why should Prasar Bharati be answerable to private channels? The Prasar Bharati is not answerable to the private channels. Whether the private channels are doing the right or the wrong, it should be the duty of the Government to think of what kind of action to be taken.

This Parliament has passed the Cable Network (Regulation) Act, 1995. On that basis we issue show-cause notices and we issue adversaries. Shrimati Kiran Maheswari is not here. Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat is here. You say that this Government is trying to project all the nuisance in the television, doing nothing.

[Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi]

[Translation]

Every day its quality is getting worse.

[English]

No, I can prove it on record when the debate will start.

[Translation]

Besides banning some private channels, the showcase notices which UPA Government issued to private channels were thousand times more, than those issued by N.D.A. Government.

[English]

But I do not believe that by confronting the channel and fighting with the media you prove yourself very strong. No. In democracy, I believe in the policy of persuasion, negotiation and dialogue.

[Translation]

Persuasion of dialogue and negotiation is more beneficial than demonstration of power.

[English]

When the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, which is ruled by BJP, Vasundhara Raje was in a big problem - he knows what that problem was - my Prime Minister told me that we should not look at politics. Chief Minister of Punjab is also not from our party. The Prime Minister said, "Do not look at politics. Call the private channels, take their cooperation and see how to reduce tension and how to convey the message." I did so. Some channels did not agree.

[Translation]

I called them for a cup of tea and in spite of my political differences with Vasundhara Raje I asked them to cooperate in creating good atmosphere. We have responsibility and we are a responsible Government and we have worked accordingly. You can enquire from the channels themselves that we have told them even at two 'O' clock in the night not to repeat tomorrow such news items which spread hatred. We do not dictate them, through dialogue and persuasion things can be sorted out and not through dictatorship. Moreover this process strengthens the country also. You said why we did not brought regulation? Andhra Pradesh High Court have already issued orders in this regard. Whole regulation has been framed and debate has also taken place on the matter, opinion on the same has also been sought by placing it on website. Consultative Committee has also given permission and discussion on the content is also nearly complete. However, I think only after reaching on a consensus, it should be implemented, everybody should be given chance and nobody is to be forced. Therefore, it took some time.

[English]

I want to inform the House, Sir, today that our Content Code is almost ready. Our Content Code and Programme Code in a refined form will come very shortly. That Programme Code and Content Code will not leave any room for any media body or any channel to say that the Government is interfering because in a country, in a democracy, trust, faith and understanding pay you more than giving a direction. We have learnt that. This is the trend of modern democracy.

Now bad things do come. Did we not ban a channel for one month or two months? Did we not ban a channel for showing wrong things in the night, for three months? We did and again, they reconciled. They came back and changed their attitude. Every moment you should know that district monitoring authority is DM and DSP. Do you want to change that provision? While sitting in Delhi, how can you know in which village, which cable operator is showing what? Your accountable officer should do it. I tell you that Prasar Bharati has no business to do that. Prasar Bharati's business is to carry the public service obligation.

[Translation]

You people should have clapped today. No channel covered national games held in Assam due to fear apprehension,

[English]

it is only the Doordarshan which covered the entire National Games. You should know that because

[Translation]

This do not get much money. You people say to bring professionals.

Ninety per cent of the channels are having a voucher payment rule and they dismiss their people within 24 hours and do not give them any compensation also. We cannot do it in a broadcaster having public service obligation. In Doordarshan, our liability is more. Therefore, you should try to appreciate the balance.

Now, the urgency is that we are having the First Commonwealth Youth Games in Pune in August, 2008, and Commonwealth Games in 2010 in India. Prasar Bharati has been chosen as the dedicated host broadcaster. Frequent meetings are required not only of the Board but the entire management. Frequent policy planning and quality planning is required with the approval of the Board. These things cannot be done by the Minister or the Ministry. There is a Board. With all my regards to all the incumbents of Prasar Bharati, we felt that it is required for future. I had interactions with all the international experts as to what kind of CEO you want to bring. Yes, till then, the trend was to bring a senior Secretary of the bureaucracy or to bring a senior man of the administration and put him there. I can cite ten names of NDA Government as to how they did it.

[Translation]

Approval was also provided by Prasar Bharati, it was appointed by administrative order. I have the documents and I don't want to belittle you.

[English]

We found that the international opinion is that you cannot get a professional competent CEO if you just seal his tenure within 61 or 62 years. I asked 'why'. They said that most of the professionals who come out from that line, want a stable time to plan and to act and then go to other assigned duties and other areas.

19.00 hrs.

I have checked up 22 organisations of India, and 35 organisations of the whole world where the competent CEO's age is 65 years, and the tenure would be five years and not six years. Therefore, it is not targeting one man. If somebody stays there for two years, then it does not mean that he will change this Government and bring your Government.

[Translation]

If such things happen then Governments will come in power and go with ordinance in world, but whether this happens? It has never happened.

[English]

If we had any bad intention to change the Chairman, then we have taken the office in 2004 and we could have done it in 2005. Why would we keep it pending? It is not by malice. Nowhere in the world have we found any law that said that an unending term of year and age is permitted to become a part-time Chairman. The part-time Chairman is not a salaried man. He keeps attending the meeting and is paid fees between Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 5,000. There is no salary, bonus or DA. Therefore, the compensation clause does not arise at all in such an Ordinance. Naturally, ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, please wait for one minute. The time of the House was extended till 7 o'clock, which is over. Therefore, if the House agrees, we will extend the time of the House by one more hour.

... (Interruptions)

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes, Sir.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, I will conclude just now. Please give me five minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, the House agrees to it.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Therefore, this amendment is not to insult or humiliate any individual. We

salute anyone who worked here. The first Chairman was a great man. He died prematurely, namely, Shri Nikhil Chakravarty. He could not complete his term. We have no malice to anyone as to who did what. My only appeal to you is to give a message to the Commonwealth Games International Bodies that our Prasar Bharati Board is tuning up with the recent challenge, and infuse little dynamism in CEO's term. Suppose, I take someone at 67 years, then he cannot stay for more than three years or if a professional comes at 65 years, then he cannot stay there after 68 years. Yes, it can be done if you reelect him.

A question was asked as to how to elect them. We have not changed this law from the days of Shri Advani's Bill; from the days of Shri Jaipal Reddy's Bill and from the days of all the Governments. The selection criterion is as simple as section four. The Chairman of the Council of States is the Vice-President of India and the Chairman of the Press Council is the nominee of the hon. President because she only will select who will be the Chairman and CEO. It is not done by a Minister and not by a political party. We have not amended that practice, and we will not amend it.

This is the limited intention of bringing this amendment, and the comprehensive amendment, as per the GoM, will take care of employees first. Shri Prabodh Panda and Shri Hannan Mollah, I would like to tell that not a single employee's interest of any category – be it technician, engineering, regular – would be harmed. Hence, I am struggling for them as their spokesman in the GoM.

With these words, I request you that this Bill may be approved by this House. I conclude my observations because the disapproval notice is already moved. Naturally, it is the time of the mover. Let him conclude his views and then I will do it. I will appeal to him

[Translation]

We have no interest in it. I would request Shri Mohan Singh to please withdraw it and give us strength.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: This discussion does not have any concluding speech but the hon. Minister has given an assurance in his reply that a detailed discussion will be held on this issue relating to his department during the second leg of the Parliament session and that he will also bring a comprehensive Bill in this regard at the earliest.

The cause of concern is that the idea to set up an independent broadcasting concern on the line of BBC in the country was first mooted in 1977. But, it happened only in the eleventh Lok Sabha when during the united front regime Shri Jaipal Reddy introduced such a bill first. After the eleventh Lok Sabha, Shrimati Sushma Swaraj became the Minister during the twelfth Lok Sabha and she also brought a Bill in this regard.

[Shri Mohan Singh]

Sir, after the twelfth Lok Sabha, it is the fourteenth Lok Sabha and this year is the concluding year of the fourteenth Lok Sabha. I think it is the bad luck of the Prasar Bharti that no comprehensive Bill has been introduced so far in the House and the officers and the employees of the Prasar Bharti are cursing you and us. Therefore, I would like the hon. Minister to execute the commitment he had made in the House. Trusting his words, with your permission, I seek the leave of the House to withdraw the resolution of disapproval.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Has the Member leave of the House to withdraw the Resolution?

The Resolution was, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill further to amend the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House will now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill. The question is:

"That clauses 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House will now take up matters pertaining to 'Zero Hour'.

19.08 hrs.

(SHRI MOHAN SINGH *in the Chair*)

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (Kasargod): I would like to draw the attention of the Government with regard to the acute shortage of electricity in the State of Kerala. The Central Government has made a noble scheme under which it distributes or allocates electricity from the Central pool, that

is, the unallocated pool. Many States had the privilege of getting this power allocated to their States. However, from last year onwards, there was an acute shortage and an acute reduction, in case of distribution of electricity. In April, 2007, the reduction in the quota was 133 megawatts; in December, 2007, the Central Government has reduced it by 50 megawatts, but at the same time, consumption has increased by 150 megawatts.

As far as Kerala is concerned, the total requirement of power is about 2,800 megawatts, including the Central quota. What we have now is only 2,400 megawatts. There is a shortage of 400 megawatts. It is at this time that the Central Government has reduced its quota of power drastically. We cannot understand why the Central Government is partial because in case of many other States, the quota has been increased. In case of Kerala, it is reduced. It is not possible for a State like Kerala to purchase electricity at the rate of Rs. 8 or Rs. 9 per unit from other generating units.

So, we request the Government to retain the earlier quota so that power could be given to the common people as well as the industrial units.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): Sir, we strongly support this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Names of Shri P.C. Thomas, Shrimati C.S. Sujatha, Shri Francis George, Shri C.K. Chandrappan, Dr. K.S. Manoj will be associated with this topic.

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL (Vijayawada): Mr. Chairman, Sir, steel, cement and power are the three commodities which play a major role in fuelling the growth and development of the nation. They are the key elements of growth and development in the country. However, prices of these three commodities are skyrocketing now. Steel price has touched Rs.50,000 a tonne; cement now costs more than Rs.225 a bag; and power has touched Rs.10 a unit. Andhra Pradesh is importing 1,500 MW of power at the rate of Rs.9 to Rs.10 a unit. There is a huge gap between demand and supply in these three commodities. Production of steel in India is only 50 million tonnes whereas the suppressed demand is more than 55 million tonnes.

19.11 hrs.

(SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN *in the Chair*)

We produce 164 million tonnes of cement while the suppressed demand is 165 million tonnes. We produce 640 million units of power, almost equivalent to 1,40,000 MW, while the requirement is more than 730 million units. In fact, in the last couple of years we added very little capacity in all these commodities. We need to evolve a policy whereby the Government can control the prices by restricting import and

export. We should ban the export of steel, cement and all raw materials. We have seen iron ore being exported in large quantities and we only imposed duty of it at Rs.300 ton after a delayed period. We need to work out and find why steel production is not increasing in India. Why is cement capacity not being added? We are talking of a double-digit growth. Are these key elements keeping pace with that target? Are we able to add new capacities in these commodities? While China adds 50 million tonnes of steel to its capacity in one year, we are producing 50 million tonnes in fifty years. In cement, China is able to add 120 million tonnes of capacity every year, while for the last 50 years we have been able to add about 164 million tonnes. This is what is happening in every sector.

We need to have proper planning. We are constructing 15 lakh houses per year for poor people under Indira Awas Yojna. In Andhra Pradesh alone 25 lakh houses per year are being constructed. A lot of irrigation projects are being constructed in India. Especially in Andhra Pradesh Rs.50,000 crore is invested in irrigation projects in the last four years. The Government of India should have a mechanism which works on these things on a day-to-day basis. Cartels are being formed today. A lot of these products are being exported. Yesterday there was a hue and cry in Visakhapatnam. Vizag Steel Plant has increased the price of steel to Rs.50,000 a tonne. Vizag Steel Plant is not supplying steel to Andhra Pradesh but sending it elsewhere and that is creating an artificial demand and supply gap. This is fuelling the prices. So, we need to work out a mechanism to control the prices of all these key elements like steel, cement and power. In the case of power, State Governments are competing with each other. Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, etc., are competing with each other in buying power at Rs.10. The State Governments are competing and purchasing power at Rs.10 for which the poor man is paying. The Central Government has to intervene and bring in a mechanism to control the prices of all these three inputs.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDER KUMAR (Haridwar): Sir, I would like to bring to your notice that various industrial units have been set up over the years in my parliamentary constituency, Haridwar, particularly in Roorkee Tehsil. No provision has been made for drainage of chemical wastes and effluents of the industrial units. The industrial units are releasing the chemicals and the contaminated water, which is going into the ground water through boring and also in the pits as a result the drinking water, is becoming contaminated and infected. We can see its consequences in Roorkee area. Jaundice is spreading widely and even some people have already died of this disease.

Therefore, my submission is that the Government should ensure that each industrial units set up in Haridwar particularly in Roorkee tehsil following the necessary measures to check pollution and also make proper arrangement for drainage of contaminated water. The Government should also conduct a survey of the patients suffering from Jaundice. Arrangement for their treatment should be made and even financial assistance should also be given to them.

[English]

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA (Mavelikara): Sir, paddy worth crores of rupees has been destroyed due to unexpected and unseasonal heavy rains. Heavy rains flooded the paddy fields destroying paddy crop ready for harvest. Over 30,000 acres of paddy crop have been affected causing huge loss to the farmers. In Kuttanad in Alappuzha district of Kerala alone the loss is calculated to be of above Rs.4 crore. Similar damage to crops has happened in all the rice producing districts of Kerala. Hence, I urge upon the Government to extend necessary financial assistance to provide relief to the aggrieved farmers in the State.

Kuttanad in Alappuzha the rice bowl of Kerala is among the areas identified having affected by the severe agrarian crisis. Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Commission's report recommended a package of Rs. 1840 crore. But there are reports that since the Central Budget announced a package of 60,000 crore to farmers, the region/area specific schemes would not be considered. The agriculture sector in the district requires urgent attention and the suggested scheme should be implemented without any delay in order to sustain the agriculture in this area.

[Translation]

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA (Jalaun): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw your attention towards Bundelkhand area of Uttar Pradesh. It has not rained there for the last four years and as a result drought has hit the area very badly. Due to crop failure, the farmers are not in a position to repay their loan. The same situation has also emerged in the Kanpur Rural district adjoining Bundhelkhand on the bank of Yamuna. The condition of the farmers of that area is pitiable. There is Sengar river in Kanpur rural area which flows from Eta, Etawah, Ooriya, Kanpur rural, Musa Nagar and adjoins Chhapraghata ghat in Musa Nagar. We can recharge the depleting ground water and improve the condition of the farmers by storing water of the above river in a reservoir in Juned village near Malasa village and water should be supplied to fields through lift canal.

[Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma]

Through you, I demand that a dam should be constructed on that river. A lift canal should be constructed so that the farmers of that area could get water for irrigation purpose.

[English]

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (Midnapore): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I just want to raise a very important matter with regard to the outbreak of Bird-flu. The widespread Bird-Flue in West Bengal is a matter of deep concern. It is not only in West Bengal but the neighbouring States also are very much affected by this Bird-Flu. The affected persons have already received some compensation. Compensation has been provided for them. But most of the poultry holders have taken huge loans from the commercial banks and financial institutions. Hence, I urge upon the Government to take note of this so that it can declare a package of debt relief to the poultry holders who have suffered a lot due to the Bird-flu. In this context, I want to express my feelings. Already some measures have been taken up and culling operations are going and lakhs and lakhs of chickens have been killed.

But we are very lucky that it did not affect the humans. I do not know what would happen if it affects the humans. Would they do the same culling operation? I do not know what action the Government would take in regard to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you take this much time, what will others do?

SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Just a minute. Some measures with regard to remedy such as injection or something should be provided so that does not spread. I think the Government would take the matter seriously.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (Idukki): Sir, on 17th February, a carrier ship namely M.V. Rassak went missing in the Black Sea with 25 Indian crew members, while on its way from Russia to Turkey.

It is now one month since the disappearance of the ship, but the authorities could not establish any reasonable or substantial finding about the whereabouts of the ship and its crew. It is all the more objectionable that the Director General of Shipping does not have a clear idea about the ownership of the ship and is now supporting the contention of the agency which recruited the crew that the ship might have sunk due to bad weather.

The Agency, which recruited the crew M/s. Pelican Marine does not have any license for such recruitment. The Deputy Director General of Shipping, Shri P.H. Krishnan,

has confirmed this and he has stated that we do not have strong laws and regulations in place to deal with such erring agencies. It is to be noted that the same agency had supplied the crew to the Ship Jupiter-6, which went missing on September 2005 in the African coast.

The families of the 25 missing Indian Crew members including the Chief Engineer of the ship, Shri Mahendra Mohan, a Keralite, are in deep agony and distress for the last one month, though to alleviate the agony, the authorities have not taken any step.

I request the Government and the Shipping Ministry to conduct a comprehensive enquiry about the incident urgently, taking the help of international maritime agencies, if need be, and find out the truth about the disappearance of the ship. Government should also take urgent steps to strengthen the laws relating to recruitment and placement of shipping crew and to license and regulate recruiting agencies in the shipping industry.

It is a very serious matter; it is almost 30 days since the disappearance of the ship, but it seems that the authorities are without any clue as to the whereabouts of the ship and the crew. We need an urgent intervention from the Government of India and the Shipping Ministry to find out the exact truth of what happened and to take action against the erring agencies and the people concerned in this matter.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur): Sir, I need your protection. In the Union budget it has been announced that three IITs would be opened during this year. My submission is that there is Malviya Engineering college in Jaipur. The college has huge area of land as well as building also. The only need is to change the name of the college. Jaipur city is located on the national highway where students from all parts of the world may come easily and study. Jaipur is the capital of Rajasthan. There is an international airport and a medical university has also been set up there. Therefore, Jaipur is a fit case for opening an IIT. Therefore, my submission is that Jaipur is a fit case for opening of one of the three IITs announced by the Government. Apart from being the capital of Rajasthan, all other facilities such as electricity, water, road etc. are available there. With the hard work of Bahen Vasundra ji it is expected that scarcity of water will also be no more there. Therefore, Jaipur is a fit case for opening of an IIT.

Therefore, my submission is that an IIT should be set-up at Jaipur as it possesses all the required facilities in the city.

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly): Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is a cantonment area in the middle of my

constituency, Bareilly city. Recently three or four days back, military administration blocked the four main roads for general traffic. Out of them, first road leads to Bareilly junction, second leads to the national highways and the third leads to a couple of schools. Military administration blocked these roads without any prior notice and without any reason. As a result, general public is facing a lot of difficulties in commuting from these routes. Earlier also they had blocked a couple of roads in the same fashion. When we raised this issue in Lok Sabha only then people of that area got relief. I urge the Minister of Defence to pay his attention to this problem. Approximately 30,000 civilians also live in this cantonment and nearby areas of the cantonment and they are facing too much difficulties. There is also a dargah where thousands of people assemble on Friday. But, the military administration is not paying any heed towards the difficulties. Last night, I was in Bareilly. I myself went there and saw that army personnel were also present there. They were stopping every passer by. Even I was not allowed to go through that road in spite of the fact that it has strategic significance. I request the Minister of Defence to look into the matter and ask the military personnel there to be a little flexible to local civilians and directions should be given to the concerned for opening these roads for the general public immediately.

[English]

SHRI P. MOHAN (Madurai): Sir, I would like to speak with regard to bonus to the Central Government and Railway employees. The maximum ceiling limit of bonus to the employees was enhanced and an official Notification was issued in the Gazette dated 27th October, 2007 thereof. Further, in the Winter Session of the Parliament, both the Houses were unanimous in doing away with the maximum ceiling limit of bonus to the Central Government and Railway employees. However, arrear of bonus for the year 2006-07 due to them is still pending for payment. Hence, I urge upon the Government of India that the same may be paid to them without any further delay enabling them to celebrate the ensuing festivals.

[Translation]

SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR (Chandrapur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, for several generations tribal people have traditionally been occupying and living on the forest land. After the passage of forest conservation act they are on the verge to be expelled from the forest land. Forest officers and Police officers together are tyrannizing over them and are making efforts to remove them from the land these tribals have occupied. As a result of this there have been a number of agitations. The Government passed the Forest Land Recognition Act in the Parliament. Since the bill has still not

taken a form of law despite it being passed by the Parliament, State Government have not been directed properly to provide land on lease to these tribals. As a result both forest officials and police officials are bent on evacuating them from the occupied land. In this way these tribal people who have been traditionally living on forest land for several generations are facing problems without any rhyme or reason. The Union Government is therefore, requested to implement the bill passed here by making it law and state Governments be directed to comply with the same.

SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA (Salumber): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of hon'ble Minister for Water Resources through the Chair towards the Arnaud, Pratapgarh, Salumber, Ghariabad Sarara, Khairwara, Kotra & Gogunda Tehsils which are hilly areas having scattered population. Due to non-availability of safe potable water people living in these areas become victim of Nuru and Bala diseases every year. These diseases are such that they can even make a person handicapped. A population of total 82372 in Rajasthan are facing the problem of potable water. This problem can be solved through Rajiv Gandhi Drinking water Mission. Union Government should take steps to solve the problem of the population of the area. ... (Interruptions) and allot Rs. 16,200 crore as per demand.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is for the Department of Water Supply of the Rajasthan Government to see.

[Translation]

SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, Rajasthan Government have made a demand of Rs. 13955 crore from the Union Government. I would like to request the Union Government to allocate Rs. 11585 crore which is estimated to be spent during the 11th Five year plan in order to provide relief to this population facing the problem of potable water. I would like to request the union Government through the Chair to oblige by allocating Rs. 11585 crore to solve the problem of potable water.

[English]

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY (Berhampore, West Bengal): Sir, prevalence of bird-flu in West Bengal has already hogged the limelight and it has already assumed alarming proportion. It was first detected on 12th December, 2007 in some parts of West Bengal but the fact is that one year earlier the Union Government had warned the State Government of West Bengal to take precautionary measures before the outbreak of bird-flu in the State of West Bengal. Later on, culling operation was initiated and even selling of poultry products was banned in 13 districts of West Bengal.

[Shri Adhir Chowdhury]

Later, the Government started mopping up operation and again the Government withdrew the ban on selling of poultry products. Now again bird-flu has spread in various parts of West Bengal. Naturally, the common people who are used to rear up poultry and who are eking out their livelihood by selling poultry products were left in jitters. But the Government is still playing dillydally with the concern of the common people. No attention has been paid by the State Government of West Bengal to the poultry farmers. Hundreds and thousands of poor people in the village of West Bengal used to earn their supplementary income by rearing up poultry both formal and informal. Everyday the State Government is heaping up all the blame upon the Union Government.

Sir, I would like to know from the Union Government whether the State Government has persuaded the Union Government to provide any financial package to those affected poultry farmers or whether the Union Government has already paid the financial package to the State Government. It is because there has been confusion among the common people that the Union Government has not given any kind of financial help to the State Government as is propagated by the West Bengal Government with an intention to humiliate and tarnish the impression of the Union Government to the common people of West Bengal. So, it is a serious problem and now it is going out of control. Therefore, I would request the Union Government to pay its kind attention to the problems arising due to bird-flu in West Bengal and take necessary action.

DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM (Bhadrachalam): Sir, this is an important matter which I want to bring to the notice of the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Culture. It is regarding an attack on a cultural centre at Hyderabad recently. This Centre is working for the last 25 years. They are promoting training and research in classical dance, fine arts and contemporary political movement.

This was a research centre. Hundreds of people from various States came there to study and for making use of the reference library. This centre had a very big library and two auditoriums. This library had a collection of about two and a half lakh books, especially Urdu literature. There were about 60 titles in Urdu literature. This was one of the biggest libraries in the country. This was burnt down by the attackers. The State Government was impressed by the activities of the centre. The Centre had given a special package for extension of the reference and research library which was inaugurated by the hon. Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri Arjun Singh recently. Such a prestigious institution was attacked by suspected communal elements.

Hence I would like to request the Central Government to take necessary action in the matter to restore the prestige of this institution by giving aids for the books lost and also the photographs.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR (Sagar): Mr. Chairman, Sir Dr. Hari Singh Gaur University is an ancient and famous university in Sagar. For long, the citizens, intelligentsia and students have been making a demand to grant central university status to this university. Also there have been many agitations in this regard from time to time. A few days back, people there and all the political parties organised an unprecedented 'Bandh' on 3rd January. It was a historical 'Bandh' in the history of Sagar which signifies that the people of Sagar are now in a decisive mood to get central university status for this university. A few days back Hon'ble Minister of Human Resources also attended to diamond jubilee function of the university and assured to grant central university status to this university. Though Madhya Pradesh is a large state, it does not have a single central university. Hon'ble Prime Minister has announced to upgrade 16 universities to Central universities in various States of the country. When the NACK team went for evaluation in Sagar, it accorded A+ grade to it. Therefore, I would like to request the Union Government through the Chair to complete the formality of granting central university status to Dr. Hari Singh Gaur university in this session itself and Dr. Hari Singh Gaur be honoured with Bharat Ratna.

[English]

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI (Kutch): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Central Government towards a very important issue concerning my constituency regarding NOC for carrying out Hydrographic survey and port activity in Kori Creek area at Kutch to set up port facilities. The Port and Transport Department, Government of Gujarat had vide their letter dated 16.08.07 requested Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and BSF to allow the private companies to carry out their surveys and investigations in Kori Creek for development of port facilities by private companies cement industries. In its response the Director General, BSF, vide his letter dated 23.10.2007 requested P&TD, Government of Gujarat to approach the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India for obtaining NOC for carrying out Hydrographic survey and port activities in Kori Creek area. Accordingly, P&TD, Government of Gujarat vide its letter dated 30.11.2007 requested the Ministry of Home Affairs to grant NOC. Response of Government of India is still awaited.

Sir, I, therefore, urge upon the Government to expedite granting the NOC as quickly as possible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri P.C.Thomas, you have given notice for a subject raised already by Ms. Sujatha. You cannot raise any other issue. So, you may associate with her.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have given notice for a matter raised by Ms. Sujatha. You can associate with her. But now you want to raise some other issue. It cannot be allowed. The issue you want raise, for that no notice has been given. Nothing will be recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow you. You can associate with Ms. Sujatha. You had given notice to raise that issue only. Now, you want to raise some other issue for which no notice has been given and thus I cannot allow you.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can only associate with Shrimati Sujatha.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): Sir, while associating with what she has said, I am only complementing her and not adding anything more to it. ...*(Interruptions)* Due to constant heavy rains in Kerala. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Only your association with Shrimati Sujatha will go on record and no other matter will go on record.

...(Interruptions)*

**SHRI M. SHIVANNA (Chamrajanagar): Sir, I would like to raise an important issue pertaining to the problems of coconut growers in Karnataka. Sir, coconut tree is considered as Kalpavriksha. Unfortunately, this Kalpavriksha has been attacked by a disease called 'NUSI'. ROOTWILT and NUSI diseases are causing grave concern among the coconut growers in Karnataka. These diseases cause low yield. My parliamentary constituency Chamrajanagar is a hilly area, coconut growers here, are badly affected by these diseases. Coconut is grown in about five thousand hectares in my district. Nearly fifty lakhs coconut trees were affected by these diseases. People were enjoying the tender water of coconut. But, now-a-days coconut growers are shedding tears as they are suffering huge losses due to low yield in coconut and fall in coconut price. Karnataka Government is giving only Rs.250/- for cutting and removing the diseased coconut trees. But coconut growers are actually spending more than Rs.500/- for the same purpose. Sir, it is not fair.

With these words, I conclude my speech Union Government to come forward and rescue the coconut growers with some special package.

* Not recorded

** English translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY (Basirhat): Through you, I want to raise a very important issue in this august House.

The employees and officers of the Foreign Exchange Department of the State Bank of India have started an indefinite hunger strike in Kolkata protesting the decision of the management to shift the Foreign Exchange Department from Kolkata to Mumbai. Everybody knows and you also know that Kolkata was the Head Office of the State Bank of India earlier. Then the Government of India took a decision to shift the Headquarters from Kolkata to Mumbai. But it was decided that the Foreign Exchange Department will run from Kolkata to serve all parts of India and abroad. But subsequently, the management took a decision with an ulterior motive to shift the Foreign Exchange Department from Kolkata to Mumbai. As a result, the employees and the people have started an agitation throughout the country. Even the State Assembly of West Bengal unanimously took a decision not to shift the Foreign Exchange Department of the State Bank of India from Kolkata to Mumbai. Ultimately, they entered into an agreement. It was decided in the agreement, made in January 2000, that fifty per cent of the work will be done by the Forex Department of the Kolkata office of the SBI and the remaining fifty per cent will be done by the Forex Department of the Mumbai office of the SBI. In spite of that agreement, now the management, with an ulterior motive, has taken a decision to shift the remaining fifty per cent of the work also from Kolkata office to Mumbai office. Kolkata office is working very efficiently and is earning a lot of money. But in spite of that they have decided to shift that. As a result, the employees, officers and staff have started an indefinite hunger strike against this decision.

We support the demand of the employees and officers of the Forex Department of the SBI, Kolkata. We urge upon the Government of India to intervene in the matter so that the remaining fifty per cent of the work can be done by the Kolkata office of the SBI. The status quo should be maintained. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri S. Mallikarjunaiah can associate with the issue raised by Shri M. Shivanna.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Sir, Kashmir is the crown of India. It is an integral part of our country but I am very sorry to say that OIC, an organization of 57 Islamic countries interferred in the matters of India regarding Kashmir issue during a discussion held in Dakar. Particularly a representative of Senegal stated that under the proposal of united Nation organization Kashmiris should have the right of self-decision. I think that raising such demand in the OIC organization is condemnable, improper and is a sort of

[Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat]

interference in the internal matters of India. I would like to demand through the Chair, from the Government of India to condemn it strongly. In OIC countries those who are our friendly countries should be clearly conveyed that any kind of interference in the internal matters of India will not be tolerated at all. Countries of the OIC organization have been making such erroneous comments on Kashmir issue time and again and we should give them a befitting reply. We should tell the world that Kashmir is our integral part and interference in our internal matters will not be tolerated.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY: He has been told.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Sir, it has been only regretted; they should condemn it.

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD (Yavatmal): Sir, through you, I would like to raise an issue. Crores of traders of the country are distressed, because as per the provision of Income Tax Act 1961, the traders have to get their accounts audited in case of transactions of Rs. 40 lakhs and alongwith audit, the traders are bound to file income tax return. This limit was set up on April 1, 1985 and 23 years have elapsed since then, but that fixed limit remain unchanged. In the year 1985, rebate given under income-tax act was Rs. 15,000 and now it has risen to Rs. 1.50 lakh. As per clause 48 of Income Tax Act, in order to increase capital income the price-index is linked with inflation. I would like to submit that the financial limit of any item should be revised after three years. According to our economical standards any limit fixed by the Government should be revised in every three years. Through you, I would like to demand that this limit should be raised upto at least Rs. 1.5 crore. I would like to put this demand before the Government to consider this matter because it will provide relief to crores of people small traders who are in distress.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Manoj, you can associate with Shrimati C. S. Sujatha. There are heavy damages due to torrential rains.

DR. K.S. MANOJ (Alleppey): I will associate with Shrimati C.S. Sujatha, but Kuttanad belongs to my constituency.

Sir, it is heart-breaking to see that the entire harvest of Kuttanad is damaged by the torrential rains of the last two or three days. All the Malayalam newspapers came out with the pictures of harvested paddy which is erupted. Almost 35,000 hectares of paddy had been destroyed and that too when the harvesting season is going on there.

Sir, for the ecological preservation of Kuttanad, Swaminathan Commission has submitted a report. This

report should have been implemented during the last year, but this has not happened so far. So, I would urge upon the Government to implement Swaminathan Commission's Report at the earliest on a war footing.

[Translation]

SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHALE (Bilaspur): Sir, the monthly allocation of rice under A.P.L. and B.P.L. scheme by the Union Government to Chhattisgarh state was 61.005 metric tonnes, it has been reduced to 740 metric tonnes, the status quo should be maintained. I would like to submit to the Union Government that as the Government of India allocates foodgrains on the basis of number of B.P.L. families in the State. There are many such families whose name had not been included due to some reason in the BPL survey of 1991 and year 1997-2008 conducted in the Chhattisgarh state. The economic condition of such families is similar to those included in B.P.L. survey list and due to low purchasing power, they are not able to procure foodgrains on the rates given to A.P.L. families.

The State Administration has decided to implement Chief Minister Foodgrains Assistance Scheme from the year 2007-2008. Through this scheme, the State Administration will make A.P.L. rice at available on B.P.L. rate to said target group so as to enable the State Government to provide 35 kilograms of rice the rate of Rs. 3.00 per kilogram to the poor families included in the survey list. Around 12.00 lakh poor families of the State would be benefited by implementation of this scheme and there are many such families which will not get this benefit as their names do not figure in this list. The Union Government are giving step-motherly treatment to them. I would like to submit to the Union Government the monthly allocation of 3104 metric tonnes of A.P.L. wheat was made in the year 2006-07 and monthly allocation of 61.005 metric tonnes of rice had been made in the financial year, but the union Government are ignoring the Government of Chhattisgarh by allocating mere 74 metric tonnes of rice to the State. There is no scope of improvement in economic condition of the poor, and due to this step-motherly treatment, the State Government itself is handling with its allocation. Therefore, I would like to request the Union Government to restore the allocation of 61.005 metric tonnes of rice and 700 metric tonnes of wheat so as to enable improvement of economic condition of the people of Chhattisgarh State.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House now stands adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11.00 a.m.

19.54 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on
Tuesday, March 18, 2008/Phalguna 28, 1929 (Saka)*

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