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Thursday, July 28, 2005

Sravana 06, 1927 (Saka)

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(English Version)

Fifth Session

(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)

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LOK SABHA

Thursday, July 28, 2005/Sravana 06, 1927 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

(MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

REFERENCE BY THE SPEAKER

Calamities occurred due to incessant rains in Mumbai and fire in Mumbai high platform

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: As the hon. Members are aware, the highest recorded rainfall in three decades in Mumbai has reportedly resulted in about hundred and eight deaths including children, since 26th July, 2005. The incessant rains have caused landslides, water and power cuts, food shortage and erratic communication links. Mumbai became inaccessible due to flooding of highways, closure of airports besides disruption of train services.

On 27th July, 2005, a shipping vessel collided with a drilling platform in the Mumbai High field area as a result of which the platform caught fire. It reportedly resulted in about eight deaths. Due to the commendable and timely rescue and relief operations by the authorities concerned, over three hundred and fifty lives were saved. Many are still reported to be missing. The economic losses due to the explosion are immense.

The House expresses its deep anguish over the calamities which prevailed upon the city of Mumbai and in Mumbai High. We wish to express our deep sense of condolence to the members of the bereaved families.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the departed.

11.01 hrs.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have received a notice from the hon. Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas. He will make a statement at 12 noon today. Both the hon. Prime Minister and the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas are going to the place. Therefore, we shall wait for that statement and we can later on have proper discussion on that if you so want.

Let us go on with Question Hour. Thank you.

Now, Q. No. 61. Kunwar Manvendra Singh — Not present.

Prof. Mahadeorao Shiwankar.

11.03 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Train Accidents

+

*61. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:
KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the accident-wise details of train accidents occurred since March, 2005, till date;

(b) the loss of railway property, number of persons injured/died and compensation paid to victims/their family, accident-wise;

(c) the details of inquiry ordered, their findings and the action taken/to be taken against officials found guilty, accident-wise;

(d) whether the Railways have issued any guidelines to fix accountability of senior officials for rail accidents caused by human failure;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) the details of discussion held during the recently held Conference of General Managers on rail accidents;

(g) the measures taken/to be taken to check rail accidents, particularly those occurring due to human error?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b) There have been 84 consequential train accidents during the period March, 2005 to June 2005. Accident-wise details of these accidents, the loss of Railway property alongwith the number of persons killed/ injured, and compensation paid to the victims/their families are given below:—

Type of Accidents	Collisions	Derailments	Manned level crossing accidents	Unmanned level crossing accidents	Fire in trains	Miscellaneous accidents	Total
Number	**2**	**45**	**1**	**26**	**8**	**2**	**84**
Cost of Damage (in Rs.)*	11890226	45053609	10000	84800	13219202	500	70258337
Casualty							
Killed	16	2	2	44	—	—	64
Injured	165	18	1	48	—	13	245
Compensation (in Rs.)	Compensation is paid after a claim is filed in the Railway Claims Tribunals, and a decree is awarded. No compensation has been paid so far in case of accidents that have occurred since March 2005. However, Rs. 23.06 lakhs have been paid as ex-gratia in case of deaths and injuries occurring as a result of accidents since March, 2005.						

(All figures are provisional).

(c) Each and every train accident is inquired into either departmentally or by the Commissioners of Railway Safety depending upon the seriousness of the accident and action as warranted is taken against the officials who are found guilty. Out of the above 84 consequential train accidents, 76 have been/are being inquired into departmentally and 8 by the Commissioners of Railway Safety. Inquiries in case of 60 accidents have been completed and action against the officials as warranted initiated.

(d) and (e) Instructions have been issued to the Zonal Railways regarding fixing responsibility at very senior levels including Divisional Railway Managers and General Managers for system failures resulting into accidents.

(f) During the Conference of General Managers held on 14-06-2005 position of accidents on Indian Railways was reviewed and General Managers were directed to pay special attention to prevention of accidents.

(g) Safety is the prime concern of Indian Railways and adoption of new measures to improve safety is a continuous process. The measures being taken by Indian Railways to minimize incidence of accidents include adoption of suitable modern technology for interlocking and signaling system, upgradation of standards of track and rolling stock, modernization of maintenance

practices, replacement of over aged assets, upgradation of training aids like simulators, checks on observance of safety precautions and provision of Anti Collision Device.

[Translation]

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has said in his answer to the original question that the 44 persons have been killed in accidents at unmanned railway level crossings whereas the total number of persons killed in various other miscellaneous accidents is 64. In fact, this number is incorrect. In an accident occurred on 3rd of May at 4.30 p.m. near Kanhan between Kanhan and Dogrikhurd, 30 kms. away from Nagpur. 52 persons were killed in which 30 were women and 17 were children. If 52 persons were killed at a single unmanned railway crossing level then it is incorrect statement by the hon. Minister that the number of persons killed is 44. Whether the hon. Minister is ready to correct it?

Second thing is how much aid or compensation has been paid to the kith and kin of those 52 persons who have died and what kind of relief has been provided? Mr. Minister may please tell us about all these things.

SHRI SUBODH MOHITE: Those 52 persons who have died in this accident....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You are a very senior Member.

SHRI SUBODH MOHITE: Sir, it is in my constituency...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Either you help him or put a supplementry. I have high regard for you.

Yes, Mr. Minister.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, this figure is collected from the respective Railway and furnished. I will cross check it whether it is deficient in any respect.

However, the point raised was about the *ex gratia* paid by the Railways. We have paid in all cases ex gratia but accident claims always relate to the Claims Tribunal. That is pending before them.

[Translation]

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: I am on a point of order. If 52 persons have actually been killed in a single accident then wherefrom this figure of 44 has come? It means either hon. Minister is giving incorrect reply or he is not replying after proper study. Will he correct it?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member says that in one accident, 52 people were killed at an unmanned level crossing. You have mentioned it as 44.

SHRI R. VELU: This is the figure I have collected. I will get it checked and furnish it to the hon. Member separately.

[Translation]

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I request that since the Minister has not gone through the question, discussion on this question may be postponed to next Monday.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Very well, your comments are on the record. Please put your second supplementary. You don not wish to put your supplementary.

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: But he is no correcting the answer. He is not giving the answer.

MR. SPEAKER: He says he will look into it. That is the information given by the Department.

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: We have given the notice 14 days before.

MR. SPEAKER: Therefore, he should correct the reply and he should apologize also.

SHRI R. VELU: I will report back to the House.

[Translation]

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my second supplementary is that these accidents are happening on a large scale. In fact, during the year 2004-2005 till April 2004-05 a loss of Rs. 2552 crore has been incurred as the same has been stated in the Rajya Sabha the other day. A huge loss of Rs. 2552 crore has been incurred. A large number of passengers are killed in train accidents. This year 143 passengers have been killed and a loss of Rs. 2552 crore has been suffered due to train accidents. In such a scenario, the Minister of Railways is not capable of holding his office. My question is whether he is going to stepdown, whether he will resign? If hon. Lal Bahadur Shastri can resign after one rail accident....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: That means you have no real Question to ask. I am very sorry. This is not a real supplementary.

Mr. Minister, you need not answer.

[Translation]

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question has not been replied....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Mr. Speaker, I want to say that...(*Interruptions*) Has he tendered his resignation ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Will you sit down?

Mr. Ram Kripal Yadav, I am on my legs. I am going to impress upon the only hon. Member that the Chair is on its legs. You show little respect.

...(*Interruptions*)

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: That is the responsibility of the Railway Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Will you resign or not?

SHRI R. VELU: No, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: On your behalf, I put the Question to him. He said, "No." He would not resign.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No running commentary please.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, there has not been any reduction in the number of accidents in the railways even after taking a number of measures. A Special Railway Safety Fund of Rs. 17,000 crore was created for the replacement of the over-aged assets and also for the modernization of the signaling system. Already four years have passed but there has not been any perceptible impact on the performance of the Railways.

MR. SPEAKER: You put your question

[Translation]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Now, the Minister of Railways has come, he will give a reply. We will ask him only as to why the number of accidents have increased now a days even after spending huge money and having a Special Railways Safety Fund of Rs.17,000 crore? Why still working with overaged rolling stock? Shri Laluji has come, I am asking Shri Laluji.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You put you question. You are lucky.

[Translation]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: We want a reply from him as to when he is going to replace the overaged and old tracks, locomotives and Coaches which have overrun their life time, which is 35 years? You still have got one year in your hand.

This fund will not be with you after one year. When these all will be completed by spending Rs. 17 thousand crore. I want to ask this from Laluji.

[English]

SHRI R. VELU: I will answer and after this he can.

[Translation]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: It's, OK. Both of you can reply.

[English]

SHRI R. VELU: The accidents that had taken place after the creation of Safety Fund, as the hon. Member has pointed out, are—during the year 2001-02, they were 415 which came down to 351 in 2002-03. They have been reduced in 2003-04 the figure was 325, and in 2004-05. the figure is only 234. There is a phenomenal reduction of 28 per cent. That would mean that the figure that was 415 has come down to 234.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Are you satisfied with this?

SHRI R. VELU: Not at all. Therefore, what we have stated on the question of spending of Rs. 17,000 crore is this. In the track renewal, out of 16,538 kms. we have completed about 11,740 kms. In bridgework, we contemplated 2,700 but we have completed 1,681. Again, for track circuiting we contemplated 5,300, and we have completed 2,638. What I am trying to say is this. As the hon. Member has asked, we will definitely complete this work of renewal of old assets, and also the rolling stocks, etc. We will complete a scheme by the end of 2007.

In addition, the Railway Safety Review Committee has given 278 recommendations, and we have accepted 260. Out of this, we have implemented 160. We have seen that all the technological upgradation, and also the manpower training, etc. are taken into consideration. In this process, definitely I assure the Member that the level of accidents has come down, and the performance has gone up....(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Sir, this question is continuing since long....(*Interruptions*)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Whenever a tainted Minister will speak in the House we will boycott. ...(*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): Now, Advaniji has also become tainted. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You please wait.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: Advaniji is tainted.

11.13 hrs.

(Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra and some other Hon. Members then left the House)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister may please wait before giving you a reply.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we want to make it clear that if Advaniji speaks here then we will also boycott him....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Ragunathji, he does not need your support.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Not to be recorded. Nothing will be recorded.

(*Interruptions*)*

MR. SPEAKER: Your leader is replying, and you are interrupting him.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI LALU PRASAD: The party has to decide as to what has to be done when Advaniji speaks.

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*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: That is another thing, right now you should reply him.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: Hon. Member Shri Basu Deb Acharia has mentioned about train accidents. I would like to tell that safety is our priority. Crores of people travel by trains every day. There have been a series of train accidents during the tenure of the N.D.A. Government. You will agree to it, then coaches were seen on the top of other coaches. People lost faith in travelling by trains during the NDA regime. Therefore, we are committed to the safe journey. Safety is of paramount importance in the Railways. After the work done by us and the efforts being made, in this direction, the accidents have occurred at only two places. The accidents in Punjab and Gujarat were due to human error and due to the negligence of railway personnel. As for as the question of unmanned level crossings is concerned the number of such unmanned level crossings is around 21 thousand. Accidents occur there even after issuing many warnings to the people. People are aware that it is an unmanned crossing. Advertisements are given in this regard and instructions are also issued to the people through electronic media. In order to cover the unmanned level crossings, 21 thousand people are needed and we are also making arrangements for the same. Sir, we are giving priority to the centuries old dilapidated railway bridges and railway lines and we are going ahead to speed up the work. The whole country knows that in the UPA regime how fast we have made efforts to avert the accidents. We have decided that if an accident takes place due to human lapse, the GMs and DRMs of railway should be held directly responsible for the same. All this was done so that accidents could be averted The whole world witnessed that three accidents had taken place in Pakistan and it had also taken place in Japan, but it is good for the UPA Government that the number of accidents have decreased sharply in its regime as compared to the regime of NDA Government. We consider the suggestions received from the hon'ble Members from time to time. However, a time bound programme would have to be chalked out to cover the unmanned level crossings. We are hopeful for that. We are of the view that difficulty is being faced due to the non-availability of rail over bridges. We are earning profits in railways without increasing fare charges. At the same time the number of accidents have also decreased and we do not sleep at night because any telephone call may come from anywhere and at any point of time and hence our officers and employees always remain alert round the clock to attend it. When Shri Nitish Kumarji was Minister for Railways, a number of accidents used to take place and we are now trying our best to set all these things right.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: After this exhaustive answer, I do not think any further supplementary is required.

[Translation]

Indo-Iran Gas Pipeline

+

*62. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA:
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:

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

(a) the present status of the Indo-Iran gas pipeline;

(b) whether India and Pakistan authorities held discussions recently on the financial and security aspects of the proposed gas pipeline project;

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

(d) whether India and Pakistan have agreed to constitute a joint working group to commence the Indo-Iran gas pipeline project;

(e) if so, the details thereof and progress made in this regard;

(f) whether USA has expressed their concern over the said project; and

(g) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

[English]

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

Statement

(a) to (e) The Government is discussing the details of the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project with the Governments of Iran and Pakistan. The discussions are progressing satisfactorily.

Two separate Secretary-level Joint Working Groups (JWGs) viz., the India-Iran special JWG and the India-Pakistan JWG, have been constituted to discuss the "financial, technical, commercial, legal and related issues to realize a safe and secure world-class project" as stated in the Joint Press Statement issued by the Ministers of Petroleum of India and Pakistan at Islamabad on 7 June 2005. A copy of the Joint Press Statement is enclosed as Annexure-I.

The first meeting of the India-Pakistan JWG was held in New Delhi on 12-13 July 2005. Both sides stressed their "serious commitment" to address various issues pertaining to the project and agreed that once basic issues pertaining to the project had been satisfactorily resolved between the three countries concerned, they would enter into a "Framework Agreement". The two sides agreed on the crucial importance of urgently appointing their respective financial advisory consortia to advise on the project structure and related technical, financial, commercial and legal matters. They agreed that every effort would be made to appoint their respective financial advisory consortia at the earliest. A copy of the Joint Press Statement is enclosed as Annexure-II.

The meeting of the India-Iran Special JWG is likely to take place in New Delhi in early August 2005. Earlier, an Iranian technical-level delegation, accompanied by representatives from BHP-Billiton, their project consultants who had prepared a pre-feasibility report for the project, visited New Delhi on 24-25 June 2005, and made a presentation covering some technical and commercial aspects of the project. The findings of the financial advisors supported by technical and legal consultants, will be discussed at future scheduled meetings of the Joint Working Groups (JWGs). These meetings will be reviewed by Minister-level interactions over the next few months. It is expected that by the end of the year, the three Governments might be in a position to decide on the project structure and related technical, financial and legal aspects of the project.

(f) and (g) The question of the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline has not been officially raised with us by the US authorities. However, it is a matter of public record that the United States has on its statute book the Iran Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) of 1996 that provides for the imposition of sanctions against any party that has made an investment of more than Dollars 40 million that directly and significantly contributes to the enhancement of Iran's ability to develop petroleum resources of Iran. US officials have stated publicly that the US position on India's energy requirements in "constructive".

Government is pursuing the import of gas from Iran in the national interest in order to meet the energy requirements of the country.

Annexure-I

Joint Press Statement

In accordance with the Joint Press Statement of April 18, 2005, in New Delhi by the President of Pakistan, His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf and the Prime Minister of India, His Excellency Mr. Manmohan Singh, it was agreed that the Ministers of Petroleum and Natural Gas would meet to explore cooperation on the issue of pipelines. Accordingly, the Indian Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Panchayati Raj, Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, visited Pakistan at the invitation of H.E. Mr. Amanullah Khan Jadoon, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources of Pakistan, between June 5-7, 2005. The two Ministers discussed cooperation between India and Pakistan with regard to the import of gas through transnational pipelines.

2. In Islamabad, H.E. Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar had the honour of calling on H.E. President General Pervez Musharraf and H.E. Prime Minister Mr. Shaukat Aziz. He had a one-to-one meeting and delegation-level talks with H.E. Minister Mr. Amanullah Khan Jadoon. The two Ministers agreed that the transnational pipeline projects should be given top priority as there would be substantial advantage to both countries in pursuing and realizing cooperation in these projects, to serve their energy security interests, and to create linkages and inter-dependencies for establishing an enduring relationship between the two countries. They were of the shared view that, given the substantial requirements of gas of their countries, the processing of pipeline projects should be accelerated.

3. The Indian Minister explained to the Pakistani Minister India's requirements of gas by pipeline and the arrangements worked out by India. The Pakistan side gave a detailed presentation of the position regarding supply and demand for natural gas in Pakistan and provided an overview of the gas sector economy. The Indian Minister thanked the Pakistani side for the detailed information provided and, in turn, provided some details of arrangements made by India to import LNG and agreed to share technical information and experience in this regard with the Pakistani side.

4. Iran-Pakistan-India Pipeline: The two Ministers reviewed the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline proposal. They agreed that the project, which envisaged supply of gas to Pakistan and India through a transnational pipeline, would go a long way in meeting the energy security requirements of the two countries and, thus, should be seen as a significant project for the benefit of the peoples of these countries. The Indian and Pakistani delegations agreed to exchange information in regard to the financial structuring, technical, commercial, legal and related issues to realize a safe and secure world class project. To this end, it was agreed that the momentum pertaining to the project should be accelerated by constituting a Joint Working Group at the Secretary-level, which will meet regularly and report progress to the Ministers to facilitate definitive decisions by them, at the earliest.

5. Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Pipeline: H.E. Mr. Amanullah Khan Jadoon provided the Indian Minister with details of this project in which the Indian side expressed interest. The Indian Minister confirmed that he would respond positively to an invitation to attend the next Steering Committee Meeting.

6. Gulf South Asia (GUSA) Pipeline: The Pakistani side outlined the parameters of the proposed GUSA project and India expressed interest in participating in this project.

7. The Indian Minister conveyed his gratitude to H.E. Mr. Amanullah Khan Jadoon for the warm hospitality and courtesy extended to him and his delegation throughout their stay in Pakistan. Minister Aiyar invited Minister Amanullah Khan Jadoon to visit India to pursue transnational pipeline projects to maintain the momentum of dialogue and cooperation. The invitation was accepted. It was decided that H.E. the Pakistani Minister would visit India at his earliest convenience. It was also agreed that the Indian Minister would again visit Pakistan at mutual convenience later in the year. These visits would be preceded by meetings of the Joint Working Group, alternately in India and Pakistan, to discuss all issues relevant to the realization of world-class pipeline projects to meet the gas requirements of the two countries.

Annexure-II

Joint Press Statement

The first meeting of the India-Pakistan Joint Working Group (JWG) on cooperation in transnational pipelines was held in New Delhi on 12th-13th July, 2005. The Indian delegation was led by Shri S.C. Tripathi, Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, while the Pakistani delegation was led by H.E. Mr. Ahmad Waqar, Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources. Besides having substantial delegation level discussions, the Pakistani delegation called on. H.E. Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Panchayati Raj, who conveyed the firm support of the Government of India to the Iran-

Pakistan-India Pipeline Project and other transnational pipeline proposals under consideration. He urged the two delegations to prepare a time frame in respect of various items pertaining to the project.

2. The discussions between the two delegations were marked by a positive and constructive approach and were held in an atmosphere of candour and mutual understanding. Both sides conveyed their serious commitment to address various issues pertaining to the project so as to maintain the momentum of the dialogue. They agreed that dialogue on the basis of bilateral joint working groups between India, Pakistan and Iran, interspersed with periodic interactions at Ministerial level, provided a satisfactory mechanism to address and resolve all matters pertaining to the project.

3. The two delegations had an indepth discussion on the technical, financial commercial and legal aspects of the project. The two sides agreed that in order to realize a safe and secure world class project, arrangements would need to be provided for in every aspect of the project, including technical, commercial, financial and legal matters.

4. The two sides agreed that once basic issues pertaining to the project had been satisfactorily resolved between the three countries concerned, they would enter into a "Framework Agreement". In this regard, it was agreed that the Indian side would submit a draft text to the Pakistani side before the next meeting of the JWG.

5. The two sides agreed that they shared an immediate commonality of interest in regard to the technical aspects of the project such as the size and specifications of the pipeline, the quality of gas, the quantum of gas required by the two countries and the build up period. It was agreed that technical experts of the two countries would meet quickly in order to harmonize the position of the two sides in this area to achieve a project of international standard.

6. The proposed pipeline routes and delivery point were also discussed. It was agreed that these would be established on the basis of techno-economic considerations.

7. The two sides agreed that the price of the gas as well as the project structure were of crucial importance. Various approaches to determine a reasonable price of gas as also various options pertaining to project structure were discussed by the two delegations. It was agreed that these matters would be pursued in greater detail at subsequent meetings of the JWG.

8. The two sides agreed on the crucial importance of urgently appointing their respective financial advisory consortium to advise on project structure and related technical, financial, commercial and legal matters. They agreed that every effort would be made to appoint the respective financial advisory consortium at the earliest.

9. The two sides noted with satisfaction that each of them had initiated the process of joining the Energy Charter, initially with "Observer" status. They agreed that in the various inter-governmental agreements entered into by them in respect of the project, the provisions of the Energy Charter would be referred to.

10. In order to carry the process forward, the two sides agreed that the next meeting of the JWG would take place in Islamabad by the end of August 2005.

11. The two sides discussed the other pipeline proposals under consideration by them, i.e. the Turkmenistan—Afghanistan—Pakistan (TAP) pipeline and the Gulf—South Asia (GUSA) pipeline. They noted that India had been invited to attend the next meeting of the Steering Committee of the TAP Project. The Pakistani side briefed the Indian side on the latest developments pertaining to the project as also on their recent discussions pertaining to the GUSA Project.

[Translation]

SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA: If any pressure is exerted on Pakistan by United States of America that if Pakistan supports Indo-Iranian gas pipeline project, the leller will stop providing financial assistance to them. In that situation, whether the government has considered any other alternative to bring the gas pipeline to India through any other route?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: We do not have any information that Pakistan holds any grudge in regard to route the gas pipeline to India from Iran. I would like to draw the attention of the hon'ble member to the joint statement given by Shri Amanullah Khan Jadoon, the Minister for Petroleum, the state of Pakistan and me on June, 7 in Islamabad, which is as follows:—

[English]

> "The two Ministers agreed that the transnational pipeline projects should be given top priority as there would be substantial advantage to both countries in pursuing and realising co-operation in these projects, to serve their energy security interests, and to create linkages and inter-dependencies for establishing an enduring relationship between the two countries. They were of the shared view that...the processing of pipeline projects should be accelerated."

[Translation]

The technical delegation of Pakistan had reached India on 12-13 July to participate in our joint working group.

They told us that as far as Pakistan is concerned, this delegation wants to move ahead in this matter by every way and the same has been mentioned in the joint press statement which is enclosed with the question.

So far as another pipeline is concerned, I am not saying that we will not route the natural gas pipeline from Iran to India, but in addition our talks are on to route it from Turkmenistan and Qutar and talks with Myanmar in connection with its enrouting are on at an advanced stage. Therefore, we will not remaine dependent on any one source of supply but the importance of Iran cannot be under estimated be cause there is an assurance of getting maximum gas from there.

SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister the time by which the work pertaining to pipeline is likely to be started alongwith the reasons for not starting the same till now? Sir, the Minister, in his reply, has not given details regarding the agreement to be signed with Iran. Therefore, I would like to know about the technical aspect of the frame work of agreement to be drawn up by the both the countries?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this proposal has been pending with the country for the last 12 years. Keeping in view the speed with which we have moved ahead during the last few months. I can say that perhaps we had never moved ahead with this speed before. Its all aspects are being discussed bilaterally between Pakistan and India and between India and Iran. I think that if, we complete the programme which we have chalked out, as mentioned in our documents, we shall reach at the destination by the end of this year where all the three countries would be able to prepare a frame work, but we need not to be more optimistic about it, because at present the bilateral talks which are going on between Pakistan and India and between India and Iran are still on. I hope that we will be able to complete the task with success.

SHRI MOHD. TAHIR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Minister whether it is a fact that during his recent foreign visit the Prime Minister has said while addressing a press conference in Washington that Indo-Iranian gas pipeline is full of risks and if so, the details thereof which prompted the Prime Minister expressed his concern and whether one of the risks is that the America has threatened Pakistan to impose a ban on them if they allow to route the project through its territory.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the repeat the words just uttered by the hon'ble member. The hon'ble Prime Minister has said that *[English]* 'Only preliminary discussions have taken place.' *[Translation]* Besides, he also stated that *[English]* "We are in a state of preliminary negotiations." *[Translation]* Now no one can doubt about it. The second thing, he emphasized

was that *[English]* "We are terrible short of our energy supply and we desperately need new sources of energy." *[Translation]* He also added that *[English]* "We desperately need the supply of gas that Iran has". *[Translation]* "Keeping this in mind, he also said that" *[English]* "I am realistic enough to realise that there are many risks." *[Translation]* Now let me know whether there is no risk, when a pipeline has to be routed to India by covering in thousands of kilometers from Iran via Pakistan. Had our Prime Minister said that there was no risk, it would have been a case of total negligence and irresponsibility.

He said—yes, there are risks. Yes, there are risks but it does not mean that we should be afraid of them or we should overlook them. We will have to face the risks and facing it is important, especially when we discuss pipelines. Iran or Pakistan, we shall have to take it seriously. When I visited Pakistan, I included the following text in the joint statement:

[English]

> "The Indian and Pakistani Delegations agreed to exchange information in regard to the financial structuring, technical, commercial, legal and related information to realise a safe and secure world-class project."

[Translation]

This is our aim and for this reason it has been stated that we shall discuss all the related issues in the Joint Working Group and when the meeting of India-Pakistan Joint Working Group was held here, it was emphasized therein.

[English]

> "The two sides agreed that in order to realise a safe and secure world-class project, arrangements would need to be provided for in every aspect of the project, including technical, commercial, financial and legal matters."

[Translation]

So, I do not think that we should ignore the risks. Moreover, we, Pakistan, India and Iran have the same goal of making it a world class project. There are such precedence in the past also. It is not a first world class project. There are a number of such pipelines in the world which had reached European Union and West Germany from USSR at the time of cold war. Recently a pipeline, named B.T.C. pipeline has been laid between Azaurbejan and Turkey through Georgia. This instance is before us and we can take advantage of it irrespective of risks before us. We shall give our final approval only when we are sure that a solution to the risks has been arrived at and that too unanimously, so that this project is materialised.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: He has given a very exhaustive reply. Is there any further question?

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Yes, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: He has covered everything.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: No Sir, he has not covered everything.

MR. SPEAKER: Very well, you put your question.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, just now the hon'ble Minister has replied. The statement made by the Prime Minister for Washington Post in America, he did not say one thing but it was three things. First thing—*[English]* pipeline is fraught with risk. Second thing—there is no international consortium to undertake the project. And thirdly—it reminds Iran of its international obligations. *[Translation]* These three statements he has made there. Mainly three points have been made in this connection. Hon'ble Prime Minister is making this statement. But already I know when this matter came up that United States of America had said that it would impose sanctions on Pakistan

and Iran if this pipeline is materialised. At that time it had been said very boldly that we would not succumb to US pressure. We would proceed further. But when Prime Minister visited America, he straightaway made a statement. After this statement why are you spending crores of rupees, million of rupees? If there is no consortium to undertake the project and you are reminding Iran of its international obligations. If this is being done under the pressure of America, can you go ahead with this project? I am looking into it. We are fighting for it and whatever is happening in Tokyo, I shall explain it....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr Minister.

...(*Interruptions*)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: I have not finished my question.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: The Speaker has called me.

MR. SPEAKER: You have already put your question.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: I have not yet concluded. Please do not go by the words and tell me whether the Prime Minister or your goodself will have upper hand and if there is a difference between the two, tell me what does it mean?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You have said that. He is the concerned Minister. He is replying.

[Translation]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am sorry to say that hon'ble Member is trying to mislead the House....(*Interruptions*)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Mr. Minister is trying to mislead the House. You are changing it under the pressure of America....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please, let us not interrupt each other when one of us is speaking. Please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: That too in such a manner that in place of reading the entire statement of hon'ble Prime Minister, he is quoting a few words out of context and trying to mislead the House. The statement made by the Prime Minister is before me and I expect that Mr. Malhotra might also be having the copy of that interview. He said this about Iran:—

[English]

"Our interest would be to work with other like-minded countries, so that a constructive solution can be found for the problems that the world-community is expressing about Iran."

[Translation]

Then he added this:—

[English]

"We have strong civilisational links with Iran."

[Translation]

And on the basis of this he said:—

[English]

"I do believe that thanks to our unique history, we can be a bridge, obviously, a bridge between the world-community and Iran."

[Translation]

When we are moving ahead, whatever the international obligations are, if you have accepted them if your own free will, then it is our responsibility to abide by those obligations and the Prime Minister further

said that we are busy in finding a solutions to this issue with the cooperation of like minded countries. Alongwith this he said:—

[English]

"Considering all the uncertainties of the situation there in Iran, I do not know if any International Consortium of Bankers would probably underwrite this."

[Translation]

Further he said:—

[English]

"I do not know...."

[Translation]

I also do not know about it. It may be that some friends of Mr. Vijay Kumar Malhotra are ready for this. Kindly tell us their names. Nobody knows. But, I want to put stress on this that the meeting of Indo-Pak Joint Working Group was held on 11-12th July and we had come out with a joint statement.

We had strained every nerve on that occation

[English]

that the two sides agree on the crucial importance of urgently appointing their respective Financial Advisory Consortia to advice on the project structure and related technical, financial, commercial and legal matters. They agreed that every effort would be made to appoint the respective Financial Advisory Consortium at the earliest.

[Translation]

After the interview of Prime Minister, we had a meeting there with the delegation of Pakistan. Excuse me, I do not mean after the interview but prior to it. We had a meeting and we came to know that we neither had a banking consortium as yet nor had any body tried to explore the same. Hence, it has now become very necessary to give priority to it. When I visited Pakistan I met the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He also laid great emphasis on it that this project should be a world class project. Regarding the seven billion dollars required as capital expenditure it is being said that, we do not have this much money. We have 140 billion dollars in our reserve. Pakistan has approximately 14-15 billion dollars and Iran has got ample funds. We know if we remain self-reliant in respect of this project, it might become a world class project. But we will have to explore bankers and consortium in order to make it a world class project. In todays scenario there is a legislation which was passed by USA some nine years ago in the year of 1996 and since then it has not been imposed on any country till date. Despite this there are various international companies in Iran which might have made small investments. We cannot ignore it by saying that this is an American legislation. The legislation is there right in front of us. It is upto us to find out a solution. With your permission I would like to remind Mr. Vijay Kumarji that a special group of India and Pakistan was constituted in 1995-96 which is called as 'Track two Diplomacy. It was comprised of two Indian representatives, one was Shri Jaswant Singhji and other was Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar. Both of us had a meeting with Pakistani representatives of the group in Singapore in December, 1995 and again, we met whem in Stockhome in July 1996. Then, we only said that we would meet again in Udaipur for the last time. Having had a last meeting in November, we, Shri Jaswant Singh and myself prepared a report wherein we mentioned all hazards and stated with full confidence that solutions could be found out. I have brought that report with me here in this House. Jaswant Singhji was a good friend of mine before he rose to the office of the Minister of External Affairs, but after receiving the charge of the Ministry he stopped showing that much of love and affection towards me. We visited Ministry of External Affairs together. We met the Foreign Secretary to present this report to him and we pointed out the risks alongwith stating that there are ways to overcome the hurdles. We requested the government to move ahead with the

project. After that Shri Jaswant Singhji became a minister. A question was asked from my predecessor Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Ram Naik about this pipeline on 14 March, 2002 in this very House. I asked a supplementary question because at that time I used to sit there and I had never thought that we would come in power. I asked Shri Ram Naikji whether he has got such a report and whether he is ready to move ahead with that report. He replied that he had not gone through that report. I was told that we were bending down whereas Shri Jaswant Singh was holding talks with Strobe Talbot. Then what has his stance at that time...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: We are not talking about Mr. Jaswant Singh. I am only asking him whether there is a contradiction between what the Prime Minister has said and what the Minister has said.

[Translation]

Let me know what have you done, (*Interruptions*) In what way does it concern Jaswant Singhji.

[English]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Sir, I insist on going through this report. He is trying to disturb me. I seek your protection, Sir, please ask him to sit down and allow me to continue.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: There is contradiction between the statements of Prime Minister and that of Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please keep quiet....

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please, sit down.

(*Interruptions*)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): Sir, the Minister is answering his question....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No hon. Member can dictate as to what the Minister will say. If it is irrelevant, I will strike it out. But I cannot say that it is irrelevant.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Please clear the contradiction in the Prime Minister's statement....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: He is referring to it.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: On the 14th of June, 2002, faced with genuine American threats in consequence of the explosion of the Bomb by their Government the previous year, this is what Shri Jaswant Singh as Minister of External Affairs had to say. There was no way...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: How is it related...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You referred to this aspect. Yes, Mr. Minister, you may please continue. This is not right. This is not fair. You cannot dictate what the Minister will say.

(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: You are supporting America....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. I will request all the hon. Members to listen to the reply.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: This is not right.

[English]

You have asked a question. The answer is related to that. Why can he not say that? This is not fair.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Tell me something about Prime Minister's statement. ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, you go on. Only Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar will be taken on record.

(*Interruptions*)...*

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: He said, "There was no way India could agree to an overland pipeline unless some fundamentals were addressed." This is what he says as a Minister, and I was a private Member. I do not think we have to take any lessons from the BJP on standing upto outside pressure.

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Rupchand Pal to put a supplementary.

(*Interruptions*)...*

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: It is a Minister's statement he has referred to relating to this project. No, this is not right. Nothing will be recorded. Only Shri Rupchand Pal's question will be recorded.

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, nothing will be recorded except Shri Rupchand Pal.

(*Interruptions*)...*

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Sir, is it not a fact that a very high US official has publicly expressed serious reservations on Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline?

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: You are not to decide that. You cannot decide that. Sit down.

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: Very well, if he has misled the House take action under the Rules. Sit down please.

(*Interruptions*)...*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Please, sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: What is the reaction of Government of India to such an observation of that high official? Did Ms. Condoleeza Rice express opinion in favour of any other gas pipeline project? (*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: It is not being recorded. Why are you speaking like this?

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: I implore upon you to kindly take your seats.

(*Interruptions*)...*

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: I would request you to please take your seats. Let the House function. This is an important project. Everybody in the country...

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: Kindly allow me to speak.

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot interrupt me Shri Ananth Kumar. No, I would not allow this.

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra, your Deputy Leader, thought it fit to be an important subject. He has specifically referred to this project and to the Prime Minister's statements, which he has mentioned, and the hon. Minister was speaking on that. You cannot dictate to the Minister as to what he will say.

Nothing will be recorded. Shri Rupchand Pal, have you put your supplementary?

(*Interruptions*)...*

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: He has asked the question. May I reply?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I will not tolerate this. This is too much. You are dictating what the Minister will say. How can you dictate to the Minister? I will not permit this.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Krishnadas I do not need your assistance. If I need your assistance, I will tell you.

Nothing will be recorded except what the Minister says.

(*Interruptions*)...*

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I confirm that there are at least two senior American officials who are on record as having expressed reservations about the pipeline, in public. I also confirm to the hon. Member that in answer to a question from the media in March of this year, the US Secretary of State, who was on a visit to New Delhi, did draw attention to certain concerns. It is also a fact which is indubitable and ineluctable that there is a law on the statute book of the United States of America, which is called the Iran, Libya Sanctions Act of 1996. It is also a fact, and I must underline this, that notwithstanding having been on the statute book for the better part of nine years, that law has not been invoked by the Government of the United States of America.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Why are you speaking on behalf of USA?

[English]

How are you speaking on behalf of the Government of the USA?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Now, Sir, I would also like to draw the hon. Member's attention to the fact that another high US official has gone on record and in public that Indian approach to this pipeline is 'constructive'.

I am in a position to convey to the House that at no official level—whether it is in the interaction of minor Ministers like myself or more senior people above me in the hierarchy—at no stage, at no interaction has there been any attempt to pressurise us. Indeed, the subject has not even come up. In these circumstances, to assume that there is US pressure or to assume that any reaction made by us or in response to such pressure is completely misplaced. The Prime Minister, as I think, in the totality of his interview placed all these issues in perspective. I have had the privilege of interacting several times with the Prime Minister since he returned from the United States of America. I do not think he shares the perception that some Members of this House have

*Not recorded.

of their being any kind of contradiction between his position and mine. We are going together on the basis of collective responsibility as we run the Government with the support of our friends in the UPA.

MR. SPEAKER: Q. No. 63—Shri G.M. Siddeswara—not present.

Defence Agreement with USA

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*64. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:

SHRI UDAY SINGH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister of Defence visited USA recently;

(b) if so, the outcome of the discussion held during his visit;

(c) whether any agreement has been signed between the two countries in defence cooperation;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the impact of the said agreement on national security; and

(f) the measures taken by the Government to safeguard the national security interest?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Sir, I made an official visit to the United States of America (USA) recently at the end of June 2005. The visit provided an opportunity for an exchange of views with the US leadership on international security issues and to promote cooperation with the US to strengthen and modernize our armed forces and our defence industries through increased professional interaction in the military sphere and in collaboration in the sphere of defence equipment and technology in the mutual interest. A document entitled 'New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship' was signed during the visit.

The 'Framework' updates the 'Agreed Minutes on Defence Relations between India and the United States' signed in January 1995. It identifies global threats that have seriously affected our security, such as terrorism and violent religious extremism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related materials, data and technologies as areas of shared concern, and provides for cooperation with the US to enhance our capabilities in responding to these and other challenges like natural disasters. It reflects our interest in the security of the sea-lanes and regional and global security and stability. It establishes a new Defence Procurement and Production Group under the existing Defence Policy Group to promote a defence trade, production and technology relationship with the US. It also provides for a dialogue on international security issues and cooperation with the international community to promote regional and global stability through building capacities of other countries for peace-keeping operations and collaboration in multinational operations, essentially cooperative operations such as disaster responses, when it is in the common interest.

The visit opens up the US as a potential source of advanced defence equipment and technology, increasing our options and leverage vis-a-vis suppliers in the acquisition of defence technology. It will promote cooperation with the US to enhance the capabilities of India's armed forces and defence industries and increase our strategic maneuverability in international affairs without committing India to any specific actions, nor obliging us to do anything that is not in the country's national interest.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I would like to thank the US Government for at least adhering to the Geneva Convention when our hon. Defence Minister visited the USA. They did not give the same treatment as was given to his predecessor when he went to the USA.

I would like to know from the hon. Defence Minister especially about the clause 3 of the New Framework, which has been signed. It deals with the defeating terrorism and violent religious extremism. It is a known fact that the US is part of this problem; it is not the solution. When it comes to religious extremism, it only points towards one religion. Clause 4(b) talks about 'collaborate' in multinational operation, when it is in the common interest. How can India's interest be common with the US interest? How can we collaborate in multinational operations wherein it is not sanctioned by the United Nations? This has been the cornerstone of our policy.

MR. SPEAKER: Put your question.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Clause 4(j) states that with a focus enabling the other countries to feel trained capable persons. This in itself shows that we are falling into the trap of the USA. Have we fallen into the trap of the USA that come 2006, the US and Britain are going to withdraw their forces from Iraq? Are we going to send our forces over there in the guise of other countries? Will the Minister agree with me?

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question? You cannot go on giving the speech. You should learn how to put a supplementary question. You are a bright yound man.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: My second question to the hon. Minister is this. Have the Minister agreed to the exchange of intelligence? Have we also agreed to the posting of RAW and CBI officers in the US because I have come to know that the FBI is operating in New Delhi?

MR. SPEAKER: You are giving an information. Please sit down.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: I am asking a question.

MR. SPEAKER: No, I will not allow this type of misuse. You are misusing the opportunity.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Have we agreed in this Framework for transformation of technology for missile defence?

MR. SPEAKER: Which question will the Minister answer?

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Has the US agreed to give membership of MTCR to India?

MR. SPEAKER: You have got another opportunity when you can put another supplementary. Now, please sit down.

I do not know which question the Minister would select to answer. You have put many questions. Let the Minister select the question.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Let me assure the hon. Member that neither there is any trap and we are mature enough to be lulled to fall into the trap of somebody. India's foreign policy is well known. India's stand on sending troops to Iraq is also well known and there is nothing in the Framework which will compel us to take any decision and I repeat, any decision which will not be considered necessary in our interest. This is a bilateral arrangement. 'Their interest' means not 'the interest'. 'Their interest' means interest of ours and interest of them. If we do not agree, there is no question of having any arrangement with them.

In respect of posting our officers, it had been reported in the Press and I myself responded to the Press after coming that there was no proposal of sending any RAW or Intelligence officer. There was a proposal whether some Armed Forces officers could be posted in pacific command or Central command of US. Our response has been 'No'. We will strengthen our Embassy in the form of Defence Attache which we have in almost every country and in that, if it is needed, that institution will be strengthened.

In respect of the missiles, what we are doing now is, we are sharing information, we are participating in various conferences and seminars. But in so far as this

arrangement is concerned, in so far as this Government is concerned, there is no question of accepting any missiles shield. Moreover, if you go through the entire text, you will find it. I would like to remind the hon. Member most respectfully that I have also stated in the Statement itself that this is the Framework of the updated 'Agreed Minutes on Defence Relations between India and the United States' signed in January 1995. Moreover, it is not only with USA but we are having this Defence cooperation relations with as many as 12 countries. We have regular institutional arrangements as to how this Defence relationship is expanded.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Framework has gone beyond the Agreed Minutes on Defence Relations that was signed in 1995. My question to the hon. Minister is whether this particular Framework, which has been signed by him on 20th June in the presence of all the three Defence Chiefs of the country, does not go contrary to the National Common Minimum Programme. It says that even as it pursues relations with the US, and UPA Government will maintain the independence of foreign policy position on all regional and global issues. Does this Framework not completely negate this?

Secondly, it would have been in the fitness of things or it would have been proper if this Framework had been debated in this august House. The whole House should have been taken into confidence and a national consensus could have been arrived at. I am pretty much sure that the Framework, the Defence Framework which India has with other countries, does not relate to this. My question is, whether the US has agreed to MTCR membership, whether the US has promised the members of the Australian Club, whether the US has said about the Nuclear Supply Group (NSG) of India. These are important questions and the hon. Minister has to answer them.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I have no problem if we have a full-fledged discussion on this. The hon. Member has confused MTCR and all these things. We will have the opportunity where all these arrangements will be discussed because these were elaborately discussed during the meeting between the Prime Minister and the US President, Mr. Bush. Some of these things have been mentioned in the statement. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: We can have a discussion on this.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Therefore, please do not get confused with the Joint Statement. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Does it not go contrary to the National Common Minimum Programme?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: It is absolutely in conformity with the Common Minimum Programme. There is no deviation. Moreover, for the information of the hon. Member, I can point out that this is the arrangement which we have.

With Russia, we have the arrangement at a much higher level. The hon. Member may not be aware of it. The Inter-Governmental Commission there, is being presided over by the Ministers of two respective countries. That is the only country with which we have this type of defence co-operation. In all other countries, it is at the level of Defence Secretaries.

SHRI UDAY SINGH: Thank you, Sir. I am satisfied with the reply that the hon. Defence Minister has given us....(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: What happened to our point?

MR. SPEAKER: You should give notice. Why not? It should be discussed.

[English]

SHRI UDAY SINGH: Sir, my question relates to Defence production. In his reply, the hon. Defence

Minister has said: "For procurement of the latest weapon system, we would collaborate with the United States." Now, we all know that the United States depends heavily on its private sector for production of defence equipment. This is not the case in India. Therefore, if this co-operation was to move further—and we hope. it should—then, does the hon. Minister not think that the Government should take measures to develop the private sector in India, which has so far, not really happened? People were trying for sometime.

My question to the hon. Minister is this. Would his Ministry take up this matter of developing the private sector capabilities in India to take up the production of defence equipment as and when required?

MR. SPEAKER: Does it relate to the main question?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I cannot say.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, I do not think, your question relates to the main Question. However, he has agreed to answer.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as the participation of the private sector in defence production is concerned, this sector had been opened much earlier, in 2001 long before we came. It was opened on the basis of licences. Other sectors have been opened without any licences. But in defence sector, private sector is to engage in production on the basis of licences. If I remember correctly, as many as 10 licences or Letters of Intent have been issued but none of them has been fructified. Therefore, I decided to appoint an Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Shri Vijay Kelkar. There were representations of the Government, of the private sector. This Group has completed its work. It has submitted the first part of its Report. We are awaiting the second part of its Report. After we receive the second part of the Report, the Government will formulate its response.

Sir, I stand corrected. My colleague has pointed out that the number of licences or Letters of Intent issued is 22 and not 10.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Mr. Md. Salim.

MD. SALIM: Sir, hardly I have the time to put my Supplementary and get the reply of the hon. Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: If you show your expertise in this short time, you would get the reply.

MD. SALIM: Before I put my question, I ask for a full-fledged discussion on this matter.

MR. SPEAKER: It has already been conceded by the Chair. Only the notice has to come.

MD. SALIM: I would pick up the question from the Supplementary put by Mr. Owaisi. As claimed by the hon. Minister. I do not think that this is an updated information of the Agreed Minutes of Defence Relations, 1995. That is why, it is terned 'new framework'. It is also not correct here to compare the arrangements we have with Russia because of the historical and political situation that we are now having.

In the Agreed Minutes of Defence Relations, 1995, there was no CMP. That is why, our assumption or anxiety is that this is much beyond the Agreed Minutes of 1995. That is why, this 'new framework' thing is there.

But our main concern is that while we are moving towards bilateralism in the defence collaboration on the question of this multilateral co-operation, yet the hon. Minister himself has said about how we are going to collaborate in the multilateral co-operation.

MR. SPEAKER: You have consumed all the time.

MD. SALIM: Sir, the hon. Defence Minister is a veteran, a parliamentarian and a senior Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, may be. But the clock is about to strike 12.

MD. SALIM: The main Question is from (a) to (f), which is very pointed. But in the reply, he has not given any pointed answer. He has given a statement. My Supplementary is this. Why has he avoided to answer parts (e) and (f) of the main Question?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I have answered all the questions and I will be able to satisfy the hon. Members when they would have a full-fledged discussion because I understand that within the constraint of the Question Hour limitations, it is not possible to make justice to the full subject. The question basically is an expression of intention. Surely, it may not be the repetition of the Agreed Minutes of Defence Relations, 1995. Then, you had explosion in 1998.

12.00 hrs.

Despite our intention, the paste has just come out of the tube. You cannot put the same paste in the same tube. Therefore, this is a major development that has taken place. Certain other major developments have also taken place all over the world. Therefore, it will require longer time to have a detailed discussion. I am prepared for it and it is for you to decide on as to when such a discussion can take place.

MR. SPEAKER: I am waiting for a notice.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Functioning of T.V. Transmitters

*63. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of complaints especially from rural and backward areas have been received in regard to faulty functioning of T.V. transmitters during the last three years;

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

(c) the action taken by the Government to ensure fault free functioning of T.V. transmitters?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati has informed that performance of TV transmitters in Doordarshan Network is generally satisfactory, though complaints of malfunctioning of some transmitters are received from time to time. The record of complaints is maintained at local levels.

(c) All efforts are made by Doordarshan to attend to the complaints promptly. However, in the case of Very Low Power Transmitters (VLPTs), which are unmanned installations, it takes sometime to attend to the complaints, as maintenance staff has to be sent from the nearby Maintenance Centres.

Hike in Diesel and Petrol Prices

*65. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL:

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

(a) whether the Government has recently hiked the prices of diesel and petrol;

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

(c) whether the Government is aware that this hike will have cascading effect on the prices of many essential commodities;

(d) if so, whether keeping in view the strong protest from various quarters, the Government is considering to roll back/reduce the hiked prices; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. On the 20th June, 2005 the retail prices (in Delhi) of petrol and diesel were raised by Rs. 2.50 and Rs. 2.00 per litre respectively.

(b) Since the end of 2003, there has been an unprecedented, sharp and spiraling increase in international oil prices combined with considerable week-

to-week and even day-to-day volatility. The Indian Basket of crude oil touched an all-time high of US$ 57.27/bbl on 8-7-2005. Against the average Indian Crude Basket price of US$ 27.96/bbl during 2003-04 and US$ 39.21 during 2004-05, the average for June 2005 was US$ 52.75/bbl. Despite the sharp increase in international prices, in order to contain the burden of increase on the consumers of sensitive products, Government have decided that the burden of the increase should be equitably shared also by the Government and oil companies. The rise in international prices of crude oil, petrol and diesel since March 2002 and the corresponding increase in retail selling prices of petrol and diesel at Delhi are enclosed as statement. On account of this policy to safeguard the interests of consumers to the extent possible, the increase in the domestic retail prices of petrol and diesel is only about half what would have been warranted by the rise in international prices. Moreover, no increase was effected on 20-6-2005 in the prices of kerosene and LPG.

(c) Following the increase in prices of petrol and diesel, the annual rate of inflation, in terms of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) numbers, has gone up only marginally by 0.04% points to 4.14% during the week ending 25-6-2005 over the previous week's level. In the subsequent week ending 2-7-2005, the rate of inflation declined by 0.05% points to 4.09%. While the recent increase in the prices of petrol and diesel appear to have made little impact on the general price situation, in the long run. The hike in diesel prices may impact on the retail prices of various commodities in different parts of the country owing to the likely increase in transport and other incidental costs.

(d) and (e) While the Government is not considering any roll back of the hiked prices of petrol and diesel, a number of steps have been taken by the Government to contain the burden of the increase in international prices of crude on consumers of sensitive petroleum products. It was decided that the burden should be equitably shared by consumers, the Government and Oil Companies. Government for its part, reduced the excise duty on petrol and diesel by 4% and 3% respectively effective 16-6-2004 and, effective 19-8-2004, the excise duty on petrol and diesel was further reduced by 3%. Government also reduced customs duty by 5% each on petrol and diesel with effect from 19-8-2004. In the Budget 2005-06, customs duty on crude was reduced from 10% to 5%, on kerosene and LPG from 5% to nil and on other petroleum products from 15-20% to 10%. The Oil marketing Companies (OMC), in accordance with administrative instructions, have been modulating impact of high oil prices on domestic retail prices of sensitive products, namely, PDS Kerosene, Domestic LPG, Petrol and Diesel by not passing on the full burden of price increase to the consumers. Inspite of under-recoveries to OMCs running to several thousand crore rupees on account of high international prices prevailing since more than a year, the price of kerosene has remained unchanged since March 2002 and that of Domestic LPG since November 2004.

Statement

The Rise in International Prices of Petrol and Diesel Since March 2002 and Retail Selling Price at Delhi

Year	International Prices			Domestic Prices	
	Crude Price $/bbl	Petrol $/bbl	Diesel $/bbl	Retail selling price of petrol (Rs./litre)	Retail selling price of diesel (Rs./litre)
1	2	3	4	5	6
March 2002	23.31	26.43	23.27	26.54	16.59

1	2	3	4	5	6
July 2005 (upto 22-7-2005)	55.00	62.94	67.68	40.49	28.45
% increase over March 2002	136%	138%	191%	53%	71%

Shortage of Personnel in Armed Forces

*66. DR. K. DHANARAJU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that there is acute shortage of Personnel in Armed Forces;

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

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to attract the talent and to fill up the vacant posts?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) There is a shortage of personnal in defence services. The deficiency in the Army, Navy and Air Force is given below:—

	Army	Navy	Air Force
Officers	10650	1244	508
Personnel Below Officers Rank (PBOR)	No Actual shortage	5226	5081

Several steps have been undertaken by the three Services to fill up the vacant posts. An Image Projection Campaign by the Army has been launched in 1997 and currently Phase-IV of the Campaign is being finalized.

Sustained publicity efforts are being undertaken by the Air Force to attract qualified youth into the officers' cadre. Almost 3000 Schools and Colleges are on the mailing list for sending publicity material. Campus interviews are undertaken by qualified assessors from Selection Boards so as to interact directly with potential candidates and answer their queries about the service.

Extensive publicity and recruitment drives are being carried out by the Navy.

Schools and Colleges are visited regularly by the representatives of the three Services for motivational talks.

In addition, the commitment and bravery of the Armed Forces is consistently projected through the electronic and print media. The Directorate of Public Relations of the Ministry of Defence, regularly interacts with the media while giving Defence related information and endeavours to ensure positive publicity of the same. Regular coverage of defence related events in the print and electronic media go a long way in creating awareness among the masses and motivating the youth to join the armed forces. Websites are also providing career information on the three Services.

[Translation]

Ban on Smoking Scenes

*67. DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:

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

(a) whether 52 per cent children in the country are getting addicted to smoking under the influence of films as per the survey conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare;

(b) if so, whether there is any demand to ban scenes depicting smoking in films;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there are any differences of opinion between the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps taken by the Union Government to ban smoking in scenes in television serials and movies?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) The World Health Organisation (WHO) in consultation with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare conducted a study on portrayal of tobacco in Indian cinema and its impact on youth audience in 2003. The study inter alia reported that youth behaviour is highly influenced by mainstream movies and exhibited a linkage between films and youth behaviour with the youth admitting that they copy smoking styles of different characters and actors in the movies. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisements and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 prohibits all direct and indirect forms of tobacco advertising and promotion of use or consumption of cigarettes or any other tobacco products, in any form.

(d) and (e) The matter is under examination in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The film industry has opposed the directive as some of the provisions are difficult to implement.

(f) The matter is under consideration in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Visit of Petroleum Minister to Iran

*68. SHRI RAM SINGH KASWAN:
SHRI GANESH SINGH:

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

(a) whether Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas recently visited Iran;

(b) if so, whether any agreement has been signed between the two countries in the field of petroleum and gas;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the progress made in this regard so far on the basis of the agreement?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Panchayati Raj visited Iran between the 11th and the 14th June 2005 at the invitation of the Minister of Petroleum of Iran to review the progress of import of natural gas from Iran, both in the form of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) as well as through pipeline, as also other projects/proposals with a view to furthering hydrocarbon sector cooperation between the two countries.

During the visit, a Sale Purchase Agreement (SPA) for the purchase of 5 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) of LNG was signed between GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL)/Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)/Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and National Iranian Gas Export Company Limited (NIGEC) on the 13th June, 2005, in Tehran in the presence of the two Ministers.

As part of the package deal for the import of 5 MMTPA LNG by the Indian companies, under a Buyback Contract, ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) have been offered 100% rights and obligations for the development of the Jufeyr oilfield and 10% rights and obligations for development of the Yadavaran oilfield in Iran.

On the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project, a Heads of Agreement was signed between NIGEC and the Indian companies. The two sides agreed to constitute an India—Iran Special JWG to discuss the technical, financial, commercial, legal and related issues to realize a safe and secure world-class project.

The other projects/proposal discussed during the Minister's visit to Iran include IOC's joint proposal, with Petropars of Iran, for the award of a block to set up a gas liquefaction plant and the marketing of LNG, GAIL's plan to participate in a petrochemical project and CNG business in Iran; exploration by OVL in Farsi Block in Iran; and R and D cooperation.

[English]

Medical Facilities in Long Distance Trains and Stations

*69. SHRI P. RAJENDRAN:

SHRI HITEN BARMAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Rajasthan High Court in its judgement has directed Railways to provide medical facilities in the long distance running trains;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Railways so far in this regard alongwith the name of trains selected for provision of such facilities;

(c) whether the Railways also proposes to provide medical facilities at major railway stations; and

(d) if so, the progress made by the Railways in this regard so far alongwith the name of stations selected for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Special Leave Petition has already been filed in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India by North Western Railway on 7-7-2005 against Hon'ble High Court of Rajasthan Jaipur judgement dated 4-5-2005 in the Writ Petition No. 5240/1996.

The Hon'ble High Court has ordered that to keep reserve a Coupe' of four berths in long distance train that shall carry sign board 'Medical Facilities' with symbol of Red Cross. Visible symbol of Red Cross shall also be displayed out side the compartment. Team of one Medical officer, one male nurse and one attendant shall board train and travel in it. Oxygen cylinder and other life saving drugs and injections to be kept to provide medical assistance to the passengers free of cost by a competent doctor. Wide publicity to be given.

Chemist facilities to be provided in stations premises keeping in mind the quantum of passengers. Since the orders of the Hon'ble High Court of Rajasthan, Jaipur are difficult to be implemented reasons being requirement of a large number of manpower (doctors, nurse and attendants), infrastructure in the moving train and budgetary allocation, the Ministry of Railways have filed an SLP in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

To manage a sick passenger in running train at present the Train Superintendent/Travelling Ticket Examiner sends information to the next Station Manager of a major Railway Station about the sick passenger. The Station Manager arranges a Railway Doctor to come to Railway Station to attend the sick passenger. On an average about 12,000 calls are attended by railway doctors per year. In case Railway doctor is not available, the Station Manager can call a private doctor to attend the sick passenger. Very serious patients are detrained and transported to nearby hospital for treatment.

Allopathic doctors travelling in train are also given 10% concession in their train fare and in exchange they provide professional services in the train to treat sick passenger. For this, augmented first aid boxes with 76 types of medicines and other medical items are provided in nominated trains.

Instructions have been given to zonal railways to open up Chemist Shop/Chemist corner etc. Already 31 chemist shops and 294 chemist corners have been opened at various railway stations.

Exploration of Hydrocarbons

*70. SHRI K.S. RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has assessed the availability of Hydrocarbon reserves in Krishna Godavari Basin;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether large quantities of Hydrocarbons have been explored in Krishna Godavari Basin by the Government and private companies;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the terms and conditions of sharing the Hydrocarbons by Union Government, State Governments and the private companies; and

(f) the mechanism to assess the expenditure incurred and the gas recovered by the companies on day-to-day basis?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) The prognosticated hydrocarbon reserves of Krishna-Godavari Basin are estimated by the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) to be 575 Million Metric Tonne (MMT) in onland areas and 555 MMT in offshore areas. Krishna-Godavari Basin also has high hydrocarbon potential in deepwater areas.

As on 1-4-2005, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) have established about 100.18 MMT hydrocarbon reserves in onland and offshore areas. Private joint venture companies have established about 287.32 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) of gas reserves in offshore areas. Recently, Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (GSPC) have also made a significant gas discovery in the Block KG-OSN-2001/3 falling in Krishna-Godavari Basin.

(e) Under the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) regime, the contractor has to share the profit petroleum with Government based on the sharing mechanism agreed during the bidding process, which is stipulated in the Contract. Under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), Government is not incurring expenditure on exploration blocks. However, profits, in the event of commercial production are shared after the contractor has recovered its costs. The contract costs, consisting of exploration, development and production costs incurred by the contractor are deducted from the gross revenue for arriving at the profit petroleum, which is to be shared with the Government based on the Investment Multiple achieved in a given period.

(f) Regular contract administration is carried out by a Management Committee comprising representatives of the contracting parties and Government through the DGH. In addition, Government also have a contractual right to audit the PSCs. These mechanisms enable Government to assess the expenditure incurred, as well as the petroleum produced, under any PSC.

Royalty is payable to the State Government for production from onland fields and to the Central Government for Offshore fields.

[Translation]

Registration of Newspapers and Magazines

*71. SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMAR SINGH DEO:
SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV:

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that the entrepreneurs of new newspapers and magazines are facing a number of difficulties in getting themselves registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to overcome such hurdles?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Government has completed the process of computerization relating to title verification. The

computerization of the process of registration is underway. The forms, alongwith check lists, have already been placed on the website.

[English]

FM Radio Stations

*72. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:
SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:

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

(a) the number of FM Radio Stations in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government has decided to allow more FM channels;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government is considering to grant concession to companies opting to operate in rural areas; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Presently, 138 FM radio stations of All India Radio and 21 Private FM radio Stations are functioning in the country. Details are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. 113 more new FM stations of All India Radio are also proposed to be set up subject to approval and availability of resources. Besides, 336 FM radio stations in 90 cities across the country will be permitted soon in the Private sector. The details are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

(d) and (e) While the radio stations would be located in the indicated cities, they would also provide service to listeners in the adjoining rural areas within their respective coverage zones. Further, if the rural areas are part of cities which fall under categories of C and D, the private companies concerned will get the incentive of networking unlike in the case of cities which fall under A and B categories.

Statement-I

List of Existing FM Radio Stations/Trs. (138 Nos.)

Andhra Pradesh		
1.	Anantpur	6 kW
2.	Kothagudam	6 kW
3.	Kurnool	6 kW
4.	Markapuram	6 kW
5.	Nizamabad	6 kW
6.	Tirupati	3 kW, 10 kW
7.	Warangal	10 kW
8.	Hyderabad	6 kW
9.	Vishakhapatnam	10 kW
Assam		
10.	Haflong	6 kW
11.	Jorhat	10 kW
12.	Nowgong	6 kW
13.	Dhubri	6 kW
14.	Guwahati	10 kW
Bihar		
15.	Purnea	6 kW
16.	Sasaram	6 kW
17.	Patna	6 kW
Chhattisgarh		
18.	Bilaspur	6 kW
19.	Raigarh	6 kW

20.	Raipur	1 kW (Interim set-up)
21.	Saraipalli	1 kW
Delhi		
22.	Delhi	5 kW, 10 kW
Goa		
23.	Panaji	6 kW
Gujarat		
24.	Godhra	6 kW
25.	Ahmedabad	10 kW
26.	Surat	6 kW
27.	Rajkot	10 kW
28.	Vadodra	10 kW
Haryana		
29.	Hissar	6 kW
30.	Kurukshetra	6 kW
Himachal Pradesh		
31.	Hamirpur	6 kW
32.	Dharamshala	10 kW
33.	Kasauli	10 kW
34.	Kullu	6 kW
35.	Shimla	1 kW (Intrim set-up)
Jammu and Kashmir		
36.	Jammu	3 kW, 10 kW
37.	Kathua	10 kW
38.	Poonch	6 kW
39.	Srinagar	10 kW
40.	Bhadarwah	6 kW
41.	Rajouri	10 kW
Jharkhand		
42.	Chaibasa	6 kW
43.	Hazaribagh	6 kW
44.	Daltonganj	10 kW
45.	Jamshedpur	6 kW
46.	Ranchi	6 kW
Karnataka		
47.	Bijapur	6 kW
48.	Chitradurga	6 kW
49.	Hospet	10 kW
50.	Karwar	3 kW
51.	Raichur	6 kW
52.	Hassan	6 kW
53.	Mercara	6 kW
54.	Bangalore	10 kW, 10 kW
55.	Mysore	10 kW
56.	Dharwar	10 kW
57.	Mangalore	10 kW
58.	Bellary	1 kW (Interim (set-up)
Kerala		
59.	Cohin	6 kW, 10 kW
60.	Cannaore	6 kW
61.	Idukki	6 kW
62.	Trivandram	10 kW

63.	Calicut	10 kW
Madhya Pradesh		
64.	Balaghat	6 kW
65.	Betul	6 kW
66.	Chhindwara	6 kW
67.	Guna	6 kW
68.	Khandwa	6 kW
69.	Sagar	6 kW
70.	Shahdol	6 kW
71.	Shivpuri	6 kW
72.	Bhopal	6 kW
73.	Indore	6 kW
74.	Jabalpur	10 kW
75.	Mandla	1 kW
76.	Rajgarh	3 kW
Maharashtra		
77.	Mumbai	5 kW, 10 kW
78.	Ahemednagar	6 kW
79.	Akola	6 kW
80.	Beed	6 kW
81.	Chanderpur	6 kW
82.	Dhule	6 kW
83.	Nanded	6 kW
84.	Nasik	6 kW
85.	Osmanabad	6 kW
86.	Satara	6 kW
87.	Yavatmal	6 kW
88.	Kolhapur	6 kW
89.	Nagpur	6 kW
90.	Pune	6 kW
Manipur		
91.	Imphal	10 kW
Meghalaya		
92.	Jowai	6 kW
Mizoram		
93.	Lungleh	6 kW
Nagaland		
94.	Mokokchung	6 kW
Orissa		
95.	Berhampur	6 kW
96.	Bolangir	6 kW
97.	Puri	3 kW
98.	Rourkela	6 kW
99.	Cuttack	6 kW
100.	Bhatinda	6 kW
101.	Patiala	6 kW
102.	Jalandhar	10 kW
Rajasthan		
103.	Alwar	6 kW
104.	Banswara	6 kW
105.	Chittorgarh	6 kW
106.	Jhalawar	6 kW
107.	Nagaur	6 kW
108.	Swaimadhopur	6 kW

109.	Churu	6 kW
110.	Jaisalmer	10 kW
111.	Mt. Abu	6 kW
112.	Jodhpur	6 kW
113.	Jaipur	6 kW
Tamil Nadu		
114.	Chennai	5 kW, 10 kW
115.	Nagercoil	10 kW
116.	Kodaikanal	10 kW
117.	Coimbatore	10 kW
118.	Tiruchirapalli	10 kW
Tripura		
119.	Belonia	6 kW
120.	Kailashahar	6 kW
121.	Agartala	10 kW
Union Territory		
122.	Daman	3 kW
123.	Karaikal	6 kW
124.	Chandigarh	6 kW
125.	Portblair	10 kW
Uttar Pradesh		
126.	Bareilly	6 kW
127.	Faizabad	6 kW
128.	Jhansi	6 kW
129.	Obra	6 kW
130.	Aligarh	6 kW
131.	Lucknow	10 kW
132.	Allahabad	10 kW
Uttaranchal		
133.	Mussoorie	10 kW
West Bengal		
134.	Calcutta	5 kW, 10 kW
135.	Murshidabad	6 kW
136.	Asansole	6 kW
137.	Siliguri	10 kW
138	Shantiniketan	3 kW

Details of 21 Operational Private FM Stations

Sl. No.	Name of the State	Name of the City	Number of Stations
1.	Maharashtra	Mumbai	4
		Pune	1
2.	Delhi	Delhi	3
3.	West Bengal	Kolkata	4
4.	Tamil Nadu	Chennai	4
		Tirunelveli	
		Coimbatore	
5.	Karantaka	Bangalore	1
6.	Gujarat	Ahmedabad	1
7.	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	1
8.	Madhya Pradesh	Indore	1
9.	Andhra Pradesh	Vishakhapatnam	1
	Total		21

Statement-II

List of New FM Transmitters Yet to be Installed in X Plan (113 Nos.)

I. New FM Stations—73 Nos.

Andhra Pradesh

1.	Kakinada	10 kW
2.	Karimnagar	5 kW
3.	Srikakulam	1 kW
4.	Nellore	10 kW
5.	Mahboobnagar	10 kW
6.	Suryapet	10 kW

Arunachal Pradesh

7.	Anini	1 kW
8.	Bomdila	1 kW
9.	Daporijo	1 kW
10.	Changlang	1 kW
11.	Khonsa	1 kW

Assam

12.	Karimganj	1/5 kW
13.	Lumding	1/5 kW
14.	Golpara	1/5 kW

Bihar

15.	Gaya	10 kW
16.	Motihari	10 kW
17.	Banka	10 kW
18.	Madhubani	10 kW

Chhattisgarh

19.	Dantewara	5 kW
20.	Rajnandgaon	5 kW
21.	Jashpurnagar	5 kW
22.	Baikunthpur	5 kW

Gujarat

23.	Jamnagar	10 kW
24.	Junagarh	10 kW

Haryana

25.	Ambala	5 kW

Jharkhand

26.	Dhanbad	10 kw
27.	Dumka	5 kW
28.	Gumla	5 kW

Karnataka

29.	Sringeri	10 kW
30.	Bellary	10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx commissioned)

Kerala

31.	Konni	5 kW

Madhya Pradesh

32.	Ujjain	5 kW

Maharashtra

33.	Shirdi	5 kW
34.	Oras	5 kW
35.	Amravati	10 kW

Manipur

36.	Tamenglang	1/5 kW
37.	Ukhrul	1/5 kW

Meghalaya		
38.	Dawki	1/5 kW
Mizoram		
39.	Champhai	1/5 kW
40.	Tuipang	1/5 kW
41.	Kolasib/Sarchip	1/5 kW
Nagaland		
42.	Phek	1 kW
43.	Zunheboto	1 kW
44.	Wokha	1 kW
Orissa		
45.	Deogarh	5 kW
46.	Raygada	5 kW
47.	Rairangpur	1/5 kW
48.	Parlakimidi	5 kW
Punjab		
49.	Fazilka	10 kW
50.	Amritsar	20 kW
Rajasthan		
51.	Ramgarh	20 kW
52.	Chautan Hill	20 kW
Tamil Nadu		
53.	Kanchipuram	5 kW
Tripura		
54.	Udaipur	1/5 kW
55.	Nutan Bazar	1/5 kW
56.	Longtherai	5 kW
Uttar Pradesh		
57.	Gazipur	10 kW
58.	Banda	10 kW
59.	Lakhimpur Khiri	10 kW
Uttaranchal		
60.	Dehradun	10 kW
61.	Haldwani	10 kW
62.	Bhageshwar	5 kW
63.	Champwat	1 kW
64.	Gairsen	1 kW
65.	Rudraprayag	1 kW
66.	New Tehri	1 kW
West Bengal		
67.	Darjeeling	10 kW
68.	Purulia	10 kW
69.	Maldah	10 kW
70.	Coochbihar	10 kW
71.	Bardhaman	10 kW
72.	Tamluk	5 kW
73.	Balurghat	10 kW

II. Additional FM Channel at Existing Stations—26 Nos.

Andhra Pradesh		
1.	Hyderabad	10 kW
Arunachal Pradesh		
2.	Itanagar	10 kW
Assam		
3.	Silchar	5 kW

4. Guwahati 10 kW

Bihar

5. Patna 10 kW

Chandigarh

6. Chandigarh 10 kW

Chhattisgarh

7. Raipur 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx commissioned)

Gujarat

8. Bhuj 10 kW

9. Ahmedabad 10 kW

Haryana

10. Rohtak 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx ready)

Himachal Pradesh

11. Shimla 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx commissioned)

Jammu and Kashmir

12. Srinagar 10 kW

Jharkhand

13. Ranchi 10 kW

Karnataka

14. Gulbarga 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx ready)

Kerala

15. Trivandrum 10 kW

Madhya Pradesh

16. Bhopal 10 kW

Nagaland

17. Kohima 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx ready)

Orissa

18. Bhawani Patna 10 kW

Rajasthan

19. Udaipur 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kw FM Tx ready)

20. Bikaner 10 kW

21. Ajmer 10 kW

Sikkim

22. Gangtok 10 kW

Tamil Nadu

23. Tirunelvelli 10 kW

24. Madurai 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx ready)

Uttar Pradesh

25. Gorakhpur 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx ready)

Pondicherry

26. Pondicherry 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx commissioned)

III. Replacement of existing MW Transmitters by FM Transmitters—14 Nos.

Andhra Pradesh

1. Adilabad 10 kW

2. Vijayawada 10 kW

Delhi

3. Delhi 20 kW

Maharashtra

4. Auranangabad 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx ready)

5. Sholapur 10 kW

Nagaland

6. Tuensang 5 kW

7. Mon 5 kW

Orissa

8. Bhubaneswar 10 kW

9. Baripada 5 kW

Punjab

10. Jalandhar 10 kW

Rajasthan

11. Jaipur 10 kW

Uttar Pradesh

12. Varanasi 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx commissioned)

13. Kanpur 10 kW (Interim set-up with 1 kW FM Tx commissioned)

14. Lucknow 10 kW

Details of Proposed Private FM Stations for Phase II

Sl. No.	Name of State	City	No. of Available Channels
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Hyderabad	7
		Vijayawada	2
		Vishakapatnam	3
		Rajamundri	4
		Tirupati	2
		Warangal	4
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar	4
3.	Assam	Guwahati	4
4.	Bihar	Patna	4
		Muzzafarpur	4
5.	Chhattisgarh	Bilaspur	4
		Raipur	4
6.	Goa	Panaji	3

1	2	3	4
7.	Gujarat	Surat	4
		Ahmedabad	5
		Rajkot	3
		Vadodra	4
8.	Haryana	Hissar	4
		Karnal	2
9.	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla	4
10.	Jammu and Kashmir	Srinagar	4
		Jammu	3
11.	Jharkhand	Ranchi	4
		Jamshedpur	4
12.	Karnataka	Bangalore	7
		Gulbarga	4
		Mangalore	4
		Mysore	4
13.	Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram	4
		Cochin	3
		Kozhikod	2
		Trissur	4
		Kannur	4
14.	Madhya Pradesh	Sagar	4
		Bhopal	4
		Indore	3
		Jabalpur	4
		Gwalior	4
15.	Maharashtra	Sholapur	3

1	2	3	4
		Mumbai	5
		Pune	3
		Nagpur	6
		Ahmednagar	3
		Dhule	2
		Jalgaon	4
		Kolhapur	2
		Nanded	4
		Nasik	2
		Sangali	2
		Akola	4
		Aurangabad	3
16.	Manipur	Imphal	4
17.	Meghalaya	Shillong	4
18.	Mizoram	Aizwal	4
19.	Nagaland	Kohima	4
20.	Orissa	Rourkela	4
		Bhubneshwar/Cuttack	4
21.	Punjab	Amritsar	4
		Jallandhar	4
		Patiala	4
22.	Rajasthan	Jaipur	5
		Ajmer	4
		Jodhpur	4
		Bikaner	4

1	2	3	4
		Kota	4
		Udaipur	4
23.	Sikkim	Gangtok	4
24.	Tamil Nadu	Chennai	6
		Tiruchy	4
		Tirunelveli	3
		Tuticorin	4
		Coimbatore	3
		Madurai	3
25.	Tripura	Agartala	4
26.	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	2
		Kanpur	3
		Agra	3
		Allahabad	4
		Varanasi	4
		Aligarh	2
		Bareilly	4
		Gorakhpur	4
		Jhansi	4
27.	West Bengal	Kolkata	5
		Asansol	2
		Siliguri	4
28.	Delhi	Delhi	6
29.	Andaman and Nicobar	Port Blair	4
30.	Daman and Diu	Daman	2
31.	Pondicherry	Pondicherry	3

Regulatory Body for TV

*73. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any decision to set up a regulatory body to monitor news and entertainment programmes on television channels;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The details are being worked out. As such, no time-frame can be indicated.

Shortage of Kerosene

*74. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:

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

(a) whether there is any shortage of kerosene in the country;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas had issued an order under the Essential Commodities Act asking the refineries including private sector units to raise their kerosene output;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the response of the refineries thereto;

(e) whether studies conducted by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas revealed that there is no shortage of the poor man's fuel but there is considerable leakage in the distribution system; and

(f) if so, the corrective measures taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir. While refinery capacity in the country is sufficient to meet the domestic demand for PDS Kerosene, refineries have the technological flexibilities to substitute the production of Superior Kerosene Oil (distributed through the Public Distribution System) by Jet Kerosene. With a view to ensuring sufficient availabilities of PDS Kerosene. OMCs are discussing ways of ensuring adequate supplies with all refineries in the country, both in the public sector and the private sector.

(b) to (d) The Ministry of Law and Justice, Department of Legal Affairs, has confirmed that the Central Government do have powers under the Essential Commodities Act to issue orders to refineries, in both public and private sector to raise Kerosene output. While proposal to direct refineries to produce minimum amount of Kerosene has been examined, Oil Marketing Companies have been advised, in the first instance, to discuss the matter with public and private sector refineries.

(e) and (f) Government are aware of the attempts made by unscrupulous elements to divert kerosene for adulteration and other illegal abuse and malpractice. To ensure availability and reduce diversion, Government have approved an innovative pilot project for radically revamping the PDS kerosene distribution network with the primary objective of ensuring that this heavily subsidized product is actually made available in the required quantities at subsidized prices to the intended beneficiaries; and, secondly, to thus cap, reverse and eventually eliminate the diversion of PDS kerosene for adulteration. The pilot projectis to be implemented in 10% of the blocks of the country for a period of six months. Thereafter, the working of the scheme would be independently assessed and, based on the experience gained, Government will consider scaling up the scheme to cover the entire country. It is hoped that the implementation of this project will lead to a significant

breakthrough in the delivery of subsidized SKO to the entitled segments of society and thus contribute to the curbing diversion for adulteration.

[Translation]

Construction of ROBs' and RUBs'

*75. SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:
SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the norms/criteria for construction of Railway Overbridges (ROBs) and Railway Underbridges (RUBs);

(b) the number of ROBs/RUBs constructed during the each of last three years;

(c) whether a number of ROBs/RUBs have not been constructed at several places despite fulfilling the prescribed norms in this regard;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) The Railway takes up construction of Road Over/Under Bridges (ROBs/RUBs) in lieu of busy level crossings on cost sharing basis with concerned State Government/Road Authorities where the traffic density at the level crossing is more than 1 lakh Train Vehicle Units (TVUs), otherwise on deposit terms. In both the cases proposals have to be sponsored by concerned State Government/Road Authorities duly fulfilling certain preliminary pre-requisites. State Government/Road Authorities are required to submit the following main undertakings alongwith the proposal:—

(i) The level crossing will be closed by State Government/Road Authorities on commissioning of ROB/RUB;

(ii) The State Government/Road Authorities will contribute their share of cost for work;

(iii) The advance action shall be taken by State Government/Road Authorities to acquire land for approaches where ever required; and

(iv) The State Government/Road Authorities will give due priority for the work in its Annual Plan etc.

The total cost of work is shared on 50:50 basis between Railway and State Government/Road Authorities. However, the cost of acquisition of any land and structures thereon required for approaches or diversions is to be borne by State Government/Road Authorities sponsoring the proposal.

(b) The number of Road Over/Under Bridges constructed during last three years are as under:—

Year		No. of ROBs/RUBs
2002-03	—	17
2003-04	—	20
2004-05	—	19

(c) to (e) Out of the works sanctioned on cost sharing basis with various State Governments/Road Authorities based on their proposals and fulfillment of norms as indicated in para (a) above, the execution of some of works is progressing slowly due to following main reasons:—

— Delay in finalisation of approach alignment, acquisition of land and removal of encroachments falling in the approaches by State Government/ Road Authorities.

— Delay in finalization of General Arrangement Drawings, preparation of estimates for approaches and sanction of same by State Government/Road Authorities.

— Constraints of fund and non-inclusion of works in their Annual Plan by the State Governments.

The State Government/Road Authorities are regularly pursued through meetings and dialogues for expediting the works.

[English]

Railways' Competition with Low Budget Airlines

*76. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways propose to gear up with measures to compete with low budget airlines directly targeting upper class railway passengers;

(b) if so, the details thereof and measures taken/ to be taken in this regard;

(c) whether the Railways have made any assessment of the trend of passenger earnings during 2003-04, 2004-05 and till date; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) Railways are aware of the cometition in the Airlines sector particularly due to low cost Airlines. However, Airlines are offering only a very limited number of seats at low fares and have conditions attached to travel, booking and cancellations. Following steps have been taken or proposed to be taken by the Railways to gear upto the competition:—

(i) Developing additional seating capacity in trains by introducing additional trains.

(ii) Enhancing the load of more patronised trains to the maximum to meet the demand.

(iii) Attaching additional coaches in trains to clear waiting list.

(iv) Improving utilisation of coaching stock so as to ward off the shortage of coaches.

(c) and (d) Actual Passenger earnings during the Financial years 2003-04 and 2004-05 and Approximate Passenger Earnings during 2005-06 (April-June, 2005) are as under:—

Financial Year	Earnings (in Rs. in crore)
2003-2004	13,298
2004-2005	14,113 (provisional)
2005-06 (till June, 2005)	3809 (approximate)

[Translation]

Inclusion of India's Historically and Culturally Important Sites in List of Endangered Sites

*77. SHRI MOHAN SINGH:

SHRI RAJENDER KUMAR:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some Indian sites of historical and cultural importance have been included in the 'list of 100 most endangered sites—2006' of the World Monuments Fund (WMF);

(b) if so, the details of those sites;

(c) whether any conservation plan has been drawn for these sites; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The World Monument Fund, a US based non-profit international organization, has listed following four sites from India in the 100 Most Endangered Sites in the world for 2006 in their "World Monument Watch".

(i) Sumda Monastery and Guru Lakhang, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir;

(ii) Watson Hotel, Mumbai, Maharashtra;

(iii) Dhankar Monastery, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh; and

(iv) Dalhousie Square, Kolkata, West Bengal.

None of these are centrally protected monuments/ sites.

(c) and (d) World Monuments Fund Co-ordinator in India has informed that a conservation plan has been formulated for Watson Hotel, Mumbai and that no such plan is available for remaining three sites.

Security Arrangements at Stations and In Trains

*78. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE:
SHRI SURESH ANGADI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of security arrangements made at Railway Stations and in trains all over the country particularly in view of the suicidal terrorist attacks in the country;

(b) whether at most of Railway Stations and in trains particularly at railway stations in Delhi, there exist no adequate security arrangements;

(c) if so, the steps being taken to beef up the security;

(d) whether mock drills have been carried out at Railway Stations and in trains to find out the effectiveness of security arrangements there; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) No, Sir. According to Entry No. 2 of the State List of the Constitution of India, 'Police' (including Railways and village Police), is a State subject. Prevention of crime, registration of cases, their investigation and maintenance of law and order in Railway premises as well as on running trains are, therefore, the statutory responsibility of the State Police. The State Police have a separate wing called the Government Railway Police (GRP) for dealing with all matters relating to law and order on the Railways. Prevention and detection of crime is the constitutional responsibility of the State Governments, and as such, Ministry of Railways has to depend largely on them for control of crime over Railways.

The Government Railway Police (under the State/ Union Territory. Governments) co-ordinate the security arrangements as per the requirements and levels of security threats, their nature etc. The Railways actively assist in aspects pertaining to the Railways in order to facilitate smooth train operations and transportation of passengers, parcels and goods in such situations.

The trains leaving and passing through Delhi area stations are being escorted by the Government Railway Police and Railway Protection Force, periodically reviewing the requirements and also maintaining the element of surprise. Basic security measures like safe guarding the rakes at the maintenance lines; keeping the rakes closed till they reach the platform etc. are taken. Graphic displays reminding the passengers to beware of unattended packages, suspicious movement of strangers etc. are displayed in the trains and railway premises. Passengers are also regularly reminded through the Public Address system and the display Television system. Sensitive stations are provided adequate security cover by the State Government agencies and the additional Forces at their resource in co-ordination with the Railways.

However, to provide better security to the travelling passengers in trains and passenger areas, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) Act, 1957 and the Railways Act, 1989 have been amended to enable the Railways, through the RPF, **to effectively supplement the efforts of the State/Union Territory Governments in**

controlling crime on the Railways. The Railway Protection Force staff are being deployed to escort many trains and are also deployed in the passenger area to augment the efforts of the State Police. Officers authorised on the Railways have also been empowered to deal with the minor offences affecting the train operations such as Alarm chain pulling, roof travel, touting, ticket less travel, unauthorized entry etc. (except Sabotage related offences under Sections 150 to 152) amending the Railways Act w.e.f. July 2004. The objective was to ensure that the State Police (Government Railway Police) get more manpower and time to handle heinous offences such as Terrorist activities, Murder, Dacoity, Robbery, Rape etc. including Sabotage and Train Wrecking, under the provisions of Indian Penal Code, the Railways Act and other laws of the land.

During the period July 2004 to March 2005, Railways have prosecuted 5,48,411 persons under various sections of the Railways Act. An amount of Rs. 8.78 Crore has been realized from them as fine. Railways have, thus commendably executed the new responsibilities with tremendous credit.

Railway Protection Force has been providing daily, an average of 1,128, escort parties in many of the important trains in co-ordination with the State Governments, for which an average of 3,443 staff are deployed. 577 stations on the average are also given additional security by RPF with deployment of 2,774 personnel daily. These deployments are in addition to the Government Railway Police personnel deployed on trains and the railway premises, in order to further strengthen the secuirty.

From July 2004 upto March 2005, 90 cases of drugging, 151 cases of luggage lifting, 44 cases of illegal arms, 51 cases of gold chains/mangal sutras snatching, 222 cases of churas/ganja smuggling, 13 cases of pick-pocketing, 11 cases of offence against women and 253 cases of other (Indian Penal Code) offences have been detected by the Railway Protection Force and handed over to Governmnet Railway Police (GRP). In addition, 790 (First Information Reports) were accepted from victim passengers and handed over to GRP for expeditious registration of offences and enquiry. Railway Protection Force have also rescued 130 minor girls and boys from Railway Stations and trains and handed them over to either their parents or (Non-Government Organizations).

The offences of Dacoity, Robbery, Theft, Theft of passengers' belongings etc. in trains and railway premises have showed a reduction after amendment of the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957 and the Railways Act, 1989 w.e.f. 1st July 2004. 50 cases of Dacoity, 198 cases of Robbery and 5542 cases of Theft of Passengers' belongings were reported during the six months period of July to December 2004 against 82 cases of Dacoity, 201 cases of Robbery and 6066 cases of Theft of Passengers' belongings reported during the previous corresponding period from January to June 2004.

The Railway Protection Force has been equipped with additional road vehicles (48 Buses, 152 Jeeps and 119 Motor Cycles costing above Rs. 9 Crores). Procurement of communication equipment (3142 number of 5 Watt Walkie Talkies and 123 number of 25 Watt VHF costing above Rs. 4 Crores) is under process. Besides compact and effective weapons like 5.56 mm INSAS rifles numbering 1000 (costing Rs. 2.95 crores), additional 500 number of 9 mm carbines (costing Rs. 67.58 lakhs) have been procured during the year 2004-05.

To monitor proper security at Railway Stations and in the trains, co-ordination meetings/conferences between Government Railway Police (GRP) Chiefs and Railway Protection Force (RPF) Chiefs are held from time to time regularly at all levels i.e. Zonal Railways level as well as Boards level to discuss crime related matters and proper escorting of the passenger trains and security of passenger areas.

(d) and (e) Surprise checks are conducted from time to time by the Superiors and Officers of the Railway Protection Force to find out the effectiveness of Security arrangements at stations and Trains.

Special care has been taken by the Railways to provide security to women passengers. Special squads in the form of Surakhsni, Tejaswani, Durgavahni and Bhairavi consisting of women Railway Protection Force Constables and women Ticket Examiners have been deployed in the affected areas of Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad and Patna sub-urban sections. Further, armed Government Railway Police personnel are also escorting ladies compartment in night hours over Mumbai sub-urban sections. Additional Railway Protection Force staff have been posted in affected sections to enhance security of women passengers.

Cancellation of Flights by Private Airlines

*79. SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that there is an open violation of safety norms by the private airline companies in the name of cheap air travel;

(b) if so, whether the Government is also aware that these private airlines cancel their flights at any time without giving any reason;

(c) if so, the action being taken by the Government in this regard;

(d) whether the Government has received any memorandum from the Indian Air Travellers' Association; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No such information has come to the notice of the Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) No such memorandum has been received in recent past.

(e) Does not arise.

[English]

Companies Dealing with Oil Exploration

*80. SHRI JUAL ORAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of companies dealing with oil and gas exploration in the country;

(b) whether the Government has issued any guidelines to oil and exploration gas companies for disclosure of new oil and gas findings; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The list of Indian as well as foreign companies dealing with oil and gas exploration and production in the country is enclosed as statement.

(b) and (c) The Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) signed by the Government with various Indian and foreign companies oblige the contractors to inform the Government of any hydrocarbon discovery made in the contract area and to conduct tests to determine, within the time frame stipulated therein, if the discovery made is of commercial interest. PSCs also provide for appraisal of discoveries to determine their commerciality. The contractors are required to furnish all relevant data of discoveries to the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons.

Statement

As far as Production sharing Contracts for exploration blocks and discovered fields in India are concerned, following private and public sector companies are working in India

1. Private Companies:

(a) Indian Companies:

1. Petrocon India Limited (Formerly Videocon Petroleum Ltd.)

2. Reliance Industries Ltd.
3. Hindustan Oil Exploration Company
4. Selan Exploration Technologies
5. Assam Company Ltd.
6. Tata Petrodyne Ltd.
7. Essar Oil Ltd.
8. Interlink Petroleum.
9. Jubilant Enpro Pvt. Ltd.
10. Phoenix Overseas Ltd.
11. Enpro Finance Ltd.
12. Prize Petroleum Company Ltd.

(b) Foreign Companies:

1. British Gas Exploration and Production India Ltd. (subsidiary of BG Energy Holdings Ltd. U.K.)
2. Cairn Energy Cambay B.V. Netherlands (subsidiary of Cairn Energy Plc., UK)
3. Cairn Energy Gujarat B.V. Netherlands (subsidiary of Cairn Energy Plc., UK)
4. Cairn Energy India West B.V. Netherlands (subsidiary of Cairn Energy Plc., UK)
5. Cairn Energy India Pty. Ltd. (subsidiary of Cairn Energy Plc., UK)
6. Canoro Resources Ltd., Canada
7. Geo Global Resources Inc., Canada
8. Geo-Petrol International Inc., France
9. Hardy Exploration and Production India Inc. (subsidiary of Hardy Oil and Gas Limited, U.K.)
10. Heramec Ltd. (subsidiary of Heritage Oil Corporation, U.K.)
11. Joshi Technologies Inc., USA
12. Mosbacher India LLC, (subsidiary of Mosbacher Energy, USA)
13. Niko Resources Limited, Canada
14. OAO, Gazprom, Russia
15. Okland International LDC, USA
16. Polish Oil and Gas Company, Poland
17. Ravva Oil (Singapore) Pte. Ltd. (subsidiary of Marubeni Corporation, Japan)
18. Tullow India Operations Ltd. (subsidiary of Tullow Oil Plc. Ireland)
19. Premier Oil North East India (subsidiary of Premier Oil, UK)

2. Public Sector Undertakings:

1. Oil India Limited
2. ONGC
3. GAIL (India) Ltd.
4. IOC
5. Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (Gujarat State Undertaking)
6. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd.
7. Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd.

Renovation of Khajuraho Temple

637. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of tourists including foreigners visited Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh during each of the last three years;

(b) whether Government is aware of poor upkeep and encroachments by and around the Khajuraho Temple;

(c) if so, whether the Government has prepared any plan to renovate the Khajuraho temple and prevent encroachment and theft of priceless sculptures in this temple; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The total number of domestic and foreign tourists who visited Khajuraho during the last 03 years is as under:—

2002-03	—	1,26,004
2003-04	—	1,70,720
2004-05	—	2,18,905

(b) The monuments at Khajuraho are being conserved, preserved and maintained well. The maintenance of a monument is a continuous process and necessary works are being taken up. No encroachment has been reported in the protected area of Khajuraho Group of Temples. However, some cases of illegal/unauthorized construction have been reported in the vicinity for which the necessary action under the provisions of Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 and Rules, 1959 has been initiated for removal of such unauthorized constructions.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Plans have been formulated to maintain the monuments and landscape the surroundings. The protected and the newly acquired area by the Archaeological Survey of India would be fenced to ensure security to the temple and its priceless sculptures.

In order to acquire land around the protected monument, a sum of Rs. 3,21,79,037/- has been deposited with District Collector, Chhattarpur towards compensation, and the process of payment to the affected persons is under way.

[Translation]

Programme for Juvenile Justice

638. SHRI SURESH CHANDEL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of proposals received from State Governments and Union Territory Administrations under 'Programme for Juvenile Justice' and financial assistance allocated and released during each of the last three years and the current year, State/Union Territory-wise;

(b) the details of funds utilization and number of juvenile homes set up and juvenile inmates assisted during the said period, State/Union Territory-wise; and

(c) the details of works for setting up of juvenile homes pending for competion and the time by which the same are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) The details of financial assistance during last three years was provided to States Governments/Union Territory Administrations is enclosed as Statement-I. No fund has been released to any State/Union Territory till date in the current financial year.

(b) and (c) The number of homes set up under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and inmates assisted during the said period is enclosed as Statement-II. The funds are released to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations during a financial year on submission of a proper utilization certificate for the funds released in earlier years for completion of projects taken up by them. The responsibility of completion of these projects lies with the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. All the States which were released funds for setting up of homes under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 during 2002-03 and 2003-04 had completed projects as per the utilization certificate

received from them. As per the utilization certificates/ proposals received during the current year, there was no pendency in the projects for which funds were released during 2004-05.

Statement-I

Complete proposal received from the State Governments/UT Administrations and financial assistance released during the financial years 2002-03 to 2005-06 under the scheme "A Programme for Juvenile Justice"

Sl. No.	Name of the States/UTs	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Tamil Nadu	1,13,59,850	1,24,68,380	1,38,17,803
2.	Orissa	42,244	5,43,181	5,73,310
3.	Rajasthan	9,16,927	12,11,910	11,94,829
4.	Sikkim	2,02,750	2,33,000	2,32,750
5.	Haryana	2,47,161	24,79,711	23,59,092
6.	Meghalaya	6,99,819	9,13,000	9,92,465
7.	Chhattisgarh	23,56,000	54,18,000	90,10,580
8.	Goa	4,12,070	1,24,800	4,95,140
9.	Karnataka	51,76,269	79,40,922	50,31,333
10.	Nagaland	4,56,000	4,56,000	5,76,000
11.	Gujarat	47,59,110	65,91,209	70,00,000
12.	Kerala	12,69,090	13,10,250	26,95,515
13.	Madhya Pradesh	1,10,80,520	1,06,86,000	1,24,89,000
14.	Assam	—	—	50,00,000
15.	Maharashtra	5,09,15,385	7,42,75,581	7,52,27,851
16.	Andhra Pradesh	1,12,13,390	2,33,000	4,07,92,840
17.	Punjab	23,04,170	30,56,150	64,95,780
18.	Mizoram	15,90,582	32,37,000	15,77,791

1	2	3	4	5
19.	Chandigarh	—	6,00,000	6,00,000
20.	West Bengal	83,65,235	80,84,210	50,81,421
21.	Tripura	—	3,868	2,250
22.	Delhi	52,09,130	70,00,000	59,00,000
23.	Bihar	30,31,250	43,40,200	—
24.	Himachal Pradesh	3,98,700	—	—
25.	Uttar Pradesh	1,89,10,990	1,27,34,530	—
26.	Jharkhand	23,83,920	—	—
	Total	14,33,00,562	16,39,30,802	19,71,45,750

Statement-II

Homes set up under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and children in these homes assisted during the financial years 2002-03 to 2005-06 under the scheme "A Programme for Juvenile Justice"

Sl. No.	Name of the States/UTs	2002-03		2003-04		2004-05	
		No. of Homes	No. of Inmates	No. of Homes	No. of Inmates	No. of Homes	No. of Inmates
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Tamil Nadu	21	2285	19	1830	19	1780
2.	Orissa	5	119	5	120	5	143
3.	Rajasthan	4	337	4	338	4	284
4.	Sikkim	1	25	1	25	1	25
5.	Haryana	7	252	7	326	7	354
6.	Meghalaya	3	76	3	76	3	76
7.	Chhattisgarh	5	275	6	N.A.	12	528

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8.	Goa	2	77	2	104	2	74
9.	Karnataka	62	2943	62	2766	62	2764
10.	Nagaland	2	100	2	100	2	100
11.	Gujarat	24	921	31	955	55	2381
12.	Kerala	22	800	22	765	22	700
13.	Madhya Pradesh	26	2972	26	4072	24	4298
14.	Assam	—	—	—	—	7	400
15.	Maharashtra	236	18655	266	19629	291	19859
16.	Andhra Pradesh	21	1229	—	—	16	1062
17.	Punjab	13	387	13	465	13	398
18.	Mizoram	5	225	4	225	4	225
19.	Chandigarh	—	—	1	N.A.	1	N.A.
20.	West Bengal	36	2885	29	2735	29	3525
21.	Tripura	—	—	1	4	1	5
22.	Delhi	13	1743	13	1655	14	1758
23.	Bihar	15	600	14	836	—	—
24.	Himachal Pradesh	2	70	—	—	—	—
25.	Uttar Pradesh	93	1789	92	1723	—	—
26.	Jharkhand	7	56	—	—	—	—
	Total	625	38821	623	38749	593	40739

N.A.—Not available from States/UTs.

Selling of Tickets Through Mobile Vans

639. SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA:

SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to formulate any scheme of selling rail tickets through mobile vans in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the schemes;

(c) the time by which this scheme is likely to be introduced; and

(d) the expenditure likely to be incurred by the Government on the said scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) A system of selling of unreserved tickets through Mobile Vans is in operation in Bhopal and Katni cities of West Central Railway, Jabalpur. However, at present there is no plan under consideration to further extend this system.

[English]

Development of Railway Network

640. SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether various subsidiaries and sponsors are involved with Indian Railways in different aspects of the development of rail network; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Indian Railways is exploring possibilities for development of rail network through partnership with State Governments, multilateral agencies, project beneficiaries and lending institutions. It is primarily through cost sharing, participation in equity in case of implementation through creation of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), Build-Own-Transfer (BOT) models and in some cases privately owned infrastructure viz. port railways, freight terminals.

Ministry of Railways have already commissioned rail connectivity to Mundra port with private investment and Surendranagar-Pipavav Gauge Conversion with public-private participation. Gandhidham-Palanpur Gauge Conversion project and Hassan-Mangalore Gauge Conversion project are being implemented through investments from private sector and other agencies. Ministry of Railways is also implementing certain projects in the States of Jharkhand, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra on cost sharing basis with State Government/Undertakings of State Government.

Allotment of Outlets to Militancy Effected Families

641. SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to provide reservation to the militancy effected families in Jammu and Kashmir in allotment of LPG agencies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of LPG outlets opened under innovative scheme, for low-income group, for the sale of 5 kg. LPG cylinders till-date, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) At present, the guidelines of the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) provide for the following percentage of reservation in the allotment of LPG distributorships to various sections of society:—

Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes	—	25%
Defence Personnel	—	8%
Paramilitary/Police/Govt. Personnel	—	8%
Physically Handicapped Persons	—	5%
Freedom Fighters	—	2%
Outstanding Sports Persons	—	2%

There is no proposal for further reservation for any other category in the matter of allotment of LPG distributorships, including militancy-affected families in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

(c) The public sector oil marketing companies have not set up separate distributorships exclusively for marketing 5-kilograme LPG cylinders to customers belonging to low-income groups.

[Translation]

Travelling in AC Coaches at Sleeper Class Cost

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

(a) whether the Railways proposes to introduce any scheme of travelling in AC coaches at the cost of sleeper class as appeared in Dainik Jagran dated July 10, 2005;

(b) if so, the detail of the scheme; and

(c) the time by which the scheme is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The scheme for upgradation of passengers, against the vacant accommodation available in Upper Class is under examination, consistent with provisions of the Railways Act, 1989.

(b) Details of the scheme are yet to be finalised.

(c) Implementation Schedule of the scheme will be decided only after the scheme is approved.

Menace of Milkmen in Daily Passenger Trains

643. SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that milkmen are using daily passenger trains to and fro Delhi as goods trains to bring their milk barrels in the morning and carry these back in the evening and also harassing the daily passengers as appeared in the *Jansatta* dated June 17, 2005;

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

(c) the stringent measures taken by the Government to stop the menace of milkmen in daily passenger trains and harassment to passengers by them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Milkmen holding Monthly Milk Vendor Tickets are authorized to travel in nominated coaches/trains only. However, some cases of milk vendors travelling in other than these specified coaches/trains come to notice and they are dealt with as per relevant rules.

(c) Regular checks are conducted to apprehend milkmen who travel in contravention of the specified rules.

[English]

Encroachment on Defence Land

644. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made so far in the removal of large scale encroachments on defence land in Cantonments; and

(b) the time by which all these encroachments are expected to be removed?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) During the last one year approximately 1800 encroachments involving an area of about 14 acres have been removed from defence land under the management of Defence Estate Officers and Cantonment Boards within the Cantonments.

(b) Action for removal of encroachment from Defence land is an ongoing process, under prescribed legal provisions. No time frame can be prescribed in such cases since legal processes are involved.

[Translation]

Rehabilitation of Workers

645. SHRI CHANDRABHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether under the new Catering Policy, 2004,

the Railways have handed over catering units to Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC);

(b) if so, whether the IRCTC has terminated the services of workers who were working earlier with the Railways after awarding the contract; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto and steps taken by the Government to safeguard the interest of those workers and to rehabilitate them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. As per Catering Policy, 2004 and subsequent policy, 2005, Railways are handing over Catering units at 'A', 'B' and 'C' Category of stations to Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC). Catering Units at 'D', 'E' and 'F' category of stations are still being managed by Railways. However, the catering activity of Railways are to be hived off completely to IRCTC.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Departmental catering units are being handed over to IRCTC alongwith staff on 'as is where is' basis and these staff will continue to serve in the IRCTC on deemed deputation with option to be exercised within three years either for absorption in IRCTC or for reversion back to the Railways. In the event of staff opting to revert to the railways they will be redeployed as per extant rules. The transfer of catering staff alongwith the activities is in accordance with the Union Cabinet decision.

[English]

Gauge Conversion

646. SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total lengh of metre gauge rail lines in the country, as on date, State-wise;

(b) the name of places having metre gauge rail lines;

(c) whether the Government proposes to convert these metre gauge lines into broad gauge;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which these metre gauge rail lines are likely to be converted into broad gauge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The State-wise length (route kilometres) of metre gauge rail lines in the country as on 31-3-2004 (latest available) is given below:—

Sl. No.	Name of State	Length of MG lines (in Route Kilometre)
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	508
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1
3.	Assam	1289
4.	Bihar	1235
5.	Delhi	22
6.	Gujarat	1814
7.	Haryana	318
8.	Karnataka	472
9.	Kerala	117
10.	Madhya Pradesh	500
11.	Maharashtra	445
12.	Manipur	1
13.	Mizoram	2
14.	Nagaland	2
15.	Rajasthan	2413
16.	Tamil Nadu	1955
17.	Tripura	64
18.	Uttar Pradesh	1767

1	2	3
19.	Uttaranchal	61
20.	West Bengal	304
	Total	13290

Note: The remaining States/Union Territories do not have Metre Gauge rail lines.

(b) There is a vast network of metre gauge lines connecting various places in the country.

(c) There is at present no proposal to convert all the metre gauge lines into broad gauge.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Schemes for NGOs

647. SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some schemes are being implemented by his Ministry with the assistance of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)'

(b) if so, the details of such schemes; and

(c) the names of schemes being implemented in Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The details are as under:—

(i) Development of Buddhist/Tibetan Culture and Art.

(ii) Grant-in-aid to voluntary organizations/societies for development and maintenance of national memorials.

(iii) Celebration of Centenaries of Important Personalities.

(iv) Financial Assistance for Preservation and development of the cultural heritage of the Himalayas.

(v) Financial Assistance for Promotion and Dissemination of Tribal/Folk Art and Culture.

(vi) Financial Assistance for Research Support to Voluntary Organisations engaged in cultural activities.

(vii) Financial Assistance for Building and equipment grants to voluntary cultural organization.

(viii) Financial Assistance for Promotion and strengthening of regional and local museums.

(ix) Financial Assistance to professional Groups and individuals for specified performing art projects.

(c) There is no specific scheme for Maharashtra. Grant-in-aid is being sanctioned under the above schemes on all India basis.

[English]

Maintenance of Monuments by NGOs

648. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether private players, NGOs and Corporate Houses are being allowed for repairing, upkeeping and maintenance of old monuments of the country; and

(b) if so, the details alongwith the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The National Culture Fund, set up by the Ministry of Culture by notification

dated November 28, 1996 provides opportunity for private players, NGO's and Corporate Houses to participate in the repair, upkeep and maintenance of old monuments in the country.

The National Culture Fund accepts institutions and individuals as partners of the Government in the management of the cultural scenario. It is an important initiative for forging public private partnership and mobilizing extra budgetary resources for culture.

Details of conservation/development works carried out under the auspices of the National Culture Fund are enclosed as statement.

Statement

Details of Works Carried/Being Carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India under NCF Projects

Sl. No.	Name of the Agency	FInancial Assistance	Activities carried out
1.	M/s. Aga Khan Trust for Culture	Rs. 30.00 lacs	Humayun's Tomb Garden in Delhi has been rejuvenated.
2.	M/s. Oberoi Group of Hotels	Rs. 5.00 lacs	Humayun's Tomb dome has been illuminated.
3.	Pune Municipal Corporation/ Venkateshwara Hatcheries and other agencies, Pune	Rs. 48.00 lacs	Shaniwar wada Palace remains have been conserved and light and sound programme has been installed.
4.	The Taj Group of Hotels	Rs. 45.00 lacs	At Taj Mahal, Agra, chemical preservation of main gate has been done. Tourist facilitation centre is being developed at Fatehabad and Fatehpuri enclosures and conservation of portion of enclosure wall on the eastern side is in progress. Signages have been installed.

[Translation]

Closure of PCO Booths

649. SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have closed down some PCO booths at New Delhi Railway Station and other stations in Delhi;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps being taken by the Railways to remove the difficulties being faced by the commuters due to the closure of these PCOs;

(d) whether the Railways propose to re-start PCO booths at Station; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) to (e) Do not airse

[English]

Shifting of Commercial Department

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that railway commuters are facing hardship due to shifting of commercial department office from the premises of DRM office to a remote location at Pune in Central Railway;

(b) if so, whether the Government has received representations to shift the said Department back to its original location;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) A representation has been received regarding shifting of commercial department office at Pune. In order to de-congest the present office, Commercial Department has been shifted to a new location, which is only 200 metres away from the station. The new office is in proper office complex having appropriate approach road and other necessary infrastructure. After construction of new divisional office, all the sub offices including Commercial will be accommodated in one complex. There is, however, no inconvenience caused to commuters on account of shifting the Commercial Office.

[Translation]

Activities of ASI Abroad

651. SHRI RAGHUVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the protection of important places linked with the Indian culture abroad has been undertaken by Archaeological Survey of India;

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

(c) the steps taken by the Government with regard to protection of To Graham Group temples situated in the SIMRIP of Cambodia?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Archaeological Survey of India has taken up restoration and conservation of Ta Prohm Temple Complex in Siem Reap, Cambodia under the ITEC programme of Ministry of External Affairs.

The project spread over a period of ten years is being executed in five phases with an estimated project outlay of Rs. 19.57 crores. The first phase of the project commenced in December 2003 has been completed in June 2005 and the scientific studies and investigations pertaining to Soil Mechanics, Foundation, Structural Engineering, Hydrological, Botanical and Archaeological aspects of the Temple Complex, 3D and 2D Laser Scanning documentations, graphic and photographical documentations of the Temple have been completed, besides dismantling of the eastern side-southern wing of the 3rd enclosure. A symposium on Ta Prohm was conducted in Cambodia during Feb. 2004, wherein the project was formally launched and report on scientific studies and investigations was submitted to UNESCO and the Cambodia Government.

[English]

Non-Functioning of Doordarshan Studio

652. SHRI A.K. MOORTHY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether a programme production studio of Doordarshan has been set up in Madurai;

(b) if so, whether it has started functioning;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) Prasar Bharati has intimated that a Programme Production Studio of Doordarshan has been set up in Madurai but has not started functioning

for no creation of posts. However, efforts are underway to start operations by re-deploying staff from other centers/ stations.

[Translation]

Rail Projects from Jharkhand

653. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MAHATO:

SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the proposals of railway projects received each year from the States of Jharkhand and Gujarat during the last three years;

(b) the steps taken on each proposal;

(c) the details of the survey undertaken during the said period;

(d) the details of the works done for improvement and extension of rail network in Jharkhand and Gujarat during the above period;

(e) the expenditure incurred on these projects; and

(f) the reasons for slow progress of these projects and the steps taken to expedite completion of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

[English]

Use of CNG

654. SHRIMATI ARCHANA NAYAK: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan to increase the use of CNG in various parts of the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) In addition to the existing CNG network in the country, it is proposed to expand the CNG network to Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Noida, Ghaziabad and Bareilly in UP; Gurgaon and Faridabad in Haryana; Pune, Navi Mumbai and Thane in Maharashtra; and Vijaiwada in Andhra Pradesh. CNG will be progressively introduced in other polluted cities with the expansion of the pipeline infrastructure and increased availability of natural gas, subject to economic viability.

Shelters and Schools for SC Children

655. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHI BARAD: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the proposals received by the Union Government from the State Governments/UT Administrations for the shelter and schools for the children belonging to the scheduled castes during 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06;

(b) the funds allocated/sanctioned and utilised for the said purpose during the said period, State/UT-wise and scheme-wise;

(c) whether the Union Government has rejected any such proposals; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) There is no scheme for "shelter and schools" for the children belonging to scheduled castes implemented through State Governments/UT Administrations. As such, no proposals

have been received by this Ministry from the State Governments/UT Administration.

(b) to (d) Questions do not arise.

Reduction in Market Share in Freight Traffic

656. SHRI SAMIK LAHIRI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the comparative figure of fare in rupee value in freight traffic in Indian Railways and Railways in various countries; and

(b) the reasons for reduction in its market share in freight traffic in Indian Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No such statistics is maintained.

(b) Although Railways percentage market share in freight traffic has decreased over the years, the fact is that the net traffic in tonnage has increased significantly. One of the factors in decrease of rail coefficient in the over all freight traffic is economised development of the country. Fifty years ago, there were hardly a handful of cement/fertilizer/iron and steel plants throughout the country and most finished products had to be carried over long distances by rail. Today, when these plants/ industries are present in almost all parts of the country, the area of supply of their finished product has been reduced to within a radius of around 250-300 kms. For this range of distance, transportation by road has a definitive advantage since it provides last mile connectivity and door-to-door service to the customer.

Cargo Hub at Nagpur

657. SHRI SUBODH MOHITE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Maharashtra Airport Development Authority has fixed target for completion of first phase of Multimodel International passenger and Cargo Hub at Nagpur;

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

(c) whether land acquisition for the project has been completed;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, the reasons for delay in acquisition of land; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The target of development of Multimodel International Passenger and Cargo Hub at Nagpur has been assigned to Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC) by Government of Maharashtra.

(c) to (f) About 600 hectres of land has been acquired so far which is in the possession of MADC. The issue regarding transfer of additional land is to be resolved through inter-governmental and inter ministerial consultations. Also, Nagpur has already been declared an international Airport.

[Translation]

Maintenance of Bofors Cannons

658. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that Bofors Cannons are not being properly maintained;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for proper maintenance of Bofors Cannons?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No such report has come to the notice of the Government.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Necessary steps have been taken by the concerned authorities to ensure maintenance of Bofors guns. These steps include strip inspection at the periodicity of 6 years and decision to overhaul guns after 18 years. Pilot Overhaul of 10 Guns has been completed during 2004-2005. It is intended to complete overhaul of all Bofors guns within next 10 years.

Permission to Foreign Companies for Exploration

659. SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI:

SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN:

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

(a) whether some foreign companies have applied for exploration of petroleum products in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Under the fifth round of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-V), 69 bids for 20 blocks (18 bids for deep water blocks, 7 bids for 2 shallow water blocks and 44 bids for 12 onland blocks) were received. A total of 27 foreign companies and 21 Indian companies (8 public sector undertakings and 13 private sector undertakings) have submitted their bids. The awards have been made on 18 blocks as per details given in the enclosed statement. The Production Sharing Contracts will be signed with the awardees companies after finalisation of the PSCs.

Statement

The Block-wise awardee of Exploration Blocks are as under

Deepwater Blocks

Name of Block	Awardee
1	2
KK-DWN-2003/1	Reliance Industries Ltd.
KK-DWN-2003/2	Reliance Industries Ltd.
KG-DWN-2003/1	Reliance Industries Ltd.—Hardy Exploration and Production India Inc.
MN-DWN-2003/1	Reliance Industries Ltd.—Niko Resources (NELP-V) Ltd.
AN-DWN-2003/1	Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.
AN-DWN-2003/2	ENI India Ltd.—Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.—Gas Authority of India Limited
	Shallow Water Blocks
CB-OSN-2003/1	Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.
GS-OSN-2003/1	Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.—Cairn Energy (7) Ltd.
	Onland Blocks
AA-ONN-2003/3	Oil India Limited—Hindustan Petroleum Corpn. Ltd.
GV-ONN-2003/1	Cairn Energy India Pty. Ltd. Cairn Exploration (No. 1) Ltd.-ONGC
VN-ONN-2003/1	Cairn Energy India Limited—Cairn Energy (6) Limited—ONGC
RJ-ONN-2003/1	ENI India Limited—Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.—Cairn Energy (2) Limited

1	2
RJ-ONN-2003/2	Phoenix Overseas Ltd.—Birckbeck Investment Ltd.
CB-ONN-2003/1 Part-A and B	Reliance Industries Ltd.
CB-ONN-2003/2	Gujarat State Petroleum Corpn. Ltd.—Gas Authority of India Limited—Jubilant Capital Pvt. Ltd.—Geo Global Resources Ltd.
DS-ONN-2003/1	Geo Global Resources
KG-ONN-2003/1	Cairn Energy India Limited—Cairn Energy (4) Limited—Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.
CY-ONN-2003/1	Niko Resources (NELP-V) Ltd.

In respect of 2 blocks namely AA-ONN-2003/1 and AA-ONN-2003/2, certain representations raising legal issues have been received and they are being examined in the Government.

Airports in Bihar

660. SHRI SITARAM SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the airports at Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur and Raxaul in Bihar are not in operation at present;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to make them operational?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) There is no demand/commitment from any airlines to operate scheduled services through these airports. On receipt of firm commitment from airlines to operate through these airports, necessary action could be initiated to operationalize these airports.

[English]

Welfare of Senior Citizens

661. SHRI TUKARAM GANGADHAR GADAKH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that fund allocated for the welfare of destitute elderly persons/ senior citizens in the country has not been utilized fully every year;

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

(c) the details of proposals received from various State Governments/UT Administrations and NGOs/VOs under various schemes for old people and funds allocated/released thereunder during 2005-06, scheme-wise, State/Union Territory-wise and VO/NGO-wise; and

(d) the number of old age homes to be opened during 2005-06, State/UT-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) It is not every year. But in the last year, funds could not be fully utilized due to incomplete proposals and/or non receipt of State Government/UT Administrations' recommendations.

(c) No proposals have been received directly from State Governments/UT Administrations. However, during the first quarter of 2005-06 i.e. upto 30-6-2005, 110 proposals have been received from Non-Governmental Organisations, out of which 74 Non-Governmental organization have been sanctioned a total amount of Rs. 1.43 crore. There is no State-wise separate allocation of funds under the scheme. Details of State-wise/District-wise and NGO-wise sanctions issued till 30-6-2005 are given in the enclosed statement.

(d) The opening of new old age homes depend upon the receipt of complete documents, availability of funds, recommendations of the concerned State Governments/UT Administrations.

Statement

State-wise, district-wise, NGO-wise grant in aid sanctioned to the Non-Governmental Organisations under the scheme of "An Integrated Programme for Older Persons (1-4-2005 to 30-6-2005)

Sl. No.	District	Name of the Organisation	Grant in aid sanctioned (Rs. in lakhs)
1	2	3	4
		Andhra Pradesh	
1.	Anantpur	Sree Venkateswara Convent Educational Society	1.38
2.	Cuddapah	Sree Krishna Devaraya Yuvajana Sangam	1.38
3.	Chittoor	Jyothi Youth Association	0.98
4.	Chittoor	Peoples Organisation for Welfare and Education Ratification	0.98
5.	Guntur	International Christian Crusade (ICC) Social Service Association	0.98
6.	Guntur	Omkar Rural Development Society	1.37
7.	Guntur	Social Educational and Rural Development of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Christians Welfare Society	1.35
8.	Guntur	Sree Sarda Mahila Vignana Samithi	2.36
9.	Hyderabad	Mahila Dakshata Samithi	1.85
10.	Khamman	Jayasree Mahila Sangam	0.98
11.	Krishna	Andhra Pradesh Girijana Sevak Sangh	2.36
12.	Krishna	Integrated Development Agency (IDA)	2.83
13.	Krishna	Bapuji Integrated Rural Development Society	1.38
14.	Mahaboobnagar	Navodaya Seva Sangam	1.38
15.	Nalgonda	Mahalaxmi Mahila Mandali	2.28
16.	Nellore	The Divine (India)	1.38
17.	Prakasam	Chandra Vamsa Organisation for Rural Development	1.38
18.	Prakasam	Lakshmi Mahila Mandali	1.38

1	2	3	4
19.	Prakasam	Priyadarshini Mahila Mandali	0.95
20.	Prakasam	Sree Mahalakshmi Mahila Mandali	1.38
21.	Prakasam	Valmiki Seva Sangham	1.38
22.	Prakasam	Vasavi Educational Society	1.38
23.	Prakasam	Sri Bhavani Mahila Mandali	1.38
24.	Ranga Reddy	St. Anthony's Educational Society	1.38
25.	Ranga Reddy	Venkateswara Social Service Association	2.36
		Assam	
26.	Nagaon	Sadau Asom Gramya Puthibharal Santha	0.84
		Himachal Pradesh	
27.	Sirmaur	Indira Ladies Club	1.54
		Karnataka	
28.	Bangalore	Sri Amhigara Chawdaiah Ed. Society	1.38
29.	Bangalore	R.T. Nagar Educational Charitable Trust	1.38
30.	Bidar	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Cultural and Welfare Society	1.38
31.	Bidar	Shivleela Women's Welfare Association	1.37
32.	Bellary	Adarsa Ed. Society	1.33
33.	Gulbarga	Mahaboob Subhani Education Trust	4.02
34.	Gulbarga	Sri Sangameshwarn Ed. Society	1.38
35.	Gulbarga	Sharanara Nadu Education Society	1.38
		Punjab	
36.	Ferozpur	Akhil Bhartiya Jan Seva Samiti	0.98
37.	Ferozpur	Lok Seva Sansthan	1.96
		Delhi	
38.	Delhi	Association of National Brotherhood for Social Welfare	1.38
39.	Delhi	Manav Propkari Sanstha	1.54

1	2	3	4
40.	Delhi	Nari Utthan Samiti	1.95
		Manipur	
41.	Bishnupur	Kumbi Khullakpam Leikai Women's Association	1.38
42.	Thoubal	Jamia Educational Society	2.76
43.	Thoubal	Rural Medical Institute	1.52
44.	Thoubai	Society for Women's Ed. Action and Reflection	0.98
45.	Thoubal	The Rural People's Dev. Orgn.	4.72
		Tamil Nadu	
46.	Chennai	Annai Illam	2.27
47.	Cudalore	Meyvazhi Tamizh Sabai	1.33
48.	Kanchipuram	Brundavanam Ed. Social Trust	1.54
49.	Kanyakumari	Home for the Aged	2.14
50.	Nagapattinam	Nehru Social Ed. Centre	2.76
51.	Perambalur	Periyar Kudil	1.85
52.	Pudukkottai	Rural Education for Community Organisation	1.38
53.	Theni	Yuvak Vikas Kendra	1.38
54.	Thiruvarur	Bharathamatha Family Welfare Foundation	1.38
55.	Triuchirappalli (TRICHY)	Jaya Balwadi Educational Society	2.36
56.	Triuchirappalli (TRICHY)	The Tamil Nadu Pengal Nala Sangam	1.74
57.	Triuchirappalli (TRICHY)	Thiruchirappalli Rural and Urban Welfare Dev. Education Society	1.38
		Orissa	
58.	Angul	Gram Sewa Mandal	5.88
59.	Khurda	National Institute of Tribal Welfare and Social Action	1.96

1	2	3	4
60.	Khurda	Bhariabi Club	2.32
61.	Kandhmal	Subhadra Mehtab Seva Sadan	4.72
62.	Puri	Ratnachira	1.38
63.	Bolangir	Gram Magal Pathagar	2.76
		West Bengal	
64.	Kolkata	Navadiganta	3.26
65.	Kolkata	J.P. Institute of Social Service	2.86
66.	Medinipur	Gangadharchak and Dewanchak Vivekananda Club	0.95
67.	Medinipur	Amar Sewa Sangha	6.26
68.	Medinipur	Hitaijore Kishoribala Databya Chikitsalaya	1.14
69.	Malda	Biplobi Rural Development Society	5.78
		Uttar Pradesh	
70.	Bahraich	Adarsh Kalyan Seva Samiti	0.98
71.	Pratapgarh	Pratapgarh Mahila Kalyan Evam Shiksha Samiti	2.36
72.	Hamirpur	Kanchanlal Saguna Seva Sansthan	1.38
		Maharashtra	
73.	Yavatmal	Late Ramesh Jadhav Shikshan and Krida Prasarak Mandal	1.38
74.	Nanded	Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Shikshan Prasarak Sanstha	2.75
		Total	142.99

Airport at Dehradun

662. MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to reply to Unstarred Question No. 614 dated March 3, 2005 regarding 'Development of Non-Metro Airports to boost tourism' and state:

(a) whether the airport at Jolly Grant, Dehra Dun is amongst the aerodrome proposed to be modernized;

(b) if so, the present status of its modernization; and

(c) the time by which the said aerodrome is likely to be modernised and become functional?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Action has already been initiated by Airports Authority of India for modernization works relating to construction of boundary wall around the newly acquired land, development of runway and terminal building in a phased manner. The work is expected to be completed in 12 months time from the date of commencement.

Purchase of Stationery

663. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply given to USQ No. 3372 dated March 24, 2005 regarding purchase of stationery and state:

(a) whether the information has since been collected;

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

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay in the collection of the information; and

(d) the time by which the information is likely to be collected?

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

(b) to (d) Ministry of Railway's fulfillment report in respect of Parliament Assurance against Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3372 dated March 24, 2005 has already been furnished to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

Parking Bays for Aircrafts

664. SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to create more parking bays for aircrafts in various airports of the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Action has been initiated for expansion/provision of additional parking bays at Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Bhopal, Bhubaneshwar, Calicut, Chennai, Coimbatore, Delhi, Dibrugarh, Goa, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Imphal, Indore, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Khajuraho, Kolkata, Leh, Lucknow, Madurai, Mangalore, Mumbai, Nagpur, Patna, Port Blair, Pune, Raipur, Rajkot, Ranchi, Shillong, Silchar, Srinagar, Trichy, Trivendrum, Udaipur, Varanasi, Vadodara and Visakhapatnam Airports.

[Translation]

Maintenance and Upkeep of Historical Buildings

665. SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 12th Finance Commission has allocated funds for maintenance and upkeep of several ancient and historical buildings and monuments in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount of funds allocated for maintenance and upkeep of ancient temples, monuments and buildings of archaeological importance located in Himachal Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Twelfth Finance Commission has recommended allocation of Rs. 625 Crores among various States for heritage conservation i.e. preservation and protection of historical monuments, archaeological sites, public libraries, museums and archives covering the period between 2005-06 and 2009-10.

The Archaeological Survey of India does not get any allocation from the Finance Commission.

(c) In the State of Himachal Pradesh Rs. 75 Lac under Plan and Rs. 75 Lac under Non-Plan have been allocated by the A.S.I. during the financial year

2005-2006 for the maintenance and upkeep of ancient monuments and sites.

Rehabilitation of Tsunami affected Orphans and old age persons

666. SHRI RANEN BARMAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of children orphaned and number of old age persons rendered helpless by the Tsunami disaster in the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar Islands;

(b) the steps taken by Government so far to resolve the problem of rehabilitation of orphans and old aged persons; and

(c) the name of Non-Governmental Organizations engaged in the service of the helpless persons and orphans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) As per the information available, the number of children orphaned by Tsunami in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar Islands is 516. No separate figures are available for old age persons rendered helpless by the disaster.

(b) Various steps were taken by State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations to assist the affected people which, inter-alia, are (i) Provision of temporary shelters for all Tsunami affected families; (ii) Ex-gratia payment to orphans; (iii) Provision of care and shelter in orphanages run/supported by Government; (iv) Provision of care and shelter in old age homes for old age persons; and (v) Provision of free rations to all affected families. Besides, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment provided assistance for setting up of orphanages, Child Helplines and counseling services for children affected by Tsunami including orphans. In addition, aids and appliances were provided to affected persons irrespective of age.

(c) A number of Non-Governmental Organisations have been involved directly by the concerned State/ Union Territory governments in the service of these people.

Organisations assisted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment are as under:—

(i) Indian Council for Child Welfare, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

(ii) Prayas Institute of Juvenile Justice, New Delhi

(iii) Asian Youth Centre, Kanchipuram

(iv) Indian Council for Child Welfare, Cuddalore

(v) Kottar Social Service Society, Nagercoil

(vi) Nehru Yuva Kendra, Kollam, Kerala

(vii) Avvai Village Welfare Society, Nagapattinam

National Council for Older Persons

667. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has set up National Council for Older Persons;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the National Policy on Older Persons has been fully implemented;

(d) if so, the manner in which the said policy has made the lives of senior citizens dignified and purposeful; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

The National Council for Older Persons (NCOP) was set up in the year 1999. The Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment is the Chairperson and Secretary (SJ and E) is the Vice Chairperson of the NCOP. Eminent personalities, parliamentarians, members of social organizations, scholars engaged in the field of welfare of older persons are its members. The present strength of NCOP is 81.

(c) and (d) The implementation of the National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) is an on-going process. The mechanism adopted by the Ministry for implementation of NPOP and the various facilities/ concessions extended by different Ministries/Departments at the Centre for the welfare of older persons are available on its website www.socialjustice.nic.in.

(e) does not arise.

[Translation]

Surplus Employees in PSUs

668. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE PATIL:
SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA:

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

(a) the total number of employees in Public Sector Undertakings as on date;

(b) whether the Government has made any assessment about surplus employees in these PSUs;

(c) if so, the estimated number thereof; and

(d) the efforts made by the Government for proper utilisation of these surplus employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) According to Public Enterprises Survey 2003-04 placed in both Houses of Parliament on 2-5-2005 there were 17.67 Lakh employees (excluding casual and daily rated workers) in the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) as on 31-3-2004.

(b) to (d) Management of CPSE concerned makes assessment about its surplus employees and also makes efforts to utilize them properly. Data in respect of surplus employees in the CPSEs is not centrally maintained.

Rights to NCM

669. MOHD. MUKEEM: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission for Minorities has recommended/suggested to the Government to give it equal rights at par with the National Human Rights Commission; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In the Action Taken Memorandum laid on the Table of Houses alongwith the National Commission for Minorities' Annual Report for the year 1995-96, it is stated that a member of the minority community can approach the National Commission for Human Rights to seek redressal of grievances arising out of violation of human rights. Under the provisions of the Human Rights Act, 1993, the Chairperson of the National Commission for Minorities shall be deemed to be a member of NHRC for the discharge of various functions specified in that Act. As such conferring powers of investigations to the Commission on the pattern contained in the protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 may not be necessary.

[English]

Payment of VRS Dues to Employees of HMT Ltd.

670. SHRI SURESH KURUP: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has implemented the Supreme Court decision on payment of arrears to the

employees of HMT Ltd. who have opted for VRS under the Golden Hand Shake Scheme;

(b) if so, whether this commitment has been fulfilled so far as the number of employees who have been paid VRS dues; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) The Supreme Court has not made any direction on payment of arrears to the employees of HMT Limited who opted for VRS. However, the Supreme Court has passed orders regarding payment of wage/pay revision arrears of 1992 in respect of all eligible employees of HMT. The Government has made its stand clear before the Apex Court that such arrears shall be borne by the company only out of its own resources.

(b) There are no arrears of VRS due to the employees separated under the VRS in HMT. However, the dues on account of wage/pay revision arrears of 1992 in respect of all eligible employees including VRS cases are being settled by HMT in a phased manner based on seniority of date of separation from the company.

(c) Does not arise.

Completion of Projects by BRO

671. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of projects completed by the Border Road Organisation (BRO) in the Kutch District of Gujarat during last three years;

(b) whether some projects are still under construction;

(c) if so, the progress made in this regard; and

(d) the target fixed for the completion of these projects by BRO?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No project has been entrusted to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in Kutch District of Gujarat.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Stoppage of Sampark Kranti Express at Bhagalpur

672. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 2501/2502 New Delhi-Guwahati Poorvottar Sampark Kranti Express has not been given stoppage at Bhagalpur;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government proposes to give stoppage to the said train at Bhagalpur to facilitate the large number of passengers bound for Delhi; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) to (d) 2501/2502 Poorvottar Sampark Kranti Express has been introduced to provide quicker connectivity from Porvottar States to the National Capital, which has value added features like non-stop service beyond the State, dedicated staff through the run and public address system. Provision of stoppage of the said train at Bhagalpur (Bihar) is therefore, not desirable at present.

Poorna-Hingoli Railway Line

673. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways proposes to complete the first phase of Poorna-Hingoli line in Maharashtra in the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the time by which work is likely to be completed?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The target date for completion of the work has not been fixed.

Guna-Etawah Rail Line Project

674. SHRI RAMSEVAK SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the date on which Guna-Etawah rail line project was approved by the Government and the period of completion of the said project;

(b) whether the said project has been completed;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the length of line in kilometre that has been constructed so far and the time by which the construction of remaining line is likely to be completed; and

(e) the funds earmarked for the said project during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) The work of construction of new broad gauge rail line between Guna and Etawah (344 kms.) was included in the Budget 1985-86. Guna to Bhind (306 kms.) has since been completed and opened to traffic in the following three phases:—

Section	Commissioned on
Guna-Shivpuri (102 kms.)	Feb, 1991
Shivpuri-Gwalior (125 kms.)	April, 1999
Gwalior-Bhind (79 kms.)	July, 2002

In the last leg of the project between Bhind and Etawah (38 kms.), 79% of the work has been completed. On this section, land in wildlife sanctuary area still remains to be handed over. The completion of work of this section would depend upon handing over of the land to the Railways.

(e) An outlay of Rs. 25 crore has been provided for this project during the current financial year.

[English]

Life Saving Jacket for Blind

675. SHRI GANESH PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has assessed the gravity of blind people facing danger to their lives while crossing roads in big/Metropolitan cities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a special jacket has been invented by some Indian entrepreneurs for wearing them so that they can be easily identified by the motorists;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to provide them the life saving jacket at nominal rates; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Government of India has been sensitive about the problems of Persons with Disability and is conscious of safety requirements of persons with visual impairment. Towards this end, following measures have been taken:—

(1) Installation of auditory signals at select Red Lights in public roads.

(2) Engravings on the surface of select Zebra crossing and edges of select railway platforms.

(3) Auditory signals in select elevators/lifts of public buildings.

(4) Tactile path/railings etc. on the pavements/ roads.

(5) Under the ADIP Scheme of the Ministry walking sticks are provided to persons with visual impairment for safe movement.

(6) Central Public Works Departments has brought out detailed guidelines for ensuring disabled friendly built environment in all public places.

(c) to (f) No such invention has come to the notice. Therefore, the question of providing life saving jackets does not arise.

Wet Lease agreement between Air India and Jet Airways

676. DR. PRASANNA KUMAR PATASANI:
SHRI SURESH ANGADI:
SHRI TAPIR GAO:
SHRI AVTAR SINGH BHADANA:
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:
SHRI MAHBOOB ZAHEDI:
SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India and Jet Airways have signed a wet lease agreement;

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

(c) to what extent Air India is likely to be benefited by this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Air India has wet-leased one A340-300E aircraft from M/s. Jet Airways for the period 09-07-2005 to 27-07-2005 to operate approximately 19 RT flights at USD 4200 per Block Hour. This short term measure had to be adopted in the overall interest of Air India as it was facing acute shortage of B747-400 aircraft capacity during July, 2005 entailing withdrawal of one B747-400 aircraft from scheduled operations.

(c) Air India has avioded cancellation of flights which would have resulted in consequent adverse impact in terms of expenditure on endorsement of tickets to other carriers, hotel accommodation, denied boarding charges etc., besides also leading to (i) loss of credibility in the market and inconvenience to passengers on the highly competitive India/London route, (ii) problems in retaining slots at London Heathrow in the event of non-operation of flights and (iii) reduced out-bound loads in August 2005, due to the non-carriage of inbound traffic in July, 2005.

[Translation]

Business of IOC

677. SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN:
SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA:

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

(a) whether Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has formulated any scheme to expand its operations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the present position of operations of IOC Limited;

(d) whether the company has fixed any target for the expansion of its business; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (e) For Project Planning and Facilities Planning, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) carry out Annual Plan and Five Year Plan exercises

in consultation with the Planning Commission. Further, as a Navratna company, they regularly review their business plans. IOC recorded a turnover of Rs. 1,50,667 crore (around US $ 34.44 billion) during 2004-05. They have drawn up plans to become a US $ 60 billion company by 2011-12. The plan includes capability building in its core business as well as petrochemicals, gas, E and P, downstream marketing activities overseas, etc. It is envisaged that the revenue from core business would be around 80% and the balance from other business by 2011-12.

[English]

Missing of Defence Personnel

678. SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of defence personnel have been reported missing for the last several years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures taken by the Government to find out the whereabouts of such missing personnel?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As per information available, one Army person of the 1965 war and 255 Army personnel of the 1971 war are missing. It is clarified that those persons are presumed dead who are so accepted by the next of kin and to whom all dues as applicable have been paid. If the next of kin have not accepted the person as presumed dead, that person continues to be deemed as 'missing'. In addition to those missing in the 1965 and 1971 wars, 15 more personnel are missing subsequent to the 1971 war, of which 13 are presumed dead. In the last ten years a total of 8 Naval personnel have been missing. The number of Air Force personnel missing is 25.

As per the current policy, soldiers missing during the 1965 and 1971 wars are presumed to be dead. However, Government, through diplomatic channels, has been consistently taking up the issue of the early release and repatriation of the Prisoners of Wars believed to be in the custody of Pakistan. The matter was also raised during the visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to New Delhi during November, 2004. It was also discussed during the Foreign Secretaries level discussions on December 27, 2004. Pakistan has not acknowledged the presence of any prisoners of war in its custody.

[Translation]

Reservation Quota for Handicapped

679. SHRI RAOSAHEB DANVE PATIL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to increase the reservation quota for handicapped;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the decision is likely to be implemented?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[English]

New Delhi-Chennai Freight Corridor

680. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPIPARAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress so far made on the implementation of New Delhi-Chennai freight corridor project;

(b) the funds allocated for this project;

(c) whether any proposal has been received to extend this corridor project upto Tuticorin in view of Sethusamudram project; and

(d) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) New Delhi-Chennai Freight Corridor Project is not a sanctioned project of Ministry of Railways.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Maintenance of Protected Monuments in Chhattisgarh

681. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Chhattisgarh has submitted action plan to the Union Government for maintenance and conservation of protected monuments;

(b) the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

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

[Translation]

Recruitment Corruption in HAL

682. SHRI DEVIDAS PINGLE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that recent recruitments in the "Hindustan Aeronautics Limited" Ojhar (MiG) witnessed large scale corruption;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has received any complaint in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

[English]

Taking over of Keltron

683. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has accepted the recommendations of the Task Force to take over the various electronic factories as defence units;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to take over Keltron as a defence unit;

(c) if so, the details thereof:

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) to (e) The Government has received requests to take over KELTRON as unit under the Ministry of Defence. The Government has not found it feasible to take over the units of KELTRON.

In response to such requests a Task Force was set upto examine and identify the possible areas for long term arrangements between Public Sector Undertakings under Ministry of Defence and Ordnance Factory Board with KELTRON. The Task Force has submitted its Report. The recommendations of the Task Force are enclosed as statement. It has been decided that the Public Sector Undertakings under Ministry of

Defence and the Ordnance Factories would consider placing orders on KELTRON within the existing framework of Government guidelines and purchase policies.

Statement

Recommendations of the Task Force with Respect to Long-Term Arrangements

1. The two State PSUs, KELTEC/KELTRON are valued suppliers to Defence Establishments and Space Department for over a decade. The companies have been more involved in supplies of developmental narure, which does not provide a long-term and planned feed for their consistent growth and upgradation. It is desirable to provide the Companies with a consistent and committed workload through long-term procurement relationship.

2. HAL, BEL, BDL, OFB, ISRO and DRDO have identified items for such long-term relationship. These are listed in Chapter 7.0. DRDO and ISRO have already a successful ongoing procedure for placing orders on these firms. Continuation and further enlargement of this relationship would be useful for mutual benefit of these organisations. However, with respect to DPSUs and OFB a viable procedure for implementation of such a relationship be looked into and approved by competent authority because at present they are bound to follow the general tendering procedure based on Government/CVC guidelines.

3. For orders of development nature, small batch size and requiring constant interaction and upgradation of skills and facilities appropriate long-term relationship with KELTEC and KELTRON would be desirable.

4. The Task Force, after considerable deliberations, recommends the following:—

4.1 The DPSUs, DRDO, OFs, etc. may appoint KELTEC and KELTRON as a 'Preferred Vendor' as currently being done by Space Department, in specified areas of procurement. The buying company may follow the limited tender process within the preferred vendors for such procurements.

4.2 In view of the financial constraints of KELTEC and KELTRON, the long-term orders may include advance payment/free issue of material alongwith orders, wherever possible.

4.3 DPSUs/OFB may also consider investment in upgradation of specific technologies as needed for their niche production coupled with operational control, if desired.

4.4 The items and work identified may be put on a 'Rate Contract' for a period ranging from one to five years, depending on the nature of item, volumes involved and the spread over a time frame. The 'Rates' and terms shall be mutually agreed by the buying company and KELTEC/KELTRON. For the period when this Rate Contract is in vogue, the buying company can straight-away procure from KELTEC and KELTRON based on agreed schedule, without having to follow any tendering process. Arrangement currently in practice with DGS and D in this respect may be considered.

5. OFB representative has sited synergy between OFB and KELTEC and some of the units of KELTRON and has indicated an option to acquire KELTEC and some units of KELTRON either as subsidiary or direct integration with OFB.

Considering the proposal from Kerala Government to the Central Govt. for acquiring KELTEC and KELTRON the Government may examine this in details including due diligence.

Revamping of Delhi and Mumbai Airports

684. SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY:
SHRI MILIND DEORA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the bidding process for revamping of Delhi and Mumbai Airports has been finalised;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the private bidders chosen for the purpose; and

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay and the time by which it is likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There has been slight delay on account of Inter-Ministerial consultation process on some significant issues such as use of airport land etc. The bidding process is likely to be finalised towards the late second half of 2005.

[Translation]

Defence ties with China

685. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA:
SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:
SHRI BHUPENDRASINH SOLANKI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is taking initiative for strengthening the defence ties with China;

(b) if so, whether any steps have been taken in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any talks have been held with the Chinese Army General in the recent past; and

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

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) Both China and India have taken initiatives to improve defence relations between the two countries.

Steps have been taken to promote confidence building measures between the Indian Armed Forces and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and in general. Such steps include more frequent reciprocal high-level visits, an annual programme of exchange of professional and training delegations, increased points and frequency of border meetings, participation in each other's national days, festive occasions and sporting events, between units at the LAC, and participation as observers in each other's military exercises, amongst others. Recent high-level visits have included the visits of Chief of Army Staff and Vice Chief of Naval Staff from India and Chief of General Staff of the PLA to India. A new 'Protocol' on Modalities of Implementation of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in the military field building upon an earlier agreement on Confidence Building Measures signed in 1996, was signed during the visit of the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao to India in April 2005.

Talks were held with the Chinese Chief of General Staff, Gen. Liang Guanglie during his visit to India in May 2005. The visit provided an opportunity to exchange views, increase familiarity with the Chinese PLA leadership, and step up activities to promote confidence-building and relations between the Armed Forces.

[English]

Recovery of Land Mines

686. SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI:
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent floods in Jammu and Kashmir have washed away some mines planted along the Indo-

Pak border, posing a serious threat to the civilian population living in the area;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the number of such displaced land mines recovered and defused by the security forces so far; and

(d) the further corrective steps taken by the Government for the safety of civilian population?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) During the current year recovery of three mines has taken place near Galar village in Jammu and Kashmir. It is possible that these could be part of unrecovered 13 mines which could not be located in Galar minefield despite all efforts.

(d) The civilian population is regularly sensitised about the missing mines and incentives in the form of cash award is also given by the Army formation to anyone providing information about unrecovered/drifted mines. Immediately on recovery of a mine, the area around it is cordoned off and the mine is destroyed at the site itself by the formation engineers, making sure that no civilian casualties take place.

Legislation for Welfare of Disabled

687. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:
SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY:
SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY:
SHRI HITEN BARMAN:

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

(a) whether India has 21.9 million disabled and their number is increasing across all groups as reported in the Hindu dated June 3, 2005;

(b) if so, the facts and reasons therefor, State/UT-wise;

(c) whether the Government has any plan to bring out a detailed comprehensive legislation for the welfare of disabled;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the manner in which the Government propose to safeguard the interest of disabled?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) According to the Census, 2001, the number of persons with disabilities in the country is 21.9 million. The figures provided by the Census are only for the year 2001 and there is no comparable figure available from Census regarding the population of persons with disabilities for the previous years. Therefore, it cannot be said that there has been increase in the number of persons with disabilities over a period of time.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. The Government has enacted the following comprehensive legislations for the welfare of persons with disabilities viz (1) the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and full participation) Act, 1995; (2) The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities, Act, 1999 and (3) the rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992. Details of the Acts are available on the Website viz www.socialjustice.nic.in.

(e) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Wagon Manufacturing Units

688. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:
DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:

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

(a) whether the wagon manufacturing units are failing to produce as per their capacity;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to enable these units to produce to their manufacturing capacity so as to do away with the shortage of wagons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The four Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) under administrative control of this ministry namely Burn Standard Co. Ltd. (BSCL), Braithwait and Co. Ltd. (BCL), Bharat Wagons and Engg. Co. Ltd. (BWEL) and Bridge and Roof Ltd. (B and R) are engaged in manufacturing of wagons. They have been unable to produce wagons as per their installed capacity due to the following reasons:—

(i) Inadequate and delayed supply of critical components such as bogies and couplers by the approved venders.

(ii) Shortage of steel and wheel sets.

(iii) Decreasing trend of wagons prices from 1997-98 to 2003-04 resulting in erosion of working capital of these companies.

(iv) High overhead costs due to sub optimal utilization of capacity owing to lack of adequate orders.

(c) Ministry of Railways have agreed to provide bogies and cuplers, besides steel, wheel sets and bearing as free supply items from 2005-06. Government have provided financial support in the form of non-plan loan to meet shortfall for salary and wages. In addition, revival packages for BCL, BWEL and B and R have been worked out through the Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises.

[English]

Revenues Earnings from Freight Traffic

689. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether higher movement of iron ore for exports in significantly adding to the revenues of the Railways;

(b) if so, to what extent the revenues earnings from freight traffic has increased during 2004-05 as compared to 2003-04; and

(c) the efforts being made by the Railways to increase freight traffic earnings further?

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

(b) Revenue earning freight traffic has increased by 7.98% during the financial year 2004-05, as compared to the figures for the financial year 2003-04. Increase of iron ore export traffic during 2004-05 is 52.60% in comparison to preceding financial year 2003-04.

(c) Several steps have been taken to increase freight traffic earnings further. The steps taken are rationalization of preferential traffic schedule, Electrification of Diesel sidings, liberalization of Engine-on-Load scheme, encouragement to freight customers to develop their private sidings on cost sharing basis, Electronic Payment Gateway, Schemes for development of integrated warehouses complexes, rationalisation of Goods Tariff, reduction in total number of classes, highest class reduced from 300X to 240S, introduction of new Premier Registration Scheme, introduction of new attractive 'Wagon Investment Scheme', 20% rebate on incremental traffic booked from sidings in the notified empty flow direction of rakes, concession of 15% in freight rates to incremental traffic during non-peak period, distance based graded concession from 10% to 50% for short lead traffic less than 100 kms; reduction in 'To-pay' surcharge from 10% to 5% for all commodities except for coal which was reduced from 15% to 10%.

[Translation]

Revenue Earned and Expenditure Incurred

690. SHRI V.K. THUMMAR:

SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total revenue earned during the last three years, zone-wise;

(b) the total expenditure incurred during the last three years, zone-wise;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to increase the revenue; and

(d) the extent to which the Government has succeeded in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The total revenue earned and total expenditure incurred during the last three years, zone-wise:—

(Rs. in crore)

Zones	2002-03		2003-04		2004-05 (Provisional)	
	Gross earnings	Ordinary Working Expenses	Gross earnings	Ordinary Working Expenses	Gross earnings	Ordinary Working Expenses
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Central	7196.17	4681.11	4362.08	2777.92	4663.27	3038.46
Eastern	4087.60	3818.75	1860.69	2257.73	2174.22	2441.07
East Central	*	*	2988.79	2241.06	2964.33	2380.43
East Coast	*	*	2996.06	1652.58	3312.22	1692.22
Northern	7315.71	4827.52	5002.75	3472.82	5343.79	3811.10
North Central	*	*	3218.04	2006.73	3930.81	2123.51
North Eastern	1339.33	1591.56	937.76	1048.57	968.60	1141.41
North-East Frontier	962.21	1178.70	1113.56	1178.14	1173.92	1348.24
North Western	*	*	1360.67	1049.60	1456.10	1197.49
Southern	2852.12	2568.84	2424.62	2221.76	2578.21	2378.87
South Central	4030.76	2834.96	3702.47	2554.61	4203.76	2789.08
South Eastern	7906.91	4523.64	2700.09	1648.74	2967.45	1887.88
South East Central	*	*	2725.01	1407.28	3182.87	1493.04
South Western	*	*	1133.34	810.83	1317.03	902.74
Western	5418.40	3570.99	3812.56	2614.71	4042.18	2806.10

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
West Central	*	*	2461.25	1602.86	2712.60	1866.86
Metro	38.52	88.27	42.42	90.63	46.89	90.68
Total	41147.73	29684.34	42842.16	30636.57	47038.25	33389.18

Note:—*These zones compiled their account w.e.f. 2003-04.

(c) To increase the revenue a number of steps have been taken like Wagon Investment Scheme, Liberalization of Siding Rules, Development of Rail-side Warehousing Complex through Public-Private partnership and Freight Concessions to attract additional Traffic, Running of special passenger trains, Augmentation of trains services and coaches, Unreserved ticketing system, Internet reservations, Commercial utilization of land etc.

(d) Total Gross Earning during the current financial year (April-June 2005) is Rs. 12618.19 crore which is 14.58% higher as compared to Rs. 11012.59 crore during the corresponding period of the last financial year.

Goods Train Corridor Project

691. SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD:
SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to launch goods train corridor project;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the expenditure likely to be incurred on this project; and

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

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

(b) to (d) It is proposed to construct a dedicated freight corridor on high density routes specially on Golden Quadrilateral and its diagonals. The corridor will be capable of moving 25-30 tonnes axle load double stack container trains. Ministry of Railways have assigned a detailed feasibility study to M/s. RITES for the project, which will indicate the cost and time span needed.

Reservation for SCs/STs in Private Sector

692. SHRI JAI PRAKASH (MOHANLAL GANJ):
SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:
SHRI M. SHIVANNA:
SHRI SAMIK LAHIRI

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

(a) whether the Group of Ministers, constituted to examine the reservation for SCs/STs in the private sector has made any progress in this regard;

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

(c) whether the proposal of reservation in private sector has been opposed by certain quarters;

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

(e) the measures taken by the Government to expedite the issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

The Group of Ministers, (GoM) constituted to initiate a dialogue with industry to see how best the private sector can fulfill the aspirations of youth belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, is having a dialogue with the apex associations of industry and trade.

(c) to (e) The associations of industry and trade are opposed to reservations in private sector, however in May 2005, 21 captains of industry have issued a statement welcoming the move of the Government to have a dialogue with the industry on affirmative action. They have committed to expand their activities for disadvantaged persons with regard to scholarships, company-run private schools, partnership with government schools, vocational training in-house as well as in partnership with ITIs, vender development programmes etc.

Marketing Plan for Petrol Pumps

693. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of present marketing plan for petrol pumps;

(b) whether the marketing plan has been abandoned after the emergence of private sector companies;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons for not implementing the marketing plan?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) After the announcement of the dismantling of the Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) in the petroleum sector w.e.f. 1-4-2002, the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) viz., Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and IBP Co. Limited, are no longer required to obtain approval of the Government for their marketing plans for setting up retail outlet dealerships. Post 1-4-2002, OMCs finalize their respective marketing plans themselves based on commercial viability of the locations.

[English]

Rail Corridor between Delh-Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah

694. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent visit of Japanese Prime Minister, any proposal to build a $ 5 billion east-west rail corridor between Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah to promote India's infrastructure was discussed; and

(b) if so, the details of the decision taken and the steps being taken in pursuance thereof?

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

(b) During the recent visit of Japanese Prime Minister in April 2005, both India and Japan confirmed their intention to examine the feasibility of proposals for dedicated multi-modal high axle load freight corridors with computerized train control system on Mumbai-Delhi and Delhi-Howrah routes utilizing the Special Terms for Economic Partnership (STEP) Scheme with inputs of Japanese technology and expertise. Ministry of Railways as a follow up has assigned a detailed feasibility study to M/s. RITES (Rail India Technical and Economic Services) for the project.

[Translation]

Upkeep of Monuments

695. SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:

DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is taking any steps to protect our heritage;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the details of existing provisions to protect our heritage; and

(e) the steps taken/being taken to attract more tourists and provide sufficient infrastructre at the heritage sites?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) protects, conserves and maintains heritage monuments and sites under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (AMASR Act).

Section 4 of the Act empowers the ASI to declare ancient monuments to be of national importance. The provisions of the AMASR Act and Rules made thereunder also provide for maintenance of the monuments, their protection, protection of antiquities and for penalties for contravention of the statutory provisions.

(e) Various tourist related amenities like drinking water, toilets, pathways, interpretation centres, publication counters and facilities for physically challenged are provided in the centrally protected monuments to attract more tourists.

[English]

Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board

696. SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Group of Ministers appointed by the Government to go into the issue of setting up a Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board has submitted its report to the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the follow-up action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir.

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

[Translation]

Privatisation of Ordance Depots

697. SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any report from the Kelkar Committee regarding privatization or corporatisation of ordnance depots;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[English]

Exodus of Pilots from IAF

698. DR. M. JAGANNATH:
SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL:
SHRIMATI ARCHANA NAYAK:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Air Force is facing difficulty as its pilots are being attracted by the civilian airline industry;

(b) if so, whether the Indian Air Force is in a position to spare its pilots; and

(c) if not, the steps taken/proposed to be taken to prevent the exodus of trained pilots from the Indian Air Force?

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

(b) and (c) The requests for acceptance of premature retirement/resignation from he pilots are considered according to Government instructions. Only those pilots who are superceded or are in low medical category or have extreme compassionate grounds are released from service. The majority of the pilots released from service have already completed their useful tenure as pilots. This release of pilots does not affect the operational status of the Indian Air Force.

Meeting of Central Asian Oil Producers

699. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is going to host a meeting of Central Asian Oil Producers with the four largest consumers of Asia-China, Korea, Japan and India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the manner in which the India is likely to be benefited from the meeting?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The proposed meeting is a sequel to the first Round Table of the Asian Oil Ministers held in New Delhi in January, 2005. The confirmation of convenience of the principal participating countries is awaited. India is trying to forge unity amongst the principal buyers and sellers to ensure oil security and sustained supply at reasonable prices.

[Translation]

Computerisation of Akashwani Stations

700. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to undertake the Computerisation of Akashwani Stations to provide better services;

(b) if so, the estimated cost to be incurred therein; and

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

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

(b) and (c) Plan schemes amounting to Rs. 11.77 crore have been approved for total computerisation of AIR network. They will be completed during 10th Plan subject to availability of funds.

Fire in Ordnance Factory, Chanda

701. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Board of Inquiry (BoI) has been constituted to investigate fire incident which took place on January 31, 2005 in Ordnance Factory, Chanda;

(b) if so, whether the said Board has submitted its inquiry report;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Board of Inquiry has assessed initiation of fire from waste explosive as probable cause of accident. Total 53 nos. of Bomb 81 MM HE had exploded due to fire and the amount of loss has been assessed as Rs. 18.65 lakhs. One person sustained injury. No official has been found guilty for the accident. Board of Inquiry has recommended the following 8 remedial measures:—

1. Containers for N-17 Mark-1 in Unit-VII and that of in unit-IX are to be identified to avoid mix up.

2. Waste Propellant/Explosive to be kept immersed in water and CE Waste to be kept in oil and disposed off twice in a week. A record is to be maintained.

3. During non-working period of the explosive buildings suitable action to be taken by OF Chanda for vigilance at proper places.

4. The buildings wherever very easily ignitable material like augmenting cases charges, propellant filling operation is being carried out, possibility of introducing automatic fire detection and automatic water drenching system to be explored to prevent the mass fire.

5. The glass panels of the windows must be fitted with wire-meshed glass.

6. One more static Tank to be provided in vicinity of buildings 273 and 276 to ensure adequate water in case of any accidents/emergency.

7. Longer lunch break period to be avoided. Building to be manned during lunch period.

8. OF Chanda may explore the possibilities that no one is permitted to enter inside the factory gate with fire creating items like match box/ lighter etc.

Recommendation No. 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8 have been implemented. Recommendation No. 5 is under implementation and the recommendations No. 4 and 6 are being examined in consultation with Board of Inquiry.

(d) Question does not arise.

Entry of Truck with Explosives in IGI Airport

702. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of an incident in which a truck having gun powder and detonators had entered in Indira Gandhi International Airport campus despite tight security arrangements;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has investigated the matter;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken against the erring persons; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) On 12-6-2005, a truck bearing Registration No. HR-55B-1208 was detained by CISF staff at Gate No. 15 of IGI Airport. A plastic gunny bag containing 69 detonators, 15 meters fuse wire and white substance weighing approx. 10.7 kg. (nature of the substance under investigation) was concealed under the seat of the driver.

(c) and (d) From the investigation it is revealed that the truck was engaged by a sub-contractor of the Contractor, who was awarded contract by Airports Authority of India for levelling and grading of the side strip and mound at North of the main runway. It is further revealed that explosive substance was meant for levelling and grading of side strip and mound the north of main runway. However, the contractor/sub contractor did not have license to possess and use explosive material. A case has been registered under the Explosive Substance Act at Police Station IGI Airport

Terminal-II, New Delhi. Accused driver has been arrested and legal action initiated against all others found criminally liable during the course of further investigation.

(e) Following steps have been taken to avoid the recurrences of such accidents in future:—

(i) The access control at all the gates leading to the operational area has been intensified and surprise checks at all the work sites inside the operational area are carried out from time to time by CISF officers.

(ii) Escort of the vehicles by CISF officers upto the operational area and unloading of material in their presence.

[English]

Conditional Access System

703. SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the policy regarding implementation of Condition Access System in the country;

(b) whether CAS has been implemented uniformly in the whole country;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the response of the State Governments to CAS;

(e) whether the Government proposes to review the implementation of CAS;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government to bring uniformity in implementation of CAS?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2002 empowers the Government to issue notifications in public interest, making it obligatory for every cable operator to transmit or re-transmit programmes of pay channels through an addressable system (commonly known as Conditional Access System) with effect from such dates as may be specified in the notification and different dates may be specified for different States, cities, towns or areas as the case may be.

(b) to (d) Conditional Access System (CAS) was sought to be implemented in a phased manner in three Metro cities viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai in one go. The implementation of CAS ran into operational difficulties in the metros cities, owing to a deep divide among the stakeholders, i.e. the broadcasters, multi-service operators and local cable operators, impinging on consumer's interest. This led to the suspension of implementation of CAS in all the four metro cities in February, 2004. However, CAS is currently under implementation in Chennai city on the strength of the Madras High Court Order. During the course of implementation, all the State Governments had opposed its implementation mainly citing the problems being faced by consumers. The issue of implementation of CAS is currently sub-judice.

(e) to (g) In view of the difficulties encountered during the implementation of CAS, the Government had referred the matter to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in Jan. 2004, which has furnished its detailed recommendations in October, 2004. The Government is yet to take a final decision on these recommendations.

Investigation on Jet Airways

704. SHRI AVTAR SINGH BHADANA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased refer to reply to Unstarred Question No. 2304 dated July 23, 2004 regarding "Grounding of Jet Airways" and state:

(a) whether the Government has completed the investigation on Jet Airways on alleged financial irregularities, sources of funding, legality and status of ownership of the airlines;

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

(c) the further action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Company Affairs conducted inspection of books of accounts of M/s. Jet Airways (India) Private Limited under Sec. 209A of the Companies Act, 1956 in the Year 2002. Prosecution for violations of Sec. 205, 224 (8), 211 (8 cases) and 292 of the Act have been ordered/launched against the company and its officers in default. The aforesaid offences have been compounded by Competent Authority, on company applications filed under section 621A of the Act, by levying total compounding fee of Rs. 2,20,000/- on Company and its officers in default.

The Ministry of Home Affairs have now informed that enquiries conducted by then have not revealed anything adverse against M/s. Jet Airways and its Board of Directors and have conveyed the security clearance.

Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue have informed that scrutiny assessment of M/s. Jet Airways (Pvt.) Ltd., under the income-tax Act, 1961 upto the Assessment year 2002-03 have been completed. Further, they have conducted detailed investigations in relation to sources of funds, application thereof and gross receipts and expenditure claimed by the assessee. Investigations carried out by the Income Tax Department have revealed that remittances received by M/s. Jet Airways Pvt. Ltd., have come through banking channel duly approved by the RBI.

However, Directorate of Enforcement have now informed that an investigation relating to M/s. Jet Airways India (Pvt.) Ltd. has been taken up by them.

Strategy to Increase Market Share in Freight Traffic

705. SHRI SAMIK LAHIRI: Wili the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways has evolved a multi-pronged strategy to increase its market share in freight traffic in view of tough competition from the road sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) A statement if attached.

Statement

In order to generate additional revenue for Indian Railways and to win back the piecemeal traffic lost to the road sector many initiatives have been taken by Indian Railways. Wagon Investment Scheme (WIS) have been introduced to cater to the need of increasing freight traffic and demand for wagons. Siding rules have been further liberalized and made more customer friendly to restore the confidence of siding owners and encourage more loading. A new scheme for development of rail-side warehousing Complexes through public-private partnership have also been introduced. Under the scheme the private player will club the piecemeal traffic and offer it in trainloads/wagon load to railways for transportation hence, diverting the traffic moving through road to rail. Further, with a view to generate additional traffic from sidings in the notified empty flow directions of wagons a concession of 20% in freight rates shall be granted for incremental traffic booked from the siding. A concession of 15% in freight rates shall also be granted to incremental traffic booked from sidings, during the non-peak period from July to September.

Non-Availability of Railway Wagons

706. SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any representation has been received from the Amritsar Exporters Chamber of Commerce about non-availability of railway wagons at Amritsar Railway Station;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure the regular availability of railway wagons at the Amritsar Railway Station alongwith the measures being taken to promote exports?

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

(b) and (c) Since the acceptance of traffic by Pakistan Railways is limited, the high level of demand from exporters could not be met. Necessary steps have been taken to supply wagons to meet all pending demands. As on date, there is no pending demand for Pakistan.

Review of New Catering Policy

707. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that a large number of anomalies exist in New Catering Policy, 2004;

(b) if so, the details of representations/demands received from various catering associations, small vendors in this regard;

(c) whether the Government proposes to review the policy to remove its anomalies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) No, Sir. However, representations from public representatives and other associations were received involving the various issues relating to Catering Policy, 2004 such as monopoly of big companies, unemployment of workers, relaxation of financial criteria for tenders, demand for enhanced reservation in catering units etc. New Catering Policy, 2005 has already been formulated, which is effective from 16-03-2005 and takes into account the demands made by various Catering Associations.

Freight Charges

708. SHRI NARAYAN CHANDRA BORKATAKY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the freight charges of foodgrains, pulses and sugar;

(b) whether inspite of categorical announcement by the Government not to increase the freight charges there is a steep rise in freight charges; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) A statement is enclosed.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. There was no across-the-board increase in the freight rates. However, in the Railway Budget 2005-06, historic changes in the "Goods Tariff" were made to make it simple, rational and transparent. Due to rationalisation, while freight rates for some commodities were reduced, there was increase in freight for certain other commodites.

Statement

Freight Rates for Foodgrains, Pulses and Sugar for Train Load Movement over Selected Distances

Freight (Rs. per Tonne)

Distance (Kms.)	Foodgrains and Pulses			Sugar
	(For non-PDS*/PAP^)	(For PDS*/PAP^ in covered wagons)	(For PDS*/PAP^ in open wagons)	
1	2	3	4	5
100	100.10	83.40	75.10	91.70

1	2	3	4	5
200	166.10	138.40	124.60	152.20
300	232.10	193.40	174.10	212.70
400	298.10	248.40	223.60	273.20
500	364.10	303.40	273.10	333.70
750	529.10	440.90	396.80	485.00
1000	694.10	578.40	520.60	636.20
1500	1024.10	853.40	768.10	938.70
2000	1270.10	1058.40	952.60	1164.20
2500	1450.10	1208.40	1087.60	1329.20
3000	1630.10	1358.40	1222.60	1494.20
3500	1810.10	1508.40	1357.60	1659.20

* Public Distribution System

^ Poverty Alleviation Programme

Revival of Loss Making PSUs

709. SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA:
SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN:
SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY:
SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO:
SHRI GIRIDHARI YADAV:
SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP:

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

(a) whether the Government proposes to revive loss making Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE) has completed examination of some of the sick public sector undertakings;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the name of these undertakings; and

(e) the recommendations made by BRPSE and the decision taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The National Common Minimum Programme stipulates that while every effort will be made to modernize and restructure sick public sector companies and revive sick industry, chronically loss-making companies will either be sold-off, or closed, after all workers have got their legitimate dues and compensation.

(c) to (e) The Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE) has considered and recommended 15 CPSEs for revival the list of which is enclosed as statement. The Government has approved revival proposal of three companies namely Hindustan

Salts Limited, BBJ Construction Company Lomited and National Textiles Corporation Limited including its subsidiary companies.

Statement

Sl. No.	Name of CPSE
1.	Hindustan Salts Ltd.
2.	Bridge and Roof Co. (India) Ltd.
3.	BBJ Construction Co. Ltd.
4.	Tyre Corporation of India Ltd.
5.	British India Corporation Ltd.
6.	National Textiles Corporation Ltd.
7.	Madras Fertilizers Ltd.
8.	HMT Bearings Ltd.
9.	Praga Tools Ltd.
10.	Braithwaite and Company Ltd.
11.	NEPA Ltd.
12.	Richardson and Cruddas Ltd.
13.	Central Inland Water Transport Corporation Ltd.
14.	Tungabhadra Steel Products Ltd.
15.	Bharat Wagon and Engineering Co. Ltd.

[Translation]

AIR Services in Trains

710. SHRI HEMLAL MURMU:

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prasar Bharti proposes to start AIR services in some selected trains like Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express trains for the entertainment of passengers through the world space satellite;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any agreement has been signed with the Railways for providing these services; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[English]

Setting up of Refineries Abroad

711. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some of the Indian Oil companies have been entrusted with the work of setting up of refineries abroad; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, company-wise?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. On commercial considerations, Indian Public Sector Oil companies have entered into, or are seeking to enter into, agreements for setting up refineries outside India.

(b) Indian Oil Corporation Limited have a proposal to set up a new oil refinery in Edo State, Nigeria, in a joint venture with Edo State Government. An MOU was signed between IOCL and Edo State Government on 10-9-2004.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) have initiated a Heads of Agreement (HoA) for the Sudan Refinery project, signed on 26-8-2003 with the Ministry of Energy and Mining (MEM), Government of Sudan and ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL).

Prospects are being explored in Iran, Turkey and Romania. Increasingly, Exploration and Production opportunities in the upstream sector abroad are being linked to our investing in refineries, expecially in Africa and Latin America. As a matter of energy security strategy we are looking to re-inforce mutual trade with mutual investment.

Advertising Code

712. SHRI D.V. SADANAND GOWDA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the provisions of the advertising code are required to be complied the channels with regard to advertisements;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these provisions are being followed by all the channels;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure compliance thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Advertisements of all satelite TV channels transmitted/retransmitted through the cable network are required to adhere to the Advertising Code prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act. 1995 and rules framed thereunder.

(c) to (e) The provisions of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act. 1995 are generally followed by all TV channels transmitted/retransmitted through cable network. Action for violations of the codes can be taken by any authorised officer i.e. SDM, DM or Commissioner of Police or any other officer notified in the official gazette by the Central Government or State Government. The Central Government has constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Cable Act to look into the violations of the Advertising Code. Specific complaints of violations are referred to the Committee for consideration. The Government is also contemplating establishment of an autonomous Authority to regulate content telecast on TV channels.

[Translation]

Losses Due to Mismanagement in Oil Companies

713. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the 'Dainik Jagran' dated May 12, 2005 wherein it has been stated that due to mismanagement, the public sector oil companies have been incurring losses worth crores of rupees;

(b) if so, whether any inquiry has been conducted in the matter;

(c) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken against the erring persons; and

(d) the directives issued by the Government to oil PSUs to check losses due to mismanagement?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The news-item regarding mismanagement of the Public Sector Oil Companies which appeared in 12th May, 2005 edition of 'Dainik Jagaran' relates to the observations made on the basis of the annual audit by the C and AG. Most of the PSUs in the oil sector have been conferred Navratna and Miniratna status. These PSUs have been granted considerable financial and administrative autonomy in order to empower them to take sound commercial decisions quickly. The audit paras relate to individual commercial decisions taken at a particular

point of time brought to the notice of the Government by these observations.

(c) and (d) Remedial action on the audit observations in initiated by the Government after detailed scrutiny of these cases in consultation with the PSU concerned and the C and AG. This process is underway.

Renovation of Aurangabad Airport

714. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether renovation works of Aurangabad Airport has been undertaken;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to expedite the renovation work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Airports Authority of India has planned to construct a new integrated terminal building to cater to 600 domestic and 300 International passengers. The detailed engineering for the proposed terminal building is in progress and physical work is likely to commence in March-April, 2006.

[English]

Sun Temple

715. SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI:
SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH:
SHRI SWADESH CHAKRABORTTY:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to news-item captioned, 'Dark clouds over Sun Temple' appearing in the 'Indian Express' dated June 13, 2005;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter therein; and

(c) the steps taken/to be taken by the Government to preserve the heritage of this temple?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Prior to the protection of the temple by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1937, architectural members of the temple were scattered in the nearby villages. These are since collected and housed in the archaeological museum and study is being carried out to locate their original position. The sun Temple receives regular attention in terms of structural conservation, chemical preservation and environment development. Scientific studies on the temple do not indicate any threat to the structure though there was some deterioration to the stone elements. The architectural members of the temple are built of Khondalite, a soft stone. As the temple is located close to the sea, it is subjected to salt laden sea wind which causes surface damage to the stone members. This also causes crystallization of soluble salts leading to weathering and corrosion of the stone.

Following remedial measures are adopted regularly to control weathering of stone members and to conserve the heritage:—

(i) Soluble salts are removed by repeated paper pulp treatment.

(ii) Micro-vegetational and fungicidal growth are being treated chemically.

(iii) The weathering effects are minimized through stone consolidation.

(iv) Water tightening and underpinning of the structure are carried out using traditional mortar.

The Archaeological Survey of India had erected tubular scaffolding on the south and western side of the

temple for strengthening some of the stone members. Efforts are on to remove the scaffolding after strengthening the cantilever of the temple.

In consultation with the State Government, a master plan has been prepared for the integrated development of the site and the Sun Temple under the auspices of the National Culture Fund. The project would be financed by the Indian Oil Foundation.

[Translation]

India's Participation in Qatar-Pakistan Gas Pipeline

716. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:

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

(a) whether the Government is considering to participate in Qatar-Pakistan Gas Pipeline; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) During the meeting between the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Panchayati Raj and the Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources of Pakistan, in Islamabad, on 5th-7th June 2005, the Pakistani side *inter-alia* outlined the parameters of the proposed Gulf South Asia (GUSA) project. During the first meeting of the India-Pakistan Joint Working Group in New Delhi, on 12th-13th July, 2005, the Pakistani side briefed the Indian side on their discussions on the project with Qatari organizations. India has conveyed to Qatar its interest in being kept informed with a view to eventually participating in the project. However, the project is at present at a hypothetical stage and is expected to take several years before it becomes technologically feasible.

Foreign Partnership in Channels

717. DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:
SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV:

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

(a) whether foreign partnership in increasing in channels being telecast in India;

(b) if so, the number of channels with foreign partnership;

(c) whether the increasing foreign partnership in these channels in causing any threat to the security of the country; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) As per existing guidelines, a company with 100% foreign equity is eligible to seek permission to uplink a Non-News and Current Affairs Channel, whereas in the case of News Channels, Foreign Direct Investment is allowed only upto 26% of the Paid Up equity. Sixty Eight (68) TV channels belonging to seventeen (17) Indian Companies having foreign equity have been granted uplinking permission so far. These channels are permitted uplinking from India after fulfillment of eligibility criteria, security clearance through Ministry of Home Affairs and compliance with various terms and conditions prescribed under the guidelines. The channels are also required to keep a record of materials uplinked, for a period of 90 days and provide the necessary monitoring facility for monitoring of programmes.

[English]

Asiatic Society of Mumbai

718. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to

declare the Asiatic Society of Mumbai as an institution of national importance;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The proposal to declare the Asiatic Society of Mumbai as an institution of national importance has been examined. It has not been found to be feasible.

Growth in Railways

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

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item appearing in 'Hindustan Times' dated July 11, 2005 wherein it has been stated that the Railways has registered negative growth in the year's first quarter;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) the steps initiated by the Railways to overcome negative growth?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) The said news-item refers to a negative growth registered in the first quarter of the fiscal under Sundry earnings only, which constitute only around 2% of the Railways' traffic earnings. Total traffic earnings of the Railways in the first quarter have registered a growth of 14.58% over the corresponding period of last year. Traffic earnings under each category in the quarter are as under:—

(Rs. in crore)

Category	To end of June, 2004	To end of June, 2005 (Approx.)	Growth over June, 2004
Passenger earnings	3504.51	3808.69	8.68%
Other Coaching earnings	216.90	263.20	21.35%
Goods earnings	7091.34	8367.98	18.00%
Sundry earnings	199.84	178.32	-10.77%
Total Traffic earnings	11012.59	12618.19	14.58%

Zonal Railway administrations have inter-alia been urged to take necessary steps to increase earnings from commercial advertisement and publicity, catering, Subscriber Trunk Dialling (STD)/Public Call Office (PCO), parking, commercial utilization of land/buildings etc. which form part of Sundry earnings. Further improvement in performance in other areas is also being emphasized.

[Translation]

Survey of New Rail Lines

720. SHRI SURENDRA PRAKASH GOYAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals for conducting survey

to lay new railway lines included in the Rail Budget for 2004-05;

(b) the time schedule fixed for completing the survey of these new railway lines;

(c) the criteria fixed for according approval to these new railway lines after completion of survey; and

(d) the data regarding railway network in the country, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) A total No. of 41 surveys/updating of surveys were included in the Budget 2004-05. All the surveys are targeted for completion by 2005-06.

(c) The policy for taking up new lines projects was enunciated by the National Transport Policy Committee in 1980. This policy states that new lines would be taken up on the following criteria:—

(i) Project oriented lines to serve new industries for tapping mineral and other resources.

(ii) Missing links for completing alternative routes.

(iii) Lines required for strategic reasons; and

(iv) Lines for establishment of new growth centres or giving access to remote areas.

(d) The State-wise figures of the Route kms. of railways at the end of 2003-04 is given in the Railway Year Book 2003-04 which was distributed alongwith Railway Budget documents.

Corruption in Railways

721. SHRIMATI KALPNA RAMESH NARHIRE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether corruption is increasing day by day in procurement system in Railways;

(b) if so, whether the Government is aware of the involvement of mafias in procurement system;

(c) if so, the number of cases reported during each of the last two years; and

(d) the action taken against the officers found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. No major incidence of corruption or involvement of mafia has come to notice in the procurement system. There is a well laid down system for procurement with proper checks and balances. There is also a system of carrying out preventive checks and complaint investigation by the Vigilance department to check irregularities in purchases.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

[English]

Quota in Express Trains

722. SHRI TAPIR GAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to manage the present situation of huge wait-listed for those passengers desire to go long distance places with fixed quota system particularly to Guwahati, Dimapur, Tinsukia and Dibrugarh from Delhi/New Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Following steps have been taken to cater to the unsatisfied demand from Delhi/New Delhi to Guwahati/Dimapur/Tinsukia/Dibrugarh:—

(i) A new Bi-weekly train i.e. 2501/2502 New Delhi-Guwahati Sampark Kranti Express has been introduced in March 2005.

(ii) Frequency of New Delhi-Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express train, which was earlier running thrice a week, has been increased to Daily.

(iii) One extra AC-3 tier coach has been attached in 2424/2436, New Delhi-Guwahati-Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express train w.e.f. 25-07-2005.

(iv) One extra second-class coach has been attached in 4055/4056 Delhi-Dibrugarh Town Brahamputra Mail on regular basis w.e.f. 10-07-2005.

(v) Additional coaches were attached to clear the extra rush.

Revision of Policy on Uplinking of Channels

723. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to revise the policy on uplinking of news channels to allow foreign institutional investors to invest in news channels;

(b) ifso, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the revised policy would come into effect?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The Government have constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) to examine the proposal for Review of Uplinking Policy and finalise its recommendations.

(c) No time frame can be indicated at this stage.

Bordoloi Airport

724. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Guwahati-Bangkok flight of the Indian Airlines is being withdrawn gradually;

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

(c) if not, whether the Union Government has any plan of turning Lok Priya Gopinath Bordoloi Airport as a parking hub to some International flights since major airports of the country are saturated following the open air policy;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken towards improvement as well as better utilization of the LGB Airport?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) No request has been received by Airports Authority of India (AAI) from any Foreign Airline for using Lok Priya Gopinath Bardoloi (LGB) Airport as a parking hub.

(e) The apron of LGB Airport has been expanded enabling it to accommodate 8 aircraft of both 'C' and 'D' categories. AAI has plans to expand terminal building by approximately 500 sq. metres on the airside with two more aerobridges. Besides, it has plans to provide an extended canopy on the city side and expand the car parking area further.

Broadcasting Services to Foreign Radio Channels

725. SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to open radio broadcasting services to foreign radio channels; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

LPG Facility

726. DR. P.P. KOYA:

SHRI SURESH CHANDEL:

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

(a) the percentage of area covered under the LPG facility in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government proposes to extend LPG facility in remaining area particularly in Lakshadweep and Himachal Pradesh;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) As on 1-4-2005, Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) were operating 9,001 LPG distributorships in various States and Union Territories, including Lakshadweep and Himachal Pradesh. Through these distributorships, OMCs are serving about 845 lakhs LPG customers covering 43.5% population of the country. The State/UT-wise details are given in the enclosed statement.

Government have advised OMCs to concentrate their future expansion plans on semi-urban and rural areas in the country, including Lakshadweep and Himachal Pradesh and to take innovative steps like opening community kitchens in villages and sale of 5 kg. cylinders to low-income group customers to increase the supply of LPG in uncovered areas.

Statement

The details of customer population in the States/UTs in the country

State/UTs	Customer Population (Lakh) (1-4-2005)	*State-wise % Customer Population
1	2	3
Andhra Pradesh	93.65	55.3
Arunachal Pradesh	1.00	46.2
Assam	14.95	30.3
Bihar	19.72	14.3
Chhattisgarh	8.12	19.9
Delhi	37.93	100.0
Goa	3.64	100.0
Gujarat	47.39	48.6
Haryana	27.85	75.1
Himachal Pradesh	10.87	89.4
Jammu and Kashmir	12.00	76.9
Jharkhand	8.56	17.8
Karnataka	46.82	45.2
Kerala	44.68	66.0
Madhya Pradesh	34.17	31.1
Maharashtra	112.93	57.1
Manipur	1.87	50.0
Meghalaya	0.83	19.6
Mizoram	1.59	89.2
Nagaland	1.10	33.6
Orissa	12.20	15.9
Punjab	40.18	92.4
Rajasthan	34.72	37.5
Sikkim	0.88	76.8
Tamil Nadu	77.58	53.5
Tripura	1.95	29.2
Uttar Pradesh	86.29	33.7
Uttaranchal	13.14	82.1

1	2	3
West Bengal	42.30	26.9
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	0.40	51.4
Chandigarh	3.02	100.0
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	0.28	61.8
Daman and Diu	0.25	70.5
Lakshadweep	0.03	29.2
Pondicherry	2.02	100.0
Total (rounded off)	844.92	43.5

*Deduced from Primary Census Abstract: Census of India 2001 website as on 01-02-05.

Sulphur Blended Petrol

727 SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the petrol and diesel containing 0.05 per cent maximum sulphur content are being supplied to retail outlets in some metropolitan towns;

(b) if so, whether the Government has taken any steps to supply such eco-friendly fuel in other towns in the country including rural areas; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Petrol with 0.05% maximum sulphur content (Bharat Stage-II) is being supplied all over the country with effect from 1-4-2005. In identified cities viz Delhi/National Capital Region, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Surat, Kanpur and Agra, petrol with 0.015% maximum sulphur (Euro-III) is being supplied with effect from 1-4-2005.

Bharat Stage-II diesel (0.05% max. sulphur) has also been introduced all over India, except in six states and part of one state namely Rajasthan, Uttaranchal, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Western part of U.P. with effect from 1-4-2005.

Bharat Stage-II diesel has been introduced in Rajasthan with effect from 1-6-2005 and in West U.P. and Uttaranchal with effect from 1-7-2005.

The Oil companies have been instructed to introduce Bharat Stage-II diesel in Madhya Pradesh from 1-9-2005 and in Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir from 1-10-2005 as per the revised schedule approved by the Government.

Parcel and Catering Business

728. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have suffered a huge losses in parcel and catering business during the last year;

(b) if so, the amount of loss suffered and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to improve the parcel and catering services in Railways and make it more competitive to private operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. Parcel and catering services are not profitable on Indian Railways when fully distributed cost taking into account the haulage cost is adopted. However, Second Class, Luggage cum Brake Van (SLR) at either end of the train is considered essential safety requirement so as to protect the passengers in the unfortunate event of accident to train. Hence, haulage cost of SLR can at best be treated as notional. Similarly, catering services, as such, make a profit. However, in case haulage cost of pantry car of

Mail/Express trains, is taken into account, the services show a loss. Pantry cars are attached as essential passenger amenity so as to provide food to passengers on running trains for which there is no other alternative. Hence, haulage cost of pantry cars can also be treated as notional.

(b) In case haulage cost of SLRs as well as pantry cars are included in costing of services, in that eventuality amount of losses suffered by the Railways for the years 2002-2003 under Broad Gauge and Metre Gauge are as under:—

In case of	Amount of loss (Rs. in crore)
Parcel, Luggage and Postal services	782.18
Catering service	410.81

(c) With a view to provide value added service to the rail customers, the scheme for leasing of parcel space in the brakevans has been introduced by the Indian Railways. Under the scheme, parcel space in the brakevans of the passenger carrying trains is leased out to the private parties by inviting bids through open tenders. On the same line, the scheme for leasing of Parcel Vans on round trip basis has also been introduced.

With a view to improve catering services, Railways have taken various steps viz. use of quality raw material, introduction of three piece casseroles packed meals, use of eco-friendly packaging materials, supply of safe drinking water alongwith meals etc. Regular Inspections/ surprise checks are carried out at the level of Railway Board and zonal Railways. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd., (IRCTC) has been set upto professionalise and upgrade the catering services. IRCTC is also training catering staff to bring about visible improvements in catering services.

Development of Arjun Tank

729. SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY:
SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether DRDO has developed Arjun Tank for the Army;

(b) if so, the salient capabilities of this tank;

(c) the manner in which this tank is better than T-90 Tanks purchased from Russia;

(d) whether the requisite preliminary tests have been carried out to test the capabilities of this tank;

(e) if so, the details thereof alongwith the deficiencies which came to the notice of the Government; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to rectify the deficiencies?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Some of the salient capabilities of Arjun tank are superior armour defeating capability, day and night operation, remarkable mobility, excellent ride comfort, high degree of immunity and fire 'on the move' capability.

(c) The Arjun tank is superior to T-90 tank due to its high power to weight ratio, superior fire on the move capability during day and night and excellent ride comfort.

(d) MBT Arjun has gone through all the tests and it is meeting the General Staff Qualitative Requirement of the Army. The first batch of five Arjun tanks, out of production lot will be going, for comparative trials with T-90 tanks.

(e) During preparatory tests before comparative trials certain systems have not met the acceptance criteria. These units are being rectified.

(f) Ruggedisation has been introduced to withstand peak abnormal temperature.

Rail Link between Jaleswar and Digha

730. SHRI PRASANTA PRADHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted for connecting Jaleswar with Digha by rail;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(c) the further action taken on the survey report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) A survey for construction of a new line from Digha to Jaleswar has been included in the Budget 2005-06. The survey has not been completed so far.

[Translation]

Wastage of Money by Oil PSUs

731. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA:
SHRI JAI PRAKASH (MOHANLAL GANJ):

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

(a) whether the Planning Commission in its mid-term review of Tenth Plan has pointed out that the public sector oil companies are deviating from their objectives and wasting public money in the name of competition;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to check wastage of public money by the public sector oil companies; and

(d) the investment made by each public sector oil company abroad till March 31, 2005?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Planning Commission in its Mid Term Review of the Tenth Plan have, inter-alia, stated that Oil Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) are competing with one another leading to sub-optimal investments, and that there is a need to review the investment programme of each Oil PSU and take an integrated view of the sector as a whole to optimally invest public funds.

(c) Oil PSUs take investment decisions based on their business and commercial considerations from out of their own internal resources. However, apart from approving their Annual Plan Outlays, the Government also intervenes wherever considered necessary with a view to avoiding unhealthy competition between them and ensuring optimal investments in the sector as a whole.

(d) The details of investment made by Oil PSUs abroad till 31st March 2005 are as under:—

Sl. No.	Name of the Oil PSU	Cumulative investment till 31-3-2005 (Rs. in Crore)
1.	ONGC+OVL	14017.11
2.	Balmer Lawrie and Co. Ltd.	27.65
3.	Engineers India Ltd.	0.03
4.	Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.	237.17
5.	Oil India Ltd.	133.36
6.	Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd.	0.73
7.	GAIL (I) Ltd.	267.00

[English]

Damage of Excavation Pits at Ayodhya

732. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether recent terrorist attack on Ayodhya's

Ram Janambhumi-Babri Masjid complex has damaged some excavation pits where ASI tried to find out facts;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether ASI has surveyed the site;

(d) if so, the total damage caused to these excavation pits; and

(e) the steps taken or being taken by ASI to save the excavated pits at the above complex?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. No damage has been caused to the excavated trenches at Ayodhya on account of recent terrorist attack.

(e) Weekly inspection of the excavated trenches at Ayodhya is being carried out as per the directives of the Hon'ble Special Full Bench of the Allahabad High Court, Lucknow Bench.

[Translation]

Disbursement of Funds by NSFDC

733. SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL:

SHRI RAGHUVEER SINGH KOSHAL:

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

(a) the schemes run by the Government through the National Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) and their lending agencies;

(b) the criteria for providing funds by NSFDC;

(c) the funds allocated and released by NSFDC during 2004-05 and 2005-06, State/Union Territory-wise;

(d) the funds actually utilized by each State Government/Union Territory Administrations during the said period;

(e) the number of persons benefited under NSFDC-funded schemes during the said period, State/Union Territory-wise;

(f) whether the States have also set up finance corporation separately for the programme; and

(g) if so, the details thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) The following schemes are implemented through National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) and its State Channelising Agencies SCAs):—

(i) Term Loan Scheme

(ii) Micro Credit Finance Scheme

(iii) Mahila Samriddhi Yojana

(iv) Skill Development Programmes

In addition, SCAs of NSFDC also implement margin Money Loan Scheme.

(b) The NSFDC adopts the following criteria for providing funds to SCAs:—

(i) Availability of State Government Guarantee against NSFDC loan to SCAs.

(ii) Fulfillment of prudential norms prescribed by NSFDC for release of funds.

(iii) Compliance of the specific terms and conditions contained in the Letter of Intent issued by NSFDC.

(c) to (e) State/UT-wise details of funds allocated, released, utilization received and no. of persons benefited under NSFDC schemes during 2004-05 and 2005-06 (upto 30-06-2005) are enclosed as Statement-I.

(f) and (g) State/UT-wise list of finance corporations set up by various States/UTs for the above programmes is enclosed as Statement-II.

Statement-I

State/UT-wise Funds Allocated, Released, Utilisation Received and No. of Persons Benefited under NSFDC Schemes in the Year 2004-05

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl. No.	State/UTs	Funds Allocated	Funds Released$	Utilisation received from the SCAs*	No. of Persons Benefited
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andhra Pradesh	994.53	2423.40	3300.30	23534
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	0.68	0.00	0.00	0
3.	Assam	199.52	0.00	0.00	0
4.	Bihar	1051.68	0.00	14.18	18
5.	Chandigarh	12.70	36.35	28.21	101
6.	Chhattisgarh	194.94	210.40	257.14	86
7.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	0.71	0.00	0.00	0
8.	Daman and Diu				
9.	Delhi	188.86	156.33	404.48	1245
10.	Goa	1.92	2.17	0.40	2
11.	Gujarat	289.56	12.71	785.71	3621
12.	Haryana	329.73	140.03	23.77	12
13.	Himachal Pradesh	121.07	62.71	154.95	466
14.	Jammu and Kashmir	62.07	196.11	6.83	10
15.	Jharkhand	257.04	0.00	96.96	116
16.	Karnataka	690.23	1101.00	610.29	3235
17.	Kerala	251.78	333.63	306.33	737
18.	Madhya Pradesh	737.88	1156.25	160.44	286

1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	Maharashtra	796.44	2572.34	1218.80	1421
20.	Manipur	4.86	0.00	0.00	0
21.	Meghalaya	1.22	0.00	0.00	0
22.	Mizoram	0.03	0.00	0.00	0
23.	Orissa	490.20	0.00	104.15	39
24.	Pondicherry	12.71	0.00	8.43	9
25.	Punjab	566.51	68.08	40.01	91
26.	Rajasthan	781.35	816.44	208.24	299
27.	Sikkim	2.97	78.56	76.73	73
28.	Tamil Nadu	955.68	0.00	12.48	6
29.	Tripura	60.71	173.15	62.24	81
30.	Uttar Pradesh	2832.88	4057.95	892.94	11523
31.	Uttaranchal	122.29	158.12	72.30	44
32.	West Bengal	1487.23	957.40	316.90	498
	Total	13499.98	14713.13	9163.21	47553

Note: *The utilisation figures pertain to utilisation received by the NSFDC from the SCAs during the year irrespective of disbursement.

$ Rs. 197.00 lakh was refunded by the SCAs. As a result, net disbursement to the SCAs in the year 2004-05 was Rs. 14516.13 lakh.

State/UT-wise Funds Allocated, Released, Utilisation Received and No. of Persons Benefited under NSFDC Schemes in the Year 2005-06 (01-04-05 to 30-06-05)

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl. No.	State/UTs	Funds Allocated	Funds Released	Utilisation received from the SCAs*	No. of Persons Benefited
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1178.70	300.00	0.00	0

1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	0.80	0.00	0.00	0
3.	Assam	236.46	0.00	0.00	0
4.	Bihar	1246.45	0.00	0.00	0
5.	Chandigarh	15.05	0.00	0.00	0
6.	Chhattisgarh	231.04	0.00	0.00	0
7.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	0.86	0.00	0.00	0
8.	Daman and Diu				
9.	Delhi	223.84	0.00	2.65	4
10.	Goa	2.26	1.24	0.00	0
11.	Gujarat	343.19	29.70	0.00	0
12.	Haryana	390.79	0.00	0.00	0
13.	Himachal Pradesh	143.49	0.00	0.00	0
14.	Jammu and Kashmir	73.57	0.00	0.00	0
15.	Jharkhand	304.65	0.00	0.00	0
16.	Karnataka	818.04	51.14	180.55	1030
17.	Kerala	298.46	75.35	109.25	227
18.	Madhya Pradesh	874.53	0.00	0.00	0
19.	Maharashtra	943.92	183.69	172.57	170
20.	Manipur	5.76	0.00	0.00	0
21.	Meghalaya	1.44	0.00	0.00	0
22.	Mizoram	0.03	0.00	0.00	0
23.	Orissa	580.98	0.00	15.50	5
24.	Pondicherry	15.08	0.00	0.00	0
25.	Punjab	671.41	17.93	0.00	0
26.	Rajasthan	926.04	0.00	29.81	71

1	2	3	4	5	6
27	Sikkim	3.52	0.00	0.00	0
28.	Tamil Nadu	1132.66	0.00	0.00	0
29.	Tripura	71.97	46.05	45.53	164
30.	Uttar Pradesh	3357.47	0.00	344.75	3970
31.	Uttaranchal	144.92	0.00	0.00	0
32.	West Bengal	1762.66	200.00	78.15	63
	Total	16000.04	905.10	978.76	5704

Note: *The utilisation figures pertain to utilisation received by the NSFDC from the SCAs during the year irrespective of disbursement.

Statement-II

State/UT-wise List of Channelising Agencies of NSFDC

Sl. No.	State/UTs	Name of the SCAs
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	AP Scheduled Castes Co-operative Finance Corporation Ltd.
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Arunachal Pradesh Ind. and Fin. Dev. Corpn.
3.	Assam	Assam State Development Corporation for SCs Ltd.
4.	Bihar	Bihar State SC Cooperative Development Corporation Ltd.
5.	Chandigarh	Chandigarh SCs, BCs and Minorities Fin. and Devp. Corpn.
6.	Chhattisgarh	Chhattisgarh State Antavasayee Sahkari Fin. and Dev. Corpn.
7.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu SCs/STs/IOBCs/Min./Fin. ar Devp. Corpn.
8.	Delhi	Delhi SC/ST/OBC/Min. and Handicapped Financial and Devp. Corpn.
9.	Goa	Goa State SCs and BCs Development Corporation
10.	Gujarat	Gujarat SCs Development Corporation
11.	Haryana	Haryana SCs Finance and Development Corporation

1	2	3
12.	Himachal Pradesh	Himachal Pradesh SCs and STs Devp. Corporation
13.	Jammu and Kashmir	Jammu and Kashmir SCs, STs and OBC Development Corporation
14.	Jharkhand	Jharkhand State Tribal Co-operative Development Corpn.
15.	Karnataka	Karnataka SCs and STs Development Corporation
16.	Kerala	Kerala State Development Corporation for SCs and STs Ltd.
17.	Kerala	Kerala State Women's Development Corporation
18.	Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh State Co-op. SCs Fin. and Development Corporation
19.	Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh Hastashilp Evam Hathkarga Vikas Nigam Ltd.
20.	Maharashtra	Mahatma Phule Backward Classes Development Corporation
21.	Maharashtra	Sant Rohidas Leather Industries and Charmakar Development Corpn.
22.	Maharashtra	Lokshahir Annabhau Sathe Development Corporation
23.	Manipur	Manipur Tribal Development Corporation Ltd.
24.	Manipur	Manipur STs and SCs Coop. Development Bank Ltd.
25.	Meghalaya	Meghalaya Cooperative Apex Bank Ltd.
26.	Mizoram	Mizoram Urban Cooperative Development Bank Ltd.
27.	Mizoram	Mizoram Khadi and Village Industries Board
28.	Orissa	Orissa SCs and STs Development and Finance Cooperative Corporation
29.	Pondicherry	Pondicherry Adi Dravidar Development Corporation
30.	Punjab	Punjab SCs Land Development and Finance Corporation
31.	Rajasthan	Rajasthan SCs and STs Finance and Devp. Co-operative Corporation
32.	Sikkim	Sikkim SC, Tribes and Backward Classes Development Corporation
33.	Tamil Nadu	Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation
34.	Tripura	Tripura SCs Co-operative Development Corporation Ltd.
35.	Uttar Pradesh	Uttar Pradesh SCs Finance and Development Corporation
36.	Uttaranchal	Uttaranchal Bahu-udeshiya Vitta Evam Vikas Nigam
37.	West Bengal	West Bengal SCs and STs Development and Finance Corporation

Residential Schools in Maharashtra

734. SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of residential schools opened in Maharashtra during 2004-05;

(b) whether the State Government has sought permission of the Union Government for opening of new residential schools during 2005-06; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Union Government thereon alongwith grants released for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) Nil, Sir.

(b) and (c) During the financial year 2005-06 no new proposal for residential schools has been received from the State Government of Maharashtra alongwith their inspection report and recommendations.

Extension of Runway of Kullu Airport

735. SHRI SURESH CHANDEL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the progress so far made for increasing the runway length of Kullu Airport;

(b) whether the Government of Himachal Pradesh has handed over the land required for extension of runway at Kullu Airport; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) IIT, Roorkee which was assigned the work of Techno-Economic Feasibility Study for extension of runway has submitted its report, which is under examination of Airports Authority of India.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The required land can be made available only after the work of river diversion and training works are completed.

[English]

TV/Radio Transmission in Universities

736. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether some universities and educational institutions have been permitted for limited community TV/Radio transmission;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the universities and educational institutions in the country where such projects have been introduced?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) In December 2002, the Union Government approved a scheme for the grant of Community Broadcasting licenses to well established educational institutions including Universities. However, there's no such scheme for Community TV broadcasting.

(b) and (c) Till date, 74 applications have been received. 53 eligible applications have been referred to Ministry of Home Affairs and Human Resource Development for clearance and Ministry of Communications and IT for availability of frequency. Letters of intent have been issued to 38 institutions and 23 have signed license agreement with us. The following 8 institutions have started Community Radio Broadcasting:—

1. Anna University, Chennai
2. Sri Manakula Vinayagar Engg. College, Pondicherry
3. India International Instt. of Management, Jaipur
4. Kongu Engg. College, Erode
5. MOP Vaishnav College for Women, Chennai

6. Sunbeam English School, Varanasi

7. Vidya Pratisthan's Instt. of Info. Technology, Baramati, Pune

8. City Montessori School, Lucknow.

AIR/DD Coverage in Karnataka

737. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the total coverage of Radio and Doordarshan in Karnataka as on date;

(b) the time by which the entire State would be given 100 per cent AIR/DD coverage; and

(c) the steps being taken/proposed to be taken by the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) In Karnataka, terrestrial Radio and TV coverage is available to 97.3% and 82.4% population respectively. Subject to the approval and availability of funds with installation of three 10 kW FM transmitters viz. one each at Gulbarga, Sringeri and Bellary, proposed in the 10th plan, radio coverage will be increased to 98.75% population in Karnataka.

Areas not covered by terrestrial transmission have been provided with multi-channel coverage with a bouquet of 33 TV and 12 Radio channels through "DD Direct Plus"—Free-to-air DTH service of Doordarshan, signals of which can be received all over the country (including Karnataka) except Andaman and Nicobar Islands with the help of small sized dish receive unit.

Appointment on Compassionate Grounds

738. SHRI RAJENDER KUMAR: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to refer to the Unstarred Question No. 3371 dated March 24, 2005 regarding appointment on compassionate grounds and to state:

(a) whether the information has since been collected;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay and the time by which the information is likely to be collected?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The asurance to the Unstarred Question No. 3371 has been implemented on 20-07-2005.

Import of Crude Oil

739. SHRIMATI ARCHANA NAYAK: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantity of crude oil imported in the country during each of the last three years;

(b) the number of oil wells explored during each of the last three years, Statewise;

(c) the number of oil wells in Government as well as Private ownership in the country;

(d) whether there is any increase in the production of oil and natural gas in the country during the said period; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Crude oil imported in the country during the last three years was as under:—

Year	Quantity (MMT)
2002-03	82.0
2003-04	90.4
2004-05	95.9

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

(c) There are about 4831 oil wells owned by Government and 181 oil wells owned by JVs/Private companies in offshore and onshore fields.

(d) and (e) The production of Natural Gas and crude oil, including condensates, during the last three years is as under:—

Year	Oil (MMT)	Gas (BCM)
2002-03	32.109	31.397
2003-04	33.369	31.961
2004-05	33.980	31.759

Statement

State/Area	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Andhra Pradesh	27	15	13
Assam	33	23	20
Himachal Pradesh	—	1	—
Gujarat	54	45	36
Madhya Pradesh	—	1	—
Rajasthan	1	—	—
Tamil Nadu	19	17	15
Tripura	5	4	4
West Bengal	—	1	—
Offshore	20	30	33

Allocation of Gas from Tapti Gas Field

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

(a) whether the additional development plan for allocation of Gas from Tapti Gas Field has been finalised;

(b) if so, the time by which it will be implemented;

(c) whether the Union Government has considered the request of the Gujarat Government for allocation of 3.65 MMSCMD Gas for Pipavav Power Project; and

(d) if so, the time by which the final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The New Revised Development Plan for Mid and South Tapti gas fields has been approved by the Management Committee of the block in March, 2005. According to this Development Plan, additional gas is anticipated by July, 2007. Gas production from their fields is targeted to increase from the current rate of 6.84 Million Metric Standard Cubic Metre Per Day (MMCSMD) to 12.00 MMSCMD.

(c) and (d) In June, 2000, an 'in-principle-allocation of 2.25 MMSCMD of gas was made for Pipavav Gas Based Power Project subject to the additional development of the Tapti Field. Consequent upon revision in the price of gas produced from Tapti field, the JV has been allowed to market JV gas at market related price/ In the terms of the Production Sharing Contract (PSC). In view of the changed circumstances, the Pipavav project developers project developers have to directly tie-up their gas requirements with the Tapti JV operator at market-related price.

Railways Earning Through Freight and Parcel

741. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the revenue earned by the Railways from freight and parcel charges during each of the last three years; and

(b) the total volume of goods carried by the Railways during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The Revenue earned by the Railways from Freight and Parcel Charges during the last three years are as under:—

(Rs. in crore)

Years	Freight	Parcel Charges
2002-03	26504.82	452.56
2003-04	27617.96	443.98
2004-05	30788.40*	485.20*

*Provisional.

(b) Total volume of goods carried by the Railways:—

Year	Revenue Freight Loading (million tonnes)
2002-03	518.74
2003-04	557.39
2004-05	601.89*

*Provisional.

Construction of ROB on Railway Crossings

742. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to construct overbridges on the railway crossings of Malliyagaon, Lakhimpur Nagar and Rajapur of Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof and time by which these overbridges are likely to be constructed; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Railways construct Road Over/Under Bridges in lieu of existing level crossing on cost sharing basis if the traffic density at the level crossings is more than one lakh Train Vehicle Units (TVUs); otherwise on deposit terms. Proposals in both conditions have to be sponsored by State Government duly fulfilling certain preliminary pre-requisites required under extant rules.

So far, no firm proposal has been received by Railway from the State Government/local bodies to construct Road Over Bridges at Malliyagaon, Lakhimpur Nagar and Rajapur.

Construction of ROBs in Tamil Nadu

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

(a) the present status of construction of on-going Railway over-bridges in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether the Union Government has any proposal for construction of a Railway overbridge at 'Manapprai' Trichy District in Tamil Nadu;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The present status of construction of on-going Road Over Bridges in Tamil Nadu is as under:—

These Road Over/Under Bridges are in various stages of planning and execution.

Status of work	Cost sharing basis	Deposit terms	Under gauge conversion
Total sanctioned works	46	7	12
Works completed on Railway portion but approaches not completed by State Government	9	3	—
Works completed on approaches by State Government but Railway portion not completed by Railway	4	—	—
Programmed for completion during 2005-06	6	4	2

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Railways construct Road Over/Under Bridges in lieu of existing level crossings on cost sharing basis if the traffic density at the level crossings reaches at one lakh TVUs (TVU—A unit obtained by multiplying the number of trains with the number of road vehicles passing over the level crossing in 24 hours) or more; otherwise on deposit terms. Proposals in both conditions have to be sponsored by State Government duly fulfilling certain preliminary pre-requisites required under extant rules. No firm proposal has yet been received from the State Government to construct Road Over Bridges at 'Manapparai'.

[Translation]

Stoppage of Trains at Nathnagar Station

744. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether 3401 Bhagalpur-Danapur Inter-City Express and 3419/3420 Bhagalpur-Muzaffarpur Jansewa Express runs *via* Nathnagar railway station;

(b) if so, whether both these trains have no stoppage at Nathnagar station;

(c) if so, whether in view of business requirements and demand of the people, the Government proposes to provide stoppage of both these trains at Nathnagar station; and

(d) if so, the time by which it is likely to be provided?

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

(b) to (d) Stoppage of 3401 UP Bhagalpur-Danapur Inter City Express has already been provided at Nathnagar from 01-07-2005 on an experimental basis for six months. Stoppage of 3419/3420 Bhagalpur-Muzaffarpur Express at Nathnagar is, however, not feasible, at present.

[English]

Group of Experts on PSUs

745. KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had set up a Group of Experts to find out ways to make the Public Sector Undertakings more competitive and effective;

(b) if so, the recommendations made by the Group;

(c) whether the Government has examined the recommendations made by the Group; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (d) Government had constituted an Ad-hoc Group of Experts (AGE) to advise on the issues relating to autonomy, delegation of financial powers, etc. to Central Public Sector Enterprises. The Report of the AGE has been received and some of the recommendations relating to enhancement of financial powers of Navratna, Miniratna and other profit-making CPSEs have been accepted by the Government. The remaining recommendations are under examination.

[Translation]

Testing of Akash Missiles

746. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE:

SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the air to air missile Akash has been test fired successfully in Orissa recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be inducted?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Surface to air missile, Akash has been test fired successfully in Orissa recently. Three guided flight trials were undertaken recently from Integrated Test Range, Balasore, Orissa and all the mission objectives were achieved.

(c) The developmental flight trials of Akash missile system have been completed and the system is ready for user trials, which will be followed by production and induction.

Disinvestment of IA/AI

747. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA:

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:

MOHD. SHAHID:

SHRI MUNSHI RAM:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has decided to disinvest a portion of its equity in Air India and Indian Airlines;

(b) if so, the amount of equity in both airlines proposed to be disinvested;

(c) the time by which these are likely to be disinvested; and

(d) the profit/loss position of these airlines during 2004-05 and first quarter of 2005-06?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) The proposals of Air India and Indian Airlines to go in for Initial Public Offering are under consideration of the Government.

(d) The net profit (unaudited) of Air India during 2004-05 is Rs. 31.20 crores (including deferred tax benefit). However, the figures for the first quarter for 2005-06 have not been finalised as yet.

Indian Airlines is expected to earn a net Profit of Rs. 17.50 crores during the financial year 2004-05 and as per the Provisional results for the first quarter of the current financial year. Indian Airlines has earned a net profit of Rs. 28.45 crores.

[English]

FDI in Private FM Radio

748. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:

SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY:

SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:

SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:

SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY:

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

(a) whether the government has allowed 20 per cent FDI in the private FM radio sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any policy has also been framed for the second phase of FM radio licensing;

(d) if so, the salient features thereof; and

(e) to what extent the second phase of FM radio is different from the first phase?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) The Government has formulated a new policy for expansion of FM radio broadcasting through Private Agencies (Phase II) which, inter-alia, provides for One Time Entry Fee (OTEF) to be decided on the basis of closed tender system, annual fee @ 4% of gross revenue subject to a minimum of 10% of Reserve OTEF, Foreign investment including FDI upto 20% of the paid up equity subject to certain conditions continued restriction on broadcast of news and current affairs and a graded penalty regime for violation of Terms and Conditions. Further details of the policy are available on this Ministry's website (www.mib.nic.in).

(e) In Second Phase, the biddings would be only for selection of operators and not for deciding annual fee which is now linked to gross revenue for the year. The other differences are permission for FDI, system of graded penalties and mandatory co-location for non-metro cities also.

Provision of Hepatitis-B Vaccine in Railway Hospitals

749. DR. K. DHANARAJU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that a large number of Railway employees are suffering from Hepatitis-B virus;

(b) if so, whether any survey has been conducted in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any immunisation programme for Hepatitis-B for Railway staff and their family members is under implementation;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) if not the reasons therefor;

(g) whether all the Railway hospitals are fully equipped to provide Hepatitis-B vaccine as and when required;

(h) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(i) the steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. A large number of Railway employees are not suffering from Hepatitis-B.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) Yes, Sir. Immunisation Programme for Hepatitis-B for Railway staff and their Family members is under implementation. All the Railway beneficiaries are given Hepatitis-B vaccination as per National Immunization Policy on demand.

(e) The Vaccine is available in all Railway Hospitals and Health Units across the Country. The Vaccine is given to the Railway beneficiaries as per guidelines of National Immunization Programme. The Vaccine is also given as and when demanded by Railway beneficiaries.

(f) Does not arise.

(g) Yes, Sir.

(h) and (i) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Production Cost of Petrol and Diesel

750. DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":

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

(a) whether the present costs of production of petrol and diesel in the country have been calculated as Rs. 17.50 and Rs. 18.53 per litre respectively;

(b) if so, the rates at which India import crude oil from the International market;

(c) whether the aforesaid products are being sold at higher prices to the consumers in the domestic market as compared to their cost of production; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The basic price of petrol and diesel in Delhi exclusive of duties and taxes is Rs. 17.40 and Rs. 18.42 respectively.

(b) The rates of the Indian basket of crude oil during the recent past are enclosed as Statement-I.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The retail selling prices are higher than the cost of production as they include, in addition to the basic price, applicable excise duty, state taxes, VAT, dealers' commission, etc. besides notional freight from the nearest refinery. The price build up of petrol and diesel at Delhi is enclosed as Statement-II.

Statement-I

Trend in the international oil prices

Period	Crude Oil (Indian Basket)
1	2
2000	27.29
2001	23.52
2002	24.38
2003	27.75
2004	35.86
Jan. 2005	40.99
Feb. 2005	42.58
Mar. 2005	49.27
April 2005	49.47
May 2005	47.04
June 2005	52.75
8-7-2005	57.27
Increase in international prices in June 2005 over 2002	216%

Statement-II

Price buildup of petrol and diesel at Delhi

Share of duties and taxes in Retail Selling Price of Petrol

Rs./litre

Sl. No.	Particulars	Delhi
1	2	3
1.	Price without Customs Duty, Excise Duty and Sales tax components	17.40
2.1.	Custom Duty @ 10% included in RTP based on RTPs applicable for 1st fortnight of July' 05	1.60 (4%)

1	2	3
2.2.	Excise Duty (levied @ 8% + Rs. 13.00/litre and education cess thereon)	14.74 (36%)
2.3.	Sales Tax (incl. Irrecoverable taxes)	6.75 (17%)
2.4.	Total of Customs Duty, Excise Duty and Sales tax components	23.09 (57%)
3.	Retail Selling Price at Delhi (1+2.4)	40.49

* Figures in brackets give the components of customs duty, excise duty and sales tax as a % of Sl. No. 3.

Share of duties and taxes in Retail Selling Price of Diesel

Rs./litre

Sl. No.	Particulars	Delhi
1.	Price without Customs Duty, Excise Duty and Sales tax components	18.42
2.1.	Custom Duty @ 10% included in RTP based on RTPs applicable for 1st fortnight of July'05	1.94 (7%)
2.2.	Excise Duty (levied @ 8% + Rs. 3.25/litre plus 2% education cess thereon)	4.93 (17%)
2.3.	Sales Tax (incl. Irrecoverable taxes)	3.16 (11%)
2.4.	Total of Customs Duty, Excise Duty and Sales tax components	10.03 (35%)
3.	Retail Selling Price at Delhi (1+2.4)	28.45

* Figures in brackets give the components of customs duty, excise duty and sales tax as a % of Sl. No. 3.

Connection of Eastern Region of U.P. with Rail Line

751. MOHD. MUKEEM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey was conducted to link Eastern Region of Uttar Pradesh with rail line passing through Khalilabad-Mehdawal-Vasi-Dumariaganj-Uttraula-Balrampur;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to lay said railway line;

(d) if so, the time by which it is likely to be laid; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A survey for construction of new line from Khalilabad to Balrampur via Uttraula, Bansi and Mehdawal (145.23 Kms.) was conducted in the year 1979, but the work could not be taken up due to acute constraints of resources.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) In view of acute constraints of resources and heavy throwforward of ongoing projects, it would not be feasible to consider the construction of the suggested line at present.

[English]

Permission to Kerala Airlines for Gulf Sector

752. SHRI P. RAJENDRAN:

SHRI P.C. THOMAS:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received any proposal from the Government of Kerala for launching a state owned low cost airline "Kerala Airlines" to fly passengers on Kerala-Gulf sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Autonomy to Gram Panchayats

753. SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:
SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE PATIL:
SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO:
SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:
SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has so far not provided autonomy to Gram Panchayats;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to enable the Gram Panchayats for self-governance?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Article 243G of the Constitution provides for the devolution of powers to empower Panchayati Raj Institutions, including Gram Panchayats, to function as "institutions of self-government" for the twin purposes of (i) making plans for economic development and social justice for their respective areas, and (ii) implementing programmes of economic development and social justice in their respective areas, for subjects devolved to PRIs, including those listed in the XI Schedule, and subject to such conditions as the State may, by law, specify. Schedule XI of the Constitution provides for the devolution of powers to Gram Panchayats and Panchayati Raj Institutions with regard to subjects that have a bearing on economic development and social justice in rural areas. A joint programme of action has been chalked at the seven Round Tables held last year between the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj and State Ministers of Panchayati Raj to ensure that on the basis of Activity Mapping, Panchayats at various levels are devolved with funds, functions and functionaries to enable them to emerge as institutions of self-government. Efforts are also being made to institutionalize social audit measures through Gram Sabhas so that Gram Panchayats are made responsible to the Village Community as a whole.

The Minister has now initiated a process of visiting each of the States/UTs to review with the authorities concerned the progress in implementing the points for action contained in the compendium. A Committee of Chief Secretaries of States and State Panchayati Raj Secretaries has been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Secretary (Panchayati Raj) to monitor the progress on the implementation of the 150 recommendations of the Seven Round Tables. Two review meetings of the Committee have so far been held on the 11th April, 2005 and the 29th June, 2005. A Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj of States/Union Territories has been constitued under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. The inaugural meeting of the Council, which is on the subject of Panchayati Raj, will be held on the 5th-6th August, 2005 at Kochi. It is expected that these efforts will accelerate the pace of implementation of provisions of Part IX, read with Article 243ZD of the Constitution, and thus bring about greater conformity, in both letter and spirit, in all States/UTs to the Constitutional provisions of Panchayati Raj.

[English]

Shortage of Paraffin Wax

754. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPIPARAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the Match Industry is facing shortage of Paraffin wax;

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

(c) the remedial action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Recently, the demand for match wax has gone up in the State of Tamil Nadu owing to increases in capacity and the addition of new match units and Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL) are unable to fulfill the increased demand fully because of limitations in plant capacity and feedstock availability. The All India Chamber of Match Industries have also submitted a Memorandum regarding the short supply of Paraffin Wax.

(c) While oil companies will continue to maintain their production/supply of Paraffin wax to meet the existing demands, Government have decontrolled the import of Paraffin wax and consuming companies are free to import directly their requirements of Paraffin wax and match wax.

Upgradation of Metro Airports

755. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL:
SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:
SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH:
SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to upgrade some metro airports in the country;

(b) if so, the airports identified for the purpose;

(c) the total amount of investment envisaged thereon;

(d) whether any study has been conducted in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the time schedule for completion of the upgradation work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (f) Government has decided to upgrade the metro airports of Delhi/Mumbai through Joint Venture route. In principle decision has also taken to upgrade the Chennai airport under the similar mode. At Delhi and Mumbai airports an investment of Rs. 7961.00 crores and Rs. 6131.00 crores respectively is estimated at current prices. A Global Technical Advisor (GTA) appointed in connection with restructuring of Delhi/Mumbai airports has studied the development/requirement of these two airports. The above amount is likely to be spent over a period 20 years. However, a list of mandatory capital projects have also been worked out to be taken up for implementation within the first 2 years and 5 years of handing over of the airports to the JVCs.

Indo-Myanmar-Bangladesh Gas Pipeline

756. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:

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

(a) whether the proposed natural gas pipeline from Myanmar to India *via* Bangladesh has run into problems;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to sort out the issues with the countries concerned?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) In January 2005,

Minister (P and NG) participated in a trilateral Ministerial meeting between the Oil Ministers of Bangladesh, Myanmar and India. In pursuance of the trilateral Joint Press Statement released after that meeting, a Techno-Commercial Working Committee (TCWC) of the representatives of the three countries was constituted. The first Meeting of the TCWC was held in Yangon on 24-25 February 2005. The TCWC prepared a draft MoU to be signed by the three oil Ministers after the approval of their respective Governments. However, the approval of the MoU has been delayed on account of differences between India and Bangladesh over one preambular paragraph in the draft MoU. Issues relating to the draft MoU continue to be under consideration of the Governments of Bangladesh and India even as India explores with Myanmar other options of importing natural gas into India from Myanmar.

Piracy and Arms Smuggling on Indian Maritime Boundaries

757. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:

SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that incidents of piracy and arms smuggling are increasing on the Indian Maritime boundaries;

(b) if so, the number of cases reported during each of the last three years;

(c) the areas which have been identified where such incidents are increasing;

(d) the steps taken by the Government to prevent such incidents;

(e) whether any accord has been signed with any other country to prevent such incidents; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) No confirmed cases of piracy were reported in the Indian Maritime boundaries in the last three years.

(d) The Indian Navy and the Coast Guard conduct regular patrols and surveillance missions to act as deterrent against piracy and arms smuggling.

(e) and (f) A Standard Operating Procedure for coordinated Patrol between India and Indonesia was signed on 13th August, 2002 and this patrolling is conducted on a biannual basis. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for coordinated Patrol between India and Thailand has also been signed in May, 2005.

Setting up of Airports

758. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:

SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY:

SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether under the rules for setting up a new airport, the distance between the existing airport and the new one should be at least 150 km.;

(b) if so, whether the Government is considering to review the rules for setting up of Airports in Greater Noida;

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

(d) the cities likely to be selected for setting up of two airports each in the country;

(e) the funds earmarked for the proposed Airports; and

(f) the time by which the construction of airports is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) As per the Policy on Airport Infrastructure, 1997 normally no

greenfield airport is allowed within an aerial distance of 150 Kms. of existing airports.

(b) and (c) The new policy on aviation sector, which would include policy on the airport infrastructure is being finalised through inter-ministerial consultations.

(d) to (f) The issues regarding location, funding and timing of greenfield airport projects are inter-alia settled in accordance with the applicable policy, likely traffic demand and project viability.

[Translation]

Regulatory Authority for Air Fares

759. SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that certain private airlines beguile and attempt to cheat the passengers by selling the air tickets at cheap rates;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to take any action against them;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government proposes to set up any Regulatory Authority to regulate the air fares to protect the consumers against cheap competition among private airlines; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir. So far the Government has not received any such complaint. In any case, after repeal of Air Corporations Act, 1953, domestic fares are not regulated by the Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Relaxation in Recruitment in Army

760. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether candidates belonging to certain States have been given relaxation in educational qualifications and other physical attributes for recruitment in the army;

(b) if so, the details of such States and reasons for giving relaxation;

(c) whether the Government would consider giving similar relaxations to the youths of certain hilly areas of Punjab; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Minimum physical and educational standards have been laid down for recruitment in the Army. Due to socio-economic conditions and remoteness of the region, certain areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Sikkim, North-East States, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands are, however, granted dispensation in the required educational qualifications. Certain recognized tribes of Ladakh, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands as well as Gorkhas (both Nepalese and Indian), are also granted dispensation in the required physical standards like height.

(c) Yes, Sir, if found feasible as per rules.

(d) Does not arise.

Apex fares Schemes by Indian Airlines

761. SHRI DEVIDAS PINGLE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the sectors on which Apex Fare Scheme has been launched by the Indian Airlines so far; and

(b) the new sectors on which Apex Fare Scheme is proposed to be launched by the Indian Airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) With the introduction of EASY fares scheme by the Indian Airlines Ltd. with effect from 05-07-2005, APEX fare scheme has ceased to exist. Hence the question of Apex Fare scheme for new sector does not arise.

[English]

Installation of Set Top Box

762. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Set Top Box so far installed by the consumers; and

(b) the estimated price of each STB after removing import duty on it?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No data is maintained in the Ministry or Prasar Bharati. However, according to the informal data gathered by Station Directors of DDK/AIR Centres that an estimated number of 38.00 lakhs Set Top Boxes have been sold in the country so far.

(b) Presently 20% of custom duty is levied on set top boxes in the country. According to market reports, the cost of Set Top Box including Dish antenna required for Doordarshan-DTH ranges from Rs. 1800-4500/- depending on the number of features.

NOC for Opening of Petrol Pumps

763. SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the news item captioned, 'NOCs:780 petrol stations under scanner' as appeared in the Tribune dated July 09, 2005;

(b) if so, the details of the necessary clearances required from various departments at the time of opening the new petrol pump;

(c) whether these rules are strictly followed by the Oil Companies at the time of allotment of petrol pumps;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Union Government is aware that the Government of Haryana has issued order directing the Deputy Commissioners of the districts in the State to review the NOCs given to petroleum companies since January, 2000 with the instructions to ask the petroleum companies to comply with the requirements within a period of 60 days;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the necessary steps taken by the oil PSUs?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (g) Government have seen the news item appearing in The Tribune of 9 July 2005, reporting that the Government of Haryana have directed the district authorities of the State to review the 'no objection certificates' (NOCs) for setting up retail outlets issued to oil marketing companies (OMCs) since January, 2000.

Generally, NOCs for the installation of ROs are given by the district authorities after obtaining clearances from various authorities like the Police, the Fire Service, the Public Works Department, etc. In certain cases, the oil marketing companies also take clearances from the National Highway Authority of India and the Forest Department.

While these requirements are not required to be complied with at the time of allotment of a Retail Outlet, petrol pumps are commissioned only after obtaining NOCs/clearances from the competent authorities.

Some of the companies/dealers of the OMCs are reported to have received notices from the Deputy Commissioners in Haryana and these have been, or are being replied to. Further action will be taken after the Government of Haryana's conclusions are delivered to the OMCs.

Recasting of Oil Sector

764. SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI:
SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:
SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY:
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:
SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:
SHRI JAI PRAKASH (MOHANLAL GANJ):
SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY:

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

(a) whether the Union Government has set up any Committee to examine of options for recasting the oil sector for synergy among state owned companies;

(b) if so, whether the Committee has submitted its report to the Government;

(c) if so, the suggestions/recommendations made by the Committee; and

(d) the action taken by the Government thereon?

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

(b) and (c) The Committee has submitted its report with recommendations on policy and structural changes and also suggested certain management solutions for improved performance of the oil companies in the public sector. Some of the major recommendations are:—

1. Merger of Oil Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) may not be advisable for the present.

2. On policy issues, there is need for an integrated energy policy, setting up of Cabinet Committee on Energy headed by the Prime Minister and setting up of an Energy Ministry. The Committee has also recommended revamping of the existing framework of supervision and overview by various surveillance agencies like Central Vigilance Commission by setting up of pre-investigation Board with former PSUs Chiefs, Government and Private Sector representatives.

3. For empowering Directorate General of Hydrocarbons as an autonomous body with a separate cadre of experts and access to funds.

4. For overseas ventures, to set up a parallel new entity by Oil India Limited. Intense competition in oversea bidding is to be avoided by fixing up a limit related to the production capacity of more than 2 million tonnes of oil equivalent for OVL, below which the other new entity would be permitted to bid.

5. Another recommendation of the Committee relates to setting up of a National Shareholding Trust, modeled after Temasek of Singapore and Khazanah of Malaysia, but with a modification. The oil PSUs joining the Trust shall continue to retain their PSU character and the Trust shall function as non-profit Trust set up under the Societies Registration Act or under the companies Act or as a statutory body. The Board of the Trust will comprise eminent personalities from Government, Public Sector and Private Sector. The Committee expects that the greater autonomy to the Trust would ensure synergy in operations.

(d) The recommendations are under consideration of the Government.

VRS in Oil PSUs

765. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has introduced Voluntary Retirement Scheme in Oil PSUs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any date was fixed for the closure of the scheme;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the number of employees opted for VRS?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. During the year 2005, Voluntary Separation Scheme (VSS)/ Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) has been introduced in Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC), Engineers India Limited (EIL), Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL), Balmer Lawrie and Co. Limited (BL) and Biecco Lawrie Limited (BLL). The schemes are in line with the guidelines issued by the Department of Public Enterprises in this regard and approved by the Board of Directors of the respective oil Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs). The details are as under:—

Name of PSU	Date of closure of scheme	Number of Employees opted/granted VRS
ONGC	05-7-2005	313
IOC	30-6-2005	85
EIL	15-3-2005	7
BL	18-4-2005	41
BLL	31-5-2005	18
CPCL	29-7-2005	14 (upto 15-7-2005)

Shortfall in IOC Profit

766. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the net profit of the Indian Oil Corporation has declined during 2004-05 in comparison to 2003-04;

(b) if so, the percentage and the amount by which the profit during 2004-05 has fallen and the reasons for such declining; and

(c) the steps being initiated to make up the losses?

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

(b) and (c) The profit after tax of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) decreased from Rs. 7004.82 crore during 2003-04 to Rs. 4891.38 crore during 2004-05, a decrease of about 30%. The decrease in profit is mainly attributable to higher under-recoveries during the year on the sale of petrol, diesel, PDS kerosene and Domestic LPG, as compared to those in the previous year, consequent upon non-revision of retail selling prices in line with international prices. The under-recoveries of oil marketing companies, including IOC, on account of the aforesaid products are being partly compensated by the upstream companies. IOC have taken the following steps towards containing their costs:—

— Optimizing the landed cost of products at various markets/destinations.

— Improving the crude mix for refining of products.

— Reducing the incidence of freight on crude oil purchase by deploying 'very large crude carrier' tankers.

[Translation]

Development of Railway Stations of Metro Cities

767. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE:

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any action plan to develop railway stations of metropolitan cities of international standard;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time schedule framed for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. However, Railway has planned to develop important railway stations in Metro cities into world class station through the proposed Rail Land Development Authority, as announced in Railway Budget 2005-06.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Development of Sabarmati Railway Station

768. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:
SHRI V.K. THUMMAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has looked into the matter of congestion at Ahmedabad Railway Station;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any scheme to develop Sabarmati Station in order to decongest Ahmedabad Railway Station;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the alternative arrangement scheme formulated by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There is no congestion at Ahmedabad station as train operation is being suitably managed within the existing resources.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Not at present.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

[English]

Creation of Department of Energy

769. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to create a Department of Energy in the Petroleum Ministry to step up India's diplomatic initiative in securing energy sources abroad and providing autonomy in approving foreign investments;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the decision is likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir.

(B) and (c) Does not arise.

Demilitarisation of Siachen Glacier

770. SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:
SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA:
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:
SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI:
SHRI ANIRUDH PRASAD ALIAS SADHU YADAV:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the per day estimated expenditure incurred on development of troops in Siachen;

(b) the number of soldiers died in Siachen during each of the last three years, till date;

(c) whether talks have been held between India and Pakistan for demilitarisation of Siachen Glacier;

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

(e) the further steps taken in the light thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) It would not be in the interest of national security to give details.

(c) to (e) Talks between India and Pakistan to discuss Siachen issue under the Composite Dialogue Framework were held in Islamabad in May, 2005. The two sides held frank and constructive discussions with a view to taking the process forward. They expressed satisfaction at the ceasefire in place since November, 2003 and agreed to its continuation. It was agreed by the two sides to continue discussions to resolve the Siachen issue in a peaceful manner.

[Translation]

Funds for Bilarabar Rail Route

771. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the funds earmarked for the Bilarabar rail route and the funds released so far for this project;

(b) the progress so far made on the said project; and

(c) the time by which this rail route is likely to be made operational?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Construction of new line between Bilara to Bar is not a sanctioned project.

((b) and (c) Do not arise.

[English]

Loan from Foreign Institutions by ONGC

772. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation has decided to go in for raising about $ 3 billion from foreign banks and foreign financial institutions;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the main objects for raising the funds; and

(c) the total funds raised so far?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) At present, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) do not have any firm foreign debt raising programme.

(b) Does not arise in view of the reply to part (a) of the question.

(c) As on the 31st March 2005, ONGC have outstanding foreign loans (in foreign currency) of Japanese Yen 2160.78 Million (equivalent to Indian Rupees 88.29 crore).

[Translation]

Special Ticket Checking Drives

773. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE PATIL:
SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:
SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether special flying squad of Railways have carried out special ticket checking drive to catch passengers travelling without ticket and those carrying goods without proper bookings;

(b) if so, the number of times such drives have been conducted during the last one year, till date and the number of passengers caught travelling without ticket or transporting goods without booking;

(c) the amount recovered/collected therefrom during the said period;

(d) the measures taken/proposed to be taken for checking ticketless travelling;

(e) whether officers have been made accountable in this regard; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) and (c) No separate statistics regarding the checks conducted by the special flying squads is maintained. During the period April, 2004 to May, 2005, 15.55 lakh checks were conducted by all the ticket checking staff including flying squad in which 161.14 lakh persons were apprehended travelling without ticket/ with improper ticket including unbooked luggage and the railway dues amounting to Rs. 260.74 crores were realized.

(d) Besides regular checks some of the measures taken are:—

(i) The minimum penalty for ticketless/irregular travel has been enhanced to Rs. 250/- from Rs. 50/- with effect from 1-7-2004.

(i) Special checks are conducted in association with Police and Railway Magistrates.

(iii) Ambush Checks, Fortress Checks, Cross Country Checks and Replacement Checks etc. are conducted from time to time.

(v) Intensive Check Post Scheme has been introduced for effectively controlling the ticketless/irregular travelling as well as ticketing frauds.

(e) and (f) Railway officers are accountable for an effective ticket checking so as to curb ticketless travel and enhance the passenger earnings.

[English]

Constitution of Advisory Panel

774. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any independent board or body or advisory panel in addition to the Censor Board to scan all movies and TV serials made with religious grounds only before these movies and TV serials are referred to the Censor Board for clearance for final release;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether the Government proposes to constitute an advisory panel to decide over all such elements in the movies which may hurt religious sentiments resulting in disruption of peace and harmony in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) set up under the Cinematograph Act, 1952, is the sole body which certifies films for public exhibition. Television programmes are required to adhere to the Programme Code prescribed under the Rules framed under the Cable Television Networks Act, 1995.

(c) and (d) The Government have consistently advised the industry bodies in both Cinema and Television sectors to exercise self-restraint. However, there is no proposal for a separate advisory panel other than CBFC.

GoM Report on FDI in Print Media

775. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:
SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN:

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

(a) whether the Group of Ministers (GoM) on the print media appointed on the question of allowing FDI in the Print media has submitted its reports; and

(b) if so, the details of its recommendations and the Government's decision thereon?

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

(b) The details of the recommendations of Group of Ministers (GoM) and the Government's decision thereon, are given in he enclosed statement.

Statement

The GoM made the following recommendations to the Cabinet:—

(i) The proposed amendments to the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867 may be agreed to.

(ii) The FDI ceiling of 26% may be retained, but investments by NRIs/PIOs and portfolio investments by recognised FIIs may be included in the FDI limit.

(iii) Publication of facsimile editions of foreign newspapers may be allowed subject to certain conditions.

(iv) Indian edition of foreign newspapers may not be allowed.

(v) The present syndication limit of 7½% of total printed area under automatic route may be increased to 20%. Cases above 20% limit may continue to be considered in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on case by case basis.

Based on the recommendations of the Group of Ministers (GoM), the Government has decided to allow the following:—

(a) The Foreign Direct Investment ceiling of 26% has been retained, but investments by Non Resident Indians/Person of Indian Origin and portfolio investments by recognized Foreign Institutional Investors has been included in the Foreign Direct Investment limits for the news and current affairs segment.

(b) The *facsimile edition, in whole or in parts*, of foreign newspapers has been allowed subject to the following conditions:—

(i) the facsimile edition, in whole or in parts, could be brought out by an Indian entity, with or without FDI, and also by foreign companies owning the original newspaper provided they get incorporated and registered in India under the Companies Act,1956 and they comply with the Indian Laws.

(ii) the facsimile editions, in whole or in parts, in brought out with the approval of the regulatory authority of the country of origin and is a standard publication in that country and is not specially designed for Indian readers.

(iii) these facsimile editions, in whole or in parts, will not carry any advertisements aimed at Indian readers in any form.

(iv) prior permission from Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is obtained for publication of facsimile editions.

(c) Publication of Indian editions of foreign newspapers continues to be prohibited.

(d) The present syndication limit of 7.5% of total printed area under automatic route has been increased to 20%. Cases above 20% limit will continue to be considered in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on case by case basis.

[Translation]

Doordarshan Transmitters

776. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE:

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN:

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

(a) the details of Doordarshan Transmitters which

are likely to become operational during the current year alongwith locations thereof;

(b) the expenditure incurred on the transmitters which are likely to become operational;

(c) whether required number of staff has been provided for operation and maintenance of these transmitters;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, the reasons for delay in this regard;

(f) the level at which the matter regarding sanctioning of posts is lying pending; and

(g) the annual estimated expenditure to be incurred on the maintenance and operation of these transmitters?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati has informed that the following ten Low Power Transmitters (LPTs) are presently technically ready for commissioning:—

(i) Andhra Pradesh	—	Kolhapur, Punganur
(ii) Assam	—	Satarsal
(iii) Haryana	—	Fatehabad, Kaithal
(iv) Karnataka	—	Mudhol, Singhnur
(v) Orissa	—	Bahalda
(vi) Rajasthan	—	Khajuwala
(vii) Tripura	—	Ambassa

Expenditure incurred on the above transmitters in Rs. 7.32 crore.

(c) to (f) The required number of staff for operation and maintenance of these transmitters has not been sanctioned so far.

(g) The annual estimated expenditure on operation and maintenance of a LPT is about Rs. 18 lakh.

[English]

Strengthening of AIR

777. SHRI SURESH KURUP: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any plan to strengthen the All India Radio in order to compete with private player in the broadcasting field; and

(b) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) AIR has a network of 215 stations which provide coverage to 99.13% of the population and covers 99.42% area of the country. It broadcasts programmes in different formats in 24 languages and 146 dialects. It remains the constant endeavour of AIR to aim for excellene both in terms of content and quality. It always reviews the quality of programmes and makes efforts to further improve the contents and technical quality/transmission. The studios and equipments are continuously being modernized to improve the technical quality of programmes.

In FM Radio, where private companies are aleady operating and to play much grater role in near future. AIR is taking the following steps:—

(1) to reorient the contents to suit the changing tastes;

(2) to spare more resources for generating more contents; and

(3) to devise marketing strategies on continuous basis.

[Translaion]

Sharing of Losses

778. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any scheme is under consideration of

the Government to make refineries to share some part of the loss being incurred by the oil selling companies from the sale of LPG and Kerosene;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Since the past few years, there has been an unprecedented, sharp and spiraling increase in international oil prices combined with considerable week-to-week and even day-to-day volatility. While crude prices have risen 136% during the period March'2002 to July'2005, the international prices of petrol, diesel, kerosene and LPG have risen in tandem by 138%, 191%, 187% and 106% respectively during the same period. However, the domestic prices of these products have correspondingly been raised by only 53%, 71%, 1% and 23% respectively. This has led to huge under-recoveries for the oil marketing companies who have, therefore, initiated a dialogue with refiners to provide suitable trade discounts in the refinery transfer price to offset their under-recoveries. It is expected that the matter will be soon be settled.

[English]

Budgetary Allocation for Minorities

779. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the budgetary allocation for minorities has been reduced in the current year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government is not serious in its commitment for the welfare of the minorities since the funds granted for their welfare were woefully inadequate; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (d) The Government is very serious about its commitment to the welfare of Minorities. The expenditure in 2003-04 was Rs. 21.20 crore. In the first budget of the present Government a special additional allocation of Rs. 50 crore was made for equity contribution to National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation Excluding the special allocation the budget allocation was Rs. 22.29 crore in the year 2004-05. In the year 2005-06 the budget allocation is Rs. 49.60 crore. Moreover, members of Minority Communities also access all the welfare and economic betterment schemes, which are administered for all sections of the society.

Maintenance of Historical Places

780. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any proposal from foreign countries for conservation and maintenance of historical places;

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

(c) whether any such proposal from a foreign country has been accepted by the Government; and

(d) if so, the terms and conditions under which the proposal has been accepted?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, Archaeological Survey of India has received proposals from Government of Cambodia and Vietnam for conservation of historical places in their countries. As a follow up action a project report for conservation and restoration of Myson group of temples in Vietnam has been formulated after a visit

by experts from Archaeological Survey of India and is at preliminary stage. However, Archaeological Survey of India has taken up Restoration and Conservation of Ta Prohm Temple Complex, Siem Reap in Cambodia on the basis of an agreement signed on 9-4-2002 between the Government of India and the Royal government of Cambodia.

The Ta Prohm project will be implemented by Archaeological Survey of India in coordination with the Authority for Protection and Management of Angkor (APSARA) and the UNESCO. This project is estimated to cost Rs. 19.57 crores and will span over a period of 10 years.

Initial works on the Ta Prohm project started in December 2003.

(c) No other proposals from foreign countries have been accepted so far. There are, however, some requests for participation/technical help for such conservation projects, which are only at a preliminary stage.

(d) Does not arise.

Discontinuation of Discount

781. SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Reliance Industries Limited has stopped the discount being given on diesel and petrol sold to public sector oil companies;

(b) if so, the reasons advanced by Reliance Industries to oil PSUs for discontinuation of discount; and

(c) the impact on the finances of the public sector oil companies?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) had offered Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) a volume discount on diesel during 2004-05. While this discount is at present not being offered in the current year, OMCs have initiated a dialogue with all refiners, including RIL, to provide suitable trade discounts for the whole of the current financial year.

Loss making CPSUs

782. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK:

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY:

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

(a) the number of Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) are running in losses;

(b) whether the Government has a proposal either to close down or sell the loss making PSUs;

(c) if so, the number of employees who are going to affected by the closure of those units; and

(d) the alternative employment/rehabilitation measures proposed to be adopted for them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) As per Public Enterprises Survey 2003-04, as on 31-3-2004, the latest period for which information is available, there were 88 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) running in losses.

(b) and (c) Enterprise specific proposals regarding restructuring/revival including closure if any for the loss making CPSEs are submitted to the Board for the Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE) for consideration and recommendation. BRPSE has recommended 15 CPSEs for revival the list of which is enclosed as statement. BRPSE has not recommended closure of any CPSE.

(d) As a step towards providing a safety net for the rationalized employees of CPSEs, a Plan Scheme for Counselling, Retraining and Redeployment for the separated employees of CPSEs under VRS/VSS is being implemented. The scheme aims at rehabilitation of the

rationalized employees through short duration training programmes. The strategy is to equip them with skills, which would enable them to be deployed mainly in self-employment activities.

Statement

Sl. No.	Name of CPSE
1	2
1.	Hindustan Salts Ltd.
2.	Bridge and Roof Co. (India) Ltd.
3.	BBJ Construction Co. Ltd.
4.	Tyre Corporation of India Ltd.
5.	British India Corporation Ltd.
6.	National Textiles Corporation Ltd.
7.	Madras Fertilizers Ltd.
8.	HMT Bearings Ltd.
9.	Praga Tools Ltd.
10.	Braithwaite and Company Ltd.
11.	NEPA Ltd.
12.	Richardson and Cruddas Ltd.
13.	Central Inland Water Transport Corporation Ltd.
14.	Tungabhadra Steel Products Ltd.
15.	Bharat Wagon and Engineering Co. Ltd.

Survey for Oil Discoveries

783. SHRI JUAL ORAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) has undertaken country-wide survey to find out oil reserves;

(b) if so, the places surveyed by NGRI during 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06;

(c) the amount spent thereon;

(d) the places where the survey indicates occurrence of oil reserves; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. Through NGRI the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons have carried out Geochemical and integrated Geophysical Surveys in some parts of the country but not on a country wide basis.

(b) and (c) The places surveyed and the expenditure are detailed below:—

Year	Places	Amount spent (Rs. Lakhs)
2003-04	Geochemical survey in Kutch onland, Chhattisgarh and Cudappa Geophysical Survey in Deccan Syncline Basin and Magnetic gravity in Madhya Pradesh	85.90
2004-05	Geochemical survey in Kutch onland, Chhattisgarh and Cudappa	10.0

These surveys are carried out to upgrade the available geological information of an area for carving out blocks to offer under future rounds of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP).

(d) The occurrence of oil reserves can only be ascertained by drilling wells after economics seismic surveys.

(e) There are further plans to carry out geochemical and geophysical surveys by DGH through NGRI in the onland areas of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh and in Kerala-Konkan deepwater and the southern tip of India.

Profits of Oil PSUs

784. SHRI SURESH ANGADI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the net profits of oil PSUs have gone down despite the global crude oil prices ruling at all time high levels;

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

(c) whether the fall in their net profits have forced the oil companies to increase their borrowings;

(d) if so, whether the oil PSUs are able to invest for increasing their capacities or upgrading their technologies even after registering a fall in their net profits;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the corrective measures taken by the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) While net profits of oil marketing companies have gone down, upstream oil PSUs have registered an increase in their profit levels reflecting inter-alia the high crude oil prices resting in international markets. The oil marketing companies registered a negative growth due to higher under recoveries on account of sale of Petrol, Diesel, Kerosene (PDS) and LPG (domestic) consequent to non-revision of retail selling prices in line with international oil prices.

(c) to (e) The average borrowings of these oil marketing companies have registered an increase in order to support investment in new capital projects and to meet the additional requirements of working capital.

(f) Does not arise.

Gas Krishna-Godavari Basin

785. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned 'GSPC strikes $ 50b gas in Krishna Godavari Basin' appeared in Economic Times on June 27, 2005.

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether Director General of Hydrocarbons has termed GSPC's gas find as premature;

(d) if so, whether any rules have been laid down to get approval from the Government before going for public announcement; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) M/s. Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (GSPC) have discovered gas in exploration block KG-OSN-2001/3 offered under the third round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-III). The contractor has informed the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) of a gas discovery made by it in well no KG-8 in a Cretaceous formation. The well was drilled upto 5061 Metres and encountered high temperature and high pressure. The well flowed gas @ 10 Million Standard Cubic Feet Per Day from 10 metre perforation from 4747 to 4777 metre depth. Neither GSPC nor its partners have notified DGH about the reserves they have discovered nor they have made any public claims

in this regard. However, In addition to writing to the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas about the estimated initial gas in place, the Chief Minister of Gujarat is reported to have stated at a Press Conference he addressed on 26 June that "based on advanced interpretation of 3D seismic data, wireline log data and test results in the KG-8 well, the initial gas in place on this structure would be 20 tef' (reference report in *The Economic Times,* 27-6-05 Annex 'A')

(c) The Director General of Hydrocarbons has described any estimates of GSPC's find as "premature" (Annex 'B') adding that "the finds are promising but the actual estimate will depend on test results" (see Annex) It may please be noted that while the notification of the gas find by the contractor would not be premature, any estimation of the reserves would be premature at this stage as such an estimate can be made only after production testing is completed, 3D seismic data is calibrated with drilled well data and a detailed study is made of the geophysical and geological data acquired in the block.

(d) and (e) While it is in order to make a public announcement about a discovery, it is not in conformity with the terms of the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) for a public announcement to be made about the estimated reserves before the reserves are certified by (DGH). Further, in terms of the PSC, the contractor is promptly required to run tests to determine whether the discovery is of potential commercial interest and within a period of 60 days of the completion of tests, submit a report to the Management Committee alongwith all relevant data together with a written notification whether in the Contractor's opinion, such discovery is of potential commercial interest.

GAIL's Investment Plan

786. SHRI PARSURAM MAJHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gas Authority of India Ltd., (GAIL) has finalised the investment plan for Tenth and Eleventh Five Year Plans;

(b) if so, the projects presently being implemented and proposed to be implemented by GAIL in the Tenth and Eleventh Plans; and

(c) the total investment proposed to be made by GAIL under its investment plan?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The investment plan for the Eleventh Five Year Plan has not been yet finalized by GAIL, The investment plan for the Tenth Five Year Plan was approved by GAIL's Board and subsequently by the Planning Commission in 2001-02.

(b) The projects being implemented at present by GAIL are:—

1. Dahej-Uran Pipeline
2. Thulendi-Phulpur Pipeline
3. Vijaipur-Kota Pipeline
4. Jagoti-Dewas-Pithampur Pipeline
5. Kelarus-Malanpur Pipeline Project
6. Expansion of Petrochemical Plant at Pata

(c) The total proposed investment outlay for the Tenth Plan is Rs. 8414 crore.

Connecting Hazira Port by Rail

787. SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the works relating to project development, agreement of strategic partners in financial participation etc. for linking Hajira Port to its hinter land by rail have been completed;

(b) if so, the details of thereof;

(c) the time by which construction work on the project is likely to be started; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the time by which these works are likely to be started and completed?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The Project is proposed to be implemented through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). Certain commitments from the partners of the SPV are not coming forth so far. The construction will be taken up after completion of the project development, agreement of strategic partners in financial participation and sanction of the project.

[Translation]

Losses of DD Channels

788. SHRIMATI KALPNA RAMESH NARHIRE: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether DD and DD News channels are running in losses;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to contain the losses?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Doordarshan is a Public Service Broadcaster. Hence cannot be actuated or adjudged by commercial considerations.

(c) It is the constant endeavour of Doordarshan to increase its commercial revenue by enhancing the quality of its programmes and news coverage of national and international events, by adopting innovative methods and modern market strategies. Doordarshan has taken various steps to increase commercial revenue which include setting up of Marketing Divisions at six centres, introduction of new programme formats, undertaking fuller utilization of time slots in non-prime band through adjustments in commercial rate card etc. The commercial revenues have shown an upward trend in 2004-05.

[English]

Construction of Bridges

789. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the information regarding date of construction of bridges etc. is not available in most of the cases;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any discrepancy has been noticed in the records maintained by the Chief Bridge Engineers office and its divisions;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the funds for bridges were not utilized fully during the review period;

(f) if so, the reasons therefor;

(g) the number of bridges identified for replacement/ renovation during the last three years and the number out of them replaced/renovated; and

(h) the steps taken by the Government to construct the bridges and utilise the funds fully within the stipulated time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. The information regarding date of construction of bridges is known.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) and (f) The funds have generally been utilized as per the final budget allocations. The expenditure

position of Plan Head Bridges in last three years is as under:—

Year	Expenditure (Crores of Rs.)
2002-03	199.1
2003-04	228.55
2004-05	377.00 (Provisional)

(g) The number of bridges identified for replacement/renovation during last three years and the number out of them replaced/renovated/rehabilitated:—

Year	Target/Identified	Achievements
2002-03	1065	1151
2003-04	1584	1563
2004-05	1629	1579

(h) Various steps have been taken to ensure utilization of funds fully like advance planning for expeditious execution, better coordination with field offices, adopting modern methods of construction etc.

Welfare of Street Children

790. SHRI TUKARAM GANGADHAR GADAKH:
SHRI RANEN BARMAN:

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

(a) the Policy of the Government to welfare, support, rehabilitate and educate street children;

(b) whether there is any record with the Government about the number of street children in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof, State/Union Territory-wise;

(d) whether the Government is aware that welfare of the street children/destitute children in the country is largely neglected and even the juvenile justice system is not being properly implemented;

(e) whether due to negligence some of these street children become victim of criminal gang and later they indulge into pretty crime;

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

(g) whether the Government proposes to frame any new policy for the welfare of street children; and

(h) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the same is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) The street children are children in need of care and protection as defined in the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000. The policy of the Government of India for such children is to provide them proper care, protection and treatment by catering to their development needs. This Ministry is implementing a scheme 'An Integrated Programme for Street Children' with the aim of preventing destitution and facilitate withdrawal of these children from a life on the streets by providing them with shelter, safe drinking water, education, vocational training and recreation.

(b) and (c) No survey has been done to ascertain the number of street children in the country.

(d) to (f) The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2000, deals with the children in need of care and protection as well as those in conflict with law. These children including street children are to be provided facilities of shelter and care in homes to be set up for this purpose in order to ensure their proper development. This Ministry is implementing a scheme 'A Programme for Juvenile Justice' under which State Governments/ Union Territories are provided assistance to the extent of 50 per cent of their funds requirement for setting up

of homes as well as maintaining children in them as per the scheme norms. Many Non-Governmental Organizations are also running these homes and are being assisted under the scheme. A total of 40739 children were assisted during 2004-05 under the scheme. The Childline service which is a 24-hours toll free emergency phone service for children in distress is also being supported under the scheme 'An Integrated Programme for Street Children'.

(g) and (h) No, Sir.

Funds for Maintenance of Taj Mahal

791. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the revenue earned by Archaeological Survey of India from tourists visiting Taj Mahal during each of the last three years;

(b) the amount spent by Archaeological Survey of India for upkeep and maintenance of the monument during the said period;

(c) whether the Government proposes to increase allocation for upkeep and maintenance of Taj Mahal; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The details of revenue earned from tourists visiting Taj Mahal during the last 3 years are as under:—

2002-03	Rs. 6,53,35,250
2003-04	Rs. 8,08,52,697
2004-05	Rs. 11,81,39,593

The revenue earned from the entry tickets is deposited in the Government account.

(b) The details of expenditure incurred on upkeep (including deployment of CISF) and maintenance of Taj Mahal during the last 3 years are as under:—

2002-03	Rs. 2.94 crores
2003-04	Rs. 3.45 crores
2004-05	Rs. 4.07 crores

(c) and (d) The allocation for upkeep and maintenance of Taj Mahal would be made depending upon the requirement taking regard to the prime importance of the monument, the process of upkeep of Taj Mahal will not face any budgetary constraints.

Closure of MG Line in N.F. Railway

792. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of MG lines being closed down in the North Frontier Railway alongwith the reasons therefor;

(b) when these are likely to be effected;

(c) the present extent of traffic congestion to and Guwahati Railway station and the steps taken to mitigate it;

(d) whether Saraighat bridge cannot accommodate double BG Track;

(e) if so, the service life of this bridge; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The following Metre Gauge lines in Northeast Frontier Railways are proposed to be closed down and dismantled due to gauge conversion of certain lines:—

(i) Barsoi-Aluabari Road

(ii) New Bongaigaon-Rangia Jn.

(iii) Kamakhaya-New Guwahati

The dismantling of MG track on these sections would depend upon progress of gauge conversion projects

and other sanctioned works in the area. However, no MG train services are at present running between New Bongaigaon-Kamakhaya-New Guwahati due to operational reasons.

(c) Following works have been taken upto mitigate traffic congestion to and from Guwahati station:—

(i) Gauge conversion of line No. 2 at Guwahati from MG to Broad Gauge (BG) alongwith the high level platform.

(ii) Gauge conversion of line No. 4 at Kamakhaya station from MG to BG alongwith high level platform.

(iii) The third line between Guwahati and New Guwahati by extending the FCI shunting neck at New Guwahati.

(iv) New Guwahati Coaching complex consisting of pit line, sick line and stabling lines.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) and (f) There is no problem in this bridge and is expected to serve for a long period as per present day traffic and maintenance.

Training to Pilots

793. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether after successfully inducting of IL-78 mid air refueling aircraft. IAF has now trained its sights firmly on another set of potent force multipliers, the AWACS to bolster its war waging capabilities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which AWACS aircraft would be inducted?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Government of India have concluded a contract on 5th March, 2004 for procurement of Airborne Warning And Control System (AWACS) aircraft. As per the contract, the delivery of the AWACS aircraft is expected between December, 2007 and March, 2009.

Electrification of Rail Lines in Orissa

794. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any time bound programme has been forwarded for electrification of all railway lines in Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the length of rail lines (in kilometers) in the State which have been electrified/being electrified?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) 1023 Route kilometres have been electrified till 31-03-2005 and electrification work is in progress on 123 Route kilometres.

'Village on Wheels' Trains

795. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have started or propose to start 'Village on Wheels' trains to connect South-North and North-South to encourage domestic tourism;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the facilities provided by the railways to the tourists; and

(c) the details of other such trains to be introduced by the railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Railways has launched a new special tourist train called the 'Bharat Darshan' consisting of sleeper class coaches to run on pre-determined circuits including those connecting North and South to enable tourists from different regions to visit important places of religious,

cultural and historical importance at an affordable cost as a comprehensive package including boarding and lodging. sightseeing, local transport, meals etc.

Depending upon the responses received on the operation of the train in the initial circuits. Similar other trains would be introduced on various circuits covering the tourist destinations in the country.

[Translation]

Low Quality of Regional Transmission

796. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the programmes telecast from the regional transmission centres of the country have mostly sub-standard programmes;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the measures being taken by the Government to imporve regional programmes;

(d) whether regional producers exploit the technicians and artistes for producing low-cost programmes; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Prasar Bharati have informed that the measures include earmarking a time band for regional programmes, production of programmes based on Indian classics, allotment of time slots to outside producers for the telecast of programmes in different genres/formats.

(d) Prasar Bharati have informed that they have not received any specific complaint of this nature.

(e) Does not arise.

[English]

Terminals for Courier/Express Movement

797. SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to have dedicated terminals at Airports for courier/express movement in other metropolitan cities on the line of Delhi; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Airports Authority of India, in consultation with Courier Operators, is considering to set up dedicated terminals at Mumbai and Chennai Airports for courier/express movements.

[Translation]

Rehabilitation of Disabled

798. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether discrimination is taking place in the rehabilitation of the persons with disabilities in the country;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the corrective measures taken/to be taken in this regard;

(c) whether the Government has formulated any scheme for making amendments in he existing policy in connection with rehabilitation of the persons with disabilities;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the number of houses build and allotted under this policy during 2004-05 and till-date, State-wise?

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

(e) State-wise details of number of houses allotted to persons with disabilities under Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) during the year 2004-05 and till date are enclosed as statement.

Statement

(Units in Nos.)

Sl. No.	Name of States/UTs	Nos. of Houses allotted to the Physically and Mentally Challenged people during the year	
		2004-05	2005-06 (till date)
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2034	212
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	53	0
3.	Assam	1655	193
4.	Bihar	737	34
5.	Chhattisgarh	184	15
6.	Goa	0	0
7.	Gujarat	355	38
8.	Haryana	204	0
9.	Himachal Pradesh	100	0
10.	Jammu and Kashmir	0	0
11.	Jharkhand	315	0
12.	Karnataka	297	118
13.	Kerala	96	37
14.	Madhya Pradesh	1665	152
15.	Maharashtra	565	3
16.	Manipur	56	0
17.	Meghalaya	32	0
18.	Mizoram	1	0
19.	Nagaland	154	0
20.	Orissa	1448	18
21.	Punjab	129	22
22.	Rajasthan	288	4
23.	Sikkim	66	8
24.	Tamil Nadu	1258	20
25.	Tripura	202	0
26.	Uttar Pradesh	2463	55
27.	Uttaranchal	114	4
28.	West Bengal	2846	54
29.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	0	0
30.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	0	0
31.	Daman and Diu	0	0
32.	Lakshadweep	0	0
33.	Pondicherry	0	0
	Total	17317	987

Setting up of Planetorium

799. SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any proposal from the State Governments for opening of planetorium in their respective States;

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

(c) whether there is a planetorium in Jaipur (Rajasthan) through which school students are being benefited from important and curious information about space;

(d) the contibution made by the Ministry in this regard;

(e) whether any proposal for allocation of funds for this planetorium has been received by the Government from the Government of Rajasthan; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) No proposal has been received from the State Governments for opening of Planetorium except State Government of Haryana for setting up Kalpna Chawla Memorial Planetorium.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Culture has not provided any financial assistance for setting up a Planetorium in Jaipur.

(e) and (f) No, Sir.

[English]

Doordarshan Kendras In Gujarat

800. SHRI JASHUBAHI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Doordarshan Kendras in Gujarat proposed to be modernised and digitalised during the Tenth Plan;

(b) the time by which the modernisation and digitalisation work of these kendras is likely to be completed; and

(c) the total amount likely to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Doordarshan Kendras at Ahmedabad and Rajkot are proposed to be modernized and digitalized during the Tenth Plan period. These are expected to be completed in 2006 at an estimated cost of Rs. 17 crore.

Separate Ministry for Disabled

801. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Disabled Rights Group, an NGO and several other NGOs in the field of welfare of disables have demanded for a separate Ministry for disabled as reported in the Times of India dated June 23, 2005;

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

(c) whether even after 10 years of enactment of Disabilities Act, 1995, the main demands of access, education and employment for persons with disabilities remain merely on paper; and

(d) if so, the steps taken or being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) The Disabled Rights Group and one other NGO have demanded that a separate Ministry be created for persons with disabilities. However, there is no proposal to create a separate Ministry for persons with disabilities.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. Various steps have been taken by the Central and State Governments to ensure reservation in Government employment, access to education and creation of barrier free facilities for persons with disabilities. Some of them are as follows:—

(i) As against 3% reservation in identified posts in the Government establishments for persons

with disabilities, the representation of persons with disabilities in the Central Government is 3.60%.

(ii) All the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations have been advised to adopt model Building bye-laws containing provisions for barrier free facilities for persons with disabilities. Some State Governments and local bodies have already adopted these bye-laws.

(iii) 18.53 lakh children with disabilities were identified in 2004-05 of whom 14.22 lakh children have been enrolled in elementary schools under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

(iv) 200 scholarships are provided every year to persons with disabilities for higher and technical education.

(v) More than 350 special schools and 140 vocational training centers are imparting special education and vocational training to persons with disabilities.

(vi) Approximately, 2.70 lakh poor and needy persons with disabilities are provided aids and appliances free of cost.

Taking over of Palia Kalan Airport

802. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Airports Authority of India has any proposal to take over Palia Kalan Airport from the Government of Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the steps taken by the Union Government to develop Palia Kalan Airport?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

National Heritage Status to Cultural Sites

803. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any guidelines for granting national heritage status to the sites of cultural importance;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Sultanganj in Bihar, where Sravani fair is held every year, fulfils said guidelines;

(d) if so, the time by which the said fair is likely to be granted national heritage status;

(e) whether the Government proposes to allocate funds for its development;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The Central Government is vested with the power of declaring any ancient monument or archaeological sites or remains as of national importance under Section 4 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. Ancient monument has been defined as any structure, erection, or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock sculpture, inscription or monolith, which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in existence for not less then one hundred years.

(c) Sultanganj in Bihar is not a protected monument of national importance as it does not fulfill the criteria.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) As there are no protected monuments at Sultanganj, there is no proposal to allocate funds.

(f) and (g) Does not arise.

[English]

Maintenance of Memorials

804. KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of memorials built in various parts of the country in the memory of brave soldiers;

(b) whether the Union Government is aware that the memorials are not being properly maintained;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Union Government for the proper upkeep of these memorials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) to (d) The memorials in the memory of brave soldiers can be built by any individual citizen, agency, state governments etc. Details of such memorials are not maintained by the Government of India. The maintenance of memorials is the responsibility of the individual or authority which has built them. A list of 24 war memorials built and being maintained by Army HQrs is enclosedas statement.

Statement

List of Army War Memorials

Sl. No.	Name	Place	Remarks
1	2	3	4
1.	Saragarhi War Memorial	Meerut	In memory of heroes of Saragarhi.
2.	Dhruva	Udhampur	In memory of martyrs of North Comd since 1947.
3.	Khetarpal Memorial	Samba (Jammu)	In memory of Lt. Arun Khetarpal.
4.	Hall of Fame	Rajouri	Heroes who laid down their lives in defence of Rajouri and Poonch.
5.	Dagger Memorial	Baramulla (Jammu and Kashmir)	Dedicated to martyrs of 19 Inf. Div.
6.	Op Rakshak Memorial	BB Cantt Srinagar	Martyrs of 8 Mtn Div.
7.	Leh War Memorial	Leh	In memory of martyrs of 1962, 65 and 71 wars.
8.	Leh War Memorial	Leh	In memory of martyrs of 1947-48.
9.	Chushul War Memorial	Chushul	Martyrs of 1962 war.
10.	Siachen Memorial	Base Camp Siachen	In memory of martyrs of Siachen.
11.	Dharamsala Martyr's Memorial	Dharamsala (HP)	In honour of Himachali Martyrs.

1	2	3	4
12.	Asafwala War Memorial	Fazilka (Punjab)	In honour of martyrs of battle of Beriwala.
13.	Tawang War Memorial	Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh)	In honour of martyrs of 1962 Sino-Indian Conflict.
14.	Agartala War Memorial	Agartala	Memory or martyrs of 1971 war (Op Cactus Lily)
15.	War Memorial Jaswantgarh	Nuranang	In memory of 4 Garh Rif Martyr Jaswant Singh in 1962 war.
16.	War Memorial Batasia Loop	Darjeeling	In memory of all Gorkha soldiers who attained martyrdom.
17.	Bogra Memorial	Binaguri	In commemoration of the capture of Bogra by troops of 20 Inf. Div. in 1971 war.
18.	Vijay Smarak	Fort William (Calcutta)	In honour of martyrs of 1971 war in Eastern Front.
19.	War Memorial Jat Regiment Centre	Bareilly	Martyrs of Jat Regt.
20.	AMC Centre and School war Memorial	Lucknow	In memory of martyrs of AMC, ADC and MNS.
21.	War Memorial PRC	Ramgarh (Bihar)	In recoginition of supreme sacrfice by Galley men.
22.	Saragarhi War Memorial	Ferozpore	In recognition of Battle of Saragarhi.
23.	War Memorial	Pune	In recognition of martyrs of 1965, 1971 wars.
24.	NOIDA Shaheed Samarak	NOIDA	In recognition of heroes of Kargil war.

[Translation]

Advertisements on Aeroplanes

805. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE:
SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme for displaying advertisements on Aeroplanes of Indian Airlines and other Airlines;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the revenue expected to be generated through this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Rule 37A of the Aircraft Rules, 1937 prohibits

displaying of advertisement on aircraft except with permission of DGCA. Such permission is granted by DGCA subject to the guidelines approved by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Permissions have been granted to Air Deccan and Raymonds so far.

(c) No fee is charged for giving the permission.

Renovation of Non-Metro Airports

806. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA:
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:
MOHD. SHAHID:
SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI:
SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA:
SHRI MUNSHI RAM:
SHRI A.K. MOORTHY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme for renovation of non-metro airports;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of non-metro airports selected for the purpose;

(d) the total expenditure likely to be incurred thereon and how the funds are to be mobilized; and

(e) the time by which the renovation work is likely to be started and completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has drawn up a plan for development of 25 tentatively selected non-metro airports. The plan aims for development of Passenger Terminal Buildings on air side and city side development in two phases. The list is being finalised depending on traffic density, regional distribution and other commercial aspects.

(d) AAI also plans to borrow funds to the extent of Rs. 3000-4000 crores from market through issue of bonds/syndication of loan for funding the development of non-metro projects.

(e) Techno Economic Feasibility Studies (TEFS) have been completed by Indian Financial Consultants (IFC) and Global Technical Advisors (GTA) for airports under phase-I. For remaining non-metro airports under phase-II, action is in hand for appointment of IFC and GTA to carry out TEFS. Target date specific to each airport will depend upon the viability and area of developments identified by the Consultants.

[English]

Filling up of Vacancies

807. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI GANESH SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has prepared any action plan to fill up 84,000 vacancies in safety category and over 8000 vacancies in Railway Protection Force;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time-frame fixed for filling up these vacancies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Railways have been directed to fill up about 80,000 vacant posts relating to Safety, Security and Operational categories either by direct recruitment from open market or promotion from amongst serving employees, as the case may be, by the year 2006. Recruitment has already been completed for 11,077 vacancies in Railway Protection Force (RPF). Appointment formalities for selected candidates are under process.

Facilities to Army Personnel

808. DR. K. DHANARAJU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the required facilities in hilly areas particularly in Kashmir and Ladakh are not being provided to Army Personnel where they are made to work in odd circumstances;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government has ever reviewed the facilities required by Army Personnel;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to provide the required facilities to Army Personnel?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Army Personnel working in Kashmir and Ladakh are provided special allowances (High Altitude allowance, Siachen Allowance, Composite Hill Compensatory Allowance wherever applicable) according to their authorization when posted in high altitude areas. Besides these allowances, all the standard facilites like canteen and medical facilities, postal services, are also provided.

(c) to (e) Facilities are reviewed on a regular basis and adequate budgetary support is being made available to provide necessary facilities.

[Translation]

Ban on Indian TV Channels in Bhutan

809. DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:

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

(a) whether Bhutan has imposed a ban on relay of several Indian TV channels in Bhutan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of those TV channels which have been banned in Bhutan alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Cable operators of Bhutan had taken off air the following foreign/Indian channels in Bhutan from April 1, 2005:—

— FTV

— Ten Sports

— All regional Indian channels like SUN TV, Asianet, ETV Bangla

— News channels like Aaj Tak, Zee News.

There was no formal directive from the Government and the above decision was taken by the cable operators themselves, following a series of articles which appeared in the media in Bhutan.

(c) As per these newspapers articles, the widespread feeling in Bhutan was that some channels were culturally degrading and were undermining Bhutanese cultural values, besides distracting students from their studies.

(d) The Indian Embassy in Bhutan has taken up the matter with the Government authorities both formally and informally, and most of the regional and news channels have since been restored.

Illegal Filling of LPG Cylinders

810. MOHD. MUKEEM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the illegal filling of LPG cylinders in urban villages of Delhi as reported in 'Dainik Jagran' on June 13, 2005;

(b) if so, whether any enquiry has been conducted by the Government in this regard;

(c) if so, the details alongwith findings thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check such illegal acts?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) On the basis of a news item published in the Delhi edition of 'Dainik Jagran' dated 13 June 2005, a discreet inquiry was conducted by Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL). They did not notice any pilferage of LPG from their LPG cylinders in the area of operation mentioned in the news item. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) have not also come across any case of illegal filling of LPG cylinders in the area mentioned. Nor have Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) come across any instances where illegal filling of gas is taking place.

As regards, the alleged activities of illegal filling of cylinders by some private parties as mentioned in the news item, the State Government is competent to take legal action against such parties in terms of the LPG (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) order 2000.

(d) The steps taken by the Government to check malpractices/irregularities in LPG distribution include:—

(i) LPG (Regulation of Supply and Distrubution) order, 2000 under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 have been promulgated. Under this Order, pilferage of LPG from cylinders is probibited.

(ii) State Governments are empowered to take action against erring distributors/persons under the provisions of the above Order.

(iii) Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG) for LPG distributors of Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have been laid down by Government prescribing strict punishment for offending distributors involved in the pilferage of LPG.

(iv) Officials of OMCs carry out random checks at distributor's godowns, delivery points as well as enroute to forestall pilferage. If pilferage is established, on any complaint, action is taken against the erring distributor in terms of the MDG or Distributorship Agreement.

Operation of Unauthorised Railway Agents

811. SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:
SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that a number of unauthorised railway agents are operating in the country and issue illegal tickets to the passengers;

(b) if so, the number of such agents arrested during each of the last three years;

(c) the action taken against them; and

(d) the stringent measures taken/to be taken to curb this practice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Some cases of unauthorised persons/anti-social elements indulging in illegal activities relating to issue of rail tickets have come to notice.

(b) and (c) The number of unauthorised rail agents arrested during the years 2002, 2003 and 2004 is 1139, 1545 and 2145 respectively. Out of the unauthorised agents so arrested, 851, 1218, 1765 were convicted in the three years under review.

(d) In order to curb their illegal activities, regular checks are conducted by the Commercial/Vigilance Departments and Police. Drives are also launched against unauthorised railway agents and persons so apprehended are dealt with as per relevant provisions of the law. Besides, during peak rush periods, monitoring at important locations is also stepped up.

[English]

Permission to Private Airlines

812. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has permitted Airone, Paramount Airways, King Fisher and Spice Jet Airways to operate their airlines; and

(b) if so, the routes for which permission has been granted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The Government has permitted M/s. King Fisher Airlines Ltd. and M/s. Royal Airways Ltd. (now M/s. Spicejet Ltd.) to operate scheduled services in the country. M/s. Paramount Airways Pvt. Ltd. and M/s. Air One Feeder Airline Pvt. Ltd. have been issued NOC to operate Scheduled and Non-Scheduled air transport services, respectively.

(b) Government has laid down Route Dispersal Guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country. It is, however, upto the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. As such, the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of Route Dispersal Guidelines issued by the Government.

Release of Central Assistance under Post-Matric Scholarship for OBC Studetns

813. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra had sent a proposal to the Union Government for sanction of financial assistance of Rs. 17183.35 lakh during 1997-98 to 2002-03 under the scheme of Post-Matric Scholarship for OBC students;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government had released only Rs. 439.40 lakh on March 30, 2005;

(c) if so, whether the Government of Maharashtra had requested the Union Government to release the balance amount;

(d) if so, the reasons for not releasing the balance amount to the Government of Maharashtra; and

(e) the time by which the balance is likely to be released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) Union Government had received a proposal from Government of Maharashtra for reimbursement of Rs. 120.68 lakhs for the amount already incurred by them during the year 1997-98 to 2001-02 and also a proposal for Rs. 26.96 lakhs for the year 2001-02 under Post Matric Scholarship for OBC students.

(b) An amount of Rs. 4,39,13,645/- was released on 30th March, 2002. No funds were released on March, 30, 2005.

(c) to (e) Govt. of Maharashtra further requested for release of funds to the tune of Rs. 200.00 crore during the year 2004-05 but no funds could be released due to non-availability of Utilisation Certificate of the funds released earlier to State Govt., Audited Accounts for the year 2002-03 onwards and number of persons benefited, by the State Govt. Union government releases these funds under the Scheme to States/UTs on receipt of proposals from them on year-to-year basis.

Gasification of Lignite Reserves

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

(a) whether the Government has taken steps to study and survey gasification of lignite reserves discovered in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Government of Rajasthan and the Gas Authority of India Ltd. (GAIL) in the matter;

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

(e) whether any foreign firm has also been involved in the above work; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL) have initialed a Memorandum of Understanding with Government of Rajasthan for the joint evaluation of the in situ Lignite gassification potential in the Barmer region of Rajasthan.

(e) and (f) GAIL have also signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with M/s. Ergo Energy Technologies Inc., Canada to establish a Lignite Gasification Plant in Barmer District of Rajasthan. The MoC is aimed at developing a long-term working relationship between GAIL and Ergo Energy aimed at enhancing the level of development of large coal resources that, for economic or technical reasons, are not exploited by conventional methods of coal/lignite mining.

Agreement between India and UK

815. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:
SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India has launched direct flights from Kolkata to London;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the agreement signed between India and UK for operation of flights from various locations in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Air India is currently operating 3 services per week from Kolkata to London.

(c) During the last round of government level talks between India and UK held on 12-13 April, 2005, the capacity entitlement for the designated airlines of both side has been increased to 42 services/week on Delhi/ Mumbai-London Heathrow route with effect from winter 2005. This will further go upto 49 services per week from summer 2006 and again to 56 services per week from winter 2006. Besides Mumbai and Delhi, the designated airlines of UK will also be entitled to operate on any other route between UK and India subject to a total capacity of 7 services per week to/from each airport in India with effect from winter 2005, except that in the case of Bangalore and Chennai only, the capacity limit will be increased to 14 services per week with effect from summer, 2006. All these services may be operated with 5th freedom rights to/from intermediate and beyond points. Reciprocally, from winter 2005, the designated airlines of India will be entitled to operate without capacity limit on any other route between India and UK.

FDI in Print Media

816. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:
SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY:
SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR:
SHRI ANANTA NAYAK:
SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:

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

(a) whether the Government has allowed foreign direct investment in the print media;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) its affect on the print media;

(d) whether the employees of print media organisations are opposing the foreign direct investment;

(e) if so, the main points of their opposition; and

(f) the reaction of the Government thereto?

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

(b) The detailed guidelines issued by this Ministry for the news and current affairs segment and non-news and non-current affairs segment are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) The decision to allow FDI in print media has been taken with a view to, inter alia, bring in greater diversity among newspapers and periodicals, bring national dailies to international standards and provide more economical and easier access to foreign scientific, technical and speciality magazines, journals and periodicals. The guidelines relating to FDI in news and current affairs segment have been revised on 13th July, 2005 enlarging the investor category to include Non Resident Indians/Persons of Indian Origin and portfolio investments by recognized Foreign Institutional Investors as also to allow facsimile editions of foreign newspapers in India, it is too early to gauge its impact.

(d) to (f) No such representations have been received.

Statement

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Guidelines for

(I) Publication of Newspapers and Periodicals Dealing with News and Current Affairs

(II) Publication of Facsimile Editions of Foreign Newspapers.

New Delhi,

Dated 13th July 2005.

Preamble

In supersession of the previous guidelines issued by this Ministry vide Press Note dated 21st November 2002 and in partial modification of the Press Note dated 5th July 2005, the Union Government have decided to allow, with immediate effect:—

(i) Foreign Direct Investment (which includes foreign direct investments by NRIs, PIOs) and portfolio investments by recognized FIIs, together upto a ceiling of 26% of paid up equity capital, in Indian entities publishing newspapers and periodicals dealing with news and current affairs. Such investment would be permissible by foreign entities having sound credentials and international standing, subject to certain conditions.

(ii) Facsimile editions, in whole or in part(s), of foreign newspapers, by Indian entities, with or without foreign investment, and also by foreign companies owning the original newspaper, provided they get incorporated and registered in India under the Companies Act, 1956.

The following guidelines are hereby prescribed:—

1. **Application**

(i) Nine copies of the prescribed application form, duly filled in, alongwith the requisite documents shall be submitted to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

(ii) Application Fee of Rs. 5000/- will have to be submitted through demand draft made in favour of Pay and Accounts Officer, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, payable at New Delhi.

2. **Title of the Publication**

Title verification shall continue to be done by the Press Registrar as per existing procedure, including for facsimile editions.

3. **Eligibility Criteria**

A. **Foreign Investment in Indian entities publishing newspapers and periodicals dealing with news and current affairs:—**

(i) Foreign Investment will be allowed only where the resultant entity (hereinafter called "New Entity") is a company registered with the Registrar of Companies under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956.

(ii) Foreign Investment including FDI by foreign entities, NRIs, PIOs etc. and portfolio investments by recognized FIIs, will be allowed upto a maximum of 26% of paid-up equity of the New Entity.

(iii) Permission will be granted only in cases where equity held by the largest Indian shareholder is at least 51% of the paid up equity, excluding the equity held by Public Sector Banks and Public Financial Institutions as defined in Section 4A of the Companies Act, 1956, in the New Entity. The term largest Indian shareholder used in this clause will include any or a combination of the following:—

(1) In the case of an individual shareholder,

(a) The individual shareholder

(b) A relative of the shareholder within the meaning of section 6 of the Companies Act, 1956

(c) A company/Group of companies in which the individual shareholder/HUF to which the belongs, has management and controlling interest

(2) In the case of an Indian company,

(a) The Indian company

(b) A group of Indian companies under the same management and ownership control.

Provided that in case of a combination of all or any of the entities mentioned in sub-clause (1) and (2) above, each of the parties shall have entered into a legally binding agreement to act as a single unit in managing the matters of the New Entity.

(iv) While calculating the 26% foreign investment in the equity of the New Entity, the foreign holding component, if any, in the equity of the Indian shareholder companies of the New Entity will be duly reckoned on pro rata basis so as to arrive at the total foreign holding in the New Entity.

(v) At least 50% of the foreign direct investment will have to be inducted by issue of fresh equity. The balance, viz. upto 50% of the foreign direct investment, may be inducted through transfer of existing equity.

(vi) Permission would be conditional on at least 3/4th of the Directors on the Board of Directors of the New Entity and all key executives and editorial staff being resident Indians.

B. **Facsimile Editions of foreign newspapers:—**

(i) Any Indian entity, with or without foreign investment, desirous of publishing a facsimile edition of a foreign newspaper, or any foreign company owning the original foreign newspaper will be permitted to publish the facsimile edition of its newspaper, in whole or in part(s), provided

(a) It is incorporated and registered as a company with the Registrar of Companies under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956.

(b) It has a commercial presence in India with its principal place of business in India.

(c) That at least 3/4th of the Directors on the Board of Directors of the New Entity and all key executives and editorial staff are resident Indians.

(ii) Any entity publishing a facsimile edition of a foreign newspaper in India shall be subject to all the relevant laws and guidelines applicable to Indian newspapers and their publishers.

4. **Basic Conditions/Obligations:—**

(i) Subject to the ceiling prescribed, it will be obligatory on the part of the all Entities to inform Ministry of Information and Broadcasting about any alteration in the foreign shareholding pattern as on 31st March of every year and within 15 days of the end of the financial year.

(ii) It will be obligatory on the part of the all entities to take prior permission from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting before effecting any changes in the shareholding of the largest Indian shareholder indicated in clause 3A (iii) above.

(iii) All entities shall inform Ministry of Information and Broadcasting within 15 days of effecting any change in the composition of its Board of Directors or key executives and editorial staff. Such a change would be subject to pIst-facto approval of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

(iv) All entities shall obtain prior clearance of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of any foreigners/NRIs proposed to be employed/ engaged in the New Entity either as consultants (or in any other capacity) for more than 60 days in a year, or, as regular employees.

(v) Facsimile editions shall be permitted subject to the following conditions:—

(a) The original foreign newspaper, whose facsimile edition is proposed to be brought out in India, is being published with the approval of the regulatory authority of the country of origin and is a standard publication in that country and is not specially designed for Indian readers.

(b) The facsimile edition shall not carry any advertisements aimed at Indian readers in any form.

(c) The facsimile edition shall not carry any locally generated content/India specific content, which is not simultaneously published in the original edition of foreign newspaper.

(d) Prior permission from Ministry of Information and Broadcast is obtained for publication of facsimile editions and the title got registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI).

(e) The publication shall clearly indicate that it is a facsimile edition, in whole or in part(s), and shall prominently carry the masthead, the editorial page and the place of publication of the original foreign newspaper.

5. **Processing of Applications**

(i) All new applications for foreign investments in Indian entities publishing newspapers and periodicals dealing with news and current affairs and proposals for publishing of facsimile editions of foreign newspapers, shall be processed and decided upon in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on the basis of inter-ministerial consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs and other ministries, as may be required.

(ii) The applicant entity shall make full disclosure, at the time of application, of Shareholders' Agreements and Loan Agreements that are finalized or proposed to be entered into. Any subsequent change in these shall be disclosed to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting within fifteen days of such a change.

(iii) The applicant entity shall frame its Articles/ Memorandum of Association to ensure compliance with the prescribed eligibility criteria.

(iv) All entities shall obtain prior clearance from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of all persons not being resident Indians who are proposed to be inducted in the Board of Directors of the New Entity.

(v) All applications for publishing facsimile editions shall clearly indicate whether the facsimile edition is to be published in whole or in part. In case only a part of the original foreign newspaper is proposed to be published, each page shall be treated as one part, and the exact page numbers of the original foreign newspaper to be published, shall be clearly indicated.

Guidelines for

(i) Publication of Indian Editions of Foreign Technical/Scientific/Speciality Magazines/ Journals/Periodicals; and

(ii) Foreign Investment in Indian Entities Publishing Scientific/Technical/Speciality Magazines/Journals/Periodicals

Preamble

The Union Government has decided to allow:—

(i) publication of Indian editions of foreign scientific, technical and speciality magazines/ periodicals/Journals; and

(ii) foreign investment upto 100% in Indian entities publishing scientific/technical and speciality magazines/Periodicals/Journals.

1. **Application**

(i) An applicaiton shall be made to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in the prescribed format to determine the nature of contents of the publication.

(ii) Application fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees Five thousand only) shall have to be deposited through a Demand Draft in favour of the Pay and Accounts Officer, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, payable at New Delhi.

2. **Processing**

(i) The application shall be processed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcating, after due inter-Ministerial consultations, to decide whether the proposed publication is covered under the category of scientific, technical or speciality magazine/periodical/journal. Representatives of the concerned Ministries/ specialist bodies and language experts, as found necessary will be associated in this task. In appropriate cases, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will issue:—

(a) An approcal, subject to compliance with the provisions of the Press and Registration of Books Act and Rules made thereunder for publication of the foreign journal; or

(b) A No Objection Certificate (NOC) for foreign investment, a copy of which would be sent to RNI/SIA/RBI and the applicant.

(ii) Determination of category assigned to the publication(s) is liable for review by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting if the contents of the publications(s) undergo change at a later date.

(iii) (a) In cases where both FDI and FII investment is envisaged, the applicant may approach the FIPB/RBI for clearance after obtaining the No Objection Certificate from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

(b) In cases involving only portfolio investment, the applicant may approach the Reserve Bank of India, for further clearance, if any, after obtaining the No Objection Certificate from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

(c) The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will keep the Secretariat for Industrial Assistance and the Reserve Bank of India informed of the FDI projected by the Company and the balance permissible foreign investment on the portfolio investment route, while communicating the No Objection.

3. **Title of the Publication**

Title verification shall continue to be done by the Press Registrar as per existing procedure.

4. **Foreign Investment**

(i) Total foreign investment upto 100% may be allowed. Guidelines of the Ministry of Finance on FDI and portfolio investment would apply.

(ii) All cases involving Foreign Investment shall be handled by the prescribed agencies, viz. FDI on the government approval route through the mechanism of the FIPB and portfolio investment by the RBI.

Derailment of Trains

817. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been many derailment of passenger trains mainly attributed to faulty wheels;

(b) if so, the details of derailments of trains due to faulty wheels reported during each of the last two years;

(c) whether the Government is considering any proposal to adopt high cost technology to identify hairline fractures in the wheels and axles of bogies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the expenditure to be incurred thereon?

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

(b) During 2003-2004 four derailments to passenger trains took place due to defects in wheels. During 2004-2005 only one such derailment took place.

(c) an (d) Railway have upgraded the specification for coaching wheels to include fracture toughness so that the crack propagation is reduced. Manufacturers of wheels for coaches have already installed on-line ultrasonic testing and magnetic particle testing to detect hairline cracks on newly manufactured wheels. To identify the cracks in axles during service, ultrasonic test of axles is also done during workshop attention.

Railways are now making efforts to develop on-line ultrasonic testing of wheel discs to identify the cracks in service. For this purpose, Phase Array Ultrasonic Flaw Detectors is being considered. The cost of one such equipment (Phase Array Ultrasonic Flaw Detector) including installation is approximately Rs. one crore.

Civil Aviation Policy

818. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISNA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to bring out a comprehensive civil aviation policy;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the salient features thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be announced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Civil Aviation had constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Naresh Chandra, former Cabinet Secretary to prepare a roadmap for civil aviation sector that will provide the basis for a new National Civil

Aviation Policy. The Committee had submitted the first part of the report on 08-12-2003 and second part on 02-11-2004. In consultation with the stakeholders in the aviation sector, the draft of the National Civil Aviation Policy is presently under inter-ministerial consultation before being submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

Funds for Ongoing Railway Projects

819. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Railways has been allocated very meagre funds for the ongoing railway projects in West Bengal;

(b) if so, whether the Railways would allocate sufficient funds to speed up the railway projects in the State in future; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Rebate for Cargo

820. SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have recently announced rebate for cargo carried during the lean season;

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

(c) whether the Railways have also announced certain relaxation in the rules for penalizing detention of wagons beyond a specified time; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Freight concession of 20% for traffic in empty flow direction of wagon and freight concession of 15% for loading during non-peak period is admissible subject to fulfillment of certain terms and conditions. Either of these two concessions can be availed at a time during the period from July, 2005 to September, 2005. These concessions have been announced with a view to fully utilize the transport capacity of the Railways and to attract incremental freight traffic.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The following relaxations have been permitted in the free time allowed for loading and unloading of wagons w.e.f. 15-7-2005:—

— Free time for loading and unloading of jumbo rakes has been increased uniformly from 8 hours to 9 hours.

— Free time for unloading of tank wagon rakes has been increased from 5 hours to 7 hours.

— The maximum limit of additional free time for extra shunting, placement/removal of rakes etc. has been increased to 2 hours.

— Free time for mechanized unloading of open wagons has been increased from 5 hours to 6 hours.

[Translation]

Inclusion of Bishnoi Caste in OBC List

821. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received any request for inclusion of 'Bishnoi' caste of Rajasthan in the central list of other backward classes;

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

(c) the time by which the request is likely to be acceded to?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The inclusion of a caste/community in the Central List of OBCs is decided on the advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC). The NCBC had examined the requests for inclusion of 'Bishnoi' caste of Rajasthan and had not advised for their inclusion in the Central List of OBCs for Rajasthan.

[English]

Export of Services by ONGC

822. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC has launched a drive to export knowledge, technology and constancy in the field of oil exploration and exploitation of oil resources;

(b) if so, the details of the plan indicating the targets contemplated thereunder;

(c) whether the Corporation has already secured contracts or signed MoUs for export of such services from Middle East and South East Asia; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Oil Natural Gas Corporation Limited is pursuing business opportunities in the Training, Constancy and Services segment of hydrocarbon industry aboard in West South East Asia, Africa and Latin America.

ONGC have secured and successfully completed the following contracts in last two years:—

1. Renovation of Drilling Rig of M/s. BAPEX, Bangladesh.
2. Training to Technical, Material Management and Exploration personnel of M/s. GNPOC, Sudan covering various aspects of upstream business.
3. Training to Drilling Personnel of M/s. ADCO Abu Dhabi on Advanced Drilling Technology.
4. Training to the executives of NIOC, Iran on well control and exploration activities.
5. Training to the executives of M/s. Statsoilie, Surinam on Advanced Heavgy Oil Recovery through Insitu-Combustion Technology and Polymer Flooding.

Contract for Geo-Chemistry Soil Sampling and Analysis for M/s. GNPOC, Sudan for quick reconnaissance survey of drillable prospects.

Gauge Conversion on Pandarpur-Miraj Line

823. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE PATIL:
SHRIMATI KALPNA RAMESH NARHIRE:
SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress so far made on the proposed gauge conversion of Pandarpur-Miraj line in Maharashtra;

(b) whether the Government has received any memorandum regarding slow implementation of gauge conversion of Pandarpur-Miraj line;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the funds earmarked for the said project during 2005-06; and

(e) the steps taken to complete the gauge conversion of the said line expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Miraj-Pandarpur is a part of Miraj-Latur Gauge Conversion project. The work has been taken up in this stretch. Overall progress of the project is 48%.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. References have been received regarding expediting gauge conversion of Miraj-Pandarpur and Kuruduwadi-Latur section.

(d) and (e) An outlay of Rs. 35 crore has been provided for the entire project during 2005-06. Necessary funds have been allotted as per the availability.

Export Parity Price

824. SHRI SURESH KURUP: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state the export parity price of petrol and diesel during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): Export parity price would be essentially based on the concept of export realization which inter alia includes (i) average FOB at Arab Gulf (AG) + AG Premiums + Quality Premiums (based on Platts and Argus data) and (ii) the Advance Licence Benefit computed based on the Standard Input Output Norms (SION) on the quantum of Customs Duty on Crude taking into account the average Crude Oil Prices for Dubai Crude as per Platts, Ocean Freight from Fateh Port in AG to Jamnagar Port in India based on World Scale 100 and AFRA adjustments and other charges.

Accordingly, on an average notional basis for the last three years, export parity prices for petrol and diesel ex-Jamnagar port work out, as under:—

Rs./KL

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Petrol	9466.61	10175.35	13983.27
Diesel	9999.39	10158.93	14555.91

[Translation]

Stoppage of Express Trains at Unnao Station

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

(a) whether the Government has received requests/ representations to provide stoppage to Gomti Express, Pushpak Express and other express trains at Unnao railway station in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof as on date; and

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Requests have been received for stoppage of various trains at Unnao. Instructions have been issued for provision of stoppage of 4025/4026 Delhi-Azamgarh Kaifiat Express at Unnao with effect from 01-08-2005 on experimental basis for six months. However, stoppage of other trains at Unnao has not been found feasible, at present.

[English]

Amount Spent on Historical Places

826. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Archaeological Survey of India has been spending huge amount on the protection of historical places in the country;

(b) if so, the amount spent thereon during each of the last three years;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to develop historical places/monuments as tourist spots;

(d) whether the Minister of Culture requested the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide services of para-military forces for protection of historical places; and

(e) if so, the decision taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The details of expenditure incurred on protection and conservation of

centrally protected monuments under the jurisdiction of Archaeological Survey of India are as under:—

2002-03	Rs. 8034.59 lakhs
2003-04	Rs. 10706.03 lakhs
2004-05	Rs. 11595.98 lakhs

(c) The steps taken by the Government include conservation, preservation, environmental development and development of tourist facilities and amenities like toilets, drinking water, interpretation centre, provision of guides, tourists literature, etc.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The Central Industrial Security Force has been deployed at Taj Mahal in Agra and Red Fort in Delhi.

National Monuments

827. SHRI JUAL ORAM:

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that some of the national monuments are on the verge of collapse;

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

(c) the steps being taken by the Government for repairing of these monuments?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir. The ancient monuments of national importance are protected and conserved by the Archaeological Survey of India.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) The Archaeological Survey of India undertakes conservaion, protection and environmental development of the nationally protected monuments besides taking up special repairs wherever necessary through their annual conservation programme.

Special Central Assistance for SCs

828. SHRI SURESH ANGADI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the population of SCs according to 2001 Census, State/Union Territory-wise;

(b) the total Special Central Assistance (SCA) released to different States/Union Territories for implementing Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes during each of the last three years and the current year, State/Union Territory-wise;

(c) whether only 55 per cent of the total allocation of Special Central Assistance has been utilized by the States/Union Territores;

(d) if so, the details of utilization of SCA by States/UTs during the said period, State/UT-wise;

(e) the reasons for such a low utilization; and

(f) the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) Statement-I is enclosed.

(b) Statement-II showing State-wise details of Special Central Assistance released during last three years is enclosed.

(c) No. Sir.

(d) and (e) State-wise details of Utilisation of Special Central Assistance are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

(f) The Utilisation of Special Central Assistance funds released to States/UTs is monitored through Quarterly Progress Report and Annual Progress Report Submitted by State Governments.

Statement-I

Statewise Scheduled Caste Population According to 2001 Census

Sl. No.	States/UTs	Scheduled Caste (SC)
1	2	3
	India	166,635,700
1.	Andhra Pradesh	12,339,496
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	6,188
3.	Assam	1,825,949
4.	Bihar	13,048,608
5.	Goa	23,791
6.	Gujarat	3,592,715
7.	Haryana	4,091,110
8.	Himachal Pradesh	1,502,170
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	770,155
10.	Karnataka	8,563,930
11.	Kerala	3,123,941
12.	Madhya Pradesh	9,155,177
13.	Maharashtra	9,881,656
14.	Manipur	60,037
15.	Meghalaya	11,139
16.	Mizoram	272
17.	Nagaland	0
18.	Orissa	6,082,063
19.	Punjab	7,028,723
20.	Rajasthan	9,694,462
21.	Sikkim	27,165
22.	Tamil Nadu	11,857,504
23.	Tripura	555,724
24.	Uttar Pradesh	35,148,377
25.	West Bengal	18,452,555
26.	Chhattisgarh	2,418,722
27.	Jharkhand	3,189,320
28.	Uttaranchal	1,517,186
	Union Territories	
29.	Andaman and Nicobar	0
30.	Chandigarh	157,597
31.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	4,104
32.	Daman and Diu	4,838
33.	Delhi	2,343,255
34.	Lakshadweep Islands	0
35.	Pondicherry	157,771

Statement-II

Release and utilisation of Special Central Assistance during the last three years and the current year

Sl. No.	States/UTs	2002-2003		2003-04		2004-05		2005-06	
		Release	Utilisation (Including out of unspent balance from previous years)	Release	Utilisation (Including out of unspent balance from previous years)	Release	Utilisation (Including out of unspent balance from previous years)	Release (Instalment releases as on 25-7-05)	Utilisation
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Andhra Pradesh	7216.48	6367.17	6222.90	5595.74	4362.72	2880.64	1102.25	
2.	Assam	512.76	514.50	625.21	305.76	800.00	731.14	332.21	
3.	Bihar	0	0.00	933.00	500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
4.	Chhattisgarh	430.25	374.58	408.29	382.60	339.05	0.00	0.00	
5.	Gujarat	559.73	1398.79	644.46	996.88	705.82	552.87	0.00	
6.	Goa	0.00	0.32	0.00	0.59	0.00	0.05	0.00	
7.	Haryana	1098.19	856.22	1434.00	835.45	560.14	2074.51	491.34	
8.	Himachal Pradesh	447.99	428.96	248.66	348.87	587.47	583.16	463.74	
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	122.88	208.55	148.46	112.69	495.08	0.00	0.00	Utilisation reports for the release of first instalment
10.	Jharkhand	0.00	564.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
11.	Karnataka	2386.12	2368.12	2124.76	2124.76	2951.8	1417.16	1225.55	
12.	Kerala	0.00	1189.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13.	Madhya Pradesh	2598.12	2390.5	2955.43	3277.34	2506.90	3146.38	1163.81	made in 2005-06 are expected in the IInd and IIIrd quarters of the year.
14.	Maharashtra	1077.10	2906.02	1991.36	2881.63	2924.36	3638.68	1157.42	
15.	Manipur	0.00	32.52	4.42	1.90	3.82	7.99	11.12	
16.	Orissa	1792.01	1795.82	779.30	745.63	345.70	728.64	0.00	
17.	Punjab	0.00	1289.85	680.03	380.28	0.00	89.62	0.00	
18.	Rajasthan	3422.90	4013.92	2984.25	3698.47	2368.68	3368.02	1437.76	
19.	Sikkim	42.21	42.20	1.12	34.76	15.44	0.00	0.00	
20.	Tamil Nadu	4500.71	4182.03	3800.74	5123.08	4327.89	6274.60	1632.49	
21.	Tripura	176.91	124.80	76.80	178.91	1198.20	113.12	142.03	
22.	Uttar Pradesh	10173.64	13417.92	7817.94	12372.55	9737.98	11642.39	4776.52	
23.	Uttaranchal	174.57	521.10	407.74	538.34	476.08	512.74	495.29	
24.	West Bengal	6640.50	6037.34	3994.68	3753.66	4672.27	2626.98	1390.22	
25.	Chandigarh	25.00	12.50	12.50	3.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	
26.	Delhi	0.00	545.23	99.37	423.91	41.87	51.81	42.08	
27.	Pondicherry	5.81	5.81	3.13	3.13	7.35	0.00	4.79	
	Total	43403.88	51606.11	38398.55	44620.06	39426.62	40438.50	15868.62	

Promotion of Sports

829. SHRI PARSURAM MAJHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the funds earmarked by the Railways for promotion of sports during each of the last three years, zone-wise; and

(b) the specific steps taken by East Coast Railway for promoting sports during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There is no provision of zone-wise earmarking of funds for promotion of sports in the Railways. Funds for sports promotion is distributed to zonal Railways/Production Units after getting their demands, shortlisting them as per the justification and priority and finally distributing the same to different Zonal Railways/Production Units.

(b) East Coast Railway have taken following steps for promotion and developments of sports:—

(i) Extension of Indoor Badminton Hall with wooden flooring at Head Quarters.

(ii) Development of Multi Gymnasium at Head Quarters.

(iii) Construction of new wooden floor Badminton hall at Khurda Road Division.

(iv) Development of extension Railway Stadium to accommodate 400 metres Athletics track at Waltair division.

(v) Development of Kabaddi Ground, Hockey Ground and Football Ground at Sambalpur Division.

(vi) Development of Basketball Ground at Head Quarters.

(vii) Development of Multi Gymnasium at Khurda Road Division, Sambalpur Division, Visakhapatnam Division and Mancheswar Workshop.

Over-Utilisation of Ahmedabad Mumbai Railway Lines

830. SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government is aware that the existing capacity of Ahmedabad-Mumbai Railway Line has been over-utilised; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to augment the capacity of this line?

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

(b) To augment the capacity between Ahmedabad and Mumbai, the following works are in progress:—

1. Automatic signaling in following sections: Dahanu Road-Valsad, Valsad-Bhestan, Surat-Vadodara and Vadodara-Anand
2. Providing additional loop at Panoli
3. Additions and alterations in Vadodara Yard
4. Extension of existing loop at Bajuwa
5. Conversion of 'C' Class station into 'B' Class at Kashipura and Vernama
6. Additional loops at seven stations: Vaitarna, Kelve Road, Udvada, Pardi, Atul, Vercha and Sachin.

Issuance of Complimentary Passes

831. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria followed for issuance of complimentary passes and concessions to individuals and organizations;

(b) the authorities who are competent to issue free passes/concessions and the number of passes/ concessions for which they are authorized;

(c) the number of passes issued during each of last three years:

(d) whether any limit has been prescribed for the Minister of Railways for issuing complimentary passes; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Complimentary card passes and cheque passes (single to and fro journey) to individuals/organizations are issued as per guidelines framed pursuant to the directives of Delhi High Court. Concession is also granted to Patients, Students, Artists etc.

(b) The authority competent to issue complimentary card passes, cheque passes and concessions is Minister of Railways. Besides, Minister of State for Railways and Member, Railway Board are competent to issue complimentary cheque passes. In a financial year, card passes can be issued in favour of 300 persons and cheque passes in favour of 2000 persons.

(c) During financial years 2002-03 and 2003-04 no complimentary card pass has been issued. However, during 2004-05, 21 card passes have been issued. During financial year 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 complimentary cheque passes in favour of 897, 988 and 458 persons respectively have been issued.

(d) and (e) A limit of card passes for 300 persons and cheque passes for 2000 persons has been prescribed in a financial year.

Air Traffic at Palam Airport

832. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a significant increase in the air traffic at the Palam Airport at Delhi;

(b) if so, whether due to increase in the air passengers traffic, the infrastructure at the Terminal 1B is not sufficient to handle the air traffic; and

(c) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to provide adequate infrastructure at the above Terminal to handle the air traffic?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. During peak periods infrastructure constraints are being experienced at Terminal 1B.

(c) Steps are being taken by Airports Authority of India (AAI) to bring in use the unused portion of Terminal 1B to improve services to the passengers of low cost airlines. Further, it has been decided to upgrade and modernise the airport through public-private partnership aiming to make it a world-class airport. AAI has also taken steps for rapid exit taxi tracks, parallel taxi track to secondary runway and parking bays. Besides, AAI is also under taking steps to increase the number of aircrafts movements through improvement in procedures etc.

[Translation]

Losses Due to Piracy

833. SHRI SURESH CHANDEL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the entertainment industry in India is incurring huge losses because of piracy;

(b) if so, the estimated loss incurred annually on account of piracy; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to curb piracy?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) According to the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) the revenue loss from film piracy is about Rs. 1200 crores annually. As far as the Music Industry is concerned, the Indian Music Industry (IMI) has informed

that the size of the music industry has fallen from Rs. 1000 crores in 1999 to Rs. 500 crores in 2004 due to piracy. The Ministry does not have any other data.

(c) The Copyright Act, 1957, which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Human Resource Development contains, *inter alia*, legal provisions regarding copyright in cinematograph films and music. The responsibility for dealing with offences under the Copyright Act rests with the police authorities of the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. Copyright Enforcement cells have been set up in most States/UT Administrations headed by a senior police officer to deal with such offences.

Apart from this, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has taken the following steps to fight piracy in the film sector:—

— This Ministry has a Plan Scheme to undertake activities relating to anti piracy measures.

— The Ministry has initiated action to formulate appropriate training modules for police officers to train them for anti-piracy.

— In September 2001, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting brought together representatives of the film producers, multi-service operators and cable operators who have jointly resolved not to exhibit films without valid permission from the copyright holders.

— Recognizing that high levels of entertainment tax lead to piracy, the Committee for Development of the Entertainment Sector, a sub committee of the 24th State Information Ministers' Conference, recommended that the rate of entertainment tax be lowered to a ceiling of 45%. In the recent SIMCON it was felt that the ceiling should be further lowered to 25-30%.

— The same Committee also recommended appointment of senior police officers in States to work in co-ordination with the entertainment industry, as nodal officers.

— During the Budget of 2003-04, audio CDs were exempted from excise duty to do away with the price advantage available to pirated CDs.

— The Public Service Broadcasting Trust has been entrusted with the task of making a film on piracy.

— The Cable Television Networks Regulation Act has been amended in 2000, to prohibit a Cable operator from transmitting or re-transmitting any programme or channel for which the Copyright holder has not granted him a license.

— The Ministry has requested Chief Secretaries of all States to advise District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police to include anti piracy measures in their monthly activity reports.

— In the meeting of the 25th State Information Ministers, piracy emerged as a key concern for most State Governments and some measures were considered in order to deter piracy in the film and music industry.

— This Ministry has also made suggestions for restricting incidence of piracy in the film and music sector while considering the on going amendments to the Copyright Act.

— National Film Development Corporation Ltd. has been commissioned to make spots for running an anti piracy campaign on prominent national and satellite channels. This Ministry has requested industry Associations to persuade films stars to work on this campaign in order to make it an effective one.

— This Ministry is consulting FICCI to explore the possibility of enacting an Optical Disc Law.

[English]

Clearance of Baggage at Airports

834. SHRI K.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that there are long queues at the airports for clearance of baggages;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to set up a single agency to handle of baggages screening at the Airports; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) During peak periods, there are queues at airports for security check of registered baggages.

(b) and (c) On experimental basis Indian Airlines and Air India have been nominated since January, 2004 as Single Agency for screening of hold baggage at International terminals of Delhi and Mumbai airports respectively. Their performance is being monitored regularly by the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security.

Procurement of Computers

835. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of computers purchased during 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 by the Ministry of Defence and attached offices and the expenditure incurred thereon;

(b) the source of procuring those computers and the procedure adopted in their procurements;

(c) whether the General Financial Rules (GFRs) and OM No. 8(4)/E.II(A)/98, dated December 17, 1998 issued by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance was followed in the purchase of computers;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to ensure that GFRs and above said OM is followed meticulously by the offices attached to Ministry of Defence?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) 8595 computers were purchased during 2004-2005 for Rs. 3135.39 lacs. In 2005-2006, so far, 678 computers for Rs. 231.48 lacs have been purchased.

(b) Computers have been procured from various sources viz., DGS and D, NCCF, Kendriya Bhandar and Open Tenders as per prescribed procedure.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The GFRs and above said OM are being followed.

[Translation]

Land for Commercial Use

836. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has provided its land to some private companies on lease for commercial purposes on revenue sharing basis;

(b) if so, the number of private companies to whom the AAI has given its land on lease till March 31, 2005;

(c) the revenue share received by AAI from the private companies during each of the last three years;

(d) the revenue share of AAI outstanding as on March 31, 2005; and

(e) the steps taken by AAI to recover the outstanding amount from the concerned parties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) The Airports Authority of India (AAI) leases land under various categories at all the AAI airports. The purpose of allotment

is also for varied usage. Since, this is a vast exercise and requires collection of data from each one of the airports, the same is being obtained.

[English]

Gauge Conversion of MG Lines into BG Lines

837. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways has conducted any survey to convert Bareilly-Pilibhit-Lakhimpur-Sitapur meter gauge rail line into broad gauge line;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which the said railway line is likely to be converted; and

(d) if not, the time by which the said line is likely to be converted into broad gauge line?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A survey for gauge conversion of Lucknow-Bareilly via Sitapur-Lakhimpur-Pilibhit was conducted in the year 2004-05. As per the survey report, cost of conversion of this 301.79 Km long line was assessed as Rs. 473.50 crore with a Rate of Return (ROR) of 5%. In view of acute constraints of resources and heavy throwforward of ongoing projects, it was not found feasible to consider the proposed work.

[Translation]

Development of Railway Stations in Bihar

838. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the name of railway stations in Bihar to be developed by the Government during the current year;

(b) whether expansion/renovation works have been started at Pirpainti Railway Station;

(c) if so, the time by which expansion/renovation works are likely to be completed at the said station; and

(d) the funds earmarked for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Upgradation/renovation/ modernisation of railway stations is a continuous process and the same is undertaken every year in accordance with the laid down norms based on traffic growth and inter-se priorities. In addition, improvements at stations are also carried out as a part of Doublings, Traffic Facility works, Gauge Conversions and computerisation, etc. The names of stations in Bihar where works relating to development of Railway Stations are in progress are as under:—

Abhaipur	Chausa	Hathua	Mahesh Khunte	Pussa Road
Akbarnagar	Chhapra Jn.	Hathua	Mahipal Road	Ragendranagar Bihar
Amba Pindapur	Dalsingh Sarai	Hatidah	Malda Town	Rajnagar
Ara	Danapur	Jamalpur	Mananpur	Rajta Halt
Aunta Halt	Darbhanga	Jangipur	Mandarhill	Ratanpur
Autar Nagar	Dariapur	Jay Murti Nagar	Masudan	Raxaul
Bairgania	Dashratpur	Jhajha	Mehasi	Sagauli

Baktiarpur	Daudpur	Kachiana Halt	Mekra Memerkhabad	Sahibganj
Banka Ghat	Dauram Madhepura	Kahalgaon	Mirza Chouki	Sahja
Barauni	Deepnagar Halt	Kahalgaon	Mokama	Sakri
Bargenia	Desari	Kajra	Mor	Salimpur Bihar
Barh	Dhamdhartla	Kalyanchak	Motihari	Samastipur
Barharwa	Dhanauri	Kalyanpur Road	Muktapur	Sasan Halt
Barsoi	Dholi	Kamtaul	Murari Halt	Sathi
Bashdevpur Chandel	Dighwara	Karamtola	Muzaffarpur	Sidhwalia
Basvachak	Dumraon	Karanpurato	Narkatiaganj	Sitamarhi
Bealehpur Halt	Dumri Halt	Karauta	Naugachhia	Siwan
Betiah	Ekchari	Karukhirhar Halt	Navada	Sudhani
Bhabhua	Ekma	Katihar	Naya Nagar	Talwabazar
Bhagalpur	Gangania	Khajoli	Nayagaon	Tapaswi Naraya Halt
Bhairopatti Halt	Gaya	Khaltipur	New Farakka	Tehta
Biharsharif	Ghorasahan	Kishanganj	Nimtita	Tekabigha
Bijuli Halt	Gidhaur	Kishanpur	Pandol	Thawe
Bikramshila	Ragendranagar Coaching Complex	Kunderhalt	Patna	Tinpahar
Bonidanga	Gulzar Bagh	Laheraiasarai	Patna Saheb	Uren
Chailaha Halt	Hardasbigha	Mabbi Halt	Pirpainti	Vachaspati Nagar
Chakiya	Harpatti Halt	Madhubani	Purnea	

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Extension of platform No. 1 and additional Platform shed at Pirpainti railway station has been completed. Other planned expansion/renovation works are targeted for completion by July 2006. The cost of such works is about Rs. 53 lakh and provision for 2005-06 is about Rs. 22 lakh.

[English]

National Heritage Sites Commission

839. KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH:
SHRI SITA RAM YADAV:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government proposes to

set up a National Heritage Sites Commission for framing a policy for preservation of the heritage sites in the country;

(b) if so, the details including the composition and terms of reference thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Culture proposes to constitute a National Heritage Sites Commission. As the present legal and institutional framework is not adequate to address the documentation, inventorisation and conservation of built heritage in its broadest outline, it is proposed to constitute a Heritage Sites Commission. The Commission would lay down broad policy guidelines and take steps to ensure that such guidelines are observed.

The composition and mandate of the proposed Heritage Sites Commission is being worked out. It is expected that the Commission would:—

— tender advice to the Government on heritage matters.

— frame guidelines in the matter of conservation of heritage monuments and sites.

— can study or cause to study in important matters regarding conservation of heritage and submit reports to the Government.

— suggest appropriate amendments to the existing heritage legislations, with specific terms of references for stocktaking and studying the present heritage laws and regulations, the practices followed in the leading European countries and suggest the ways of setting up a Heritage Site.

(c) The Commission could be set up after the enactment of an appropriate legislation, on which work is on.

[Translation]

Use of Kulhar, Khadi in Railways

840. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA:
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:
MOHD. SHAHID:
SHIR MUNSHI RAM:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have decided to subsidise the use of Kulhar and Khadi and also remove the ban on sale of cold drinks in trains/stations as appeared in Dainik Jagran dated june 15, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons for such move;

(c) whether the Railways are incurring losses due to use of Kulhar, Khadi and ban on sale of cold drinks since the introduction of these items in Railways;

(d) if so, the losses incurred by the Railways therefrom zone-wise; and

(e) the Railways zones where the scheme has remained unsuccessful?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Railways do not subsidise use of Kulhar and Khadi. They are purchased at rates prevalent in the market. No ban was imposed on the sale of cold drinks in the trains/stations.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

(e) Use of Kulhar and Khadi are eco-friendly and by and large popular over Indian Railways.

[English]

Policy on Rural Habitat

841. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high level panel of Government

officials, representatives from Private Sector and social workers has called for a separate policy on rural habitat with the Panchayati Raj Institutions as reported in the Hindu dated May 9, 2005;

(b) if so, whether the Government has framed any policy in this regard; and

(c) if not, the time by which it is likely to be framed and announced?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) During the Seminar reported in *The Hindu* May 9, 2005, no separate policy has been called for on Rural Habitats with Panchayati Raj Institutions but suggestions were made that Panchayati Raj Institutions be involved in the planning and development of Rural Habitats.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Since this was a suggestion before a Seminar, it is pre-mature to conclude that this suggestion will be incorporated in the Policy.

Development of Kaveri Engines

842. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in spite of spending a huge amount on the Kaveri engine project, the engine is not yet ready for high altitude flight tests;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether DRDO is now actively considering for global technical partner for the development of Kaveri engine;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time schedule chalked out for the development of Kaveri engine?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Kaveri and Kabini (core engine) have been tested in simultated High Altitude Testing Facility in Russia in three spells from August 1998, as on date. Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is also planning to send Kaveri (K-9) engine for Flying Test Bed trials in December 2005/January 2006.

(c) and (d) The DRDO has reviewed and assessed that significant risk reduction may accrue through a partnership in engine development and production, to meet "production release" goals of Kaveri for LCA by 2009. Expressions of Interest have been sought from all reputed military engine manufacturers to assess the level of interest in such a proposal.

(e) Kaveri is planned to be integrated with LCA by March, 2007 and production release by 2009.

Assistance to Ex-Servicemen

843. DR. K. KHANARAJU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that after retirement the Army Personnel are not being helped by the Resettlement Directorate of Armed Forces;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of complaints received by the Government in this regard; and

(d) the effective steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to help the retired Army Personnel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) Directorate General Resettlement (DGR) provides facilities and implements various schemes for welfare and resettlement of ex-servicemen, in co-ordination with Rajya Sainik Boards and Zila Sainik Boards.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Representations are received from ex-servicemen, at various levels in the government, which are expeditiously attended to.

(d) A new Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare has been created in the Ministry of Defence to give focused attention to the welfare programmes, resettlement and rehabilitation and pensionary benefits for ex-servicemen and their dependents.

Concessional Tickets on Compassionate Grounds

844. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the facilities being provided by Indian Airlines (IA) and Air India (AI) to freedom fighters, senior citizens, women and serious patients from poor background;

(b) the number of free tickets given by AI/IA on compassionate grounds to patients suffering from serious ailments during the last three years and till date;

(c) the criteria adopted for providing the facilities;

(d) whether the said category of persons have submitted any demand letter to the airlines and the Union Government; and

(e) if so, the action taken by the Union Government in this regard and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Air India grants 55% concession on domestic fares to active Military Services personnel, cancer patients, blind persons and senior citizens. Indian Airlines grants 50% concession on domestic fares to senior citizens, cancer patients, blind persons and the persons suffering from 80% and above locomotor disability. Besides, Indian Airlines also offers 75% concession to recipients of pre-independence Bravery Awards of level I and II.

(b) to (e) Free or concessional air passages are granted to bonafide patients and one or two attendants undergoing medical treatment abroad for which facilities are not available in India. These passages are released on the recommendations of the Director General of Health Services. In accordance with these guidelines and the requests received, Air India had issued two tickets during the year April, 2003-March, 2004. Similarly, Indian Airlines had issued four tickets during the year 2002-03.

Shortage on Engine Drivers

845. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:
SHRI PABODH PANDA:
DR. M. JAGANNATH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an acute shortage of engine drivers;

(b) if so, the number of vacancies as on date;

(c) whether the shortage of drivers is affecting the freight and passengers earnings;

(d) if so, whether the Railways have assessed the financial losses due to the shortage of drivers;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps taken by the Indian Railways to deal with the shortage of engine drivers?

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

(b) and (f) Occurrence and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process and filling up is by direct recruitment or promotion of serving employees. While a few vacancies are likely to exist in this continuous process at any given point of time, the policy of the Government is to fill up the vacancies promptly. Standing procedure already exists for holding of selections/suitability/trade tests timely for filling up of promotional vacancies and placing indents

on Railway Recruitment Boards for filling up of direct recruitment quota vacancies.

The number of vacancies so calculated in a category is based on the sanctioned strength. The sanctioned strength includes not only the bare requirement for operation but also Rest Givers, Leave Reserve and provision for training etc. In the case of Running Categories these additional provisions have been liberally made in order that work does not suffer, even if there are time gaps between arising and filling up of the vacancies.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Revamping of CBFC

846. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to revamp the Central Censor Board of Film Certification;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it has come to the notice of the Government that recently the film industry people have decided to form a self-regulatory body which itself presents such objectionable scenes in the films to CBFC for scrutiny; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There is no proposal to revamp the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

(c) and (d) Leading film associations have offered to set up their own self-regulatory body to facilitate filtering of objectionable scenes. However, this matter is at a preliminary stage.

Purchase of Aeroplanes

847. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:
SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU:
SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY:
SHRI ANANTA NAYAK:
SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has since approved fleet purchase planes of Indian Airlines and Air India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of planes to be purchased by each Airline;

(d) the total financial implications involved and how the funds are to be mobilised; and

(e) the time scheduled fixed for acquisition of planes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Air India and Air India Charters Limited (AICL), a subsidiary of Air India, have submitted the following Projects for approval of the Government:—

(i) for acquisition of 18xB-737-800W aircraft for induction by AICL at a total cost of Rs. 4,951 crores.

(ii) for acquisition of 50 new long range aircraft viz. 8xB777-200LR, 15xB777-300ER and 27xB787-8 at a total cost of Rs. 33,197 crores.

Whereas Indian Airlines submitted a Project Report for acquisition of 43 aircraft comprising of A-319, A-320 and A-321 at a total cost of Rs. 10,237 crores.

The above Project Reports are under consideration of the Government.

(e) No firm time frame can be given for the above proposed acquisitions as it would take time in getting the necessary approvals.

Payment of Statutory Dues to Employees

848. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA:

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

(a) whether many of the Public Sector Undertakings under his Ministry have not cleared the salaries and other dues to its employees for the past few months;

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

(c) the steps taken by the Government to clear the dues of the employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A number of loss making Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) under the Department of Heavy Industry (DHI) have not paid the salaries and other statutory dues to its employees for the past few months. A statement showing the PSE-wise details is enclosed.

(c) As enunciated in the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), Government is trying to revive the sick/loss making PSEs. Accordingly, to improve employee morale and effectively involve them in the restructuring exercise, an amount of Rs. 517 crore was provided to 24 PSEs for liquidating pending wages/ salaries and statutory dues for period upto July, 2004. Government has again recently decided to provide an amount of Rs. 150.24 crore for liquidation of outstanding statutory dues, salary and wages upto 31-3-2005, in case of 16 defaulting PSEs. Though it is primarily the responsibility of the company to make payment of salary/ wages to its employees, the Government have been providing financial assistance by way of non-Plan loan to PSEs which have not been able to generate enough resources for meeting this liability.

Statement

(As of 30th June 2005)

(Rs. crore)

Sl. No.	Name of the Public Sector Enterprise	Salary/wages and other statutory dues
1	2	3
1.	Andrew Yule and Co. Ltd. (AYCL)	28.53
2.	Bridge and Roof Co. Ltd. (B and R)	0.89
3.	Bharat Heavy Plates and Vessels Ltd. (BHPV)	36.69
4.	Bharat Opthalmic Glass Ltd. (BOGL)	2.17
5.	Bharat Pumps and Compressors Ltd. (BPCL)	3.37

1	2	3
6.	Braithwaite and Co. Ltd. (BCL)	0.30
7.	Burn Standard Ltd. (BSCL)	3.25
8.	Bharat Wagon and Engineers Co. Ltd. (BWEL)	9.17
9.	Cement Corporation of India Ltd. (CCI)	4.41
10.	Hindustan Cables Ltd. (HCL)	79.96
11.	Heavy Engineering Corporation Ltd. (HEC)	10.00
12.	HMT (Chinar Watches) Ltd.	5.35
13.	HMT (Machine Tools) Ltd.	12.95
14.	HMT (Watches) Ltd.	37.75
15.	Hindustan Photofilms Manuacturing Co. Ltd. (HPF)	11.92
16.	Instrumentation Ltd. Kota (ILK)	5.38
17.	Nepa Ltd.	10.84
18.	National Instruments Ltd. (NIL)*	1.64
19.	Praga Tools Ltd. (PTL)	1.66
20.	Richardson and Cruddas Ltd. (R and C)	0.44
21.	Triveni Structural Ltd. (TSL)	2.08
22.	Tungabhadra Steel Products Ltd. (TSPL)	2.51
	Total	271.26

*Position as on 31-05-2005.

Revenue Earned by DD/AIR

849. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the total revenue earned by the Doordarshan/ AIR from different programmes during the last three years.

(b) whether viewership of the DD/AIR has increased/ decreased a compared to the private channels;

(c) if so, the details alongwith the comparative figures of the last three years;

(d) whether any study has been conducted to improve the contents of the DD channels keeping in view the rapid changes in the private channels content; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Prasar Bharati has informed that the details of revenue earned by AIR and DD during last three years are as follows:—

(Rupees in crores)

Year	DD	AIR
2002-03	553.81	132.25
2003-04	530.23	141.04
2004-05	665.27	158.35

(b) and (c) Prasar Bharati has informed that DD-I channel continues to maintain its pre-eminent position as the most watched TV Channel in the country. As regards AIR, it has a network of 215 stations, which provide coverage tc 99.13% of the population and reaches 91.42% area of the country, whereas a few private FM players are functioning in selected cities only. With the launch of DTH, viewership of both DD and AIR has increased.

(d) and (e) Prasar Bharati has informed that the improvement of content in the DD channels is a continuous process. The Audience Research Unit of DD carries out viewership studies on a regular basis.

[Translation]

Encashment of Bank Guarantee

850. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn towards the news-item captioned "Beena Kuchh Diye Karoro Dakar Gayee" appering in Dainik Jagran, dated May 31, 2005;

(b) if so, whether any inquiry has been conducted in the matter;

(c) if so, the findings thereof; and

(d) the action taken against the officials found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The contract was entered with M/s. HAS, Holland (New M/s. Thales) in April, 1998 for procurement of modification kit for Air Defence (AD) system of Trishul vehicle to provide 'Search on Move Capability' which is a strategic/sensitive requirement for the Air Defence System.

(c) The modification kit for AD system fabricated by M/s. Thales was ready for supply to DRDO. In the meanwhile, India conducted 'Pokhran' Nuclear test in 1998, the Netherland Government did not issue the export license to supply the above item to DRDO, India.

(d) In this regard, the several rounds of talks were held with the vendor for supply of these items. As a result of the persistent pursuance efforts, now M/s. Thales has obtained the export license from Government of Netherland to supply the modification kit to DRDO. The shipment is ready and expected to be received any time by DRDO.

[English]

Commission of Dealers

851. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:
SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE:
SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:
SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD:

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

(a) whether the Federation of All India Petroleum Dealers Association has observed one day nation wide

strike on June 20, 2005 demanding an increase in dealer's commission;

(b) if so, whether the Government has held talks with petrol pump owners and unions in this regard;

(c) if so, whether the Government has taken any decision in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) to (e) The recommendations of the Committee of Directors' (Marketing) of Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to increase dealers' commission from Rs. 707/kl to Rs. 848/kl for petrol and from Rs. 425/kl to Rs. 509/kl for diesel has been accepted and OMCs have been advised accordingly.

Extraction of Stones from Lalitgiri

852. SHRI JUAL ORAM: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the extraction of stones from the world famous Buddhists site at Lalitgiri in Orissa;

(b) if so, whether the Archaeological Survey of India has initiated any action in the matter.

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken to stop the illegal extraction of stones?

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

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The Archaeological Survey of India, Bhubaneswar circle approached the District Administration to stop quarrying operation near Lalitgiri hill. According to the decision taken in the meeting under the chairmanship of Minister (Culture), Government of Orissa, the joint inspection of the site was made by the expert committee consisting of Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, the Tehsildar, Dharamshala, Secretary, Orissan Institute of Maritime and South-East Asian Studies and other Revenue officials.

(d) During the joint inspection, it was found that the quarrying operation was in an area that falls beyond the regulated area of the protected site.

Revision in Eligibility Criteria for Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for SC/ST

853. SHRI SURESH ANGADI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has revised the eligibility criteria for award for Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for SC/ST;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the original criteria which was approved by the Planning Commission in August, 2004;

(d) the reasons for changing the eligibility criteria;

(e) whether the Planning Commission has taken strong objection to this unilateral change in the eligibility criteria;

(f) if so, whether the Planning Commission was consulted in the matter;

(g) if so, the details thereof; and

(h) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (h) The Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme has been approved

in principle. The eligibility criteria and other modalities are under discussion between Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Social Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Planning Commission.

Power to Election Commission

854. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to empower the Election Commission to hold Panchayat elections;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any discussion has been held with all the State Governments in this regard;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Article 243K of the Constitution provides that the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral roll for, and the conduct of, all elections to the Panchayats shall be vested in a State Election Commission consisting of a State Election Commissioner to be appointed by the Governor. As the Constitution empowers the State Election Commissions in matters of elections to Panchayats, the question of the Union Government empowering the Election Commission of India to hold Panchayat Elections does not arise.

(c) to (e) Does not arise. However, the question of elections to Panchayats was discussed at the Guwahati Round Table of States and Union Ministers of Panchayati Raj in November, 2004 and the conclusions arrived at are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Sixth Round Table of Ministers in-Charge of Panchayati Raj-Guwahati, 27-28 November 2004

Ministers in-charge of Panchayati Raj, and their representatives, bearing in mind the spirit of cooperative federalism which must inform the effective implementation of Panchayati Raj as set out in Part IX of the Constitution of India and related provisions, agreed to recommend to their respective Governments, for joint acceptance by the Centre and the States, the following points of action:—

Elections

(i) The Indian voter is one and indivisible. The Principle of parity between parliamentary and assembly elections, on the one hand and panchayat elections, on the other, must therefore be maintained, especially as it is noticed that people's participation in panchayat elections is substantial and generally equal to or higher than in parliamentary/assembly elections. Thus, for example, even in States with difficult geographical terrain, 88% of the electorate has participated in panchayat elections in Himachal Pradesh and 83.5% has participated in Sikkim.

(ii) While all matters relating to panchayat elections have been vested by the Constitution in State legislatures/governments, there is a need to work towards commonality, if not uniformity, in election procedures and provisions. To this end, it would desirable to vest all responsibilities for the election process in State Election Commissions rather than splitting these up, including:—

(a) preparation of electoral rolls;

(b) delimitation of constituencies;

(c) reservations and rotations;

(d) qualifications of candidates;

(e) conductof elections; and

(f) functioning as the first stage of adjudication in election disputes.

(iii) The Union Government might consider the preparation of a model code relating to the supervision, direction and conduct of elections to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRLs).

(iv) With a view to evolving a common electoral roll for all levels of elections, consultations between the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the State Election Commissioners (SECs) might be encouraged with a view to resolving practical problems that might arise in the preparation, maintenance and updating of such electoral rolls for elections to be held at different times for different levels of Governments. The panchayat and nagarpalike wards should be regarded as the building blocks for electoral rolls for all levels of election.

(v) Consideration may be given to incorporating in the laws pertaining to PR elections the same provisions of disclosure as apply to Parliament and State Assembly Elections.

(vi) The Election Commission of India (ECI) might be approached for establishing a forum for institutional interaction between SECs and ECI on issues such as directives being issued by the State Election Commission; the use of radio broadcasting for disseminating election-related information; anomalies arising out of migration; linking delimitation with census operation; uniformity in service condition of SECs; and proposals like sealing the electronic chip in the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), and not the machine itself, for evidentiary purposes, thus leaving the machine free for use in panchayat elections.

(vii) State may consider according the same salary and emoluments to State Election Commissioners as High Court Judges are entitled to.

(viii) It is recommended that the Delimitation Commission be regularly in contact with the SEC's, who are members of the Commission, to sort out practical difficulties arising out of delimitation process.

(ix) To facilitate the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in panchayat elections, the Union Government in consultation with Election Commission of India and the SECs, might consider issues relating to the funding of the purchase of EVMs for the use of State Election Commissions.

(x) Elections to District Planning Committees provided for in Article 243ZD of the Constitution might also be brought within the purview of State Election Commissions to ensure full conformity with Constitutional provisions, which has not always been the case.

Efficiency of Commercial Pilots

855. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to reduce the number of hours required to obtain Commercial Pilots Licence (CLP) for aeroplane;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to improve the efficiency of commercial pilots and operational efficiency of the aeroplanes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The Central Government have already reduced the number of hours required to obtain Commercial Pilot's

Licence (CPL) for aeroplane from 250 hours to 200 hours with effect from 14-06-2005.

(c) Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) have taken following steps to improve the efficiency of Commercial Pilots:—

(i) Pilots are required to undergo bi-annual Proficiency Checks, Local Checks, Random Checks, Skill Test, Refresher Course, Instrument Rating Checks, etc. under the supervision of DGCA approved Instructors/Examiners to maintain the efficiency in flying;

(ii) The format for issue/renewal of Pilot Proficiency Check and Instrument Rating has been revised to conform to the international standards and has inclusion of additional emergency and abnormal procedures including Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR), Cockpit Resources Management (CRM), and "Pilot Not Flying" (PNF) duties; and

(iii) CPL holders operating aircraft below 5700 Kg. All-up-weight (AUW) are subjected to flight review as per the requirement of Aircraft Rules.

Whereas manufacturer lays down maintenance procedures to be followed by the operators to have the optimum operational efficiency of the plane, DGCA through spot checks and surveilance checks ensures that the operator follows all the laid down procedures meticulously. DGCA also mandates all airworthiness directives declared by the country of design of the aircraft for improving operational efficiency of the plane.

Enquiry into Alleged Pay-Offs

856. KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the South African arms firm which had supplied anti-material rifles to India has admitted payment of pay-offs;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government has conducted any enquiry in this regard;

(c) if so, the findings thereof; and

(d) the action taken or proposed to be taken against all those who violated the guidelines laid down by the Union Government in regard to defence deals?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Based on the information furnished by M/s. Denel, South Africa, there is prima facie evidence of violation of clauses relating to use of undue influence and agents/agency commission, as contained in the contracts of Anti-Material Rifles (AMR) signed in 2002. A decision has been taken to initiate action to cancel all contracts entered into with M/s. Denel. The contract signed on 7-3-2005 for procurement of 400 AMR has been cancelled. The matter was also referred to the CBI for investigation. An FIR was filed by the CBI in the matter on 6-6-2005 against, inter-alia, the unknown public servants. Further appropriate action, as warranted by the report of the CBI, would be taken after the receipt of the same.

[Translation]

Incident at Dadri Station

857. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA:
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:
MOHD. SHAHID:
SHRI MUNSHI RAM:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the recent incident of violent clash between passengers and RPF personnel on ticket checking matter at Dadri railway station;

(b) if so, the details of the incident;

(c) the loss of railways property and number of

persons injured/died in the incident and compensation provided to them;

(d) whether any inquiry has been ordered into incident;

(e) if so, the details thereof, its outcome, officials/ persons found guilty and the action taken/to be taken against them; and

(f) the measures taken/to be taken to check recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A Special Ticket Check was conducted by the Commercial Branch led by the Assistant Traffic Manager of North Central Railway with the assistance of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) staff at Dadri railway station on 10-6-2005. During the checking of train no. DDN-1 EMU at Dadri station, the local passengers together with the public near the Station resisted the ticket checking and became violent. The unruly mob damaged the Railway offices by arson, looted Railway cash of Rs. 80,000/- assaulted the checking staff and Railway employees by pelting stones, iron rods and opening fire from weapons. One Head Constable of the Railway Protection Special Force sustained bullet injury and 13 Railway employees and Railway Protection Force personnel sustained injuries due to the pelting of stones. Consequent upon these, in exercise of right of private defence to protect the lives of Railway Employees and to protect the railway property, the Railway Protection Special Force personnel had to open fire to control the situation. As a result, 2 persons from the unruly mob died and 8 sustained injuries. Senior Police and Civil administration officials reached the spot and controlled the situation.

On the FIR lodged by the Assistant Traffic Manager, Aligarh Junction, the Government Railway Police/Aligarh Junction registered a case vide Crime No. 112/05 u/s 147, 148, 149, 307, 336, 436, 395, 397 IPC and 150, 151 Railways Act, 1989 and 5/6 Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act against 1000 unknown persons on 10-06-2005.

On the FIR lodged by the relatives of the dead persons. Government Railway Police/Aligarh Junction registered a case vide Crime No. 112A/B/05 under section 302 against Railway Protection Special Force staff.

(c) The total loss suffered by the Railways due to damage to the railway property has been estimated at Rs. 28,42,000/- approx. including the looting of Railway Cash of Rs. 80,000/- from the station. One Head Constable/RPSF sustained bullet injury and 13 railway employees (including RPF personnel) sustained injuries due to opening of fire and pelting of stones by the unruly mob. As a result of opening of fire by Railway Protection Special Force personnel to save the lives of the railway employees and to protect the railway property, 2 persons from the unruly mob died and 8 sustained injuries. No compensation has been paid to the dead and injured.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. An enquiry into this case was conducted by a committee consisting of the Chief Security Commissioner/Railway Protection Force; Chief Commercial Manager (General) and Additional Divisional Railway Manager of North Central Railway, Allahabad. The enquiry revealed that during the course of ticket checking drive, one boy fell down from train No. DDN-1 EMU at platform number 2-3. The Railway Protection Force staff picked up the boy and took him to the RPF Post to provide First Aid. Some of the passengers present at the platform became agitated by rumours that the boy was dead, became furious and resorted to violence. No railway official was held responsible for the above incident.

(f) The Committee has recommended following preventive measures to be taken to check recurrence of such incidents:—

1. The Local Police and civil Administration be informed in advance about such ticket checking drive.

2. The Public Address System available in railway stations be used so that the traveling public is informed and aware of the actual position time to time.

3. The Railway Protection Force/Railway Protection Special Force and the Police Force be issued with Tear Gas shells, Rubber Bullets and other Riot Control equipments so that the situation could be controlled without resorting to firearms.

[English]

Defence Trade and Strategic Agreement with USA

858. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:

SHRI B. MAHTAB:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has entered into a defence agreement with USA;

(b) if so, whether the present treaty with USA is likely to affect the defence agreement with Russia; and

(c) if so, the strategy chalked out by the Government to keep balance of defence trade and cooperation and strategic agreement intact with both the countries?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) A document entitled 'New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship' was signed with the United States of America (USA) on June 28, 2005.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) India intends to strengthen its defence relations and cooperation with both Russia, a time-tested partner, and and US, with whom prospects of such cooperation are growing, through the development of relations with both countries in the areas of military-to-military cooperation and defence technology, for mutual benefit. Relations with one will not be at the expense of the other.

Revamping of AIR Services

859. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:

SHRI HEMLAL MURMU:

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Committee set up by the Government under the Chairmanship of former Civil Aviation Secretary (Shri K. Roy Paul) for revamping the air services has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the salient features of the recommendations made by the Committee; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to implement the recommendations of the committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Committee has made recommendations to decongest the air traffic and enhance the air traffic capacity at Delhi, Mumbai in particular and some other airports of the country. These recommendations based on short, medium and long term measures range from improving ground infrastructure facilities, technological improvements in Communication, Navigation, Surveillance (CNS) and Air Traffic Management (ATM), Airspace management, Maintenance procedures of airside, organisation structure of CNS-ATM services, separation of Helicopter and General Aviation Services particularly during peak hours, Manpower Planning, recruitment policy, training and skill development etc. These recommendations are under consideration of the Government.

Plan Outlay for Department of Culture

860. SHRI JASHUBAHI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding the plan outlay for the Department of Culture alongwith its annual grant sanctioned by the Government for current financial year;

(b) whether there has been any reduction in the amount;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) to what extent this reduction will affect the protection and maintenance of all the monuments/sites?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The Plan outlay for 2005-06 of the Ministry of Culture is Rs. 551.12 crores. The details of Plan outlay for 2005-06 are given below:—

Sl. No.	Sector	Plan Outlay 2005-06 (Rs. in crores)
1	2	3
1.	Modernization and Computerization	1.00
2.	Promotion and Dissemination	116.91
3.	Archaeology	80.00
4.	Archives and Records	31.69
5.	Museums	84.96
6.	Anthropology and Ethnology	9.57
7.	Public Libraries	37.89
8.	Institutions of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies	11.89
9.	IGNCA	0.50
10.	Other Expenditure	59.80
11.	Activities for North East Region	55.11
	Total	489.32
12.	Building Projects (Capital Works)	61.80
	Grand Total	551.12

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Vocational Training to SC Youths

861. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any consent letter from the major industrialists of the country in May, 2005 regarding vocational training to be provided by them to the youths belonging to Scheduled Castes;

(b) if so, the details of those major industrialists who have given their consent to impart vocational training to SCs youths in the industries and companies of private sector;

(c) whether the work of imparting vocational training to SCs youths has been started;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, the reasons for delay; and

(f) the time by which the same is likely to be finalized?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (f) On 25th May 2005, Shri Ratan N. Tata, Chairman, Tata Sons Ltd., addressed a letter to the Hon'ble Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment enclosing a statement signed by 21 captains of industry in which they have, inter-alia, agreed to expand their activities with regard to vocational training in-house as well in partnership with ITIs. The signatories are: Ms. Anu Aga, M/s. Rahul Bajaj, Kumara Mangalam Birla, Tarun Das, Naushad Forbes, A.S. Ganguly, J.N. Godrej, F.T. Khorakiwala, H.F. Khorakiwala, Suresh Krishna, Keshub Mahendra, A.C. Muthiah, Sunil Kant Munjal, B. Muthuraman, N.R. Narayana Murthy, Deepak Parekh, Azim Premji, S. Ramadorai, Gurpreet Singh, Ratan N Tata and Gautam Thapar. The above-referred statement is a part of continuing dialogue with industry with regard to affirmative action for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe youth. No specific time frame can be indicated.

[English]

Publication of Foreign Newspapers

862. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received proposals from foreign newspapers for publication of their newspapers in India.

(b) if so, the details of the proposals received therefrom;

(c) the decision taken by the Government thereon;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the foreign newspapers likely to start their editions?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Parking Charges

863. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to exempt airlines using non-metro airports from parking charges; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Requests have been received from Domestic Scheduled Operators to extend concessions on parking charges at Non-Metro Airports. The requests are being examined by the Airports Authority of India.

Deficiencies in MiG Variants

864. SHRI CHENGARA SURENDRAN:
SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH:
SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an expert committee on flight safety has identified design deficiencies in older MiG variants and categorized these as high accident prone technologies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the remedial measures suggested by the expert committee, if any; and

(d) the decision taken or proposed to be taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The Expert Committee on Aircraft Accidents has deliberated on the issue of design deficiencies in respect of all aircraft. Based on the analysis of trends, the Committee has found that older technology aircraft including MiG variants, are more prone to failure.

The new technology aircraft incorporates improved design features, which provide better air safety.

The Committee has suggested the need to formulate a strategy to manage the risk inherent in the old technology aircraft, monitoring of failure trends and strengthening of quality assurance and airworthiness certification procedure at the overhauling facilities of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

Necessary actions to improve flight safety standard are continuously undertaken for improving flight safety and to reduce aircraft accidents in the IAF.

Deployemennt of Soldiers in Peacekeeping Mission

865. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:
SHRI PARSURAM MAJHI:
SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian soldiers deployed in different countries at present under UN peacekeeping mission, country-wise;

(b) the number of casualties of such soldiers took place during 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 so far; and

(c) the details of the compensations paid to the kith and kin of the deceased soldiers?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The strength of Indian soldiers deployed in United Nations (UN) Peace Keeping Missions, country-wise, as on date, is as follows:—

Sl. No.	Name of the Country	No. of Personnel
1	2	3
1.	Democratic Republic of Congo	3551
2.	Lebanon	648
3.	Ethiopia-Eritrea	1554
4.	Ivory Coast	8
5.	Burundi	11
6.	Sudan	175
7.	UN Headquarters, New York	2

(b) While no casualties occurred in the year 2004, two casualties have been reported during the year 2005.

(c) The compensation to the next of kin of the deceased soldiers is paid as per the extant norms of the Army or UN which includes gratuity, ex-gratia, liberalized family pension and Army Group Insurance Fund (AGIF).

[Translation]

Outstanding Dues of PSUs

866. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state: the amount of all public sector oil companies outstanding against the private companies for sale of oil, diesel, petrol, as and other petroleum products till March 31, 2005, company-wise?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

12.02 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Sir, with your permission, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Part-Report of the Phukan

Commission and "Accompanying Note on the Justice S.N. Phukan Commission's part-Report"* (in Hindi version only) under sub-section (4) of section (3) of the Commissions of Inquiry Act. 1952.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 2352/05]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:—

(1) A copy of the Statement (Hindi and English versions) explaining reasons for not laying the Annual Reports and Audited Accounts of the Weighbird India Limited (WIL) and Bharat Brakes and Valves Limited (BBVL) for the years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, and Reyrolle Burn Limited (RBL) for the year 2003-2004, within the stipulated period of nine months after the close of the respective accounting years.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 2353/05]

(2) A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (Hindi and English versions) between the Engineering Projects (India) Limited and the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 2354/05]

(3) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

(i) Statement regarding Review by the Government of the working of the Bharat Leather Corporation Limited, Agra, for the year 2003-2004.

(ii) Annual Report of the Bharat Leather Corporation Limited, Agra, for the year 2003-2004, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 2355/05]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): I beg to lay on the Table:—

(1) A copy of the Railway Servants (Hours of Work and Period of Rest) Rules, 2005 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 75 in weekly Gazette of India dated the 27th February-5th March. 2005 under section 199 of the Railways Act 1989.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 2356/05]

(3) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions):—

(i) Memorandum of Understanding between the RITES Limited and the Ministry of Railways for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 2357/05]

(ii) Memorandum of Understanding between Ircon International Limited and the Ministry of Railways for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 2358/05]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): I beg to lay on the Table:—

(1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Maulana Azad Education Foundation, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004.

(ii) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the Maulana Azad

* English version was laid on the Table on 13th May, 2005.

[Shrimati Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan]

Education Foundation, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004, together with Audit Report thereon.

(iii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Maulana Azad Education Foundation, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned ar (1) above.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 2359/05]

12.92½ hrs.

ELECTION TO COMMITTEE

Central Advisory Board of Archaeology

[English]

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): Sir, I beg to move:—

"That in pursuance of the provision in paragraph XVIII of the Government of India. Archaeological Survey of India, Resolution No. 9/4/2004-EE(CABA) dated 28th April, 2005, the Members of this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Speaker may direct, two Members from among themselves, to serve as members of the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology (CABA), subject to the other provisions of the said Resolution."

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That in pursuance of the provision in paragraph XVIII of the Government of India. Archaeological Survey of India, Resolution No. 9/4/2004-EE(CABA) dated 28th April, 2005, the Members of this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Speaker may direct, two Members from among themselves, to serve as members of the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology (CABA), subject to the other provisions of the said Resolution."

The motion was adopted.

12.03 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTERS

(i) Fire accident in Mumbai High North Platform of ONGC

[English]

*THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): Mr Speaker, Sir, a major fire accident occurred on Mumbai High North (MHN) processing platform at 4.05 p.m. on 27th July, 2005 resulting in the loss of the facility. The accident took place when ONGC's multi-purpose support vessel "Samudra Suraksha", under Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) operation, was engaged in a medical evacuation operation. According to available information, the MSV lost control, drifted, and collided with the platform causing a major fire which also engulfed the MSV.

Given the intensity of the fire and consequent damage, the platform was abandoned according to a well-rehearsed abandonment drill used in offshore operations. Similarly, personnel from the multi-purpose support vessel (MSV) were evacuated, except for six divers who are now undergoing decompression and are expected to survive. Personnel on board the chartered drilling rig in NC Yester deployed in the area were also evacuated. The MHN platform was totally lost in less than two hours alongwith a Pawan Hans helocopter positioned on it. ONGC support and supply vessels and three chartered helicopters were quickly mobilised for search and rescue operations. Indian Navy and Coast

* Also placed in Library. See No. LT 2362/05.

Guards provided prompt assistance by deploying ships and aircrafts.

A total of 384 personnel had to abandon the affected platform and the two vessels. Of them, 351 have been rescued in addition to the six divers who are undergoing decompression.

The injured persons were provided first aid by doctors and paramedics immediately on rescue. 129 of those rescued are reaching Mumbai Docks today in the morning. They perhaps would just be about to arrive there. The remaining rescued personnel are expected to reach Mumbai by late evening. The search for missing persons is continuing.

So far, ten personnel are confirmed dead. These include six from ONGC and one each from the MSV and NC Yester. Two bodies are yet to be identified. On behalf of the nation, I extend my deepest sympathies to the bereaved families. Their rehabilitation will be our duty.

In spite of the severe destruction caused by floods and rains in Mumbai, all possible resources for rescue and relief were mobilised immediately. This was in spite of the fact that the control centre at Bandra (East) was non-functional as a result of power outage, all communication links were destroyed and the fleet of 12 chartered helicopters at Juhu helibase was completely grounded because of the flood situation. An emergency control centre was set up immediately to manage the response effectively. CMD, ONGC and other officers of ONGC have already reached Mumbai on 28th early morning, that is today, by the first civilian flight to land on the opening of Mumbai Airport. I am leaving for Mumbai immediately after making this *suo motu* statement.

Though the loss of the platform would immediately impact 110,000 barrels per day of crude production, it is expected that 70 per cent of this production would be restored over the next four weeks. The platform was insured for US $ 195 million and the MSV for US $ 60 million under ONGC's offshore package insurance policy.

CMD, ONGC has constituted an internal enquiry committee to go into the causes of this tragic accident with the help of outside experts.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the outstanding successes of ONGC in carrying out the prescribed safety drill at the site of the accident, as also to extend the nation's grateful thanks to the Navy and the Coast Guard through our hon. *Raksha Mantri*, who is present here now—who have mounted a remarkable rapid and extremely successful search and rescue operations. My thanks are also due to M/s. Cairn Energy and M/s. British Gas who have offered their helicopters for the rescue operations.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: We shall have a discussion. I have already committed that.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: All those things cannot be gone into now. The hon. Minister has to go there and I have accepted it. He said that the enquiry was going on.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No. Please give a notice and I shall allow a discussion.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Mumbai South Central): Sir, I want to ask only one question...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I will allow a full-fledged discussion. It has already been agreed, Shri Mohan Rawale.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the hon. Home Minister Shri Shivraj Patil to make a *suo motu* statement.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: We will allow a full-fledged discussion to which I have committed.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Before the hon. Home Minister would say anything, I want to ask a question. ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No. This will open up a discussion now. This is not the system here and you know that very well. You may take part in the discussion; I will allow you.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: If no attention is paid to it, Mumbai may face danger.

[English]

MR, SPEAKER: Now, hon. Home Minister will make a statement. Shri Mohan Rawale, please cooperate. He has to go to Mumbai now.

12.10 hrs.

(ii) Incident in Gurgaon involving workers of Honda Motors and Haryana Police

[English]

*THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I made a statement day before yeseterday in the House in connection with the unfortunate incident that took place on the 25th July, 2005 in Gurgaon, Haryana involving the workers of Honda Motors and the State Police.

Since the time of the incident, the Central Government has been in constant contact with the State Government. We have ascertained further details from the State Government about the incident, the situation, and the steps that they are taking.

As informed by the State Government, a commission of enquiry has been appointed under Shri Justice G.C. Garg, a retired judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. The Commission will submit its report to the State Government within three months from 26th July, 2005.

The DC and SSP, Gurgaon have been asked to proceed on leave.

Out of the injured protestors admitted in the hospitals at Gurgaon and Sohna, only six are now under treatment in the civil hospital, Gurgaon and none of them is serious.

Some of the persons detained by the police have been found, on verification, not the employees of Honda Motors.

As per the report of the State Government, crowd gathered on 26th July, 2005, within the complex of the civil hospital, Gurgaon. The DC who was visiting the injured persons at the hospital was gheraoed. This caused hindrance in the discharge of duties of the doctors and the staff of the hospital. Following the aggressive posture of the crowd, the police was forced to use teargas shells to chase away the crowd.

The State Government has informed that the situation is under control and peaceful. The Central Government is also monitoring the situation.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, we had asked for the compensation....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK (Ahmedabad): He should at least have the courtesy to listen to the hon. Members. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I have permitted him to go. He has to go with the Prime Minister to Mumbai.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot hear anything. I have permitted him to go as he is going to Mumbai with the hon. Prime Minister to do an important work.

...(*Interruptions*)

* Also placed in library. *See* No. LT 2363/05.

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot hear anything being said by the Members.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I have permitted him to go.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Why, Sir? We wanted to know....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot ask me like that. He has been permitted to go because he is going to Mumbai on a very important job. You cannot ask me as to why I have permitted him.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I have given him the permission.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Sir, we urge you, request you....(*Interruptions*) We would like to know from the hon. Home Minister....(*Interruptions*) With folded hands. I would request you....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I am also, with folded hands, asking you to sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. I will not hear you. You must sit down Shri Nandy. When I am on my legs, you have to sit down. I will not allow this sort of indiscipline. Shri Seth, please sit down.

SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH (Tamluk): Sir, please allow us to speak.

MR. SPEAKER: If I will allow you or not, depends on how you behave.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: So far as this issue is concerned, it is an important matter on which Members wanted to ask clarifications. I have my strongest reservations about it. The hon. Minister has made a *suo motu* statement.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH: Sir, we should have a discussion on this...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: It is very strange. I thought you were a Member of a disciplined Party.

You know very well, at least we should remember, that in Lok Sabha no clarification or question is permitted after the Statement. You know very well, if you want to have a proper discussion, there is a method of doing it. Of all the Members, Shri Pathak, you are questioning as to why I have allowed the Home Minister to go. I have told you why I have allowed him to go.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: I am sorry, Sir. I was just requesting that he should at least have the courtesy to listen...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I can understand. Your exuberance is somewhat misplaced now.

I have allowed him to go because he has asked for my specific permission to go. He is accompanying the hon. Prime Minister who is going on a very important mission of going to Mumbai and see for themselves. When there is no opportunity under our rules to put questions to him, I have allowed him to go in my judgement. Now you are questioning my judgement.

Therefore, if you want a discussion, there are many methods. You know the rule book. You know the Directions. You know the Member's Hand Book. You know Kaul and Shakdhar. You can also try to initiate new methods. But I will have to decide ultimately so long as I am here.

...(*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Sir, most respectfully, I would like to submit that the hon. Home Minister has not made a *suo motu* statement. Hon. Members would recollect when yesterday after Question Hour this issue was raised, they wanted to have some information from the hon. Home Minister...(*Interruptions*). Kindly take your

[Shri Pranab Mukherjee]

seat. When I am talking, you please take your seat. I expect some sort of respect from you. You wanted the Home Minister to make a statement....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded. Whatever you are saying is not being recorded.

(*Interruptions*)...*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I made a commitment that the Home Minister will make a statement...(*Interruptions*). I do not think that every time we can convert this House into a State Assembly.

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: I will continue to sit here. Not one word said by you is being recorded. If you want to disturb the proceedings of the House, you are welcome. But it will have no effect on me. I can assure you that it will have no effect on me.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: It will not be recorded. You can go on disturbing the House proceedings, if you so choose. You are all senior Members. I have certain important announcements to make. You are not even permitting the Speaker to speak.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): Sir, we are not disturbing. The Leader of the House has made a statement. We are only saying that action has been taken against a small officer. There is a political responsibility. The Chief Minister should have gone. ...(*Interruptions*)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should be recorded. These are your suggestions. All right, let us end all this. Hon. Members, I am making a statement. Mr. Nandy, I am sorry to say that you are crossing the limit.

(*Interruptions*)...*

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I will not allow it to be recorded. You are speaking without my permission.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Naidu, until I finish my statement, you sit down. Do not record anything.

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: You sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: It is not the duty of the Central Government. You sit down. You are acting most irresponsible. You are functioning most irresponsibly. Mr. Seth, you have to sit down. You will be in trouble. I am sorry I have to take the most drastic action against you. Mr. Seth, you have to sit down.

Hon. Members, some very important announcements are going to be made by me and you know that this is not permitted. Knowing that, you are disturbing the proceedings of the House.

12.19 hrs.

OBSERVATION BY THE SPEAKER

Re: Relinquishing of office of Secretary General of Lok Sabha by Shri G.C. Malhotra and appointment of Shri P.D.T. Achary as Secretary-General, Lok Sabha

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House that Shri G.C. Malhotra, Secretary-General of Lok Sabha is relinquishing his office on 31st July, 2005 on his superannuation.

*Not recorded.

Shri Malhotra, who became the Secretary-General of Lok Sabha on 14th July 1999, has been recognised by all for his devotion to duty, hard work, efficiency and loyalty to the institution. I wish to record my highest appreciation of his outstanding contribution in strengthening the system of parliamentary democracy through the highest forum of our country.

Shri Malhotra has a thorough knowledge of parliamentary practices, procedures and constitutional matters which has greatly helped the Presiding Officers and the panel of Chairmen in condicting our proceedings in a smooth and orderly manner. He has always been available to all sections of the House with his learned counsel. His services have also been of great help to the Parliamentary Committees, their Chairmen and Members. He has been very objective in his advice. All these attributes have benefited the Chair and the Members in an ample measure.

Shri Malhotra has helped in successfully organising various international parliamentary conferences, seminars and workshops by the Indian Parliament. He has also been of great help to Indian Parliamentary delegations attending international parliamentary conferences and on goodwill visits to foreign Parliaments. His contributions have been acknowledged by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and various other parliamentary bodies.

He has been closely associated with the conference of the Presiding Officers of Legislative bodies in India for a long time. He has also been the Secretary to many Committees constituted by this conference. He proved his merit as an efficient administrator and an effective team leader.

Shri Malhotra has authored several articles and also books. Because of his experience and expertise he was chosen as the 'Resource Person' by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in several of their seminars and workshops.

As an ideal parliamentary officer, Shri Malhotra has always been objective and committed to the institution with which he has been closely associated for over three decades. Throughout his career he has worked very conscientiously and the institution has benefited from his rich knowledge of parliamentary procedures and practices.

I have great pleasure in announcing that in recognition of his services to the Lok Sabha, Shri Malhotra will be an Honorary Officer of the House.

I wish him the best of health and a very meaningful and productive life in the years ahead. I am sure all of you will join with me. I have already expressed my appreciation for him.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Sir, I join you and we place on record our appreciation for his excellent performance that he has rendered as the Secretary-General of the House. I wish him a very happy and prosperous future.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we associate with whatever has been expressed by you in his praise, the entire House agrees to that. The service rendered by him for this House, for democracy, for Parliament is appreciable and commendable. We offer him all good wishes.

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, I entirely agree with the expression that you have made in regard to the Secretary-General, Shri G.C. Malhotra and I sincerely hope that we will continue to receive his advice and counsel and he will continue to assist us in our functioning in the Parliament.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have learned a lot from Shri G.C. Malhotra whose life has been an epitome of sincerity and dedication. I express my good wishes for him. The books authored and edited by him, will ever be guiding the people

[Shri Mohan Singh]

coming in the Parliamentary system in the future. I wish him a long life. Of course he is retiring from here, but he will not retire from Parliamentary works and will keep helping the Parliament in his own capacity, with this, I once again congratulate.

[English]

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are really thankful for the contribution that Shri Malhotra has made as the Secretary-General of Lok Sabha. You have very rightly mentioned about his contributions and I am associating with whatever has been expressed by you about his contributions for strengthening parliamentary practices and procedures. We would definitely be obliged for a long time to come for the contributions he has made.

[Translation]

SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA (Sangrur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to associate myself with the views expressed by you about Shri Malhotra. The way he guided new and old MPs, is very commendable. On behalf of all the members I would like to say that he should be associated with the Parliament in every possible way.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajganj, Bihar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have got the opportunity to learn a lot from Malhotraji. In my individual capacity, I would like to say that whenever we came across difficulties, we contacted him and always got his co-operation and affection. We wish him a long life and would like to request you that ways should be worked out to get his co-operation in Parliamentary practices so as to enable us to be benefited by his talent.

[English]

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (Sriperumbudur): Sir, Shri Malhotra had been very cooperative with the hon. Members. The special attraction is that he is always with a smiling face and we get attracted with his smile. Another thing is, after you have become the hon. Speaker of the House, he seems to be your younger brother.

MR SPEAKER: You have an angry Speaker with a smiling Secretary!

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: On behalf of the DMK, I wish him all success.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhanjharpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I agree with the views and the feelings expressed by you and the hon. Leaders appreciating the works of Shri G.C. Malhotra and I associate myself with that. With his work efficiency, talent and capacity, Malhotraji, tackled many situations and never faced any difficulty in discharging Parliamentary works. Whenever the question of experience or work efficiency arose while disposing a Parliamentary work we experienced his talent closely. Prabhunathji said it rightly that the benefit of his work efficiency, his talent and his experience will be utilised from time to time. We wish him a long life.

SHRI RAJESH VERMA (Sitapur): Hon. Mr. Speaker, Sir, while associating myself with your views, I am a bit saddened on the retirement of Malhotraji. He rendered a long service to our Parliament. We will always remember his soft nature and co-operative attitude since last tenure to present one. I pray to God for his long life and hope that he will always keep taking interest in the Parliamentary traditions, while congratulating him I hope that he will keep on helping us even after leaving the Parliament.

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE (Aurangabad, Maharashtra): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we will remember a lot the experience of Shri Malhotra. As you said, we will always be getting his services, his suggestions and experience. All of us will be benefitted by his knowledge. When Shri Madhukar Sarpotdar was the leader of the Shiv Sena, he also became the Chairman of Extimates

committee. A Parliamentary Pay Committee was formed at that time whose Chairman was also Shri Sarpotdar. Shri Malhotra got the opportunity to work with him in that committee and he got good experience. When Shri Manohar Joshi was the Speaker, we wanted to ask some questions. At that time Shri Malhotra told us that we should not ask those questions because the questions may land our Speaker in trouble. Thus, he guided us quite a number of times on different issues. His books always proved to be very beneficial to us. On behalf of Shiv Sena, I would like to say that Parliament should always get his services and this is what I wish him for his future.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Mumbai South Central): Mr. Speaker, Sir, you please give extension to him.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I will announce something else.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri G.C. Malhotra contributed a lot in running the business of Lok Sabha and extended his helping hand to the Speaker in the smooth functioning of Lok Sabha. His nature is very good. When we went to USA, England and other places with you, Shri Malhotra was also with us. He always took care of Members of Parliament particularly of me. Shri Malhotra was very cooperative with all the Hon'ble Speakers of Lok Sabha till now. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you were saying yesterday that nobody was co-operating with you, I was standing and speaking from here. I extended my cooperation with you and sat down. Members sitting right in front of you were not cooperating, but I was co-operating.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: We congratulate Shri G.C. Malhotra for his contribution in the smooth functioning of the proceedings of the House and the affection he showered on the Members. We thank him for that. But I want that he should contest elections after the retirement. I promise that if no party is giving him ticket, our Republican Party of India is ready to give him ticket. I am the only member of my party, but if he stays with us, after 10-15 years, we both will finish Bhartiya Janta Party which had two members in 1984. On behalf of my party. I thank Shri G.C. Malhotra. Jai Bhim, Jai Bharat.

[English]

SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO (Purulia): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I associate myself with what you and other leaders have stated about Shri G.C. Malhotra. His writings have helped the new Members. I have known him for the last fifteen years. I appreciate his contributions towards the working of Parliament. His writings have also helped Members of Parliament a lot. Thank you.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (Srikakulam): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri Malhotra is a great, honest and lovely person. I have acquaintance with him since 1996. He was elevated to the post of Secretary-General when Shri Balayogi was the Speaker of Lok Sabha. I travelled with him in many Parliamentary Committees. He has written so many books. Those books are very useful for young Parliamentarians.

My request to the hon. Leader of the House, through you, is that since he has abundant knowledge in parliamentary procedure and practice and Constitution of India, his services should be utilised by the Government in future also for the betterment of the functioning of the Government. I wish him a long and prosperous life. Thank you.

SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY (Chidambaram): Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a saying "Wear a smile and win a man". Shri Malhotra knows the tactics of how to win friends and influence people. We are grateful for his dedicated service so far. We wish him well. We will be highly enriched and educated by his future work also. Thank you.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN REDDY (Adilabad): Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. On behalf of TRS. I complement the Secretary General for the yeoman service that he has rendered. He is a guru, especially to beginners like us. He was giving very valuable service to us. We are thankful to him. We wish him prosperous life and elevation in future. Thank you.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (Idukki): The Secretary-General's post is very critical in our parliamentary democratic set-up. Shri Malhotraji has upheld that position in a very illustrious manner befitting his most illustrious predecesors who sat in the Chair. It is gratifying to note that his services will be available to the House even though in an honorary capacity. His wisdom and his experience will certainly be of help in the years to come in the conduct of the business of this House. I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Kerala Congress Party, to wish him well not a just retired life but a very active retired life.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (Midnapore): I join you and other hon. Members of this House. I express from our party thanks and gratitude to the Secretary-General. Malhotraji, I think, he will help us in the coming future and his cooperation and his valuable suggestions would help strengthen the democracy and the parliamentary democracy of our country. I wish him a happy and prosperous life.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): My party and I offer all felicitations on the dual function of the Secretary-General the function of the House as well as the function as administrator of the office. I think, he has been doing very well. I offer him all good wishes.

MR. SPEAKER: I am very happy and it is quite appropriate that all sections of the House have joined me in wishing him well. I can assure you he is retiring on 31st July, but from 1st August. I have given him a very special assignment. I am sure, he will perform it very successfully.

Therefore, I am quite conscious that certainly I will find out ways and means to utilize his services, which you have all appreciated. I wish him a very very happy future life.

Hon. Members, I am also happy to announce that keeping in view the traditions in independent nature of the Lok Sabha Secretariat. I have decided, in consultation with the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition, to appoint Shri P.D.T. Achary, who superannuated only on 30 June last while holding the office of the Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat, as Secretary-General, Lok Sabha. Shri Achary, has over 35 years of a diversified experience and distinguished service in Lok Sabha Secretariat in course of which he occupied important positions in the Secretariat and has also made his mark, in the recent past, in providing a useful assistance to the Departmentally-Related standing Committees apart from efficiently discharging his services as Secretary of the Lok Sabha Secretariat. Shri Achary will be in position with effect from 1st August, 2005. I wish him well in the discharge of his duties and responsibilities as our next Secretary-General.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Prabhunath Singh—Calling Attention.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (Srikakulam): My clarification is not on the Home Minister's statement. I am using this opportunity in the Zero Hour.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not Zero Hour, Mr. Yerrannaidu. It is the Calling Attention time. I have called Shri Prabhunath Singh—Item No. 7.

12.38 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

(i) Need for effective implementation of various Centrally Sponsored Schemes for Rural Development

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajganj, Bihar): Hon'ble Speaker Sir, I would like to draw attention of

hon. Minister of Rural Development towards the matter of urgent public importance mentioned below and request him to give statement in this regard:—

"Need for effective implementation of various Centrally Sponsered Schemes for Rural Development".

*THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): Speaker Sir, we are thankful to you for allowing to the hon. Members to move the calling attention motion regarding the role of hon. Members in implementation of various rural development schemes running for the villages and the poor requires state vigilance. I am also thankful to hon. Member Mr. Prabhunath Singh for raising this important issue and calling attention of the house.

[English]

MR SPEAKER: Please, please—No whisperings here. An important debate is being discussed.

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: The Ministry is fully aware of the need for effective Implementation of all its rural development programmes, including Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), which is a wage implementation programme. Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Indira Aawas Yojana (IAY) etc. The Ministry is getting a regular feed back on the status of the implementation of various programmes of the Ministry at the field level. The programmes of the Ministry are regularly monitored and progress reports are received from the DRDAs/State Governments on a regular basis.

The details of physical and financial progress of the programmes being executed by the Ministry of Rural Development are as follows...(*Interruptions*)

SGRY Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana was started in September 2001 and the objective of the scheme was to provide additional wage employment and food security to the rural poor through the creation of need based durable economic and social infrastructure. Since inception of the programme, a total of 294.05 crore mandays have been generated upto March 2005, During this period, a total of 58.17 lakh woks have been completed and 4.38 lakh works were in progress as on 31st March, 2005. During this period, an amount of Rs. 21058.48 crore has been utilised and 124.72 lakh MTs of foodgrains has been distributed.

In order to assess the efficacy of its programme, the Ministry has a system of periodic assessment of various programmes. Accordingly Concurrent Evaluation study got conducted through 43 independent reputed research Institutes for SGRY. Their major findings are as under:—

— 77.61% of the works were completed in the same year.

— Physical quality of assets was reported very good, good and satisfactory in 98.09% cases. Only in 1.91% cases, quality was reported to be poor.

— The works were described by beneficiaries very useful and useful in 98.2% cases. Only in 1.72% cases, works were described not useful.

— In 81% cases, the wages were paid within a fortnight according to the Guidelines.

— About 98% beneficiaries want continuation of the programme in its present form.

The National Food for Work Programme was started in November 2004 in 150 most backward districts. The objective of the programme is to provide additional resources apart from SGRY for the generation of additional supplementary wage employment and providing food security through creation of need based economic, social and community assets. The programme is self targeting in nature and open to all rural poor. Since inception, a total of 12.99 crore mandays have been generated under the programme till May 2005. During this period 36690

*Also placed in Library. *See* no. LT 2360/05.

[Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh]

works have been completed and 31232 are in progress. An amount of Rs. 764.45 crore have been utilised and 6.03 lakh MTs of foodgrains has been distributed.

To further improve the quality of performance of SGRY and NFFWP, the Guidelines have been issued for constitution of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees of beneficiaries of the concerned village/locality for every work to monitor the progress and the quality.

Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY):—

Self Help Group (SHG) approach, in the recent years, has been recognised as an effective approach towards socio-economic empowerment of people living below poverty line in India. The Ministry of Rural Development is accordingly implementing a self employment scheme called Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) for achieving the larger goal of poverty alleviation in the rural areas with particular focus on the vulnerable groups. It is a credit cum subsidy scheme. Credit plays a predominant role and subsidy is an enabling component. The scheme endeavours a paradigm shift in development process by focusing on social mobilisation of rural poor into SHGs, their capacity building, skill up-gradation, training, assistance for taking up different economic activities, credit linkage, infrastructure, technology and marketing support as important elements of development strategy. During the first three years of 10th Plan from 2002-03 to 2004-05 the Ministry has released 2049.88 crore rupees under this scheme and Rs. 4127.37 crores of credit was mobilized for the SGSY beneficiaries. During this period 28.18 lakhs Swarozgaries were assisted. The other achievements are:—

— Credit mobilisation stepped up from 40-45% during 2000-2003 to 65% in 2004-05;

— Percentage of Group Swarozgaris assisted increased from 30-40% during the first three years to 70% during last 2 years;

— Credit flow to SHGs increased from 20-25% during initial three years to over 60% during 2004-05. These trends point to the consolidation of group approach in the implementation process; and

— Ratio of investment in SHGs to individual Swarozgasris has increased from 0.24 in 1999-2000 to 1.82 in 2004-05.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):—

As regards the PMGSY the programme was launched on 25th December, 2000. So far (2000 to 2005 and 06) the proposals for road works valued at Rs. 18644.75 crores have been cleared and Rs. 12118.63 has been released to different states. Rs. 10096.09 crore has been spent and 71609.95 Kms road length has been completed under this programme.

Indira Aawas Yojana (IAY):—

Under Indira Aawas Yojana assistance is provided to the rural poor for the construction of a house. Under this programme per unit assistance is provided at the rate of Rs. 25,000/- for plain areas and Rs. 27,500/- for hilly/difficult areas. Assistance is also provided for the upgradation of unserviceable Kutcha houses and subsidy under credit cum subsidy scheme is provided at the rate of Rs. 12500/- per unit for all the areas. During the first 4 years of 10th Plan i.e. 2002-03 to 2005-06 an amount of Rs. 7565.37 crores has been released to the districts under this scheme and an amount of Rs. 8917.10 crore is reported to have been utilized. Against this expenditure, a total number of 4572777 houses have been constructed.

Programmes Under 11th Finance Commission:—

The funds under 11th Finance Commission Award are directly transferred to the States for onward allocation to the Gram Panchayats by the Ministry of Finance. The States/Panchayats have been given the flexibility to utilize these funds for development.

Monitoring of Rural Development Programmes:—

It is well recognized that the success of the programmes largely depends on the effective delivery

system and efficient implementation at the grassroots level so that the programme benefits reach the rural poor in full measures. In order to ensure this, the Ministry has evolved a comprehensive **multi-level** and **multi-tool** system of Monitoring and Evaluation for the implementation of its programmes. The important instruments of the monitoring mechanism are briefly out lined below:—

— Periodical Progress Reports (Financial and Physical);

— Area Officers Scheme;

— Performance Review Committee;

— Review by Union Minister;

— District-Level-Monitoring;

— National Level Monitors; and

— Vigilance and Monitoring Committees.

Vigilance and Monitoring Committees:—

Revised guidelines have been issued in respect of the Vigilance and Monitoring Committtees at the state and district levels. According to these guidelines the Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha) have been nominated as Chairman/Co-Chairman of the District Level Committees. Other members include Rajya Sabha Members from the State concerned who opted to be associated with the District Level Committee (as Co-Chairman), all MLAs of the district, representatives of the State Government and Panchayati Raj Institutions at the district level, representatives of SC/ST/Minority Committees, etc. According to the guidelines meetings of the Vigilance and Monitoring Committees are to be held once in every quarter. The Chairmen of the District Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committees have been requested to ensure that meetings are held regularly. **The State Governments have reported that 116 District Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committees have already held meetings at least once, since the issue of revised guidelines in October, 2004.**

Similarly, for the villages and poor, 70-72 crore people of the six lakh villages of the country, in which most of them are poor, proper arrangements have been made for providing employment, for proper development of villages, for prosperity of villages and to free the country from the curse of unemployment and poverty. Besides, assistance has been sought from state Government, Panchayati Raj and hon'ble Members to provide benefits of the whole scheme to the rural poor. ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You will have another opportunity Mr. Minister.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: At least one hon. Member has taken the trouble to give notice. I have given this opportunity because of the important subject. Many hon. Members have not thought fit to give any notice. Please do not interrupt the hon. Member who has taken the trouble.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No. I am not going to permit the further additions. This is not according to the rules.

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI (Garhwal): Rules say that we have to give prior notices. We came to know only this morning that this notice has come.

MR. SPEAKER: I have not framed the rules myself. You can read the rules.

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI: I know that.

MR. SPEAKER: There are some laxities allowed. This is the result of that. You have given the notice at 12.43 hours.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I know everybody is interested. I shall decide. Leave it to me, please so long as I am here.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: You please keep quite and sit down....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Only Shri Prabhunath Singh's statement will be recorded.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we regularly get the information about the rural development programmes through various means. The Department of Rural Development also replies to our queries. We also keep getting the information about the said programmes during the speeches and replies given by the Hon. Minister of Rural Development in the House. One of the publications of the Ministry titled 'Gramin Vikas Ek Jhalak' also provides brief details about everything regarding allocation of funds, name of schemes and the State to which allocation has been made. Though, I will not like to get into the statistics.

I felt that the hon. Minister was a bit ill at ease while providing the details during his reply. However, I have never put a question mark on the objectives of the porgrammes launched by the Government and the intention of the hon. Minister. I know that the hon. Minister intends to do something for the country and the State as well. At times, I get a chance of reading his views in the news papers. Though, the hon. Minister is quite candid in his intentions expressed through media, yet, here he is presenting merely statistics. In his capacity as a Minister of Rural Development he should have pointed out the lapses in the programmes undertaken and proposed the various remedial measures to be taken by the Government to overcome the said lapses and shortcomings. The purpose of various schemes implemented by the Government is to ensure that these lead to development in the villages which have been deprived of it. Its objective is to provide employment to the labourers and the poor belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes alongwith each section of the society. Though, the Government have launched several schemes but I would like to know as to how far these schemes have proved effective in actually benefiting the people. I was satisfied at having read his statement in the newspaper. As per his views expressed outside the hosue these schemes are not proving beneficial, whereas his official statement says that these are proving beneficial. These two statements are quite contradictory.

Avoiding a lengthy speech, I would like to mention about only two-three schemes. The Government implements various schemes, such as Sanmpooran Rojgar Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sarak, Indira Aawas Yojana and have also launched some new schemes like Sam Vikas Yojna, Food for Work Proggramme etc. The Government also propose to introduce a new Bill, namely, Employment Guarantee Bill.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, his intention is good and I do not doubt it, but what is going on in the matter of allocation of funds? I would not like to get boggled in the details as to which State has been allocated how much amount? I am concerned only about the practicability and the feasibility of the schemes. Under Sam Vikas Yojana, a few districts have been identified in each State. As per the information available with me, Rs. 1500 crores will be allocated annually for the development for these districts. Several schemes will be undertaken under it and it is a very good programme. I am convinced that if these schemes are implemented properly in the rural areas, these areas would certainly prosper. The schemes include opening of High Schools, Water Drainage, Irrigation facilities and constructing houses for the poor.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that the hon. Minister must also be having a soft corner for Bihar. Therefore, I would like to know the names of those district in Bihar to which funds have so far been released and also whether the work on the schemes cleared has been started or not? I spoke to the Collector of Chhapra on telephone and asked him whether funds under Sam Vikas Yojana have been released to his district or not?

He informed that Rs. 15 crore have been released and Rs. 15 crores more will be released shortly. He told that he has received an intimation that a total sum of Rs. 30 crore will be released for this district. I asked him whether the scheme has been selected? He said that he was going to convene a meeting. He further stated that he would select a scheme very shortly. Now, since a Calling Attention Motion had come up in the House, yesternight, I asked the said collector on telephone as to whether the scheme had been selected? He told that the meeting had not yet been convened.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah): Which meeting has to take place?...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Who is to attend the said meeting? The Collector will preside over it and his officers...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: The Hon. Minister is very knowledgable. He can reply to all the questions.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: All his well wishers..., I will not use the term plunderers since, it may be unparliamentary....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: It will also go on record. Your statement whether you should use this word or not, will also go on record.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Therefore, I am thinking that I should not use the word looter, ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: It will also go on record.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: A group of such people, they will be the one to select these schemes. All the officers are included in it. Perhaps the Chairman of Zila Parishad has been made a part of it. Apart from that, no local representative, Member of Legislative Assembly or Member of Parliament has been included. So far as the Government figures....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: The person whom they have made Chairman, even he is not a member of the Monitoring Committee....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: So, he may have a very good intention but his style of functioning is not good from any angle. Therefore, through you, I would like to say that when Hon'ble Minister gives a reply. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, you listen to the question.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: I would like to know through you about the districts chosen for the 'Sam Vikas Yojana' and by when funds will be allocated, alongwith the amount thereof and the pace at which those schemes will be identified and implemented.

13.00 hrs.

The Selection Committee which has been constituted for schemes, will be include local representatives in it? Please, reply in yes or no. I would like to know it from him Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana....(*Interruptions*)

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: The hon. Member is giving speech on the Shram Vikas Yojana. I would like to inform him that the Planning Commission implements the Shram Vikas Yojana. The Rural Development Ministry does not implement the Shram Vikas Yojana....(*Interruptions*) Since he has asked informally then I will give reply to all of them.

MR. SPEAKER: All right. If it is within your jurisdiction you can reply, otherwise it is not necessary.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: The hon. Minister had discussed about the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in his reply. It is a very good scheme. A population of upto 500 in the plains and....(*Interruptions*) There was a provision for connecting a village with a population of 500 or more in plains and a village with a population of 250 or more in hilly areas with main roads. I have said it rightly 500. He allocated the instalment of the

[Shri Prabhunath Singh]

scheme to each State. Meanwhile, there were some voices that accounts of expenditure have not been received from such and such States and therefore, next instalment is not being sent to those States. Particularly, I would like to discuss about Bihar that they had given an instalment of Rs. 150 crores in 2003-04. But no amount has been allocated during 2004-05. The whether the Govt. have conducted any review about whether vies the approved works have been completed or not and whether funds allocated have been utilised or not? I can say that I have been he appointed as Chairman of one of the Committee. That committee was considering this matter. We called the officials and had discussion with them. They informed that in most of the districts, even half of the work has not been completed and when this discussion about Bihar took place fact came out that this agency in Bihar is not functioning properly. We, including the Minister were there in the committee. When he became Minister then he assigned the works related to Bihar to the Central Agency. The main objective of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was to connect the village by roads. But main objective of this scheme was sidelined in the case of Bihar. And long stretches of roads and bridges were taken up for construction. The funds meant for Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna were diverted for construction of State roads being constructed by PWD of State Governments and Central Agency in Bihar has not even started the work till date. I want to say that he delivery lengthy speeches and when he was in opposition, he used to speak emphatically and open the eyes of the Members sitting beside him. Now, why he is not opening the eyes of his officers? What has happened to his courage and vigour....(*Interruptions*)

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: I will set everything right.

MR. SPEAKER: [redacted]Minister, please speak later on. Prabhunath Singhji, now put your question.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will put questions after preparing the background.

MR. SPEAKER: Your background has gone very long. Make it brief.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I want to know from the hon'ble Minister that the Central Agency appointed for Pradhanmantri Gram Sadak Yojana and the work started earlier and the work which is still pending, by when work is likely to be completed and by when you are going to start work through Central Agency in Bihar? Kindly give complete details thereof.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please conclude now. I have given you 17 minutes.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: I am not getting any opportunity to speak now-a-days.

MR. SPEAKER: Prabhunath Singhji does not a chance to speak. All right, speak now.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the objective of Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana—is to provide employment particularly, in rural areas, to scheduled casts, scheduled tribes and to the guardians of women and children engaged in labour and also to create their economic background.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with regard to utilisation of funds under said schemes, it has been prescribed that certain percentage of funds will be spent by Panchayat Committees, through Panchayat Pradhan and Zila Parishads.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You have already mentioned that. Very effectively you have mentioned your points. I have noted that.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: For this purpose different percentages have been fixed. I know about

Bihar but not about the whole country that the money being spent through Panchayat Committees head is a 100% loot and I do not know what was Gandhiji's dream of Panchayati Raj.

SHRI ILYAS AZMI (Shahabad): 95 per cent funds under it are looted.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: May be, 5 per cent fund are utilised in the area of hon'ble member, but in our area there is a 100% loot. That's why ever year 10-20 Panchayat Pramukhs are shot dead. People express their anguish by killing them. Money does not reach the poor for whom it is allocated. Tha's why people provocate the poor to resent to extremism. This has to be saved from the mediators. Through you, I would like to tell the minister that hon'ble minister is repeating it time and again that this is the matter of state, his party is ruling in the Centre as the State. If we write as well letter to Hon'ble Governor then he says that Raghuvansh Babu, don't feel that I am playing the game of chess. I would like to know that who is playing the game of chess—he or hon'ble Governor. Please clarify the truth.

MR. SPEAKER: Allright. Now please complete your speech after mentioning about Maharajganj.

MR. RAGHUNATH JHA: Nothing is left in Maharajganj.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Indira Aawas Yojana is meant for poor.

MR. SPEAKER: Allright. We all are here for poor.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Sir, under this scheme, there is a provision for construction of houses for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and widows of soldiers. In fact, the scheme provides that a meeting of Gram Sabha should be held for identifying persons for this scheme.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Prabhunath, you have already taken 22 minutes.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, let this issue be taken up further tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: You please ask your last question.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, it should be taken up again tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: You have raised very good questions. In fact you have delievered a speech. We have learnt a lot of things from you. Please ask your last question.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, we were discussing about the Indira Aawas Yojana. In that—first of all, meeting of Gram Sabha is called after that the list is sent to Block Development Officer of the Block. These are selected in office of Block Development Officer. But the Truth is that the meeting is called nowhere and BDOs and village Heads work in connivance with each other. For this, village Heads give list of fraudulent signatures to BDO. The BDOs and village Heads act in connivance with each other.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You have to seek clarifications only, as you know.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Sir, in case where relations between BDO and Village Head are tense no meetings of Gram Sabha are called. The funds allocated under the scheme remain utilised.

Sir, officers eat away Rs. six thousands as commision. This is the money of Government of India. Government are sending it for the poors of the villages. So if you cut my time, then those poor people who are watching the proceedings, will say that opportunity is not being given to raise their matter. So Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me speak.

MR. SPEAKER: What to let speak. You have been speaking for the last 25 minutes.

[English]

You need not advise me. You go to your seat.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Sir, I am speaking for the poor, let me speak. I would like to know from Hon'ble Minister about the irregularities being committed under the scheme. The Government have prepared estimates for the scheme but the things are not going on as required. So, I would like to ask. What steps the Government propose to take to streamline working of said scheme.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Let us not violate all the rules all the time.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Sir, I am going to conclude my speech by mentioning just two points.

MR. SPEAKER: Allright. But make two small points only.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Sir, I want to discuss about self-employment scheme and the second one is about Monitoring Committee. I am going to conclude.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for your co-operation.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: We follow your each instruction.

MR. SPEAKER: I am grateful to you. Now you conclude.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: I will conclude my speech after discussing just two points. That is why I have closed all my documents. I want to say something about Self employment Scheme that they have promised to provide employment to educated unemployed youth, poor, workers and the farmers. But the reality is that these people are running from pillar to post in the blocks, banks and offices of the industries and at the end they get only 40 per cent of their total remuneration and rest 60 per cent of the money goes to the commission agents as commission. This 40 per cent of the money which they earned by their hard labour, exhaust very soon and they become unable to do any job. After that they are burdened with interest of loans which they have taken.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: In future I have to consider whether I shall allow Calling Attention or not. It should not take more than half an hour but it has gone for more than 40 minutes.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my second point is about monitoring.

MR. SPEAKER: This should be your last point.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: They do not even get employment due to the irregularities in Banks and how would you correct all these irregularities? They have set up monitoring committee and Vigilance Committee of Members of Parliament. He says that their meeting should be held once in three months and he has also written a letter in this regard. But not even a single meeting has been held in his native State, Bihar. There are so many States, where no such meetings have ben held. Please tell me that the time frame and the guidelines prepared by him to facilitate meeting at regular intervals in those States where no such meetings have been held. Mr. Speaker, Sir, with these words, I am concluding my speech following your incstructions.

MR. SPEAKER: You have followed my instructions only after 15 minutes.

[English]

Hon. Members, I am very keen to allow. Calling Attention is expected to take half an hour only. I have allowed two Calling Attentions today. This is a matter on which a notice can come for discussion under Rule 193.

This is a very important matter. I am not minimising its importance. If we take so much time for Calling Attention, then it will be very difficult.

Hon. Members, you are aware that rules allow only Members, upto five Members, who have given notice to take part in the discussion. But somehow or the other, we have relaxed the rules by a sort of convention or pressure if I may say so over the years. I am not blaming any hon. Presiding Officer or Member. Some Members have given their names. I have got 13 names. If I allow everyone, it will become more than a discussion under Rule 193. Therefore, I will allow another four Members. I request them to put only one question. Otherwise, I will not permit.

Now, Shri Shailendra Kumar, no background. Do not go by his standard.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I am very grateful to you for having given me an opportunity to speak.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no need to express gratefulness, please put your question.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR : Rural Development Ministry is a very important ministry and we are now discussing about it. Associating myself with the statement made by Shri Prabhunath Singhji and would like to ask hon. Minister that whethr he would ascertain the participation of the hon. Members of treasury benches and the opposition in all the schemes of the Rural Development Ministry or not, because the involvement of the Members of Parliament would ensure proper functioning of the schemes.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil): Sir, this is a very important matter. I have received a letter from the Minister as early in March 2005 regarding the formation of District and Vigilance Monitoring Committee in every district. I am a Member of Parliament. I have not received any communication....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not the occasion to get the information like this. You please put your question.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : He was making all along his speech. There was no interruption. I have been keeping silent for the last so many days without doing anything.

MR. SPEAKER: That does not mean that you can go on speaking. I have allowed you to put one question. Please put that question.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : When you had called me, I stood up. I will put the question.

MR. SPEAKER: It is very kind of you. You put your question.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : I am doing it.

In *The Hindu* dated 3rd June, 2005, this year, they have raised some issues in the Food-for-Work Programme. There are many infirmities in the way the Food-for-Work Programme has been designed and is being implemented.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it coming under your Ministry?

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: This should not be allowed to be done. This is another source of exploitation. Now, I put a question that there are inordinate delays in implementing all the rural schemes, especially, the Pradhan Mantri Sadak Yojana. So far, there are inordinate delays. So, all those rural programmes designed by the Ministry are not being implemented at the proper time with proper guidance. I want to know whether the Ministry will take immediate steps to issue guidelines to the concerned State Governments for implementing these programmes without fail. At the same time, the Central Government should go through the issues that are enunciated in *The Hindu* article which has given the details. So, I request the Government to go into those details and see that the delay is prevented. At the same time, the Central Government should direct

[Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan]

the State Government to constitute the Vigilance Committee as directed by the Government. I request the Government to inform the Kerala Government.

So far they have not constituted any Committee. So, I request you to inform the Kerala Government to constitute the Committee as directed in your letter referred to earlier. I request the hon. Minister to take immediate steps for doing this.

[Translation]

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURAI (Garhwal): Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question is about Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. I had demanded a Calling Attention on this matter on 22nd February but hon. Minister has not accepted that and even on 17 March you did not accept that despite my repeated requests. He has told in his reply that Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is a State subject, therefore, we could not do anything. Second thing he told that Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is implemented through States, therefore, we can't do anything regarding its implementation. It means he can't do anything. both in monitoring as well as implementation. Hon. Minister, this kind of approach is not good. Therefore, the reason for all these complaints lie in the fact that his ministry say that this is not their job, whereas this is a cent percent Centrally Sponsored Scheme. He has also set up a committee which monitors it. Today so many things have been said and this has also been said that the fund is not being utilized. Since last three years not even a single penny has been utilized in our Uttaranchal. The fund for the year 2002-03 have been released now. My first question is what actions he is going to take to ensure proper utilization of the funds released so far? My second question is—what are the arrangements being made by the Centre to monitor those areas where progress is very slow? My third question is, he has fixed the criteria of population 500 and 250. It is with regard to the village at the fag-end but there may be more villages enroute. During the regime of the previous Government it had been decided to include the villages coming under the periphery of half km. left or right. Wanted you take any decision in this regard?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. This is the co-operation that is needed. Thank you.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I will not allow you. Please do not stand. You never bothered to give a Calling Attention notice. You are only trying to take advantage of another Member's notice.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Sir, whether all those who have spoken have given notice.

MR. SPEAKER: It is very easy to ask, notice should also be given. When all the leaders had agreed in the meeting, they have been alloted time. This is not right.

[English]

Do not get into an argument with the Chair. It does not look nice.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhanjharpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister through you that 150 backward districts have been selected in the entire country. What are the criteria for their selection and how many districts of Bihar are included in "Food for work Programme"? How many man days have been generated in those backward districts which are included in 'Food for work Programme'? I have got the information that work have been accomplished there through tractors. Tractors rather than labourers have been used for work. This is very unfortunate. This is the open violation of the guidelines of Government of India.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in my part 'B' of the question. I would like to know that whether it is a fact that road construction work in Bihar is not taking place due to Central Agencies which are not ready to go there. Whether it is a fact? I want to know this?

[English]

MR SPEAKER: Yes, hon. Minister, reply please.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Rajaram Pal, I would not allow you. Please do not insist. I would not allow you to go on shouting. Some rule has to be followed.

[Translation]

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK (Unnao): Time should be allotted party-wise.

MR. SPEAKER: It is not a matter of party, he has been given opportunities so many times. Just leave it, you don't have to defend him.

[English]

He is a very good Member.

[Translation]

Right now, reply should be heard.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government shares the concerns of all those hon. Members including Prabhunath Singhji who have asked questions while making misleading speeches pertaining to schemes of Rural Development. The Schemes to solve the problems of rural development and rural prosperity in villages, cannot succeed without the help of State Government, elected representatives of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, all hon. Members and all the elected representatives.

SHRI ILYAS AZMI (Shahabad): Hon. Minister, it is not a question of help rather allocation is being made and the funds for schemes are being disbursed.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: We expect cooperation from all of you and ask for the same. We expect cooperation from all the elected representatives of our country, hon. Members, State Governments, representatives of State Legislative Assemblies, 29 lakh 20 thousand elected representatives of Panchyati Raj so that these schemes could properly be implemented and its benefits could reach the poor properly. We expect cooperation from all quarters to achieve this end.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: No body asks them.

MR. SPEAKER: It's alright, you please sit down.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: We are also addressing it. Everybody will ask, nothing could be done without consultation.

[English]

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (Sriperumbudur): The State Government has not been cooperating. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Pathak, you please sit down. Please take your seat. You go to your constituency and assert your rights there. I do not know how many Members go and assert their rights in their constituencies. You take up the matter with the District Magistrate. Nodbody does it.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing to be recorded. No more will be recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)*

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Pathak, I am sorry to say that you are violating the Chair. You are violating the direction of the Chair. Nothing is being recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Somebody will speak out his inner voice.

...(*Interruptions*)

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*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: If you wish so, you can indulge in wrestling here and make this House a wrestling arena.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Would you sit down or not?

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: I am ready for a full length debate on it but nobody takes trouble to give a notice.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: I have given a notice ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not the right thing. One hon. Member has tried and has written several times, raised it in the leaders meeting as well. I will work as per rules.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: We had asked you to conduct a debate in this regard...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Very well, I would adjourn the House.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: If you do not want to listen to the reply, I would adjourn the House.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Unless you sit down, I would adjourn the House.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: You carry on.

[English]

Do not respond to them.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members have raised a big question. I want to answer them all one by one but it is not possible without their help. Meetings are not convened due to two reasons. We give intimation regarding meetings. Meetings have been convened in 130 districts. Four meetings have been convened in single district, it has also been reported....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Tell about Uttar Pradesh. ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Pathak, what are you doing? Do not disturb the House. You are disturbing this House.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: I am expressing his pain and problems....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot address the Minister.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: I will tell him not about Uttar Pradesh only but about his district and village as well...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: If he tells about the meeting then I will resign....(*Interruptions*)

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Please listen to me....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I would name you, Mr. Pathak.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: What is the matter?

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You are behaving in an unruly manner. You have no right to address the Minister.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: You are our guardian. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please, you keep quiet. You don't even listen to the guardian. You talk of guardian but do you pay heed to him?

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: I would pay heed only if you say right things....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You will pay heed according to your liking. You sit down. Do not speak even a word.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I would adjourn and go away.

[Translation]

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: I don't have a problem. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Had you not asked the question? You may not have the problem for that. The Members who have asked question, they want a reply.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Azmi, in future, I would not give a chance

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You are behaving in a most irresponsible manner. I am not going to allow it. This is the Parliament of India.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot do anything.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: If anybody interrupts hereafter, I will give him a notice....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please, you keep quiet.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am going to sit down but you should implement rules and ask others to follow them....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: What is the rule?

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: To which person and party you have given an opportunity to speak?....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Very well, the House stands adjourned to meet at 2.30 p.m.

13.28 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till thirty minutes past fourteen of the clock.

14.32 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled at thirty-two minutes past Fourteen of the Clock

[MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

CALLING ATTENTION

Need for effective implementation of various Centrally Sponsored Schemes for Rural Development—*Contd.*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of Rural Development will continue his reply.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav, Shri V. Radhakrishnan, Shri Khanduri and Shri Raghunath Jha also wanted to raise certain issues alongwith Shri Prabhunath Singhji through Calling Attention. Some other hon. members also wanted to raise issues and I would like to satisfy them by answering accordingly. Those who have not raised issues, can also raise them in a minute or so and I will reply to them quickly. I would like to satisfy them....(*Interruptions*) Their cooperation is required to save it from corruption. It they also become a part of it then only the God can save the things. Therefore, please listen to me....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, please address the Chair and not the individual.

[Translation]

if you do not keep this in mind then who will care for the Chair?

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is alright. In view of the importance of the rural development schemes and the concern of the hon. Members, we have already held one round of meeting with hon. Members from each State. We are repeating the same and have held a meeting with hon. Members from North-East. We would call a second meeting with the hon. Members in which the opinions and views of the Members regarding rural development schemes will be taken into consideration. The problem of unemployment and poverty crores of rural poor is a curse for the country. According to the Common Minimum Programme, untill villages are developed, poverty and unemployment cannot be rooted out from the villages. It cannot be said that the country has developed. Gandhiji also used to say that until villages are developed, the country will not develop. Therefore, we have held one round of meeting and are going to have second round. We have constituted District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee and have given full powers to the hon. Members. The Committee comparises President, Vice-President, Chairman, Vice-Chairman and has been given full powers to hold at least four meetings in a year and one meeting in three months. If the number of sittings increase, there is no harm in it but there should be atleast four sittings in a year and one sitting in three months. But it...(*Interruptions*) do not interrupt, ask it later. First listen to me then...(*Interruptions*) Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to request the hon. Member that I am also one of them and after the speech if someone feels unsatisfied with it, he can ask questions and I would answer all such questions. But sometimes interruptions lead to digression. We monitor the report of District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee. We have received information that meetings were not held in many districts. So far, we have found two reasons behind it. First of all, I would like to say that there are lapses on the part of hon. Members who are Presidents in these committees. They didi not hold meetings with the collectors. We have also got information that collectors have also committed mistakes and have not called meetings even after the request made by the Members. Whenever we receive information in this regard, we immediately try to draw the attention of the State Governments towards this. A cooperation of hon. Members, State Governments, district administration and Panchayati Raj is required for each and every Committee. Nothing can be done without their cooperation. Therefore,

we have written to all State Chief Ministers about this. We have consulted District Vigilance and Monitoring Committees and Chief Ministers and they have responded that they will cooperate. We are directing our officers to work according to guidelines. We are getting cooperation but still there are some difficulties. The hon. President and Members do not have time to hold meetings. We are making arrangements for the same. I am issuing a circular to this effect that if President do not have time then Vice-President can also call such a meeting. We are directing collectors that if no meeting is held within three months, they would be held responsible for that. I am also going to make an arrangement that meeting may take place within 15 days after consulting the Vice-Chairman of the district. The State Government can take action if the collector has shown laxity and the bureaucracy has not cooperated. Otherwise the Chair is competent enough to do it as it is also a matter of breach of privilege. We have given powers to the hon'ble Members to Preside over the sitting of the District Vigilance and Monitoring committee and if deliberate intention is found in interrupting the proceedings of the committee by violating the instructions and if it is found that a collector is violating the instructions of hon. Members knowingly, a case of breach of privilege can be registered against that officer and the Chair can take action against it. I was trying to find a solution of these two reasons and today the same have been resolved. Therefore, I thanked Shri Prabhunath Singh, who raised the issue, as well as the Chair which allowed raising of such an important issue through Calling Attention. We are grateful for that. I think myself fortunate enough because you gave me a chance to tell the House as well as the Government that as to how the villages are to be developed, how poverty and unemployment are to be removed. Measures have been taken to make the District Vigilance Monitoring Committees effective.

The Next point relates to transparency and peoples' participation. Several hon'ble Members have raised questions about SJRY and Food for Work Programme. Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav has raised a question regarding selection of districts. There is a criteria for this. Three parameters were set by the Planning Commission regarding selection of districts. The Commission decides the wages and productivity of the district where the population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is on higher side. We have selected 150 backward districts of the country under Food for Work Programme and the same was introduced in these districts. There after taking into account the wages and productivity, which were the criterion of the Rashtriya Shram Vikas Yojana. This wage is employment and SJRY is also wage employment. After consulting the Planning Commission, we provide money to every district in the month of April on the basis of poverty prevailing there. The money reached there within 15 days and after that 20 per cent of the amount is given to Zila Panchayat, 30 per cent to Block Panchayat and 50 per cent to Gram Panchayat. The hon. Member has raised a question about the irregularities being committed there in. So we have made a provision of transparency and people's participation in it. According to a scheme, a Monitoring Committee consisting of 5 to 9 persons will be constituted which will include advisors, beneficiaries and inhabitants. In that it has been provided that retired defence personnel of villages, teachers, clerks, officers etc. would be included in the committee. Besides, at least one person each belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and women would be included. That local monitoring committee would comprise of 5 to 9 persons. We have said that the members of such committee would be trained at block level and information should be given about schemes and transparency would be observed regarding the plan, the amount involved, the wage rates, and works to be undertaken. Since this committee is running 18 lakhs plans in six lakh villages at present the works are complete in some of the schemes and in some schemes it is in progress. That is why we have asked all the State Governments to constitute local monitoring committees. We have asked for publication of advertisements in all regional newspapers in all regional languages. The common men who are excellent social workers, political activists, social activists, educated intellectuals, journalists should know about these things and see it. Since the works are in

[Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh]

progress in six lakh village across the country and it is a matter concerning the poor that is why it requires transparency and public participation...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Would hon. Minister give all of us a letter regarding constitution of such a monitoring committee which you have just mentioned. We will help you in constitution of such committees...(*Interruptions*)

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: We will also give them a letter. We will give written information to all hon. Members separately within a period of one week mentioning that such a committee would not be constituted without help of hon. Members and they should see that these are functioning properly. We will provide them information about the amount released by us and works done out of that, district-wise. Hon. Members of some States might be remembering that we have done correspondence about the status of their State. We inform Chief Ministers and hon. Members when the amount to ths State is released; the amount of the district is released so that alertness is observed.

Sir, since this work cannot be done without the help of all of us, that is why we expect help from everyone and we no doubl are getting help from everyone. Common Minimum Programme is committed to observe strict vigilance over the states in this regard. We are adopting measures to get public participation, transparency and full support of hon. Members for strict vigilance. Hon. Member Shri Prabhunath Singh has mentioned about the irregularities in banks regarding SGSY. Self help groups will take the shape of a movement. It is a self employment scheme. Since there is a wage employment programme to eradicate unemployment which includes SGRY, Food for Work Programme. Secondly, we have self employment programme which is not only a self employment programme, it is productive self employment programme. Productive self employment schemes have been launched in which 22 lakh Self Help Groups have been constituted till now. One Self Help Group will include 10 women belonging to scheduled castes and more people living below the poverty line will be included in it. There may be 30 per cent people from above poverty line. This also includes individual self employments. Hon. Members have mentioned that irregularities take place in banks. We have also received complaints. Bank officials cannot dare to take bribes from Self Help Groups. We have taken immediate actions with regard to the complaints of individual self employment. We have 3-4 complaints with Banks. Firstly we have raised complaints of bribe. Secondly, there are approximately 1200 bank branches are zero lending branches and they do not even open the account of poor people. They do not grant credit to poor people. We have written to hon. Finance Minister citing the names of 1200 bank branches which are not cooperating with us. Further we have written that banks are charging 12 to 14 per cent rate of interest from the poor people. This is atrocious. Bank grants credit at the interest rate of 8 to 9 per cent for constructing palaces and purchasing cars and the people of below poverty line who want to create self employment and are the participants of on going Self Help Group movement are being charged 10-12 per cent rate of interest. This is injustice. The Finance Minister has taken it seriously. He has consulted the Reserve Bank of India and assured us that the interest rate should not exceed 9 per cent. It reflects autonomy of banks. But we will not let it exceed 9 per cent. The commercial banks whereas the have agreed to lend credit at 9 per cent rate of interest, rate of interest is more than 10 per cent in cooperative banks and rural banks...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please listen to the Minister what he is saying.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: I am telling about the solution made to the problems—for your information. I want his cooperation to complete the remaining tasks and I expect cooperation from all of us. There are areas where banks are not there. There are 3-4 more types of problems. The Finance Minister cooperated with us. Hon. Finance Minister have constituted bank committees at State level and district

level and have carried out reforms in consultation with officers. The number of zero lending branches is coming down and the bankers have started working efficiently for supporting the Self Help Group movement.

Sir. I feel pride in informing the House that the non performing assets in the country are to the tune of Rs. 1.5 lakh crores but the thousands of poor have no contribution to it. 98 recovery has been made from poor people. Despite that irregularity takes place and this cannot be tolerated. Our common minimum programme is committeed to the poor. Our commitment is to help the poor and to improve their economic condition and provide employment to them. The Prime Minister have asked to generate more employment. Therefore, we have launched employment generating programmes, wage employment programmes and self employment programmes to eradicate poverty.

Deputy-Speaker, Sir, question have been raised about Indira Aawas Yojana and it is said that poor men are not selected under the scheme. I would like to tell that the right to identify the beneficiaries have been given to the Gram Sabha; but he has also raised the question that meeting of Gram Sabha are not conducted. I would like to tell that our country is so strange and diverse that the number of our Gram Sabha varies from 113 to 50 thousand. There is a Gram Sabha in Kerala consisting of 50 thousand members and there is a Gram Sabha in Arunachal Pradesh consisting of 113 members. In West Bengal Gram Sabha comprises somewhere 2 thousands, somewhere 3 thousands, somewhere 4 thousand or 5 thousand members. This is also diversity and strangers of this country that somewhere we have Gram Sabha, somewhere we have ward sabha and somewhere we have revenue village sabha.

Sir, Rajiv Gandhiji perceived Panchayati Raj and to materialize it a new section was added to the 73rd amendment during his regime and it was passed. As per the 73rd amendment of the Constitution of India, the provisions regarding empowerment of Panchayati Raj, Panchayati Raj elections every fifth year and one third reservation for SC/ST women were provided and now are being implemented and all these things are taking place.

Sir, after the complaint regarding not holding the meetings of Gram Sabha, the hon'ble Member made another complaint that their number was too high. Now he may wonder at the delay being caused in its implementation. The reason for it is that some people had filed a PIL in the Supreme Court and the Court gave a stay ordering that the Act should not be tampered with.

Sir, we summoned the Government Counsel., Solicitor-General Additional Solicitor-General and the persons who filed PIL and told them that we brought the amendment because the names of lakhs of poor could not be included in it and now we are implementing it. The rural people complain that they are poor but still their names have not been included in the BPL list and they have not received either Government assistance or an accommodation. We have received complaints that such irregularities are being committed in villages and names of poor people are not being included in the list. The hon'ble Supreme Court heard our counsel. Hon'ble Judge has completed the hearing but the persons who have filed PIL, have taken some time. The stay should be vacated in the case after the verdict, thereafter, the names of people living below poverty line which were missingly will be included in the BPL list. There are 13 points on which Survey has been completed as per the parameters. According to it the name of the poorest person will be recorded first followed by the second and the third and so on and thus the list of 15 poorest persons will be written on the wall of Panchayat Bhavan or school. The whole process will be computerized and the names will be printed in a booklet form and circulated to each hon'ble Member so that they may see to it that no name is missing....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please sit down. I will also allow you to speak. You please sit down. Nothing is being recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)*

*Not recorded.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, 15 lakh houses are proposed to be constructed with a budget of more than Rs. 27 thousand crore under Indira Aawas Yojana, which is a rural area scheme. Indira Aawas Yojana will be made transparent, and its benefits will accrue to the poor in order of their names in the list. Similarly, houses will be allotted under Indira Aawas Yojana. The hon'ble Member has complained that irregularities are committed in the names of 2 to 4 thousand people. This cannot be tolerated. Transparency will be ensured, the names will be written on the wall and computerisation will be done. Not only this, right to appeal has also been provided therein.

If the name of a poor person in missing from the list a provision has been made whereby final authority will be vested in the B.D.O., S.D.O. or a Collector to finalise the list and an appeal at three stages can be made so that no irregularities are committed and no names are missing. It has been done to ensure transparency in the Indira Aawas Yojana...(*Interruptions*) Hon. Prabhunath Singhji raised a very good question regarding Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. It relates to the entire country. Then he switched over to Bihar. I will answer it but Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana ...(*Interruptions*) let me complete the answer.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Prabhunath Singhji, I will allow you to speak.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajganj, Bihar): I referred to Bihar became if he cannot improve the situation of Bihar, then how can he improve the situation of entire country...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: After the reply of the hon'ble Minister, you will be allowed to speak. Not now. Please sit down. This is not the way.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Should I sit down? Do you mean that I should leave it. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was started in the year 2000. With the objective of linking villages having population upto 500 with roads. The total length of road in the country, is 43 lakh kilometre. Out of it, are 58 thousand kilometre National Highways, State Highways are 1.25 lakh km., major district roads are 3.25 lakh km. and rural roads are 27 lakh km. Khanduriji is sitting here, there is no mention about rural road, highways—highway, Golden Quadrlateral, East-West corridor, North-East corridor in 58 thousand km....(*Interruptions*)

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI (Garhwal): He will be glad to know that they have stopped the entire work...(*Interruptions*)

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Please listen, we have not stopped it. The 27 lakh km. rural roads is now being given importance. Within one month, we will release a Rural Road Vision-2025, containing a layout of rural roads and infrastructural facilities to be provided to the rural people. In the year 2000, they made a provision of Rs. 2500 crore to spend on the development of the village under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, We will spend Rs. 2000, 2200, 2300 or 2500 crore earned from cess, on these states and have also made a provision of Rs. 4200 crore in the current budget. The amount will be spent on the development of the villages so that the rural people can walk on road and the villages can get rural connectivity. We have extended the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and there will be no dearth of funds for it. We have asked the State Governments to enhance their capacity to consume there will be no paucity of funds ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Members, no running commentary please.

[Translation]

I am asking them, not you.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing is recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)*

*Not recorded.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing to be recorded except the speech of the hon. Minister.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Khanduri. Sit down please.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Lal Singh. Please sit down.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, an estimate of Rs. 60 thousand crore was made to be spent on connecting the villages having population of 500 people.

15.00 hrs.

I have made calculations. It was not correct. Now I have again made calculations. Rs. 60-70 thousand crore will not solve the purpose. This country is big. Astuteness and courage are required to run this country ...(*Interruptions*)

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: I have calculated that Rs. One lakh thirty three thousand crore are needed. Courage needs to be mustered up for connecting all the villages having a population more than thousand-five hundred. His Excellency President anticipates the implementation of the scheme in toto. All urban facilities should be provided in the villages. Hon. President always talks of rural development. Therefore, we are committed to provide all urban facilities in villages. Roads, potable water, education, medicines and electricity are required in villages. Rajiv Gandhi Rural Electrification Scheme is there for electrification which envisages....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Swain, you please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Sir, One lakh twenty five thousand villages are yet to be electrified. The local people wonder when they will get freedom? The 'Bharat Nirman' we have envisaged provides for free of cost electricity to the people belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in every village and every cluster by the end of year 2009. Courage is required to provide electricity at any cost to the poor, dalits and tribals residing in villages. Their wards should also study under electric bulb and get on the path of progress. The Rajiv Gandhi Rural Electrification Scheme has made provision for that. The Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana under the Bharat Nirman Scheme has a target of linking all the villages having a population of even 1000 persons which are not yet connected with roads. Besides, a target has been fixed to connect those hilly areas with roads, which have a pupulation of about 500 people by the end of year 2009. The Ministry of Finance has also given an assurance that there will be no paucity of funds. The scheme to connect villages with roads by the year 2009 is almost ready. We have urged the State Governments to increase their consumption capacity. The ambition of India will be fulfilled through implementation of this scheme.

Sir, Shri Prabhunath Singhji had raised a question regarding Bihar....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If you again raise the matter of State Governments, this will create furore.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Sir, rupees three hundred Crore and Rs. 60 crore were given consecutively. A total of Rs. 360 crore were given to Bihar for first and second phase. Out of which works of 905 roads were undertaken. Construction of 416 roads has been completed. A sum of Rs. 272 crore has been spent thereon and a part of it is still remaining. Shri Prabhunath Singhji used to sit here and I used to sit in the Opposition during the 13th Lok Sabha. At that time he used to say that these works should be entrusted to the Central Agencies. But his Government did not pay any heed to it. After the UPA Government came into power, his voice is bing heard and action is going to be taken thereon. Five Central Agencies have been entrusted with the job which are NHPC, NBCC, NPCC, IRCON and CPWD etc....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: No running commentray, please.

[Translaiton]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Central Agencies have been given the job and arrangements have been made everywhere in this regard. The approval for 157 roads has been accorded to the Central agencies, works in 35 districts have since commenced with a sum of Rs. 480 crore. The Total length is 1645 kms. Works on 47 roads in five districts have started. Besides, clearances to 177 roads with a cost of Rs. 320 crore is under process. Its length is 800 kms. We are going to construct 7000 kms. long road with a cost of Rs. 2000 crore very soon. But the sad part is there are attempts to sabotage them. When engineers of the NHPC visited there, they were abducted. It is a blot on Bihar and works are being impeded so that engineers may run away from the work. Engineers held a press conference there that they would not run away for fear. People belonging to that party are sitting here who were responsible for abductions. They turned out to be associated with his party. They would not allow the works to be carried on there, would stop the work, abduct engineers and come here and complain that there is no progress of work. This double game will not work. They will be exposed and it will be made known to everyone.

Hon. Member Shri Devendra Prasad Singh expressed concern that Central agencies are not ready to go there. They never have said that they will not go there. They will go there. They have worked in terrorism infested Kashmir and ULFA dominated areas, they are not afraid of local pick pockets. Work has to be done, that too expeditiously and the aspiration of people will be fulfilled.

The questions asked separately by all the hon. Members have been answered...(*Interruptions*). I now invite all the Members who were getting up one after another to ask questions and accept all the challenges. But now that time to gone and nobody can stop the development of villages. No body can stop us from taking measures to eradicate unemployment and poverty. We are committed for development and prosperity of villages, providing all the facilities in villages and removing unemployment and alleviating poverty with the help of the UPA and others and nobody can stop this.

Yeh Door Dekh Poori Angaar Anek

Poongi Sari Jal Jayegi

Maanvta Ki Kaali Bindi

Kshar Kshar Ho Jayagi

Dekhen Is Bharat Mein Kaun Bada Veer Balidaani hai

Kiski Dhamni Mein Khoon Aur Kiski Dhamni Mein Paani Hai

Long live rural development, long live rural prosperity. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah): Long Live Mr. Minister as well....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Member, please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Mr. Minister has made a very good speech but has not answered any of the questions....(*Interruptions*) It was his political speech. The questions we have asked, not a single question has been answered....(*Interruptions*) What was the benefit of asking questions....(*Interruptions*) We will have to visit his office and sit over a cup of tea then he will give a reply. He has not given any reply here....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please listen to me.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, today the Hon. Mr. Speaker congratulated the Secretary General for his services. You should at least congratulates. Mr. Minister for his wonderful reply....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I was about to say the same.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I think, Mr. Minister has given reply to every point. Therefore, I think we should take up next point. If questions are asked again thereon it will take long time. In my view, Mr. Minister has elaborated his reply.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask one or two questions from the hon. Minister....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Okay, You can ask.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool): Sir, there are some clarifications. I may be given a chance. I would like to seek only a small clarification from the hon. Minister. So, I may be given a chance after him.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have allowed Shri Prabhunath Singh to ask the question first. You may ask after that.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Azmi, please sit down. I have allowed Shri Prabhunath Singh to ask the question.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I was listening to the reply of the hon. Minister. He did not reply even a single question....(*Interruptions*) He has delivered a speech only....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The Hon. Minister has delivered a detailed speech. Do not do injustice with him. He has replied to your questions for one hour.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like clarifications from the hon. Minister on one or two specific points. He has said that we used to demand for a central agency when we were on the other side. It is true that our government did not do this. It is also true that when the UPA Government came into power they started the work in Bihar through central agency. We would like to know from the hon. Minister whether they have started the road work which was inaugurated a year ago by Shri Lalu Prasadji, hon. Minister for Railways and how many kilometre road has been constructed so far? Secondly, he has talked of irregularities. We would like to know that whether any solution to the problem has been worked out by him. He has suggested that a local committee at Panchayat or block level will be constituted. How he would like to empower the committee and what will be the importance of its recommendations? Please clarify this also.

Thirdly, he referred to the meetings. Shri Raghunath Jha also met him and told him that there is no representation of the Members of Parliament in the sittings of Panchayats, Gram Sabha or General Body. Whether he has written to the State Governments that Members of Parliament should be included as representatives in the sittings. Regarding Sam Vikas Yojana, he has stated that it is a scheme of Planning Commission but he has designated collector as its Chairman. There is no role of the Members of Parliament in the selection of the scheme. We would like to know whether the Member of Parliament of that district. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ILYAS AZMI (Shahabad): Members of Legislative Assembly take part in the sittings but the Members of Parliament do not....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: There is no participation of the Members of Legislative Assembly also. Whether he would designate the Member of that district as Chairman instead of the Collector and get a scheme selected? In regard to the rural poor, he said that they are going to implement all schemes for them. I would like to request him not to make verbal speech because he states one thing in newspaper and other in the Lok Sabha. In reaction to a letter written by him to the Governor of Bihar. The newspaper stated that they do not play chess. He should clarify if the Governor is playing a game in the Governor House or he is playing a game by making speech in Lok Sabha. He should give reply to both the questions.

[English]

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH (Kanakapura): The speech made in the Lok Sabha Chamber will be the official speech. Whatever is spoken in Lok Sabha, is right....(*Interruptions*)

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Sir, I should like to congratulate him for constituting vigilance and monitoring committees and vesting the Members of Parliament with some powers. Though on paper, it is called vigilance and monitoring committee and you have made the Collector as the Member Secretary. He has to convey meetings of the committee. I have conducted three such meetings in my Mahabubnagar District in a short span of six months after receiving your letter. We found some irregularities in the implementation of various programmes. like, National Food for Work Programme, drinking water scheme, SGRY, SGSY, etc. I, in the capacity of Chairman of that Committee, endorsed them to the Collector and asked him to enquire into them and take necessry action. Here the situation is like this. You say that you can call for any file and inspect it. But practically where is the power to take action". It is with the Collector. We do not have any power to punish anybody. What is the use of it? We can go to see files and recommend. In our Andhra Pradesh State, MLAs are exerting so much of pressure on the Collectors that they do not conduct the meetings of the Gram Sabhas They do not care for any guidelines; whether it is SGSY, SGRY or National Food for Work Programme, they are not following the guidelines. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Thank you.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. JAGANNATH: Hear me first....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded except what Dr. Jagannath says.

(*Interruptions*)*

DR. M. JAGANNATHA: Sir, it has been my experience as the Chairman of the Committee. He does not have any experience and so, he should not be allowed to speak and I should be given a chance. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Okay, Thank you. Please sit down now.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Madam, please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH: What are the criteria for thos programmes?...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Jagannath, do you want to ask any question?

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Every programme has got its guidelines...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Have you got any questions to put?

...(*Interruptions*)

*Not recorded.

DR. M. JAGANNATH: I will come to the 22.5 per cent of SGRY going to the individual beneficiaries of SC/ST....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please put the question.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please sit down now.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. M. JAGANNATH: It is my experience.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Jagannath, sit down now.

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Sir, I should congratulate and appreciate the lung power of the hon. Minister. I should congratulate him because he has given very clear-cut guidelines. Every word carries value. But what is happening at the ground level? Nothing is being implemented as per the guidelines....(*Interruptions*) Shri Ramdas Athawale, please sit down....(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Ramdasji, sit down please. ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

The local MLAs are giving the list which is endorsed by the Collector....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Coming to SGRY, the list is given by the MLAs....(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Jagannathji, sit down now.

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH: It is very relevant. The hon. Minister has done it with a good spirit. But it is being diverted and the benefits are not going to those who are to be benefited. The benefits are going to the *benamis*, proposed by the local MLAs. No consideration is being given to the MPs....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Okay, thank you. Please sit down now.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Coming to SGSY, again the beneficiaries are selected on the recommendation of the local MLAs and are not selected by holding *gram sabha* meetings or the Joint Selection Committee meetings. The bankers are also not coming forward to help in this and so, action should be initiated against the bankers also....(*Interruptions*) As the Chairman of the Committee, I am telling all this. Why are you scared? ...(*Interruptions*) You can prove that it is not happening; otherwise, I can prove it....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, please sit down. After this, nothing will be recorded. Now, please sit down. Nothing will be recorded. Dr. Jagannath, I have given you enough time. Now, you have to sit down.

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: No. Nothing will be recorded.

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. M. JAGANNATH: It is very relevant. The guidelines are there and the intention of the Central Government is also good. But what is being done at the ground level or at the grass-root level? For any activity of the Government, there are guidelines. ...(*Interruptions*)

*Not recorded.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please sit down. No. You have crossed all limits now.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: No. You have crossed the limits. Please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: No. No. Please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Even after the hon. Minister's reply, anybody can seek clarification. The hon. Minister is prepared to answer all the clarifications. That was his commitment and that is why I am seeking clarifications from him.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You may sit down now. Nothing is going on record.

(*Interruptions*)...*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Wait a minute, let Shri Libraji to complete his speech.

SARDAR SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA (Ropar): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, thank you very much.

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, have you decided not to allow the Members of Bahujan Samaj Party to speak?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: How do you think that I will not allow you to speak.

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: Before this, Shri Brajesh Pathak and I sought time to make submissions but we were not given any. The Members of Bahujan Samaj Party do not get a chance to speak.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I will give you time. Please sit down.

*Not recorded.

[Translation]

SARDAR SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, we have listened to a very good speech but it does not have any impact on the rural people. I am Chairman of two districts. Self-Help Groups have been formed there and which claim to be working properly but I have seen that no work is being performed in the villages by these groups. It is said that they do not take money. But this is not right. Here it is said that amount has been released for the work but the officers do not enquire about this and I think they all get their share out of it.

The condition of the kutcha houses is very bad, the people living in these house do not get any financial assistance. On the other hand the people living in pucca houses draw salary, pension or are working as 'Patwari' etc. Only they get financial assistance from the Government. This money is recovered from them but no case is registered against them. Besides, I have also seen that the State Government do not give its due share in the funds which is released by the Central Government. Some arrangement should be made for the same so that the works can be performed for the benefit of the poor.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: This is a valid point. Government's share is missing because of which several works remain incomplete. Secondly as we have seen in Punjab, one person gets money several times. He receives money out of 50 per cent, 20 per cent and also out of the 30 per cent. It means that same person receives money from Panchayat, Blocks and from District Council also.

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: Sir, our colleague, Minister of Rural Development, Shri Raghuvansh Prasad Singh has rendered here a very good Mushaira which would have been heard by the whole country.

[English]

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil): Sir, I am on a point of order.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Azmiji, please take your seat for one minute only as Shri Radhakrishnanji wants to raise a point of order.

[English]

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: I am referring to Rule 197 relating to Calling Attention. I am extremely sorry to refer to this point of order. As per the rule, the Minister may make a brief statement. Here, the Minister had delivered a marathon speech as if he was answering a debate on rural development.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: Secondly, it says that there shall be no debate. But here we are having an extensive debate. Everybody is asking a question...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: They are asking only clarifications.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: After the reply, there can be no questions. The questions can be asked before the reply. First, the Minister will have to make a brief statement....(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA (Khajuraho): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, my question is rearding point of order.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Varkala Radhakrishnan, please sit down.

[Translation]

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA: My question regarding point of Order is that discussion regarding Rural Development Ministry is being held here first time in this august House and hon. Member has some objections. I want to say that let the discussion be continued.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is no point of Order here.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded without my permission.

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You are wasting the time of the House. Nothing will be recorded which is being said by Shri Varkalaji.

(*Interruptions*)...*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded which is being said by Shri Varkalaji.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, a positive discussion has ben held in regard to the Ministry of....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Varkala, you please sit down, because your speech is not being recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Varkalaji, you please sit down.

[English]

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi): Sir, I am on point of order. My contention is that the Calling

*Not recorded.

[Shri Bikram Keshari Deo]

Attention Notice was given by the hon. Member, Shri Prabhunath Singh. At that time, the hon. Speaker made a comment....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI BIKRAM KESARI DEO: You please listen. Sir, the hon. Speaker gave a ruling at that time.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

(*Interruptions*)...*

[Translation]

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, some important things have come before us through calling attention on rural development schemes. Hon. Raghuvansh Prasad Singhji has rendered here some good Mushaira. This entire speech was on schemes or whatever is on papers written or based on the false charts which come from districts. All the rural development schemes are running with the help of funds provided by the Government of India. The officers of DRDA, officials or Collector, all are under State Government. The fact is that they do not even bother what the Members of Parliament say. A Monitoring Committee has been constituted and a Chairperson has also been for that appointed, but he has not been empowered at all.

[English]

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh): Sir, if we devote such a long time for one Calling Attention Motion, then rest of the business of the House would have to be laid on the Table....(*Interruptions*) This is not fair...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Your MPs are not allowing us to hear.

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: I will ask only one question from Hon. Rural Development Minister that if he is prepared to empower the Chairman of the monitoring committee to approve the centrally sponsored schemes sanctioned by the Collector and short list construction agencies. If the power of approval would be provided to the Chairman, they will be bound and 10-20 per cent corruption and loot of Government exchequer would be checked. He has talked of making appeal against the irregularities in Indira Aawas and other schemes. But where will be that appeal? If there will be an appeal in the same monitoring committee, I am sure, the loot in Indira Aawas Yojana will be checked. The CDO releases funds by giving approval to the list provided by the Gram Pradhan. He may be empowered to appoint them. I am sure, at least 50 per cent corruption will be checked.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, officers of Indira Aawas were provided funds in advance but now-a-days this practice has been stopped. It has been done because these has been misapropriation of funds. The problem is that the poor people are notable to construct their houses owing to paucity of fund. So, they ask the contractors to construct it for them. But the Contractors make profits and do not construct their houses. My request is that the practice of providing advance must be restored. Secondly, if the Sarpanch does not convene a meeting of the Gram Sabha deliberately would he empower the BDO to convene the meeting of Gram Sabha regularly. The problem of taking new initiatives arises in Swarn-Jayanti Gram Swarojgar yojna. Training which is being imparted at he most of the places is very old. Nothing is new in it and even dairy items are also same. Rs. 23 per person is spent on providing training. They should be

*Not recorded.

sent outside for training from time to time so that they may get some new ideas. Does he propose to increase the amount per day spent on training.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH (Udhampur): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of Hon. Members. Sir, with your permission I want to say something and want to congratulate the hon. Minister because none of ministers have ever formed any Military Vigilance Committee.

[English]

He is the first Minister in India to do it....(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Lal Singhji, please take your seat.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Lal Singh, nothing is going to be recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am very happy and heartly thank all those hon. Members who have raised questions and are eager to raise a question. I am fully confident that rural development will not be stopped and the pace of rural development will be fast with the passage of time. Hon. Members are taking so much interest and are very eager to raise questions and to have the answers and thus I am sure that the schemes will definitely be successful. I will answer the questions raised by the Members but those who were not able to raise their questions will be invited state-wise, so they may please ensure their presence there.

15.37 hrs.

[SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN *in the Chair*]

Please accept our invitation. There we can have long question-answer session. Our hon. Officers as well as hon. Members will also be present there. All the querries will be resolved....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: You let him answer.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: I will send the written answers to those hon. Members who have raised questions...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. It is over. I will not allow you. The subject is over. Shri Subbarayan may go ahead now.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will not allow anything which is against the rules. We are functioning under the rules. Rules do not permit any question or a discussion or any debate here. It is a Calling Attention going on. Only a brief statement or a clarificatory question is allowed. Then the Minister replies and there ends the matter. No further questions are allowed.

Now, Shri K. Subbarayan may proceed.

15.38 hrs.

(ii) Situation arising out of closure of more than 600 dyeing and bleaching factories located in and around Tirupur in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto

[English]

SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN (Coimbatore): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Textiles to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:—

"The situation arising out of closure of more than 600 dyeing and bleaching factories in and around Tirupur in Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto."

*THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKARSINH VAGHELA): Sir, at the outset, I would like to mention that the Government treats the closure of more than 600 dyeing and bleaching factories of Tirupur area as unfortunate. However, the facts gathered in this regard mention that the farmers of Karur and Erode districts found that the environmental pollution caused by the dyeing and bleaching factories were harmful to their agricultural products.

The pollution was more pronounced in the river Noyal. Due to this reason, the farmers of Karur and Erode Districts filed a case in the hon. Madras High Court. In 1998, the dyeing units were directed by the hon. Court to implement "Zero Discharge" by which the treated effluent can be reused. As these conditions have not been fulfilled except for a fraction of 89 dyeing plants out of about 737 units, the hon. Court has taken the decision to order the closure of dyeing and bleaching units where the Reverse Osmosis (RO) plant was not installed.

It may be noted that the above decision of the hon. Madras High Court has become possible because of the failure of dyeing and bleaching factories of Tirupur to install effluent treatment plants even after the direction of the hon. High Court of Madras. It would be relevant to mention that the textile processing activity has been notified as a "hazardous activity" with stringent regulations because a bye-product of textile processing activity is the generation of toxic effluent, which is required to be treated properly before disposal. However, the treatment of effluents requires major investment for the process houses without giving any tangible commercial returns. Therefore, they shy away from making this investment and in the absence of treatment of effluents, the textile processing discharges lead to pollution of water bodies which has its consequential impact on environment.

Under the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme of this Ministry, five per cent interest against bank loans can be reimbursed for installation of effluent treatment plants. Similarly, under the Industrial Pollution Control Project of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, there is a package to assist industrial units for controlling pollution. Under this package also loans are provided at concessional rates. The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion has approved an assistance of Rs. 50 crore for installing pollution control measures, *inter alia*, to different units at Tirupur under the Scheme. "Industrial Infrastructure Upgradation Scheme".

As per the notice, the affected units, numbering 600, employ around 2.50 lakh workers. This means, on an average, a single unit employs around 417 workers, which shows that the units are fairly large-sized and, therefore, may easily bear the cost of installation of eco-friendly effluent treatment plants.

Only yesterday, I have been informed that the hon. High Court of Madras has passed a judgement that the units who have already paid 25 per cent of the project cost towards the installation of Reverse Osmosis plants can file an affidavit giving the time for completion of the project. Under this circumstance, there is every likelihood for 352 closed units to reopen after compliance of the hon. High Court's order.

Again I would like to assure the hon. Member that under the existing schemes, the Government would like to provide all possible help to the textile processing units of Tirupur area in installation of effluent treatment plants.

SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very sorry to say that the statement of the Minister of Textiles is not proper. No permanent solution has been proposed in that.

First of all, I would like to clarify one matter. In the statement itis said—that 600 units employ around 2.50 lakh workers. It is not correct. The dyeing and bleaching factories alone do not employ so much of workers. They employ only 20,000 workers. Only when you include the workers who are working in the 5,000 hosiery units, the number of workers will come to two and half lakhs.

I would like to request, through you, the Government of India and the Tamil Nadu Government that they should

*Also placed in Library. *See* No. LT 2361/05.

share the expenses involved in the installation of effluent treatment plants.

This is my humble request because bleaching, dyeing and hosiery units are generally tiny, small and medium industries. Therefore, the Central Government should do something in this matter.

MR CHAIRMAN: Shri K.C. Palanisamy, you can ask for a clarificatory question.

*SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY (Karur): Sir, as regards to the closure of dyeing and bleaching units in Tirupur, the hosiery town known for knitting industry, I would like to reiterate whatever that has been stated by my esteemed colleague Shri Subbarayan while calling the attention of this august House and also of the Union Government. Sir, when our leader Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi was at the helm of affairs in the Government of Tamil Nadu, 25% subsidy was given to the processing units to set up effluent treatment plants. As the installation costs for these plants especially the setting up of reverse osmosis plants are not cost effective. They have not been set up fully. Tiny and small processing units cannot afford this heavy expenditure. The total effluent level per day is 5 crore litres and the cost for treating them will be more than Rs. 50 crore and hence it becomes prohibitive. When the hosiery units export annually Rs. 6000 crore worth of knitwear and pay taxes to both the State and Central Governments, the Governments themselves must come forward to set up common effluent plants sharing 50:50 and selecting clusters of units. Hence I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government will ensure setting up of centralised common effluent treatment plants to benefit the hosiery units and knitting industry, thereby helping thousands of workers and their families who will be hit hard by the closure of processing units and the resultant closure of hosiery units?

SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN (Nagercoil): When Tirupur units are exporting and earning more than Rs. 6000 crore annually and when Rs. 1800 crore and more is paid in the form of taxes, it is unfortunate that the Textile Ministry, on its own, has not come forward to help hosiery and related dyeing units by way of creating centralized effluent treatment plants in the interest of clothing and apparel industry and also the knitting sector workers, their family members and the rural population nearby. Hence, I want to know from the Textile Minister why there was no initiative from the Textile Ministry when this problem has been persisting for quite some-time. It is found that the Department of Industrial Policy had nearly apprised an assistance of Rs. 50 crore only for industrial super-structure upgradation scheme.

Now, considering the gravity of the situation when 3.5 lakh of workers are losing jobs, 660 dyeing units are closed and thousands of hosiery units are facing closure, will the Government of India come forward with a relief measure? That is my question.

MR CHAIRMAN: Shri V.P. Singh, only a clarificatory question.

SHRI VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH (Bhilwara): I have a very specific question. Is it not a fact that most of the effluent plants that you are talking about are more expensive than even the processed houses and the dyeing plants? So, they will not be able to afford them. If they are not in a cluster, you cannot have a common effluent plant. Then, what is the solution to it?

The second question that I want to ask the Minister is that you have a Pollution Board in all the States, and they give NOCs. Are they really doing their job and what is the solution to all this?

Because, the effluent and the pollution of the waters in that area is so much that it creates a lot of disaster in that area. There is no solution. Mr. Minister, you must have a solution to it. So far, here are no solutions that have really come forward.

With these words, I conclude.

MR CHAIRMAN: Now, the hon. Minister can reply.

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

[Translation]

SHRI SHANKAR SINH VAGHELA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, Pollution Control is not under the purview of the Ministry of Textiles. The State Pollution Control Boards, which control the quality of water do not check it the water being supplied is proper or not. The farmers moved the High Court in Chennai therefore stay has been given there. The Ministry of Textiles does not have any role. The Ministry of Textiles has implemented two schemes namely Apparel Parks and TCIDS till date for infrastrcture development. Rs. 17 crore used to be given for the former and Rs. 20 crore were given for the latter. Effluent Investment Plants are covered under these. I want it to go on record because so far no body has sought the help of the Ministry of Textiles. Tirupati Exporters Association has demanded some amount on 17th May 2005, which does not come under our purview. Despite that, we have given Rs. 11 crore for wind mills. We will provide an additional sum of Rs. 9 crores tro them if they ask for it. Rs. 50 crore have been allocated to the Installed Pollution Control, Madras out of which Rs. 25 crore have been released. Our Minister of Environment and Forests, Shri A. Raja belongs to Tamil Nadu. I have discussed with him that whatever the state Government is doing, let it be that way. If a project is placed before us regarding grants from his Ministry and ours then we will consider it sympathetically to provide grants from both the Ministries.

15.52 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) Need for issuance of certificate to *bonafide* Scheduled Caste members in Union Territory of Chandigarh

[English]

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the continued denial of S.C. certificates to the members of Scheduled Castes in the Union Territory of Chandigarh, even though their castes are included in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order for Chandigarh, has actually resulted in denial of all benefits and injustice to them. An incorrect interpretation of the relevant rules has led to denial of these certificates even to those persons who were born in Chandigarh itself after 1-11-1966, the day Chandigarh Union Territory has come into being. There are cases where the elder sibling has the certificate but the younger one is denied the same. Population of the city has grown ten-fold since 1-11-1966 and it has attracted people from Punjab and Haryana (of which it is the Capital) besides many other States. Untenably, a resident of these States shifting to their capital is denied the benefits otherwise he is entitled to.

15.53 hrs.

[SHRI ARJUN SETHI *in the Chair*]

This is so, though the latest census has recorded them as belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Punjab Municipal Corporation Act as applicable to Chandigarh makes no distinction between the pre-1966 and post-1966 Scheduled Caste settlers in the city.

The present practice has led to great concern and consternation amongst a large segment of the population. I urge the Government to immediately review the matter and issue instructions for issuance of S.C. certificates to all *bona fide* S.C. members whose castes are included in the Constitution Order.

(ii) Need for construction of roads by Border Road Organisation at the borders of Uttaranchal with a view to prevent intrusion of extremists from adjoining countries

[Translation]

SHRI K.C. SINGH 'BABA' (Nainital): Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you I want to draw the attention of hon. Defence Minister, towards the border areas of Uttaranchal which are adjacent to Nepal. There is a need for construction of roads by the Border Road Organization in these areas.

Sir, there is the possibility of intrusion of Maoists from Nepal to Uttaranchal which is a matter of concern. It is causing fear in the state. The instrusion of Maoists can endanger the security of our state and the country as well.

Sir, Uttaranchal has close borders with China on one hand and on the other it has long borders with Nepal. Since Purnagiri, Pancheswar, Jhulaghat, Jauljivi, Dharchula, Tawaghat, Narain Ashram, Malpa, Gabriang and Kalapani in Uttaranchal are adjacent to Nepal border. It is very necessary to ensure the construction of roads by the Border Road Organisation (BRO) in these rural areas for alround development of villages. The construction of roads will help in providing bettter health, education and other public services and it will bridge the gap between rural and urban life. It will also contribute to the safety, security, self respect, social standing and the cultural identity as well.

Sir, I urge upon the Central Government that keeping in view the seriousness of the said issue, the Border Road Organisation should be instructed at the earliest to construct roads in these areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shri Rayapati Sambasiva Rao : Not present.

Shri S.K. Kharventhan.

(iii) Need to clear the proposal of the Government of Tamil Nadu for construction of court buildings in Erode district

[English]

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (Palani): In my Palani Lok Sabha Constituency, in district Erode, most of the courts are not having sufficient infrastructural facilities. More particularly, in the district headquarters, Erode, there is no building for criminal court complex. In the year 1985, lands were allocated by the State Government for construction of the criminal court complex. But the criminal courts are now functioning in five different places. The lawyers and clients are not able to reach the courts in time. Every year, number of lawyers are dying due to road accidents while commuting from one court to another court.

In the same manner in Kangayam also, courts are housed in cattle sheds. The Vadesenthur court in Dindigul District housed in a dilapidated rented building. The Kodumudi court is also housed in small sheds on he river bed. The Government of Tamil Nadu has sent proposals to the Union Government for allocation of funds to construct court buildings on priority basis. The proposals are pending for a number of years. Time and again, I took up the matter with the Government and also with the authorities. But, so far no action has been taken.

Hence, I request the hon. Minister of Law and Justice to take up this issue with the Finance Ministry to allocate necessary funds for the construction of the above courts at the earliest.

(iv) Need for Central intervention to prevent the economic blockade on National Highways No. 39 and 53 in Manipur by All Naga Students Association

DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA (Inner Manipur): Yet another month-long economic blockade has been imposed on the only two lifelines of Manipur: NH-39 and NH-53 since June 21, 2005 by the All Naga Students Association, Manipur (ANSAM). During this period, the people of Manipur were suffering like anything and the suffering was all the more for our brethrens in the hill districts of the State. The prices of the essential commodities rose sky high. The essential commodities were not available in the market. Already the State has been suffering a lot.

Whatever might be the reason, every issue can be resolved amicably through dialogue. Offer of dialogue by the State Government being not accepted, the blockade continues.

[Dr. Thokchom Meinya]

This situation shall not be allowed to continue and we should not be subjected to this kind of treatment for no fault of ours.

In such a scenario, I urge upon the Union Government to step in and intervene immediately and help the State Government to resolve the stalemate in the interest of all concerned. These NHs need to be fully protected. Let us create NHs protection forces for these National Highways and prevent such frequent economic blockades in the region for all time to come.

16.00 hrs.

(v) Need to restore the recognition of Medical Colleges de-recognised due to shortage of teachers

[Translation]

SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH (Sholapur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, every year new Medical Colleges are given recognition in the country but those Medical Colleges which have been given recognition earlier, are being denied the same on the ground of shortage of teachers. If, there is a shortage of teachers in verity then why is a ban not imposed on setting up new colleges. The future of the institutions and students is in the dark due to not granting recognition to the old colleges.

Therefore, I urge the Union Government to restore recognition to the already recognized colleges, which has since been withdrawn.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shri Y.G. Mahajan	Not present
Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat	Not present
Shri Santosh Gangwar	

(vi) Need for early completion of certain pending National Highway projects of Uttar Pradesh

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government is not giving priority to some of the pending road projects of Uttar Pradesh which have been sanctioned earlier and are in the last stage of completion. I urge the Minister of Surface Transport to complete the following projects on priority basis:—

1. The construction of bye pass in Bareilly on National Highway No. 24 should be started.
2. The work on Bareilly-Bageshwar road, which is an inter-state road, should be started at the earliest. The funds have already been allotted by C.R.F. for the same.
3. Construction of Rail over-bridge between Rampur and Bareilly National Highway at Meerganj and Fatehganj West on National Highway No. 24 should be sanctioned and started.
4. Four laning of Delhi-Lucknow National Highway No. 24 particularly between Moradabad-Bareilly-Lucknow should be started keeping in view of the requirement of the traffic.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shri Mahavir Bhagora	Not present
Shri Lakshman Seth	Not present
Shri P. Mohan	Not present
Shri Munawar Hassan	Not present
Shri Giridhari Yadav	

(vii) Need to declare State Highway between Deoghar and Patna as a National Highway

[Translation]

SHRI GIRIDHARI YADAV (Banka): Mr. Chairman,

Sir, the road from Deoghar to Patna via Jamui, Shekhpura, Nalanda in my parliamentary constituency is in dilapidated condition and most of the vehicles of Uttar Pradesh use this road for reaching West Bengal and Jharkhand. This road is one of the most busy roads of Bihar. The people of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh pass through this road on their pilgrimage to Deoghar. Sometimes there is traffic jam in the cities on this road. 'Sarvani Mela' is going on now-a-days and the people are facing a lot of difficulties.

I urge the Union Government, through this House to declare the P.W.D. road of Bihar between Deoghar and Patna as National Highway so that the condition of the road could be improved.

(viii) Need to Streamline telephone services of BSNL in Shahabad Parliamentary Constituency, Uttar Pradesh

SHRI ILYAS AZMI (Shahabad): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the condition of land line and mobile services of BSNL in Lakimpur Kheri district of my Parliamentary constituency is very poor. The Transmission tower in the important towns like Mohammadi and Gola has been operating for one year yet not a single sim card or land line connection has been released so far though there is no such problem in neighbouring districts. The people were compelled to go to the G.M. with the recommendation letter of the Member of Parliament but have not got any relief from there.

Therefore, I urge the Union Government to provide landline and mobile services of B.S.N.L. in Kheri district of my Parliamentary constituency, Shahabad, at the earliest and the G.M. (Telephone) should be transferred with immediate effect.

[English]

MR CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record, except your written statement.

*...(Interruptions)**

*Not recorded.

(ix) Need to take steps for early completion of power projects in Maharashtra

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHARE (Aurangabad, Maharashtra): Due to the present power crisis in Maharashtra not only the industrial and agricultural sector has been affected, but the common people are also suffering on account of non-availability of domestic power supply.

I urge the Union Government to take necessary steps for the early completion of Dabhol, Bav-I and II, Davade and Manda power projects in Maharashtra so that the common people can get rid of the power crisis.

(x) Need to permit cashew growers of Andhra Pradesh to continue with the existing technology of roasting seed through drum roasting system

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool): Sir, Cashew produced in Andhra Pradesh is considered second to Kerala variety of cashew in terms of taste and size. It may no longer retain its taste because the cashew processing units are forced to adopt technology that affect the aroma and taste of cashew seeds. Presently, cashew seeds are roasted through a drum roasting method. It adds to the taste of the cashew nuts, as roasting has no water content and the seed has to roast within itself in the shell. But the boiling technology, which is being thrust on the cashew growers, takes all the aroma and taste of the seed.

Several Kallam units in Kerala which had been experimenting this new technology for the last two years are going back to drum roasting because of financial losses. Now, the cashew growers in Andhra Pradesh are being forced to adopt this new technology. This technology conversion may force the cashew manufacturers to close down their units. This would not only generate frustration among the farmers but would also affect the foreign earnings.

[Dr. M. Jagannath]

Sir, Andhra Pradesh produces more than five lakh bags of 80 kg. each every year. The farmers are selling the raw cashew shells to Kerala manufacturers. Among the nine varieties of Andhra, 210, 160, 240, 320 halves and pieces are famous in different sections of consumers. There is no measurement for sweetness of the seed though the weighment is taken criteria in deciding the quality. Andhra Pradesh cashew is supplied all over the country.

Through you, Sir, I would request the Government that all the cashew growers be allowed to continue with the existing technology of roasting seed through drum roasting system.

(xi) Need to provide 20 per cent bonus to tea garden workers in Assam with a view to check labour unrest in the State

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (Lakhimpur): Sir, the problem of tea garden workers due to arbitrary fixation of percentage of bonus by manipulation of profit and loss account by the concerned management has become a regular source of labour unrest in Assam. Deprivation of legitimate bonus has gone to the maximum level with further manipulation of tea price in auction market by vested interests. Not only consequent loss to the Government exchequer, it also indicates a grim future of Guwahati Tea Auction Market when, due to flaw in Government policy, producers got a handle to sale 70 per cent of their processed tea directly without going through auction market.

It is, therefore, urged that the Union Government intervene to ensure grant of 20 per cent bonus to the tea garden workers with transparent policy and to ensure survival of Guwahati Tea Auction Market from impending closure by modification of existing norms to compel the gardens for selling at least 80 per cent of the processed tea through Guwahati Auction Market. Legislative measures are also required to ensure that the balance sheet of such defaulting gardens are scrutinised by the Accountant-General to prevent future manipulation. Timely intervention is also urgent to ensure implementation of labour welfare measures by strict enforcement of concerned law including Assm Tea Plantation Labour Act 1951. Strict enforcement of concerned Central Law on mandatory contribution of the employers to the Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund and Pension Fund in Assam by prosecution of defaulting gardens which defaulted for hundreds of crores without any penalty so far may be taken into account.

16.11 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Natural Calamities in the Country—*contd.*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now the House will take up further discussion regarding Natural Calamities in the country raised by Shri Basudeb Acharia on 26th July, 2005.

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bereilly): Mr. Chairman, Sir, seriousness of the House is easily reflected by the fact that right now, not a single Cabinet Minister is present in the House....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will be coming.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): According to convention, a Cabinet Minister has to be there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is coming. He has assured that he will be coming here.

[Translation]

SHRI GANESH SINGH (Satna): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am on my legs to discuss about Natural Calamities under the Rule 193. Several parts of the country have

suffered huge loss due to flood this year too. The climate of our country is praised worldwide. But now we have to bear its brunt. Some part or the other is in the grip of floods, drought, snowfall, earthquake or Tsunami. The ecological balance is deteriorating day-by-day. We need to give a serious thought to this issue. The farmers of our country used to say an adage that our country is at the mercy of almightly and indeed, it is being felt that our nature is totally in the hands of God. Earlier, we had rains from clouds, now we have incidents of cloud bursting. People used to give the example of self-restriction of sea but now even the sea has become violent. This is all because of Tsunami. Even now we hear from coastal areas that waves have caused heavy damages. Earlier, snowfall was a normal thing, now we have heavy snowfalls. We had 12 meters snow fall in the country. It seems that nature's balance has been completely destroyed.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to submit through you that last year, 17 States of the country were reeling under flood that means every year two third part gets affected by floods. Properties worth more than Rs. 20000 crore are damaged every year. Last year, 367.11 lakh persons in 128 districts were affected, crops on 30.42 lakh hectare of land got damaged. More than 15 lakh houses were destroyed. Almost similar situation is prevailing in the whole country this year as well. From the kind of news that we are getting from several states of the country like Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and now Mumbai, it seems, the situation is getting worse. Between 1st to 4th July, in our Madhya Pradesh, 17 districts were the worst affected out of which 9 districts remained submerged in flood for weeks. 8 districts were affected by heavy rains. About 4,577 villages were affected by flood in Madhya Pradesh. 24 lakh people suffered by it. Six major cities remained submerged in water for a week. Hundreds of people have died so far. 42 thousand livestock is dead. More than 61 thousand houses have collapsed completely and about more than one lakh 20 thousand houses have been damaged partially. The crops sowed on more than 23,900 hectares of land in Madhya Pradesh got damaged completely even before ripering. Public properties worth more than Rs. 70 crore have been damaged in Satna-Katni—which is my constituency. More than 10 thousand houses have collapsed there. Roads, electricity, bridges and culverts etc. have been damaged in a great number. According to initial estimates of the Madhya Pradesh Government, the state has suffered a loss of Rs. 62,821 lakhs. The state has asked for this sum from the Union Government but we have received only around Rs. 93 crore so far which is a meager amount. I demand that Rs. 100 crore be provided immediately so that we could help the affected persons.

The flood in the state was of such magnitude that our 200 villages remained submerged for weeks. Our Madhya Pradesh Government had set up more than 300 camps to help flood victims where more than one and half lakh people were given relief for 15 days. Our State Government distributed about 845 metric tonnes of foodgrains. The RVC Act legislated during the British period had never been amended. Our Government has helped the victims by bringing about the amendments. Foodgrains to the tune of Rs. 90 lakh have been distributed there so far. The relief work for more than one and half lakh beneficiaries has been done by sanctioning an amount of Rs. 40 crore so far. In our state, a grant to the tune of Rs. 291.91 lakh has been disbursed in 17 districts for seeds.

I would like to tell the hon. Minister that about 26 districts have been affected in Gujarat. Eight thousand villages there have been hit by flood completely. A loss of more than Rs. 10 thousand crores has been suffered and 2 lakh persons have become homeless. The question is, we have been facing natural calamities every year. Efforts should be made to find its permanent solution. The causes of flood should be identified and the Union Government should try to work with the state governments in tandem to overcome these problems.

I would like to thank the former Prime Minister Hon. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee who had made an effort to

[Shri Ganesh Singh]

maintain the natural balance. He had initiated the efforts for interlinking of rivers. But, unfortunately the UPA Government has put this project in cold storage. Today, one part of the country is facing flood, another is troubled by drought and another parts are in the grip of some other natural calamities. I feel that something has to be done. Every year discussions are held on these issues and every year the Central Government is giving assistance to state governments as well. It is providing several crores of rupees to the state government every year but no permanent solution has been found out so far. I feel the need of the hour is to look for a permanent solution.

My submission is that whatever loss the state governments have suffered should be compensated by the Union Government, particularly the poor persons whose houses have collapsed and have been destroyed completely should at least be given an immediate relief in the form of Indira Aawas. I urge upon the Government to take this issue seriously. When the floods hit our areas, we had communicated about it to the Prime Minister. He sent one Minister there and promised to send a Central study team also but unfortunately no central study team has visited Madhya Pradesh. I request that a central team should visit there immediately and conduct an on the spot study and provide maximum assistance to Madhya Pradesh. Even otherwise, madhya Pradesh has been subjected to gross discrimination in regard to other schemes. The Central Government does not provide assistance in accordance with our demands. Not less than four persons from our state are in this Government as Ministers but they have never given priority to development of Madhya Pradesh. I would like to submit that they should discharge their duties. The people of Madhya Pradesh are watching the functioning of the state government and at the same time the performance of Cabinet Ministers are also under the scanner. I request you to extend as much help as you can for development of the state as well as for the benefit of the people. I thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

SHRI K.S. RAO (Eluru): Mr. Chairman, Sir, this issue of natural calamities is being discussed almost every year. But, unfortunately, I think the real commitment or desire or determination is lacking from various Governments which are in power. Most of them speak when they are in the Opposition. But when they come to power, they just touch it, but do not go into the core of it. Only when a calamity occurs, then they will immediately think of rushing some assistance temporarily to save the people out of danger, but no permanent solution is being thought of. What is actually required is a permanent solution and not a temporary cure.

As many of my colleagues who spoke earlier said, the losses that are occurring are unimaginable. In the last three years, the claims for assistance from the State Governments on account of natural calamities in various States is Rs. 1,03,725 crore and the assistance approved by the Central team is Rs. 13,671 crore. Every year, through the NCCF and CRF the Central Government is giving a minimum of Rs. 4,000 crore. This is only a pittance, a marginal figure of just one per cent or two per cent of the total losses in the calamities. If a farmer loses his land in flood what does he lose? He loses a crop worth Rs. 20,000 or if it were to be a fish pond he loses Rs. 1,50,000 and if it were to be a prawn pond he loses Rs. four lakh. But the compensation that will be given by the Government is Rs. 2,000 or Rs. 4,000 per acre. Where does it stand him? Obviously, the amount of assistance that is given by the Government of India is no assistance at all. It does not reflect the losses that are being caused due to floods or drought. The Government does not go into it. It is something wrong with the planning itself.

The scheme of inter-linking of rivers which was considered and thought by Dr. K.L. Rao in the Seventies is in cold storage even today. Now, when the Committee on the inter-linking of rivers headed by Shri Suresh Prabhu gave a report saying that the project costs Rs. 5,60,000 crore, immediately it is dumped into a dustbin.

By this figure of Rs. 5,60,000 crore, they think that they cannot do it at all and it is not feasible. Nobody goes deep into the matter whether it is feasible or not. How much are we spending by not linking the rivers of this country? Can we not avoid both drought and floods which are serious matters now?

Of course, we are having calamities like earthquake, tsunami, cyclone etc. Certain things might not be in our control. The technologies that will be developed will only be helping us to predict them a little in advance; but we are not in a position to control all these things totally. But at least the drought and floods can be controlled very easily. It does not require a technology to be imported from outside the country. It does not require billions of dollars. All that is required is conversion of a hill into land and limestone into cement etc. and by motivating our people we can do all these things. Serious thought is not being given to it. The whole problem is there.

We have been discussing about employment guarantee. So much of hot discussion is going on that 'lot of poor people are there in the villages, they do not have work and now we have to create work and we will give the guarantee and a right for employment etc.' If the linking of river waters was to be taken up, 35 million hectares of land is going to be cultivated. How much employment would it give? Hundred million people can be employed immediately. The, where is the need for employment guarantee? All the people in the villages can be employed automatically. They do not want to live on the mercy of the Government of India. They do not want to be beggars. They only want work. They want to live and by doing so you are giving work to them. You do not need to spend Rs. 20,000 crore on employment guarantee every year. You do not need to spend thousands of crores for providing drinking water to them. You do not need to spend thousands of crores to cure them when diseases come during floods or drought.

Sir, we spend money whenever there is flood or drought. We have to, as our friends have mentioned. face loss of life; loss of infrastructures like telephone lines. roads, etc.; and everything is damaged as a result of such incidents. The aspects such as the loss of crops, the loss of houses of the poor or loss of people are not taken into account. How much will it be if all these aspects are also taken into account? How much loss will it be? Consequentially, we are spending on health; on drinking water; on infrastructure; on loss of crops; on loss of infrastructures like railways, telecom, road, etc.

In addition to this, the production of foodgrains has also come down with the net result that the prices are increasing. We have not discussed about inflation, but tomorrow, another Calling Attention or a Motion might come before the House to discuss about inflation in the prices. Why did it happen? It happened because there was no production, and as a result of this the prices have gone up.

I just want to give the details for inter-linking of rivers. If the consolidated amount of Rs. 5.6 lakh crore required for this project is mentioned, then every one of us will keep our mind hollow, and forget about it till such time a flood or drought hits us.

I would like to tell the hon. Members about the calculation for it, so that every one of us can take a pledge to put pressure on the Government to ensure that the inter-linking of rivers is started immediately. The total cost for it is Rs. 5.6 lakh crore for 35 million hectares. Does the House know about the cost incurred per hectare for inter-linking of rivers? It would be Rs. 60,000 per acre.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, the total cost for it would be Rs. 1,60,00 crore.

SHRI K.S. RAO: No, Sir. It is Rs. 5.6 lakh crore.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you talking about the total amount for the project?

SHRI K.S. RAO: Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it is not so.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack): Mr. Rao, the hon. Chairman was earlier the Minister in the Ministry of Water Resources.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is Rs. 1,60,000 crore *in toto* for the inter-linking of the rivers.

SHRI K.S. RAO: Sir, it is Rs. 5.6 lakh crore.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Mr. Rao, he was the Minister in the Ministry of Water Resources, and he knows about this issue.

SHRI K.S. RAO: I have also gone through the papers, and they are before me. Apart from being a Member of Parliament. I am also an engineer. Therefore, I am sure about it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, please continue with your speech.

SHRI K.S. RAO: Sir, I will concede to you. Now, a project covering 35 million hectares is costing Rs. 5.6 lakh crore, and 40,000 mw of hydel-power would also be generated from it.

I want to mention before the entire House that we do not require more than Rs. 5,000 crore or Rs. 10,000 crore to implement this project, and actually Rs. 5.6 lakh crore is not required for it. The days have gone when we did not get money on loan. Now-a-days funds are available not only internationally, but they are available even in the domestic market. Today, the banks have plenty of funds. They are waiting for a credible borrower, as they are not getting the right borrower. The Government also does not want to take the responsibility in it.

There is ample number of engineers in this country, and there is also technology for it available in this country. Lots of corporate sectors are prepared to take-up the execution of the entire project, and complete it within 10 years. The only thing required here from the Government is motivation. If the Government were too keen on completing this project, then I can challenge that this project could be done in 10-12 years' time with no investment from the Government of India or any State Government for that matter. I am saying this because the corporate sector is ready to do it.

The interest rates have also come down, and the funds are available at four per cent or two per cent, particularly, for projects of this nature. If it were to cost Rs. 1,00,000 per acre at four per cent interest, then Rs. 4,000 would be the interest burden per acre per year. What product comes out of it? Nearly, Rs. 3,50,000 crore worth of additional production can be done by inter-linking of the rivers every year with the help of this project. What revenue comes out from it if so much of money can be generated from it? All of us know that the revenue is 11 per cent of the GDP. It means, if tomorrow we are able to increase the production to Rs. 4 lakh crore, then Rs. 44,000 as revenue would be coming to the Government. They can pay the interest component out of it also. The farmers are ready to join, and they are ready to participate in it. We only have to convince them that we are not going to swallow the money taken from them. They must have faith in us. If they have faith in us and if we, as a legislator or as a Member of Parliament, go to the farmers and say, "Now, you have got land which is worth Rs. 50,000. However, the moment I get the project, the value of your land is going to go upto Rs. 1,50,000. You are getting an unearned income of Rs. 1,00,000 per acre", they will be very much pleased. I am not asking them to give the money immediately. I am only asking them to take partial liability of the project cost, which is Rs. 60,000. I will say, "You share Rs. 20,000, and the Government is prepared to give Rs. 40,000 out of the revenue that it is earning." This is apart from the value addition.

Everybody eloquently makes a statement, "Oh, there is a calamity, calamity, calamity!" If these were to be the ways to get things done, then no Minister or the Government could seriously look into the matter. I honestly request the entire House and my colleagues to take a pledge to take up inter-linking of rivers immediately without any loss of time. I can assure the entire House that it does not require a large amount of money.

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool): You tell this to the UPA Government.

SHRI K.S. RAO: I am not like others. I will tell my Government also. I am not blaming anybody. I am not blaming anybody like you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please address the Chair.

SHRI K.S. RAO: The President of India also said the other day that he was very keen to see that this project is taken up immediately. What more benefits can we have from this inter-linking of rivers? Navigation comes in, the transportation costs come down, and when water is everywhere in the country, there will be greenery automatically and as a result the environment will improve. For generations, we lived on the banks of village tanks. Now, all these tanks are silted and these tanks are no longer in existence. Tomorrow, if we deepen and de-silt these tanks, we can fill it with water, and there will not be any drinking water problem. There are lakhs of engineers in this country and many of them are unemployed. Even the retired engineers, who have got a lot of knowledge and experience, are ready to help us to make a survey and give it to us. We only have to motivate them.

In case, the Government thinks that it cannot implement the entire project overnight, let it make a beginning in the Southern part of the country. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has already made a beginning in this regard. It is linking up *Godavari* and *Krishna* Rivers by which 80 TMC of water is being released from *Godavari* into *Krishna* and as a result, 13 lakh acres of land is going to be cultivated. It will enable to the farmers to grow two crops safely and definitely. There will not be any problem of drinking water; there will not be any drought. The same thing can be applied to Orissa also, my friends. Tomorrow, the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa can think of linking up *Godavari* and *Mahanadi*, we need not come here for that, and it will benefit both the States. It does not cost much at all. Similarly, we can link Cauvery also. If we were to make a beginning and if we were to prove that it is going to be beneficial and it helps in reducing the occurrence of drought and floods in that area automatically, then *Ganga* and other rivers can be connected. People can take a lead from that.

It is my wish that all of us put together must ensure that this process of inter-linking of rivers is started immediately and save this country from droughts and floods, if not from Tsunami or cyclones, which can also be regulated later because technology is advancing substantially and the human ingenuity can stop these things one day.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA (Hamirpur, U.P.): Mr. Chairman, Sir, a lot of discussion have been held during the last two days by our Hon. Members. Recently Maharashtra, especially Mumbai and its surrounding areas have been facing the brunt of heavy rainfall. It has caused heavy loss of life and property alongwith throwing supply of electricity and traffic out of gear and damaging communication systems.

Similarly many regions of Uttar Pradesh, besides Hamirpur, Mahoba, Banda, Jalon, Jhansi, Lalitpur of Bundelkhand regions suffered loss of life and property because of floods in the rivers of the regions especially in the river Ken. Besides Banda villages of Maudaha, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Charabari and Rath of my constituency have been facing disruption in power supply and complete breakdown of telephone network. Poor, landless labourers and farmers have become homeless, roads have been damaged and train services have come to a halt.

Homeless people have been given shelter in schools. Children's studies have been disrupted as the villagers were provided shelter in shcools.

Many villages have been cut off due to water logging. The state government is extending all cooperation to the flood victims. Yesterday, an allegation was made by my neighbouring Member of Parliament, Bhai Mahendra Nishad that State Government is not giving assistance to the people suffering from floods in river Ken, which is totally baseless. Whereas the fact is

[Shri Rajnarayan Budholia]

that following the directions of the Hon. Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Revenue Minister, Food Minister and other concerned Minister of the State Government visited Banda by Helicopter immediately and gave appropriate directions to the administration and all essential and required arrangements were also made. But, the central assistance is also needed to restore normalcy in the life of the people ravaged by floods. The country suffers due to occurrence of floods drought, heavy rains and earthquake etc. every year. Many parts of the country are ravaged by these calamities every year and loss of rupees is suffered by the country. Therefore, a permanent solution must be found out to combat these natural calamities so that immediate assistance could be provided to the affected people.

Sir, through you, I demand from the Union Government to get a survey conducted by a central team to assess the damage caused by the floods in river Ken in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh and immediate central assistance must be provided for boats, motorboats, electricity, telephone road, education, reconstruction of houses and for providing compensation to the poors, farmers and labourers who have suffered losses because all the crops of the farmers of this area have already been destroyed due to heavy hailstorm and now cultivation cannot be done due to water logging.

I also request the Government to grant a special package by getting the situation assessed by a central team. Our hon. Chief Minister has already demanded a special package, which has not been provided till date. My friend, hon. Ganesh Singhji has demanded the same because our region is adjacent to Madhya Pradesh. Our friend Shri Mahendra Nishad has also asked for the same because his area is also adjacent to mine. My request is that a special package must be provided to Uttar Pradesh.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah): Mr. Chairman, Sir, every year we discuss about natural calamities in this House and nominal action is taken regariding the superficial information that we get here. The country got independence more than 50 years ago but still we have not been able to find permanent solutions to deal with natural calamities. This is very sad, and we have to think over it seriously. Maharashtra, Mumbai, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and other parts of the country have suffered a lot due to floods and heavy rains. Very often, many parts of the country have to suffer loss due to floods, drought, heavy rains, earthquake, tsunami waves, hailstorm and sometimes due to heavy downpour. I hail from Bihar which witnesses heavy damage each year because of the rivers flowing from Nepal. Kosi, Gandak, Bagmati, Kamla and big-small rivers of Adhawara Group flow from Nepal cause havoc in Bihar. The infrastructure which we build with the help of the centre and state governments like schools, hospitals or the agricultural lands, all are damaged by the waters of these rivers.

Sir, river Ganga flows in my state. From Buxar to Farakka, every year thousands of acres of land is ravaged by the floods of river Ganga. Thousands of acres of land is damaged every year and no one even cares about it. We have raised this question time and again. Last year North Bihar witnessed furious floods. Our difficulties knew no bounds. Not even a single place was there where helicopter could land. Bihar had to face this ordeal. Houses of nine lakh poor people below poverty line collapsed and central team surveyed the affected area. The union government provided funds for the reconstruction of two lakh houses whereas nine lakh houses had collapsed who will construct the houses of 7 lakh poor people. We had opposed the division of Bihar. The Prime Minister had stated that they would not let one state become poor and other grow rich. A committee had been constituted comprising Members of all political parties under the leadership of hon. Nitishji. We had submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister. He had stated that a special package would be prepared to compensate the loss suffered by Bihar due to partition but not a single penny has been provided. This is the very sad aspect. Today, the people of Bihar wish to congratulate the present government that it has been mentioned in the common minimum programme that a permanent solution would be found

out to solve this problem of Bihar. We had been demanding from the previous as well as from the present government as a result of which a joint office has been established in Nepal. Two years have passed, 30 crores of rupees have been granted in the tenth plan but a DPR has not been prepared till date. This is regarding the river Kosi, Gandak, Bagmati, Adhwara group and Kamla rivers flow in our region. When will DPR be prepared regarding these rivers? Unless multipurpose dams are built, the Bihar will continue to suffer from floods. If multipurpose dams are built, 9 thousand MW electricity will be generated from it which can also be supplied to other states. Not only Bihar but the whole country should think about permament solution to this problem and try to check it by taking a concrete decision.

10 lakh hectare land in Bihar has been lying water logged and no arrangements have been made so far to retrieve it. There are half a dozen ponds like Mokama pond and Badhaiya pond etc. spreading over thousands acre of lands. We can hardly cultivate one crop there. We want that arrangements to retrieve that land should be made. The embankments on Gandak, Bhagmati, Kamla, Rivers of Adhvara group, Kosi and Gandar in Champaran are about 15-20 years old and are in a dilapidated condition. These embankments get damaged every year due to which western Champaran, Eastern Champaran, Sheohar, Sitamarhi, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Purnea, Kishanganj and Samastipur districts suffer heavy losses. Hon. Shri Balu is not present here. All roads in Bihar whether National Highways or other always remain in a bad state. The National Highway between Muzzafarpur and Sitamarhi is lying closed for one and half months and the road between Sheohar to Sitamarhi is lying closed for three months. The hon. Minister had visited that area and assured to find out solution for the same. The solution lies in building a bridge and raising the levels of roads. The roads are submerged in water but there is no water in the fields. As a result some villages are facing difficulties and nothing has been done in this regard till date. We hope that the hon Minister while replying to this debate will reply to this question also.

Sir, it is directly affecting the population of six crores. I am concluding my speech. The Government should understand our problem. It is not a state matter only. Today we are suffering losses due to international rivers. We face losses due to the rivers of Nepal and therefore the Union Government should work effectively to save Bihar from poverty, unemployment and the damage to infrastructure. With these words. I conclude.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajganj, Bihar): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am participating in the discussion regarding the issue of natural calamity and disaster, raised by Shri Basu Deb Acharia under Rule 193, Although this matter is not being discussed for the first time in the House. I feel that just as birth and death are ultimate truths, similarly, it is the convention of the House that whenever there are floods, there will be a discussion under Rule 193 and hon. Members would participate in it. The officers might have prepared the reply to this question. The presence of the hon. Minister is not needed as he does not know reply to the questions that will be raised. The hon. Minister will read whatever is released officially, it seems as if he is following the convention of the House and we are also a part of it.

Sir, every year many states of the country are affected by floods. This time Maharashtra is affected by heavy rains which is even worse than floods. Whenever the people of villages get angry at anybody they say that he is trying to set water on fire and now there is this incident of fire breaking out amidst sea while it rained. The country is facing the situation of natural calamity and disaster. We go on discussing either the situation in Assam, Bengal, some parts of Uttar Pradesh or the cyclone in Orissa or some other such calamity. It has almost become a tradition that we discuss Bihar very seriously during the time of floods. We demand that the Government should provide relief and make various arrangements but no permanent solution is found out. Every year, hon. Member suggests that it should be done in such a manner that people can get rid of the flods but the same could not be materialised by any government. We did not want it to be discussed

[Shri Prabhunath Singh]

here but Shri Raghunath Jha has mentioned the division of Bihar. We had opposed it in the House. Due to our opposition the appeal was postponed but it was brought in the House second time after making certain amendments. Though it had not got so much support as it should have. I would like to tell Mr. Raghunath Jha, that it is also true that had the proposal not been passed by the State Legislative Assembly, the division would never have taken place. Those who used to swear that the division of Bihar will take place at the cost of their lives have sent the proposal for the same to the Legislative Assembly. When you discuss something every matter should be discussed honestly. He has mentioned this political issue not us.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, when the floods occur, the cattle are more affected than the human beings. I would like to tell Shri Raghunath Jha that we have acquired historic significance in every aspect. When history is taught, the name of Nalanda University is mentioned with pride. We say proudly that it is our birthplace. When relief is provided to the people during floods, we make every possible effort to swindle it. Bihar recently witneseed the flood relief scam wherein the amount of relief meant for the floods victims was misappropriated. The inquiry is still going on. We read in the newspapers that on one hand collector is being sent to jail and on the other the Chief Secretary is also involved in the scam. The matters relating to Bihar are discussed in the House but no concrete step is taken to provide relief to Bihar for its better future. It is beyond the competence of the Government of Bihar to check the menace of floods. This problem is related to two countries. When Shri C.P. Thakur was the Union Irrigation Minister, he visited Nepal twice. The matter was discussed in the House and he assured that this problem will be resolved at the earliest. Now Shri Thakurji is no longer the Minister as the regine has changed and the new Government has been in the office for 14 months, I do not know about the progress made in this regard. We would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any progress in the talks held with Nepal or it is still at the same stage. Unless the Government of India holds talks with Nepal, the people of Bihar cannot get rid of this problem. The State and the Union Government can make immediate arrangements in this regard. The rivers are full of silt. Desilting of rivers can also go a long way in channelising the flow of water and minimising the impact of floods. Thirdly, arrangements can be made for fore-warning the people who live nearby the areas that could be inundated so that they can be moved to safer places till water level goes down. The cattle may be taken to safer places and arrangements should be made for supply of fodder there. But these arrangements are never made. People and cattle get affected by floods overnight and after that the matter is discussed in Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I don't want to speak for long. Now it is a coincidence that the state government and the Union Government are the same since there is President rule in Bihar. People of Bihar always face the brunt of floods. I want to say that the Union Government should pay attention towards it and the state government and Union Government should jointly formulate a plan to tackle the situation immediately. During the Government of Atalji there was a proposal of interlinking of rivers. If the rivers are interconnected, we can get rid of the floods. If the rivers are connected then Bihar cfan be saved from floods and there may be greenery in a desert like Rajasthan. This plan have also been put on back burner.

SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA (Dhandhuka): They do not want to implement it.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Yes, they don't want to implement it because they are not willing. I want the Government to continue the dialogues with Nepal and apprise the entire nation about the outcome of the dialogues through the House. Secondly, the centre and the states together may provide immediate relief, now the floods have occured again and desilting cannot be done but its magnitude is not that much high. The main road has been constructed in certain areas as told by Shri Raghunath Jha. The reason being that it has been

declared as National Highway. Earlier, only patch work was undertaken on this road to cover the pits. If the level of these roads are raised, as sanctioned by NHAI, Government of India we feel that these roads will never be blocked. The Union Government and state government should work together as every department of Government of India cannot function properly in flood affected areas. No doubt, this year people would have to face the onslaught of floods but the state government and the Union Government should work toghether to warn the people about the impending floods so that they can be saved in the coming year.

Thirdly, in the aftermath of floods, the stagnant water breeds insects and bacteria causing widespread water borne diseases and epidemics. Innumerable people died of such diseases. People who die of floods are counted by media. The Government data is not found to be correct but the people who die of diseases caused due to floods are not provided with sufficient medical care and that is through you. I would like to warn the Government of India that some parts of Bihar have been flooded and there is a possibility of more floods. It is in the air that Nepal is intending to release water and that day not 1-2 villages but 5-10 districts will be submerged overnight. Therefore, the Government should remain alert to protect the people and conduct relief operations.

Speaking for a long time is not a good thing but we are following the tradition and I am also included in it since the people of Bihar do not feel that we are worried about floods. We know what the Government would do. Officers would have forwarded ready-made answers which the Minister would repeat here tomorrow and we would not care to do anything concrete.

With these words I thank you very much.

[English]

PROF. M. RAMADASS (Pondicherry): Respected Chairman, Sir, yesterday and today, we have heard a large number of hon. Members expressing grave concerns about the recurrent natural calamities in the country and the need to take urgent permanent solutions to solve the problems of natural calamities.

Now, I would like to emphasise and impress upon the Government that tackling the natural calamities in the country is as important as accelerating the development of Indian economy and Indian society. If we do not pay adequate attention to the problems created by the natural calamities, then all our development efforts would come to a standstill. In fact, I would say that planning for economic development in this country in the midst of natural calamities would be like writing on the sea sands, which are being washed away by the sea waters. Therefore, if we can control all the natural calamities, perhaps we would be able to achieve two per cent more of growth rate every year. We are aiming at eight per cent growth rate but we are landing up with five per cent or 5.6 per cent of growth rate because the growth rate is being deflated by the natural calamities that are occurring. We are aiming at four per cent growth rate in agriculture but are ending up only with 1.2 per cent. This is because of the natural calamities that we have. Therefore, we should know the gravity of the situation and pay equal attention to the aspect of controlling these natural calamities.

Sir, as you know, all parts of the country are affected by the natural disasters in one way or the other. They are not random in character; they come in regular frequencies year after year and place after place. You know the coastal States—particularly the area in the east coastal Gujarat—are vulnerable to cyclones. Four crore hectares of landmass is vulnerable to floods. Sixty-eight per cent of the total area sown is vulnerable to drought. Fifty-five per cent of the total area is in seismic zone of III and IV and is vulnerable to earthquake. Sub-Himalayan and Western Ghats are vulnerable to landslides. As a result of the continuous onslaughts of these natural calamities, there is a heavy toll of life and property in the country.

17.00 hrs.

To elucidate my point, let me quote one or two statistics. In 1988, the total number of people affected by the natural calamities was 101.5 lakhs, with a monetary loss of about Rs. 40.63 crore. But in 2001,

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the number of people who were affected byu the flood was 788.10 lakhs, which is about 7-8 times increase. The amount of loss had increased from Rs. 40.63 crore in 1988 to Rs.12,000 crore in 2001.

Even yesterday there was an estimate from Mumbai that the total production loss was estimated to be about Rs 1,000 crore for various industries. So, there is onslaught of natural calamities affecting the Indian economy and the Indian revenue system and it reduces the availability of new investments for the country. So, we will have to look at the natural calamities from this point of view and the Government should pay very great attention to this aspect.

When we come to the question of tackling natural calamities, I would first feel that with the higher level of scientific capability that we have in the country, we should be able to evolve a foolproof warning system. 'Prevention is better than cure', as is the saying. So, we should be able to evolve a system. We are boasting ourselves by saying that India has the third largest reservoir of technical and scientific manpower. What is this scientific manpower doing, if it cannot forecast or forewarn the coming of a flood or coming of a cyclone or the coming of a tsunami? If the scientific manpower cannot be used for this, what kind of scientific researches that we are doing in this country? Therefore, we should be able to get a coordinated, activated and motivated research efforts in this area. The Indian Meteorological Department must be geared to meet the needs of the research effort in this area. That should be done and I would feel that the Government should be able to work out what is called a national disaster management network system in the country so that we will be able to exchange information between different States.

Even the recent tsunami episode which has affected even my own Union Territory, could not be forewarned. So, a good forecasting system, a good forewarning system and a good prevention system must be evolved. That is the need of the hour.

Secondly, once the natural calamities come, we should be able to provide 3-4 measures. One is the immediate response to the natural calamities so that we will be able to mitigate the seriousness or the loss of the natural calamities. For this purpose, we should be able to create a national quick reaction team so that as and when a natural calamity occurs, the Central Government would be able to rush these forces to the place where it is required. So, that should be done.

With regard to rescue, we should be able to create a separate search and rescue team at the national level which should also help us. With regard to relief measures, no standardised procedures are available for providing relief to the people. In the recent tsunami case, we know that in Tamil Nadu, the Government of Tamil Nadu had followed a particular pattern; the Government of Pondicherry had followed a different pattern and the Government of Andaman and Nicobar Islands had followed a different pattern. But the victims are the same. It created inequalities among the beneficiaries and still the problems are not yest solved because there are no foolproof system of relief.

Although the Government of India has evolved the norms for providing assistance for calamities of various categories, the amounts suggested as relief is woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the people. For example, the Government of India has said that the amount to be released in the case of a diseased person will be Rs. 50,000. Are we valuing the life of a person only to Rs. 50,000? We should be able to think about this and the Parliament of India must be able to think whether this will be sufficient for a family which has lost the breadwinner on account of a natural calamity. What is more pathetic is that under the head of supplementray nutrition, the Government is providing Rs. 1.05 per head per day. You may just imagine about this—the Government is giving Rs. 1.05 as supplementary nutrition allowance per day per head. When a house is destroyed, the Government is giving only Rs. 5,000. How is it possible for a victim to construct a house with Rs. 5,000-Rs. 6,000?

Therefore, the existing relief norms should be revised taking into account the real situation energing in the affected places.

Natural calamities bring permanent devastation. People lose their houses, huts, land, in fact everything is lost. Therefore, we should evolve a rehabilitation package. Whenever there is occurrence of natural calamity, we should be able to create a project implementing agency.

Fourthly, there should be a comprehensive approach. It is not that the natural calamity can be tackled only by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Science and Technology Department, the Environment and Forests Department, the Irrigation Department and the Road Department, all these departments must act in a coordinated manner so that we are able to tackle this problem in an effective way.

Much has been said about the linking of rivers. I endorse this view.

There should be disaster management planning at all levels; from district to State and to the national level so that we are able to predict and forewarn these calamities and manage them. The Disaster Management Department must be created in every State and in every district so that we are able to tackle the problem. Local panchayats must be given an important place. Community should be involved. More than the Government, the community must be prepared to face the onslaughts of natural calamity at any time. For that purpose I would feel that disaster management should be included as a part of the curriculum in schools, colleges and in the universities so that every student, every citizen of India would be able to know what should be done immediately at his own level.

Finally, the Government is contemplating the introduction of National Disaster Management Bill. This is being discussed in the Committee on Home Affairs. I would feel that the Government should introduce this Bill at the earliest so that we would be able to avoid the negative effects of these natural calamities. The Government should pay serious attention to this matter and come out with concrete solutions so that every year, every month we do not face such situation. In Mumbai we have flood and in Tamil Nadu we do not have water. We are knocking at the doors of everybody asking for water. Mumbai people do not know how to remove water. The Government should pay very great attention to this fact. Unless and until this is done, all the development would be devalued on account of these natural calamities.

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool): Respected Chairman, Sir, for the fourth consecutive year I am taking part in the debate on natural calamities. Every year like a parrot we are repeating and narrating the same things without any concrete effective steps to combat either the flood, cyclone or drought. We are just taking reactive action rather than any preventive action. In India, it has become a perennial phenomenon. We either have flood or drought or earthquake in one or other part of the country. This year, Tsunami caused vast damage to property and lives of human being and cattle. This disaster has occurred only once in our memory and Environmentalists fear that this may occur in the near future also. This year, States like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh are affected by flood. Vast damage has been caused in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Since the last two days we have been hearing about the havoc being played by nature in the State of Maharashtra resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people and damage to the basic infrastructure. In our State of Andhra Pradesh, though there were heavy rains which caused floods in one or two districts, for the past five years we have been experiencing drought. Recent floods in Gujarat and Maharashtra have caused untold miseries to lakhs of people and deaths of few hundred people.

The worst affected community due to floods or drought is the farming community. The infrastructure like roads and bridges are damaged. In some places, Railway tracks are washed away. The crops spreading over lakhs of acres are submerged due to floods. On the other hand, lakhs of acres of land is kept without

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any farming activity due to drought. There are a number of hunger deaths and suicides by farmers. We witnessed this in the recent past in Andhra Pradesh and many other States also. There was loss of human life because of severe drought and floods. Though the earthquakes are not common to our country, we have been experiencing this in some parts of the country whether it is northern part, southern part, western part or north-eastern part. Due to God's grace they were all of low intensity. Had the intensity been high, the damage could have been very huge.

We have not heard of Tsunami. Even our elders might not have heard of it. It was told that it appeared after 100 years. Even the name was not familiar to us. It hit Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and also Pondicherry. It also hit other parts of the world. It is not possible to avoid natural calamities like Tsunami, cyclones and floods. But if we had a mechanism for forecasting them, we could have evacuated people in time and such a major loss of lives could have been avoided.

The premier institute like the Indian Institute of Oceanography studies about the ocean and its wealth. It plays a greater role in the development of the country by bringing out the ocean wealth. But it does not have any mechanism to forecast Tsunami. The scientists were saying that they do not even have the preliminary knowledge how Tsunami occurs and how it could be recorded. Such is the situation in our country and because of that, we are facing a lot of problems. We are losing human lives, cattle and property also.

To combat all these things, we have Natural Calamity Relief Fund. The damage is occurring in lakhs and crores of rupees but we are providing around Rs. 3,300 crore or so which is a very meager amount. We would like to have a good and just mechanism which could save thousands and lakhs of lives. Under the given circumstances, the State Governments do not have sufficient funds to take care of this. Like a big brother, the Central Government should come out in a bigger way to help the State Governments. The National Calamity Relief Fund and the National Calamity Contingency Fund put together had Rs. 3,300 crore for 2004-05 which is a very meager amount.

When the Andhra Pradesh was hit by floods because of the funds crunch and because of the callousness of the State Government the remedial measures were far from satisfactory. The Chief Minister was away in the foreign country. The hon. Revenue Minister went on record saying that when the incident is taking place how could the Administration go and help people and provide relief. It could be done only after the calamity subsides. The machinery could be mobilised afterwards and the damage could be assessed. Then only we can give relief. It is a very callous attitude. When the people are dying in hundreds and thousands, such type of response is there from the Government.

Sir, you are from Orissa and you know when the cyclone hit Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, our the then Chief Minister, Shri Chandrababu Naidu played a crucial role which was highly acclaimed by the world.

We have not learnt any lesson from our past experience. As per statistics provided, 17 States are affected by floods on a regular basis and other States too are affected either by drought or some other kind of natural calamities.

Sir, 367.11 lakh people spread over 128 districts in the country were affected by floods in the previous year, 1747 persons were reported to have lost their lives and 9560 cattle lives were reported lost on account of flood. Moreover, 30.42 lakh acres of cropped area was affected, and 15.70 lakhs of houses were damaged. The States affected were Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura and West Bengal. The worst affected States were, Assam, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. This year the States of Himachal

Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra has been worst affected by floods. In spite of this, we have not learnt any lesson.

17.16 hrs.

[SHRI D.P. YADAV *in the Chair*]

Take the case of the Tsunami disaster. When Tsunami occurred, a Committee of Group of Ministers was constituted and also a National Disaster Management Committee too was constituted under the Chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary. But no meeting either of the Committee of Group of Ministers, or the Committee on National Disaster Management seems to have taken place.

Sir, 10,277 people lost their lives on account of Tsunami; 501 children were orphaned because of it and 1,089 villages were affected. But in spite of all these losses on account of such natural calamities we have not taken any measures of any permanent nature to control them and combat them.

Under the circumstances I would like to request the Government of India, through you to take the following measures.

Firstly, to put in place a well controlled disaster management system in order that it could act immediately and save the lives of not only humans but also cattle and also protect property during such natural calamities. Though there was a Task Force constituted for this purpose during the NDA regime, during the UPA regime, the name of that Task Force is practically unheard of.

Secondly, the allocation for the National Calamity Fund should be increased so that without waiting for mobilisation of funds from other sectors, the States could get immediate relief from the NCRF and NCCF.

Thirdly, the State Governments should be helped liberally when such types of natural calamities take place. The Centre should now help in a big way the States like Gujarat, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh.

Fourthly, the Food for Work programme should be extended to all parts of the country.

Fifthly, there should be provision made for good medical facilities to contain the epidemics like Cholera, Malaria and other communicable diseases. This is very common. There is bound to be a break of epidemics of some disease after a natural calamity. Such a thing compounds the miseries of the people affected by natural calamities.

Finally, there should be a provision for payment of full compensation to the farming community for their crop loss due to floods or such other natural calamities.

Sir, some parts of our country today are experiencing floods and some other parts are experiencing drought. We have plenty of water in India that is going as waste into the sea without any proper utilisation. The NDA Government thought of inter-linking the rivers of North India and South India. The rivers of North India receive water when the glaciers in the Himalayas start melting and therefore, it has a perennial source of water. This idea of inter-linking the rivers of North India and South India was mooted by the late visionary K.L. Rao a long time back. But for the reasons best known to the authorities, this was put in the cold storage. But when the NDA Government took over, the former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri N. Chandrababu Nasidu took a lot of interest in the matter and prevailed upon the then NDA Government to take some steps in this regard. The then Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Suresh Prabhu to look into this aspect of inter-linking of rivers of North and South India. But for the reasons best known to the UPA Government, this has been put in the cold storage. Many of the Members of that Committee felt that through inter-linking of rivers floods could be controlled and also excess water could be used for irrigation of parched lands of low reinfed States and thereby the problem of drought could be tackled.

Finally, I would urge upon the UPA Government not to see as to which Government in the State has started this programme but to see which party has started after all the interest of the entire country is

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needed. I would request the UPA Government to take up interlinking of rivers immediately to solve the drought and flood problems.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi) Sir, today we are discussing natural calamities which involve drought, floods and also heat waves. When it is being discussed today in this august House of Parliament, we must understand that it is a global phenomenon.

Natural calamity has become a global phenomenon. Today, there is a cyclonic storm in Thailand and after a couple of days, it hits the coast of Orissa and it becomes a super cyclone devastating nearly 23,403 square kilometres of land and lakhs of lives are lost. There is an earthquake in Indonesia. Tsunami comes, hits the Bay of Bengal and submerges Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Lakshadweep Islands. So, we are caught unaware. Thus, time has come for us to think seriously that how these natural calamities are happening. We have to admit the fact that the natural calamities are virtually manmade. I am happy to see the Minister for Environment and Forests, Shri Raja, sitting here. I hope he would read the debate later. But today, there has been so much of environmental degradation and ecological imbalance because of which we are facing these natural calamities. Tsunami's effect would not have been so serious like how it was. The norms of the three CRZs, I, II and III, have been violated. What were the State Governments doing then? What was the Central Government doing then when the norms of the CRZs were violated? The entire mangrove zone has been destroyed for serving human habitation. It shows that the previous Government never took any initiative to improve the quality of life of those poor people living in those remote coastal areas of the country. And after Tsunami, you are planning to make a 6000 kilometres protection wall to save the coastal areas from further Tsunami. What a magnitude of loss! What magnitude of loss of money! It could have gone for other development works like building schools, for schemes like Indira Aawas Yojana, giving land to the poor and for improving the PDS in the country. Today, half of our budget is going for degraded environment management. So, it is high time for us to carry out the directions given in the Earth Summit and Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg and Rio de Janeiro. Otherwise, the natural calamities will be increasing day by day and more of our population will get affected so, we have to take concrete measures in this regard.

Today, when a natural calamity takes place, what does the Government give to the people? its the funds from the NCCR and NCRF? But for how long will it go on? It is a short-term relief, so that persons affected by them do not get any shock. Sir, it is like a shock to those people who are affected by natural calamities. Things like restoration works have to be taken up timely, it should be of a long-term nature project where we create assets for protection of environment and ecology also to make a shield of security against natural calamities. It could have been done long time back. We are still dependent on the Relief Code drafted by Britishers. They drafted it when Bengal Famine took place. Later on it was extended to all the States. It is virtually redundant. It cannot deliver goods to the people and devastation of today. When sand casting is done or when agricultural crop is destroyed, the amount of compensation given is the same old compensation. In some States I have seen that the amount of compensation has not been changed at all. New laws have not been enacted to deal with new calamities. The Central Government has taken some initiatives, like constituting Disaster Management Authority. It was conceived after the Super Cyclone. I thank Shri Shivraj Patil for having introduced the Disaster Management Authority Bill in the House. I pray to the august House and to the Chair that this Bill should be passed immediately and it should become law of the land soon.

Here, I would like to say that quality of relief material provided and it deliverance had improved during the NDA Government. When the Super Cyclone took place, there was no dearth of delivery of relief material to Orissa. That trend has continued today. I also congratulate

Dr. Manmohan Singh for not taking external aid during tsunami. But the way was shown by the NDA Government.

During Super Cyclone, a great fiasco took place in Orissa. Crores of money were sent. This is what *India Today* has reported. I would like to quote it. On the cover of *India Today*, it was reported:—

> "13,000 tonnes of foodgrains undelivered; 60,000 sarees and dhotis not distributed; no electricity in 50 per cent of the affected towns; half of the 270 telephone exchange dead; three key Collectors absconding; Rs. 52 crore emergency relief unspent."

I do not want to go into detail because the hon. Member is not present in the House.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Deoji, some other hon. members want to speak on the subject. Still 25 hon. members want to speak.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Sir, if you disturb how can I speak?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Chair is cooperating with you. You also cooperate with Chair, your cooperation is needed in running the proceedings of the House. It is a very important issue and many hon. members want to speak.

[English]

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: I have spoken for only five minutes. I seek protection from the Chair.

Before I conclude I would like to say something about predicition of monsoon. This time monsoon has flooded some areas like western India. But parts of Orissa, like western Orissa, is reeling under drought. The water level has risen by only one foot in wells of Kalahandi. The paddy sowing has been delayed, thereby affecting the *kharif* crop. According to agricultural experts, production will come down by fifty per cent. Meteorological Department is a vital Department. Today, every village has internet, television, radio and newspaper. The media has gone to rural India. But the model followed by the Meteorological Department for predicting monsoon is outdated one. The Department said that monsoon will arrive in Kerala by 1st of June, but it was delayed by five days. South-west monsoon contributes 47 per cent of the total precipitation in the country, which is about 4,000 billion cubic metres and 1,000 billion cubic metres is from ice. In these conditions, if the projections are not correct, how can the farmer predict his cropping pattern? How can the farmer plan his future agricultural programme? Agricultural extension is the poorest in the country. Till today, in Bihar—your State—agriculture extension is there or not, I vouch if it is there properly at the *Panchayat* level. The farmer during the failure of monsoon is completely blind and lost. He does not know what to do. So, the report given by Gowarikar Committee headed by Scientist Gowarikar, was quite a correct model for onset of monsoon. Then, that was changed to a Kelkar Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Modern technology is coming and science and technology has improved in the country. We have got efficient Minister. He should come out with a proper model so that the monsoon predictions are correct becuase the State of Orissa is one of the poorest States in the country, We completely depend on agricultural operations and agruciltural productivity. If there is a 50 per cent fall in it, our people go back by seven years. Sir, if there is a drought in Orissa, our economy of the farmer or the economy of the farm-related labourers goes nearly seven years back. That is what the statistics say. So, considering this, I think, the Discussion under Rule 193, initiated by Shri Basu Deb Acharia, is a welcome measure. The heat wave conditions were prevailing. In Orissa, we had one of the worst heat waves. For example, we experienced 54 degree Celsius during summer in Talchar, and 51 degree Celsius in Titlagarh. Why, Sir? It is because the coal mining activity is going on in Talchar. The peripheral development programme which they are supposed to do, they are not doing. They are not planting trees. They are not doing afforestation work. Therefore, Sir,

[Shri Bikram Keshari Deo]

it has to be seen that when we exploit a natural resource, it has to be properly compensated for and then only can we get some respite from natural calamities in future. Otherwise, debates like this will be going on and on. Crores of money will be going on from the Exchequer and we will not be achieving anything.

Sir, Shri Mahavir Prasad, the Minister of Agro and Rural Industries, is here. We are from Orissa and a lot of small scale industries and rural industries were devasted by super-cyclone. But till date, they haver not been rehabilitated.

[Translation]

They have not been provided any facility till now; they have not been rehabilitated because the whole of small scale industry and tiny sectors have been ruined. We want that hon. Minister should visit Orissa and take measures to promote small scale industries, tiny sectors and artisans industry.

[English]

I do not see the Minister for Resources here who plays a very important role in a natural calamity, nor do I see the Agriculture Minister here to give the reply in the time of any agricultural problem. The Environment Minister was here, but he has gone.

With thewords, I thank you.

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH (Mandi): Thank you, Sir, for giving me an opportunity to speak on natural calamity. I must highlight the damage that has happened in my area. A natural calamity of gigantic magnitude, due to sudden rise of this *jheel* in the Chinese territory, known as Parechu *jheel*, struck the Satluj Valley on 26 June, 2005. It led to an unprecedented rise of water level of Satluj river from Tibetan Plateau throughout the entire stretch of National Highway No. 22. The rise in water level was reported upto 15 metres above the normal level at some places. It led to extensive damage to about 350 kilometres of road from Samdo to Gobindsagar and Bhakra Dam. I may tell you that 10 bridges and 11 ropeways were washed away. Fifteen motorable bridges and eight jeepable and foot bridges were damaged. Ten kilometres of road between Wangtoo and Samdo were washed away. Fifteen kilometres length of various patches in road between Wangtoo and Samdo has been damaged.

Various link roads originating from National Highway including certain National Highway and PWD roads between Sainj and Wangtoo have been damaged.

Electricity supply has highly been damaged. Electrical lines including poles and towers, OFC network, water supply schemes, sewerage system have also suffered serious damages.

Now, I come to power generation. It was very heavily damaged. As you know, recently, the hon. Prime Minister had visited our area to inaugurate the Nathpa-Jhakri project. This project had to be shut down for another week or so. It is causing a loss of Rs. 600 crore a day.

I must mention here that the bridges which were connecting the tribal areas were also washed away. They are Shilkhar, Leo, Khab, Akpa, Kharo, Karchham, Jagatkhana, Bazir Bauri, Nathpa and Bhabanagar.

Apart from the above, the foundations, abutments and approaches of a number of other bridges have been damaged. Extensive damage has also been caused to the National Highway number 22 which has been damaged at the following places like Kali Mitti, Nogli, Cholling and Ralli, Poari, Pooh, Kharo, Khab, Shilkhar and Samdho.

The State Highway at Sainj and Luhari has also been damaged and at several places, the foundation base of National and State Highway has also been damaged. The major part of district Kinnaur, that is, from Wangtoo to Samdho is completely cut-off from the rest of the world and intra-district communication has also affected due to the breach of roads and bridges at various points in this stretch. Similarly, Spiti Valley of

Lahaul and Spiti District, which is also mainly dependent on this road, has also suffered connectivity problem. Flood has not only caused extensive damages along the rivers Parechu, Satluj and Spiti but has also affected the population living in the entire area of Kinnaur District between Wangtoo to Samdho and Spiti Sub-division of Lahaul-Spiti District as they have no access to transportation and are not in a position to sell their cash crops/export surplus farm produce to the market. Services like health, education, electricity and supplies of essential commodities have also been affected. This has also adversely affected movement of the local people, employees and security forces, especially students and patients.

I may tell you that control rooms, warning systems and contingency plans were already in place and hence were operationalised effectively because 922 families—which had 4650 members in five districts like Kinnaur, Shimla, Kullu, Mandi and Bilaspur—which were living in the danger zone were evacuated to already identified safe places and essential food and shelter was provided. After the receding of the water level, most of them have returned to their homes except in three locations where relief camps are still operational.

The services of the Indian Air Force helicopters and the State helicopters were pressed into service to evacuate the stranded tourists and to make available medical emergencies. There were 562 persons who were stuck up in those areas alongwith the 69 foreign tourists who have been evacuated till 1st of July, 2005.

Now, distribution and sale of essential items through the Public Distribution System and the local markets have also been regulated to avoid panic buying and to ensure equitable access to essential items. Restoration of power supply was also taken up immediately and power supply in more than 60 per cent area, including district headquarters, have been restored.

For providing emergent connectivity, ropeways along the river at various points with priority to locations where bridges have been washed away, are being installed, for which steel ropes, trolleys and other accessories have been sent through helicopters and two ropeways have been installed.

Old Hindustan Tibet road, which passes along higher elevation and is safe from flood, but abandoned, is being restored and this road between Tapri and Akpa with a length of 70 kilometres by-passing the most critically damaged National Highway between two points is in a length of about 55 kilometres. It will provide alternative jeepable connectivity not only to the population between these two points but also beyond rest of Kinnaur and Spiti valley till the time National Highway between Tapri and Akpa is restored.

The National Highway with the State PWD, which was damaged at many points, particularly near Rampur, has been restored and this has been opened upto Wangtoo.

Relief material, including gratuitous relief, to the affected people have been distributed. Relief team alongwith 28 mule load material to Leo village, where more than 22 houses were completely washed away and were totally cut off due to bridges which were washed away. Now, the PWD has made mule paths and bypassed the block points so that movement can be done and to have connectivity to these villages. Materials for restoration of power supply and pesticides and fungicides are being sent through the helicopters. There are sufficient essential commodities available under PDS in the affected areas though there is an acute scarcity of LPG, kerosene oil in these areas.

I may tell you that the Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh alongwith some of his Cabinet colleagues visited the affected areas thrice to review the relief and restoration operations. We are very grateful to Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson, United Progressive Alliance, hon. Home Minister, Union Government, Home Secretary, Government of India and Director General, ITBP who also visited the affected areas on June 29, 2005. Central Government Assessment team also visited the affected areas on June 30, 2005.

[Shrimati Pratibha Singh]

Now, I may tell in brief that the loss in these areas concerning the Public Works Sector goes upto Rs. 10008.50 lakh. Similarly, in other sectors also like irrigation and public health, there is great loss which is estimated at Rs. 1780.61 lakh. In horticulture sector there is a loss of Rs. 580 lakh. Similarly, in the fisheries sector also, the loss is accessed to a tune of Rs. 80 crore. In the BSNL, there is a loss of Rs. 1.00 crore. In agriculture also, there is a loss of Rs. 3,858 lakh. Even the State Electricity Board has suffered a great loss which is amounting to Rs. 2978 lakh.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Madam, please conclude.

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH: An amount of Rs. 1.69 crore was available in the State Calamity Relief Fund during the current year. Against the allocation, we have already spent Rs. 50.34 crore on account of drought and excessive rains, snow, and flash floods. Although, Rs. 50.35 crore is left in balance in the Calamity Relief Fund, but total demands to the tune of Rs. 40 crore from the Deputy Commissioners and from various Departments have been received for repairs and restoration works.

Further, rainy season is in primary stage and snow season is yet to come. Under the circumstances, the State will be left with no balance of Calamity Relief fund and will not be in a position to sustain the huge loss to the public or private property due to flash flood, which is to the tune of Rs. 610 crore.

In the end, I would like to mention about the additional funds required from National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF). We require an amount of Rs. 75 crore for roads and jhullas. We require a sum of Rs. 25 crore for link road or paths and connected infrastructure. Similarly, we require an amount of Rs. 15 crore for water supply, irrigation, sewerage and flood protection. Restoration of power supply requires Rs. 7 crore. Forest infrastructure requires Rs. 5 crore. Cultivated areas, which were damaged and which were washed away, require Rs. 15 crore. Private houses and properties, which were damaged, similarly require Rs. 3 crore. The damage done to agriculture and horticulture crops requires an amount of Rs. 5 crore. The total comes about Rs. 150 crore.

I would like to request the Government of India to take into consideration the losses, which have been caused in our areas and help us.

17.46 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thirteenth Report

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Santosh Gangwar may kindly present the Thirteenth Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly): Sir, I beg to present the Thirteenth Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

17.47 hrs.

Natural Calamities in the Country—*contd.*

[Translation]

SHRI RAJARAM PAL (Bilhaur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank you for providing me an opportunity to speak about the Natural Calamities which is a national problem. I have been listening the discussion of hon'ble Members since yesterday till today, and from the discussion held last year during the last Monsoon Session makes me feel that neither the House nor we are serious, not only about Natural Calamities but any other national problems. Infact, the natural calamites are not new to us, rather it have been occuring for last thousands of years. Before independance our people were more aware about Natural calamities and were quite capable of tackling the situation. But today, despite providing thousands and

crores of rupees as national assistance, they appear helpless. Through you, I would like to submit only this that it is a national problem. Natural calamities do not occur all of sudden. Some calamities are easy to foresee, and can be predicted to some extent. It may occur before or after ten to fifteen days or sometimes one months but they are bound to occur. But even after 57 years of our independence neither the state Governments nor the Central government are serious about finding out a permanent solution to deal with the calamities. This callous attitude has promoted me to come to the conclusion that these calamities wreak havoc on the poor people only and even after 57 years of independence no Governments have shown any interest in doing anything for the betterment of those poor people what they do is mere eyewash.

Sir, are we really accountable to the poor even after 57 years of independence? It is the objective of our constitution as is envisaged in its preamble. Are we serious about them? Today, this needs to be discussed. The maker of the Constitution, Dr. Ambedkar had rightly said that howsoever good the constitution of a country may be but if the intention of the people who actually have to implement it is not good, then the Constitution will be useless.

Today, I would like to say that our State Governments and Central Government are not very serious about Natural Calamities. The only reason behind it is that the state affected by natural calamity are not ruled by the same party which is governing at the centre. Therefore, the Central Government is not serious enough. Even the concerned MPs and MLAs do not wish to visit the area of a state affected by natural calamities, as they do not have their vote bank overthere. Therefore, they won't visit there. Through this House, I would like to submit that this country belongs to all but we have failed in keeping the objectivies fulfilled for which our leaders has got the country freed 57 years ago. We must accept it. We, the Members will have to be serious for the country. We must be serious for every problem and we need to find out permanent solutions to deal with natural calamities. It requires serious pondering because all the hon'ble Members have unanimously said that it appears that every year during the Monsoon session we sit in the House and express our concerns about natural calamities, but are we actually serious for the people who have to face natural calamities time and again? Today, a number of states of the country are in the gripped of flood. In Maharastra floods have affected the normal life of the people badly. About Bihar, I always heard that natural calamities have become their destiny and the people of Bihar have accepted it that it is their destiny. Uttar Pradesh is no to exception. There are dozens of districts which are facing the problem of flood and life of thousands of people has been affected.

Sir, the Ganga, the Yamuna, the Betwa and the Kain rivers flow through Uttar Pradesh. All these rivers cause havoc every year. If we give a serious thought to the causes of such calamities, we will find that we are constantly interfering with the nature. The water harvesting capacity which we had earlier in the form of ronds, rivers etc. has now reduced due to sand. For this reason their capacity to stop the flood has come to an end. The Government of Bhartiya Janta Party emphasised on inter-linking the rivers. It is right that we may find a right solution by inter-linking the rivers. Through you, I would like to submit that the way the Kein river caused havoc in Banda District of Uttar Pradesh, hundreds of people and cattle have been killed. A number of villages have been engulfed by the Ghaghra river in Bahraich. The Barrage on the Ganga was constructed because the water level in Kanpur was reducing very fast and. There is acute drinking water problem. Nearly Rs. 400 crore were spent on the construction of the Barrage in order to provide good potable water and stop the reducing water level. Leave aside the reducing water level and providing drinking water, the money which was to be spent on the construction of barrage has been embezzled by officers concerned. Due to construction of the barrage the villages situated on he bank of Ganga for thousands of years and where the water of Ganga never entered, so far.

MR. CHAIRMAN: SHri Rajarampalji, enough discussion has been done on the problem and its causes, now, some suggestions should be given.

SHRI RAJARAM PAL: Sir, dozens of villages have been engulfed by the Ganga waters due to this barrage. Thousands of hectares of a fertile land have been swept away by the river Ganga. Not a single house is left intact in dozens of villages like Debinpurva, Ginnipurva, Dallpurva, Shamberpurva, Rampur, Ram Nihal Purva etc. The fertile lands have been destroyed due to erosion by the Ganga river. About one thousand and five hundred families are taking refuse in various schools of Kanpur. There is no arrangement of fodder for the cattle. People are on the verge of starvation. The administration is unable to provide any permanent arrangement for them. So, the administration has asked them to go back. Their houses have been swept away by the river Ganga and they are unable to live there. Through you, I would like to submit that the Government of Uttar Pradesh is not so serious about the affected people. Therefore, through you, I would like to demand that proper arrangement should be made to rehabilitate those people who have become homeless due to flood in Katari in Bilhaur constituency by giving them a special package.

SHRI SITA RAM SINGH (Sheohar): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to extend my thanks to you for giving me an opportunity to speak on this issue. It is a matter of great importance for our country and for Bihar also.

17.59 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Sir, since yesterday discussion is going on and I am paying full attention to it. I would like to give suggestions on some points. Hon'ble Member was right in saying that natural disasters are of two types, one which strikes suddenly and another is of perennial nature. I would like to submit about those which strike suddenly. Ours is a scientifically very advance country. New technologies have been invented.

18.00 hrs.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Sita Ram Singh, please wait a minute. Twenty two hon. Members are yet to speak.

[Translation]

You please decide as to how much time is to be devoted to...discussion. Reply is also to be given today.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to request you to extend the time upto 8 p.m., Maximum number of hon'ble Members will be able to speak. Reply can be given tomorrow ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): Sir, we can extend the time of the House upto seven o'clock and then see later whether we have to extend it again...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Let us extend the time for one hour initially. Reply with be given today itself.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhanjharpur): Discussion should be completed today. If, it is not possible to reply today, then it will be given tomorrow.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Reply is to be given today.

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly): Mr. Deputy-Speker, Sir, you are giving me less than five minutes to speak while a Member, who moves any resolution speaks for an hour. You are requested to extend the time of the House upto eight o'clock...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I am going to extend the time of the House initially for an hour. But we will try to conclude early.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE: For the time being, let us extend the time upto seven o'clock and if necessary,

we can extend it again later. We should try to finish this discussion today...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: It was decided in the meeting of the BAC that the House will sit till late hours, but it has been adjourned. Yesterday too the House should have functioned till late. Many Members of our party are willing to speak. Yesterday, House was adjourned while I had gone out for three minutes. ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE: I am for concluding this discussion, including the reply today. Please rest assured ...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH (Udhampur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, please extend the time of the House. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I am going to extend the time for an hour, later on we will see.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SITA RAM SINGH: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I was submitting that science has witnessed many advancement, but here in our country there is no technology available to forcast as to which natural disaster is going to strike in the coming days, as was in the case of Tsunami and Mumbai...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Sita Ram Singh, you have only five munutes' time.

[Translation]

SHRI SITA RAM SINGH: OK Sir, I will be precise. I speak occasionally, so I would like to request you to extend the time allotted to me...(*Interruptions*)

It is raining in Mumbai. Metrological Department everyday forecasts about the areas, where rain will occur. In my opinion, Mumbai is the second most important city after Delhi. Whenever, there is heavy down pour roads are inundated with water upto three feet. Why not drainage system was constructed there in such a manner so that rain water may drain through it into the ground. I would like to suggest that the Government should be aware of such things.

Natural disasters strike every year in Bihar. In Bihar, flood is a perennial issue. It seems this time it will occur late. Previous year flood had devasted Bihar. Every year flood causes destruction to our lives and properties and every year certain areas are affected by drought but I will say about it later. Firstly, I would like to mention about flood. For many years, flood come here and cause heavy damage to property, roads and the lives of peasants, workers are ruined and the villages and towns are devasted.

This perennial problem of flood is rooted more in Nepal than in the state. The Government of India should hold meaningful talks with the Government of Nepal. The Government of India has never been serious about this matter since the independence. It never thought of holding meaningful talks with the Government of Nepal to find out permanent solution to mitigate the suffering of the people of Bihar for which lot of money is spent and is wasted.

On various occasions, I have tried to raise my point under various rules in the House. Today, I would like to say in nutshell that the Government of India have taken some initiatives to avoid this type of disaster by opening its offices at seven places. But nothing can be achieved by mere opening the offices. Instead the Government should act towards that directions. The Government of India should consult with its technocrats to find out the permanent solution of the flood problem so that people may get rid of this scourage and river water can be utilised for irrigation and power-generation. I would like to urge upon the Government to come with the permanent solution of this problem. Thirdly, I would like to mention

[Shri Sita Ram Singh]

that the dams constructed by the Government of India and State Governments, are in dilapidated condition. Dams were constructed on rivers like Bagmati, Koshi, Adwara, Sikrana, Ganges and are in a dilapilated condition today. Last year, in my parliamentary constituency alone, flood caused damages to the dams at not less then ten places. It is impossible to compensate the damage caused by flood. Dams have not been repaired since their construction. Now, the Government has announced that we are providing funds but not a single inch of dam has been repaired. At many a places there is a need of sluice gate to be fixed, but it has not been done. At some places, efforts were taken to fix sluice gate but soon equipments were stolen away. Now, Government is not serious about it and due to this negligense, all the infrastructure and the dams built over the years, are in dilapilated condition today. I would like to submit that the government agency has set up a think tank in the name of Ganga Project. In my parliamentary constituency a dam was built before the independence at Goabari at Dhaka and it is protecting the lives of millions of people there. Last year it was damaged due to flood and caused heavy loss of lives and property.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, you please conclude.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SITA RAM SINGH: I will not give you any more chance to complain. Let me speak for two minutes only. When the issue of the construction of dams came, the then Government of Bihar stated that the dam would be constructed. But when the central team of the Government of India visited there, it observed that there would be no use of constructing the dam, and did not allow the construction of dam. Fortunately, flood hasn't occurred so far. If the flood occurs, I think it would be devastating for ten lakh people. What sort of idea is this? I had raised this matter in the meeting of the Committee also, but till today it has not been done. I would like to say that in order to save the states facing the problem of devastation caused by floods as prevailing in Bihar, I would like to say that, that existing dams over Koshi, Adwara and Bagmati rivers should be rapaired and the existing gap in the dams should also to filled.

Sir, natural calamity occurred in our country in the form of drought as well. Drought has occurred here, this year also. Half of our region remains affected by the drought. Thirdly, water logging is another problem. Efforts are being made for years to provide better irrigation facilities. Efforts were made to provide some facilities but the State Government of Bihar had insufficient resources. The Government of India did not provide the required resources and funds. This aspect has been neglected so far. I do not want to go into the details, as the time is short. I just want to say that the Government of India should provide adequate funds for irrigation facilities and to tackle the drought problem to those states facing these problems and Bihar is number one in the list of such states. It would benefit the farmers and the villages.

Third thing that I would like to submit is that there is one area of Mokama Tall in Patna, Bihar. It has a peculiar submit position. The Government wants to show it in an integrated form but the Government failed to do so. I would like to request the Government to put this area in an integrated form and to level this land with irrigation facilities for the benefit of the farmers. In addition to this, I would like to mention few more things about my area. Sir, this time floods caused less devastation in our area but there are two or three districts where you cannot visit despite you willingness. Even the train facilities are available by a longer route. Even the National highway is under two-three feet water. Since last year the efforts are being made. During the floods, National Highway Minister also visited the area. Muzzaffarpur is a Commissionery city under Sitamari district. But today two-three feet water is there and you cannot visit there. I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards this problem and request the Government to make the road operational. It is a natural disaster and the Government are acting as a mere spectator. People are suffering but no solution has been

found out for this problem. I would like that Government should pay attention towards this problem.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I may please be given the opportunity to speak....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Ramdasji, Please sit down. I will call you later.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Athawale, I assure you that I will give you time to speak on this issue. I will try my best to accommodate you.

[Translation]

SHRI RAKESH SINGH (Jabalpur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I convey my thanks to you for giving me an opportunity to speak. For the last two days, the entire House has been expressing its concern over natural calamities. Natural calamities had occurred in the past and are occurring and are not limited to a particular state. The occurrence takes place in various states simultaneously or at different times. They bring grave devastation all over the country but should we only admit that these are beyond our control and so we continue to bear these natural calamities and the losses caused by them and keep starting the relief work after making estimate of losses? These calamities occur almost every year. There is not a single year when some part of the country had not suffered from flood or drought. But it seems that no effort is being made by the Government to find out permanent solution, taking into account the lessions from these natural calamities neither the Government is pondering over any such program. This is a very serious situation because no part of the country is safe from this point of view. The States, which we once considered safe from natural calamities are also facing natural calamities now. Recently, the heavy rains in Mumbai stands testimony to this fact and beside this, it has been proved once again that our entire system is incapable to deal with such natural calamities. We can do nothing except increasing the duration of relief work.

Sir, the NDA Government under the leadership of Hon'ble Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji had for the first time shown a sincere initiatives in this direction and mooted the long term plan to connect all the rivers in the country. If more work is done on this plan then certainly not only we can get rid of the floods but can bring green revolution in those parts of the country, which suffer from the drought. But I am sorry to say that this Government do not seem to be serious about this plan. I would like to say that this plan has been put on the back burner. This is a matter of deep concern because when natural calamities strike, they mostly affect the middle and lower class people. These are the people, who, after the onslaught of natural calamities become dependant on relief only. Our country was known for environmental balance in the whole world. The climate and the environment of our country was considered the best in the world but today it is painful to see that our country is worst affected by environmental imbalance. The consequential situation has been affecting the people of poor and lower sections. Recently, the situation, which errupted in Madhya Pradesh, affected 16 districts and out of them 9 districts are the most affected. It affected near about 10 lakh BPL families and even APL families were also affected in large number but the condition of poor families is more serious since they have neither food to eat nor shelter to live. The condition of APL families is also almost the same because they have lost everything in the flood. In my constituency from when I am elected, Jabalpur and Katni both places have been gravely affected with heavy rains and floods and suffered ravaging destruction. In Katni district more than 10 persons died due to heavy rains and floods, hundreds of cattle were swept away and thousands of people have become homeless. Whole of the Katni city remained flooded for five days. I had seen that when the ground floor of the house got submerged in the flood, people moved to first floor and when the first floor also got submerged in the flood, they moved to the terrace from where they could be rescued

[Shri Rakesh Singh]

by the motor boats and boats. In the Bahorivan legislative constituency of my parliamentary constituency Katni, it rained 1600 millimeter. In those places where usual rainfall had been 50 to 55 millimeter, there in last 10 to 15 days, the rainfall had been 64 inches. The magnitude of devastation can be gauged from this fact.

Not only the kuchcha houses collapsed but the remaining houses were also got severely damaged and are on the verge to collapse anytime. The people living there are suffering on both the front. First, they have been left with nothing to eat and recently those who are living in the damaged houses with their families with small children, cannot sleep all over the night due to the fear of collapse of house. But they have no option since the whole of the village is affected. Sehora and Panagar legislative constituencies of Jabalpur district had been seriously affected. Hundreds of houses have collapsed there. Farms are still flooded and hundreds of cattle have died. The condition of farm labourers is very bad. For them, it was the time to store grain for the whole of the rainy reason by working in the farms. But today, farms are flooded with water. In such a situation where those labourers can go? The crisis of sustinence has arisen for them. I, myself visited these areas and found that a number of villages can be approached by a boat only. The boat was not in a good condition and when it reached in the middle I felt if any small problem develops in the boat, I would not be able to reach the shore. I realized the pain through which the people are going while crossing that river with their children. The Government of Madhya Pradesh has announced relief for the affected people in this situation. The immediate relief is being provided and its distribution has also started. But the State Government has its own limited resources. It cannot meet all the requirement of the affected people for their rehabilitation and employment and that too in such a situation. In my Lok Sabha Constituency only in two districts Jabalpur and Katni, have suffered a loss of Rs. 250 crore. The State Government is providing assistance to the affected people whose houses have collapsed. Besides, it is providing 20 kg. foodgrains. So far the State Government has spent Rs. 100 crores for relief works.

Natural calamities occur in every part of the country and these affect common man. There should be no politics for providing relief to them. But I am sorry to say that meager amount of Rs. 95 crore has been made available to the Government of Madhya Pradesh. A Union Minister visited Bhopal, and surveyed the flood affected areas by helicopter. Later he announced that family members of the deceased will be provided Rs. one lakh as relief. But, till today that is just an announcement and the dependents of the deceased have not got any help.

I believe that this kind of treatment should not be meted out to any state, which is affected by natural calamity. All should be treated equally. Through you, I would like to request the Union Government to provide special financial package for Madhya Pradesh as it is the most balanced state from the point of environment and it has got the most forest covered area in the country. Such a state is facing environmental imbalance and it is suffering most due to that. So, food for work scheme should be introduced for Agriculture labourers and the poor farmers of Jabalpur and Katni districts. The Houses should be provided to BPL families under Indira Aawas Yojana.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I want to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on this issue.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH (Udhampur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on this issue and I would not take much time. At the outset, I would like to say that we should, pay attention towards the basic issues. Every State demands funds and various teams of Union Government visit those states. Slums are washed away every year and big houses remain intact. There is lack of planning. All public and private locations have been grabbed where rivers rivulets flow. Throughout India encroachment has been made on such locations and flow of water has been stopped. If that is being done then water will change its course, in such a condition complaints are made that water is entering homes. That's why I want to make an

appeal to people that God is great. If we try to exploit nature then natural calamities will occur. So, I want to say that money is not the most important thing but required planning should be done. Today about 50 lakh people are residing in that city where 50 lakh people cannot reside. Mumbai is witnessing such a worst situation due to rains. Such situation occurs due to depletion of forest cover.

The militants have cut down trees in my state. Army has resorted to same act to check militancy. Avalanches have also destroyed forests. Such situation arises due to depletion of forest cover in hilly areas. The Government have started formulating new plans but it did not bother to provide relief to poor people whose houses had collapsed due to heavy snowfall. Five-or six months back the snowfall was about 15 feet or 18 feet. In Basholi, Bilawar, Banihaal, Ramban, Kathua, Gularnaas, Doda, Indravaan, Kishtvaar, Bhadravaar and Chnaini have no electricity. When I visited, there the people told me that some years ago electricity polls had been uprooted due to snowfall and these have not been installed so far. The earlier loss has not been made up and the Government are planning for future. The planners are the people who sit in air-conditioned rooms. The situation can be improved by those people who know the reality.

Nowadays, even MPs are not being given due respect and importance. If such attitude is there, how MPs can function to safeguard interests of the country. I would like to say that a check should be there for making such CDs which are destroying image of MPs. A scheme should be formulated to save rivers in villages. The level of water is receding and the Government has to check it. I know it is just a formality to express my views as nothing is going to happen. It would not be beneficial for poor. Only proper planning and implementation there of will be beneficial for poor. Farmers' land is washed away. On one hand the agriculture land is shrinking every year and on the crops suffer damages on the other. Horticulture also gets damaged. They are talking about tourism and beautification. Long discussions have been held here villages need to be developed. Every year four and a half lakh people migrate to Delhi-Mumbai. The Government should try to check it. Aggarwalji, as long as the Government do not check it, nothing will be achieved. A monitoring committee should be set up. Who is the incharge of this Department? The land of farmers is washed away in floods, their houses get damaged and relief has also been provided. There are 32 departments for this purpose. There is lack of disaster management in our country. If somebody tries to contact such departments on phone then nobody picks up the phone. The control rooms do not function properly. The Government should pay attention towards poor people, countrymen to whom the country actually belongs. I am very thankful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, Mr. Ramdas Athawale. You have to conclude your speech within five minutes.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir...

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, when will be the reply to this discussion? Will it be tommorow?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I think, the reply should be today.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Why today, Sir? The Home Minister is not here. He has gone to Maharashtra. Would he come back today?...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: As the member desire. If they desire to get the reply today, we shall get it today otherwise the hon. Minister will give his reply tomorrow.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Not today, let it be for tomorrow.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Let us hear Mr. Athawale first.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the Government has tried to fight against natural

[Shri Ramdas Athawale]

calamities many times. There is a need to have some planning to tackle them. Such a heavy rainfall occurred in Mumbai after hundred years. Mumbai city is situated along the sea coast. The rain continued there for twelve hours thus flooding the whole city. Mumbai is the commercial capital of India. Mumbai contributes Rs. 40 thousand crores to the Government of India every year. There is a need to renovate the drainage system in Mumbai. Therefore, we demand the Prime Minister to provide Rs. 10 thousand crores for the development of Mumbai....(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Prime Minister has gone to Mumbai to take stock of the situation. He is being accompanied by Shri Sharad Pawar and Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar. The Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Vilasrao Deshmukh is assessing the extent of damage caused in Raigad, Ratnagiri, Nanded and is trying to help the affected people. The floods come every year in many districts of Bihar, U.P. and Maharashtra. Some areas of the country face drought also. The Government headed by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had made a plan to the tune of Rupees 125 thousand crores to interlink the rivers. Wherby it was envisaged that a river overflows its surplus water should be divereted to another one. Proper planning is needed to avoid any damage to the people. Heavy damage has been caused in Mumbai, it is necessary that the department forecasts such heavy rains, which they generally never do. We have seen the huge damage caused by Tsunami, if the people had prior information about it, they would not have lost their lives. Therefore, we demand from the Government of India, as Shri Lal Singhji was saying, that they should consider to set up a Natural Disaster Ministry on the lines of various separate departments such as the departments meant for Housing, Agriculture etc. which look after different fields. There should be an independent Ministry with the name. Natural Disaster Ministry to deal with natural disasters because every year as natural calamities like earthquakes, tsunami, floods, droughts etc. keep on striking, which cause huge damage to the people and thousands and lacs of people lose their lives. Therefore, we request the Hon. Prime Minister and Shrimati Sonia Gandhi to consider setting up a Natural Disaster Ministry.

Sir, I had suggested that the rainwater along the coastline of Mumbai, where heavy rainfall occurs, should be channelised to Kopan Kinnar Strip where there is scarcity of water and drought occurs. Having seen the recent heavy rainfall in Mumbai, the people have become aware that there is a need to channel this water through canals or other sources to the places receiving scanty rainfall, a dam needs to be constructed for this purpose. Such planning is needed in this regard. I fully believe that presently, Hon. Prime Minister is considering about it.

Sir, the problem of drinking water exists at many places. This issue also needs to be considered. There is a need to experiment with sea space water in drought prone areas. Salted sea space waters should be treated and made worth drinking. This should be considered. I think that every year, thousands and lacs of people are losing their lives and damage worth crores of rupees is being caused. There is a need to have a plan to check all this. I am fully confident that our UPA Government is capable of such planning. As Dr. Manmohan Singh is an economist, he will do better to improve the economy of the country during these five years. The opposition did nothing during the last six years; as a result, they had to lose their Government. We are aware that we have to run the Govenment and there are responsibilities on us. Therefore, we shall try to solve most of the problems of the people during these five years and we should make an effective planning regarding natural disaster. We should take care that more and more facilities may be provided to the people. I do not want to take more time because the allotted time is over and others are to speak....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I gave you eight minutes because you belong to Maharashtra.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: I demand from the Government of India that more assistance should be given to Mumbai and Maharashtra. I thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Next speaker is Shri W. Wangyuh Konyak.

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, an information has just been received that an explosion has taken place in Rajgir-Patna Shramjivi Super Fast Express and more than one hundred people have been injured. We want that the information regarding the related facts may be given before adjourning the sitting of the House because more than one hundred people have been injured. We want that the Government should pay attention to it.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the concerned information may be provided.

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is an important train on Rajgir-Patna-Delhi route, it is a Super Fast Train, we want the Government to pay attention towards it.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I will look into it.

SHRI W. WANGYUH KONYAK (Nagaland): Sir, a natural calamity is a problem created by the nature. But it is for the Government to solve the problem. When Assam is flooded, the entire north-eastern States are affected. It is because all the buses, trucks, essential commodities, etc. generally get through Assam only. Therefore, at least one comprehensive plan should be formulated so as to avoid flood-affected areas in Assam in the interest of the entire North-Eastern States and so. I want that the Government takes up that project.

Secondly, on 26th May 2005, a massive landslide occurred in Mokokchung Town. Altogether, 15 people were killed, ten houses were completely damaged, and six people got injured. Out of the 15 people killed, six were from Bihar, one from Assam and the rest are from Nagaland. On the same day, unusual and unexpected flash floods occurred in Tuli town. Two hundred and eighty two houses have been damaged beyond repair and many properties have been lost including the National Highway No. 61. After a gap of 20 days, the Central Government has sent a Central Ministerial Team headed by the Joint Secretary, Shri D.S. Mishra from the Home Ministry and they have submitted a report to the Central Government. Today, after more than two months of the incident, no relief has been sanctioned. Had it happened in any other part of the country, the Prime Minister would have visited that place, the Home Minister would have visited that place and immediate relief measures would have been taken and many other things would have been undertaken. But in Nagaland, even after a gap of more than two months, not a single pie has been sanctioned for that State. It clearly shows the step-motherly treatment being meted out to that State.

The Memorandum of Understanding alongwith the damage report and estimate has been submitted to the Central Ministerial Team. But till today, not a single pie has been sanctioned. If I am not mistaken, if it had happened in any other part of the country, thousands of crores of rupees have been announced as relief measures.

This is a serious problem for the entire country. Nagaland is an economically poor State in the country and the Central Government should not show step-montherly treatment to any State. Therefore, I urge the Central Government to treat the entire country equally, and immediate relief should be given to the State of Nagaland.

I, therefore, request the Central Government to release the funds immediately as per the report submitted by the Central Ministerial Team.

[Translation]

SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK (Panaji): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to you for allowing me to participate in the discussion this time. Our country was

[Shri Shripad Yesso Naik]

hit by Tsunami six months ago. A period of six-seven months has elapsed since then. We were just getting out of that crisis but in the meantime the ravaging floods hit the entire western India and that disrupted the normal life of people. This time it has rained so heavily after 150 years. It has affected the entire western India upto Mumbai, Karnataka and Belgaum. It has broken traffic connectivity at several places. Roads have been blocked, rail movement has been stopped. Air service had not stopped but now it has also stopped. Seeing this, it comes to our mind that natural disasters like floods and droughts occur every year. After natural disasters, our countrymen extend all assistance, the Central Govt. Also extends assistance. I want to say that our disaster management system is not working properly. Had it been working properly we would have saved life and property and prevented the damage to a great extent. But, so far no measures have been taken by the Central Government in this regard. The disaster Management Authority Bill has been submitted only today. A number of disasters would have occured over 57 years of our independence but with the cooperation of the people the magnitude of damage caused by these disasters are being reduced. We can arrest the damage if we develop a proper system.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, after a period of about 100 years Goa is facing such ravaging floods. Goa is a small state, and being a small state it is not capable enough to cope with the damage. Therefore, it is the Central Government's duty to extend immediate assistance to the state for the damage. Ten persons were killed in a landslide in Dikkanpal village of South Goa. A number of houses have collapsed due to heavy rains. A person has washed away by flood in Uzagaon in Fonda taluka. A number of houses in Dicholi and Sakhai have been flooded and it would be very difficult for the local Government to compensate the affected people. The crops of the farmers have been destroyed and there is no chance of crops in these fields in future also. This damage amounts to at least Rs. four-five crore. I demand from the Central Government that the Goa state may be compensated immediately for the damage.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, there is Karnataka on one side of Goa and Konkan of Maharashtra on the other side. These also the toll is very high. Everything has been destroyed by the flood waters. Chipadoon, Khed, Pen, Managaon in Raigarh and Ratnagiri districts have been submerged causing large scale loss of life and property. Therefore, I urge the Central Govt. to send a team to these parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka to assess the situation and provide financial assistance immediately. It is my humble request.

[English]

SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR (Patiala): Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak today on this subject.

Over the last couple of years we have witnessed major natural calamities in India; be it the long four years drought in Rajasthan, floods and cyclones in Orissa, earthquake in Gujarat and the recent and the most terrible human tragedy in India, the Tsunami. Even the cursory analysis of the scale of these natural calamities shows us that the economically developed countries of the world are very much better equipped and have a greater resilience to deal with these natural calamities and they have lesser loss of leves. This bias—you can call it of nature against our country—may be due to the fact that we do not have that much development and also the lack of funds that the poorer and the developing countries are facing. For us, if a premium quality of weather reporting is linked up with the good insurance system, I think it would be a very efficient way of imparting knowledge and information to our rural sectors and our fisher folk.

The Seventeenth Report of the Estimates Committee of the Lok Sabha, 2003 on 'Relief and Rehabilitation Measures in Natural Calamities' observed that India is one of the most disaster prone countries of the world. There are many Ministries, Departments and organisations

in the Central Government which are responsible for rescue, relief and rehabilitation work. But the Estimates Committee further observed:—

> "Experience has taught that more than dearth of funds, relief materials, infrastructure and personnel, it is proper coordination, direction and prompt response which are found lacking."

I think necessary arrangements should be made so that the Central Government and the State Governments can work together and address natural disasters that are of a rare severity in nature and can be effectively taken care of.

Besides these major natural calamities and disasters that come to the country, there are natural calamities in areas that come year in and year out. Though the traumatic effect of Tsunami is not felt, the people of these areas die a bit every year because every year they have to face the destruction that is wrought on them and on their livelihood without any fail.

One such case is in my Constituency, Patiala in Punjab. We have a river called Ghaghar River which originates in the Shivalik mountain hills. It has a total length of 242 kilometres, which flows through Punjab, Haryana and then rests in the sand dunes of Rajasthan. Out of these 242 kilometres, 165 kilometres go through Punjab, 77 kilometres go through Haryana and out of the 165 kilometres, 102 kilometres go through my parliamentary constituency of Patiala. Every year 300 villages are flooded causing damage to crops worth about Rs. 4710 lakh. It does not include the damage that is done to the milk cattle, the houses and the fodder. This is an estimate made on the compensation given to the farmers at the rate of Rs. 2000 an acre which is really a token because actually the loss would be in the range of Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 14,000 an acre. I am ashamed to say that every year I have to go to my constituency, face the people and give them lip sympathy because in spite of repeated efforts for the last six years, we have not been able to do anything as it is an inter-State matter. Somehow we cannot get together the three concerned States and do something about it. Primarily, I think as Shri Suresh Prabhu and even Shri Lal Singhji mentioned that the land use should be seen in order to find out whether there should have been check dam to stop this perennial flooding. The State of Haryana I think has made a lot of development and a lot of colonies. So I really do not know when this problem is going to be sorted out. Only last year, the situation was so bad that the Army had to be called in. They were there for 15 days. If we did not have the Army there, we would have had a total disaster.

They did a commendable job in rescuing people and in providing food to the people. This neglect I can only see in my constituency. Maybe, it is a constituency tucked in a corner in Punjab and everybody feels that the State of Punjab never has floods. But we have floods because it is a seasonal flooding every year by this river and now this river in my constituency is known as the 'river of sorrow'. The people of Patiala parliamentary constituency deserves every assistance from the Government at the Centre. We too form part of this great nation and consequently a part of this natural calamity system that takes place every year.

The other thing to worry about is the lowering of the ground level water. I am constrained to mention that the Minister of Water Resources told me two months ago that Punjab has become a worst affected State as far as lowering of ground water is concerned. I think, this would turn into a natural calamity of a great enormity if we do not start doing something about it now. Maybe, we already are too late. Eighty-five per cent of our irrigation, in spite of our having an immense canal network, we have taken out from the ground and with that we have impoverished ourselves at the cost of our State where we have fed ourselves during the Green Revolution and also have fed the entire country.

So, I would like to conclude by saying that tragedies are great teachers but unfortunately many people draw wrong lessons. We must look forward and with now science and technology and modern life, in general, providing us enormous amount of proection

[Shrimati Preneet Kaur]

from the most difficult hazards of nature, we must go forward to build a safer environment with substantial development for our people.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Hon'ble Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to take part in the discussion raised by Shri Basu Deb Acharia under rule 193 on natural calamities in the country.

This discussion is going on since yesterday. All our colleagues from the ruling party, opposition and other parties have discussed extensively on this issue. If it rains excessively, we have floods and if there is no rain, the problem of drought emerges. Natural calamities like earth quakes, Tsunami, snowfall, cloud bursts, landslides, dust-storm, storm lightening strike us every now and then. I think such things happen every year. We as well as the government, whether state governments or the Central Government, know about these calamities and the time at which they strike but still we are not in a position to control them. First we should formulate a plan for it so that we could safeguard against them in advance. The places affected by such calamities have to face the problem of unemployment also. There is a need to supply food, pesticides and commodities of daily use in such areas. We should develop such relations with the neighboring countries that in such a time of crisis the help and assistance of each other could be sought and exchanged.

I would suggest that the interlinking of rivers could be a solution of the problem of floods. During the Prime Ministership of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, BJP formulated scheme to interlink major rivers. This can also solve this problem, The surplus water of the overflowing rivers could be diverted to the water deficit areas to that may help taking the problem of securring floods.

19.00 hrs.

The megnitude of lateral erosion on river banks is high leading to frequent mafia clashes resulting in the deaths of people. If mining of sand is allowed, the river have more space to flow freely and there will be no problem of flood. Second thing is that if there is no rain, there is problem of draught. All the hon. Members have expressed their views on drinking water. My constituency, on falls between river Ganga-Yamuna doing a 20 km. strech. Kings used to build their palaces on the banks of rivers. There are several castes who live on the banks of rivers, and earn their livlihood by selling in milk and rearing cattle. They go to low lands for agriculture. When floods recede in rivers they do farming there and arrange the fodder for their cattle. They spent all their lives on the banks of rivers. Concrete steps should be taken for the welfare of such people. As far the problem of drinking water, I is concerned, I am of the view that there is no scarcity of water resources. There are small rivers and rivulets in the constituencies of all the Hon. Members.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It the House agrees, the duration of House can be extended by one hour.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Ok, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The duration of the House is extended by one hour.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I was saying that there is a need to build checkdam for the solution of drinking water problem. There are two rivers in my constituency namely Sasurakhderi and Kilanhai. We have built five checkdams on these rivers. Itstops water flow. If we build checkdams to stop water flow like this, then we would be able to find the solution of draught problem or drinking water problem in future. I just read in the library that assistance was given for draught in Bihar, but a scam happened there. There were talks. Of stopping the assistance given by the Central Govt. to tackle the natural calamities. I request the Govt. that the financial assistance provided to tackle the natural calamities should not be stopped. It there is any such case somewhere, then we should be vigilant about the same. I would like to thank Army and voluntary organisations, who help people in such circumstances

whole heartedly and I request the Union Govt. and State Govts. to encourage such organisations.

Third thing is that there were scams in the financial assistance provided, as was seen in Bihar. Our hon. Prime Minister set up a task force to tackle the natural calamities. A scheme from 2004 to 2007 has also been formulated for states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and West Bengal. If the Govt. takes any step keeping in view these things, then it would help a lot in tackling the natural calamities.

With this, I conclude my speech and I thank you for providing me an opportunity to express my views.

19.04 hrs.

[SHRI GIRIDHAR GAMANG *in the Chair*]

[English]

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (Idukki): While we are discussing natural calamities which affect our country, in the last few days there have been heavy rains and landslides in various parts of our country. As usual, as it happens during monsoon, this time also the State of Kerala has also been hit and lashed by heavy rains and there have been landslides in various districts. There have been heavy loss of life, damage to property and standing crops. The worst hit district is the district of Idukki, which is my constituency in the State of Kerala. The hill station of Moonar, in Idukki district, has been very heavily hit this time. In one single day, there has been 47 inches of rain. Consequently there have been landslides and people have lost their lives. I would like to cite this as an example. In this town of Moonar, which is a tourist centre, of late large-scale construction activity has been taking place. Taking into consideration the ecological impact of such activities, the Government should come out with a proper law to regulate these kinds of activities so that the ecological destruction may not cause this kind of mishaps in future.

I would request the Government to appoint an appropriate Central agency to study the future developments needs of Moonar, which is a very important tourist centre in our country, to suggest ways and methods to regulate construction and developmental activities so that there will be a balanced growth without causing ecological problems. I would request the Government to make special studies the disaster-prone areas in our country so that we can avoid mishaps in future. We have to revise the norms of Natural Calamity Contingency Fund because States like Kerala, Orissa, etc. are hit by natural calamities every year. There is a huge loss as far as standing crops are concerned; agricultural fields are washed away and houses get collapsed. These States will have to be compensated adequately by the Central Government. Without Central Government's liberal financial assistance, these States cannot tide over these crises. I would request the Government to have a re-think on the norms of the NCCF and compensate the State adequately to cope with natural calamities every year.

My colleagues have mentioned several issues. I do not want to go into all those issues again. Our country should have a proper disaster management policy. Soon we are going to come out with a Bill to face this kind of calamities in our country. We have floods, earthquakes, and drought every year in various parts of the country. Calamities like this occur every year. We should be ready with proper mechanism to help the States and the people to face these kinds of calamities.

Once again I would request the Government to make a proper study of major disaster-prone areas in our country to help the States to combat these calamities.

SHRI SURESH ANGADI (Belgaum): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much. Karnataka State is also very much affected by flood. I am from Belgaum district, which is in the border of Maharashtra and Goa. The entire Belgaum district is covered with water. More than 25 villages have been submerged in water. About 7 to 8 people have lost their lives. I would request the hon. Prime Minister, through this House and through you. Sir, that the Government should give special relief to Karnataka. Only Rs. 4 crore have been given to flood-affected areas.

[Shri Suresh Angadi]

More than 5,000 acres of agricultural land has got spoiled. Major crops like paddy, potatoes, vegetables and sugarcane have already been affected by water. There is continuous drought for the last three years. This year, due to flood, my district farmers are in great trouble. My district is one of the historical places. I come from that region where Kittor Rani Chenamma, the first lady fought for freedom.

Respected, Sir, please direct the hon. Prime Minister to send a team for studying the affected areas not only in Belgaum district but other parts of Karnataka like Karwar, Mangalore, etc. About more than 1 lakh acres of land have been affected in all these areas. I would request the Government of India that a minimum of Rs. 1000 crore relief should immediately be given to Karnataka and save the losses to the farmers affected by this flood—flood relief immediately. If you send any other team from the Government of India for studying this problem, I will be grateful.

PROF. CHANDER KUMAR (Kangra): Hon. Chairman, Sir, I am very much thankful to you for giving me the time. Under Rule 193, Shri Basu Deb Acharia has moved this Motion in this House on natural calamities. When he initiated discussion on natural calamities in the whole of the country, I also want to make some suggestions to combat the natural calamities.

Natural calamities are not in the shape of only floods. This is a natural phenomenon. These natural calamities are in the form of earthquakes, floods, cloud bursts, forest fires, Tsunami and other types of catastrophic changes which are taking place on the earth. The characteristics of the rivers in Himalayas are entirely different from those of the southern rivers. The Himalayan rivers have not attained the base level of erosion whereas the southern rivers have attained the base level of erosion. In all the rivers which have their source in the Himalayas, there is a tremendous erosion and flood whereas in the southern part of the country, all the rivers have attained the base level erosion and there is no geological problem in those rivers. In the Starred Question when it was asked in this House, hon. Minister, Shri P. Dasmunsi, was giving the reply. In my Supplementary Question about Himalayan rivers, those rivers which are having their source in Himalayas which are young mountain and very fragile in nature and require a long perspective plan, how to club all these rivers. There is tremendous silt and flood coming from the Himalayan rivers—right from western Himalayas to Northeast. So, it requires a long-term strategy and planning so that we can club all these rivers.

Hon. Chairman, Sir, I come from Himachal Pradesh. All the big rivers which are having their source in the Himalayas, like Ravi, Beas, Sutlej and Chenab, are passing throught Himachal Pradesh. Due to their source in the Himalayas, there is always erosion and the people residing along the banks of these rivers have to live in constant danger. Every year, some of the people are just washed away and marooned along these rivers' courses when rivers are in spate. That is the Beas River. The course of the Beas River has been diverted towards Satluj River and that is called the Beas-Satluj link and the water diverted in the Bhakra dam. When Beas-Satluj link was constructed, base level of the Beas was raised to the extent of 30 metres in height and the whole of the backlash came to Kullu and Manali. Due to the backlash there is a flood, the whole of the river banks have been washed away. There is a tremendous erosion and flood in those areas. So, the characteristic of the Himalayan rivers is entirely different from the Southern rivers. Hence, while formulating all these plans and long-term strategy in those areas for hydel generation, we should not inbound the water of those rivers but it should be channelised in a proper manner. All these rivulets, tributaries and the catchment areas should be channelised in such a way so that all these rivers are not flooded during the rainy season. In downstream also, we are facing the same problem. There are the seasonal streams and rivers in the Shivalik which are called *cho*. That aspect has rightly been pointed out by the hon. Members Shrimati Pratibha Singh and Smt. Praneet Kaur. These reasonal streams (Cho) during the raining season flooding whole of Punjab

and Rajasthan and other areas as well. It also requires large scale channelisation and the farm land can be reclaimed.

It is rightly said that there is a tremendous deforestation in the catchment areas. We must identify certain catchment areas of Himalayas. That should be kept in tact whether in the lower Shivalik or in the mid Shivalik or in the high reaches of the Himalayas so that there is least disturbance of ecology and environment in those areas. It requires a long-term strategy and planning. The hon. Prime Minister late Shri Rajiv Gandhi created the Ganga Development Authority. On the analogy of the 'Ganga Development Authority', he said that there should be an Himalayan Development Authority. With bilateral assistance from different donor countries, we can get the money for planning and all these rivers from their source. The river system can be channelised in such a way that it should not be the sorrow of the people but it should be the prosperity of that particular region.

Floods are not a new thing and us, and the whole of the country. Every year, we are experiencing these types of problems in the upper areas, in the Himalayan region, downstream in plain areas. So, it requires a long-term strategy. The rules and the regulations, which have been formulated by different States, should be strictly adhered to. We know that some of the areas are very fragile and some of the other areas are seismically very sensitive ones. But you will see that the housing pattern is entirely different. If you go to Kangra, Shimla, Konkan region, you can see multi-storey buildings coming up. Nobody adheres to the rules and regulations of that area. So, it requires immediate steps to be taken by the Government. The State Governments and the Central Government have enacted rules, regulations and Acts. They should adhere to the Acts and Rules which constructing house so that people can be saved from these natural calamities. In the seismically very sensitive areas, the construction work of the building should be according to the nature and the features of that particular area.

Sir, just a few days back, there was a big flood furry in Himachal Pradesh. River Satluj was in spate and has brought havoc to these areas. The hon. Chairperson of the UPA Government Shrimati Sonia Gandhi visited some of the affected areas to take stock of the situation. She was accompanied by the Union Minister Shri Shivraj Patil and the State Chief Minister Shri Virbhadra Singh. We are very much thankful to Shrimati Sonia Gandhi. She took stock of the situation of that area. Right in the whole of the river Satluj, catchment in the upper course, from Rampur onwards to Kinnaur, there is a large-scale damage. The rise in the level of the river water was about 50 feet. It has caused havoc to the whole region.

There is a tremendous loss in those areas. The loss is to the tune of Rs. 1000 crore. When Shrimati Sonia Gandhi visited these areas, she had an interaction with the people of these areas. Hindustan-Tibet road is the only road which serves whole of the Kinnaur district. We are having a bumper crop of apples and other type of fruits in those areas. so, it requires immediate attention of the Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

PROF. CHANDER KUMAR: I urge upon the Government for immediate restoration of all these roads and network of all these bridges. Sir, 18 bridges have been damaged and more than 10 bridges have been washed away. So, it requires immediate attention of the Government to give some of the money. I want to make some suggestions that relief manual, which has been enacted by the Government of India and different States, that should be revised.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have given enough time to you.

PROF. CHANDER KUMAR: There should be a disaster management programme in all the States. A Committee should be constituted that wherever and whenever there is any natural calamity then all the departments should coordinate. You know that in the States and Centre also, all the departments are just not working in unison. Different departments are looking after different aspects of all these things.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are so many speakers waiting for their turns. So, please conclude.

PROF. CHANDER KUMAR: It requires that there should be a core network of offices within the State and also in the Centre so that we can have immediate relief work and other type of relief operations. With these words I thank you very much for the time given to me.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR (Vadodara): It's true that nobody can avert the inevitable. We have to face the wrath of nature willingly or unwillingly. It is said—"Hoi hain wahi jo Ram rachi rakha, ka kari tarak badhai rahi shakha." We should not argue and it is high time that we thought about disaster management and its systems. Nobody would have that the level of rainfall to be received in the entire season moved be received in just a matter of seven days and also that 245 per cent so in fall would be received in Padra, Bhagodia divisions. We have seen the havoc of rain not only in Vadodara city but the whole Gujarat. Not only Gujarat, Maharashtra has also fallen prey to it. I would like to say that we should take precautious about disaster management. Meteorological office informs us that Monsoon would be good this season. But we don't get the information that it would make people's life so miserable. We should think about it.

245 talukas of Gujarat faced natural disaster. In Padra division only more than 200 per cent rain of the season has been recorded. As a result of this, 55 villages were cut off from the roads and all other facilities. Earlier, there was a system of cleaning the rivers, nullans and ponds before the arrival of monsoon and because of this natural flow of water never got blocked. But today, increasing settlements and problems of encroachment stops flow of water and creates the situation of flood. Due to this, whenever there is talk of making the arrangements, its true that the Central Government gives funds for tackling the problem. The State of Gujarat has also got Rs. 500 crore fund and we are thankful about that. However, the State Government has estimated the loss to the tune of Rs. 8,000 crore.

The State of Gujarat is important from the point of view of the country's economy and its planning. Whether it is in the form of tax payment or in the form of Industrial development. Today Gujarat is a victim of flood and it should be provided funds on the pattern of Tsunami relief.

Around 100 years ago Baroda city was built by Sahjiraoji. He built Pratap Pura and Ajwa ponds. One of its portion has been washed away and because of that Bagodia division has been affected. One portion of Pratap Pura, built by sand, has been damaged. The Central Govt. should provide funds for that also. So, as to enable us to make better arrangement in the coming years. There is a need of strengthening the border of Pratap Pura Sarovar and Ajwa Sarovar. We have to evacuate two lakh people affected by the floods. The administration worked well to save one lakh people. I am also thankful to them.

We have very good industrial development and there are many public sector undertakings there. We had to shut them for five days. Damage there is unaccountable. So, giving relief in taxes would also be quite important. Our people suffered losses of crores of rupees in a day. In the village where I live, wholesale traders of foodgrains live. Foodgrain traders in my village suffered the losses to the tune of two crore rupees. Padra Municipal Corporation suffered the loss of Rs. 18 crores. I request the Central Govt. to keep all these factors in mind and give the funds to the Govt. of Gujarat as demanded by the State Govt.

SHRI BHARATSINH MADHAVSINH SOLANKI (Anand): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very much grateful to you for providing me an opportunity to speak. Our hon. Members have said so may things and expressed their views on natural calamities. In view of the recent train crisis in Gujarat, UPA chair person, Hon'ble Soniaji and Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singhji his sent Home Minister Shri Shivraj Patil there to take stock of the situation and as Jayaben told that Rs. 500 crore has been given as aid. I mean to say that whether we are in the Goverment or not, whether there are cyclone,

train crisis, famine, earthquakes in the Gujarat, Soniaji and Congress Party are always there to extend a helping hand to the people of Gujarat. At the time of earthquake, Rs. 150 crores were given despite of too much objection. In this time of railway network crisis, UPA Govt. at the Centre helped Gujarat directly by providing Rs. 500 crore. We are grateful to Soniaji and Manmohanji for this gesture. But it is also a fact that despite such aid, during the riots in Gujarat, there was total lack of sympathy for the people by the BJP's Narendra Modi Govt. It was also felt this time in Gujarat

[English]

When more than 60 per cent people were suffering, the State Government was very weak to act at that point of time.

[Translation]

Help should have been provided to the people at the earliest, and on time, on 1 of July we told and requested our District Collector that Army and Air Force were required, to save the people. Despite that, the Govt. machinery was very slow in reacting to it and the full compensation was not paid to the dependents of the deceased and people have been told to bring Post-Mortem Report.

SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: Almost all the people have got the assistance.

SHRI BHARATSINH MADHAVSINH SOLANKI: Assistance was not given. I request Jayabenji to convey our submission to Narendra Bhai. Only those will get the assistance, whose reports were sent. Subsequently, when we requested to the administration, and spoken to the Revenue Secretary, we were told that a committee would be formed.

SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: All the 213 people have got assistance. The Govt. is doing such a good work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Madam, heis explaining, not interrupting. Solankiji come to your point

[English]

please take your seat. He is not yielding.

[Translation]

SHRI BHARATSINH MADHAVSINH SOLANKI: Madam post-mortem report has been sought. We have requested the administration that when the collector and other office bearers were not able to move out of their city, for five-six days, it was impossible to keep a dead body for five-six days and got the post mortem done. Despite that a new committee has been formed. We have passed a resolution and after meeting all the social workers of the area, that decision should be taken with in seven days and help should be provided to them. Similarly, the animals also came across same fate. We mean to say that there were discrepancies in the cash drawl. Its duration varied from two days in some places, five days in some and 15 days in some places and the full compensation was not given. Thus the Govt. of Gujarat has given a sum of Rs. 18 crore to the people. Now, you can imagine as to how small a summon of Rs. 18 crore is when 60 per cent of the total population of five crore has been affected for 15 days while cash-drawl is only of Rs. 18 crore.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please conclude.

SHRI BHARATSINH MADHAVSINH SOLANKI: My constituency, and my district in Gujarat was worst affected, so I should be given more time to speak. You can well imagine that despite such magnitude of the incident, the Govt. has only provided such meagre assistance. Only Rs. 80 crore has been earmarked for housing. Although it requires more money. There was a loss of Rupees Eight Thousand Crores. Union Govt. should provide more help. The assistance given by the Union Govt. at the time of earthquake and cyclone, was not properly utilized by the Bhartiya Janta Party Govt. of Gujarat. They Misused the amount. ISRO's help should be sought to improve the situation. We have the river areas and the largest coastline in the country. We are worst hit people. At that time we should be given more assistance. Narmada Project is a major project here. Our state would be benefited if centre provide maximum support which will improve the situation here. That's all I wanted to say.

SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI (Rewa): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it seems that our country is worst hit by the natural calamities. Hardly any year passes when

[Shri Chandra Mani Tripathi]

there is no heavy loss of life and property due to draught, floods or hailstorms in one area or the other. There are certain natural calamities about which the Govt. can do nothing inspite of its willingness. Such as, one cannot forecast easily about the earth make, forecast of Tsunami is not possible, same can be said about the hailstorm. But if the successive Governments of the country worked out a permanent solution to deal with the flood and drought situation in the country, there would have been no need for a discussion. Today, when we are discussing this topic, there was heavy devastation in Mumbai due to rain, I don't want to discuss about other areas, because every member has spoken about his/her areas.

The flood situation in Madhya Pradesh is alarming. I want to draw the attention of the House towards the loss of life and property there. Sir, I would like to tell about the Govt. figures about the condition on 7 July, 2005. Extensive damage had been caused in the districts of Riva, Sagar, Katni, Jabalpur, Satna, Damoh, Panna, Narsingpur, Chhattarpur, Umaria and Vidisha. 358 villages were affected in there districts of Madhya Pradesh. Around 2.5 lakh population has been affected by the flood. 6 cities are affected. Their population is 9 lakh 50 thousand. I want to give the district-wise details for the same. 19 persons were killed and 8 are missing in Sagar district, 6 persons were killed in Katni, three persons were killed and two are missing in Jabalpur, 3 persons were killed and there are missing in Satna, one person was killed in Damoh, three was no loss of life in Panna, only loss of property is reported from there, one person was killed in Narsingpur, one person was killed in Riva, one person was killed and two are missing in Umaria, two persons were killed in Vidisha. Total 37 persons lost their lives and 15 are missing in this flood. 129 villages are affected. Govt. of Madhya Pradesh have taken a number of relief measures. 117 Relief camps were set up in these districts. Relief was provided to 24 thousand 539 persons. But, I would like to say humbly that by amending the four VC, the Govt. of Madhya Pradesh is providing relief on its own. Compensation has been given. As Govt. of Bhartiya Janata Party is there, the Govt. of India has not given enough money. They have given only Rs. 93 crores. On this occasion, I want to thank all the MPs and MLAs of Madhya Pradesh who have donated five lacs rupees from their MPs and MLAs Fund for flood affected areas and have also donated their one month's salary. But union government is not giving its full support. I want to make a submission that everybody makes hay while sun shines but one should not do it on Pyre's heat I would like to request the Union Government to give compensation to flood affected people. At the end, I want to say two things. Sir, through you, I want to draw the attention of Government that some long-term schemes should be formulated and these schemes should be perfect enough to curb the problems like flood and drought. The work upon a long-term scheme of linking of rivers was started during the tenure of Hon'ble Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee. That work has almost ceased, now it should be restarted. The problems of flood and drought may be resolved if the work of linking of rivers is completed. De-siltring of riverbeds should be undertaken as these are full of sand and soil. The frequency of floods will get reduced if de-silting is completed. Residential Complexes should not be allowed along the rivers and strong embankment should be constructed. Where there are heavy rains, villages get submerged, houses get ruined. At such places this water should be harnessed in ponds near the village so that there may have protection from flood and this water may be used as drinking water during summer and drought like situation may be avoided. There were ponds in every village earlier, but now these ponds have been encroached upon. I would like to request that ponds should be constructed at large scale. Apart from this, most of the houses should be given to the people living Below Poverty Line. The Houses collapsed got ruined during rains, should be reconstructed under Indira Aawas Yojana and given to the people living below poverty line.

Sir, relief works should be started immediately and proper arrangements should be made to rehabilitate the affected people. In view of you the time constraint I would

like to condude by adding not. If the Union Government helps state governments and provide assistance to the flood affected states as per requirement without any political bias it would be more beneficial. I am very thankful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (Andaman and Nicobar Islands): Hon'ble Chairman, Sir a discussion upon natural calamity is going on, I want to express my views on this subject. Every hon'ble Memeber of this house is well aware of the menace of flood and drought. Tsunami is a new name added in this list. We never had to face this calamity earlier and were unaware about it. A few days ago we saw that the water under the sea came with such a great thrust that is devastated everything there. A great loss of life and property took place which is hard to assess. Many people are still missing obviously they might not be missing in sea, they might have died. Hon'ble Members have expressed their views regarding it quite efficiently. I want to say that everybody knows what the disease it but we have to find out its cure. To find out the solution of this problem we have to initiate a nationwide debate from village Panchayat level to Lok Sabha to find ways to tackle the problem fo floods. There should be some arrangement protecting the people of every area. But how it would be done. To achieve this objective apart from a lengthy discussion we have to formulate schemes. If we people keep on talking only about the rising of water level, blocked roads and damaged bridges, it will not going to yield any result.

One more important thing. You not I should mention is regarding the relief package by the Government. Relief should be reached to the affected individual immediately. If you provide that relief after six-seven months then what the purpose it would serve. If the patient has died then coramine injection will not get him alive. Therefore, it is need of the hour that immediate relief measures should be provided to farmers, fishermen, labourers and manual workers. There must be a system for this. There should be a co-ordination from Panchayat level to Lok Sabha. If we follow such a systematic method only then we would be able to provide relief to them otherwise nothing would happen.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, everybody knows that how much loss occurred there due to Tsunami. From Hon'ble President to various senior ministers to officers of Government departments visited there. Hon'ble Prime Minister, Home Minister and Chairperson of UPA Shrimati Soniaji also visited there. Due to this a lot of worked was done there. But I have to point out where work is still needed to be undertaken. Standing crops of farmers got damaged. They are unable to plough the land in present circumstances because level of saline water is more than two meters and at some places it has percolated into the earth. In such a situation, to maintain the road earthing upto three meters has been done but even then water has surfaced again. There is a need to ponder over it. Earlier scientists used to advise not to cut trees, don't carry away sand; it may cause a lot of damage. But we have to start from the beginning. Scientists have to contemplate a fresh about all the rivers and drains of country and should recommend new polity in regard thereto. We were having precious mangrove forest, it has been ruined. Mangrove forests are very rare in the world. Carrying away sand was prohibited there but that sand itself took hold of mangrove and ruined it. Even today Forest Department is neither making any enquiry or analysis. As it is said deforestation causes low rain fall. But heavy tree felling has resulted into heavy rains and caused floods. That's why we need to ponder over it afresh. We should follow scientific view about it and a report should be prepared about it so that Members of the House may be benefited from it.

I would like to say one more thing that there is need to link employment with reconstruction. You have provided shelter to people but how would they live in it, what they will eat. We have to make arrangement of food for them; we have to provide them everything alongwith employment. Until and unless employment is not linked with development works, these problems will remain as such. You are not giving enough time to me. It is very important.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your point are good, but time is limited.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government should consider suggetion of looking at thus with a new perspective. Right now, all the markets in our region have been hit. Few people are there sitting with their goods, but have no sale. Those who have some sale are able to make their both ends meet. We should consider this issue with seriouness, I expect from the Government to work with seriousness.

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA (Khajuraho): Sir, the kind of interference with the nature is being done, land mafias are indulged in mining activities and forests are being cut owing to which the ecological balance is being disturbed and as a result of this we are facing natural calamities like tsunami, floods and drought.

Sir, Science has made giant leap forward, but if we see the working of the Meteorological Department, their forecast are never correct. The places they forecast to receive heavy rains get not a single drop of rain and the places forecast to have no rains do get heavy rains. We will have to improve this technology in today's scientific age so that we can alert the people on time.

Sir, today Madhya Pradesh is reeling under severe floods. Thousands of villages have been affected by it and hundreds of villages have been destroyed. Thousands of livestock have been perished. About 24 lakh people have been affected by this flood. Ten districts have been ruined. Sixty-seven persons have died. 42,000 animals have died, 61,000 houses have collapsed and crops on 22 thousand hectares of land have been destroyed. Madhya Pradesh Government has gone extra yard and amended the RVC to provide relief by disbursing maximum amount to the people. We have not received an amount of Rs. 225 crore as natural calamity relief from the Central Government. Only Rs. 93 crore have been given and it is being proclaimed aloud that we are helping a lot. We had asked for Rs. 500 crore but so far the state Government has undertaken relief work worth Rs. 200 crores form it's own resources. I would like to request that the Union Government should provide the required amount immediately.

Sir, I want to submit few suggestions before you to tackle natural calamities. The functioning of meteorological department should be streamlined so that they could make correct predictions and people could get corret information and be alert on time. Similarly, stringent measures should be taken to ban the interference with the nature by the jungle mafia and mining mafia so that the balance of nature is not disturbed and we could avoid natural calamities. Former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had announced the programme for the interlinking of rivers, which could have effectively dealt with the problem of floods and drought. Recently, Ken river in Madhya Pradesh was flooded which had received water from many other rivers. It devastated the districts of Panna, Damoh and Chhattarpur. The rivers of Chhattarpur and Tikamgarh were flowing at low level because they did not receive rainfall. Therefore, we urge to continue this programme.

Similarly, the people who have lost their houses should be given special assistance by the Central Government for housing because most of these displaced and homeless people are those who live below the poverty line. They should be rehabilitated through the schemes like Indira Aawas Yojana.

Sir, no land is available for their rehabilitation. The Department of Forests have many vacant lands there which are ideally located. Affected persons should be given those lands so that people could get lands there for settlement. Similarly, there has been great loss of livestock. Arrangements for postmortem of animals should be made. Laws should be formulated for it and livestock counting should be based on 'Panchnama' in villages. People should be given compensation for lost cattle on the basis of 'Panchnama'. Similarly, those farmers should be compensated whose lands have submerged.

Besides, arrangements or fertilizers and seeds should be made. Most of the roads have been damaged, electricity poles have been uprooted and dams have

been breached. Arrangements should be made for restoration of all these things. It will provide employment to unemployed persons as well. Arrangements should be made for initiating relief works immediately to undertake these works.

SHRI SURESH CHANDEL (Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I express my gratitude for providing me an opportunity to speak on this important issue. The house is discussing on floods since yesterday. Many of the speakers have said that during the last few years, the more we have discussed on floods, the more its frequency have increased. Natural calamities have become the destiny of this country and we hold discussions thereon every year. Instant measures are taken and next year we have to deal with similar problems, which occur with even more severity. I would like to urge upon the Union government that on one hand instant measures are necessary and on the other long-term measures should be pondered over as well. The state, which I belong to, had faced floods in recent past. A loss of Government and private properties worth Rs. eight hundred crore have been suffered due to deluge in river Satluj because of an artificial lake formed by the river Parichu in Tibet of China. Neither the Government of Himachal Pradesh nor the Government of India has any authority over this lake. Similar flood had occurred in the year 2000 also and again this had happened in the recent past. A delegation had visited there during the Prime Ministership of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Then it was decided upon to transfer the data of water level in rivers. I want to urge upon the Government of India to allow Indian experts to visit there by using political channels so that on the spot assessment could be done to know the water level in the river and its impending dangers. Even last time Indian officials could not get permission to visit there and therefore assessments are made on the basis of photographs received by satellites.

Several incidents of cloud bursting happen in our state. The incidents of cloud bursting have increased over the years but unfortunately no mechanism has so far been developed to forecast incidents of cloud bursting. The rains caused by cloud bursting are localized and turn even a small nullah into a roaring river, which engulfs hundreds of people. Some mechanism should be developed for it. The experts in this field world over should be consulted upon and there is a need to fend off the threats arising out of these.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now it is 8.00 o'clock. Time of the house is going to over.

SHRI KHARABELE SWAIN (Balasore): Sir, please extend the time of the House for 15 minutes.

20.00 hrs.

[English]

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Sir, we can extend the time of the House by 15 minutes more. We can extend it till 20.15 hours.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. It is being extended upto 20.15 hours. Shri Suresh Chandelji, now you please continue.

SHRI SURESH CHANDEL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, recently Gujarat was reeling under severe flood situation. To handle the situation, the government of that state has taken praiseworthy steps. That is the first state, where Disaster Management Authority has been established and the state has been awarded for the same. According to my knowledge, perhaps this is the first state which has taken initiative to get Imaging satellite System from Canada. Through this system, every type image can be taken in every season and I feel, the government of India should ensure to make such system available in every state in the country.

Sir, after the severe flood situation in Gujarat, images received through the Imaging Satellite System revealed that flood has occurred due to changes in the topography there. Had this system been used earlier the images would have forecast the threat of flood and perhaps the fury of floods might have been mitigated

[Shri Suresh Chandel]

as the rescue operations would have been undertaken in advance.

Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that to get the information in advance about the floods and other natural calamities. Imaging Satellite System or other such system must be obtained in India and if needed experts should be sent to conduct a study in this regard in those countries where this system is already functioning and initiative must be taken to get this forcasting system in India.

Sir, even in the last session, I had suggested to set up a Trans Himalayan Development Authority comprising all the states of Himalayan foothills to protect and conserve ecology of Himalaya. Almost all the hon. Members who have participated in the discussion held on flood situation, have said about the environmental imbalance which is increasing rapidly day by day. Therefore it is my humble request and suggestion that Trans Himalayan Development Authority must be set up.

Sir, losses to the time of Rs. 800 crores was caused to Government and private property due to the sudden floods in river Satluj on 22 June, 2005 in Himachal Pradesh on account of breach in the artificial lake formed in the river Parichu in Tibet, China, but the Government of India have released an assistance of Rs. 100 crores only so far. I would request the Government to provide an assistance of atleast Rs. 500 crores from NCCF to make good the losses suffered by the state.

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR (Sagar): Sir, all the hon. Members have expressed their views regarding natural calamities in their respective states and the country. And as all have said that ecological balance is being disturbed continuously. That is why, this type of severe floods and drought situation are occurring in the country.

Sir, Incidents of cloud burst used to occur only in Himachal Pradesh, but now such incidents are occurring in plains also. Recently, there were torrential rains in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat resulting into terrible situations. I would like to draw your attention towards Madhya Pradesh and would like to say that I hail from Sagar constituency of Madhya Pradesh. On 3rd and 4th July, Sagar has received 20 inches of rainfall just in 24 hours. The name of the city is Sagar but there is to any sea. There is a pond only by which the water flowed and the people were surrounded by water in their own houses in some of the areas. Army had been called upon there and they helped people to come out from the stranded place.

Sir, out of 17 district in Madhya Pradesh nine have been affected severaly where 67 people have been died. Most of them are from my district Sagar. 27 people have been died alone in Sagar district due to flood. There were 60 people traveling in a bus from Rahli to Baroda. Due to flood the bus washed away and only 45 people could be evacuated from the bus but remaining 15 people who were stranded could not be evacuated even after making great efforts. The same situation arised in the village Padariya near Parsoriya. An old aged lady and her grand daughter were stranded in their house. It was a kachcha house and was fully water logged. They cried for help but not even a single person came forward to help them due to flood and they could not be saved. 27 people were died in Sagar district. 752 villages in Sagar districts have been badly affected due to the flood. About 3755 hectare cultivable land have been drastically affected and 3147 cattle have died. Over all, about 53 thousand kachha-pucca houses, have been damaged partially or fully due to the flood. There was a loss of about Rs. 66 crores in Sagar district in which 22,688 families would be the beneficiaries. Sagar remained disconnected for 6 days. Railway network had also come to a halt during those days. State Government has tried to do its best. Whatever efforts are being made, it is coming from the State Government and social institutions only, but that can't be compensated by them alone.

Some of our friends shown political bias, but my view is that floods, earthquakes and tsunamis are the matters which should be linked with the human values and we have to come forth to help in this matter keeping the human values in mind and leaving the bias aside.

A provision of Rs. 225 crores has been earmarked for the Natural Calamities Fund for Madhya Pradesh in 12th Finance Commission. Madhya Pradesh should be provided Rs. 225 crores in current year, but I am sad to say that out of this only Rs. 95 crores has been provided to Madhya Pradesh in a first instalment. A survey has been conducted in flood affected states like Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. On the basis of that it has been estimated that Madhya Pradesh Government need Rs. 500 crores apart from the amount released in first instalment. As a whole there is a loss of Rs. 1000 crores. I request to the Government through you that Central Government should provide more and more help to Madhya Pradesh.

Moreover, I would like to give just 2-3 suggestions to deal with such a situation. Developed countries and departments of Metrology are using latest technology, we should also use those technologies so that we could minimize the damage caused by earthquakes, floods and heavy rains. With the plan of linking the rivers, water will be used efficiently and that can be ased for hydro power and irrigation also.

There should be an emphasis on the construction of earthquake resistant houses and houses should not be constructed without the N.O.C. of Municipal Corporations, village panchayats, only earthquake resistant houses should be constructed. Last thing I would like to say that Indira Aawas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana and Beeri Majdoor Aawas Yojana, all of these schemes should be exercised to provide houses for those poor peoples who have become homeless in such calamities

I would like to thank you for providing me an opportunity to speak.

SHRI CHANDRABHAN SINGH (Damoh): Hon'ble Mr. Chairman, Sir, you have provided me an opportunity to speak in the House on the problem of flood in Madhya Pradesh including in my constituency. I would like to draw the attention of the Central Government through you. In the last few days, 12 lakh people in approximately four thousand villages in Madhya Pradesh affected by the flood caused by heavy rains and it is estimated that the property worth of Rs. 1000 crore has been lost and lakhs of houses collapsed, thousands of people died and many are missing there, our five lakhs people have been rendered homeless.

In my constituency, five helicopters of Indian Air force, steamers and Army was sent for rescue, which worked for one week, they have managed to save thousands of lives. I, myself reached there and engaged myself in the rescue work with the help of helicopters, tractors and motorcycles from 4th July to 23rd July in various villages. Among 10 flood affected districts of Madhya Pradesh, my constituency Damoh and Panna districts were most affected districts of flood due to heavy rains, for which work of survey has completed. In 6 people in each district of Damoh and Panna of my constituency have died due to flood and more than 50 thousands livestock have died. More than 1500 of pucca houses and 20,000 of kuchcha houses are totally damaged. More than 3000 or pucca houses and more than 25,000 of kuchcha houses are partially damaged and more than 450 villages are affected with flood and houses in more than 50,000 families are completely or partially damaged. In my constituency, more than 25,000 people got affected with flood. On the basis of information collected from the collector of my constituency, an amount of more than Rs. 30 crores has been provided to the flood affected people under RVC 6-4 as a form of relief. It has been estimated that several lives and property worth of more than 210 crores has been destroyed there. In my constituency, there is a loss of more than Rs. 200 crores due to the damage of government buildings, roads and collapse of dam. In the districts of Damoh and Panna only, there is a loss of more than Rs. 410 crores. In addition to this, 700 meters of rail track between Damoh and Katni swept away in Vyarya river, due to this rail service remained suspended for three days. Ghatera railway station sank completely. Telephone system of Damoh district remained out of order for three days.

Sir, this is my suggestion that in Damoh, Panna and Chhatarpur districts of my constituency, seven rivers namely Sunar Kopra, Vyasya, Patne, Kane etc. which

[Shri Chandrabhan Singh]

merge into the Kane river, originates. I have seen the situation of flood by the helicopter. If the depth and width of these rivers at stony terrain be increased, then there will be a permanent solution of this problem. I request the Central Government to arrange the relief amount immediately.

Sir, I request the Central Government through you to provide relief and help to the victims of heavy rains and floods by releasing Rs. 500 crores as demanded by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh at the earliest. Among the flood affected 10 districts of Madhya Pradesh, the Panna and Damoh districts are severely affected. I would like to request Central Government through you that Panna and Damoh districts should be attached with the scheme of food for work so that farmers and workers should not migrate. An amount of Rs. One lakh to the kith and kin of those who died in the flood, should be provided at the earliest as announced by the Minister of State Shri Suresh Pachouri in Madhya Pradesh.

Finally, I would like to request the Central Government through you that all the victims of floods should be rehabilitated and a sum of Rs. 25,000 be provided free of cost under Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana and Indira Aawas Yojana to each of those facilities in my constituency who have rendred homeless.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjouned to meet tomorrow the 29th July, 2005 at 11 a.m.

20.14 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, July 29, 2005/Sravana 07, 1927 (Saka)

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