

# LOK SABHA DEBATES

## (English Version)

**Eighth Session**  
**(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)**



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Dated.....//Sept. 2007.

*(Vol. XXI contains Nos. 1 to 10)*

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**NEW DELHI**

Price : Rs. 80.00

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# LOK SABHA DEBATES

## LOK SABHA

Thursday, July 27, 2006/Sravana 5, 1928 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, two very serious incidents have taken place yesterday and the day before, which are a matter of concern for the whole country. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, let there be order in the House. Your Deputy Leader is speaking and you are interrupting.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You have given me a notice about this matter.

...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Sir, I asked for suspension of the Question Hour.

[Translation]

The reason being that the Government of Assam has stated that Bangladesh has occupied two kilometer stretch of India's land. The Assam Government is saying this that Bangladesh has grabbed two kilometers of Indian land. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I will allow this matter to be raised.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Sir, this is not a small matter. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha): Sir, everyday, during the Question Hour, they are disturbing the proceedings. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: What has the question hour to do with it—the Government of Assam is saying that Bangladesh has grabbed two kilometers of our land. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

The Defence Minister is here. The Leader of the House is here. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY: This is happening everyday. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Will you please take your seat?

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: The second thing is that five people of Lashkar-e-Taiba were working in Indian army whereas the Government had claimed that no such persons were working in the army and that they were working in para-military forces. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Malhotraji, I would only request you to raise it after the Question Hour. I will allow this matter to be raised after the Question Hour.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Both these matters are of great concern.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: In one hour's time nothing is going to happen. Please raise it after the Question Hour. I will allow you to raise it after 12 noon, not now.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: The other day the Govt. had declared that there was no such person in the Air Force, but now they are found to be working in the army.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: There are very important questions listed today.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am not saying your matter is not important. I am only requesting you to raise it at 12 noon. Thank you very much.

...(Interruptions)

*[Translation]*

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE (Aurangabad, Maharashtra): Sir, it is a very serious issue.

MR. SPEAKER: I will give you a chance after I receive your notice.

11.01 hrs.

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Prabodh Panda, Q. No. 61

### Global Positioning System at Stations

\*61. SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways propose to set up Global Positioning System (GPS) at the railway stations to inform the location of trains;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the names of stations selected for such system; and

(c) the time by which this system is likely to be installed?

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

### *Statement*

(a) Railway has sanctioned a pilot project namely Satellite Imaging for Rail Navigation (SIMRAN) for real

time passenger information system. This project is being developed by utilizing Global Positioning System (GPS). This project is being carried out jointly by Research Designs & Standards Organisation (RDSO), Lucknow and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur. The pilot project is sanctioned for development of hardware and software for providing real time information to the passengers.

The objectives of SIMRAN project are:

- To develop technology for continuously tracking every train for its location, speed and direction of movement.
- To develop techniques to disseminate information on real time basis about train running to passengers and to the general public through display boards of situations, Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), Short Message Service (SMS) and Internet.

(b) This is a locomotive based system and not station based. The equipments under this project will be provided on locomotives of passenger trains and not at stations.

The trial of the project is being carried out on three sections.

- Allahabad-Kanpur Section (Allahabad Division of North Central Railway).
- Lucknow-Kanpur Section (Lucknow Division of Northern Railway).
- Chennai-Bangalore Section (Chennai Division of Southern Railway and Bangalore Division of South Western Railway).

(c) The pilot project is planned for completion by March, 2008. Based on its outcome, decision to implement this system over Indian Railways will be taken.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Sir, at the very outset I must thank the hon. Minister for his very exhaustive answer. But even then I have a few questions to ask and therefore, I will put my supplementaries.

Sir, the present Public Address System is incomprehensible and the monitor displaying the status of the trains is simply clueless. The Global Positioning System, the GPS, is a very sophisticated device. Using

this device, the status and movement of the trains and the images can be made to flash at the plasma screen at the platforms. I had asked the hon. Minister about the names of the stations in which these have been installed. But the hon. Minister, in his reply, has stated that this is a locomotive based system and not station based.

Once the GPS is installed in the locomotive, it starts communicating with the satellite imaging system and gives information to its location.

MR. SPEAKER: Please put your question.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Sir, I am coming to my question. The data and images are conveyed to the mother computer at the monitoring office of the railway stations. The computer stores the images and relays them to the plasma screen at the various points of the station. If there is no station suggested as a monitoring office for installation of the mother computers and the platforms of the concerned stations are not selected for display, then how would this device operate? I would like to know the names of the stations that have been selected for installing of the mother computers.

MR. SPEAKER: He has already answered it.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Sir, I am sorry to say that the names of the stations have not been mentioned.

MR. SPEAKER: Your supplementary should be based on the answer.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, for the information of the House, I may say that the System itself was announced by our hon. Prime Minister on 15.8.2003. He said that all safety related issues as regards the Railways will be addressed to by a Technology Mission on Railway Safety. Accordingly, 14 schemes have been announced and of them, this is one of the schemes.

Now, coming to the Global Positioning System, we are now utilising 24 satellites which are already available and at any point of time, three satellites that remain at any point will tell about the location of the train, the speed of the train, direction of the train, etc. and it is purely meant for the information of the passengers and the public.

Coming to your question as to whether it is necessary to have some gadgets in the railway stations or not, it is

not at all necessary because we have got a centralised server already which will get the information and pass it on to every station. So, we need not have a GPS receiver in every station. The receiver is installed in each and every rolling stock namely the railway engines. About 2000 passenger locos are moving everyday and each train will carry one receiver which will pass on the information to each station which in turn will be displayed in the display board as regards the train movement, etc. It is necessary to develop such a technology to see that punctuality is maintained. So, the Global Positioning System is a welcome concept. We have selected three sections for this system. One is Allahabad-Kanpur Section and other is Lucknow-Kanpur Section and third is Chennai and Bangalore Daily, three or four trains are put on trial. This is only a pilot project. The project between Chennai and Bangalore is to be started in December, 2006. Now, only after seeing the outcome of this pilot project, we can spread it to the entire nation. This is at the approximate cost of Rs. 92 crore which would mean that with this, we are going to improve the service to the public as regards the train movement, punctuality, etc.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Sir, the trial of this project is being carried out in three sections. My question is whether the Minister is contemplating to include South-Eastern Railway and Eastern Railway in this pilot project.

SHRI R. VELU: The hon. Member knows that this is a pilot project. So, it cannot be an exhaustive and broad based project. We have sanctioned Rs. 2 crore for this in which the Ministry of Human Resource Development, (IIT, Kanpur) Ministry of Railways and two industry partners, E-Logistics, Chennai and TCS, Mumbai are contributing at the rate of 50 per cent, 30 per cent and 20 per cent respectively. This involves an expenditure of Rs. 2 crore and if further funds are required, I will get them examined as to whether it is necessary at all or not. If it is necessary, I will get it done.

*[Translation]*

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Railways whether he proposes to make arrangements for setting up Global Positioning System (GPS) at Allahabad, Kanpur and other major Railway Stations located along the prominent railway route from Mughalsarai to New Delhi since Uttar Pradesh is the largest State lying at the heart of our country.

[English]

SHRI R. VELU: Though I have already answered this supplementary, at the cost of repetition, I would inform the House that once this pilot project becomes successful, it will cover the entire Railways of India.

SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN: The Global Positioning System is reported to have some intentionally imposed errors in respect of computation of latitude and longitude of the order of about 30 metres. It has some other lapses also. But Inverted Differential Global Positioning System (IDGPS) is free from such errors and lapses.

Considering the advantages of the IDGPS in automating and computing and also in reducing the professional stress and tension in the railway control room, would the Government take up IDGPS in place of GPS? If so, when? If not, the reasons therefor.

SHRI R. VELU: This is a new suggestion made by the hon. Member. This project, the GPS, has already been put in operation to test its efficacy. If that does not come up to our expectations, the suggestion made by the hon. Member would be taken into consideration.

### Women Officers in Armed Forces

\*62. DR. M. JAGANNATH:  
SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of women officers in each wing of the Armed Forces;

(b) whether the women officers in Armed Forces are being discriminated against men officers in service conditions;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government has taken any steps to look into all these matters; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

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

### Statement

The percentage of women officers in the Defence Forces is as follows:

Army	Navy	Air Force	Army Medical Corps	Military Nursing Service	Army Dental Corps
2.56%	2.86%	5.42%	13.58%	100%	18.92%

The service conditions of women officers in the Defence Forces are governed by the laid down instructions. In the Medical, Nursing and Dental Services of the Defence Forces, women are appointed both as Short Service Commission (SSC) and Permanent Commission (PC) officers. In these Services, SSC women officers are also eligible to get PC. The women officers are also appointed as Short Service Commission officers in some select branches in the three Defence Forces as per respective schemes applicable. Pay scale of an officer is decided based on substantive rank held. Short Service Commission women officers do not get a lower scale of pay compared to similarly placed Short Service Commission men officers.

As per a recent decision of the Government, women officers in Short Service Commission in the three Defence Services will get Captain, Major and Lt. Colonel (and equivalents in the Air Force and Navy) scale after, 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively.

The issue regarding grant of Permanent Commission to women officers in the three Services is being examined by the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Sir, as per the Statement laid by the hon. Minister on the Table of the House, the percentage of women officers in defence forces is very meagre compared to the population of women folk.

MR. SPEAKER: What about the membership of the House? Are the parties considering that?

DR. M. JAGANNATH: After nearly sixty years of independence, when we are thinking of empowering the women folk in a bigger way, their representation is very meagre in defence forces. Their representation in Army, Navy, Air Force, Army Medical Corps and Army Dental Corps is 2.56 per cent, 2.86 per cent, 5.42 per cent, 13.58 per cent and 18.92 per cent respectively. Only in Ministry Nursing Service, their representation is 100 per cent.

I would like to know from the hon. Defence Minister as to what are the reasons for such a low representation of women in defence forces. Is it because of the discriminatory treatment meted out to them? In the recent past, there were several reports in the newspapers that some of the women officers were forced to resign and when they were court martialled they were not given a chance to represent their cases properly. I would like to know from the hon. Defence Minister as to what is the real position.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, so far as defence services are concerned, it is true that as compared to the percentage of men officers, the percentage of women officers is quite low. The hon. Minister is aware of the fact that in certain sections of armed forces, women were allowed entry quite a long time back. For example, women were allowed to enter Military Nursing Service in 1927 and in Army Medical Corps they were allowed to enter in 1943. But in other services they were allowed entry only recently, that is in 1991. Only in 1991 a decision was taken to allow them entry in some other services. Till then women were not permitted to enter into armed forces, except in Army Medical Corps and Military Nursing Services. In 1991 a decision was taken that they should be recruited for the Short Service Commission also. These figures are the reflections of that system.

Now, more and more women are showing interest in joining armed forces. There were certain discriminations between the male and female officers even in the Short Service Commission in respect of training, ranks, etc. Very recently, just a month back, we have taken a decision that women officers and the men officers would have exactly the same ranks. They will enter as Lieutenant. Then, they will be entitled to get the ranks of Captain, Major and Lt. Colonel after two, six and thirteen years of reckonable services.

It is applicable for both male officers and female officers. As the hon. Member is aware of, the pay in the Armed Forces depends on the rank which they hold. Therefore, when the disparity in the ranks has been removed, the disparity in the pay has also been removed. Even in the area of the training in the Short Service Courses, there was a no problem in respect of Navy and Air Force, but there were problems in the Army. As the hon. Members would appreciate, the job of the Armed Forces is not easy. It is more hazardous. Therefore, women officers were not given 49 weeks of training. Earlier in the Short Service Commission, they were given 24 weeks' of training, but now we have introduced the recent changes where we have brought that they will be at par with the men officers and everybody will get the training of 49 weeks. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister has given a very exhaustive answer.

...*(Interruptions)*

DR. M. JAGANNATH: No, Sir. I have put the question about the recent past where two women officers were forced to resign. It has appeared in the newspapers. In one case in respect of the Air Force in Bangalore, one women officer was not given opportunity to represent her case properly in the Court Martial proceedings. The hon. Minister has not answered about this. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as the individual cases are concerned, whenever there is any type of complaint, there is a set procedure in the Army, in the Air Force and in the Navy. For redressal, court of inquiry is set up and in these two matters also, the court of inquiry is looking into it. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Shrinivas Dadasaheb Patil.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: No, you have put your 'Second Supplementary'.

...*(Interruptions)*

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Sir, I have not put my Second Supplementary. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What second Supplementary? Do not try to put 'Third Supplementary'.

...*(Interruptions)*

DR. M. JAGANNATH: No, Sir. I was asking a clarification in respect of the 'First Supplementary'.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, I would not allow. Dr. M. Jagannath, I am sorry.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, I would not allow. Dr. Jagannath, I am sorry.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You write to him and he will answer. I have called another hon. Member. Please cooperate. I am sorry. I would not allow.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL: Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

The issue regarding grant of permanent Commission to women officers in the three Services is being examined by the Chiefs of Staff Committee. It is included in the written reply Tabled in the House. I would like to know from the hon. Minister about one thing. There are Sainik Schools, National Defence Academy, and Indian Military Academy to train the male officers. After this policy is likely to come into force, it would be a time lag for giving Commission to the Women Officers. Therefore, I would like to know whether any arrangement is likely to be made to train the women officers to have the permanent Commission through such Academies, and if so, whether the Government is likely to select certain places and enrol women after Secondary School Examination or 12th Class Examination so that they would be prepared to go into the Army after their full training of either two years or four years as it has been done in the case of male officers.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: It is like putting the cart before the horse. First, the decision is to be taken that the permanent Commission would be extended to the women officers. For the recruitment to the prestigious Defence institutions like Rashtriya Military Academy, National Defence Academy, there are various competitive examinations and once the permanent Commission is being opened to the women officers, naturally they will be eligible to sit for these examinations and they would be considered.

*[Translation]*

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Defence has categorically stated in his replying that there are 2.56 per cent women personnel in the army, 2.86 per cent in the navy and 5.42 per cent in the Air Force. In his clarification, the Hon. Minister admitted that the percentage of women personnel in the three wings is less owing to the fact that recruitment of women in the defence forces started late in 1991. But the approach of the Ministry of Defence is quite disappointing, probably because the department doubts their ability to come forward in defence of the country and does not rely on women. I would like to know whether the Government has chalked out any scheme for augmenting recruitment in order to increase the percentage of women in the armed forces because, on the one hand, the Lieutenant General of the army issues a statement saying that the army is ready to recruit more and more women personnel so as to encourage them and also in deference to their wishes and on the other, we have a contradictory statement saying that we have no role to play in protecting women and bringing them forward. I am asking this pointed question because he himself concedes that we have a very less percentage of women in the armed forces despite the fact that the women have evinced more and keen interest to join the army. I would like to know the steps being taken by the Government in this regard so that we can believe that the Government reposes full faith in their ability and encourages their recruitment?

MR. SPEAKER: Your points should be brief and concise.

*[English]*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: We are encouraging women to join the Forces. I am sure, the hon. Member has also seen a large number of advertisements, boards and hoardings encouraging women to join the Services especially the Armed Forces. But surely the hon. Member is aware of the fact that even the Services which we had opened to women like the Medical Corps in 1943, there also the percentage has not increased very substantially though there is no dearth of women doctors. Because of the very fact that there is very hard life in the Armed Forces, even the male officers are not coming forward to join it. There is a vacancy of more than 12,000 posts. These are highly competitive areas. If the brilliant boys naturally get chances somewhere else, they do not

join the Armed Services. But surely we are encouraging. We are also having different camps in different areas, in the University Campus, in the colleges so that they can join more and more. I do believe once a decision on the Permanent Commission is being taken, then perhaps that would be another incentive for women to join the Armed Forces.

SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH: So far as my knowledge is concerned, in developed and the developing countries, women officers in the Defence Forces are much more in number than that of our country. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he would lay down any policy guidelines for recruitment of women officers in the Defence Forces more and more. In his answer, he has told that the service conditions of women officers in the Defence Forces are governed by the laid down instructions. What are the laid down instructions by which they are governed? I would also like to know whether there is any difference in respect of the instructions between the male officers and the female officers of the Defence Forces. I want to know this information from the hon. Minister.

*[Translation]*

MR. SPEAKER: You would not get the details here but he can answer you in 'yes' or 'no'.

*[English]*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as the differences of the Service Conditions are concerned, in my earlier answer, I have stated that those differences have been removed. I have given the conditions. Once you join the Services, say after passing the examination, recruitment takes place to join as Lieutenant. From the date of reckonable service, you get the rank of Captain after two years. Thereafter you get the rank of Major after 6 years and after that, Lieutenant Colonel after 13 years etc. You can go on like this. This is the period-specific promotion in two years, six years and 13 years. Once if you are not disqualified because of certain other reasons, you will have this promotion automatically and there is no discrimination in this area or between male officers and the female officers.

*[Translation]*

SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDALIKRAO GAWALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I associate myself with the feelings

expressed here in the House by my fellow lady members with regard to their concern about the regrettable condition of women in the armed forces. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister as to what steps are being taken to revise and amend the present rules and service conditions applicable to recruitment of women in the army and also by what time will our efforts fructify?

MR. SPEAKER: The Hon. Minister has already replied to it.

*[English]*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, I have already replied this question. We are encouraging them. They are coming in more and more numbers. It is not that they are not coming. We began the process in 1991. If you look at the absolute figure in percentage terms, in this country we have 11 lakh personnel in the Armed Forces and three per cent of this 11 lakh is the number of women and that is not a very small number. We took the decision to recruit women in Armed Forces in 1991, the decision was implemented in 1992 and from 1992 to 2005 this is the figure. But as I mentioned, there are difficulties. Even the males are not coming to the extent which are required. In respect of Service Conditions which are required for women officers particularly, this is being made.

MR. SPEAKER: I think all section of the House want more women officers in the Armed Forces and the hon. Minister is accommodating. We can go to the next question now.

#### Suicide Cases

+  
\*63. MS. INGRID MCLEOD:  
SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of suicide in the Armed Forces reported during each of the last three years and the current year;

(b) whether the Government has ascertained the factors attributed to these suicides;

(c) if so, the conclusions drawn therefrom; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to prevent such cases?

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

**Statement**

The total number of cases of suicide reported in the years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 (till date) in the Army, Navy and Air Force are 120, 116, 119\* and 84 respectively.

All the suicide cases are investigated through appropriate Courts/Boards of Inquiry. An analysis of the findings of the same has revealed that, in majority of the cases, this extreme step was resorted to by the individual due to personal and family problems like marital discords; medical, financial or property issues; extra marital affairs etc. and not because of professional or organisational reasons.

The measures adopted by the three Services in this regard include increased formal and informal interaction between senior and junior officers so as to know individual problems and suggest solutions in a proactive manner; organizing buddy system and strengthening time tested reporting and feedback system in the unit; using services of psychiatrists and counsellors to conduct lectures/presentations and educate officers/personnel; identifying personnel under stress and carrying out psychological conditioning and counseling of identified individuals. These measures are being personally monitored by the Senior Officers. All officers and other personnel in the Services have been sensitised on the above issues.

MS. INGRID MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister does not fix responsibility on the higher-ranking officers, but it is evident from statements to higher-ranking officers in the Army that they adopt a callous and indifferent attitude to the mental problems faced by many of those in the lower ranks. This attitude contributes directly or indirectly to suicides. These officers may also be covering up the more sinister aspects of suicides. We cannot undermine any direct or indirect role played by the higher-ranking officers which lead to suicides. Will the hon. Minister order an investigation to ascertain if the behaviour of the senior officers are directly or indirectly responsible for the suicide of Lt. Sushmita Chakravarty?

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\*This includes 15 attempted suicide cases in respect of Army for the year 2005.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, I wish to compliment you. I believe this is your maiden effort.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, so far as the case of suicide of Lt. Sushmita Chakravarty is concerned, it is under investigation. A Board of Inquiry has been set up. I must inform the House that in the last five years, compared to male officers, the number of suicide cases of women officers is only five. This is very unfortunate. Even one suicide should not take place.

But, as I mentioned to you, the job of the Armed Force personnel is not normal. For a long time they have to stay outside their family. In a poor country like ours, we cannot provide 100 per cent marriage accommodation to officers or to persons below them. They have to be posted in the frontline which has extremely inhospitable terrain and atmosphere apart from other hazards associated with the Army. There is no doubt that this puts strain and so we have built up a mechanism through which we can constantly review the position. For instance, we have very recently instructed that there should be better man management and there should be prompt attendance of the grievances through frequent interaction of the junior leaders with the soldiers.

The hon. Member may not be aware of one thing that in Army one thing is very important and that is the Rank and Chain of Command. Therefore, the superior officer has the responsibility and it cannot be at the highest rank, otherwise, the chain would be broken. But in each stage of that command, appropriate mechanism is being worked out from the lowest to the topmost.

Secondly, another problem we shall have to face and that we cannot skip under the carpet is the type of strain which we are putting under our Armed Forces. Army is basically meant to protect the international border and to protect the country from aggression. But today, a very big chunk of our Armed Forces is put in services for internal security. This is the unfortunate state of affairs. But the hard fact is there, as a result of which the specialised forces, sometimes, which we are creating and the type of training they require and the gap between difficult postings, hard postings, the short duration, reduction of the durability of the hard postings, sometimes we cannot afford all these. All these, sometimes have the cumulative effect.

But still, I have checked up the figures from other contemporary rate of suicide cases in respect of

developed countries' Armed Forces. In the USA it is 17 per lakh, in UK it is 16 per lakh, in France it is 24 per lakh and in India it is 10.8 per lakh. Though it is 10.8 per lakh, I am not satisfied. If we can reduce it further, we should try to do it and each case is being looked into.

MS. INGRID MCLEOD: Sir, has the hon. Minister ordered an investigation into the allegations of foul play by the family members of Captain Sumit Kohli who committed suicide on the 30th of April?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, the Board of Inquiry has been given all the information and they have been instructed to look into the matter so that we can reach at the bottom of the case.

*[Translation]*

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, from the reply given to this question, it seems that they army considers that suicide take place in the army only due to personal and family problems. I differ with their views as I think that besides personal and family reasons, the working and services conditions prevalent in the army like not granting leave in time and not extending proper medical facilities are prominent reasons contributing to the suicidal tendency. Besides, they are paid very meagre salaries and allowances. He has not mentioned any of these main reasons.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: You should be brief and put your question.

*[Translation]*

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Will the hon. Minister make such arrangements so that the officers directly talk to the Jawans, listen to their problems and try to address them more frequently, say after every three months? Will their grievances with regard to their salaries etc. be redressed by sending one of their representatives in the Pay Commission. There is no doubt that the salaries and allowances of the officers and Jawans of the army are far less as compared to IAS and IPS officers.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: These are all suggestions.

*[Translation]*

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: In view of the above will the Government increase their salaries and allowances, their leave span, grant them leave twice or thrice a year and provide them proper medical facilities?

MR. SPEAKER: You should not put such big supplementaries.

*[English]*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, I have already mentioned in reply to my question that these are the steps we are taking, apart from other better management, prompt attendance of the grievances by frequent interaction at all levels, frequent spells of leave, identification and counseling of the persons who are at higher risk of combat stage, counseling even by the religious preachers, training of the regimental medical officers and junior commanders, psychiatric tests etc.

All these are being taken care of, but the factors have to be taken in view. It is not proper for me to suggest "at an interval of three months." He should understand the magnitude of the problem and the requirement of the Armed Forces for various duties starting from the jungles of North-East to the snow-capped Himalayas. It is easy to say but it is not possible to move the troops of such number at the interval of three months.

MR. SPEAKER: That is a suggestion for action.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Therefore, these are the technical problems and logistic problems that one has a understand. I myself admit the types of leaves that we should give them. The other day you discussed about the security situation. And what was the tenor?  
...*(Interruptions)*

Let me complete. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

...*(Interruptions)\**

MR. SPEAKER: There are rules and procedures.

...*(Interruptions)*

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\*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded Mr. Gehlot.

...(Interruptions)\*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: If the hon. Member is interested in replying his own question, I have no problem. He can answer his own question. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded except what the hon. Minister says.

...(Interruptions)\*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as pay scale is concerned, there is a system. When we will talk of Railways, we should say that the Railway people should get more; when we talk of post offices, we should say that post office People should not get more. They Pay Commission has been set up and it is not possible that every sector will have their representation in the Pay Commission. There is a set practice; as per the set practice it will be taken care of.

[Translation]

SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to tell the Minister of Defence that the cases of suicide among the defence personnel involving both male and female take place. Being an ex-service man, I am of the opinion that such cases can be attributed to denial of leave to personnel in case there is some problem at home or any major function has to take place back home and the personnel anticipates that he would be provided leave and he is denied. There is some discipline in defence forces. They approaches this section commander for sanction of leave if the leave is not sanctioned by him one has to go to his senior officer like Platoon Commander or Company Commander. These are the kinds of hurdles faced by the army personnel and such incidents take place when their requests are turned down. Therefore, I would like to know from the Defence Minister whether the Government propose to relax the said procedure. So that the problems of the personnel could be highlighted before the higher officers and recurrence of such incidents could be checked.

[English]

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: There, system has been introduced that they can tell their grievances to

their seniors. But the problem is genuine. That is why we are trying to provide more married accommodation so that their separation from their families for a long time is reduced. Fortunately, the Government has sanctioned adequate amount of money for the married accommodation projects, but it will meet partly. Therefore, we will have to take a comprehensive view. Frequent rotation, frequent leave at short intervals, counselling, and if there is a sign of depression then immediately to take note of it and thereafter take appropriate step; these ought to be worked out, and we will have to take a comprehensive view.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI JYOTIRMOYEE SIKDAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell the hon'ble Minister of Defence that every time a woman in defence force commits suicide, personal reasons are cited for the said act. I fail to understand this. Recently, suicide was committed by Sushmita Chakarborty and the same reason was given for her committing suicide. That the woman has committed suicide due to personal reasons. Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the Minister of Defence whether any report has been sought from any women commission or from any other organization in this regard or any declaration has been sought from the Defence organization.

[English]

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, I am afraid I cannot accept this suggestion because there are set rules of the Army. Definitely others who have the information can give it to the Board of Inquiry but we cannot send the investigation team from outside. The hon. Members would appreciate that in the last five years there had been five cases of suicide. Each case has been looked into and the Board of Inquiry has been set up. They have taken note of it. It is very unfortunate. I cannot think of having some sort of roving inquiry in this sector.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI RANJEET RANJAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not satisfied with the reply given by the hon'ble Minister. There are lots of problems like frequent transfers, sanctioning very few leaves and the harassment by the seniors which have come to the notice. Few days ago, one of the officers of the Army had died and it is yet to be found out whether it was a case of suicide or murder.

\*Not recorded.

The family members of the said officer maintain that the officer was under some pressure as he knew about something. I would like to know whether certain steps are being taken like showing the photograph of the family members etc. to maintain their mental balance and to save them from falling prey to the mental disorders like depression etc.

*[English]*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, I have already answered this question. It is definitely and mainly because of the stress and strain under which they have to work.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister is very sympathetic and he has said that. The nation is sympathetic.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as the question of somebody is concerned, we have investigated into the matter. Of course, the relations have their due. They were taken into confidence and they were told what the actual fact is.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, the Minister has replied that the reason for all these things is not organizational or professional. It is a good thing but we are losing very skilled people. Definitely he should admit that. Although it is an individual matter, we are losing skilled people. Skilled people are very much necessary for the Defence Forces.

We are coming across so many problems of the individual cases. The family members—wives and children—of the Army personnel are residing at far away places and facing some problems but the civil authorities are not listening to their problems. So, what is the mechanism that the Government is having to redress their problems? They are having some problems in their personal capacity. How do you make the civil authorities to address their problems?

MR. SPEAKER: Almost these are identical questions.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as the interaction with the civil authorities is concerned, in every State we have Rajya Sainik Board, District Sainik Board and at Centre Kendriya Sainik Board. The Defence Secretary is constantly in touch with the Chief Secretary and telling them that these people are protecting our borders and they cannot attend to their domestic problems because of long distance. So, there should be an institutional arrangement at the district level. He has told them to redress their problems through the District Sainik

Board. In some of the States like Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, I must say that there is very good cooperation but there are certain other States—I would not like to mention that names—from whom we are not getting adequate response. I myself had taken it up with the State Chief Ministers. Very recently, I myself had a meeting of the Central Sainik Board, of which the Chief Ministers are the members. We had an interaction with them. I had underlined the problems and sought their personal intervention. I do hope that the situation will improve shortly.

DR. P.P. KOYA: Sir, the hon. Minister has given an extensive answer befitting his stature and experience. I am very happy about that. The core question is this. What are the steps that the Government is taking to minimise or to avoid suicide incidents?

Unfortunately, suicide is common among the farmers, among the other sections of the people and so also in the Army.

MR. SPEAKER: He has elaborately answered it, Dr. Koya. He has mentioned so many things.

DR. P.P. KOYA: So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has any definite plan to overcome this suicide rate by way of information, communication, IEC activities or a special training so that the number of such incidents would come down.

MR. SPEAKER: Training for not to commit suicide!

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: We are emphasising on training; we are emphasising on counselling; we are emphasising on reducing of the stress; we are emphasising on providing the relief in the required cases. It will have to be a comprehensive approach because the number is very large. It is unfortunate that we are losing in this process, some of our very skilled personnel. But perhaps, it would not be possible for me to indicate that we can have a situation, which will be totally suicide free. It may not be possible. But we should try to reduce it as best as we can, and we are trying to do it.

*[Translation]*

#### Railway Projects

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\*64. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":  
SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether norms have been fixed by the Railways for granting approval to the projects and receiving dividends from those projects;

(b) if so, the required rate of dividend from projects on the basis of the prescribed norms;

(c) whether there are several Railway projects having rate of dividend less than the prescribed norms;

(d) if so, the details of such projects;

(e) whether the Railways have taken measures to bring the dividend from these projects at par with the prescribed norms; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (f) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**Statement**

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per extant norms, those projects are considered to be financially viable which yield a rate of return of 14% under the discounted cash flow method.

(c) and (d) A number of new lines and gauge conversion projects, which do not have the requisite rate of return, have been taken up on socio-economic considerations to provide connectivity to backward, hilly, tribal, remote and underdeveloped areas. A list showing details of these projects is enclosed as statement.

(e) and (f) Initiatives have been taken to involve participation of the State Governments in funding the projects. The standards of construction of such lines having low traffic/returns have been suitably amended to suit lower traffic needs to bring down the cost.

**Statement**

Sl.No.	Project	Cost (Rs. In Crores)
1	2	3
<b>New Lines</b>		
1.	Abohar-Fazilka	86.44
2.	Agra-Etawah via Fatehabad and Bah	214.9
3.	Ahmednagar-Beed-Parli Vaijnath	462.67
4.	Ajmer-Pushkar	88.4
5.	Amravati-Narkher	284.27
6.	Angamali-Sabarimala	550
7.	Ara-Sasaam	189.14
8.	Azimganj (Nasipur)-Jiaganj up to the Ghats	22.78
9.	Bangalore-Satyamangalam	901.62
10.	Baramati-Lonad	138.48
11.	Beas to Dera Baba Jaimal Singh	4.07
12.	Bogibeel bridge with linking lines between Dibrugarh and North Bank	1767.36
13.	Chandigarh-Ludhiana	450

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1	2	3
14.	Chhapra-Muzzafarpur	378.56
15.	Dausa-Gangapur City	208.83
16.	Deogarh-Dumka	180.73
17.	Deogarh-Sultaniganj, Banka-Barahat and Banka-Bhitiah Road	312
18.	Dudhnoi-Depa	22.33
19.	Eklakhi-Balurghat	282.74
20.	Etawah-Mainpuri	129.7
21.	Fatuha-Islampur Restoration and Sheikhpura to Neora via Daniawan	406.92
22.	Gadwal-Raichur	108.91
23.	Gandhinagar-Adrej Moti-Kalol	49.96
24.	Giridih-Koderma	371.36
25.	Godhra-Indore & Dewas-Maksi	946.16
26.	Gulbarga-Bidar	369.7
27.	Guna-Etawah	432.46
28.	Hajipur-Sagauli	324.66
29.	Harmuti-Itanagar	156
30.	Hassan-Bangalore	412.91
31.	Hathua-Bhatni	200.73
32.	Howrah-Amta	154.3
33.	Hubli-Ankola	997.58
34.	Jind-Sonipat	190.81
35.	Jiribam-Imphal Road (Tupul)	727.56
36.	Kadar-Chikamgalur-Sakleshpur	274.29
37.	Kakinada-Pithapuram	66.14
38.	Kalka-Parvanoo	27.23
39.	Karur-Salem	229.88
40.	Khagaria-Kusheshwarsthan	162.87
41.	Kichha-Khatima	165.67

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1	2	3
42.	Koderma-Ranchi	1033.04
43.	Kolayat-Phalodi	186
44.	Kosi Bridge	341.41
45.	Kothapalli-Narsapur	695
46.	Kottur-Harihar via Harpanhalli	135.55
46.	Kumarghat-Agarthala	879.99
48.	Lalitpur-Satna & Rewa Singrauli	925
49.	Lanjigarh Road-Junagarh	119.29
50.	Macherla-Nalgonda	243.17
51.	Maharajganj-Masrakh	113.75
52.	Mandarhill-Rampurhat via Dumka	254.07
53.	Manoharabad-Kothapalli	308
54.	Munger-rail-cum-road Bridge on river Ganga	981
55.	Munirabad-Mehbubnagar	497.47
56.	Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi	210.79
57.	Nandyal-Yerraguntla	173.32
58.	Nangal Dam-Talwara & Taking over siding of Mukerian Talwara	300
59.	New Maynaguri-Jogighopa	894.38
60.	Patna-Ganga bridge with linking lines between Patna and Hajipur	684.47
61.	Peddapally-Karimnagar-Nizamabad	517.63
62.	Puntamba-Shirdi	48.78
63.	Rajgir-Hisua-Tilaiya & Islampur-Natesar	245.17
64.	Ramganjmandi-Bhopal	726.05
65.	Rewari-Rohtak	149.38
66.	Sakri-Hassanpur	89.7
67.	Talcher-Bimlagarh	726.96
68.	Tanur (Kuttipuram)-Guruvayoor	137.71
69.	Tarakeshwar-Bishnupur with Extension up to Kumarkundu Bypass connecting Howrah-Bardhaman Chord	255.68

1	2	3
70.	Tarantaran-Goindwal	37.51
71.	Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramula	8000
72.	Rampur-Lalkuan-Kathgodam New Line-Road Bridge near Rampur	18.05
	<b>Gauge Conversion</b>	
1.	Ajmer-Udaipur-Chittaurgarh including extension from Udaipur to Umra	455.71
2.	Aunrihar-Jaunpur	85.92
3.	Bankura-Damodar River Project, Bowaichandi-Khanna, Rainagar-Chanchai & Bankura-Mukutmanipur	282.7
4.	Bhildi-Samdari	244.74
5.	Chhindwara-Nagpur	383.79
6.	Dharmavaram-Pakala	294.99
7.	Dindigul-Pollachi-Palghat & Pollachi-Coimbatore	343.17
8.	Gonda-Bahriach-Sitapur-Lucknow PH I	73.42
9.	Gonda-Gorakhpur Loop with Anand nagar Nautanwa	381.17
10.	Guntur-Guntakal & Guntakal-Kalluru including New line from Pendakallu to Gooty	503.97
11.	Jabalpur-Gondia including Balaghat-Katangi	524.88
12.	Jayanagar-Darbhanga-Narkatiganj	329.38
13.	Kaptanganj-Thave-Siwan-Chhapra	320.1
14.	Katakhal-Bairabhi	88.7
15.	Katihar-Jogbani and Katihar-Barsoi-Radhikapur	492.98
16.	Kolar-Chickballapur	99.42
17.	Lumding-Silchar including alignment between Migrendisa-Dittockchera and extension from Badarpur to Bairagram	1496.42
18.	Lumding-Dibrugarh with linked fingers, Haibargaon-Mairabari and Senchoa Jn.-Silghat Town	882.12
19.	Madurai-Rameswaram	194.5
20.	Manamadurai-Virudhnagar	97.24
21.	Mansi-Saharsa & Saharsa-Dauram Madhepura-Purnia	257.01
22.	Mathura-Achnera	33.67

1	2	3
23.	Miraj-Latur	515.57
24.	Mudkhed-Adilabad	199.06
25.	Mysore-Chamarajnagar (Phase-I) with extension to Mettupalayam	606.58
26.	Naupada-Gunupur	91.3
27.	Neemuch-Ratlam	167.51
28.	New Jalpaiguri-Siliguri-New Bongaigaon including linked branch lines	890.83
29.	Pipar Road-Bilara	33.44
30.	Pratapnagar-Chhota Udepur	148.61
31.	Quilon-Tirunelveli-Tiruchchendur & Tenkasi-Virudunagar	697.7
32.	Rajkot-Veraval, Wansjalua to Jetalsar with new line from Veraval to Somnath	359.8
33.	Ranchi-Lohardaga with extension to Tori	390
34.	Rangia-Murkongselek along with linked fingers	915.7
35.	Rewari-Sadulpur including Sadulpur-Hissar	306.58
36.	Rupsa-Bangriposi	124.85
37.	Sakri-Laukaha Bazar-Nirmali & Saharsa-Forbesganj	355.81
38.	Samastipur-Khagaria & Mansi-Khagaria	122.45
39.	Shimoga-Talguppa	441.26
40.	Sholapur (Hotgi)-Gadag	342.7
41.	Sriganganagar-Sarupsar	143.92
42.	Surendranagar-Bhavnagar-Rajula-Mahuwa with the extn. upto Pipavav & Sihor-Palitana	440.19
43.	Tiruchchirappali-Nagore-Karaikkal	172.69
44.	Trichy-Manamadurai	201.92
45.	Villupuram-Katpadi	235.68

*[Translation]*

#### Ongoing Railway Projects

\*78. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a substantial increase in the expenditure on the ongoing railway projects in the country;

(b) if so, whether any demand has been made for additional allocation of funds for various railway projects;

(c) if so, the total funds sanctioned for these projects, project-wise; and

(d) the time by which these projects are likely to be completed?

*[English]*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

*Statement*

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There have been demands for increase in allocation of funds for various ongoing projects.

(c) The allocation of funds for various projects has increased over the years and details of yearly allocations are available in Budget Documents.

(d) A number of initiatives have been taken for getting additional resources through Public Private Partnership, Cost Sharing by State Government, Funding through Ministry of Defence, National Projects. Additional funds have also been allocated through increased internal resource generation. With these initiatives, ongoing projects are being aimed for completion in a period of about five years.

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': Mr. Speaker, Sir, in reply to the part 'c' and 'd' of my question no. 64, the Government have admitted that a number of new railway projects which do not have the 14% dividend rate of return, have been taken up on socio-economic consideration to provide connectivity to backward, hilly, tribal remote and underdeveloped areas. A list of such projects has also been given. I would like to know whether the Government have fixed certain norms for the selection of such areas as there are many inherent contradictions as far as the names of the places given in the list are concerned.

Sir, there are several such areas in the list which are yet to reach the level of progress at the desired level. Such areas also include many from Bihar like Arah, Sasaram, Chhapra and Muzzafarpur. Besides, several areas of Punjab Ludhiana, and Chandigarh have been shown in the list. Therefore, I would like to know from the Government whether the Government have fixed any norms for the selection of such areas.

*[English]*

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the National Transport Policy Committee, 1980 enunciated certain norms as to where these new lines, gauge conversion etc., could be sanctioned as projects. It may be tap the minerals; it may be for connecting certain routes to provide for an alternative route as a missing link to decongest that line. It may be for strategic reasons; it may be for growth centres; it may be, ultimately for backward and undeveloped areas.

Now, the hon. Member has said that Bihar and other places are not covered. He would be happy to know that 36 projects are in Bihar and 41 projects are in Uttar Pradesh. But it does not mean that Punjab, Haryana and other places do not have the backward areas. There may be uncovered areas. That is why we said that the norm is only with regard to the backwardness etc., as assessed by the State Government. If any proposal comes from the State Government, we take it into consideration. Also, if any hon. Member comes with a proposal saying: "In my Constituency such and such area is not covered, it is more backward", such a proposal would be taken into consideration without reference of the rate of return.

About the rate of return, we normally fix it at 14 per cent as a viable rate of return. Way back in 1968, the Mirchandani Committee had gone into the whole thing and said: "It is 10 per cent on the discounted cash flow method." This was subsequently enhanced to 14% in 1992 by the Ministry of Railways. To understand and appreciate it better, I may inform the House as to what this discounted cash flow method is. For example, you take a project of 30 years. You calculate the cash flow of each year and again calculate the net cash flow of each year taking into account the net reduction in expenditure or increase in the net income.

Thereupon, you work out the present value of the net cash flows of all the years of the project applying a predetermined discount rate. Then, make the cost of the project by adding the present values of the net cash flows of all the years of the project's economic life. On the cost of the project, you calculate 14 per cent. That is how, we calculate it. This would mean that the Railways would generate income not only for the capital cost but also for the capital formation. Capital formation would mean again to have some amount earmarked for the depreciation reserve, development fund, pension fund, etc., etc. This is all required for the Railways to have

modernisation and further programmes. that is how we take all these factors into consideration while accepting a project whether it generates 14 per cent or not.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have any more query?

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': Mr. Speaker, Sir, I asked a very small question and he has given a lengthy reply which has no relevance. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You should be happy.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': He has nothing to do with my question. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You must be happy to get such a long reply for such a small question.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': I never said that the projects from Bihar were not taken up. I also did not ask about the norms. I simply wanted to know as to what norms are adopted by the Government out of the prescribed norms. I also did not say as to why projects from Punjab were taken up, yet he made a mention of it. The reply given by the hon'ble Minister has nothing to do with the question I asked.

Second supplementary is related to part 'e' and 'f' of the reply in which it has been mentioned "initiatives has been taken to involve participation of this State Governments". Through you, I would like to know from the Government whether the Government have made any assessment of the cost cutting measures about which a mention has been made in part 'e' and 'f' of the reply and if so which are the States which are likely to be involved in the said exercise?

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: You use simple Hindi. Otherwise, it is difficult for him to understand.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, knowing that we have got about 230 schemes in the shelf of the order of Rs. 53,000 crore, which we are finding it difficult to finance them, our hon. Minister of Railways have written to all the Chief Ministers requesting them to participate to the extent of at least 50 per cent of each project. In the past, some of the State Governments had participated in some of

the schemes. It may be a new line. It may be a gauge conversion. But now our hon. Lalu ji has written. Till now none of the State Governments has responded to the letter for participation. This is my first point.

Secondly, what we are trying in our Railways now for the funding of the projects is that we are trying to mobilise funds from our National Projects Assistance from the Government, public-private participation which we have now found very attractive, National Defence Funding, funding from internal resources and then going to the market. That is how, we are managing now. Now the problem is finding resources to finance all these unviable projects which are in the shelf.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Ramji Lal Suman.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: That is not to be recorded.

...*(Interruptions)\**

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded except the speech of Shri Ramji Lal Suman.

...*(Interruptions)\**

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as has just been said by the hon. Minister there are 230 ongoing projects with railways. Guna-Itawa, Mainpuri-Itawa, Agra-Itawa project which were started during the tenure of Shri Madhavrao Scindhia are still pending.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, It has been stated here that the railways get 14% dividend from the projects which directly implies that the cost of the projects will be recovered in a span of seven years. I am of the opinion that railway is not a commercial organization. It has social obligations to fulfil. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to request, through you. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You put your question.

*[English]*

You are a senior, competent Member,

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\*Not recorded.

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Sir, rate of dividend in the power sector is 3% which also has social obligations. Going by that standard, I can say that the percentage is quite on higher side. The ongoing railway projects are not completed in time. As per my information at least, 138 projects have been undergoing in the country but there in no fixed deadline for their completion consequently it is leading to the cost escalation. Through you, I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister the extent to which the rate of dividend likely to be affected due to the non completion of the projects within the stipulated time.

*[English]*

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, I quite share the concern of the hon. Member. As I mentioned, we are taking these projects into consideration with reference to the priority as I mentioned about the priorities earlier. But now, the costs will get escalated. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not asking about priority. I would like to state that in order to complete the incomplete projects. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: It is not correct.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Very well. I will go to the next Question.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Please reply to my Question. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What is this going on? If you do not like the reply, there are other devices as well. You are aware of it. Shouting will not serve any purpose.

*[English]*

By shouting nothing will happen. You are not allowing him to complete the reply.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI R. VELU: So far as the hon. Member is concerned, I wish to state that we are completing projects. Out of 348 projects, 88 projects have been completed. It is not that we have not completed the projects in the Railways. As I mentioned, now we have got as many as 260 projects pending of which there are 105 projects of doubling, 15 projects of gauge conversion, 17 projects of new lines and 16 projects of electrification—153 in all.

...*(Interruptions)* You are raising a point whether we have set any target for completion. It is not possible because we are able to distribute the finance available with us to all the schemes. When we do not do that, I think, the hon. Members will say—'Why are you neglecting my scheme?' But still, we are prioritising with reference to the last mile projects as to which are the projects to be completed in this year which can generate some income. We are also prioritising other projects which will give income. It is not that we are ignoring the schemes. We will not do that. We are recognising the fact that by delaying it the costs will increase. But then we are trying to find out how best we can complete the projects. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it simply means that while preparing the projects we are not aware of our financial limit.....

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Not one word will be recorded.

...*(Interruptions)\**

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, instead of looking at the hon. Members, sometimes you look at the Speaker also because that is creating more problems for you.

I will allow one more Question. I will allow Q. No. 78 which is an allied Question.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have to give him time because he has no notice.

*[Translation]*

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is enormous increase in railway projects and their cost also

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\*Not recorded.

goes up because every successive Government adds its own political priorities to them. When their Government came to power they added their own list to it. When the other Government came to power they added their list. It is an account of this that there is continuous increase in the cost of projects. My pointed question is as to what action is going to be taken by the Government to check those who make addition and deletion to the projects according to their political agenda.

*[English]*

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, we, in the Railways, do not apply any political parameters. We always go by merits or demerits of the project. We do not attach so much of political parameters and things like that. However, as I mentioned earlier, we will definitely give due priority with reference to the needs and aspirations of the people.

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*[Translation]*

### Modernisation of Railway Stations

\*65. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Railway Divisions functioning in each Zone at present;

(b) whether the Railways have drawn up any plan to modernise at least one Railway Station in each Railway Division of world standard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the details of the Railway Stations identified for the purpose; and

(e) the time by which the said plan is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) There are sixty-seven divisions functioning on sixteen Railway Zones on Indian Railways at present. The number of divisions in each Railway Zone is as under:

	Name of the Zone & Headquarter	No. of Divisions
1.	Central Railway, Mumbai	5
2.	East Central Railway, Hajipur	5
3.	East Coast Railway, Bhubaneswar	3
4.	Eastern Railway, Kolkata	4
5.	North Central Railway, Allahabad	3
6.	North Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur	3
7.	North Western Railway, Jaipur	4
8.	Northeast Frontier Railway, Guwahati	5
9.	Northern Railway, New Delhi	5
10.	South Central Railway, Secunderabad	6
11.	South East Central Railway, Bilaspur	3
12.	South Eastern Railway, Kolkata	4
13.	Southern Western Railway, Hubli	5
14.	Southern Railway, Chennai	5
15.	Western Railway, Mumbai	6
16.	West Central Railway, Jabalpur	3

(b) and (c) There is no such plan at present to modernise at least one station in each Railway division to world standard. However, in order to make perceptible improvements at railway stations in the country, about 5 stations on each division out of the declared model stations or important stations have been identified to be modernized and given a facelift.

(d) The Zone-wise details of 334 stations selected for improvement of passenger amenities are as under:

Central Railway	Solapur, Ahmednagar, Gulbarga, Wadi, Daund, Pune, Kolhapur, Miraj, Satara, Sangli, Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Dadar, Lokmanya Tilak Terminus, Thane, Kalyan, Manmad, Nasik Road, Bhusaval, Khandwa, Akola, Nagpur, Chandrapur, Wardha, Ballarshah, Amla
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Eastern Railway	Howrah, Bardhaman, Rampurhat, Bolpur, Tarakeswar, Sealdah, Bidhannagar, Road, Dum Dum Jn., Barasat, Ranaghat, Malda Town, Bhagalpur, Jamalpur, Sahibganj, New Farakka, Asansol, Durgapur, Jasidih, Madhurpur, Baidyanathdham.	Northeast Frontier Railway	Barpeta Road, Goalpara Town, New Bongaigaon, Rangiya, Dibrugarh Town, New Tinsukia, Mariani Jn., Simalguru Jn., New Jalpaiguri, Kishanganj, Katihar, Darjeeling, Raiganj, New Alipurduar, Kokrajhar, New Coochbehar, Newmal Jn., Gosaingaon Hat, Guwhati, Dimapur, Lumding Jn., Silchar, Hojai.
East Central Railway	Patna Jn., Rajendra Nagar, Ara, Buxar, Mokama, Samastipur, Darbhanga, Raxaul, Motihari, Sitamarhi, Hajipur, Muzaffarpur, Barauni, Begusarai, Khagaria, Dhanbad, Koderma, Barkakana, Daltonganj, Parasnath, Mughalsarai, Sasaram, Gaya, Dehri-on-sona, Anupgarh Narayan Road.	North Western Railway	Ajmer, Udaipur City, Abu Road, Falna, Rani, Bikaner, Hissar, Sri Ganganagar, Bhiwani, Sirsa, Jaipur, Rewari, Alwar, Bandikui, Dausa, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Pali Marwar, Barmer, Nagaur.
East Coast Railway	Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri, Brahmapur, Bhadrak, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam, Rayagada, Duvvada, Titlagarh, Kantabanji, Kesinga, Bolangir, Sambalpur.	Southern Railway	Chengalpattu, Katpadi, Arakkonam, Tambaram, Triuttani, Erode, Coimbatore, Palghat, Calicut, Mangalore, Ernakulam, Trichur, Quilon, Trivandrum Central, Kanniyakumari, Pondicherry, Virudhachalam, Tiruchchirappalli Jn., Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Dindigul, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Virudhungar.
Northern Railway	Delhi, New Delhi, H. Nizamudidn, Meerut City, Kurukshetra, Ludhiana, Jalandhar City, Amritsar, Firozpur, Jammu Tawi, Dehradun, Bareilly, Moradabad, Haridwar, Roorkee, Rishikesh, Ambala Cantt., Chandigarh, Shimla, Bhatinda, Saharanpur, Dhuri, Lucknow, Varanasi, Ayodhya, Rai-Bareilly, Prayag.	South Central Railway	Ongole, Vijayawada, Rajamundry, Nellore, Kakinada Town, Hyderabad, Secunderabad, Kazipet Khammam, Warangal, Kacheguda, Kurnool Town, Nizamabad, Basar, Mahbubnagar, Tirupati, Guntakal, Raichur, Cuddapah, Anantapur, Guntur, Nalgonda, Nadyal, Nadikudi, Narasaraopet, Nanded, Aurangabad, Jalna, Parbhani, Partur.
North Central Railway	Agra Cantt., Mathura, Agra Fort, Raja ki Mandi, Kosikalan, Jhansi, Gwalior, Banda, Urai, Dholpur, Aligarh Jn. Allahabad Jn., Etawah, Kanpur Central, Mirzapur.	South Eastern Railway	Kharagpur, Balasore, Midnapore, Santragachi, Mecheda, Tatanagar, Rourkela, Jharsuguda, Chakradharpur, Rajganjpur, Bokaro Steel City, Purulia, Bankura, Bishnupur, Garbeta, Ranchi, Haita, Muri, Ramgarh Cantt.
North Eastern Railway	Gorakhpur, Lucknow Jn., Gonda, Lakhimpur, Badshah Nagar, Chapra Jn., Siwan Jn., Deoria Sadar, Manduadih, Azamgarh, Haldwani, Lalkuan, Rudrapur City, Kashipur, Mathura Cantt.	South East Central Railway	Bilaspur, Raigarh, Champa, Shahdol, Korba, Raipur, Durg, Bhatapara, Tilda, Bhilai Power House, Gondia, Rajnandgaon, Dongargarh, Tumsar Road, Chhindwara.

South Western Railway	Mysore, Davanagere, Shimoga Town, Hassan, Haveri, Hubli, Belgaum, Vasco, Hospet, Bellary, Bangalore City, Yeshwantpur, Bangalore Cant., Mandya, Tumkur
Western Railway	Surat, Vapi, Navsari, Bandra Terminus, Mumbai Central, Vadodara, Anand, Nadiad, Bharuch, Ankleshwar, Ratlam, Indore, Dahod, Ujjain, Chittaurgarh, Ahmedabad, Maninagar, Gandhidham, New Bhuj, Palanpur, Rajkot, Surendranagar, Jamnagar, Than, Wankaner, Bhavnagar, Veraval, Porbandar, Jhunagarh, Gandhigram.
West Central Railway	Jabalpur Katni, Satna, Maihar, Saugor, Bhopal, Habibganj, Itarsi, Guna, Bina, Sawaimadhopur, Bhawanimandi, Bayana, Bharatpur, Gangapur City.

(e) This work is likely to be completed by February, 2007.

*[English]*

#### **Adulteration/Under Measurement of Petrol/Diesel**

\*66. SHRI P. MOHAN:  
SHRI SAJJAN KUMAR:

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

(a) whether the instances of adulteration and under-measurement of petrol and diesel are on the increase;

(b) if so, the total number of adulteration/under-measurement cases came to the notice of the Government during the first half of 2006, State-wise;

(c) the action taken by the Government against the dealers found guilty in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check such malpractices?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (c) The possibility of adulteration of petrol/diesel by some unscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out due to the large price difference between petrol/diesel and various adulterants available in the market which could be used for adulteration. In addition to adulteration, there are also cases of short delivery of petrol/diesel by the retail outlets. The public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) inspect their retail outlet and take action against the dealers found indulging in various irregularities, including those related to adulteration and short delivery, in terms of the provisions under the Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG) and Dealership Agreements. The details of inspection carried out by the OMCs and the cases of adulteration and short delivery detected during the last three years are given below:-

Year	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
No. of Inspections	91844	104488	106310
Suspected cases of adulteration	254	225	229
Short delivery	319	241	542

The State-wise details of the number of adulteration and short delivery cases detected by the OMCs during 01.01.2006 to 30.06.06 are given in the enclosed Statement. During this period, OMCs terminated 15 dealerships and suspended sales in 376 cases.

(d) The provisions under the MDG have been made stricter with effect from 1.8.2005 and they now provide for termination of dealerships in the case of adulteration being established at the first instance itself. The State Governments have been requested to galvanize their inspection machinery to take action against irregularities under the Control Orders issued by the Government under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. In addition, OMCs have been asked to introduce technological innovations in controlling adulteration. These new initiatives include automation of retail outlets, installation of Global Positioning System (GPS) on tank trucks carrying petroleum products to monitor their movements and introduction of marker in PDS Kerosene to check its diversion for adulteration.

**Statement**

Name of the States/UTs	Number of adulteration/ short delivery cases detected during 01.01.2006 to 30.06.2006
Andhra Pradesh	21
Arunachal Pradesh	1
Bihar	6
Chhattisgarh	6
Delhi	11
Gujarat	9
Haryana	36
Himachal Pradesh	4
Jammu and Kashmir	5
Jharkhand	17
Karnataka	6
Kerala	11
Madhya Pradesh	13
Maharashtra	20
Orissa	15
Punjab	48
Rajasthan	33
Tamil Nadu	19
Uttar Pradesh	60
Uttaranchal	10
West Bengal	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>

**Financial Assistance for Development of Holy Places**

\*67. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL:  
SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has provided financial assistance for development of holy places in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the holy places alongwith the financial assistance provided during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the Union Government has received requests from various State Governments for financial assistance for development of holy places;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A Statement-I showing the details of the financial assistance provided by the Ministry of Tourism for development of holy places during the last three years is enclosed.

(c) to (e) The Ministry of Tourism provides central financial assistance to various States/UT Governments for development of tourist places including holy places, which are prioritized in consultation with them. Statement-II showing the holy places prioritized in consultation with the State/UT Governments for extending central financial assistance during the current financial year is enclosed.

**Statement I**

*The details of Holy Place alongwith financial assistance sanctioned and funds released by the Ministry of Tourism during the last three years of the Tenth Plan for development of Holy Places in the country*

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl.No.	State/UT	Year	Name of Project	Sanctioned amount	Released amount
1	2	3	4	5	
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2003-04	Integrated development of Amravati under Buddhist Circuit	300.00	300.00

1	2	3	4	5
2.		2003-04	Development of Nagarjunasargar under Buddhist Circuit	500.00 500.00
3.		2004-05	Integrated development of Tourism circuit, Hyderabad-Nalgonda-Khammam	797.47 637.98
4.		-do-	Development of Puttaparthi, Ananthpur District as a Rural Tourism Destination	49.50 39.00
5.		2005-06	Integrated development of Lower Krishna Valley Buddhist Circuit	800.00 240.00
6.	Assam	2003-04	Development around Kamakhya temple	151.27 151.27
7.	Bihar	2003-04	Landscaping and development at Tomb of Malik Ibrahim Bayyu & Temple	134.00 134.00
8.		-do-	Development scheme of Bodhgaya-Phase-II	462.53 370.00
9.		-do-	Minor works at Bodhgaya	5.89 5.89
10.		-do-	Development at Nav Nalanda Mahavira	352.00 352.00
11.		2005-06	Development of Bodhgaya-Rajgir-Nalanda under the scheme of Integrated development of Tourist Circuits	768.12 614.50
12.	Gujarat	2003-04	Development of area around Somnath Temple	500.00 500.00
13.		2004-05	Renovation and development of Vicinity of Sun Temple at Modhera	118.93 95.14
14.	Haryana	2003-04	Renovation/Strengthening of Tourist infrastructure at Kurukshetra, Jyotisar and Pipli	108.25 108.25
15.		-do-	Installation of Mahabharat Ratha at Jyotisar, Kurukshetra	210.00 210.00
16.		-do-	Development of Kurukshetra, Tapovan Park (Phase-II)	125.84 125.84
17.		-do-	Development in Udgam Sthal at Adi Badri	178.79 178.79
18.		-do-	Const. of Archaeological complex at Abi badri	72.00 36.00
19.	Himachal Pradesh	2004-05	Integrated development of Kangra tourist circuit	800.00 640.00

1	2	3	4	5	
20.	Jammu and Kashmir	2003-04	Strengthening of infrastructure on Amamath Yatra Circuit	100.00	100.00
21.		-do-	Integrated Development of J&K Tourist Circuit. (Kheer Bhawani, Baba Reshi, Shrine at Ashimaquan, Amamath Shrine, Mattan Shrine etc.)	735.00	735.00
22.		2004-05	Tourist circuit at Lovdora Qazigund-Assari-I-Sharief Hazratbal-Hassan Villa	800.00	640.00
23.		2005-06	Integrated Development of tourist circuit at Baltal Holy cave-Panjtami-Sheshnag-Pahalgam in J&K	700.00	560.00
24.		-do-	Development of Shiv-Khori, Udampur	411.51	329.20
25.	Jharkhand	2004-05	Development of Tirthankar-Boddhisatwa circuit	494.57	393.33
26.		2005-06	Integrated development of Deoghar	417.57	334.05
27.	Karnataka	2003-04	Floodlighting at Hoyasala Temple at Halobid	61.04	61.00
28.		2004-05	Integrated development of Badami-Aihole-Pattadakal-Mahakoota circuit in North Karnataka	800.00	800.00
29.		-do-	Integrated development of Melkote-Belur-Halebid-Sravanabelagola circuit in South Karnataka	798.50	636.80
30.	Kerala	2005-06	Integrated development of Pilgrim Tourism Circuit	704.45	563.36
31.	Madhya Pradesh	2003-04	Development of Bhadya Kund near Shivpuri	9.00	8.84
32.		-do-	Development around western group of temples, Khajuraho circuit	190.80	190.80
33.		2004-05	Development of Omkareshwar	327.79	262.23
34.		-do-	Development of Maheswar	136.00	108.60
35.		-do-	Development of Simhastha at Ujjain	110.66	88.48
36.		-do-	Destination development of Amarkantak	489.60	391.68
37.		2005-06	Integrated development of tourist circuit Sanchi-Bhopal-Bhojpur-Bhimbetka-Pachmarhi	715.45	572.00
38.	Maharashtra	2003-04	Development of Pandharpur	96.51	96.51

1	2	3	4	5	
39.		2003-04	Const. of covered shelters at Gyaneshwar Maharaj	93.62	93.62
40.		-do-	Development of Pandharpur Deu and Alandi Circuit	400.00	400.00
41.		-do-	Additional project at Pandharpur circuit	94.60	94.60
42.	Orissa	2004-05	Integrated development of Buddhist Circuit at Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri, Udaigir and Langudi	740.67	592.52
43.		2005-06	Development of Sakhi Gopal in District Puri under Destination Development	294.04	235.23
44.		-do-	Integrated development of Bhubaneswra-Dhaulti-Puri-Konark Tourist circuit	720.09	576.07
45.	Punjab	2003-04	Tourist infrastructure around Amritsar	81.00	23.30
46.	Rajasthan	2003-04	Dormitories, tent platforms and Sulabh Sauchalaya at Pushkar	238.57	238.57
47.		-do-	Const. of Vishhramsthali at Dargarh Sharif at Ajmer	187.00	187.00
48.		-do-	Integrated development of Pushkar	261.43	261.43
49.		-do-	Purchase of Swiss cottages and deluxe cottages for Pushkar	100.00	100.00
50.		-do-	Renovation of Vishramsthali at Pushkar Road, Ajmer	68.50	54.80
51.		2005-06	Integrated development of Mewar-Vagad Circuit comprising of places in Udaipur-Rajsamand-Chittorgarh-Banswara-Doongerpur Distts.	580.00	464.00
52.		-do-	Development of Braj Bhoomi religious tourism circuit comprising of Barsana, Jheel, Kalia Devi, Poonchari, Neelkanth, Bharthrihari in Rajasthan	447.07	381.65
53.		-do-	Integrated development of Pushkar	434.04	347.23
54.	Sikkim	2005-06	Refurbishment of Gonjang Ugyen Donga Chhokorling Ningma Monastery	6.67	1.33
55.	Tamil Nadu	2003-04	Development at Rameshwaram as a part of Vivekananda circuit	168.24	54.00

1	2	3	4	5
56.		2003-04	Floodlighting of Irateshvara temple	24.05 22.00
57.		-do-	Floodlighting of Sri Brigadeeshwara Temple, Thanjavur	16.50 16.50
58.		-do-	SEL show at Vivekananda Rock Memorial	225.00 202.00
59.		-do-	Floodlighting of Vivekananda Rock	32.12 32.00
60.		2004-05	Infrastructure and destination development of Mahabalipuram Phase-II	432.00 345.00
61.		2005-06	Destination development of Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu	426.42 341.14
62.		-do-	Integrated development of Arupadi Veedugal tourist circuit (Murugan Temple Circuit)	798.97 639.17
63.		-do-	Jain Teertha Kshetras circuit in Tamil Nadu Tirumalai-Mattupatti-Tirunathar Kunru-Vallimalai	192.00 48.00
64.		-do-	Chozhanattu Thirupathigal tourist circuit	500.00 400.00
65.		-do-	Development of Adi Sankara tourist circuit	443.00 354.40
66.	Uttar Pradesh	2003-04	SEL show at Samath	352.00 316.00
67.		-do-	Development and beautification of Ram ki Paidi Ayodhya	98.18 98.18
68.		2004-05	Renovation of Radha Kund and Shyam Kund in Mathura District	145.35 116.28
69.		-do-	Development of Ma Shakumbhari Devi Temple (2) Baba Haridas Mandir and (3) Qutabe Alam Dargah at Gangoh in Saharanpur Distt.	49.28 40.00
70.		-do-	Extension and Development of Assi Ghat at Varanasi	464.78 362.00
71.		-do-	Renovation and Beautification of Kusum Sarovar at Govardhan	100.77 80.66
72.		2005-06	Beautification of Kali Vahan Temple at Etawah	46.90 37.52

1	2	3	4	5
73.		2004-05	Development of Garhmukteswar-Brij Ghat	256.80 205.44
74.		-do-	Renovation and Beautification of Chhatris of Goverdhan at District Mathura	58.60 46.88
75.		-do-	Development of Ghuisarnath Dham, Pratapgarh	258.09 206.47
76.		-do-	Preparation of sight survey plan of Parikrama path for Govadhan and Vindavan Research Institute at Vrindavan	0.79 0.79
77.	Uttaranchal	2003-04	SEL show at Haridwar	192.00 173.00
78.		2004-05	Integrated Development of Badrinath Dham Tourist circuit	702.09 561.67
79.		2005-06	Integrated development of Hemkunt Sahib-Ghangharia Valley of flowers circuit in Distt. Chamoli	653.54 522.83
80.		-do-	Development of Kedamath	453.13 362.50
81.		-do-	Development of Gangotri (Distt. Uttarkashi) as a tourist destination	481.42 385.13
82.	West Bengal	2003-04	Development of Dakshineswar Kali temple complex Kolkata	132.24 113.68
83.		-do-	Repair of bathing ghats and fencing of the area River Hooghly in front of Sri Sarda Math, Dakshineswar	62.82 62.82
84.		2005-06	Kalighar re-development project at Kolkata	500.00 400.00

**Statement II***Projects of Holy Places Prioritised for the year 2006-07*

Sl.No.	State	Destination	Circuit
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh		Buddhist Circuit
2.	Assam	Kamakhya and Satellite Pilgrimage Township of Hazo	
3.	Bihar	Mandeshwari Temple	Bodhgaya-Nalanda-Rajgir

1	2	3	4
4.	Gujarat	Dwarka	
5.	Haryana		Kurukshetra
6.	Himachal Pradesh	Dharamshala	
7.	Jharkhand	Parasnath	
8.	Madhya Pradesh	1. Panna 2. Mandu	1. Amarkantak-Mandla-Dindoi 2. Hasangabad-Maheshwar-Onkareshwar-Barwani
9.	Maharashtra	Omkeshwar	Buddhist Circuit including Elephanta
10.	Orissa		Bhubaneswar-Puri-Konark
11.	Punjab	Fatehgarh Sahib including Alam Khas Bagh with SEL show	Pilgrim Circuit
12.	Rajasthan	Ajmer Sharif	
13.	Sikkim		Pilgrim Circuit at Sorang
14.	Tamil Nadu	Madurai, Thanjavur, Kanyakumari	
15.	Tripura	Chaturdashi Devta Bari	
16.	Uttar Pradesh	Aligarh	1. Agra-Fatehpur-Sikri-Mahtura 2. Varanasi-Samath 3. Brajbhoomi-Vrindavan
17.	Uttaranchal	Yamunotri Tehri	Rishikesh-Haridwar

#### Birds Hit Accidents/Incidents

\*68. SHRI K.S. RAO:  
SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of accidents/incidents occurred due to lack of communication and failure in navigation system during each of the last three years and the current year;

(b) the number of birds hit accidents/incidents occurred during the said period;

(c) the steps taken to check such accidents/incidents in future;

(d) whether the Government has taken any steps to regulate effectively the increasing volume of air traffic in the country and ensure aircraft safety both on the ground and in the air; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Due to lack of communication and failure in navigation system no accident took place during the last three years. However, there were 03, 04, 00 and 02 incidents attributable of communication and navigation facilities during 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 (till date), respectively.

(b) Due to bird hit no accident occurred during the last 03 years. There were 130, 185, 189 and 40 incidents due to bird hits during 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 (till date) respectively.

(c) Government have ensured many preventive measures. Airfield Environment Management Committees have been constituted at those airports where scheduled flights operate to identify the sources of bird attraction and take remedial steps for prevention of such incidents. Various steps have been taken to reduce bird hits inside and outside the airports such as proper disposal of garbage, prevention of water logging, coverage of garbage dalaos, establishment of modern abattoirs, scaring and shooting of birds etc.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. Aircraft Act, 1934 has been amended to make disposal of garbage in the open within 10 kilometres of the airport as a cognizable offence. Also New high speed exist taxiways at Delhi and Mumbai airport are being constructed. A parallel taxi track is being constructed for Delhi Airport for reduction of runway occupancy time. Air Traffic Control (ATC) Procedures have been revised. Dedicated Clearance Delivery Position has been implemented at Mumbai and Delhi during peak period time. But on general aviation aircraft during the peak periods at Delhi and Mumbai airport has been imposed. ATC automation system at Delhi and Mumbai airports are being upgraded. Advanced Surface Movement Guidance and Control System (ASMGCS) is being installed at Delhi Airport. Automatic Dependence Surveillance System—C/Controller Pilot Data Link Communication has been provided at Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Kolkata airports.

#### **Flying Clubs/Academies**

\*69. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Flying Clubs/Academies functioning in the country;

(b) the number of candidates got pilot training in these institutions during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the Government is considering to establish more Flying Clubs/Academies for pilot training to meet the future demand of pilots;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which these are likely to be established?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) There are 17 Flying Clubs/Institutes in the country approved by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) imparting training for Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) after successfully clearing the DGCA examination for grant of CPL.

(b) 386, 499 and 822 candidates were trained during the year 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) It has been proposed to establish a premier flying training institute at Gondia in Maharashtra to be named "Rajiv Gandhi National Flying Training Institute".

(e) The proposed training institute is likely to be operational in the year 2007-08.

*[Translation]*

#### **Reservation for SCs/STs In Private Sector**

\*70. SHRI GIRIDHARI YADAV:  
SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA:

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

(a) the progress made by the Government in regard to the reservation in jobs for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the private sector;

(b) whether Group of Ministers (GoMs) constituted for the purpose has submitted its report to the Government;

(c) if so, the recommendations made by the GoMs and the follow-up action taken by the Government thereon; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the time by which it is likely to be submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) to (d) In pursuance of the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), a Group of Ministers (GOM) was constituted to examine the issues of affirmative action, including reservation in private sector, and 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. The GOM has discussed

the matter with the four major Industry Associations and also obtained the opinions of three legal luminaries. The industry associations are in favour of affirmative action but not in favour of reservations. The legal opinion is that a Constitutional amendment(s) will be required to introduce reservation in the Private Sector. The matter is under consideration of the Government. At this stage, it is difficult to indicate a time frame.

#### Crash of Aircraft and Helicopters

\*71. SHRI MODH. TAHIR:  
SHRIMATI ARCHANA NAYAK:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of fighter aircraft and helicopters crashed during 2006, till-date;

(b) the reasons for such crashes;

(c) the loss of lives and properties suffered as a result thereof;

(d) whether each crash has been investigated; and

(e) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) A total number of 3 fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force have crashed in three separate accidents during the period from 1st January 2006 up to 20th July, 2006. However, there have been no accidents of the aircraft of the Indian Army and Indian Navy during this period. The details regarding the accidents are as follows:

Sl.No.	Date/ Place of Accident	Fighter Aircraft	Helicopter	Cause of accident	Pilot/ Service Personnel killed	Fatal (Civilian)	Loss of Property (if any)
1.	17.1.2006 Jamnagar	MiG-21	—	Explosion of rocket during firing	—	—	—
2.	21.3.2006 Barmer, Rajasthan	MiG-21	—	Human Error (Mishandling of controls)	Two pilots	—	—
3.	8.6.2006 Jamnagar, Gujarat	MiG-29	—	In-flight fire	—	—	—

Besides the above fighter aircraft accidents, a Kiran Trainer aircraft also crashed on 18th March, 2006 at Bidar, in which two pilots were killed.

Each aircraft accident in the Defence Forces is investigated through a Court of Inquiry (Col) and remedial actions according to the recommendations of the Col are taken. Besides, a continuous and multi-faceted effort is always underway in the Defence Forces to enhance and upgrade flight safety. Measures to enhance the quality of training to improve the skill levels, ability to exercise sound judgment and situational awareness of pilots are being pursued. Constant interaction with Original Equipment Manufactures (OEMs) both indigenous and foreign are also maintained to overcome the technical defects of aircraft. Anti-bird measures are also undertaken.

*[English]*

#### Indo-China Defence Ties

\*72. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT "BACHDA":  
SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

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

(b) if so, the issues discussed and the outcome thereof;

(c) whether any Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between India and China on defence related matters; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Raksha Mantri, Pranab Mukherjee visited China from May 28th to 2nd June, 2006, during which he held discussions with his Chinese counterpart General Cao Gangchuan and had separate meetings with the Chinese Premier H.E. Mr. Wen Jiabo, Vice Chairman of Central Military Commission General Guo Boxiang and Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing. The discussions by the Raksha Mantri with the Chinese defence leadership covered international situation and regional cooperation, India-China relations, defence exchanges and dialogue, boundary question, Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), sharing of information, etc. Raksha Mantri's visit has institutionalized the mechanism of high-level exchanges between India and China in the military field and has contributed to greater mutual understanding on a range of issues and to the enhancement of trust between the two sides. During the visit, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for exchanges and cooperation in the field of defence between India and China. The MoU provides for institutionalized framework for conducting defence exchanges and dialogue, joint military exercises and training, observation of each other's military exercises, structured study tours, training at each other's military academies, participation in seminars, etc.

#### **Increase in Petrol and Diesel Prices**

\*73. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:  
SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE:

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

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

(b) if so, the reasons and the justification therefor and the extent upto which these have been increased;

(c) whether this increase will have-cascading effect on the prices of essential commodities;

(d) if so, whether the Government is considering any proposal to reduce the Central taxes on petrol and diesel with a view to providing relief to the consumers;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the others steps being taken by the Government to control the situation to avoid further increase in the prices of petrol and diesel?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The prices of crude oil in the international market have risen very steeply in recent years resulting in an increase of petroleum product prices for consumers. The Indian basket averaged \$66.55/barrel in June 2006 and recorded an all time high of \$73.96/bbl on 14.7.2006, compared to the price level of \$23.31/bbl in March 2002. In view of the fact that 76% of four crude requirement is met through imports, the escalating international prices necessitated a corresponding price increase in petroleum products. To partly mitigate the burden of oil marketing companies on account of increase in international prices, the retail selling prices of petrol & diesel were moderately increased by Rs. 4/litre and Rs. 2/litre respectively, effective 6.6.2006 in Delhi.

(c) The impact of fuel prices on inflation has been assessed as marginal, considering that the weights of petrol and diesel in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) are only 0.89% and 2.02% respectively.

(d) to (f) Government has recently revised the methodology of pricing in respect of petrol and diesel by implementing trade parity pricing in stead of import parity pricing, as recommended by Dr. Rangarajan Committee. The customs duty on petrol and diesel has also been reduced from 10% to 7.5% in June 2006.

Government has taken all possible measures to ensure that there is no hardship to common man on account of price rise. Despite unprecedented rise in international prices, Government did not increase the prices of PDS kerosene and LPG to protect the interest of the common man and the weaker sections of society. Government adopted the principle of equitable burden sharing amongst three stakeholders, namely, the consumers, the PSU oil companies and the Government to protect the interest of the common man and the vulnerable sections of society. Government along with oil companies has decided to absorb 87.5% of the burden of the escalated international prices of crude oil, amounting to Rs. 73,500 crores, leaving only a balance of 12.5% to be borne by the consumers by way of increase in petrol and diesel prices. Government has decided to issue bonds worth Rs. 28,300 crores during 2006-07 to oil marketing companies to partially compensate for State Governments

to moderate the impact of price rise on the common man, ten State Governments, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu (diesel only), Uttaranchal, Manipur and Assam, have reduced the sales tax on Petrol and Diesel to reduce the burden of the recent price hike.

#### **Welfare Projects for Ex-servicemen**

\*74. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government had decided to encourage projects for the welfare of the ex-servicemen contemplated by the State Governments;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any State Government has approached the Union Government to initiate projects for ex-servicemen;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) The Department of Ex-servicemen Welfare encourages State Governments to play an active role in promoting welfare projects for ex-servicemen.

Various re-employment/self employment schemes being run by the Central Government for the welfare of ex-servicemen inter-alia include the following:—

- (a) Ex-servicemen Security Agencies being sponsored by Directorate General Resettlement;
- (b) Ex-Servicemen Coal Transport Companies;
- (c) Scheme for attachment of Tippers of widows/ disabled ex-servicemen with Ex-Servicemen Coal Transport Companies;
- (d) Allotment of Oil Product Agencies under Defence Category;
- (e) Allotment of Mother Dairy Booths;
- (f) Management of CNG Stations in National Capital Region (NCR);
- (g) Ecological task forces of the Territorial Army.

The Department of Ex-servicemen Welfare had requested some of the State Governments to explore the possibility of providing self-employment to ex-servicemen and formulate project proposals.

The Governments of Maharashtra, Haryana, Uttaranchal, Bihar and Punjab have formulated proposals for providing self-employment to ex-servicemen in the food processing industry, which were forwarded to the Union Ministry of Food Processing for further processing in consultation with the concerned State Governments.

#### **Allocation of Funds for Development of Tourism**

\*75. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount allocated/released to various State Governments/UTs for development of tourism during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has any mechanism to ensure full utilisation of funds meant for tourism related projects;

(d) if so, whether the Government proposes to strengthen the tourism related infrastructure for attracting the foreign tourists; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) A Statement showing the total amount allocated/released to various State/UT Governments for development of tourism during the last three years is enclosed.

(c) Ministry of Tourism has the following mechanism to ensure full utilisation of funds meant for tourism related projects:

- (i) The implementation of the sanctioned projects are monitored regularly by the Ministry of Tourism in the review meetings held with the State/UT Governments and the implementing agencies.
- (ii) Domestic field offices of the Ministry are also actively involved in monitoring the projects at the field level to ensure expeditious implementation of the projects.

- (iii) Ministry of Tourism, while sanctioning the projects also fixes time limits for completion of the projects in consultation with the State/UT Governments.
- (iv) The State Governments are also impressed upon to intimate the progress of the implementation of the projects in the form of quarterly progress report prescribed for this purpose.
- (v) State level Monitoring Committees, headed by the Secretary (Tourism) of the respective States/UTs also monitor the progress of implementation of the sanctioned projects.

(d) and (e) Ministry of Tourism extends central financial assistance for tourism infrastructure development to States/UT Governments, Central Government Agencies, Public Sector Undertakings and Private Sector Companies under its following schemes:

- (i) Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits
- (ii) Assistance for Large Revenue Generating Projects
- (iii) Incentives to Accommodation Infrastructure Subsidies.

In addition, Ministry of Tourism approves and classifies Hotels, Heritage properties, Apartment Hotels, Guest Houses, Time share resorts, Bed and Breakfast establishments to ensure standard accommodation to tourists. Ministry of Tourism has also been in constant touch with various State Governments and land owning agencies to follow investor friendly land policies, creation of land banks and adoption of the policy of single window clearance for tourism projects.

**Statement**

*State-wise Tourism Projects sanctioned during the last three years of Tenth Five Year Plan*

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Sl.No.	State/UT	2003-04			2004-05			2005-06		
		No. of Project Sancd.	Amount Sancd.	Amount Released	No. of Project Sancd.	Amount Sancd.	Amount Released	No. of Project Sancd.	Amount Sancd.	Amount Released
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	Andhra Pradesh	6	946.50	896.44	16	2827.19	2240.68	7	2,615.82	1,700.00
2.	Assam	3	313.46	313.06	8	986.03	766.22	10	2,140.00	1,898.45
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	6	1044.60	700.00	9	1325.50	927.96	10	2,240.16	1,655.21
4.	Bihar	6	1019.42	913.89	7	1901.43	1527.71	3	1,212.23	722.49
5.	Chhattisgarh	6	1005.00	364.00	6	1117.94	897.93	7	1,775.59	1,436.54
6.	Goa	2	36.76	34.76	3	110.00	38.00	1	10.00	8.00
7.	Gujarat	8	920.51	815.82	2	138.93	111.14	5	2,011.58	1,169.04
8.	Haryana	16	1215.38	879.23	6	693.55	513.64	7	639.71	515.77
9.	Himachal Pradesh	4	182.32	85.00	12	2680.00	2161.00	6	1,645.00	921.00
10.	Jammu and Kashmir	5	595.00	895.00	5	819.25	699.04	22	6,666.01	5,320.31
11.	Jharkhand	2	1109.00	774.60	2	945.91	756.72	5	1,227.27	697.76

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12.	Karnataka	14	932.86	792.51	12	2461.76	1937.37	8	1,706.52	1,001.21
13.	Kerala	6	608.50	564.15	10	2283.83	1820.33	13	4,858.88	3,889.90
14.	Madhya Pradesh	10	621.90	394.51	11	1595.19	942.21	12	3,047.39	2,419.54
15.	Maharashtra	10	931.83	914.58	10	1620.62	925.30	9	2,075.04	1,662.99
16.	Manipur	1	82.44	24.73	0	0.00	0.00	2	49.80	39.84
17.	Meghalaya	2	40.22	24.92	2	963.30	807.91	1	5.00	4.00
18.	Mizoram	5	587.70	186.75	6	1086.35	382.38	10	2,273.41	1,687.29
19.	Nagaland	4	711.00	220.80	7	2250.69	1413.40	9	2,528.97	1,873.17
20.	Orissa	5	419.55	138.50	8	1320.74	1059.38	10	2,309.61	1,586.44
21.	Punjab	2	96.00	12.30	7	724.68	581.47	5	1,437.67	1,150.13
22.	Rajasthan	14	1644.81	1414.25	13	2516.61	1375.07	7	2,591.87	2,086.40
23.	Sikkim	8	1151.09	681.49	8	660.81	531.33	14	2,844.56	2,213.74
24.	Tamil Nadu	14	1339.82	850.53	7	1308.92	705.83	19	4,264.62	3,007.68
25.	Tripura	6	450.17	135.16	1	20.00	16.00	3	716.26	569.43
26.	Uttaranchal	4	230.44	203.94	7	2199.98	1750.73	13	2,738.00	2,193.18
27.	Uttar Pradesh	7	1115.80	916.26	9	1044.93	831.19	18	3,905.23	3,126.03
28.	West Bengal	10	717.44	384.34	10	513.04	407.43	5	989.35	792.48
29.	Andaman and Nicobar	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	1	6.25	5.00
30.	Chandigarh	2	10.00	8.00	3	467.00	373.60	1	13.70	13.70
31.	Dadar and Nagar Haveli	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	2	29.79	25.92
32.	Delhi	17	3316.28	3222.13	8	628.85	511.00	2	20.00	17.00
33.	Daman and Diu	1	265.07	238.56	0	0.00	0.00	4	262.28	208.61
34.	Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0	0	0
35.	Pondicherry	1	245.17	73.55	2	451.00	360.00	2	469.39	375.51
<b>Total</b>		<b>207</b>	<b>24185.84</b>	<b>18073.76</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>37663.83</b>	<b>27371.97</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>61316.96</b>	<b>46793.76</b>

Note- This includes the projects relating to Circuits, Destinations, Large Revenue Generating Projects, Rural Tourism (Software and Hardware) Projects, IT, Event, Fair & Festivals Projects.

**Cess on Petroleum Products**

\*76. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:  
SHRI HITEN BARMAN:

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

(a) whether cess is being recovered from crude oil producing companies under the Oil Industry Development Act, 1974;

(b) if so, the total amount collected by the Government through cess levied on petroleum products up to March, 2006; and

(c) the amounts of loans/grants released by the Oil Industry Development Board to public sector oil companies and other organizations for development purposes during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An amount of about Rs. 60830 crore has been collected by the Central Government through cess levied on crude oil up to March, 2006.

(c) The amounts of loans/grants released by the Oil Industry Development Board to public sector oil companies and other organizations during each of the last three years are as under:

Year	(Rs. in Crore)	
	Loans	Grants
2003-04	520.00	77.21
2004-05	2211.83	75.18
2005-06	760.00	89.51

**Quality of Catering Service**

\*77. SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is decline in quality of catering service in trains and at stations;

(b) if so, the number of complaints regarding supply/selling of sub-standard food in trains/stations received during 2005-06 and 2006-07, Zone-wise;

(c) the action taken on such complaints; and

(d) the measures being taken/to be taken to check quality of food served/sold in trains and at stations and to improve the catering service?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) to (d) No, Sir. Improvement in catering services is an ongoing process. This includes maintenance of hygiene, standard and quality of food services, introduction of good quality packaging/use of biodegradable material, revision of menus, procurement of raw material from approved sources etc. Regular/surprise checks are conducted by the railway administration to monitor the catering services and remedial action is taken.

A list showing number of complaints received and action taken thereto for the year 2005-06 and 2006-07 (up to May) is enclosed as Statement.

In order to ensure that standardized hygienic food and beverage are supplied to rail users prescribed hygienic norms are followed by the base kitchens and other cooking units. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) have already undertaken renovation of base kitchens/cooking units. Replacement of old/defective furniture, food service equipments and other gadgets, gas pipelines etc. are undertaken on need basis. In addition to above massive training programs are conducted for catering staff to upgrade the quality of services. Good quality raw materials are procured from reputed cooperative societies approved by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Agmark standards as applicable. To ensure the quality of food "Services Monitoring Cells" (SMC) have been created at Zonal level by IRCTC to take immediate remedial action.

**Statement**

Sl.No.	Railway	Year 2005-06 and 2006-07 (Up to May)	Complaints			Inspections		
			No. of complaints	Not substan- tiated	Action taken	No. of Inspections	Found satisfactory	Action taken
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Central	2005-06	118	7	111	446	123	323
		2006-07	44	25	19	84	42	42
2.	Eastern	2005-06	6	6	0	12	0	12
		2006-07	0	0	0	2	0	2
3.	Northern	2005-06	187	26	161	648	43	605
		2006-07	36	2	34	122	59	63
4.	North Eastern	2005-06	9	0	9	496	410	86
		2006-07	1	0	1	159	158	1
5.	Northeast Frontier	2005-06	2	0	2	40	0	40
		2006-07	2	0	2	0	0	0
6.	Southern	2005-06	245	174	71	2280	250	2030
		2006-07	17	12	5	277	12	265
7.	South Central	2005-06	13	1	12	309	69	240
		2006-07	3	3	0	105	105	0
8.	South Eastern	2005-06	24	8	16	607	341	266
		2006-07	0	0	0	119	67	52
9.	Western	2005-06	61	21	40	781	266	515
		2006-07	10	6	4	20	8	12
10.	East Central	2005-06	19	2	17	657	517	140
		2006-07	3	1	2	42	29	13
11.	East Coast	2005-06	25	6	19	229	0	229
		2006-07	0	0	0	25	0	25
12.	North Central	2005-06	46	40	4	660	316	264
		2006-07	131	0	0	250	80	170

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13.	North Western	2005-06	4	3	1	819	757	62
		2006-07	3	2	1	59	51	8
14.	Southeast Central	2005-06	11	6	5	191	191	0
		2006-07	3	1	2	105	105	0
15.	South Western	2005-06	22	3	19	206	80	126
		2006-07	15	0	15	70	12	58
16.	West Central	2005-06	35	4	31	356	206	150
		2006-07	2	0	2	16	3	13
17.	IRCTC	2005-06	202	20	182	313	207	106
		2006-07	225	0	225	544	391	153
	Total	2005-06	1029	327	700	9050	3776	5214
		2006-07	495	52	312	1999	1122	877

[Translation]

**Budget Hotels and Food Plazas**

\*79. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY:  
SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have identified various sites adjoining potential railway stations for construction of budget hotels;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the progress made for construction of such hotels so far;

(c) whether the Railways are planning to invite private sector participation in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Railways also propose to set up Food Plazas at various places;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the time by which these are likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is planned to open 100 Budget Hotels. Tenders have been opened for 5 stations viz. Madurai, Vijaywada, Secunderabad, Chandigarh and Sealdah. Sites in 15 more stations have been finalized and are ready for floating tender. Sites for other stations are in various stages of finalization.

(c) Yes, Sir. The Budget Hotels will be set up through Public-Private Partnership.

(d) Tenders are floated for open competitive bidding under transparent, 2 packet system *i.e.* Technical & Financial.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) 37 Food Plazas have been commissioned till now. Licence for another 5 Food Plazas have been issued and are under process of commissioning. Tenders for another 11 locations have been opened and are under scrutiny. 9 more sites are under finalization.

(g) No timeframe has been set for setting up of the Food Plazas.

*(English)***Modernisation of Non-Metro Airports**

\*80. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI:  
SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to modernise 35 non-metro airports of the country;

(b) if so, the names of the airports proposed to be modernised alongwith the estimated expenditure likely to be incurred thereon;

(c) whether the tenders for the purpose have been issued;

(d) if so, the details alongwith the time by which the modernisation work is likely to be started;

(e) whether any private participations has been invited in this regard; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Airports Authority of India (AAI) decided to modernise 35 selected non-metro airports to world class standards with focus on airside and city side development. These airports are located at Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Guwahati, Jaipur, Udaipur, Thiruvananthapuram, Lucknow, Goa, Madurai, Mangalore, Agatti, Aurangabad, Khajuraho, Rajkot, Vadodara, Bhopal, Indore, Nagpur, Vishakhapatnam, Trichy, Bhubaneshwar, Coimbatore, Patna, Port Blair, Varanasi, Agartala, Dehradun, Imphal, Ranchi, Raipur, Agra, Chandigarh, Dimapur, Jammu and Pune. A Task Force constituted to deliberate on financing plan for development of regional airports inter-alia recommended Rs. 4,662 crore for development of airside and terminal building and Rs. 1,500 crore for city-side development of the 35 non-metro airports. The Committee on Infrastructure has approved that:—

(i) Development of all the 35 non-metro airports may be taken up.

(ii) For some major airports, wholly owned subsidiaries of AAI may be considered.

(iii) Whereas the air side development of airports could be taken up by AAI, the city-side development could be taken up through Public Private Participation (PPP).

(iv) Development of airports in the NE region must be taken up by AAI on a priority basis.

Development of the 35 non-metro airports is likely to be completed by the year 2010-11.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

**Restoration of Ancient Manuscripts**

400. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that old and ancient manuscripts are lying in Museums and other places outside India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to restore the invaluable treasure of ancient India?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The Government has established the National Mission for Manuscripts in 2003 to locate, catalogue, conserve and disseminate India's manuscripts. The Mission is making efforts to collect details and compile catalogues of Indian manuscripts in Germany, UK and USA. However a comprehensive survey of India manuscripts in museums and institutions outside the country has not been made. With a view to restore the invaluable manuscript heritage of India, the National Manuscript Mission is working towards creation of a digital resource of manuscripts on collections abroad, by making digital copies. The Mission is working toward expanding its international network to document and conserve the invaluable manuscript treasure of India.

**Free Education to Children of Martyrs and ex-Servicemen**

401. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the children of martyrs and ex-servicemen are provided free education alongwith boarding facility;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to set up hostels at District and Tehsil level to provide free education to the children of martyrs and ex-servicemen; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) and (b) Children of Armed Forces personnel killed/missing or permanently disabled in 1962, 1965, 1971 wars, Op PAWAN, Op MEGHDOOT and all post MEGHDOOT operations in India and abroad including Counter Insurgency Operation only, studying in Government/ Government aided schools/educational institutes, Military/ Sainik Schools and others schools recognized by the Central or State Governments including the autonomous organizations financed entirely by Central/State Governments are entitled following educational concessions:

- (i) Complete exemption from tuition fee (full amount) and other fees (Capitation fee and Caution money not included) levied by the educational institutions concerned (including charges levied for the schools bus maintained by the school or actual fares paid for railway pass for students or bus fare certified by the Head of Institutes).
- (ii) Grants to meet hostels charges in full for those studying in boarding schools and colleges.
- (iii) **Cost of Books and Stationery:** Rs. 250/- (Rupees Two hundred and fifty only) per annum per student or the amount claimed by the student, whichever is less.
- (iv) **Cost of Uniform where this is Compulsory:** Rs. 810/- (Rupees Eight Hundred Ten only) at the maximum during 1st year and Rs. 350/- for the subsequent years per annum per student or the amount claimed by the student, whichever is less.
- (v) **Clothing:** Rs. 250/- (Rupees Two hundred fifty only) for the 1st year and Rs. 150/- for the subsequent year per annum per student, or the amount claimed by the student whichever is less.

The above educational concessions will be available upto the inclusive of the First Degree Course.

(c) and (d) No such proposal is under the consideration of the Government.

#### **Gauge Conversion of Nagpur-Nagbhid Railway Line**

402. SHRI SUBODH MOHITE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have conducted any survey for gauge conversion of Nagpur-Nagbhid railway line;

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

(c) the progress made on the said project so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) A survey for conversion of Nagpur-Nagbhir (106 Kms) line from narrow gauge to broad gauge was conducted in 2003-04. As per the survey report, the cost of gauge conversion of this line was assessed as Rs. 141.56 crore with a rate of return of (-) 5%. In view of non-remunerative nature of the line, heavy throw-forward of ongoing projects and acute resource constraints, it has not been found feasible to take up the work for the present.

*[Translation]*

#### **Upgradation of Railway Workshop at Kota Junction**

403. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to upgrade the Railway workshop at Kota Junction;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the funds earmarked for the project; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) A work for augmentation of facilities for overhauling liquefied petroleum gas tank wagons is in progress.

(b) The work was sanctioned in the year 2003-04 at anticipated cost of Rs. 2 crore. An expenditure of Rs. 1.11 crore has been incurred upto March, 2006 and

an outlay of Rs. 47.60 lakhs has been provided during 2006-07.

(c) The work is likely to be completed by March, 2007.

*[English]*

**Schemes for Improving Efficiency of NCC Cadets**

404. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has launched any new schemes/programmes for the qualitative improvement of the efficiency of National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds allocated to various States particularly Gujarat for NCC activities during each of the last three years and current year, State-wise; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government especially in respect of IT related defence system for NCC cadets?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The training presently being imparted to NCC cadets meets the aims of NCC. Qualitative improvement is a continuous process. To make NCC training more effective, adventure activities like mountaineering, competition rifle shooting, horse riding, parasailing, white water rafting, microlite aircraft flying and scuba diving have been extended to a large number of NCC cadets.

(c) A statement showing the details of fund allocated to Directorates of NCC concerned with various States and Union Territories including Gujarat for the purpose of NCC activities is enclosed.

(d) No such scheme has been instituted.

**Statement**

*Details of funds allocated to the Directorates of NCC in various States and Union Territories during each of the last three years and the current year*

Sl.No.	Name of Directorate	Funds Allocated (Rs. in crores)			
		2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andhra Pradesh	0.99	1.22	1.23	1.02
2.	Bihar and Jharkhand	0.77	1.49	1.04	0.14
3.	Delhi	0.39	0.49	2.73	5.25
4.	Gujarat	0.63	0.83	0.77	0.84
5.	Jammu and Kashmir	0.28	0.4	0.4	0.49
6.	Karnataka and Goa	0.82	1.13	1.27	0.79
7.	Kerala and Lakshadweep	0.61	0.63	0.77	0.97
8.	Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh	1.61	1.54	2.4	2.48
9.	Maharashtra	1.3	1.83	2.41	3.06
10.	North Eastern Region	0.61	0.96	1.06	1

1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Orissa	0.64	0.93	1	0.87
12.	Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh	0.7	0.92	0.77	1.07
13.	Rajasthan	0.51	0.77	0.75	0.73
14.	Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Andaman and Nicobar	0.75	1.17	0.92	1.13
15.	Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal	1.64	2.37	3.43	4.36
16.	West Bengal and Sikkim	1.01	1.6	1.7	2.98
Total		13.26	18.28	22.65	27.18

[English]

#### Scheduled Castes Sub-plan

405. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is implementing any special scheme named 'Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan';

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

(c) the funds allocation under the scheme during 2005-06 and 2006-07;

(d) whether the said scheme is applicable for all States; and

(e) if so, the details thereof alongwith the funds allocated to each State during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP) (earlier known as Special Component Plan) is not a scheme in itself. It is an umbrella strategy, for the overall development of Scheduled Castes. As per the guidelines issued by the Planning Commission, State Governments/UT Administrations and the Central Ministries are required to formulate and implement Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP) as part of their Annual Plans by earmarking Plan funds, in proportion to the percentage of SC population

in the respective States/UTs for ensuring rapid socio-economic development of Scheduled Castes.

(c) to (e) At present, 27 States/UTs having sizeable SC populations are implementing SCSP. Funds under SCSP are allocated by each State Government/UT Administration out of their Annual Plan funds.

#### Scheme for Promotion of Tourism in NE States

406. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:  
SHRI MOHAN RAWALE:  
SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to formulate any special scheme to promote tourism in the North Eastern States;

(b) if so, whether the "Inner Line Permit" is a hurdle in the development of tourism industry in the North East as published in the *Hindustan* dated May 15, 2006;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the time by which the 'Inner Line Permit' is likely to be abolished; and

(e) the extent of private sector participation therein?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Development & Promotion of tourism is primarily the responsibility of the State

Government/Union Territory. However, in order to give boost to tourism in the North Eastern States, Central Financial Assistance amount to Rs. 12709.57 lakhs has been sanctioned by the Government of India for tourism infrastructure development during the financial year 2005-06. In addition, Ministry of Tourism has produced collaterals and promoted and marketed North-East as a tourism destination through print and electronic media and also by enabling them to participate in international travel marts.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The 'Inner Line Permit' falls within the purview of the State Government and it is enforced or relaxed by them based on the prevalent security scenario, local needs and tourism trends. No time frame has been drawn out by the State Governments regarding abolishing this permit.

(e) Private sector participation is encouraged in promotion of different segments of tourism sector.

*[English]*

#### **Guidelines/Rules on merger/Takeover of Airlines**

407. SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has framed any guidelines/rules regarding transfer of airport infrastructure in case of merger or takeover of airlines; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) The M/o Civil Aviation has formulated and published the Policy to be followed regarding use of airport infrastructure in case of merger/take over of airlines and sale/transfer of aircraft. The salient features of the same are as under:

The airlines that takes over the aircraft pursuant to merger/take over or sale/transfer of the aircraft will be allowed usage right over airport infrastructure like parking bays, landing slots etc., which are allotted by Airport Operator without any payment, subject to the following conditions:

- (i) Only the user rights over such infrastructure that are given to an airline on non-payment basis e.g. parking bays, landing slots etc. may be allowed to be used by the airline that takes over the aircraft. For all over rights, the terms of lease/sale agreement between the airport operator and the airline may apply.
- (ii) The ownership over such infrastructure would continue to vest with Government/airport operator and therefore, cannot be transferred by one airline to the other airlines in any event.
- (iii) User rights may be allowed to be used by the airline that takes over the aircraft only in respect of those rights, which are actually under use by the airline that transfer the aircraft. All other rights will be taken over by the Government/airport operator.
- (iv) The user rights will be available with the airline that takes over the aircraft only till such time that the infrastructure concerned is under actual use. If the airlines that takes over the aircraft does not use the concerned infrastructure, it will lose the user rights over the infrastructure.

#### **Setting up of Railway Station at Parvathipuram**

408. SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are considering to conduct a survey for setting up of a Railway Station at Parvathipuram in Kanyakumari District; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The proposal for setting up of a railway station at Parvathipuram is under examination from operating, engineering and financial points of view.

#### **Railway Safety Fund**

409. SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a non-lapsable special Railway Safety fund was set up in 2001;

(b) if so, the funds utilized during each of the last three years; and

(c) the total amount lying in the fund as on date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. A non-lapsable 'Special Railway Safety Fund' of Rs. 17000 has been set up w.e.f. 1.10.2001 to wipe out the arrears in renewal/replacement of over-aged assets within a time frame of 6 years.

(b) The position of Special Railway Safety Fund utilised during the last three years is as under:

(Rs. in crore)

Year	Expenditure (net)
2003-04	2583.77
2004-05	3677.78
2005-06	2783.14 (provisional)

(c) Since the inception of the fund Rs. 13567.76 crores (Provisional) have been appropriated and Rs. 12965.28 crores (provisional) have been utilized till 31.3.2006. As on 31.3.2006, balance under Special Railway Safety Fund was Rs. 602.48 crores. As per Budget Estimate 2006-07, contribution into this fund will be Rs. 2115 crores.

#### Quota of Petroleum Products for States

410. SHRI SUBRATA BOSE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government fixes the quota of petroleum products for the States;

(b) if so, the norms/criteria adopted therefor; and

(c) the quota of petroleum products has been fixed by the Union Government for each State for the year 2006-07, product-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) There is no State-wise quota fixed by the Government for the allocation of petroleum products except for PDS kerosene. PDS kerosene has been

allocated to the States/UTs on a historical basis. In accordance with the policy adopted by the Government of India in 2000, Kerosene (SKO) allocation for distribution under the Public Distribution System (PDS) was reduced every year beginning 2001-02 till 2003-04, taking into account the number of LPG connections released in each State/Union Territory. While the initial allotment for 2004-05 was based on the criteria adopted hitherto, additional allocations were made during the year to meet urgent emergent demand. For the year 2005-06, allocations have been maintained at the level of 2004-05, including additional allocations made during that year. For the 1st quarter and 2nd quarter of 2006-07, allocations have been maintained at the level of 2005-06. The State-wise allocation of PDS kerosene for the 1st and 2nd quarter (April to September) of 2006-07 is given in the enclosed Statement.

#### Statement

Name of States/UTs	1st Quarter of 2006-07 (April to June, 2006) (In MTs)	2nd Quarter of 2006-07 (July to September, 2006) (In MTs)
1	2	3
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1454	1454
Andhra Pradesh	129289	129289
Arunachal Pradesh	2314	2314
Assam	64501	64502
Bihar	161857	161857
Chandigarh	3266	3267
Chhattisgarh	36734	36734
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	695	695
Daman and Diu	529	529
Delhi	42121	42121
Goa	4803	4803
Gujarat	185939	185940
Haryana	36404	36405
Himachal Pradesh	12634	12634
Jammu and Kashmir	14489*	14489*
Jharkhand	52793	52794

1	2	3
Karnataka	115369	115369
Kerala	54077	54077
Lakshadweep	400#	000#
Madhya Pradesh	122152	122152
Maharashtra	319219	319219
Manipur	4976	4977
Meghalaya	5100	5100
Mizoram	1554	1554
Nagaland	3328	3328
Orissa	78744	78744
Pondicherry	3064	3064
Punjab	59298	59298
Rajasthan	99728	99728
Sikkim	1395	1395
Tamil Nadu	139732	139732
Tripura	7708	7708
Uttar Pradesh	310443	310443
Uttaranchal	22462	22462
West Bengal	188025	188026
<b>Total</b>	<b>2286596</b>	<b>228603</b>

\*Allocation for J&K State (other than Ladakh region) as given in two blocks *i.e.* given in two blocks *i.e.* Summer (April-September) @40% of annual allocation and Winter (October-March) @60% of annual allocation. This allocation is for other than Ladakh region of J&K State. For Ladakh region State Government of J&K is allowed to uplift the entire year's allocation *i.e.* 3600 MTs of SKO during summer months *i.e.* May to October, when the road remains open.

#Advance allocation for Lakshadweep for six months (April-September, 2006) has already been conveyed.

#### **Under-utilisation of Capacity in Ordnance Factory**

411. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the capacity utilisation of the ordnance factory at Itarsi during each of the last three years;

(b) the reasons for under-utilisation of capacity, if any; and

(c) the steps taken to improve the production capacity in the said factory?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Machine & Manpower in Standard Man-Hours (SMH) utilization in Ordnance Factory, Itarsi, during the last three years was as under:—

Year	% Machine Utilization	% SMH Utilization
2003-2004	89.00	142.34
2004-2005	84.77	139.04
2005-2006	81.19	120.44

(b) The reason for under utilization of Machine capacity in Ordnance Factory, Itarsi, is mainly due to reduction in the orders placed for propellant of some artillery ammunition.

(c) Efforts are made to maximize exploitation of capacity by pursuing order to the tune of installed capacity and development of new propellant.

#### **Provision of Wheel Chairs at Stations**

412. SHRI E.G. SUGAVANAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Delhi High Court has directed the Ministry of Railways to provide wheel chairs at all stations for the benefit of physically handicapped;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Railways thereon; and

(c) the other steps taken by the Railways to provide user-friendly amenities to the handicapped?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The Hon'ble High Court has directed that Ministry of Railways may issue a direction to all State Masters concerned to take immediate action on a complaint made by a disabled person with regard to the non-availability of wheel chair at any railway station and the Station Masters personally shall be

responsible for it. A notice at a conspicuous place at every railway station must be put in Hindi, English and regional languages, indicating as to where the wheel chair is available and in case of non-availability, the person affected can contact the Station Master. The telephone number of the Station Master shall also be indicated.

(b) Necessary instructions has been issued to all Zonal Railways.

(c) In pursuance of implementation of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, Railways have provided the seven short-term facilities at about 300 'A' & 'B' category stations. These following short-term facilities are planned at remaining 'B' category stations:

- (i) Standard ramp for barrier free entry.
- (ii) Earmarking parking lots for vehicles used by disabled persons.
- (iii) Non-slippery walkway.
- (iv) Signages.
- (v) Toilets.
- (vi) Water taps suitable for needs of handicapped persons.
- (vii) "May I Help You" Booth.

Besides facilities at stations, Railways have also been manufacturing coaches which have a compartment earmarked for wheel chair borne passengers. The layout of this compartment including toilets has been designed on the basis of international practices and norms for similar facilities for wheel chair borne passengers. It is planned to provide atleast one such coach in every Mail/Express train during next two years.

#### **Release of Funds by NSCFDC**

413. SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN:  
SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA:

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

(a) the funds allocated and released by the National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSCFDC) under various schemes implemented by it during 2006-07, State/UT-wise;

(b) the number of persons to be benefited therefrom during 2006-07; and

(c) the rate of interest charged by NSCFDC under the schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) During 2006-07 total sum of Rs. 170.00 crore has been allocated to States/UTs, in proportion to their Scheduled Castes population. The actual release with number of beneficiaries is as follows:—

State	Funds released (upto 30.6.06) (Rs. in lakh)	Persons benefited
Gujarat	255.97	650
Punjab	35.64	80
U.P.	1693.20	8892

(c) Interest at the following rates is charged by NSFDC from its State Channelising Agencies (SCAs):

#### **Term Loan**

- (i) 3% (upto Rs. 5 lakhs)
- (ii) 5% (above Rs. 5 lakhs)

Micro Credit Finance - 2%

Mahila Samridhi Yojana - 1%

#### **Restructuring of Services of Air Hostesses**

414. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to restructure the services of air hostesses of the public sector airlines;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the other steps taken/being taken by the Government to compete with the private operators in the aviation industry?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Both the airlines constantly endeavour to take measures to improve their product and remain competitive in the market. Besides, both the airlines are in the process of acquiring modern aircraft in order to revamp their fleet. The Government has already accorded approval for acquisition of new aircraft by Air India and Indian Airlines. Further, both the airlines are proactively adjusting their pricing based on market demand and competition. Besides, Air India has launched low cost airline viz. Air India Express in April, 2005 to cater to price sensitive markets and to retain its market share on routes such as to Gulf. Indian Airlines offers competitive market fares through various promotional schemes to compete with low fares offered by Low Cost Carriers, viz. 'Easy Fares' and "Unchecked Fares" schemes.

#### **Selling of Rail Tickets through Post Offices**

415. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are tying up with the Department of Posts to offer tickets for suburban and long distance travel as reported in the Times of India dated June 28, 2006;

(b) if so, the details of the plan chalked out in this regard;

(c) the places where such facilities are likely to be made available to passengers initially;

(d) whether the Railways propose to introduce the scheme in all the State capitals where ticket reservation rush is very high; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) The proposal is at preliminary stage.

*[Translation]*

#### **Constitution of Special Force 'Veerangna'**

416. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway Protection Force has recently constituted a special force/team named 'Veerangna' to ensure safe journey of women;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of trains in which such force/team are being deployed initially;

(d) whether the Railways propose to deploy such force/team in all trains; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) it is a fact that a group of Lady Constables named 'VEERANGNA' is working to ensure safe journey for women in trains in suburban areas under the supervision of Divisional Security Commissioner/Delhi-II.

(b) A task force namely 'VEERANGNA' consisting of a group of a young Railway Protection Force Lady Constables along with IPF/1, SI/2, HC/4 is functioning in Delhi division. The task force is conducting drives against unauthorized male passengers traveling in Lady Coaches of the suburban trains. During the period from 6th June, 2006 to 12th July, 2006, this special group achieved outstanding results and succeeded in detecting as many as 854 cases in which male passengers were found traveling un-authorisedly in ladies coaches and action was initiated against the arrested persons under the provisions of section 162 of the Railways Act, 1989.

(c) All suburban trains in Delhi area are being checked regularly by the 'VEERANGNA' team.

(d) No, Sir. It is not feasible due to constraints of manpower.

(e) Does not arise.

*[English]*

#### **Gandhi Heritage Sites Project**

417. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has selected certain places for Gandhi Heritage Sites Project;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to include Palwal (Haryana) in Gandhi Heritage Sites Project in view

of its historical importance being the place of arrest of Mahatma Gandhi on April 10, 1919 while going to Amritsar?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The following Gandhi Heritage Sites have been identified for development:

- (i) Porbander, (Birth Place), (Gujarat)
- (ii) Mumbai (Mani Bhawan), (Maharashtra)
- (iii) Champaran, (Bihar)
- (iv) Sabarmati, (Gujarat)
- (v) Madurai, (Tamil Nadu)
- (vi) Dandi, (Gujarat)
- (vii) Sevagram Ashram, (Maharashtra)
- (viii) Pune (Maharashtra)
- (ix) Kolkata (Beliaghata), (West Bengal)
- (x) Gandhi Smriti, (Delhi)
- (xi) Phoenix Settlement, (South Africa)
- (xii) Tolstoy Farm (South Africa)
- (xiii) In North-West Frontier, (Pakistan)
- (xiv) Noakhali, (Bangladesh)
- (xv) Kingsley Hall, East End, (London)

Further steps will be taken after receiving the recommendations of the Sub-Group which Government of India has constituted under the Chairmanship of Governor of West Bengal for the development of Gandhi Heritage Sites.

#### **Development of Kukurmara as Eco-Tourism Spot**

418. SHRI M.K. SUBBA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received any proposal from Government of Assam for development of Kukurmara as eco-tourism spot;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

#### **Additional Railway Reservation Countries**

419. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria for opening of additional railway reservation counters at places other than the respective railway stations in big cities, district, headquarters and other places;

(b) whether there has been any amendments to the existing norms for this purpose;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the details of the pending requests for opening of such additional railway reservation countries, State-wise;

(e) whether there is any requests for more than one year;

(f) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(g) the steps taken by the Railway to clear them expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) As per extant Passenger Reservation System (PRS) policy, the criterion for opening of Computerised Passenger Railway Reservation facilities at places other than the respective railway stations in big cities, district, headquarters and other places are:

(i) Important tourist or hill stations and pilgrimages centers etc.

(ii) Satellite locations in metro cities which are thickly populated having population of 4 lacs and more and where no PRS centre is available within a radius of 15 Kms. PRS centres may also be opened in metro and other big cities where urban population is increasing and leading to congestion in the existing PRS centres.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Does not arise.

(d) and (e) Requests are regularly received for additional railway reservation counters, these are examined and wherever justified, they are provided. The list of Computerised Passenger Railway Reservation Centers sanctioned based on such requests which are yet to be made functional is enclosed as statement.

(f) and (g) The main reasons for pendency are non-availability of communication channels, and/or non-provision of free accommodation from State Government, etc. at District Headquarter Towns.

**Statement**

*The list of Computerised Passenger Railway Reservation Centres sanctioned based on pending request*

Arunachal Pradesh	1. Deomali
Bihar	2. Banmankhi
	3. Hari Nagar
	4. Jogbani
	5. Kamtall
	6. Khajol
	7. Laukha Bazar
	8. Mahjallia
	9. Pandol
	10. Patna Airport
	11. Rajnagar
	12. Sakri
Gujarat	13. Ahwa
	14. Anjer
	15. Una (Gujarat)
Haryana	16. Gohana
Himachal Pradesh	17. Lahaul Spiti Keylong
Jammu Kashmir	18. Doda
	19. Poonch

Karnataka

Kerala

Maharashtra

Rajasthan

Tamil Nadu

Uttaranchal

20. Challekere Rly. Stn.

21. Angamaly for Kaladi

22. Idukki

23. Navapur

24. Kuchaman City

25. Madras High Court

26. Pamarth Niketan

27. Tehri Garhwal

*[Translation]*

**Promotion of Culture of Jharkhand.**

420. DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:  
SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any step to conserve and promote the culture of Jharkhand; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the amount spent thereon during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are 10 centrally protected monuments in the state of Jharkhand under the protection of Archaeological Survey of India. These are:-

1. Asura sites at Hansa, Distt. Ranchi
2. Asura sites at Khunti Tola, Distt. Ranchi
3. Ancient stone temple with a small Shivalinga inside, Distt. Ranchi
4. Asura sites at Khunjla, Distt. Ranchi
5. Asura Sites at Saridkel, Distt. Ranchi
6. Ashoka inscriptions on the Chandan Shahid—hill at Ashikpur, Distt. Ranchi.
7. Ruins of Baradari buildings with probable underground cells and passage at Arazi Mukimpur, Distt. Santhal Parganas

8. Jami Masjid at Hadaf, Distt. Santhal Parganas
9. Site of an old fort at ruam, Distt. Singhbhum
10. Ancient mound at Itagarh, Distt. Singhbhum

All these monuments are in a good state of preservation and the conservation of the monuments is a continuous process. The expenditure incurred on the conservation of these monuments during the last three years are as under:—

(Rs. in lakhs)		
2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
82.39	70.72	73.55

The amount spent in the State of Jharkhand on various other Schemes and programmes is as under:

Scheme	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Scheme of S&F	6.24	8.64	2.88
Lalit Kala Akademi	2.00	2.00	2.00
Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre	5.50	8.45	7.60
Sangeet Natak Akademi	13.20	12.30	32.83
Promotion of Tribal Culture	Nil	0.50	0.60

[English]

#### Rural Tourism Projects

421. SHRI MILIND DEORA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has selected Channapatna in Bangalore Rural district and Ilkal in Bagalkot district for promotion under the "Rural Tourism Project" for 2006-07;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total expenditure likely to be incurred on these projects;

(d) the time by which these projects are likely to be completed;

(e) whether there is any other tourism related projects which are being developed by the Government in Karnataka; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (f) Yes, Sir. Under the scheme of Product/Infrastructure Development for Destination and Circuit of Ministry of Tourism, funds are sanctioned and released based on the proposals received from the State/UT Government. The Ministry of Tourism has prioritized development of the following schemes in consultation with the State Government of Karnataka for granting Central Financial Assistance during the current financial year:

Sl.No.	Name of Project	Scheme	Amount (Rs. in Lakh)
1.	Channapatna, District Bangalore	Rural Tourism	50.00
2.	Ilkal, District Bagalkot	Rural Tourism	50.00
3.	Hampi	Destination Development	500.00
4.	Lingamakki	Destination Development	500.00
5.	Bijapur-Bidar-Gulbarga	Tourist Circuit	800.00

#### Misutilleation of Funds by NGOs

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

(a) whether the Government has blacklisted some NGOs which were found involved in misutilleation of financial assistance sanctioned under various schemes of the Ministry;

(b) if so, the names of NGOs blacklisted during 2006, State-wise;

(c) whether due to easy guidelines these NGOs easily manipulate the law and get their projects sanctioned by unfair means;

(d) if so, whether the Government proposes to review the guidelines to restrict manipulation by fraudulent NGOs; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) List enclosed as Statement.

(c) to (e) No, Sir. The guidelines and procedure for sanction of grant in aid to the Non Governmental Organisations have adequate safety measures. Before sanctioning grant in aid to the NGOs, recommendations from the concerned State Governments are obtained. Beside, detailed report which includes audited accounts, utilization certificates, annual reports, list of beneficiaries, list of staff etc. is also obtained and scrutinized. Subsequent installments of grant-in-aid are released only after evaluation of performance of NGOs and satisfactory inspection reports.

#### *Statement*

*Names of the NGOs blacklisted during 2006 (State-wise)*

#### **Biher**

1. Central English Academy
2. Youth Mobilisation for National Advancement

#### **Gujarat**

1. Ayush Foundation

#### **Madhya Pradesh**

1. Gram Sabha Seva Samiti
2. Adarsh Shivam Social Development Society

#### **Operation of Foreign Airlines**

423. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of foreign airlines operating in India;

(b) whether there are some foreign airlines operating without demanding Air India's right to fly to that country;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government has permitted co-landings to some International Airlines; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Traffic rights for operation of international air services are specified in our bilateral Air Services Agreements concluded with various countries on reciprocal basis. However, actual utilization of these traffic rights are guided by the commercial judgement of the concerned airlines. At present, 64 foreign airlines of 50 countries are operating to/from India, out of which 25 foreign airlines of 25 countries are providing unilateral operations. The Indian scheduled carriers, viz., Air India, Indian, Jet Airways and Air Sahara are operating together to 28 foreign countries, out of which they are providing unilateral operations to 3 countries.

(d) and (e) The Government has granted co-landing facility without cabotage rights to the designated airlines of Turkmanistan on Amritsar-Delhi sector and to the designated airline of Sri Lanka on Goa-Delhi sector.

#### **Survey for Construction of Railway Lines**

424. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have approved to conduct survey for construction of railway line from Jajpur to Keonjhar Road and railway line from Banspani to Bimlagarh in Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

#### **Miniratna Status of PSUs**

425. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria adopted to grant Miniratna status to any Public Sector Undertaking;

(b) the names of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) having the status of Miniratna;

(c) whether the Government has received any proposals for granting Miniratna status to some PSUs;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV):

(a) The Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) which have made profit in the last three years continuously, have a positive net worth, have not defaulted in the repayment of loans/interest payment on any loans due to the Government, do not depend upon budgetary support or Government Guarantee (except where required under the standard stipulations of external donor agencies) are eligible to be considered for Miniratna status. Further, restructuring of the Board by inducting at least three non-official Directors is a pre-condition for exercise of enhanced powers under the Miniratna Scheme.

(b) As per available information, there were 46 PSEs having the status of Miniratna as on 14.7.2006. The list of these CPSEs is enclosed as statement.

(c) to (e) The concerned Administrative Ministry is empowered to decide about Miniratna status of CPSE depending upon whether a CPSE fulfills the requirements of Miniratna status.

#### ***Statement***

##### *List of Miniratna CPSEs*

As on 14.7.2006

#### **Category-I**

1. Bharat Dynamics Limited
2. Bharat Electronics Limited
3. Bongaigaon Refineries & Petrochemicals Limited
4. Central Warehousing Corporation
5. Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited
6. Container Corporation of India Limited
7. Dredging Corporation of India Limited
8. Engineers India Limited

9. Engineering Projects (I) Limited
10. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
11. Hindustan Newsprint Limited
12. Housing & Urban Development Corporation Limited
13. India Tourism Development Corporation Limited
14. IRCON (International) Limited
15. Kochi Refineries Limited
16. Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited
17. MMTC Limited
18. MSTC Limited
19. National Aluminium Company Limited
20. National Fertilizers Limited
21. National Mineral Development Corporation Limited
22. Neyveli Lignite Corporation
23. Numaligarh Refinery Limited
24. Oil India Limited
25. Power Finance Corporation Limited
26. Power Grid Corporation Limited
27. Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers Limited
28. Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited
29. Rural Electrification Corporation Limited
30. RITES Limited
31. Shipping Corporation of India Limited
32. State Trading Corporation of India Limited
33. Telecommunications Consultants (India) Limited

#### **Category-II**

34. Balmer Lawrie & Co. Limited
35. Educational Consultants (I) Limited
36. Ferro Scrap Nigam Limited

37. HMT (International) Limited
38. Hospital Services Consultancy Corporation (I) Limited
39. India Trade Promotion Organisation
40. Indian Medicines Pharmaceuticals Corporation Limited
41. Manganese Ore India Limited
42. MECON Limited
43. National Film Development Corporation Limited
44. PEC Limited
45. Rajasthan Electronics & Instruments Limited
46. Water & Power Consultancy (India) Limited

**Monetary Provisions for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes**

426. SHRI G.V. HARSHA KUMAR: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission for Denotified Tribes, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes has sought appropriate monetary provisions in the next Five Year Plan and territorial rights for social uplift of these communities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto;

(d) the amount allocated and utilized for these communities during the last three years;

(e) the measures taken by the Government for the welfare and development of these communities during the said period;

(f) whether the Government is formulating any schemes to ensure that these tribes have a decision-making role at the national level; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) to (g) At present, there are no separate Schedules/lists for the Denotified Tribes, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes. Persons belonging to these categories have generally been categorised as Scheduled Castes, or Scheduled Tribes or Other Backward Classes depending upon their socio-economic conditions and they are getting benefits of the schemes/programmes being implemented for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

The National Commission for Denotified Tribes, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes has been set up to:

(i) specify the economic interventions required for raising the living standards of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic, Tribes' by asset creation and self-employment opportunities;

(ii) recommend measures to utilize the existing channelising agencies set up for the economic development of SC/STs and OBCs for extending an economic development package to these groups, keeping in view their specific requirement;

(iii) identify programmes required for their education, development and health; and

(iv) make any other connected or incidental recommendation, that the Commission deems necessary.

**Sky Bus Metro**

427. SHRI CHENGARA SURENDRAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of Sky Bus Metro project developed by the Konkan Railway;

(b) whether some State Governments including Kerala have proposed for construction of Sky Bus Metro in their States;

(c) if so, the details of proposals sent by the State Governments in this regard along with their estimated costs; and

(d) the action taken by the Railways thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) A High level committee headed by Dr. P.V. Indiresan has recommended to conduct trials for further development of the Sky Bus technology before it is certified for use by the public. The Ministry of Railways have allocated Rs. 25 crore in the Railway Budget for the year 2006-07 for this purpose.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Pune Municipal Corporation and Government of Andhra Pradesh have requested Konkan Railway Corporation Limited for preparation of techno-economic feasibility reports in the city of Pune and Hyderabad respectively.

Based on the Detailed Project Report for Sky Bus in Kochi submitted by Konkan Railway in 2002, Government of Kerala had approached Ministry of Urban Development for arranging funds. There is no further advice from the State Government on this subject.

(d) Sky Bus project shall be implemented by Konkan Railway Corporation Limited after the Sky Bus technology is proved and it is certified for use by the public.

#### **Bharatiya Rail Bijlee Company**

428. SHRI B. MAHTAB: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways had any proposal to set up Bharatiya Rail Bijlee Company in joint venture with the National Thermal Power Corporation;

(b) if so, the present status thereof; and

(c) the equity of the Railways in the proposed company?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. Railways are exploring the possibilities for setting up of Captive Power Plant in Joint Venture with National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) to get cheaper power for Railways for its traction purpose.

(b) Cabinet Note in regard to setting up of proposed Joint Venture Power Plant with NTPC has been sent to Ministry of Power on 20.2.06 for further processing for taking approval from Cabinet Committee on Economic

Affairs (CCEA). Ministry of Power has sent draft Cabinet Note to Ministry of Finance on 19.5.06 for comments.

(c) Equity of Railways will be 51% in proposed Joint Venture Company.

*[Translation]*

#### **Increase in Pension of Ex-Servicemen**

429. KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently increased pension of ex-servicemen;

(b) if so, the year-wise, increase in pension since 2000, till date; and

(c) the basis of the said increase in pension?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There was increase in pension of Personnel Below Officer Rank (PBOR) with effect from 1.1.2006, which is the first increase after 2000.

(c) The PBOR retire at a relatively younger age and the three lowest ranks viz. Sepoy, Naik, Havildar do not complete the qualifying service for earning full pension even with the then existing weightage of 5 years. Therefore, it was decided to increase their weightage to 10, 8 and 6 years respectively subject to a maximum qualifying service of 30 years. However, in case a person was already getting more than 30 years qualifying service with the existing weightage of 5 years, he would continue getting that. The pension of pre-1.1.1996 retired PBOR has been revised with reference to the maximum of the post-1.1.1996 pay scales.

*[English]*

#### **Funds for Post Centenary Golden Jubilee Years of Sepoy Mutiny**

430. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the total funds allotted for 300th Anniversary of Khalsa Panth in 1999, 2600th Birth Anniversary of Mahavira in 2001 and 2550th Anniversary of Mahaparinirvana in 2006;

(b) whether any funds has been sanctioned for the Post Centenary Golden Jubilee years of Sepoy Mutiny;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The total funds allotted are detailed hereunder:—

(i) 300th Anniversary of Khalsa Panth in 1999	Rs. 100 crores
(ii) 2600th Birth Anniversary of Mahavira in 2001	Rs. 100 crores
(iii) 2550th Anniversary of Mahaparinirvana in 2006	Rs. 100 crores

(b) to (d) There is no such commemorative event as Post Centenary Golden Jubilee. However, the Government has decided to commemorate 150th Anniversary of First War of Independence, 1857 and the Finance Minister in his last budget speech has announced a provision of Rs. 10 crores for the same.

### Free Travel Facility in Railways

431. SHRI RANEN BARMAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the categories and the number of persons under each category being allowed free travel facility in the Railways;

(b) the annual loss incurred by the Railways on this account;

(c) whether the Railways purpose to reduce the number of persons being allowed free travel in order to improve its revenues; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) A statement is attached.

(b) Annual financial liability on account of complimentary passes issued to various categories of persons is around Rs. 11.00 crore.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

### Statement

The following categories of persons are being issued free travel facility by Railways:

		Position as on 31.03.2006
Sl.No.	Category	Number of persons
1	2	3
I.	CARD PASSES	
1.	Freedom Fighters (Cost borne by Ministry of Home Affairs)	12,666
2.	Arjuna Awardees/Olympic Medalists/Asian & Commonwealth Gold Medalists/Dronacharya Awardees.	563
3.	Winners of Param Veer Chakra, Maha Veer Chakra and Veer Chakra (Defence personnels)	431
4.	Winners of Ashok Chakra, Shourya Chakra and Kirti Chakra	462
5.	Winners of President's Police Medal for Gallantry and Police Medal for Gallantry (Policy Personnel).	1,643
6.	Non-official Members of Railway Hindi Salahkar Samiti.	17
7.	One office bearer each of the four organization namely Kendriya Sachivalaya Hindi Parishad, Nagrik Pracharini Sabha Varanasi, Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti Wardha and Akhil Bharatiya Hindi Sansthan engaged in propogation of Hindi.	—

1	2	3
8.	Ex-MR/MOS(R)/DMR	21
9.	Bharat Ratna Awardees.	4
10.	Complimentary Card passes issued under the discretionary powers of the Minister of Railways	37
II. CHEQUE PASSES		
1.	Cheque passes issued under discretionary powers of Minister for Railway/Minister of State for Railway/Board Members (2005-06)	1,853
2.	Cheque passes issued to Licensed Porters and their spouse.	37,680

**Tourism Projects**

432. SHRI ARJUN SETHI:  
SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the number of tourism projects of the States/UTs sanctioned by the Union Government during the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Five Year Plans alongwith the financial assistance provided for the purpose, State/UT-wise;

(b) whether the Union Government has conducted any survey/study to find out the projects which were sanctioned particularly during the Eighth and Ninth Plans have not been completed so far;

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

(d) whether the Union Government has issued any instructions to the State Governments/UTs to complete these projects; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) A Statement showing the number of tourism projects sanctioned during the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Plans for the States/UTs along with the financial assistance provided to them is enclosed.

(b) to (e) The progress of implementation of the projects is regularly monitored by the Ministry of Tourism in consultation with State/UT Government officials. The domestic India Tourism offices are also utilized for assessing the progress of the projects sanctioned. State/UT Governments have also been regularly advised to ensure completion of incomplete projects and time limits have also been laid down for completion for each project based on mutual consultation and after assessing the progress of the implementation process. It has been decided not to release any further funds for incomplete projects of 8th and 9th plan which have not been completed by 31.3.2006.

**Statement**

*Status of the projects sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism during the 8th, 9th and 10th Five Year Plans*

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Sl.No.	State/UT Name	8th and 9th Plan			10th Plan		
		No. of sanctioned projects	Sanctioned amount	Released amount	No. of sanctioned projects	Sanctioned amount	Released amount
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Andaman and Nicobar	16	450.62	274.57	1	6.25	5.00
2.	Andhra Pradesh	83	1599.74	1415.06	30	6897.71	5427.39

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	54	1177.37	687.15	28	4670.66	3618.47
4.	Assam	89	2444.70	1392.94	30	4187.62	3420.74
5.	Bihar	58	1043.28	540.92	24	4695.15	3933.70
6.	Chandigarh	30	251.64	192.09	8	493.45	401.93
7.	Chhattisgarh	12	282.28	102.85	28	4482.26	3180.96
8.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	11	94.01	35.85	4	37.86	32.38
9.	Daman and Diu	17	203.21	130.30	9	581.85	469.01
10.	Delhi	60	929.14	758.68	41	4728.27	4498.54
11.	Goa	96	1520.02	957.22	7	157.26	83.26
12.	Gujarat	89	1843.35	951.24	19	3612.97	2524.92
13.	Haryana	86	1648.30	1363.30	39	3059.26	2625.36
14.	Himachal Pradesh	133	3095.67	2499.90	47	5254.19	3904.21
15.	Jammu and Kashmir	87	1976.06	1620.60	34	8499.22	7000.63
16.	Jharkhand	18	520.19	318.25	9	3324.09	2546.96
17.	Karnataka	144	3310.76	2867.58	44	7955.01	5519.43
18.	Kerala	104	4172.09	3052.04	43	9278.92	7503.89
19.	Lakshadweep	9	194.86	121.26	0	0	0
20.	Madhya Pradesh	76	1549.73	1049.70	52	6055.87	4887.70
21.	Maharashtra	135	4086.0	3239.99	41	5964.08	4889.13
22.	Manipur	66	1621.80	565.28	7	215.58	186.13
23.	Meghalaya	37	602.22	229.07	9	1130.87	884.31
24.	Mizoram	81	1501.73	1373.37	25	4068.62	2543.63
25.	Nagaland	63	1052.42	935.73	26	5851.16	4083.74
26.	Orissa	109	2256.44	1593.29	26	4427.96	3522.81
27.	Pondicherry	31	381.19	256.37	8	1185.16	948.50
28.	Punjab	69	1248.88	695.18	16	2276.35	1794.12
29.	Rajasthan	130	2465.76	1912.23	44	7788.94	6580.32
30.	Sikkim	104	1231.36	1041.94	43	5011.15	3723.68
31.	Tamil Nadu	137	2557.40	1955.50	52	8486.53	6222.70

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
32.	Tripura	67	1366.18	1148.20	16	1406.14	791.25
33.	Uttar Pradesh	89	1556.08	962.76	37	6261.18	5199.93
34.	Uttaranchal	68	1455.31	1219.88	26	5765.92	4741.91
35.	West Bengal	101	1971.28	1312.50	31	2960.91	2280.40
Total		2559	53661.77	38772.79	904	140778.42	109977.04

**New Technique to Avoid Rail Accidents**

433. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI:  
SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:  
SHRI P. RAJENDRAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Konkan Railway Institute of Staff Training has evolved any new technique to avoid rail accidents;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether its utility has been proved by post research testing;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the action plan prepared by the Railways for its all-round use in the country; and

(f) the expenditure likely to be incurred by the Railways for using this new technique?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (f) No, Sir. Do not arise.

**Agreement between Indian and US**

434. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreement has been reached between Government of India and US federal aviation authority for developing and modernising airports and other infrastructure in managerial operational and technical areas in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in civil aviation has been proposed by the US Government, which provides for assistance in the following fields:—

- \* Providing technical and managerial expertise in developing, improving and operation of civil aviation infrastructure, standards, procedures, policies, training and equipment.
- \* Providing training for Civil aviation personnel.
- \* Inspection and calibration for our civil aviation equipment and air navigation facility.
- \* Assistance in airport certification in India.

(c) After the said agreement has been formally signed, the respective implementing authorities namely Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Airports Authority of India etc. would be entering into specific technical assistance agreement with Federal Aviation Authority of US according to their requirements in respect of areas under their respective jurisdiction.

[Translation]

**Affect of Hike in Diesel Prices on Railways**

435. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:  
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:  
SHRI KAILASH NATH SINGH YADAV:  
SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment has been made with regard to likely extra burden on Railways as a result of recent hike in diesel prices;

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

(c) the manner by which the Railways propose to handle this extra financial burden without affecting the interests of the passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Due to recent hike in diesel oil price, additional amount likely to be spent is assessed at around Rs. 352 crores for the current year.

(c) The Railways are not proposing any increase in fare and freight on account of hike in diesel prices for the present and will seek to absorb the increase in cost within their overall ways & means position.

*[English]*

#### Creation of New Railway Division

436. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have created a new Railway Division viz. Salem Division by taking away the areas under the Palakkad Division;

(b) if so, the reasons for such a decision;

(c) whether the Railways are aware that creation of the new Division will result in huge revenue loss to the Palakkad Division; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to protect the revenue earnings in Palakkad Division?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The demand for creation of a new division at Salem has been agreed to in principle. However, the detailed territorial jurisdiction of the proposed Salem Division has not yet been finalised.

(c) and (d) It is too early to say whether this will lead to loss of revenue on Palghat Division.

#### Kollam-Shengottai-Tirunelveli Railway Line Gauge Conversion Project

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

(a) the progress made so far on the Kollam-Shengottai-Tirunelveli railway line gauge conversion project;

(b) whether the work on the said project is going at very slow pace; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to expedite the completion of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Gauge conversion of Kollam (Quilon)-Shengottai-Tirunelveli is in various stages of progress. On this project, work on Kollam (Quilon)-Punalur and Shengottai-Tenkasi are targeted for completion during 2006-07. Land owners are obstructing the work despite possession given to the Railways. State Government have been requested to facilitate the work in affected area.

*[Translation]*

#### High Speed Trains

438. SHRI SRICHAND KRIPLANI:  
SHRIMATI KALPNA RAMESH NARHIRE:  
SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA:  
SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway are contemplating to introduce high speed trains in the country;

(b) if so, the names of the rail routes selected for the purpose; and

(c) the time by which these are likely to be introduced?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[English]

**Development of Surat-Hazira Railway Line**

439. SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY:  
SHRI HARIN PATHAK:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are planning to develop Surat-Hazira railway line through Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL);

(b) if so, whether the strategic partners have given commitment for financial participation;

(c) if not, whether the Railway are contemplating to allocate funds to RVNL for this project; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Commitment for financial participation has been received from Government of Gujarat and Essar Steel Limited.

(c) and (d) The necessary funds would be provided once the project is sanctioned.

**Policy for Food Processing Industry**

440. SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:  
SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:  
SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD:  
SHRI E.G. SUGAVANAM:

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently formulated a policy for the food processing industry;

(b) if so, the details alongwith salient features thereof;

(c) the areas which are likely to be benefited by the said policy; and

(d) the time by which the said policy is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (d) A draft National Food Processing Policy was prepared and circulated inviting comments from various stakeholders. In the meanwhile, Government has constituted a Group of Ministers (GOM) for an integrated strategy for promotion of agri-business-Vision, strategy and action plan for the Food Processing Sector. The National Food Processing Policy will be finalized on the basis of GOM recommendations.

**Vacant Posts in Public Sector Undertakings**

441. SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA:  
SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY:

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

(a) whether there has been delay in making appointment to the vacant top posts in the Public Sector Undertakings;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the dates from which these are lying vacant;

(c) whether the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) has requested the concerned Ministries to send proposals in this regard;

(d) if so, the response of the Ministries thereto; and

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

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) As per available information, 18 posts of Chief Executives and 59 posts of Functional Directors in Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), excluding the posts kept in abeyance as a conscious decision by the concerned Administrative Ministries, were lying vacant as on 18.7.2006. The details are given in the enclosed Statement.

(c) and (d) The Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) writes to concerned Administrative Ministry/ Department one year ahead of the date of each vacancy of Board level post in CPSEs. The PESB finalizes the job description within 10 days thereafter and circulates to all concerned inviting applications within a period of

30 days. On receipt of applications, selection interviews are held and the recommendations of PESB are forwarded to the concerned Administrative Ministries/Departments for obtaining the approval of competent authority. In the case of unforeseen vacancies, as soon as the vacancy is intimated to the PESB, the selection process is initiated by it on priority.

(e) The Government has already issued detailed guidelines indicating the defined time-frame for filling up the Board level posts in CPSEs so that the PESB recommendations should be made at least 6 months in advance of the date of vacancy and are sent to the concerned Ministry/Department for completing other formalities.

### *Statement*

#### *Details of Vacant Board level Posts in CPSEs*

Period of Vacancy	Number of Vacant Post as on 18.7.2006	
	Chief Executives	Functional Directors
Less than 3 months	7	16
More than 3 months but less than 6 months	4	16
More than 6 months but less than 1 year	1	17
More than 1 year	6	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>59</b>

[*Translation*]

#### **Navy War Room Leak Case**

442. SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR:  
SHRI DEVIDAS PINGLE:  
SHRI UDAY SINGH:  
SHRI RASHEED MASOOD:  
SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT:  
SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:  
SHRI ARJUN SETHI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether CBI has conducted searches at several places in the country in connection with Navy War room leak case;

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

(c) whether some officials of the Defence forces have been found involved for supplying secret documents;

(d) If so, the facts thereof; and

(e) the time by which investigation in this regard is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) Based on information provided by the Ministry of Defence, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case under section 120-B of the Indian Penal Code read with sections 3(1)(c) and section 5 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923 against dismissed officers of the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force along with private persons and retired officers and unknown persons who had conspired to unauthorizedly trade off classified documents/information relating to the Ministry of Defence. Searches were conducted at 18 places on 5th-6th April, 2006 and at 20 places on 23rd June, 2006 at the offices, residences and factories of the accused and some other suspects.

The CBI has filed chargesheet in the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Delhi on 3rd July, 2006 against Lt. (Retd.) Kulbhushan Parashar, Lt. Commander (Retd.) Ravishankaran, Ex-Wg. Commander S.L. Surve, Indian Air Force, Ex-Commander Vijender Rana, Indian Navy and Ex-Commander Vinod Kumar Jha, Indian Navy.

Further investigation of the case by the CBI is continuing. No definite time-frame to complete the investigation can be indicated at this stage.

[*English*]

#### **Modernisation of Armed Forces**

443. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any plan has been prepared to modernise Armed Forces with latest machines and equipment to enable them to meet security requirements of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the quantum of funds allocated for the same; and

(c) the measures taken to ensure that the plan is implemented in letter and spirit?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Modernisation of Armed Forces is an on-going process and acquisition plans are prepared keeping in view the national security threat perceptions. Defence Services prepare a 15 year Long Term Perspective Plan to achieve the long term objectives. The 5 year Defence Plans flow from this Long Term Perspective Plan and the Annual Acquisition Plan is based on these 5 year Defence Plans.

(b) The quantum of funds allocated during the 10th Defence Plan (2002-2007) for the Modernisation of Armed Forces are as under:—

Year	(Rs. in Crores) Funds Allocated
2002-2003	18882.09
2003-2004	18066.71
2004-2005	25840.05
2005-2006 (RE)	26933.41
2006-2007 (BE)	29990.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>119713.09</b>

(c) The progress of Defence expenditure and the status of on-going new schemes included in the Acquisition Plan is regularly monitored and kept under constant review.

#### **Inclusion of Paramahansa and Jagannath Temples in CPM List**

444. SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received any representation from the Government of Orissa to include Paramahansa and Jagannath Temples in the list of Centrally Protected Monuments (CPM); and

(b) if so, the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However,

the Lord Jagannath Temple, Puri and Jagannath Temple, Jajpur in Orissa are already declared as monuments of national importance.

*[Translation]*

#### **Proposal to make Paintepur Railway Halt as Railway Station**

445. SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway propose to make Paintepur Railway Halt Station in Sitapur district of Uttar Pradesh on Budhwal Railway line as a permanent railway station; and

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There is no proposal for upgradation of Paintepur Railway Halt Station.

(b) Does not arise.

*[English]*

#### **'Garib Rath' AC Trains**

446. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU:  
SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM:  
SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have introduced fully air-conditioned Garib Rath trains on a pilot project basis as proposed in the Railway Budget 2006-07;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the time by which such trains are likely to be introduced;

(e) whether the Railways have received some proposals for introduction of such trains on other routes; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Railways thereto?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Garib Rath coaches are under production.

(d) During the current financial year.

(e) and (f) Requests for introduction of new train services are received at various levels viz. station level, division level, headquarter level and Railway Board level. These requests are received continuously throughout the year and this voluminous data is not compiled. However, presently there is no proposal to run additional Garib Rath trains except those announced in Rail Budget during the current financial year.

#### Production of LPG

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

(a) the details of the oil companies which are producing Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in the country;

(b) the target set by each company for the production of LPG alongwith their achievements during each of the last three years;

(c) whether Oil and Natural Gas Corporation proposes to increase the production of LPG in some of its plants in 2006-07; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) The details of Public Sector Oil Companies which are producing Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) with their target & actual production of LPG during the last three years are given in the enclosed Statement.

(c) and (d) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation is planning an additional condensate recovery unit at an approved cost of Rs. 14.23 crore for LPG augmentation at Gandhar in the State of Gujarat to produce 64 tonnes per day (TPD) LPG and 41 TPD Naptha.

The completion schedule of the project is April, 2007.

#### Statement

Figs. in Thousand Metric Tonnes (TMT)

Name of the Company	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06	
	Target	Actual Production	Target	Actual Production	Target	Actual Production
Indian Oil Corporation Limited	1099	1221	1168	1205	1360	1354
Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited	1018	1172	940	1095	910	1094
Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited	497	477	485	464	484	461
Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited	337	354	350	355	392	399
Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited	195	191	298	267	385	407
Bongaigaon Refinery & Petrochemicals Limited	46	48	45	49	51	50
Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited	201	231	266	283	243	275
Numaligarh Refinery Limited	52	46	59	47	48	47
Kochi Refineries Limited	400	423	*	423	*	337
Gas Authority of India Limited	923	1088	938	1094	970	1042
Oil India Limited	50	51	50	49	50	48

\*There was no specific target for production of LPG during 2004-05 and 2005-06

**Entry of Foreign Oil Companies in Indian Market**

448. SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to allow foreign oil companies to enter in the Indian market;

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

(c) the manner in which the entry of the foreign oil companies is beneficial to the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) In exploration and production, the Government has a Policy called New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) for exploration and production of oil and natural gas in the country and Coal Bed Methane (CBM) Policy for exploration and production of CBM. These two transparent policies provide a level playing field through international competitive bidding system to both domestic and foreign companies.

Reasons for inviting foreign companies in exploration and production are the following:

- (i) a large and geologically challenging area remains unexplored or poorly explored.
- (ii) there is urgent need to invite state-of-art technologies and geological ideas in addition to risk money for expeditious exploration.

In refining, 100% FDI is permitted through the automatic route. However, in case the project is taken up along with a PSU, FDI is restricted to 26%.

As per existing FDI policy, FDI up to 100% can be automatically approved for all activities (other than refining) and including market study and formulation; investment/ financing, setting up infrastructure for marketing in Petroleum and Natural Gas subject to sectoral regulations issued by the Ministry of Petroleum and in case of actual trading and marketing of Petroleum products, divestment of 26% equity in favour of Indian partner/public within 5 years.

100% FDI is permitted under automatic route for LNG terminals and petroleum product pipelines.

100% FDI is permitted with prior approval of the Government in Natural Gas pipelines.

(c) Foreign companies can bring in new technologies and fresh geological ideas besides risk capital and investments.

**Revival Scheme for Instrumentation Limited**

449. SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS:  
SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL:

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

(a) whether the Government has prepared any revival scheme for Instrumentation Limited; and

(b) if so, the details and the present status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES, MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) and (b) A proposal on the revival of Instrumentation Limited has been placed before the Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE) for their recommendations.

**Misuse of Funds by Oil Companies**

450. SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has pointed out glaring misuse of funds and irregularities in accounts by the State owned oil companies in the last ten financial years as reported in "The Hindustan Times" (Delhi edition) of June 22, 2006;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government to check misuse of funds by the State owned oil companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) conducts annual audit of all Ministries/ Departments of the Government as well as of the Public Sector Undertakings. In its Reports pertaining to the last ten years, the CAG in his annual audit observations has pointed out certain instances of infructuous project

expenditures, idling of assets, delays in recovery of dues, inadequate contract management, etc., by the State-owned Oil Companies. Action has been taken by the Ministry as well as by the State-owned Oil Companies to settle these audit observations in consultation with the CAG. Based on these audit observations, the State-owned Oil Companies also take up remedial and corrective measures to bring about improvement in the existing systems and procedures as well as action against erring personnel, wherever considered necessary.

#### **Training Facilities In IGRUA**

451. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of pilots and other technicians trained at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Udan Academy (IGRUA) during each of the last three years and current year;

(b) whether this number is enough to meet the requirements;

(c) if so, whether it is proposed to expand and modernize the training facilities in IGRUA; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) has trained 10, 12 and 25 cadets for Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) with Multi engine endorsement and Instrument Rating during 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06 respectively. In addition, during the said period IGRUA has also trained 52, 10 and 08 CPL holding Pilots respectively only for Multi Engine endorsement and Instrument Rating.

(b) The number of pilots produced by IGRUA partly meet the requirement of the aviation industry. The demand is also met from the pilots passing out of the other Flying Clubs/institutes approved by Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

(c) and (d) The Government propose to upgrade Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi, Rae Bareilly at an estimated cost of Rs. 57 crores, approximately. This includes induction of single engine and multi engine aircraft, rebuilding of helicopters, modernisation of runway, construction of additional buildings for hostel, hangar and

office and acquisition of the adjacent Sultanpur airfield. The upgradation would increase its output from 40 trainees per year to 100 trainees per year.

*[Translation]*

#### **Losses of Public Sector Oil Companies**

452. SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT:  
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:  
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:  
SHRI KAILASH NATH SINGH YADAV:

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

(a) whether any assessment has been made with regard to decrease in losses to Public Sector Oil Companies as a result of recent hike in prices of petroleum products;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is also considering some other steps to make up the losses of public sector oil companies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) It has been estimated that with the hike in prices of petrol and diesel effected on 6th June 2006, the under-realisation of the PSU oil marketing companies will reduce.

(c) and (d) Government has taken the following additional measures to make up the losses of public sector oil companies for the current fiscal year:

- Issue of oil bonds amounting to Rs. 28,300 crores during 2006-07.
- Sharing of Under-realisation by upstream oil companies amounting to Rs. 24,000 crores during 2006-07.
- Change in pricing methodology of petrol and diesel. Discount from refineries.
- Reduction in Custom duty on Petrol & Diesel.

[English]

**India's Participation In Tap Pipeline Project**

453. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has been invited to join the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) has pipeline project;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(d) the progress made so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (d) An Indian delegation led by the Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas visited Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on 14-15 February, 2006 to participate in the 9th Steering Committee Meeting of TAP project as an 'Observer'. The Steering Committee invited India to become an official member of the project. The Government has since accorded 'in principle' approval to the proposal for India joining the TAP project. The matter has been taken up with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to appropriately take up India's request for joining the project with the Governments of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

[Translation]

**Purchase of Sukhoi Jet**

454. SHRI MOHD. TAHIR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to purchase Sukhoi Jet planes from Russian aeroplane manufacturing company;

(b) if so, the number of planes proposed to be purchased alongwith the expenditure involved therein; and

(c) the time schedule for acquisition of these planes from the said company?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) There is no proposal presently under

consideration of the Government for further procurement of Sukhoi aircraft from Russia.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

**New Blocks of Coal Bed Methane**

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

(a) whether the Government has identified certain blocks in the country for the exploration of Coal Bed Methane (CBM);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some foreign companies have also offered bids for the same;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) No Matter

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Under the third round of Coal Bed Methane (CBM-III) Policy, the Government has invited bids for Exploration and Production (E&P) in 10 blocks. The details are given in the enclosed Statement.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The following eight foreign companies have submitted bids in third round of Coal Bed Methane (CBM-III) policy:-

1. Arrow Energy, Australia.
2. CDX Gas, USA
3. MOLOPO, Australia
4. OMIMEX, USA
5. EIG, Australia
6. BP, USA
7. Geo Petrol, France
8. Coal Gas, USA

(e) The exploration work will commence after signing of the contracts with the successful companies and issue of Petroleum Exploration License by the State Governments concerned.

*Statement*

Sl.No.	Coal field	Block Name	State
1	Raj Mahal	RM-CBM-2005/III	Jharkhand
2.	Birbhum	BB-CBM-2005/III	West Bengal
3.	Tatapani-Ramkola	TR-CBM-2005/III	Chhattisgarh
4.	Mand-Raigarh	MR-CBM-2005/III	Chhattisgarh
5.	Sohagpur	SP(N)-CBM-2005/III	Madhya Pradesh
6.	Singrauli	SR-CBM-2005/III	Madhya Pradesh
7.	Kothagudem	KG(E)-CBM-2005/III	Andhra Pradesh
8.	Barmer	BS(4)-CBM-2005/III	Rajasthan
9.	Barmer	BS(5)-CBM-2005/III	Rajasthan
10.	Godavari North	GV(North)-CBM-2005/III	Andhra Pradesh

**Repairing of Aircraft**

456. SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA:  
DR. K. DHANARAJU:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether many aircraft of Armed Forces which require repairs/maintenance are lying in workshops for want of spare parts;

(b) if so, the details of such aircraft of Air Force and Navy separately; and

(c) the steps being taken to make the spare parts available?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The process of procurement of spares for the Armed Forces is a continuous process. The Armed Forces procure aircraft spares in advance against scheduled reviews which are carried out periodically and the spares required by the Services are stocked to a predetermined level. Every effort is made to ensure that the Aircraft on Ground (AOG) are at the minimum level.

**Mural Paintings**

457. SHRI KRISHNA MURARI MOGHE:  
SHRI VIJAY KUMAR KHANDELWAL:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the pre-historic mural paintings in Madhya Pradesh are getting damaged due to natural factors and defacement by tourists; and

(b) if so, the concrete steps being taken by the Government for the protection of these pre-historic wall-paintings in Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Centrally protected rock-shelters with prehistoric mural paintings at Bhimbetaka, are in a good state of preservation. At protected rock shelters adequate watch and ward staff is posted by Archaeological Survey of India and conservation measures are undertaken.

[English]

**Automated Petrol Pumps**

458. SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has opened its first fully automated petrol pump in Mumbai;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent to which the automated petrol pump outlet would prevent pilferage and adulteration of petroleum products;

(d) whether Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) proposes to set up similar outlets in other cities/metros in the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof, location-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) has recently introduced automation in one of its retail outlets (ROs) located in Mumbai. The automated system provides for monitoring of stocks, receipts and sales from the RO, apart from other features like computerized billing, etc.

(c) The automation system being provided at ROs is expected to facilitate better monitoring of stocks, receipts and sales from the outlets. These transactions can be constantly recorded by the computer provided within the system and automatically transferred to the Company's Head Office on daily basis. The system is also expected to ensure efficient stock reconciliation on day-to-day basis, thereby reducing the chances of unintended product being unloaded in the tanks at these ROs.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. By the end of the current year, *i.e.*, 2006-07, IOC plans to cover around 1000 retail outlets in the country under its automation programme. Location-wise details are available with the Director (Marketing) of the Company.

#### **Rail Container Freight Business**

459. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some public/private sector companies have registered themselves for permission for the rail container freight business;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways have taken any decision for allotment of rail container freight business to these companies;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the time by which the decision is likely to be taken in the matter?

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

(b) Fourteen (14) operators have applied for permission to run container trains on Indian Railways as listed below:

- (i) M/s Pipavav Rail Corporation Ltd.
- (ii) M/s Gateway Distripark Ltd.
- (iii) M/s Container Corporation of India Ltd.
- (iv) M/s United Liner Agencies of India (P) Ltd. and J.M. Baxi & Co.
- (v) M/s Hind Terminal Pvt. Ltd. and MSC Agency (India) Pvt. Ltd.
- (vi) M/s Reliance Infrastructure Engineers Pvt. Ltd. and Sonata Investment Ltd.
- (vii) M/s ETA Engineering Pvt. Ltd. and Dinesh International Ltd.
- (viii) M/s India Infrastructure & Logistics Pvt. Ltd.
- (ix) M/s Mundra International Container Terminal Pvt. Ltd.
- (x) M/s South India Corporation (Agencies) Ltd.
- (xi) M/s Delhi Assam Roadways Corp. Ltd.
- (xii) M/s Adani Logistics and Gujarat Adani Port Ltd.
- (xiii) Central Warehousing Corporation
- (xiv) Bothra Shipping Company and Bagadiya Brother Pvt. Ltd.

(c) to (e) All the fourteen operators have been given "In Principle" approval to run container trains.

**Amritsar Airport**

460. SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any representations for expansion of Rajasansi International Airport at Amritsar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government thereon?

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

(b) Requests have been received from State Government of Punjab and Members of Parliament for upgradation of Rajasansi International Airport at Amritsar.

(c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has completed various upgradation works relating to extension of runway and expansion of apron alongwith construction of a new Terminal Building for handling 250 departing and 250 arriving passengers at peak hours.

**Grant-in-aid to Folklore Academies**

461. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government provides grant-in-aid to Folklore Academies of the States; and

(b) if so, the details of the grant-in-aid provided to these Folklore Academies during each of the last three years, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

**United Nations Report on Drug Addiction**

462. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a report of the United Nations released recently has pointed out that drug addiction among youths in the North-Eastern States in India is a cause of concern;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken to curb drug addiction among youths in the North-Eastern States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The report indicates that since the 1970s, the pattern of drug use amongst local youth in North-Eastern States has changed from age-old tradition of cannabis and opium use to heroin smoking, followed by injecting heroin and that many young males and females begin drug use by directly injecting as opposed to the traditional route which involved non-injecting. Gradually emphasis is shifting from heroin to synthetic drugs like dextropropoxyphene taken through injections.

(c) The Ministry is implementing the Scheme for Prevention of Alcoholism and substance (Drug) Abuse wherein non-governmental organisations are provided financial support for awareness programmes, counseling, treatment, after care and rehabilitation services in varied settings such as the community, workplace, educational institutions, prisons, etc. Presently, 46 de-addiction centres and 8 counseling centres are functioning in the North East for this purpose.

*[Translation]*

**Investment by Foreign Companies in Exploration of Oil and Gas**

463. SHRI RASHEED MASOOD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the foreign companies have denied to make investment in exploration of oil and gas in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government proposes to formulate any new policy and devise new measures to encourage these foreign companies; and

(d) if so, the time by which the new policy and measures would be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA

PATEL): (a) to (d) No, Sir. The Government under the New Exploration Licensing Policy as well as Coal Bed Methane Policy has provided a level playing field to Indian as well as foreign companies to participate under an Internationally Competitive Bidding (ICB) system. Both Indian private as well as foreign companies have been bidding for blocks under these policies through these rounds.

*[English]*

#### **Extension of Taj Express**

464. SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to extend the Taj Express upto Jhansi; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the same is likely to become effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) 2279/2280 (old no. 2179/2180) Taj Express has been extended upto Jhansi from 01.07.2006

#### **Cancellation of Flights by Private Airlines**

465. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received complaints about cancellation of flights by the private airlines from and to various airports in Gujarat thereby causing inconvenience to the passengers;

(b) if so, the number of such complaints received during the last one year; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Complaints are received from passengers regarding missing/lost baggage, refund of tickets in case of delays/cancellations, denial of facilities like wheel chair, meals/snacks in case of delayed flights, etc. though no state-wise data is maintained. During 2005-06, out of 20354 scheduled flights to be operated to/from various cities of Gujarat by private scheduled airlines, 410 flights were

cancelled mainly due to bad weather, technical and operational reasons.

(c) All the airlines have been advised that they should display on their respective websites various facilities offered to the passengers, both free and chargeable, in a conspicuous manner so that passengers are aware of these before booking air tickets. Operators are also advised to maintain schedule integrity.

#### **Gauge Conversion of Naupada-Gunupur Railway Line**

466. SHRI GIRIDHAR GAMANG: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total funds allocated for gauge conversion of Naupada to Gunupur Railway line during each of the last three years and current year;

(b) the reasons for delay in implementation and execution of the conversion line by East Coast Railway Zone; and

(c) the progress of survey of B.G. Line from Gunupur to Therubali as extension project to connect B.G. Line from Naupada to Therubali thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The expenditures incurred on Naupada-Gunupur gauge conversion project during the years 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 are Rs. 12.38 crore, Rs. 12.82 crore and Rs. 7.32 crore respectively. Budget outlay provided for the project during the year 2006-07 is Rs. 34 crore.

(b) The project is being progressed as per its operational priority and availability of resources.

(c) The updating survey for extension of the line from Gunupur to Therubali has been completed and the project has been found non-bankable.

*[Translation]*

#### **Augmentation of Coaches in Trains**

467. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR KHANDELWAL:  
SHRI KAILASH BAITHA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have made any progress in regard to augmentation of coaches in popular passenger carrying trains as proposed in the Railway Budget for 2006-07;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the work in this regard is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) 180 trains have already been augmented on a permanent basis. Augmentation of trains is an ongoing process depending upon traffic pattern, operational feasibility and availability of resources.

[*English*]

#### **Dabolim Airport**

468. SHRI ALEMAO CHURCHILL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Dabolim Airport in Goa and the area around it is owned by the Indian Navy;

(b) if so, the exact extent of the area owned by the Indian Navy; and

(c) the date on which the land was acquired by the Indian Navy?

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

(b) The extent of area owned by the Indian Navy is around 1781 acres.

(c) Dabolim Airport was handed over to Indian Navy in 1962 after the liberation of Goa in 1961. Subsequently, additional land was acquired in 1972 and 1992 for expansion of naval facilities including extension of runway.

#### **Unauthorised Petrol Pumps**

469. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are thousand of unauthorised petrol pumps in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Jammu &

Kashmir as per the survey conducted by the Oil Market Companies (OMCs);

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether these unauthorised petrol pumps have been issued licences by the State Government in violation of the Government rules and guidelines;

(d) if so, whether these unauthorised petrol pumps are also involved in adulteration cases; and

(e) if so, the action being taken by the Government against those unauthorised petrol pumps?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Government have received reports of the existence of unauthorised petty dealers or barrel storage points selling petrol/diesel in different States. In a survey conducted by the public sector oil marketing Companies (OMCs), it has been reported that the state-wise number of unauthorised identified utility pumps, barrel points selling petrol/diesel is as under:—

State	Number
Uttar Pradesh	11000
Rajasthan	1000
Bihar	88
Jammu & Kashmir	20
Andhra Pradesh	5

(c) It has been reported that certain State Governments such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, etc. have issued licences to petty dealers and utility pumps (barrel storage points) for retailing diesel in rural areas. Such utility pumps do not belong to any of the Oil Companies authorised by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas and hence are unauthorised.

(d) and (e) Since these utility pumps do not belong to any of the Oil Company, they are not subject to any inspection/quality inspection checks by the Oil Companies as is the case with their regular retail outlets. However, State Government could take action against adulteration cases by such pumps under the control orders issued under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

The State Governments have been asked to take necessary steps to identify and to close such unauthorised pumps.

#### Ongoing Railway Projects under Southern Railway

470. SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the ongoing Railway projects under the Southern Railway alongwith the funds allocated to each of these projects, project-wise;

(b) whether most of the project works are not progressing satisfactorily due to inadequate allocation of funds; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to release adequate funds to speed up the completion of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Details of the on-going railway projects under Southern Railway indicating anticipated cost, outlay expected to end 2005-06 and outlay provided during 2006-07 is as under:—

(Rs. in crore)				
Sl.No.	Name of the project	Anticipated cost	Outlay expected to end of 2005-06	Outlay 2006-07
1	2	3	4	5
<b>New Line</b>				
1.	Karur-Salem (85 Kms)	229.88	73.7	5
2.	Angamali-Sabarimala (116 Kms)	550	6.62	8
3.	Tanur (Kuttipuram)-Guruvayur (36 Kms)	137.71	8.16	5
<b>Gauge Conversion</b>				
1.	Madurai-Rameshwaram (161 Kms)	194.80	91.23	20
2.	Trichy-Manamadurai (150 Kms)	202.32	71.16	50.02
3.	Quilon-Tirunelveli-Tiruchendur & Tenkasi-Virudhunagar (357 Kms)	698.27	207.68	50.69
4.	Tiruchchirappalli-Nagore-Karaikal (200 kms)	135.25	63.45	9.00
5.	Villupuram-Katpadi (161 kms)	235.68	16.36	25
6.	Thanjavur-Villupuram (192 Kms)	356.89	109.79	100.00
7.	Cuddalore-Salem via Vridhachalam (191 kms)	550.52	87.74	80.00

1	2	3	4	5
8.	Dindigul-Pollachi-Palghat & Pollachi-Coimbatore (224.88 Kms)	343.17	0	1
9.	Manamadurai-Virudhunagar (66.55 Kms)	97.24	0	1
	<b>Doubling</b>			
1.	Madurai-Dindigul (Incl. Ambaduturai-Kodaikanal Road) (62.05 kms)	97.81	15	30.00
2.	Irugur-Coimbatore (17.70 kms)	38.66	17.41	5
3.	Attipattu-Korukkupet 3rd line (18 kms)	132.02	40.14	21
4.	Pattabiram-Tiruvallur-4th line (15.06 kms) & Tiruvallur-Arakkonam-3rd line (26.83 kms)	47.00	15.57	28.50
5.	Chennai Beach-Korukkupet—3rd line (4.1 kms)	59.58	4.90	0.50
6.	Chennai Beach-Attipattu-4th line (22.1 kms)	50.23	10	0.50
7.	Calicut-Mangalore (221 Kms)	501.42	485.2	8.00
8.	Cheppad-Haripad patch doubling (5.28 Kms)	17.36	2.99	2
9.	Cheppad-Kayankulam (7.76 Kms)	26.23	7.49	2
10.	Erakulam-Mulanturutti (17.37 Kms)	58.23	36.5	16
11.	Shoranur-Calicut (86 Kms)	169.42	150.27	4
12.	Mavelikara-Chengannur (12.3 Kms)	45.99	7.62	10
13.	Mavelikara-Kayankulam (7.89 Kms)	26.81	11.76	10
14.	Mulanturutti-Kuruppantara (24 Kms)	79.94	0.01	2
15.	Chengannur-Chingavanam (26.5 Kms)	99.69	0	4.99

1	2	3	4	5
<b>Metropolitan Transport Project</b>				
1.	Thirumailai-Velacheri-Ph. II (11.17 Kms)	233.08	227.52	5.56
2.	Extension of Mass Rapid Transit System from Velacheri to St. Thomas Mount (5 kms)	415.59	0	1
<b>Railway Electrification</b>				
1.	Villupuram-Tiruchchirappalli (178 kms)	87.81	0	5

(b) and (c) Works are being progressed as per availability of resources and operational requirement of the line.

#### **Investment in Agro Food Processing Sector**

471. SHRI K.J.S.P. REDDY: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has made any investment in agro food processing sector; and

(b) if so, the details of the investments made during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) and (b) Under the Plan Schemes of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, financial assistance is provided for establishment and modernization of the food processing units, creation of infrastructure, support for R&D, human resource development besides other promotional measures to encourage development of food processing industries. The details of financial assistance provided to Food Processing Industries Projects, state-wise, during the last three years are given in the enclosed statement.

#### **Statement**

#### *Investment in Agro Food Processing Sector*

(Rs. in lakh)

State/UT	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-06 (upto Dec. 05)
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	465.57	797.67	441.04
Assam	257.79	245.76	40.83
Bihar	—	25.32	51.96
Chhattisgarh	—	32.61	6.48
Delhi	—	2.50	36.77
Goa	17.00	25.00	47.58

1	2	3	4
Gujarat	165.85	262.15	258.88
Haryana	185.94	183.34	132.39
Himachal Pradesh	99.18	75.51	116.98
Jammu and Kashmir	108.78	74.78	35.36
Jharkhand	—	—	48.28
Karnataka	151.49	425.32	302.55
Kerala	192.53	152.86	285.35
Madhya Pradesh	88.93	45.62	172.45
Maharashtra	529.03	778.67	907.72
Manipur	108.41	—	—
Meghalaya	—	12.14	—
Mizoram	110.50	12.30	—
Nagaland	40.75	—	17.35
Orissa	—	63.31	3.93
Pondicherry	—	24.54	—
Punjab	163.00	538.23	340.90
Rajasthan	86.00	35.83	61.47
Tamil Nadu	274.03	310.60	498.25
Tripura	33.07	—	—
Uttar Pradesh	263.19	591.76	570.17
Uttaranchal	5.37	87.88	156.31
West Bengal	132.96	325.74	284.61

[*Translation*]

**Loss Making Airports**

472. SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV:  
SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of airports in the country at present;

(b) the number of airports out of them earning profits;

(c) whether the Government proposes to hand over the loss making airports to State Governments and private parties; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) As on 31.3.2006, there are 127 Airports maintained by Airports Authority of India in the country.

(b) Only 10 Airports including airports at Delhi and Mumbai are earning profits.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

#### **Pantry Car Facility in Trains**

473. SHRI KAILASH BAITHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have finalised the names of trains in which pantry car facility is to be provided during 2006-07;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is also any proposal to provide pantry car facility in Satyagraha Express; and

(d) if so, the action taken in this regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) As per policy pantry cars are attached on Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Premier/Superfast and Mail/Express trains. Priority for allotment of pantry cars is Rajdhani Express, long distance premier/superfast trains, Mail/Express trains with more than 24 hours journey time each way and the remaining trains with preference to those trains in which vestibules are provided.

No definite time frame can be given for provision of pantry cars in different trains including Satyagraha Express as this is subject to availability of pantry cars and operational feasibility.

#### **Import of LNG**

474. SHRI V.K. THUMMAR:  
SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:

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

(a) the quantum of natural gas imported during each of the last three years, country-wise; and

(b) the amount spent on the said import year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) M/s Petronet (LNG) Limited (PLL), a joint venture company promoted by Gail (India) Limited (GAIL), Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC), and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), imported 2.5 MMT (Million Metric Tones) Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in the year 2004-05 and 5.0 MMT LNG in the year 2005-06 valued at approximately Rs. 1700 crore and Rs. 3250 crore respectively from Qatar for its Dahej LNG Terminal.

In addition, M/s Shell Hazira imported some cargos of LNG for its 2.5 MMT LNG terminal at Hazira, during the year 2005-06.

#### **Multi Dimensional Scheme for Tourism**

475. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:  
SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any proposals to adopt a multi dimensional scheme in order to boost tourism in the country;

(b) if so, whether the State Governments are being included in the implementation of this scheme;

(c) if so, the reaction of the State Governments in this regard; and

(d) the amount of assistance proposed to be given to the State Governments for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) A number of long term and short term measures have been taken by the Government to boost tourism in the country, including:

- Positioning and maintaining tourism development as a national priority activity
- Enhancing and maintaining the competitiveness of India as a tourism destination
- Improving India's existing tourism products and expanding these to meet new market requirements
- Creation of world class infrastructure

- Special thrust to rural and small segment tourism
- Attention to civilization issues and issues pertaining to civic administration, good governance and also of socio-cultural values; and
- Development of integrated tourism circuits and destinations.

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance to various States/UT Governments for tourism infrastructure development, for fairs and festivals which showcase the cultural image of the State and events which are of national importance and also for IT related tourism promotional schemes.

(d) An amount of Rs. 439.00 crore has been earmarked in the Annual Plan (2006-07) of the Ministry of Tourism towards Central Financial Assistance to States/UTs for development of tourism infrastructure in the country.

[English]

#### **Restoration of Katsraj Temples**

476. SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:  
SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to share the expenses with Pakistan Government for the restoration of a Katsraj Temples;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the stage at which matter stands?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No such proposal has been made to Pakistan.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

#### **Agreement with Foreign Company to Check Adulteration**

477. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has signed an agreement with a multinational company to check adulteration in petroleum products;

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

(c) whether the Government proposes to provide training to check adulteration to the employees of the oil companies;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the extent to which this will help to check adulteration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Government has not signed any agreement with any multinational company for checking of adulteration in petroleum products. With a view to checking adulteration in auto fuels, Government has asked public sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to take following measures:—

(i) Inspection, certification and auditing of retail outlets (ROs) by reputed external agencies;

(ii) Introduction of marker system in adulterants;

(iii) Monitoring of movement of Tank Trucks (TTs) transporting Motor Spirit (MS), High Speed Diesel (HSD) and Kerosene through Global Positioning System (GPS);

(iv) Drawal/testing of samples by independent agencies;

(v) Automation of retail outlets.

OMCs may engage appropriate companies/agencies to implement the aforesaid measures.

(c) to (e) The employees of OMCs who are required to carry out inspection/testing to check adulteration are trained and equipped on the procedure to be followed for checking adulteration. As and when new procedures/systems are introduced, the concerned employees of OMCs would be trained on the use of new procedures/systems.

The new measures are expected check adulteration of auto fuels.

[Translation]

**Survey of Kangra-Jogindra Nagar Railway Line**

478. PROF. CHANDER KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any survey for construction of Kangra-Jogindra Nagar railway line has been conducted;
- (b) if so, the outcome thereof; and
- (c) the follow-up action taken by the Railways thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Updating survey for gauge conversion of Pathankot-Kangra-Joginder Nagar section has been completed. As per survey report, the cost of construction of 189.5 kms. long line has been assessed at Rs. 1316.16 crore with a rate of return as (-)22.04%. The survey report has been examined and the project is not recommended to be taken-up in view of unremunerative nature and constraint of resources.

[English]

**Appointment of Inspectors for Verification of Helicopter Pilots**

479. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:  
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has no Helicopter flight operations inspector to verify the qualifications and skills of more than 150 pilots of helicopters for the last three years as reported in the Hindustan dated July 11, 2006;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to appoint qualified inspectors to verify the qualifications and skills of helicopter pilots keeping in view the safety of the passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b)

Yes, Sir. The post of Inspector of Flying/Flight Operations Inspector (Helicopter) is vacant since 16.08.2004, due to shortage of eligible helicopters pilots in the country and the fact that no pilots from the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and industry are willing to serve as Flight Operations Inspector (Helicopter) because of the gap between the remunerations offered by PSUs/industry and the prescribed pay-scale for this post in Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). However, DGCA approved examiners are carrying out skill test of pilots to ensure safety in operation. Also services of Helicopter Advisor from European Union attached with Helicopter Cell in DGCA are being utilised by DGCA.

(c) Union Public Service Commission had found one suitable candidate earlier but due to his unwillingness he did not appear for the personal talk in the Commission. DGCA has since being making efforts to fill up this post and the vacancy has been re-advertised in the 'Employment News' 22-28 July, 2006.

[Translation]

**Purchase of Bio-Diesel**

480. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE PATIL:  
SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:

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

- (a) whether Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have started purchasing bio-diesel;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the total quantity of bio-diesel purchased by the OMCs alongwith value thereof during each of the last three years, company-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas formulated a Bio-diesel Purchase Policy in October, 2005. This policy is effective w.e.f. 1.1.2006 and is a statement of intent on purchase of bio diesel by the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs). This policy, *inter alia*, identifies 20 purchase centres of OMCs all over the country where these companies would purchase bio-diesel which meets the standards prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), from those bio-diesel

manufacturers who register with them after satisfying the technical specifications, at the specified delivered price. OMCs have reported that they have not been able to purchase any bio-diesel at any of the identified locations till now.

However, IOC has informed that its R&D division procured some bio-diesel during 2003-04 and 2004-05 as per the following details:

2003-04	7KL @Rs. 57.62 per litre from M/s Pure Energy Corporation, USA
	9KL @Rs. 53/- per litre from M/s Lubrizol India Ltd.
2004-05	92KL @Rs. 54.21 per litre from M/s Gujarat Oleochem.

Also, HPCL has informed that it sourced 20 MT of bio-diesel from Lubrizol India Limited, Mumbai and 20 MT from Pure Energy, USA in the year 2004 for conducting field trials with Brihan Mumbai Electric Supply & Transport Undertaking (BEST), Mumbai. The cost incurred to procure 40 MT bio-diesel was about Rs. 32,40,000.

[English]

#### Illegal LPG Connections

481. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received complaints regarding liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) connections being provided by LPG distributors illegally;

(b) if so, the number of such complaints received during the last one year, State-wise; and

(c) the action taken against those distributors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported 5 established cases of complaints indulging in release of illegal LPG connections against their LPG distributors during 2005-06 as per details given below:

Gujarat	—	1
Orissa	—	1
Punjab	—	2
Uttar Pradesh	—	1

(c) Action against erring distributors has been taken by OMCs in terms of Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG).

#### Exploration of Coal Bed Methane

482. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA:  
SHRI BHUPENDRASINH SOLANKI:

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

(a) whether the Government of Gujarat has requested the Union Government to induct a third partner in order to expedite the work related to exploration of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) block awarded in 2004; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Government of Gujarat has written a letter to this Ministry suggesting to induct a third partner in order to expedite the work related to exploration of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) in the block BS(3)—CBM-2003/II. However, no proposal has been received, in terms of the contract.

#### Railway Connectivity of Hazira Port with Mumbai-Delhi Railway Route

483. SHRI BHUPENDRASINH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd., Hazira Port Ltd., Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation and Gujarat Maritime Board regarding rail connectivity of Hazira Port with Mumbai-Delhi railway route; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 13.01.2005 between the following parties:—

- (i) Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL)
- (ii) Hazira Port Private Limited
- (iii) Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation
- (iv) Essar Steel Limited
- (v) Gujarat Maritime Board.

The main purpose of MoU was to implement the Surat-Hazira new railway line project by creation of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) with the above mentioned parties as its equity partners.

#### **Delay/Cancellation of Flights**

484. SHRI P. RAJENDRAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received complaints regarding the increase in cases of delay and cancellation of International and Domestic flights;

(b) if so, the number of such complaints received during the current year; and

(c) the action taken by the Government for improving the efficiency of flight operations and to avoid unnecessary delays?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) have received 37 complaints in this year from passengers regarding missing/lost baggage, refund of tickets in case of delays/cancellations, denial of facilities like meals/snacks in case of delayed flights, etc.

(c) All the airlines have been advised that they should display on their respective website various facilities offered to passengers both in terms of free and chargeable ones, in a conspicuous manner so that passenger are aware of these before booking air tickets. Operators are also advised periodically to maintain integrity of scheduled operations. In order to avoid delays due to congestion of traffic during peak hours particularly at Delhi and Mumbai

Airports, measures such as simultaneous use of two runways, improved ATC procedures, construction of Rapid Exit Taxi Ways, ban on general aviation during peak hours, etc. have been undertaken.

#### **Sale of Kerosene to BPL Families**

485. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:  
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:  
SHRI HARIN PATHAK:

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

(a) whether the Government has decided to restrict the sale of kerosene through distribution system to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families only;

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

(c) whether the Above Poverty Line (APL) families living in rural areas where access of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is limited, are deprived of to avail this facility after implementation of this decision;

(d) if so, the justification behind taking such decision; and

(e) the sources from where the Above Poverty Line (APL) families will avail kerosene facilities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (e) In order to formulate a long-term pricing policy, the Government had constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. C. Rangarajan, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister to examine different aspects of pricing and taxation of petroleum products with a view to stabilizing/rationalizing their prices, keeping in view the financial position of the oil companies, the investment needed in the sector, the need to conserve petroleum products, and establishing a transparent mechanism for the autonomous adjustment of prices by the oil companies. The Committee submitted its report on 17.2.2006.

The Government has accepted the recommendations of Dr. Rangarajan Committee Report and has decided 'in principle' that subsidized PDS kerosene be limited to BPL families only. The modalities to implement this decision have not been worked out yet.

*[Translation]***Compensation to Waiters**

486. DR. RAM LAKHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have made any provisions for the treatment, insurance and protection of life of the waiters employed by the contractors and working in the Pantry Cars in case of sudden accident;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Railways propose to formulate a policy in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, whether the Railways propose to issue instructions to the contractors to pay the compensation amount in lump-sum for the protection of life of the waiters; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (f) Sir, the private licensees operating pantry cars, engage their employees on their own terms and conditions and they do not come under the administrative control of Railways or Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC). However, licensees are bound to follow all the necessary labour Acts & laws of the land formulated to safeguard the interest of workers, as stipulated in the Licence Agreement.

As regards death/injury as a result of rail accidents/ untoward incidents, provision already exist making railways liable to pay compensation to all victims who were carrying a proper travelling authority. For obtaining compensation, the victims/dependents have to file a claim in the Railway Claims Tribunal which depending on the merits of the case, awards a decree.

**Tribal Museums**

487. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering any proposal to set up Tribal Museums in the country;

(b) if so, the details alongwith locations identified thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

**Irregularities in Railway Hospital, Nagpur**

488. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether cases of irregularities in the Railway Hospital, Nagpur Division have come to the notice of Railways;

(b) if so, the details of cases reported during the last one year;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted by the Railways in this regard;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken against the officials found guilty; and

(e) the steps taken by the Railways to provide proper facilities to the patients in the said Railway Hospital?

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

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

(e) At present there is one Railway hospital under Central Railway and one Poly-clinic and two Health Units under South East Central Railway at Nagpur. Six visiting specialists have been sanctioned for Central Railway's Hospital at Nagpur. In addition, powers have been given to railway hospitals to call specialists from outside on case to case basis. Powers have also been delegated to the Health Units as well to get the diagnostic investigations done from private clinics/laboratories.

**Air Service Agreement between India and Iceland**

489. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any air service agreement has been reached between Indian and Iceland;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the benefits likely to be accrued to India by this agreement?

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

(b) The essential features of the Air Services Agreement are as follows:

- (i) Both countries shall have the right to designate as many airlines as they wish;
- (ii) The designated airlines can mount 14 flights per week with 2 intermediate and 2 beyond points.
- (iii) Either Party shall have the right to revoke, suspend or limit the operating authorization or technical permissions of an airline designated by the other Party in certain circumstances as mentioned in the agreement.

(c) The Agreement once signed will pave way for establishment of air links between the two countries.

*[English]*

#### Transmission of Natural Gas

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

(a) the number of agencies/entities engaged in transmission of gas, local gas distribution network and marketing business;

(b) the requirement and capacity available for transmission gas pipelines;

(c) the mechanism applied by the regulatory authority to enforce an affiliated code of conduct, to regulate the business of transmission of natural gas, gas marketing and gas distribution network;

(d) whether the Government proposes to allow one agency to do business in only one business activity and regulate transmission pipelines with extra capacity for use as prescribed by the regulatory authority; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA

PATEL): (a) Apart from GAIL (India) (GAIL), other entities like Gujarat State Petronet Limited (GSPL) and Assam Gas Company Limited (AGCL) are also engaged in transmission of natural gas. The entities involved in the Local Gas Distribution include Mahangar Gas Limited, Indraprastha Gas Limited, Bhagyanagar Gas Limited, Tripura Natural Gas Company Limited, Central UP Gas Limited, Green Gas Limited, GGCL etc. The entities involved in gas marketing include GAIL, ONGC, OIL, IOCL, BPCL, GSPCL, GGCL, AGCL, Shell Hazira, Petronet LNG Limited, etc.

(b) GAIL has 5739 Kms long pipeline networks capable of handling about 130 million standard cubic metre per day (MMSCMD) of gas. GSPL and AGCL also have pipeline networks in the States of Gujarat and Assam respectively.

(c) to (e) The Petroleum & Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006 defines "affiliate code of conduct" as the code of conduct governing entities engaged in storage, transmission, distribution, marketing and sale of natural gas under sub section (1) of section 21.

Section 21 of the Act states that "Provided that in case of an entity engaged in both marketing of natural gas and building, operating or expanding pipelines for transportation of natural gas on common carrier or contract carrier basis, the Board shall require such entities to comply with the affiliate code of conduct as may be specified by regulations and may require such entity to separate the activities of marketing of natural gas and the transportation including ownership of the pipeline within such period as may be allowed by the Board and only within the said period, such entity shall have right of first use."

Appropriate regulations on various matters including on the Affiliate Code of Conduct would be notified by the Regulatory Board under Section 61 of the Act.

#### Use of Hindon Airspace for Civil Aircraft

491. SHRI E.G. SUGAVANAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to use Hindon airspace for civil aircraft;

(b) if so, whether the committee headed by H.S. Khola has recommended that Hindon airspace be used for civil aircraft; and

(c) if so, the action taken by the Government thereon?

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

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Defence in this regard.

#### Reconstitution of NCM

492. SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has reconstituted the National Commission for Minorities (NCM); and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The name and designation of the Members of the Commission is as follows:—

Name and Designation:

1. Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Chairman
2. Shri Michael P. Pinto, Vice-Chairman
3. Shri Harcharan Singh Josh, Member
4. Ven. Lama Chosphe! Zotpa, Member
5. Lt. Gen. (Retd.) A.M. Sethna, Member
6. Prof. Zoya Hasan, Member
7. Dr. Dileep Padagaonkar, Member.

#### Quality of Water in Railways

493. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the mechanism adopted by the Railways for filling water in the coaches;

(b) whether any quality check is being done on water supply to the Railways especially to the pantry cars in various trains; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The water tanks in the coaches are filled using flexible pipes connected to the main water pipe line provided for the purpose at nominated locations.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Water supplied for various applications like taps on platforms and other passenger areas, for filling in coaches including pantry Cars, etc. is periodically tested by Railway's Medical Department for bacteriological fitness and residual chlorine content for potability. Generally 90% to 92% samples are found conforming to standards. Results of remaining tests are analysed and necessary corrective measures are taken.

*[Translation]*

#### Night Viewing of Memorials and Heritage Sites

494. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering any proposal to open various memorials/heritage sites on the lines of Taj Mahal for night viewing for the public;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which these memorials/heritage sites are likely to be opened?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No, Sir. There is no such proposal under consideration presently.

(b) and (c) Questions do not arise.

*[English]*

#### New Railway Line between Howrah-Seakhala-Champadanga

495. SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to construct a new railway line between Howrah-Seakhala-Champadanga *via* Furfurah within the districts of Howrah and Hooghly of West Bengal; and

(b) if so, the present status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) A survey was conducted in 2000-01 for constructing a new line from Dhankuni (on Howrah-Barddhaman chord line) the Champadanga *via* Seakhala and from Seakhala to Bargachia. As per the survey report, the cost of construction of this rail link (total length: 41.50 Kms) was assessed as Rs. 87.67 crore at the then price level with a rate of return of (-) 12.28%. In view of non-remunerative nature of the line, heavy throw-forward of ongoing projects and acute resource constraints, it has not been found feasible to take up the work for the present.

[Translation]

#### Amendment to Aircraft Act, 1934

496. SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to amend the Aircraft Act, 1934;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

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

(b) The proposed amendments to the existing Aircraft Act 1934, would *inter alia* enable the Government/Directorate General of Civil Aviation to exercise supervisory control on the standards of airports and Communication/Navigation/Surveillance and Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) facilities, to license the personnel engaged in air traffic control and to make rules to ensure civil aviation security. It will also ensure that the safety oversight functions are performed effectively by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. The proposed enhancement in the quantum of penalties is likely to have the desired deterrent effect and hence would go a long way in raising the compliance level.

(c) A Bill for the purpose is proposed to be introduced in the ensuing session of Parliament.

[English]

#### Medical Facilities and Medicines in Poly-Clinics

497. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Ex-servicemen poly-clinics set up so far by the Government in the country alongwith the number of beneficiaries;

(b) whether there is any lack of medical facilities and medicines at these poly-clinics;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for streamlining the working of these poly-clinics?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) The Government has sanctioned a total of 227 Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) polyclinics to be set up by 31st March 2008. 222 ECHS polyclinics have already become operational. As on date, 3,12,233 ex-servicemen pensioners are members of the ECHS. Their authorised dependents also benefit from the scheme.

(b) to (d) The ECHS was introduced with effect from 1st August, 2003 and is in formative stage. The state of medical facilities and availability of medicines in most of the polyclinics is satisfactory. Under the scheme, a polyclinic, besides looking after minor ailments, is also a referral point for referring the patients for treatment of major and complicated diseases to empanelled hospitals and diagnostic centres. 519 such hospitals and diagnostic centres have so far been empanelled under the scheme.

#### Development of Tourist Spots in Assam

498. SHRI M.K. SUBBA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposals for development of Tourist-Spots in Assam, have been pending with the Government;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the cost thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to clear these proposals?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No, Sir. A statement showing financial assistance provided by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India to the State Government of Assam during the 10th Plan period is enclosed.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

**Statement***Development of Tourist Spots in Assam***Projects Sanctioned During 2002-2003**

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Sl.No.	Name of the Projects	Amount Sanctioned	Amount Released
1	2	3	4
1.	Camping site at Khora	142.00	142.00
2.	Const. of facilities for pilgrims at Kamakhya	80.00	64.00
3.	Development of ethnic village at Bhalukpung	45.00	45.00
4.	Majuli Island resort	382.25	325.21
5.	Mauli Festival	05.00	04.00
6.	Rangoli Bihu festival	12.05	09.60
7.	River Front Development along Brahmaputra	30.00	30.00
8.	Signages	25.00	25.00
Total		721.30	644.81

**Projects Sanctioned During 2003-2004**

1.	Development around Kamakhya Temple at Guwahati	151.27	151.27
2.	Elephant Festival 2004 Assam	04.19	03.75
3.	Integrated complex at Agartoli Range Kaziranga, Assam	158.00	158.00
Total		313.46	313.02

**Projects Sanctioned during 2004-2005**

1.	Development of NE Travel Circuit in Assam	437.75	350.00
2.	Tourist Arrival-cum-Reception Centre, Guwahati	384.00	284.80
Total		821.75	634.00

**Projects Sanctioned during 2005-2006**

1.	Development of NE Circuit in Assam	280.00	224.00
2.	Construction of Yatri Niwas at Kapopathar (Assam)	30.00	05.76
3.	Development of Adventure Tourism in Kaziranga, Assam	44.95	35.90
4.	Proposed Eco-Tourism Development Project at Kokrajhar	460.00	368.00
5.	Circuit Development of Manas-Guwahati-Kaziranga	781.00	624.80

1	2	3	4
6.	IT Project for Assam Tourism	47.80	43.00
7.	Celebration of Rangoli Bihu Festival	10.00	8.00
8.	Celebration of Dehing-Patkal Festival	5.00	4.00
9.	Integrated Development of Dhubri-Goalpara-Guwahati-Silchar-Karimganj Tourism Circuit	432.28	348.82
10.	Kaziranga Festival 11th to 14th Feb., 2006	5.00	4.00
11.	Celebration of the Tea Tourism Festival, 2005	5.00	5.00
Total		2,101.03	1,668.28

**Agreement between GAIL and ONGC  
for Gas Supply**

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

(a) whether GAIL (India) Limited and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited have recently signed any gas sales agreement;

(b) if so, the details alongwith terms and conditions thereof; and

(c) the quantum of gas, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. will supply from various oilfields under the said agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Gas Supply Agreement (GSA) for supply of Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) gas was signed on 7th July, 2006 between GAIL (India) Limited and ONGC.

The main features of the GSA are:

- The GSA is for APM gas from the existing fields of ONGC.
- The GSA is valid for fifteen years from the date of signing of the agreement.
- Price of gas would be as per Govt. orders in force.
- Take or Pay: GAIL will offtake 90% of the adjusted Annual Contract quantity or nevertheless pay for it.

— Seller's Supply Obligation: ONGC would assure supply of 90% of the Annual Contract Quantity.

— In case of fall in available supply pressure, one year notice to be given by Seller to enable buyer to set up facility.

— Invoicing twice a month and payment within 7 days.

(c) The quantity of gas which ONGC shall supply under the contract shall be as per the production profile given in the Long Term Gas Profile-2000 (LTGP-2000) of ONGC. As per LTGP-2000, the availability of gas is projected to decline from the existing level of about 50.50 million standard cubic metre per day (MMSCMD) over the years.

**Report of NCRLM**

500. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities (NCRLM) has submitted its report to the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the recommendations made by the Commission;

(c) the follow-up action taken by the Government thereon;

(d) If not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the time by which it is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (d) No, Sir.

(e) 31st October 2006.

#### **Agreement by AI for Cargo Service**

501. SHRI MILIND DEORA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Air India (AI) is planning to ink a deal with West Asian freight forwarding company Falcon Group for carrying cargo to destinations in the Gulf and Europe;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which this deal is likely to be finalized; and

(d) the benefits likely to be accrued to AI by this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) The matter is under consideration.

#### **Sachar Committee on Muslim Community**

502. SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Rajender Sachar Committee appointed by the Government to look into the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim Community has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) the follow-up action taken by the Government on the report; and

(d) If not, the reasons therefor and the time by which it is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (c) No, Sir.

(d) The term of the High Level Committee has been extended upto 31st October 2006 on account of the fact that there were certain unavoidable delays in providing necessary accommodation, staff and infrastructural support to the Committee, and in making available relevant information/data to the Committee for consolidation, collation and analysis.

#### **Subsidy to EPIS**

503. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of subsidy and other facilities provided to the entrepreneurs during the last three years for setting up Food Processing Industries in the country, particularly Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) the details of Food Processing Industries in Andhra Pradesh which are economically viable?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES, MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) and (b) The financial assistance extended by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries to the Food Processing Industries projects (state-wise) during the last three years is given in the enclosed Statement-I. The numbers of Food Processing Units assisted by the Ministry in the State of Andhra Pradesh are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

#### **Statement I**

#### **Subsidy to FPIs**

(Rs. in lakh)

State/UT	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-06 (upto Dec. 2005)
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	465.57	797.67	441.04
Assam	257.79	245.76	40.83

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1	2	3	4
Bihar	—	25.32	51.96
Chhattisgarh	—	32.61	6.48
Delhi	—	2.50	36.77
Goa	17.00	25.00	47.58
Gujarat	165.85	262.15	258.88
Haryana	185.94	183.34	132.39
Himachal Pradesh	99.18	75.51	116.98
Jammu and Kashmir	108.78	74.78	35.36
Jharkhand	—	—	48.28
Karnataka	151.49	425.32	302.55
Kerala	192.53	152.86	285.35
Madhya Pradesh	88.93	45.62	172.45
Maharashtra	529.03	778.67	907.72
Manipur	108.41	—	—
Meghalaya	—	12.14	—
Mizoram	110.50	12.30	—
Nagaland	40.75	—	17.35
Orissa	—	63.31	3.93
Pondicherry	—	24.54	—
Punjab	163.00	538.23	340.90
Rajasthan	86.00	35.83	61.47
Tamil Nadu	274.03	310.60	498.25
Tripura	33.07	—	—
Uttar Pradesh	263.19	591.76	570.17
Uttaranchal	5.37	87.88	156.31
West Bengal	132.96	325.74	284.61

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**Statement II****Subsidy to FPIs.****Project Proposals (Approved) in MFPI for  
Andhra Pradesh (Year-wise)**

Year	Approved
1997-1998	1
1998-1999	1
1999-2000	3
2000-2001	1
2001-2002	2
2002-2003	4
2003-2004	13
2004-2005	27
2005-2006	24
2006-2007	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>

**Benefits to Children of SCs/STs Women Marrying  
to Non-SCs/STs Persons**

504. MS. INGRID MCLEOD:  
SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE:

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

(a) whether the Government is considering any proposal to grant benefits of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes category to the children of SCs/STs women marrying to non-SCs/STs persons; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) The matter of granting benefits of Scheduled Castes to the children of a Scheduled Caste woman marrying to a non-Scheduled Caste person has been referred to National Commission for Scheduled Castes for their opinion. As regards Scheduled Tribes, no such proposal has been received.

**[Translation]****Additional Revenue from Petrol/Diesel Price Hike**

505. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":  
SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:  
DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

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

(a) whether the Government has made any assessment regarding the amount of additional revenue to be earned by the Union and the State Governments as result of increase in the prices of petrol and diesel;

(b) if so, the amount estimated to be earned during the year 2006-07;

(c) whether the Government proposes to share this additional income with the petroleum consumers;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) In the case of the Central Government, the additional revenue due to price increase is in the form of incremental excise duty. As a substantial portion of the excise duty on petrol and diesel is specific (fixed) the same does not vary with price revision. The incremental in Excise Duty as a result of the last price revision *i.e.* on 6.6.2006 works out to be approximately Re. 0.25/litre and Re. 0.13/litre in case of Petrol and Diesel respectively.

As regards sales tax, it is imposed by State Governments at different rates and is *ad valorem* in nature. However, based on the request made to the State Governments to moderate the impact of price rise on the common man, ten State Governments, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu (diesel only), Uttaranchal, Manipur and Assam, have reduced the sales tax on Petrol and Diesel to reduce the burden of the recent price hike.

(c) to (e) Government adopted the principle of equitable burden sharing amongst the three stakeholders, namely, the consumers, the PSU oil companies and the

Government, to protect the interest of the common man and the vulnerable sections of society. Government along with oil companies has decided to absorb 87.5% of the burden of the escalated international prices of crude oil, amounting to Rs. 73,500 crores, leaving only a balance of 12.5% to be borne by the consumers by way of increase in petrol and diesel prices.

Government has reduced the customs duty on petrol and diesel from 10% to 7.5% in June 2006. Government has also decided to issue bonds worth Rs. 28,300 crores during 2006-07 to oil marketing companies to partially compensate for under-recoveries on sensitive petroleum products.

*(English)*

#### **Upgradation of Mail/Express Trains Into Superfast Category**

506. SHRI P. MOHAN:  
SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways propose to upgrade some mail/express trains into superfast mail/express category;

(b) if so, the extra facilities to provided to the passengers travelling in such trains;

(c) whether the Railways have sufficient number of high power locomotives at present to run these superfast trains; and

(d) if so, the facts thereof?

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

(b) The journey time by superfast trains is comparatively less as their average speed on entire run is minimum 55 kilometre per hour (kmph) on Broad Gauge and 45 kmph on Metre Gauge.

(c) and (d) Presently Indian Railways have deployed different types of suitable diesel and electric locomotives, which are sufficient to haul superfast trains. The present holding of these passenger locomotives is as under:—

Diesel Locomotives		Electrical Locomotives	
400 Horse Power (HP)	28	5000 HP	380
3100 HP	570	6000 HP	48

#### **New Railway Line between Chandrakona Road Railway Station and Mecheda**

507. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway have conducted any survey to construct a new railway line between Chandrakona Road Railway Station and Mecheda *via* Ghatal in South Eastern Railway;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) A survey for construction of a new line from Panskura (near Mecheda) to Chandrakona Road *via* Ghatal has been taken up.

#### **Construction of Ahmednagar-Beed Parli-Baijnath Railway Line**

508. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of construction of Ahmednagar-Beed Parli-Baijnath new railway line project;

(b) the total expenditure incurred on the project so far; and

(c) the time schedule for completion of the said project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Land acquisition of 1464.77 hectare in 105 villages has been processed. On Ahmednagar-Narayanodh (15 Kms) section, possession of 56.14 hectare land in 5 villages is given. Earthwork and bridges taken up.

(b) Expenditure upto March, 2006 is Rs. 15.06 crore.

(c) No target date of completion has been fixed.

#### **Construction of Goods Shed**

509. SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have decided to construct goods shed at Bhadrak Railway Station under the East Coast Railway;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the funds provided for the same during the current year;

(c) whether construction work has been started;

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

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. There is already a goods shed at Bhadrak. However, it has been decided to upgrade the same from a half-rake point to a full rake point.

(b) Provision of an additional line, extension of existing line along with platform and shunting neck at Bhadrak is a sanctioned work, at a cost of Rs. 1.3388 Crore. The allocation for the year 2006-07 is Rs. 0.72 Crore. In addition, extension of covered shed by 40 metres on the loading/unloading platform has also been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 23.47 lakh in 2006-07.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Work of additional line and extension of the shunting neck is complete. Construction platform is in progress. The target date for completion of the project is October, 2006.

(e) Does not arise.

#### **Handling of Works at Airports**

510. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT "BACHDA": Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether multiple agencies are handing works at international airports in the country in contrast to the practice being followed at big airports world over;

(b) if so, the work-wise details of the agencies presently manning the Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata airports;

(c) whether the Government is planning to entrust the overall control to a single authority at each of the international airports; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. Multiple agencies are handling works at international airports in the country. Even at big airports world over, multiple agencies handle different works.

(b) The work-wise details of the agencies manning at Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata airports are as under:

The work related to Air Traffic Control, Communication and Navigational System, Airport Terminal and Airside Management, Rescue and Fire Fighting, Cargo handling is being handled by Airports Authority of India, however, w.e.f. 3.5.2006 airport terminal and airside management, rescue and fire fighting and cargo handling at IGI Airport, Delhi, CSI airport, Mumbai is being handled by Joint Venture Companies. Work related to Airworthiness of aircraft, Air safety by Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Weather Forecast by Indian Meteorological Department, Security-perimeter and anti-hijacking check by CISF, Law and Order by State Police, Immigration checks by Bureau of Immigration, Customs-checks by Department of Customs, Airport Health Services, Yellow Fever vaccination by Ministry of Health, Plant Quarantine by Department of Plant Quarantine, Check-in of passengers, Aircraft operation, X-ray of registered baggage by Airlines, Money exchange by Banks, Post and Telegraph services by Department of Posts and Telegraph, Railway Reservation by Indian Railways, Ground handling of flights by Air India and Indian and In-flight catering by Flight Caterers.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

#### **Connectivity among Tourist Destinations in Kerala**

511. SHRI CHENGARA SURENDRAN:  
SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPAN:  
SHRI PANNIAN RAVINDRAN:  
SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received any proposal from the Government of Kerala seeking financial assistance for a project aiming to improve connectivity among the four prime destinations namely Kovalam, Kumarakam, Munnar and Bekal in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

#### **Shortage of Fighter Aircraft and Helicopters**

512. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVJIRAO:  
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:  
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:  
SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARASTE:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Air Force is facing shortage of fighter aircraft and helicopters;

(b) if so, whether the Indian Air Force proposes to acquire 126 fighter aircraft and 80 helicopters as a part of its efforts to strengthen its airpower as reported in *the Hindu* dated June 18, 2006;

(c) if so, the facts thereof and the brand of fighter aircraft selected therefor; and

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

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Government constantly review the security environment and accordingly decide to induct appropriate equipment and to make other arrangements for adequate defence preparedness. The purchase of fighter aircraft and helicopters required for the Air Force is made in accordance with the established Defence Procurement Procedure. This procedure envisages a time frame of 2-3 years for conclusion of contract in such major purchases. It would not be in the interest of national security to give further details.

#### **Special Security Force**

513. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are considering to establish a special security force to protect passengers during the journey;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

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

(b) Nil.

(c) Does not arise.

#### **Smart Cards to Cooking Gas/Kerosene Consumers**

514. SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:  
SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:  
PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:  
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:  
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:  
SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIS:

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

(a) whether the Government is planning to introduce smart cards on the lines of ration cards to consumers of cooking gas and kerosene with a view to check diversion of kitchen fuels;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the idea behind introducing this card;

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

(d) the States where it is likely to be introduced initially?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Government is considering a proposal for introduction of Smart Card for distribution of PDS Kerosene on an experimental basis with a view to better targeting the subsidy for intended beneficiaries.

(c) and (d) No final decision has been taken as yet.

#### **Commercial Plantation of Jatropha**

515. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK:  
SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the existing policy of the Railways with regard to commercial plantation of jatropa;

(b) whether the Railways propose to enter into Joint Venture (JV) partnership with private companies for commercial plantation of jatropa;

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

(d) the sites identified for jatropa plantation in joint venture; and

(e) the revenue likely to be earned by Railways from it annually?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Railway have an existing policy of commercial plantation including Jatropa on Joint Venture (JV) basis. Under the policy, JV partner is allowed to undertake plantation including Jatropa curcus on railway land on revenue sharing basis. While planter is required to bear all the cost of plantation, Railway's contribution in turn would be land.

(d) Plantation of Jatropa on commercial plantation basis has been taken up at Jhusi on North Eastern Railway.

(e) Since Railways are in very initial stages of the scheme, it is not possible to ascertain the annual returns as the same would vary depending upon the location, size, species, etc. as well as purchase price of the plants.

*[Translation]*

#### **Emergency Quota In Trains**

516. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any provision of emergency quota in Ahmedabad bound trains from Kota Junction;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether the Railways propose to provide emergency quota in these trains; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There is no such proposal under consideration.

(d) Does not arise.

*[English]*

#### **MOU with European Countries**

517. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH:  
SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE:  
SHRI SRICHAND KRIPLANI:  
SHRIMATI KALPNA RAMESH NARHIRE:  
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:  
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:  
SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high level railway delegation visited European countries in the recent past;

(b) if so, the issues discussed and the outcome thereof; and

(c) the details of Memorandum of Undertakings (MoUs) signed with the various countries for the development of railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. A high level delegation led by Minister of Railways visited United Kingdom, France, Austria, Italy and Germany from 23.6.2006 to 07.07.2006.

(b) and (c) The delegation visited railway facilities to see the systems, practices and latest advances in railway technologies. The delegation also discussed with the Governments and railway authorities regarding mutual cooperation. During the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for technical cooperation between the Indian Railways and Ferrovie dello Stato s.p.a. (Italian Railways) has been signed on 3.7.06.

#### **Development of Western Corridor**

518. SHRI BHUPENDRASINH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways propose to develop western corrdior from Jawahar Lal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) to Delhi via Vadodara-Ahmedabad-Palanpur-Jaipur-Delhi; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Western Corridor of Dedicated Railway Freight Corridor Project has been sanctioned in Rail Budget 2006-07. The Corridor will start from Jawaharlal Nehru Port and will be routed *via* Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Palanpur and Rewari to Tuglakabad and Dadri. The Corridor will carry mostly container traffic. The cost of Western Corridor is estimated as Rs. 11,446 crores.

*[Translation]*

#### Development of Agra as World Heritage City

519. SHRI SAJJAN KUMAR:  
SHRI AVTAR SINGH BHADANA:  
SHRI SURENDRA PRAKASH GOYAL:  
SHRI BALESHWAR YADAV:  
SHRI MILIND DEORA:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of foreign tourists visited Taj Mahal during each of the last three years;

(b) whether the Union Government has chalked out any Action Plan to develop Agra as World Heritage City;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the estimated expenditure likely to be incurred thereon; and

(e) the steps taken/being taken to implement the Action Plan?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The number of foreign tourists who visited Taj Mahal during each of the last three years is as under:

Year	Number of foreign Tourists
2003	2,50,716
2004	3,64,997
2005	5,93,637

(b) There is no provision in the Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 and Rules, 1959, for notifying heritage cities.

(c) to (e) Questions do not arise.

*[English]*

#### 15-Point Programme for Minorities

520. SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY:  
SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recast the 15-Point Programme for the welfare of the minorities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the progress made by the Government on their implementation;

(d) whether several Ministries have their direct departmental role in implementation of the 15-Point Programme;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the manner in which the Government make provision of budget, administration control and monitor the exclusive implementation of it?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Details of the programme are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(c) All Ministries/Departments of the Central Government and all States and Union Territories have been advised of the new programme and need of their implementation.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Details of the different Ministries/Departments are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

(f) The budget provision available for different schemes included in the programme would be utilized and augmented, if necessary. The Ministry of Minority Affairs is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Programme, in consultation with the concerned States, Ministries/Departments.

**Statement I****"Prime Minister's New 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities"****A. Enhancing Opportunities for Education****(1) Equitable availability of ICDS Services**

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is aimed at holistic development of children and pregnant/lactating mothers from disadvantaged sections, by providing services through Anganwadi Centres such as supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, referral services, pre-school and non-formal education. A certain percentage of the ICDS projects and Anganwadi Centres will be located in blocks/villages with a substantial population of minority communities to ensure that the benefits of this scheme are equitably available to such communities also.

**(2) Improving access to School Education**

Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme, and other similar Government schemes, it will be ensured that a certain percentage of all such schools are located in villages/localities having a substantial population of minority communities.

**(3) Greater resources for teaching Urdu**

Central assistance will be provided for recruitment and posting of Urdu language teachers in primary and upper primary schools that serve a population in which at least one-fourth belong to that language group.

**(4) Modernizing Madarsa Education**

The Central Plan Scheme of Area Intensive and Madarsa Modernization Programme provides basic educational infrastructure in areas of concentration of educationally backward minorities and resources for the modernization of Madarsa education. Keeping in view the importance of addressing this need, this programme will be substantially strengthened and implemented effectively.

**(5) Scholarships for meritorious students from minority communities**

Schemes for pre-matric and post-matric scholarships for students from minority communities will be formulated and implemented.

**(6) Improving educational infrastructure through the Maulana Azad Education Foundation**

The Government shall provide all possible assistance to Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) to strengthen and enable it to expand its activities more effectively.

**B. Equitable Share in Economic Activities and Employment****(7) Self-Employment and Wage Employment for the poor**

(a) The Swarnjayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY), the primary self-employment programme for rural areas, has the objective of bringing assisted poor rural families above the poverty line by providing them income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and Governmental subsidy. A certain percentage of the physical and financial targets under the SGSY will be earmarked for beneficiaries belonging to the minority communities living below the poverty line in rural areas.

(b) The Swarnjayanti Shahari Rojgar Yojana (SSRY) consists of two major components namely, the Urban Self-Employment Programme (USEP) and the Urban Wage Employment Programme (UWEP). A certain percentage of the physical and financial targets under USEP and UWEP will be earmarked to benefit people below the poverty line from the minority communities.

(c) The Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) is aimed at providing additional wage employment in rural areas alongside the creation of durable community, social and economic infrastructure. Since the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) has been launched in 200 districts, and SGRY has been merged with NREGP in these districts, in the remaining districts, a certain percentage of the allocation under SGRY will be earmarked for beneficiaries belonging to the minority communities living below the poverty line till these districts are taken up under NREGP. Simultaneously, a certain percentage of the allocation will be earmarked for the creation of infrastructure in such villages, which have a substantial population of minorities.

**(8) *Upgradation of skills through technical training***

A very large proportion of the population of minority communities is engaged in low-level technical work or earns its living as handicraftsmen. Provision of technical training to such people would upgrade their skills and earning capability. Therefore, a certain proportion of all new ITIs will be located in areas predominantly inhabited by minority communities and a proportion of existing ITIs to be upgraded to 'Centres of Excellence' will be selected on the same basis.

**(9) *Enhanced credit support for economic activities***

(a) The National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC) was set up in 1994 with the objective of promoting economic development activities among the minority communities. The Government is committed to strengthen the NMDFC by providing it greater equity support to enable it to fully achieve its objectives.

(b) Bank credit is essential for creation and sustenance of self-employment initiatives. A target of 40% of net bank credit for priority sector lending has been fixed for domestic banks. The priority sector includes, *inter alia*, agricultural loans, loans to small-scale industries & small business, loans to retail trade, professional and self-employed persons, education loans, housing loans and micro-credit. It will be ensured that an appropriate percentage of the priority sector lending in all categories is targeted for the minority communities.

**(10) *Recruitment to State and Central Services***

(a) In the recruitment of police personnel, State Governments will be advised to give special consideration to minorities. For this purpose, the composition of selection committees should be representative.

(b) The Central Government will take similar action in the recruitment of personnel to the Central police forces.

(c) Large scale employment opportunities are provided by the Railways, nationalized banks and public sector enterprises. In these cases also, the concerned departments will ensure that special consideration is given to recruitment from minority communities.

(d) An exclusive scheme will be launched for candidates belonging to minority communities to provide coaching in government institutions as well as private coaching institutes with credibility.

**C. *Improving the conditions of living of minorities*****(11) *Equitable share in rural housing scheme***

The Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) provides financial assistance for shelter to the rural poor living below the poverty line. A certain percentage of the physical and financial targets under IAY will be earmarked for poor beneficiaries from minority communities living in rural areas.

**(12) *Improvement in condition of slums inhabited by minority communities***

Under the schemes of Integrated Housing & Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) and Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), the Central Government provides assistance to States/UTs for development of urban slums through provision of physical amenities and basic services. It would be ensured that the benefits of these programmes flow equitably to members of the minority communities and to cities/slums, predominantly inhabited by minority communities.

**D. *Prevention & Control of Communal Riots*****(13) *Prevention of communal incidents***

In the areas, which have been identified as communally sensitive and riot prone, district and police officials of the highest known efficiency, impartiality and secular record must be posted. In such areas and even elsewhere, the prevention of communal tension should be one of the primary duties of the district magistrate and superintendent of police. Their performances in this regard should be an important factor in determining their promotion prospects.

**(14) *Prosecution for communal offences***

Severe action should be taken against all those who incite communal tension or take part in violence. Special court or courts specifically earmarked to try communal offences should be set up so that offenders are brought to book speedily.

**(15) Rehabilitation of victims of communal riots**

Victims of communal riots should be given immediate relief and provided prompt and adequate financial assistance for their rehabilitation.

**Statement II**

*Details of the different Ministries/Department having a role in implementation of the 15-Point Programme*

1. Ministry of Women and Child Development
2. Ministry of Human Resource Development
3. Ministry of Rural Development
4. Ministry of Labour and Employment (DGE&T)
5. Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs)
6. Ministry of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation
7. Department of Personnel and Training
8. Ministry of Home Affairs
9. Ministry of Minority Affairs.

**Co-operation with China in Petroleum Sector**

521. SHRI G.V. HARSHA KUMAR:  
SHRI UDAY SINGH:  
SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:

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

(a) whether Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas has recently visited China and held discussions on energy co-operation;

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

(c) whether some of the Chinese firms have shown interest for co-operation in the petroleum sector;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the extent to which the country would be benefited by such long term strategic co-operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA

PATEL): (a) to (e) The Minister had visited Shanghai, China to represent India at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit. Agenda for the event covered a very wide spectrum of issues including energy related issues particular to the region. There were no discussions on any specific oil and gas projects.

[*Translation*]

**Train Accidents**

522. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:  
SHRI SRICHAND KRIPLANI:  
SHRIMATI KALPNA RAMESH NARHIRE:  
SHRI TUKARAM GANGADHAR GADAKH:  
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:  
SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of train accidents reported since January, 2006;

(b) the *prima-facie* cause of each such accidents and responsibility fixed therefor;

(c) the loss of lives and properties therein along with the compensation/*ex-gratia* relief given to the injured and relatives of deceased, accident-wise;

(d) whether the Railways have ordered inquiries to find out the exact cause of such accidents;

(e) if so, the details and outcome thereof along with the action taken against the officials/persons found guilty, accident-wise;

(f) whether the gross violation of rules is taking place in order to increase the income of Railways as a result the danger of train accidents is looming large, as reported in the 'Amar Ujala' dated June 28, 2006;

(g) if so, the reaction of the Railways thereto; and

(h) the details of the plans being chalked out by the Railways in order to bring down the number of train accidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) There have been 109 consequential train accidents during the period from January 2006 to June 2006, in which 81 lives were lost

and 150 injured. Out of these 109 accidents, 10 have been/are being enquired into by Commissioner of Railway Safety and rest by departmental enquiry committees. Depending on finding of the enquiry, action as warranted, including punitive action against those found responsible is taken under the Discipline and Appeals Rules. A total of Rs. 2,56,500/- ex-gratia payment has been paid in these cases. Compensation, however, is payable after the claim cases are filed and decree is awarded by the Railway Claims Tribunal Accident-wise details are given in the enclosed Statement.

(f) and (g) No, Sir. Safety is the prime concern of Indian Railways and every care is taken not to compromise the same.

(h) All possible steps are undertaken on a continuing basis to prevent accidents. These measures include timely replacement of over aged assets, adoption of suitable technologies for upgradation and maintenance of track, rolling stock, signaling and interlocking systems, safety drives and inspections at regular intervals to monitor and educate staff for observance of safe practices. As a result there had been a declining trend in the number of accidents from 473 in 2000-01 to 234 in 2005-06. In the current financial year also there have been 57 consequential train accidents upto June 2006 as compared to 63 in the corresponding period of last year.

All figures are provisional.

### *Statement*

Sl.No.	Date of Accident	Type of accident	Train No.	Railway	Brief particulars	Cost of Damage	Prima facie Cause of accident	Type of inquiry	Responsibility	Action taken against Railway staff	Casualty		Ex-gratia/ Compensation
											Killed	Injured	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1.	01-Jan-06	Derailment	2501 Express	East Central	10 coaches derailed	2050000	Rail fracture	Departmental	Pointmen, Assistant Engineer, Section Engineer P. Wey, Junior Engineer P. Wey and Station Master.	Withholding of increment to removal from service for different categories of staff.	—	—	—
2.	03-Jan-06	Derailment	Goods Train	Western	8 wagon derailed	450000	Rail fracture	Departmental	Enquiry under progress.	Action as per the enquiry report	—	—	—
3.	05-Jan-06	Unmanned	3020 Express	North Eastern	Train engine dished against a tractor	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	—	Not payable
4.	06-Jan-06	Derailment	Goods Train	Northern	7 wagons derailed	210000	Rail fracture	Departmental	P. Way Inspector	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
5.	10-Jan-06	Collision	2815 Exp. and Coaching pilot	East Central	Coaching pilot after disregarding the shunt signal side collided with 2815 Exp., which was entering the station.	180000	Disregard of shunt signal by the driver of coaching pilot	Departmental	Electrical Driver, Assistant Driver, shuntman and Deputy Station Manager	Withholding of increment to removal from service for different categories of staff.	—	5	Not payable
6.	11-Jan-06	Unmanned	Goods Train	Northern	Train engine dished against a bus.	200	Negligence of road user.	Departmental	Road user.	Not applicable	—	6	Not payable
7.	12-Jan-06	Collision	4888 Express and Goods train	Northern	4888 Express side collided with the standing Goods train	1480000	Station staff allowed through passage of 4888 without ensuring complete arrival of the goods train	Departmental	Guard, Pointman and Station Master	Removal from service	—	—	—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
8.	12-Jan-06	Derailment	448 Passenger	North Eastern	while starting from the station the train engine derailed	480	Diverged of starter signal by the Driver	Departmental	Driver, Diesel Assistant, Station Master, Gateman	Withholding of increment	—	—	—
9.	12-Jan-06	Derailment	Goods Train	South Eastern	3 wagons derailed	65000	Colling of rail by microwants	Departmental	Microwants	Not applicable	—	—	—
10.	12-Jan-06	Unmanned	2973 Express	North Western	Train engine derailed against a tractor	20000	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user.	Not applicable	1	—	Not payable
11.	12-Jan-06	Unmanned	6044 Express	South Central	Train engine derailed against an auto-tractor	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user.	Not applicable	3	7	500
12.	15-Jan-06	Unmanned	1077 Express	Northern	Train engine derailed against a Tata Sumo	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	3	1	Not payable
13.	17-Jan-06	Derailment	682 Passenger	Southern	Train engine derailed	—	Excessive cross level variation and locking of axle box of the wheel of loco	Departmental	(1) Junior Engineer (2) Junior Engineer Loco	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
14.	17-Jan-06	Unmanned	5831 Express	East Central	Train engine derailed against a tractor	5000	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	4	—	Not payable
15.	18-Jan-06	Derailment	Goods Train	Northern	9 wagons derailed	240000	Cause could not be established	Departmental	Engineering and Mechanical staff	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
16.	18-Jan-06	Derailment	2053 Express	Northern	Train engine derailed	—	Point was not correctly set and padded	Departmental	Station Master	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
17.	23-Jan-06	Unmanned	176 Passenger	North Eastern	Train engine derailed against a tractor	20000	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	—	Not payable
18.	25-Jan-06	Unmanned	3183 Express	Eastern	Train engine derailed against a Tata Sumo	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	6	10	Not payable
19.	25-Jan-06	Derailment	Goods Train	South Eastern	11 wagons derailed	12382495	Sabotage	Departmental	Microwants	Not applicable	—	—	—
20.	26-Jan-06	Derailment	Goods Train	East Central	5 wagons derailed	6800000	Sabotage	Departmental	Microwants	Not applicable	—	—	—
21.	06-Feb-06	Derailment	Goods Train	East Central	13 wagons derailed	15300000	Rail fracture	Departmental	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	—	—
22.	09-Feb-06	Manned	8008 Express	East Coast	Train engine derailed against a Manual car	50000	Failure of gateman in closing the gate	Departmental	Gateman	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
23.	10-Feb-06	Unmanned	4059 Express	North Western	Train engine derailed against a tractor	16100	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	2	—	Not payable
24.	15-Feb-06	Fire	2415 Express	West Central	SLR caught fire	1000000	Electric short circuit due to overloading	Departmental	Ms. Pahal Corp., Indore and Guant	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
25.	16-Feb-06	Derailment	230 Passenger	East Coast	Train engine derailed	—	Track and coach defect	Departmental	(1) Section Engineer/Track (2), Section Engineer/Track	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
26.	15-Feb-06	Derailment	Goods Train	Southern	1 wagon derailed	—	Breakage of R-2 spring spigot	Departmental	Workshop staff	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
27.	19-Feb-06	Deraiment	3 NNM Passenger	South East Central	Train engine derailed	—	Violation in cross level	Departmental	Junior Engineer/P. Way and Section Engineer/P. Way	Withholding of increment	—	—	—
28.	22-Feb-06	Deraiment	Material train	North Eastern	4 wagons derailed	500	Negligence of material unloading staff	Departmental	(1) Junior Engineer/P. way (2) PWS (3) Guard	Withholding of increment to compulsory retirement to different categories of staff	—	—	—
29.	24-Feb-06	Deraiment	Goods Train	East Coast	5 wagons derailed	6062000	Rail fracture	Departmental	M/s NMDC	Not applicable	—	—	—
30.	24-Feb-06	Deraiment	238 Passenger	East Coast	1 coach derailed	—	Rolling down of boulder kept near track by Engineering staff	Departmental	Junior Engineer/Works	Withholding of increment for one year	—	—	—
31.	25-Feb-06	Unmanned	482 Passenger	South Central	Train engine dished against a car	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	2	—	Not payable
32.	25-Feb-06	Deraiment	Goods Train	Northeast Frontier	5 wagons derailed	50000	Excessive cross level variation	Departmental	Junior Engineer/P. way, Junior Engineer Carriage and Wagon and Guard	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
33.	26-Feb-06	Deraiment	3049 Express	Northern	Train engine and eight coaches derailed	6125500	Sabotage	Commissioner of Railway Safety	Miscrowals	Not applicable	1	2	16000
34.	26-Feb-06	Unmanned	6345 Express	Southern	Train engine dished against a car	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	3	1	Not payable
35.	26-Feb-06	Miscellaneous	234 Passenger	South Western	One tipper grazed against the train	—	Negligence of tipper driver	Commissioner of Railway Safety	(1) Driver of tipper lorry (2) JE-11/P. way	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	1	10	38000
36.	01-Mar-06	Deraiment	551 Passenger	North Eastern	10 coaches derailed	1568630	Negligence of Railway staff	Commissioner of Railway Safety	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	5	7000
37.	01-Mar-06	Unmanned	2GB Passenger	West Central	Train engine dished against a tractor	6500	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	3	1	Not payable
38.	02-Mar-06	Deraiment	Goods Train	South Western	1 wagon derailed	4646675	Hot axle	Departmental	(1) Staff of Jhansi workshop (2) Guard	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
39.	04-Mar-06	Deraiment	4164 Express	Northern	Train engine and 2 coach derailed while the train was entering Bulandshahr station	35000	Wrong operation of points	Departmental	Junior Engineer/Signal and Assistant Station Master	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
40.	07-Mar-06	Deraiment	Goods Train	South Central	11 wagons derailed	216246	Cold breakage of axle	Departmental	Carriage and Wagon staff	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
41.	10-Mar-06	Deraiment	3 BJ Passenger	South East Central	Train engine derailed	—	Boulder fallen on track	Departmental	Natural Calamity	Not applicable	—	—	—
42.	10-Mar-06	Deraiment	Goods Train	East Coast	1 wagon derailed	303800	Wagon defect	Departmental	Kota Workshop	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
43.	10-Mar-06	Deraiment	536 Passenger	East Central	While the train was starting from station 2 coaches derailed	145000	Coach defect	Departmental	Junior Engineers	Reduction in pay scale by 2 stage with Cumulative effect for 1 year	—	—	—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
44.	11-Mar-06	Demolment	Goods Train	Western	25 wagons derailed	60000	Rail fracture	Departmental	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	—	—
45.	11-Mar-06	Demolment	347 Passenger	South Central	Train engine derailed	95000	Diesel loco defect	Departmental	Section Engineer Diesel	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
46.	15-Mar-06	Demolment	1 PRL Passenger	Northern	4 Coaches derailed while the train was entering the station	1000	Over speeding	Departmental	Driver	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
47.	20-Mar-06	Demolment	3019 Express	North Eastern	Train engine derailed	98673	Disregard of starter signal by the Driver	Departmental	(1) Driver (2) Diesel Assistant (3) Guard	Withholding of increment to compulsory retirement to different categories of staff	—	—	—
48.	20-Mar-06	Unmanned	798 Passenger	Southern	Train engine dished against a lorry	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	5	Not payable
49.	21-Mar-06	Demolment	4315 Express	Northern	1 coach derailed	55000	Buffer entanglement	Departmental	Carriage and Wagon staff	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
50.	24-Mar-06	Unmanned	314 Passenger	Western	Train engine dished against a Tempo	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user.	Not applicable	—	9	Not payable
51.	25-Mar-06	Demolment	4649 Express	Northern	1 coach derailed	—	Track and coach defect	Departmental	Engineering and Mechanical staff	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
52.	25-Mar-06	Manned	2016 Express	North Western	Train engine dished against a dumper resulting into demolment of train engine	25000	Negligence of gateman	Departmental	Gateman, Section engineer/P. Way	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
53.	01-Apr-06	Demolment	6012 Express	South Central	Train engine and 3 coaches derailed	18000	Non securing of points	Departmental	Assistant Station Master and Pointman	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
54.	06-Apr-06	Demolment	Goods Train	North Western	2 wagons derailed	70000	Track defect	Departmental	Sr. Section engineer/P. Way and Section Engineer P. way	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
55.	07-Apr-06	Unmanned	613 Passenger	Northeast Frontier	Train engine dished against one Masul car	3000	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	2	—	Not payable
56.	07-Apr-06	Demolment	Goods Train	South Western	3 wagons derailed	—	Wrong operation of points	Departmental	(1) Station Master (2) Cabin man	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
57.	10-Apr-06	Miscellaneous	5273 Express	Northern	One JCB working near the track dished against train	98000	Negligence of JCB driver	Commissioner of Railway Safety	JCB driver	Not applicable	2	6	25000
58.	15-Apr-06	Demolment	261 Passenger	East Central	3 coaches derailed	30000	Two route due to operation of points under the moving wheels due to more gap between rail face and lock bar	Departmental	Cabman, Leveman, Senior Section Engineer /Signal, Section Engineer/Signal	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
59.	23-Apr-06	Unmanned	2563 Express	North Eastern	Train engine dished against one track	19894	Negligence of road user	Commissioner of Railway Safety	Road user	Not applicable	—	9	17080

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
60.	24-Apr-06	Fire	911 Holiday Special	North Central	1 coach caught fire	825000	Inflammable material carried by some unknown	Departmental	Unknown Passenger	Not applicable	—	—	—
61.	25-Apr-06	Unmanned	8029 Express	South East Central	Train engine dished against one dumper	395000	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	1	2000
62.	25-Apr-06	Unmanned	Goods Train	Eastern	Train engine dished against one lorry	6500	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	—	Not payable
63.	25-Apr-06	Derailment	472 Passenger	North Western	Train engine and 2 coaches derailed	—	Spread gauge	Departmental	Gangman and Section Engineer P. Way	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
64.	27-Apr-06	Unmanned	2861 Express	Southern	Train engine dished against one tractor	25000	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	—	Not payable
65.	28-Apr-06	Manned	2402 Dn Express	East Central	Train engine dished against one tractor	160000	Negligence of gateman	Departmental	Gateman	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	2	1	14500
66.	30-Apr-06	Derailment	Goods Train	Southern	22 wagons derailed	8470283	Wagon component fallen on track	Departmental	Workshop staff	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
67.	01-May-06	Derailment	Goods Train	Eastern	19 wagons derailed	—	Fresh breakage of rail	Departmental	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	—	—
68.	02-May-06	Unmanned	9005 Mail	Western	Train engine dished against one tractor	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	2	Not payable
69.	02-May-06	Manned	9023 Express	Northern	Train engine dished against one truck	320000	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	—	Not payable
70.	03-May-06	Unmanned	9119 Express	Western	Train engine dished against one tractor	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	—	Not payable
71.	03-May-06	Derailment	K-83 EMU	Central	3 coaches derailed	—	Rail fracture	Commissioner of Railway Safety	None	Not applicable	—	—	—
72.	04-May-06	Unmanned	8005 Express	East Coast	Train engine dished against one tractor	22425	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	3	—	Not payable
73.	04-May-06	Derailment	4 Dn Passenger	South East Central	Train engine derailed	—	Violation in cross level	Departmental	Section Engineer/ P. Way and Gangmate	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
74.	10-May-06	Unmanned	4520 Express	North Western	Train engine dished against one tractor trolley	18000	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	2	4	Not payable
75.	16-May-06	Derailment	3 Up Passenger	South East Central	2 coaches derailed	140000	Sabotage	Commissioner of Railway Safety	Miscarants	Not applicable	—	1	5500
76.	16-May-06	Miscellaneous	2 MNR Passenger	Northern	2 passengers got injured after getting hit by signal ladder of gate no. 34-B	5000	Infringement by signal ladder of the gate signal of gate no. 34-B	Commissioner of Railway Safety	Signalling staff	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	2	1000
77.	16-May-06	Unmanned	259 Passenger	Western	Train engine dished against one car	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	2	—	Not payable
78.	17-May-06	Unmanned	2164 Express	South Central	Train engine dished against one autochickshaw	28888	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	4	—	Not payable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
79.	19-May-06	Miscellaneous	4553 Express	Northern	One tree fell down and struck with the train	—	Cutting of trees by micromants	Commissioner of Railway Safety	Miscareants	Not applicable	—	4	15000
80.	19-May-06	Derailment	Goods Train	East Coast	Train engine and 8 wagons derailed	16532000	Sabotage	Departmental	Miscareants	Not applicable	—	—	—
81.	19-May-06	Unmanned	466 Passenger	North Western	Train engine dished against one truck	3000	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	1	Not payable
82.	21-May-06	Unmanned	749 Passenger	Southern	Train engine dished against one tractor	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	—	1	Not payable
83.	22-May-06	Unmanned	2079 Express	South Western	Train engine dished against one tpper lorry	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	7	1	Not payable
84.	24-May-06	Collision	Goods Train and Couple light engine	East Central	Couple light engine collided with Goods train	5600	Disregard of Home signal by the driver of couple engine	Departmental	Diesel Driver, Diesel Assistant	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	2	Not payable
85.	24-May-06	Unmanned	366 Passenger	North Central	Train engine dished against one tractor	1000	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	2	1	Not payable
86.	26-May-06	Miscellaneous	5012 Express and 402 Passenger	North Central	Passenger of both trains hit by signal sighting board	10000	Indisgement by signal sighting board	Departmental	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	7	Not payable
87.	28-May-06	Unmanned	17F Passenger	North Western	Train engine dished against one tractor	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	1	Not payable
88.	30-May-06	Derailment	BV-524 EMU	Eastern	1 coach derailed	—	Changing of route during movement of train	Departmental	(1) Cabinman (2) Station Master	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
89.	30-May-06	Unmanned	5312 Express	North Eastern	Train engine dished against one tractor trolly	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	3	1	Not payable
90.	30-May-06	Derailment	2817 Express	Korikan	1 coach derailed	1000	Flooding of track due to heavy rain	Departmental	Natural calamity	Not applicable	—	—	—
91.	06-Jun-06	Derailment	Goods Train	North Central	15 wagons derailed	17000000	Wagon defect	Departmental	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	—	—
92.	07-Jun-06	Derailment	245 Passenger	North Eastern	1 coach derailed	450	Sudden application of brakes by driver	Departmental	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	—	—
93.	06-Jun-06	Derailment	Goods Train	Northern	2 wagons derailed	45500	Brake binding	Departmental	Cartage and wagon and workshop staff	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
94.	08-Jun-06	Derailment	4910 Express	North Western	Train engine derailed	283151	Weld failure	Departmental	Sr. Section engineer/P. Way, Section Engineer P. way and P.W.M	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
95.	09-Jun-06	Unmanned	Goods Train	Northern	Train engine dished against one tractor	900	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	2	—	Not payable
96.	09-Jun-06	Unmanned	6 ABP Passenger	Northern	Train engine dished against one tractor	1000	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	2	2	Not payable
97.	11-Jun-06	Unmanned	49D Passenger	South East Central	Train engine dished against one libaul car	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	2	4	Not payable

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98.	11-Jun-06	Unmanned	1RF Passenger	North Western	Train engine dished against one tractor	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	1	Not payable
99.	13-Jun-06	Unmanned	310 Passenger	Western	Train engine dished against one rickshaw	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	4	Not payable
100.	14-Jun-06	Unmanned	525DMU Passenger	Western	Train engine dished against one autorickshaw	—	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	2	—	Not payable
101.	15-Jun-06	Miscellaneous	4005 Express	North Eastern	Train engine dished against one truck standing near track	—	Breakage of axle of truck near track	Commissioner of Railway Safety	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	30	88000
102.	22-Jun-06	Derailment	Goods Train	South Western	9 wagons dished	—	Track and wagon defect	Departmental	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	—	—
103.	23-Jun-06	Derailment	Goods Train	West Central	2 wagons dished	80000	Rail fracture	Department	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	—	—
104.	11-Jun-06	Unmanned	5048 Express	North Eastern	Train engine dished against one tractor	55200	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	—	Not payable
105.	28-Jun-06	Derailment	10 BJ Passenger	South East Central	Train engine dished	—	Variation in cross level	Departmental	Junior Engineer/ P. way and Gangmate	Discipline and Appeal Rule under progress	—	—	—
106.	28-Jun-06	Derailment	Goods Train	Western	3 wagons dished	105000	Wagon defect and crew mismanagement	Departmental	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	—	—
107.	28-Jun-06	Derailment	1548 Express	Central	Train engine dished	100000	Track and loco defect	Departmental	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	—	—
108.	30-Jun-06	Derailment	2557 Express	North Central	4 coaches dished	35000	Train taking two road over diamond crossing	Departmental	Enquiry under progress	Action as per the enquiry report	—	—	—
109.	30-Jun-06	Unmanned	497 Passenger	North Western	Train engine dished against one truck	12080	Negligence of road user	Departmental	Road user	Not applicable	1	—	Not payable

*[English]***Private Companies in Defence Sector****Establishment of Railway Workshop at Nenam**

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

- whether there is any proposal to establish a Railway Workshop at Nenam near Thiruvananthapuram;
- if so, the details thereof; and
- the time by which it is likely to be established?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

524. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:  
SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- the number of licences/Letters of Intent issued to private manufacturing companies to produce Defence products since 2001;
- whether recently the Government has blacklisted some of the private companies which are manufacturing Defence products;
- if so, the details thereof; and
- the total amount of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) came in the Defence sector since 2001?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (c) Since May 2001, 28 Letters of Intent/Industrial Licences have so far been issued to private manufacturing companies to produce Defence products. None of the companies which have obtained Letters of Intent/Industrial Licences for production of Defence items has been banned.

(d) As per available records, the total amount of FDI inflow in Defence sector, under the licensing regime, during the period May 2001 to April 2006 is Rs. 0.24 crore.

#### **Supply of Aluminium Caskets**

525. SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:  
SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has recently booked some senior Army officers and US based funeral service company for allegedly supplying poor quality aluminium caskets at exorbitant rates after the Kargil war;

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

(c) whether the manner in which the caskets were procured from the US based firm have been found most illegal; and

(d) if so, the time by which investigation in this regard is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) A case of purchase of 500 aluminium caskets and 3000 body bags made in August 1999 was handed over for investigation to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). A regular case has been registered by CBI against Major General (Retired) Arun Roye, the then Military Attache, Washington, Colonel S.K. Malik, the then Director in Master General of Ordnance (MGO) Branch in Army Headquarters (AHQ), Colonel F.B. Singh, the then Joint Director in MGO's Branch, AHQ and Mr. Victor Baiza Jr. of M/s Buitron & Baiza Caskets and Funeral Supplies, Texas, USA in connection with cheating and criminal misconduct in purchase of sub-standard aluminium caskets and body bags for the Indian Army. No definite time-frame to complete the investigation can be indicated at this stage.

#### **Supply of Vessels to ONGC**

526. SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA:  
SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY:

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

(a) whether the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) has called bids for supplying 26 vessels with modified stringent conditions and differential positioning for their offshore works during the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether with the modified contract period of five years with substantial revision in their physical parameters, none of the Indian shipping companies will be able to bid which will result in grabbing the contract by foreign flag vessels owners; and

(d) if so, the details and the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) have invited tender for charter hiring of 30 vessels (Anchor Handling Tug/Production Supply Vessel/ Offshore Supply Vessels) with Dynamic Positioning (DP) capabilities.

(b) A total 38 tender documents have been sold. As a sequel to pre bid discussions, the date of closing of tender, which was 19.07.2006 has been subsequently extended to 3.8.2006.

(c) and (d) No Sir, ONGC has been constantly in touch with the Indian Ship Owners Association (INSA) to upgrade the vessels to DP-1 type to meet stringent safety standards, especially in view of expanding deep-water operations. To facilitate Indian Ship Owners, ONGC has also provided a longer charter period of 5+1 years as against 2-3 years and allowed staggered mobilization to convert vessels to DP-1. The government supports ONGC's efforts to upgrade its safety standards, as there cannot be any compromise on this account.

#### **Import of Petroleum Products**

527. SHRI SUBRATA BOSE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether petrol and diesel have been imported in finished form/crude form;

(b) if so, the total quantity of petrol and diesel imported during each of the last three years, separately;

(c) whether procurements of these products are made through bilateral contracts with oil producing countries or on-the-spot purchase from the market;

(d) if so, the proportion of procurements made during the said period, separately;

(e) the names of countries which supplied petroleum products under the bilateral contracts during said period; and

(f) the details of supply contracts outstanding, if any, in respect of finished petrol, diesel and crude oil as on June 30, 2006 and the contractual prices in respective cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) Petrol and diesel have been imported in finished form. Approximately 76% of the crude oil requirement of our refineries is also imported.

(b) The quantity of petrol and diesel imported during the last three years is as under:-

(Qty. in TMT)

Product	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06 (Pov.)
Petrol	—	233	485
Diesel	100	814	733

(c) PSU Oil Marketing Companies are importing petrol and diesel on spot purchase basis.

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

(e) The countries which supplied petroleum products to PSUs under bilateral contracts during 2005-06 are Malaysia, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

(f) Under various term contracts, a quantity of 38.21 MMT crude oil is outstanding from foreign National Oil Companies to the oil PSUs. In the bilateral agreements, only volume is fixed and the price is based on the Official Selling Price (OSP) of crude which are declared by the suppliers on month-to-month basis.

#### **Gramin Ticket Booking Service**

528. SHRI SUBODH MOHITE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway have decided to start new 'Gramin Ticket Booking Services' to help rural unemployed youths;

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

(c) the criteria for issuing the agency to rural unemployed youths under the scheme;

(d) the details of commission provided to the agency; and

(e) the estimated revenue likely to be earned by the Railways under the scheme?

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

(b) 50 'E' category stations of East Central Railway have been nominated for selection of Gramin Ticket Booking Sevaks (GTBS), out of which selection of 17 GTBS has been finalised and that on 6 stations will be finalised shortly. For 27 stations no applications were received.

(c) The selection of GTBS is done by a Committee of three officers of the Division from Commercial, Finance and Operating Departments after calling application through a notice pasted on the notice board of the station. The GTBS should fulfill the following qualifications:—

(i) Applicant should not be under 18 years of age and should be at least Matric pass or equivalent. However, educational qualification can be relaxed by DCM/Sr. DCM if there is no applicant otherwise available.

(ii) Applicant should produce a Character Certificate from the Village Head or a Magistrate that he bears a good moral character and is free from any criminal case pending against him.

- (iii) Applicant with a telephone connection in his office or residence will be preferred.
- (iv) Applicant should be a local resident of the area served by the station.
- (v) Applicant should be prepared to give Rs. 10,000 refundable security deposit to the Railway. On completion/termination of contract, pending dues will be adjusted from the Security deposit and balance refunded to GTBS.

(d) GTBS are authorised to realize service charge of Rs. 0.50 per ticket from passenger.

(e) Since the scheme has not been implemented yet it is not possible to assess the increase in earning from this scheme.

*[Translation]*

**Tourism Officers Abroad**

529. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU:  
SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to restructure the overseas Indian Tourism Offices in order to give impetus to tourism in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the effective steps taken by the Government to promote Indian Tourism abroad;

(d) the number of foreign tourists visited India during each of the last three years and expected during 2006-07; and

(e) the infrastructural arrangements made/contemplated to be made to cope up with the expected inflow of tourists in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Ministry of Tourism regularly reviews the functioning of its overseas India Tourism Offices to ensure effective marketing of India Tourism overseas.

(c) In order to promote tourism to India and attract foreign tourists to the country, the Ministry of Tourism,

through its 13 India tourism Offices, undertakes a series of promotional activities in tourist generating markets overseas. These activities include advertising, participation in fairs and exhibitions, organising seminars, workshops and road shows, publication of brochures and joint advertisement support and inviting media personalities, tour operators and opinion makers to visit the country under the Hospitality Programme of the Ministry.

(d) The details of foreign tourist visited India during last three years and year 2006 (upto June) are given as under:—

Year	No. of Foreign Tourist Arrivals
2003	2726214
2004	3457477
2005	3915324 (Provisional)
2006 (upto June)	2154890 (Provisional)

(e) Ministry of Tourism extends financial assistance for tourism infrastructure development to State/UT Governments, Central Government agencies, Public Sector Undertakings and Private Sector companies under its following schemes:

- (i) Product/Infrastructure Development of Destination & Circuits.
- (ii) Assistance for Large Revenue Generating Projects.
- (iii) Incentive to Accommodation Infrastructure Subsidies.

In addition, Ministry of Tourism approves and classifies Hotels, Heritage properties, Apartment Hotels, Guest Houses, Time share resorts, Bed and Breakfast establishments to ensure standard accommodation to tourists. Ministry of Tourism has also been in constant touch with various State Government and land owning agencies to follow investor friendly land policies, creation of land banks and adopt the policy of single window clearance for hotel projects.

**FPIs in Backward and Tribal Areas**

530. DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:  
SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the norms and rules formulated by the Government for setting up of food processing industries in backward and tribal dominated areas;

(b) whether the Government has provided financial assistance for setting up any food processing industries in the backward and tribal dominated areas; and

(c) if so, the details thereof during the last three years, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (c) The Government has

implemented several Plan Schemes for promotion of food processing industries. These schemes are project specific and not state or area specific. The rate of financial assistance in the form of grant-in-aid for Technology Upgradation/Establishment/Modernization of food processing units is 25% and 33.33% of the total cost of plant and machinery and technical civil works subject to a maximum of Rs. 50 lakhs in general areas and Rs. 75 lakh in difficult areas like North East, J&K, Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, A&N Islands, Lakshadweep and ITDP area. The financial assistance extended to FPI projects during the last three years in the States falling under the category of difficult areas, is given in the enclosed Statement.

*Statement*

*FPIs in Backward and Tribal Areas*

(Rs. in lakh)

State/UT	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06 (upto Dec. 05)
Assam	257.79	245.76	40.83
Himachal Pradesh	99.18	75.51	116.98
Jammu and Kashmir	108.78	74.78	35.36
Manipur	108.41	—	—
Meghalaya	—	12.14	—
Mizoram	110.50	12.30	—
Nagaland	40.75	—	17.35
Tripura	33.07	—	—
Uttaranchal	5.37	87.88	156.31

[English]

**Import of Defence Technologies**

531. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to grant special status to some premier private companies for importing Defence Technologies directly from abroad;

(b) if so, the details of such companies identified by the Government;

(c) whether the Government has earmarked the Defence Technologies which will be imported by these companies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

There is, however, a proposal to identify premier private companies, which can be treated at par with Defence PSUs for production of Defence items in terms of the provisions of Defence Procurement Procedure 2005.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

*[Translation]*

#### Restoration of Telescopic Benefits

532. SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT:  
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:  
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:  
SHRI KAILASH NATH SINGH YADAV:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have restored the telescopic benefits to the passengers in end-to-end fares which were earlier withdrawn on April 1, 2006;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways have made any changes or propose to make any changes in Tatkal Reservation scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) From 15.6.2006, the benefit of telescopic fares, as available prior to 1.4.2005, has been restored.

(c) and (d) In the recent past, the following changes have been made in the Tatkal Scheme:-

- (i) Advance reservation period for booking ticket under Tatkal scheme has been enhanced to five days.
- (ii) Waiting list tickets are now being issued under this scheme.
- (iii) Tatkal tickets can be booked through Internet.
- (iv) A flat refund of 25% of total fare charged on ticket, excluding Tatkal charges, has been introduced on cancellation of confirmed Tatkal tickets surrendered upto 24 hours before schedule departure of the train.

- (v) On those trains where demand for booking from originating to destination is not enough, Railways have been authorized to earmark intermediate station quota from where ticket under Tatkal Scheme can be issued keeping in view the traffic pattern.

*[English]*

#### Strength of RPF Personnel

533. SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the strength of personnel in the Railway Protection Force (RPF) at present;

(b) whether keeping in view the increase in crime in trains the Railways are considering to increase the strength in the Railway Police Force (RPF); and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The strength of Railway Protection Force personnel is 67,056.

(b) Yes, proposals are under consideration to increase the strength of the RPF.

(c) In the wake of Dec. 2003 Amendments in the RPF Act 1957 and The Railways Act 1989, RPF was given additional responsibilities of security of Railway passengers and passenger area. To perform the additional duties of train escorting and access control efficiently 2 proposals are under consideration in the Ministry of Railways for augmenting the strength of RPF. The details of the proposal are as under:

1. Fresh creation of 24,034 posts in non-gazetted cadre
2. Fresh creation of 173 posts in gazetted cadre.

#### Visit of US Joint Chief of Staff General

534. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US Joint Chief of Staff General visited India; and

(b) if so, the details of issues discussed and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) General Peter Pace, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, United States of America visited India from June 4-7, 2006.

(b) During the visit, discussions were held on enhancing defence cooperation. The meeting reviewed ongoing defence relations and initiatives within the framework of evolving relations between India and the United States. His discussions with Indian interlocutors also centered on the need to sustain and enhance military to military cooperation, security of the Indian Ocean Region, regional security issues, and cross-border terrorism. Ways to enhance training cooperation between the Armed Forces of the two sides were also discussed. Views were also exchanged on the recently concluded Shangri-La Dialogue.

#### **Combat Squadron Strength**

535. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether even with the planned induction of aircraft during 2005-2017, there would be any deficiencies in the combat squadron strength against the authorised strength at the end of X, XI & XII Plan periods; and

(b) if so, the efforts made to maintain the authorised strength in the interest of the security of the nation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government constantly review the security environment and accordingly decide to induct appropriate equipment and to make other arrangements for adequate defence preparedness to enhance combat strength in terms of quality and quantity. It would not be in the interest of national security to give further details.

#### **Freight Corridor Project**

536. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have planned to outsource track laying for dedicated freight corridor project;

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

(c) whether the Railways have invited the companies for bidding in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There is no such proposal at present.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

#### **Vacancies in Railways**

537. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA:  
SHRI VIJAY KUMAR KHANDELWAL:  
SHRI ASADUDDIN OWASI:  
SHRI DHANUSKODI R. ATHITHAN:  
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:  
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of posts including safety category are lying vacant in the Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for not fulfilling these vacancies;

(c) whether Railways have started any special drive to fill up these vacancies;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken or being taken by the Railways to ensure that safety is not compromised due to shortage of manpower?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Filling up of vacancies is an on-going process and steps are always underway to fill the vacancies as and when they arise. As on 1.4.2006 there were approximately 1,66,569 vacancies of Group 'C' and 'D' including 86,340 in Safety categories.

(c) No special drive has been launched for recruitment of staff on Indian Railways.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) No compromise is made on safety of trains. While monitoring the staff strength, safety on trains operations

is always emphasized and kept in view so that the desired quality of output is achieved by employing optimum number of staff.

#### **Incentives for Carrying Goods by Trains**

538. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have extended some additional incentives for carrying goods by trains;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent to which these incentives have helped the Railways to get more business?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Many incentive schemes have been launched. These schemes give financial incentive by way of concession on freight to incremental traffic, higher rail-coefficient, traffic in traditional empty flow direction and for Cargo Aggregation. Besides, customers can enter into Long Term Special Incentive Schemes with Zonal Railways.

(c) It is difficult to assess the exact quantitative impact of these schemes. However, the freight earnings upto the first quarter of the financial year *i.e.* upto June 2006 (approximate) have increased by 14.08% as compared to the corresponding period of the previous financial year (approximate).

#### **International Railway Routes**

539. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have any plans to open more international railway routes especially in the neighbouring countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

#### **Railway Projects**

540. SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are considering to electrify railway line from Trivandrum to Kanyakumari;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the work on the project is likely to be started and completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The final decision to electrify Trivandrum to Kanyakumari section will be taken after appraisal of the proposal.

#### **Food Technology Parks**

541. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:  
SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA:  
SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN:  
SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA:

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government provides financial assistance to State Governments for setting up of Food Technology Parks in their States;

(b) if so, the details of the financial assistance provided to the State Governments for the purpose during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(c) whether the Union Government has received proposals from the State Governments for financial assistance during the current year in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) The Ministry of Food Processing Industries under its Plan Scheme provides financial assistance to various implementing agencies such as Public Sector Undertakings/Joint/Assisted/Private Sector/Non Governmental Organizations/Cooperatives for creation of common facilities in Food Parks, such as un-interrupted power supply, water supply, cold storage/ice plant/

warehousing facilities, effluent treatment plant, quality control and analytical laboratory, etc. in food parks, upto 25% of the project cost in General Areas and 33.33% in Difficult Areas, subject to maximum of Rs. 4.00 crores on common facilities. The grant of assistance is considered based on complete & viable project proposals received from the implementing agencies in various States, duly appraised by Banks/Financial Institutions and recommended by the respective State Nodal Agencies. The assistance is released directly to the project implementing agency.

(b) to (d) A statement showing financial assistance approved for setting up of Food Parks in different States by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries during last three years viz. 2003-2004, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 is Annexed. During the current financial year 2006-07, four project proposals for setting up of food parks—one in District Hardwar, Uttaranchal, one in District Alwar, Rajasthan, one in Rajamundry, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh and one in Kundli, District Sonapat, Haryana have been received through State Nodal Agencies. The proposals have been scrutinized and required supporting information/clarifications have been called for.

**Statement**

*Financial assistance approved for Food Parks during 2003-04*

Sl.No.	State	Location of Food Park	Approved MFPI assistance (Rs. in Lakhs)
1.	Maharashtra	Palus, District Sangli	400.00
2.	Rajasthan	Sri Ganganagar	227.89
3.	West Bengal	Sultanpur, South 24-Parganas	200.28
4.	West Bengal	Malda	387.00
Total			1215.17

*Financial assistance approved for Food Parks during 2004-05*

Sl.No.	State	Location of Food Park	Approved MFPI assistance (Rs. in Lakhs)
1.	Tamil Nadu	Nilakottai Industrial Estate, Dindigul District	325.00
2.	Uttar Pradesh	Shahajanwa, Gorakhpur	323.11
3.	West Bengal	Shankarpur, Distt. Purba Medinipur	178.92
4.	West Bengal	Sankhrail, Howrah	400.00
Total			1227.03

*Financial assistance approved for Food Parks during 2005-06*

Sl.No.	State	Location of Food Park	Approved MFPI assistance (Rs. in Lakhs)
1.	Kerala	Adoor	388.00
2.	Maharashtra	Kapsi, Taluka Kamtee, Nagpur	397.50
3.	West Bengal	Murshidabad	379.88
Total			1165.38

**Infiltration across LoC**

542. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the infiltration from across the Line of Control (LoC) is on the increase;

(b) if so, the number of such cases reported during the current year so far and how does it compare with the corresponding figures of the previous year; and

(c) the steps taken to stop the cross border terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Infiltration attempts from across the Line of Control continue and are being effectively neutralized in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The assessed infiltration into J&K during January-June, 2006 was 169 persons as compared to 91 during the same period in 2005. The strategy adopted by the Army to tackle cross border terrorism incorporates an integrated dynamic counter infiltration strategy, comprising of multi-tiered arrangements, including a forward tier of troop deployment, deployment of the state-of-the-art surveillance devices, the Line of Control (LoC) fence, a second tier deployment in conjunction with the fence, relentless operations in the hinterland and winning the 'hearts and minds' of the local populace through small scale development and community projects. The Army, in conjunction with other intelligence and security agencies, continually review its strategy to deal with terrorists to ensure that violence levels in J&K remain under check.

[*Translation*]

**Change in Route of New Delhi-Howrah Rajdhani Express**

543. SHRI KAILASH BAITHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are considering to run New Delhi-Howrah Rajdhani Express train *via* Narkatiaganj-Gorakhpur line;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is also any proposal to increase the frequency of said Rajdhani Express; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(d) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[*English*]

**Land Acquisition for Railway Projects in Orissa**

544. SHRI B. MAHTAB: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made so far with regard to land acquisition for railway projects in Orissa, project-wise;

(b) the rate at which compensation is being paid to the persons whose land has been acquired; and

(c) the time by which the land acquisition process is likely to be completed in each project?

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

(b) The rate of compensation payable for land acquisition is decided by the State Government.

(c) Land acquisition is undertaken and completed by the State Government. No tentative deadline of land acquisition is feasible to be fixed.

**Export of Missiles**

545. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:  
SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL:  
SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to export missiles particularly Brah Mos;

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

(c) whether negotiations have been made with any countries in this regard;

(d) if so, the details alongwith the response received from those countries;

(e) the time by which the export of missiles is likely to be started; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to ensure that production of the missiles met world-class quality standards?

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

(b) BarhMos being a joint venture project with Russia, there is already a decision of the Governments of India and Russia to use the jointly developed missile in the Indian and Russian armed forces and to export the system to friendly countries.

(c) to (e) Due to sensitiveness involved with export of the missile, it is not possible to give the details.

(f) A comprehensive quality assurance system has been devised to ensure the world-class quality standards in both the countries with interchangeability of components and subsystems between the two countries with common quality arrangements.

#### **Buffer Stock of Kerosene and LPG**

546. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH:  
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

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

(a) whether the stock of Kerosene oil and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) is receding fast and some parts of the country is experiencing acute shortage of Kerosene oil;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to make buffer stock of Kerosene and Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) PDS kerosene is an allocated product and

the Government of India allocates it to the States on quarterly basis. The distribution of PDS Kerosene to the consumers is handled by the State Governments. As of 24.07.06, the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) had overall Kerosene stocks at their supply locations in various State sufficient to meet 23 days requirement on all India basis. In addition to PDS Kerosene, oil companies sell free market Kerosene as per requirements.

As regards LPG, as on 24.07.06, OMCs had overall LPG stocks at their supply locations in various States sufficient to meet 11.5 days requirement on all India basis.

(b) There is no proposal with the Government to make buffer stock of kerosene and LPG in the country.

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

#### **Purchase of Computers**

547. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 337 dated November 24, 2005 regarding purchase of computers and state:

(a) whether the information has since been collected;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The computers, servers, peripherals and networking equipments are purchased by various Competent Financial Authorities at different levels spread all over the country. The records of such purchases are kept only for limited period of time as per the existing rules and procedures and complete records for the period in question are no longer available.

#### **Electrification of Bangalore-Mysore Railway Line**

548. SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made so far on electrification of Bangalore-Mysore Railway Line Project;

(b) the expenditure incurred on the said project till date; and

(c) the time schedule for completion of the said project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) At present, there is no proposal to electrify Bangalore-Mysore line.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

#### **Railway Projects of Western Railway**

549. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have received any proposal from Western Railway regarding doubling and electrification of Railway Line from Jamnagar to Ahmedabad and from Viramgam to Mehsana;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Railways thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) No such proposal has been received. However, on Ahmedabad-Jamnagar line, double broad gauge line already exists on Ahmedabad-Viramgam section and a survey for doubling of Viramgam-Surendranagar (65 Kms) section has been sanctioned during 2006-07 to assess the traffic on this section.

#### **Amendment to Petroleum Rules, 2002**

550. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA:  
SHRI BHUPENDRASINH SOLANKI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 1207 dated March 2, 2006 regarding Amendment to Petroleum Rules, 2002 and state:

(a) whether the matter has been examined by the Government;

(b) if so, the decision taken by the Government on the matter; and

(c) if not, the present status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) Government have received a suggestion from the Government of Gujarat to amend Rule 43 of the Petroleum Rules, 2002 to include ship breaking activities so that inspection of ships after beaching is done by the Explosive Department.

The views of Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organisation (PESO), Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport & Highways, Ministry of Steel and Ports & Transport Department, Government of Gujarat on proposed draft amendment were obtained by this Ministry.

Ministry of Commerce and Industry while forwarding comments from PESO *inter alia* suggested that there is no need for amendment of Rule 43 for inclusion of ship breaking activity under Rule 43(d) of Petroleum Rules. It also suggested that, if necessary, the rule may be suitably modified to the effect that the hot work certificate under Rule 43(d) be issued by the State Government agencies under Factories Act and Rules. On these views of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the comments of Ministry of Steel, Ministry of Shipping and State Government of Gujarat were called for. Comments of Ministry of Shipping are still awaited.

#### **Gauge Conversion between Ahmedabad and Udaipur**

551. SHRI BHUPENDRASINH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have received any proposal for gauge conversion work between Ahmedabad and Udaipur;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Railways thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Demands have been received from the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Rajasthan and Hon'ble Members of Parliament for gauge conversion of Udaipur-Ahmedabad metre gauge line.

(c) A survey for gauge conversion of Ahmedabad-Himmatnagar-Udaipur metre gauge line has been

completed recently as per which cost of conversion of 342 kms long line has been assessed as Rs. 1010.57 crore with a rate of return of 4.91%.

*[Translation]*

**Purchase of Bomb Detection Instruments**

552. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:  
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was any plan to purchase hi-tech bomb detection instruments for conducting the search and frisking operations at Railway stations and in trains as reported in 'The Hindustan Times' dated July 13, 2006;

(b) if so, whether this plan is pending with the Railways for clearance;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the measures taken or proposed to be taken to conduct search and frisking operations in trains and at Railway stations?

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

(b) and (c) All the important stations over Zonal Railways are to be covered under Bomb Detection Plan. Instructions have been issued recently to All Railways to procure such equipment such as Bomb detection equipment and Close Circuit Television (CCTVs) Cameras for installation on important stations. Many of the Railways already have Handheld metal detectors, Door Frame Metal Detectors and Dog Squads.

(d) Two additional Companies of Railway Protection Special Force have been deployed in Mumbai (Central & Western Railway) after the above blasts. Besides additional force has been mobilized to Mumbai from adjoining divisions in Western & Central Railway. Close Circuit Television (CCTVs) at 11 Railway stations in Mumbai have been installed to keep surveillance in Railway premises. In addition 22 Railway Protection Force (RPF) Sniffer dogs are at present deployed to conduct anti-sabotage checking in Mumbai. Intensive publicity and public awareness campaign alerting and educating all passengers to remain vigilant against any unidentified/unclaimed suspicious objects lying inside coaches &

platforms and to report to Government Railway Police (GRP)/RPF/Railway officials immediately in case of detection by them. RPF staff have also been provided with Hand Held Metal Detectors to conduct checking at Railway stations. Close liaison with GRP & State Police is being maintained to provide effective security to passengers and passenger area.

The proposal to provide additional manpower, modern security devices/gadgets, and concurrent additional legal powers, etc. to RPF are under consideration at different levels. Steps are also being taken to upgrade RPF Training centers with a view to improve quality to training. A comprehensive intelligence-orientation programme for the RPF is already under-way.

**Nagpur Airport**

553. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 2077 dated March 9, 2006 regarding 'Nagpur Airport' and state the progress made so far with regard to transfer of Nagpur Airport under the Airports Authority of India to the Maharashtra Airport Development Company Ltd. (MADC)?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Government of Maharashtra have now agreed to set up a Special Purpose Vehicle to Jointly develop Nagpur airport.

*[English]*

**Unhygienic Condition of Railway Kitchens/  
Cooking Units**

554. SHRI E.G. SUGAVANAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are aware of the reports regarding the conditions prevailing in base kitchens and other cooking units of the Railways which is highly deplorable and unhygienic and the kitchen staff are also not properly trained and educated to perform their duties effectively;

(b) if so, the fact thereof and the action taken by the Railways thereon; and

(c) the steps taken by the Railways to provide hygienic foods to the users and also to improve the services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The staff are qualified and are trained with Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) on personal hygiene and workplace hygiene. Actually in base kitchens the rotis and chapattis are prepared on work tables and not on the floor as mentioned in the news paper report. Development of cooking area including base kitchen and improvement in their hygienic condition, its equipments and quality of foods is a continuous process. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) which is managing the catering activities on Indian Railways have initiated various steps to improve the condition of base kitchens and standards of catering services which includes—

(i) installation of new equipments and gadgets like flycatchers, chimneys, masala grinders, potato peeler, cold storage etc. in base kitchens; (ii) painting and whitewashing the base kitchens at periodical intervals (iii) imparting training on personal hygiene (iv) issue of new uniforms to staff (v) conducting food audit by professional agencies (vi) entrusting modernisation of the base-kitchens to Rail India Technical and Economic Services (RITES).

#### Export Orders Secured by BHEL

555. SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of export orders secured by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) during the last one year, country-wise;

(b) whether BHEL has fixed any target to increase its export orders during the current year and in the coming years; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRY, MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) The country-wise major export orders secured by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) during the financial year 2005-2006 are as under:

Sudan	4 x 125 MW Steam Turbine based Thermal Power Plan at Kosti, Sudan from National Electricity Corporation, Sudan.
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Oman	Two Gas Turbine based Power Plants on turnkey basis from Petroleum Development, Oman.
Oman	Centrifugal Compressor package from Petroleum Development, Oman.
Ethiopia	2 x 230 KV Class Sub-stations from Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation Ethiopia.
Afghanistan :	42 MW Hydro Electric Power Plant.
Surinam	Transformers for NVEBS, Surinam.
Syria	Order for 40 sets of Well Heads from SPC, Syria.
Poland and : Germany	Orders for PV Modules.

(b) and (c) During the current year, BHEL has set a target of Rs. 2040 Crores for export orders. BHEL has been continuously working on strategy to further increase project exports.

#### Establishment of Sainik Welfare Boards

556. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the districts in Karnataka where Sainik Welfare Boards are functioning at present;

(b) the districts among them where number of ex-servicemen is more than five thousand;

(c) whether there is any proposal to establish Sainik Welfare Boards in districts having less than five thousand ex-servicemen; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) There are 11 Zila Sainik Welfare Offices in the State of Karnataka. These are Bangalore (Urban), Bangalore (Rural), Belgaum, Bijapur, Dharwad, Gulbarga, Karwar, Kodagu/Medikeri, Mangalore, Mysore and Shimoga.

(b) The ex-servicemen population is maintained Zila Sainik Welfare Board-wise. The Zila Sainik Welfare Board of Bangalore (Urban), Belgaum and Kodagu/Medikeri have population of more than five thousand ex-servicemen.

(c) and (d) There is no such proposal.

**Food Testing Laboratories**

557. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government provides financial assistance under its Plan Scheme for setting up/upgradation of food testing laboratories;

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

(c) the steps taken by the Government to strengthen the food testing laboratories for the benefit of consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (c) Ministry of Food Processing

Industries (MFPI) provides financial assistance under its Plan Scheme to various stakeholders for setting up/upgradation of food testing laboratories. Under the Plan Scheme, the Central/State Government organizations, IITs and Universities are eligible for grant-in-aid limited to entire cost of the capital equipments required for setting up/upgradation of such laboratories. All other implementing agencies are eligible for grant-in-aid limited to 33% of the cost of capital equipment required for setting up/upgradation of such laboratories for general areas and 50% for difficult areas.

A statement indicating State-wise financial assistance provided by MFPI during last three years for setting up/upgradation of food testing laboratories is enclosed. The laboratory facilities thus created are common and can be availed by consumers, food processing units and other stakeholders for the purposes of testing of food products.

**Statement**

*State-wise financial assistance provided by MFPI during last three years i.e. 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 for setting up/upgradation of food testing laboratories*

(Rs. in Lakh)

Sl.No.	State/U.T.	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	Total Grant-in-aid
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andaman and Nicobar	—	—	—	—
2.	Andhra Pradesh	—	—	175.19	175.19
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	—	—	—	—
4.	Assam	—	—	245.50	245.50
5.	Bihar	—	—	—	—
6.	Chandigarh	—	—	—	—
7.	Chhattisgarh	—	—	—	—
8.	Dadra and Navgar Haveli	—	—	—	—
9.	Daman and Diu	—	—	—	—
10.	Delhi	—	11.25	37.86	49.11
11.	Goa	—	—	—	—
12.	Gujarat	—	—	137.40	137.40
13.	Haryana	—	—	—	—

1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Himachal Pradesh	—	—	—	—
15.	Jammu and Kashmir	—	—	—	—
16.	Jharkhand	—	25.00	—	25.00
17.	Karnataka	—	—	—	—
18.	Kerala	—	—	—	—
19.	Lakshadweep	—	—	—	—
20.	Madhya Pradesh	—	—	14.85	14.85
21.	Maharashtra	—	—	—	—
22.	Manipur	—	—	—	—
23.	Meghalaya	—	—	—	—
24.	Mizoram	—	—	—	—
25.	Nagaland	—	—	—	—
26.	Orissa	—	—	—	—
27.	Pondicherry	—	—	—	—
28.	Punjab	—	—	71.57	71.57
29.	Rajasthan	—	—	—	—
30.	Sikkim	—	—	—	—
31.	Tamil Nadu	—	—	130.84	130.84
32.	Tripura	—	—	—	—
33.	Uttar Pradesh	—	—	—	—
34.	Uttaranchal	—	—	—	—
35.	West Bengal	—	—	145.85	145.85

#### Railway Line from North Bengal to Sikkim

558. SHRI M.K. SUBBA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for constructions of railway line from North Bengal to Sikkim has been pending with the Railways;

(b) if so, whether any feasibility survey of the proposed railway line has been made;

(c) if so, the outcome thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) A survey for a new line from Sivok to Singtam was conducted in 2000-01 as per which cost of construction of this 60 Kms long line was assessed as Rs. 1099 crore with negative rate of return (-)34%. The project could not be taken up because of unremunerative nature, constraint of resources and heavy throwforward of ongoing projects.

However, based on demands, a survey for new line from Sivok to Rangpo has been included in Budget 2006-07.

#### **Procurement of 66 Hawk Aircraft**

559. SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the type of aircraft which is used currently for training of IAF personnel;

(b) whether the Indian Air Force has decided to procure 66 Hawk aircraft from the United Kingdom;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether this type of aircraft is not modern aircraft of international standard; and

(e) if so, the justification for procuring such aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) For flying training of Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel, HPT-32, Kiran Mk-1, Kiran Mk-1A and MiG-21 aircraft are currently being used.

(b) to (e) Government have approved the induction of 66 Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer (AJT) aircraft from M/s. BAE Systems of the United Kingdom. Hawk AJT is a modern aircraft of international standard. 24 of such aircraft will be supplied by BAE Systems in flyaway condition and the remaining 42 aircraft will be licensed and manufactured in India by M/s. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

#### **Shortage of Wheel Chairs**

560. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any shortage of wheel chairs being used by persons with locomotive disabilities;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard;

(d) whether the Government has conducted any survey to find out the design of the wheel chairs to fulfil the needs of the physically challenged persons so far their manoeuvrability is concerned;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to further improve the design of the wheel chairs?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

(f) The wheel chairs are manufactured as per standard specifications BIS No. IS-7454-1991 and IS 8086-1991 laid down by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO) a public sector undertaking under Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is a sole manufacturer of wheel chairs with BIS specifications.

#### **Raising of Platform Level of Jhargram Railway Station**

561. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have approved to raise the level of platforms of Jhargram railway station in Kharagpur Division of South Eastern Railway;

(b) if so, whether construction work for raising the level of platforms at the said station has been started;

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

(d) if not, the time by which the construction work is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. Jhargram is a 'D' category station. Medium Level platforms have already been provided at this station as per norms. There is no deficiency of platform level at this station.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

**Doubling of Manmad-Daund Railway Line**

562. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work on doubling of Manmad-Daund railway line has been held up due to shortage of funds;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Railways to provide adequate funds so as to complete the project expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) No, Sir. This is not a sanctioned work.

**Establishment of Gurukuls for Development of Rural Tourism**

563. SHRI K.S. RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to establish Gurukuls in villages for development of Rural Tourism in the country;

(b) if so, the locations identified for the purpose, State-wise;

(c) the time by which these are likely to be established; and

(d) the potential of rural tourism in generating employment opportunities for youths in rural India?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) It has been decided to establish Gurukul at the sites identified for development of Rural Tourism product with the assistance of Ministry of Tourism for spreading the attributes of Indian Art and Culture within and outside the country, thereby enabling the visitor to gain first hand experience of diverse art and craft skills at the various rural tourism sites and generating further tourist arrivals.

(b) and (c) The names of the proposed gurukuls sites, where various arts and artists to be promoted, to get the benefit out of the next tourist season, are as under:

— Pochampalli (Nalgonda District, Andhra Pradesh).

— Raghurajpur (Puri District, Orissa).

— Hodka (Kachchh District, Gujarat).

— Pranpur (Ashok Nagar District, Madhya Pradesh).

— Aranmula (Pathanamthitta District, Kerala).

(d) The promotion of rural tourism can lead to increased tourist arrivals to rural sites and in the process can strengthen rural livelihoods including benefit to the youth, through income from visitor handling services apart from income through art and craft activities.

**Financial Assistance to Loss Making PSEs**

564. SHRI ADHALRAO SHIVAJIRAO PATIL:  
SHRI RASHEED MASOOD:  
SHRI SUBRATA BOSE:

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

(a) whether statutory dues of workers in many loss making Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) have been pending for quite some time;

(b) if so, whether the Government has cleared any proposal to provide financial assistance to these loss making Public Sector Enterprises to clear the workers' dues as reported in 'The Hindustan Times' dated May 19, 2006;

(c) if so, the details of the financial assistance proposed to be provided to each PSE for this purpose;

(d) whether the Government proposes to revive any of these PSEs; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRY, MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) to (c) Government have approved an amount of Rs. 140.31 crore (subject to actuals) to be provided as loan to 15 loss making PSEs under the Department of Heavy Industry for payment of pending salary/wages and statutory dues upto December, 2005 as per details given in the enclosed statement.

(d) and (e) As per the policy laid down in National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), Government proposes to revive all viable PSEs. Revival Plans are considered on the basis of the recommendations of Board for Restructuring of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE). Out of the above 15 PSEs, cases of 12 PSEs have been submitted to BRPSE. So far the Government has approved the revival of one PSE namely; Heavy Engineering Corporation Ltd.

**Statement**

**Financial Assistance to Loss Making PSEs**

		(Rs. Cr.)
Sl.No.	Name of the Public Sector Enterprises	Amount approved (subject to actuals)
1.	Andrew Yule & Co. Ltd.	29.47
2.	Bharat Heavy Plates & Vessels Ltd.	9.92
3.	Bharat Ophthalmic Glass Ltd.	1.79
4.	Burn Standard Co. Ltd.	3.25
5.	Bharat Wagon & Engg. Co. Ltd.	3.40
6.	Heavy Engineering Corporation Ltd.	10.18
7.	Hindustan Cables Ltd.	28.13
8.	HMT (MT) Ltd.	9.92
9.	HMT (Watches) Ltd.	18.11
10.	Hindustan Photo Film Mfg. Co. Ltd.	5.92
11.	Instrumentation Ltd.	8.02
12.	NEPA Ltd.	7.07
13.	National Instruments Ltd.	0.27
14.	Triveni Structurals Ltd.	2.26
15.	Tungabhadra Steel Products Ltd.	2.60
<b>Total</b>		<b>140.31</b>

**Modernisation of Kolkata and Chennai Airports**

565. SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY:  
SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to modernise Kolkata and Chennai airports;

(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 STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Though the modalities of implementation of the modernisation plans have yet to be decided in the interim the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has drawn up plans for construction of a new international departure block with car parking facility etc. at an estimated cost of Rs. 225 crores at Kolkata airport. Thereafter, new international arrival block will be constructed. AAI has already initiated actions to extend runways and to develop plans for construction of a new Domestic Terminal Building plans for construction of a new domestic Terminal building and 11 additional bays. Construction of an Integrated Cargo Complex is likely to be completed soon.

At Chennai airport, AAI has already taken up construction to expand and modify International Terminal Block at an estimated cost of Rs. 23.47 crores. AAI is also constructing 20 additional parking bays. AAI has further plans for construction of a new domestic terminal building for which State Government of Tamil Nadu has been requested to hand over 583 hectares of land to AAI.

*[Translation]*

**Irregularities in Purchases of Spare Parts of Bofors**

566. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the irregularities committed in the purchase of spare parts of Bofors is being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the said investigation has been completed; and

(d) if so, the action being taken on the basis of investigation report?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) A case of purchase of spare

parts of Bofors against a contract dated 24th August 1999, which was made during Operation Vijay, was handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for investigation. The CBI has registered a Preliminary Enquiry (PE) in the case. The enquiry in the matter is in progress.

[English]

#### **TB Transmission among Air Travellers**

567. SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:  
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:  
SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Health Organisation (WHO) has issued any guidelines to the Airline industry for reducing the risk of T.B. transmission among the air travellers as reported in *The Times of India* dated June 29, 2006;

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

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

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

(b) The guidelines provide for certain steps to be taken by the airline operator to avoid the risk of transmission of tuberculosis during flight.

(c) The Government has issued a circular to all operators for compliance.

#### **Manufacturing of Pilotless Plane Lakshya**

568. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) has manufactured pilotless plane 'Lakshya';

(b) if so, the number of such planes manufactured and provided to the Indian Air Force so far;

(c) whether the Government proposes to sell these planes to other countries;

(d) if so, the names of the countries which have shown interest in purchase of this plane; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Three aircraft have been inducted into the Indian Air Force so far.

(c) There is no such proposal.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

#### **Development of Tourism in Teagarden Areas**

569. SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received any proposal from the Government of West Bengal for the development of tourism in teagarden areas of the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) An amount of Rs. 388.98 lakh has been sanctioned during the year 2006-07 for the Development of Tea Tourism Circuit under scheme for Integrated Development of Tourist Circuits. The sanctioned project includes items like internal pathways, car parking, paved area, landscaping, water supply system, water purification system, waste disposal system, lighting and illumination system, boundary wall and signages, etc. at identified tea gardens.

#### **Permission to Private Airlines to Fly Abroad**

570. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria for allowing the private airlines to fly international destinations;

(b) whether the Government has relaxed the criteria while permitting any private airlines in the recent past; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Under the existing guidelines, Indian Scheduled carriers having experience of continuous operations of 5 years in the domestic sector and having a minimum fleet size of 20 aircraft are permitted to operate on international routes, except to Gulf countries of UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

#### **Declaration of Kerala Beaches as Tourism Economic Zone**

571. SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received any proposal from the Government of Kerala to declare Beaches of the State from Poovar to Kovalam as a Tourism Economic Zone;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) A concept proposal has been received in the Ministry of Tourism from the State Government of Kerala for establishment of a Tourism Special Economic Zone in Veli-Kovalam-Poovar area. However, there is no scheme in Government of India for establishment of such zones.

#### **Levies on Gasohol**

572. SHRI SUBODH MOHITE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether levies imposed by the Central and State Governments are making gasohol economically unviable to oil marketing companies;

(b) if so, the details of the levies imposed by the various State Governments and Central Government;

(c) whether the Government has received any representations from various quarters for reduction of levies on gasohol;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to reduce the levies on gasohol?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

#### **Survey on OBCs and SCs/STs Population**

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

(a) whether any survey has been conducted by the Government for an exact estimate of population of Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of OBCs, SCs and STs in the country entitled for reservation in all educational institutions in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Population data regarding Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is available in Census of India 2001 Report. No National Survey to determine the exact population of Other Backward Classes has been conducted.

(c) No such estimate is available.

#### **FDI In FPI**

574. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:  
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has allowed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Food Processing Industry Sector;

(b) if so, the details of FDI inflow during 2005-06 and proposed for 2006-07;

(c) the details of FDI proposals pending for clearance as on date; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to simplify the FDI clearance system and to achieve the targets fixed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (d) Hundred percent FDI is permitted in food processing sector except in food retailing, plantation and alcoholic beverages. The total amount of FDI inflows in Food Processing Industries for the period 01.04.2005 to 31.03.2006 was Rs. 182.93 crore. No FDI proposal pertaining to FPI is pending for consideration of FIPB Unit, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

*[Translation]*

**Increase in Encounters between Army and Terrorists**

575. SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT:  
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:  
SHRI KAILASH NATH SINGH YADAV:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the incidents of encounters between the army and terrorists have increased during the last six months;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of soldiers and terrorists killed in these encounters during the said period; and

(d) the steps taken to contain the terrorist attacks on the army?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Due to the ascendancy gained by the Security Forces, the terrorists are avoiding direct contact with the Army.

(c) During January to June 2006, the Army has killed 268 terrorists. The total number of soldiers killed during the same period is 23.

(d) Upgradation and improvement of security arrangements to contain the terrorist attacks on the Army

is a continuous process. It includes improvements in intelligence gathering, periodic review of security of military establishments, intensification of patrolling for surveillance and area domination, deployment of Quick Reaction teams (QRTs) and conduct of synergized intelligence based operations in adjoining areas, provision of state-of-art weapons and equipment to soldiers, etc.

*[English]*

**Concessional Finance to OBCs by NBCFDC**

576. SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) provides concessional finance to Other Backward Classes for starting income generating schemes;

(b) if so, the funds allocated and released by the NBCFDC under such schemes during each of the last three years and the current year;

(c) the funds actually utilized by each State/Union Territory and number of persons benefited therefrom during each of the last three years;

(d) whether the Government has received complaints regarding misutilisation of funds by some States/Union Territories;

(e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken against them;

(f) the rate of interest charged by NBCFDC under its various schemes; and

(g) the measures taken by the NBCFDC for proper utilization of funds by States/Union Territories?

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

(b) The details of funds allocated and released by the NBCFDC to SCAs during last three years and the current year are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(c) Statement-II showing the funds utilized by each State/Union Territory and number of persons benefited during last three years is enclosed.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

(f) The rate of interest charged by the Corporation under various schemes is given in the enclosed Statement-III.

(g) The SCAs have been asked to generate adequate awareness among the target group about the NBCFDC's schemes and to simplify loan procedure and have also been advised that the disbursement of loan should be need-based, so that funds are properly utilized for the purpose for which these are disbursed.

**Statement I*****National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation******The funds allocated and released by the NBCFDC during last three years and the current year***

Sl.No.	Name of the State/UT	2003-04		2004-05		2005-2006		2006-2007	
		Amount (in crore) Allocation	Amount (in lakhs) Released						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Andhra Pradesh	22.00	1150.00	11.00	250.00	10.00	200.00	10.00	0.00
2.	Assam	7.91	95.68	3.15	80.20	4.00	250.00	1.90	0.00
3.	Bihar	13.00	7.50	9.00	170.00	9.58	30.00	9.98	0.00
4.	Chhattisgarh	4.66	25.00	4.32	108.19	1.50	150.00	2.00	90.00
5.	Chandigarh (UT)	0.21	15.00	0.34	24.70	0.26	10.00	0.00	0.00
6.	Delhi (UT)	1.00	50.00	0.50	50.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
7.	Gujarat	10.00	350.00	7.42	350.0	6.90	280.00	7.00	0.00
8.	Goa	2.52	46.67	0.50	28.45	1.00	41.87	0.91	0.00
9.	Haryana	3.40	200.00	3.00	176.00	3.00	300.00	3.00	54.60
10.	Himachal Pradesh	2.00	182.84	2.50	250.00	2.00	185.93	2.00	39.55
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	1.00	15.00	0.81	40.60	1.00	2.00	1.00	0.00
12.	Jharkhand	6.00	270.30	1.00	0.00	3.00	25.00	2.99	0.00
13.	Karnataka	18.00	1690.77	10.00	100.00	10.05	1005.00	10.00	251.70
14.	Kerala	35.95	3067.50	23.84	1697.50	26.00	2334.00	11.42	350.00
15.	Madhya Pradesh	11.42	492.50	6.66	148.75	3.00	100.00	6.00	0.00
16.	Maharashtra	29.00	2684.00	20.00	1960.00	22.00	1700.00	12.00	850.00
17.	Orissa	7.00	50.00	5.00	50.00	3.70	50.00	2.57	0.00
18.	Punjab	4.00	43.00	2.83	200.00	3.00	230.00	3.00	0.00

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
19.	Pondicherry (UT)	1.40	50.00	1.45	50.00	0.85	85.03	0.50	50.02
20.	Rajasthan	4.56	114.88	4.93	293.40	4.00	400.00	0.00	0.00
21.	Sikkim	4.19	125.00	4.10	267.90	3.52	352.02	2.94	0.00
22.	Tamil Nadu	18.00	1075.00	8.00	800.00	13.50	1350.00	8.50	0.00
23.	Tripura	3.98	0.00	2.72	99.03	1.50	50.00	2.95	0.00
24.	Uttar Pradesh	23.00	550.00	16.00	616.00	20.00	158.00	20.00	94.50
25.	Uttaranchal	0.09	9.00	3.00	52.75	1.04	104.48	0.00	0.00
26.	West Bengal	15.00	750.00	11.30	600.00	8.82	400.00	5.36	200.00
Total		249.29	13109.44	163.37	9363.47	163.72	9793.31	126.02	1980.37

*Statement II**Funds utilised and number of persons benefited by State/Union Territory during the last three years*

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl.No.	Name of the State/UT	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06	
		Funds utilised	Persons benefited	Funds utilised	Persons benefited	Funds utilised	Persons benefited
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1469.60	24065.00	381.13	135.00	284.52	400
2.	Assam	280.28	274.00	40.00	220.00	50.00	780
3.	Bihar	467.44	10.00	9.22	623.00	169.92	31
4.	Chhattisgarh	94.40	40.00	29.84	137.00	113.26	343
5.	Chandigarh (UT)	1.74	25.00	34.28	72.00	5.42	30
6.	Delhi (UT)	100.00	55.00	13.25	78.00	78.36	0
7.	Gujarat	1069.56	615.00	433.28	880.00	231.72	590
8.	Goa	49.90	26.00	20.49	15.00	14.53	23
9.	Haryana	200.00	940.00	0.00	769.00	325.00	1239
10.	Himachal Pradesh	234.16	256.00	153.78	500.00	252.67	227
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	10.00	30.00	45.60	97.00	0.00	9

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12.	Jharkhand	0.00	540.00	142.83	0.00	75.02	50
13.	Karnataka	1740.77	7757.00	1015.65	6628.00	936.23	6732
14.	Kerala	2887.90	11900.00	1297.53	5382.00	2223.13	7648
15.	Madhya Pradesh	919.51	1292.00	180.11	507.00	418.64	400
16.	Maharashtra	2745.48	5570.00	1954.19	6941.00	1685.35	4069
17.	Orissa	265.84	105.00	84.42	495.00	58.95	163
18.	Punjab	50.00	629.00	43.00	321.00	250.02	435
19.	Pondicherry (UT)	81.10	173.00	68.89	176.00	85.03	280
20.	Rajasthan	182.67	278.00	115.62	792.00	282.87	906
21.	Sikkim	100.00	170.00	25.46	300.00	257.90	717
22.	Tamil Nadu	901.26	28717.00	882.10	29799.00	886.83	54993
23.	Tripura	47.42	0.00	0.00	190.00	0.00	75
24.	Uttar Pradesh	0.00	1138.00	899.89	4770.00	1045.22	2000
25.	Uttaranchal	0.00	40.00	9.00	74.00	52.75	206
26.	West Bengal	630.42	1675.00	423.31	2857.00	573.19	1510
Total		14529.45	86320.00	8302.87	62738.00	10356.53	83858.00

*Statement III**The rates of interest under various schemes of NBCFDC*

Type of Loan	Rate of interest from NBCFDC to SCA (per annum)	Maximum rate of interest from SCA to beneficiaries (per annum)
Term loan	3%	6%
Micro Finance	2%	5%
Mahila Samridhi Yojna	1%	4%
New Swarnima for Women	1%	4%
Swayam Saksham	2%	5%
Education Loan	1.5%	4%
Margin Money	3%	6%

**Privatisation of Non-Metro Airports**

577. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to privatise some of the non-metro airports;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the criteria adopted for privatisation of such airports; and

(d) the steps so far taken in this regard?

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

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

**Increase in Flying Hours**

578. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to increase the annual limit of 1000 flying hours of pilots;

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

(c) whether the Government is aware that the proposed move is likely to put more stress on pilots; and

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

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

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

**Development of Tourism**

579. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received proposals from various State Governments/UTs for development of tourism in respective States/UTs during the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance to various States/UT Governments for development of tourist places which are prioritised in consultation with them. A Statement showing the tourism projects prioritised for implementation during the current financial year is enclosed.

**Statement****Prioritised Projects to be Implemented during the year 2006-07**

Sl.No.	State	Destination	Circuit	Event/Fairs/Festival	Rural Tourism
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1. Hyderabad including Chamminer & Golconda 2. Warangal 3. Nellore (Pulicat Lake)	1. Beach circuit Vizag 2. Buddhist circuit 3. Kalahasti-Kanipakam-Talakona Circuit	1. Kakatia Event 2. Golkonda Event 3. Vijaynagar Festival 4. Kalinga	1. Kuchipudi (near Vijaywada) 2. Dharmakaram (near Puttuparthi) 3. Surbhi (near Pochampalli)
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1. Amenities at Parsuramkund Lohit District.	1. Tinsukia (Assam)-Namsai-Tezu-	1. Arunachal Festival 2. Siang River Festival 3. Noyokum/Mopin	1. Ligu Village, Upper Subansiri

1	2	3	4	5	6
		2. Restoration & Preservation of Heritage Site (Stone Rampart) at Dambuk.	Walong-Dongi	Festival 4. Buddha Mohatsava	District
3.	Assam	1. Kamakhya and Satellite Pilgrimage township of Hazo. 2. Shivasagar Convention Centre & 3. Wellness Centre at Hotel Brahmaputra Ashoka, Guwahati	1. Orang-Teeppur-Nameri-Bhekupong-Tawang Tourist	1. Rangoli Utsav 2. Dehing-Patkai 3. Tea Tourism 4. Kaziranga Elephant Festival	1. Charideo Sukafa Nagar in Shivasagar Distt.
4.	Bihar	1. mandeeswari Temple	1. Bodhgaya-Nalanda-Rajgir	1. Buddha Mahotsav 2. Rajgir Mahotav 3. Sonpur Mela 4. Chhath Mahotsav	1. Pattharkathi (near Gaya)
5.	Chhattisgarh	1. Chitrakote fall 2. Rajim	1. Jagdalpur circuit	1. Bastar Event 2. Malher Event 3. Sirpur Fest. 4. Rajim Fest.	1. Chilipi (Near Kanha National Park) 2. Churni (Near Haadeo Bango Dam)
6.	Delhi	Development of Infrastructure as per Master Plan For Commonwealth Games	—	—	To be communicated
7.	Goa	—	1. North Goa Circuit 2. South Goa circuit	1. Shigmo Festival 2. Goa Carnival	—
8.	Gujarat	1. Champaner Pavagadh 2. Gir 3. Dwarka	1. Junagarh-Veraval Porbandar	1. Navratri 2. Tametar 3. International Kite Festival 4. Sharad Utsav	Dandi Vadnagar Nageshwar

1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Haryana	1. Surajkund 2. Sonapat- Ethnic India 3. Badkhal	1. Kurukshetra	1. Kurukshetra-Sufi Fest 2. Heritage festival Pinjore 3. Art & Craft Festival Karnal 4. One more fair to be communicated	To be Communicated.
10.	Himachal Pradesh	Dharamshala	1. Eco tourism in Tribal Areas 2. Pilgrim Circuit	1. great Himalayan Run 2. Pre-World Paragliding 3. Kullu Dussehra 4. Simla Summer Festival	1. Mashobra village in Simla 2. Beroh Village Near Dharamshala 3. Gurukul Oriented Village
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	(a) Specific tourism infrastructure projects for Tourism Development Authorities of Bhaderwah, Kishtwar, Poonch, Rajouri, Lakshnpur- Sarthal, Kokernag, Leh and Kargil (b) Specific tourism infrastructure projects for Tourism Development Authorities of Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Sonamarg and Patnitop (c) Restoration of Heritage building at Mubarka Mandi, Phase-I (d) Golf Course at Jammu (e) Reconstruction of gutted TRC at Srinagar	Development of Tourist Circuit at Kargil	1. Mega Event in Ladakh 2. Jaehn-e-Kashmir 3. Jammu Festival 4. Navratri Festival, Vaishno Devi 5. Gulmarg Festival	(a) (Software Work Plan) support for 5 villages viz., Drung, Pahalgam, Jheri, Surinagar and Gagangir (b) support for 10 new villages to be identified by the State Government

1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Jharkhand	1. Rajmahal 2. Parasnath	1. Ranchi-Rangerh- Rejarappe- Tenughat- Hazribagh-Padma Itkhorl	1. Hajaribagh Festival 2. Air Show Ranchi 3. Hija 4. Jagannath Rath Yatra	1. Ambedubi, Dielt. Singbhum 2. Kharsaven, Dielt. Sarikelat- Kharsaven
13.	Karnataka	1. Hampi 2. Lingemakki	1. Bijapur-Biddar- Gubarga 2. Southern Wilderness Circuit	1. Bangalore Habba 2. To be communicated 3. Hampi 4. Karavali	1. Chenputna village -Bangalore 2. Alkan village Bagalcote
14.	Kerala	1. Vagamon 2. Kumarkom 3. Padnabhapuram Place 4. Thrippunithura	1. Southern Eco- Tourism	1. Malabar Mahotsav 2. Boat Show 3. Elephant Festival 4. Nishagandhi Festival	1. Kathakali Costume Village 2. Coir Village 3. Spice Village
15.	Madhya Pradesh	1. Panne 2. Mendu	1. Amarkantak- Mandla- Dindol 2. Hasangabad- Maheswar- Onkareshwar- Barwani	1. Khajuraho Festival 2. Travel Mart 3. Pachmarhi	1. Sivra in Datia 2. Ram Nagar in Mandla 3. Any Village in Maheswar
16.	Maharashtra	Kunkeeshwar	1. Buddhist Circuit including Elephanta 2. Fort Circuit	1. Elephanta 2. Ellora 3. Kalkas 4. Chikaldhara	1. village near Koihapur 2. Village near Pune for Gurukul
17.	Manipur	1. Nongm- aiching (Eco- Park with Golf course) 2. Imphal	1. Imphal- Bishnupur- Sendra- Churachandpur	1. Manipur Tourism Festival 2. Manipur Tourism Meet 3. LUH-NGAI-NI Festival 4. KUT Festival	Andro, Khongiom and None
18.	Meghalaya	1. Protection & development of caves around Jowai 2. Tura	1. Williamnagar- Jakrem-Jowai 2. Shillong- Cherrapunji Jowai Mawplong	1. Winter Tourism Festival 2. Shillong Autumn Festival 3. Nongkrum Festival 4. Wangla Festival	To be decided

1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	Mozoram	1. Chaltang 2. Chaltih	1. Southern- Harangchakawn, Tawpui 'S', Lawnglai, Saiha, Vawmbuk, Sangau, S. Vanlalpai. 2. Eastern-Keltum, N. Vanlalpai, East Lungdar, Khawbung, Farkawn, Zokhawthar, Hnahlan.	1. Chapchar Kut 2. Thalfavang Kut 3. Anthurium Festival 4. To be decided later.	—
20.	Nagaland	1. Tourist Travel Destination Touphema, Kohima district. 2. Aizuto, Zunheboto Distt.	1. Zunheboto- Tuensang- Kiphri 2. Governor's camp (Wokha)-Nui Land Area (Dimapur)- Jalukie (Peron).	1. Tokhu Emong 2. Metumnu 3. Hombill Event 4. Event-Cultural nigh Variety show	To be identified
21.	Orissa	1. Chilka	1. Bhubaneswar- Puri-Konark 2. Simlipal- Chandipur-Talsari- Panchingameeswar 3. Araku valley- Sone-beda-Koreput- Malkagri	1. Sreekahetra vasabi Utsav 2. Ekamra 3. Puri Beach Fest. 4. Konark Fest.	1. Dayening Badi Village Dhoolbari Distt. 2. Khalyajali Village
22.	Punjab	1. Roper 2. Fatehgarh Sahib (Including Aam Khas Bagh with SEL show) 3. Kapurthala	1. Freedom Struggle Circuit Delhi-Amritsar 2. Pilgrim Circuit	1. Rural Olympics (Rural Sports, Village Gila Raipur, Distt. Raipur 2. Kinnow Festival at Abhor, Distt. Ferozpur 3. Punjab Fest. (Mela) 4. Craft Mela at Kapurthala	1. Village Paldi (Distt. Hoshiarpur) 2. Vialge Kalanour (Distt. Gurdaspur) 3. Village Maisor Khana (Distt. Bhatinda)
23.	Rajasthan	1. Amjer Sharif 2. Jaisalmer	1. Eco-Tourism circuit 2. Floodlighting of monuments	1. Heritage Festival 2. Rajasthan Day Celebration 3. Pushkar Fair 4. Desert Festival	To be identified

1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	Sikkim	1. Development of Amusement Park at Sarnaa. 2. Pilgrim centre at Sorang	1. Development of Tourist Centres at Phodang and Mangan in North Sikkim 2. Development of Assam Lingzey and Khedi Trek Route in East Sikkim	1. Nanchi Festival 2. Gangtok Winter Festival 3. Ravangla Festival 4. Haghey Mela 5. Mangan Festival 6. Gyaishing (Pelling)	1. Rong Village in South Sikkim. 2. Tharpu village in West Sikkim
25.	Tamil Nadu	1. Madurai 2. Thanjavur 3. Kanyakumari	—	Mahabalipuram mega festival	To be communicated
26.	Tripura	1. Chaturdashi Devta Bari	1. Development of North West Tripura Circuit	To be communicated	Joychandrapur
27.	Uttar Pradesh	1. Aligarh	1. Agra-Fatehpur Sri-Mathura 2. Varanasi-Samath 3. Brajbhoomi Vrindavan	1. Buddha Mahotsav at Samath 2. Lathmar Holi 3. Dev Deepawali	To be communicated
28.	Uttaranchal	1. Yamnotri 2. Tehri	1. Pishikesh-Haridwar (Mega Project) 2. Binsar-Balnath-Manesar	1. Dehradun Virasat Festival 2. Garhwal Festival 3. Kumaon Festival 4. Poomagiri Festival	1. Village Trijugi Narayan, Distt. Rudraprayag.
29.	West Bengal	1. Goke 2. Kalimpong 3. Passey	1. Freedom Circuit 2. Tea Tourism 3. Beach circuit	To be communicated	To be communicated

#### Afforestation in Railway Zones

580. SHRI B. MAHTAB: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have undertaken afforestation in various zones;

(b) if so, whether any afforestation programme has been undertaken by the East Coast Railways;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the steps proposed to be taken by the East Coast Zone in this regard?

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

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Targets for current year for East Coast Railway is 3.5 lakh saplings (including 2 lakh saplings of Jatropa). During last year East Coast Railway planted over 2.5 lakh saplings including 1.5 lakh of Jatropa.

(d) Does not arise.

#### Exploitation of Minorities

581. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission for Minorities has made any study in regard to exploitation of minorities in various States;

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

(c) the details of the organisations found responsible for exploitation of minorities in various States; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) The National Commission for Minorities has reported it has not made any such study.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

#### **Provision of Wagons to FCI**

582. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are supplying unfit wagons to Food Corporation of India (FCI) for transportation of foodgrains; and

(b) if so, the action taken to provide wagons declared fit for transporting foodgrains?

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

(b) Does not arise.

*[Translation]*

#### **Discontinuation of Post-Matric Scholarship for OBCs**

583. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the grants being given to the States by the Union Government to provide scholarship to the students of other backward classes under post-Matric Scholarship scheme has been discontinued;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the release of subsidy on scholarship provided earlier to the students by the States is pending;

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

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

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Government of India provides grants for Post-matric Scholarship for OBC to the State Governments/UT Administrations on year-to-year basis.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Does not arise.

*[English]*

#### **Extension of Tungabhadra Express**

584. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have received any request from the Government of Andhra Pradesh for extension of Secunderabad-Kurnool Town Tungabhadra Express up to Dharamvaram *via* Guntkal; and

(b) if so, the response of the Railways thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Extension of 7607/7608 Secunderabad-Kurnool Town Tungabhadra Intercity Express unto Dharmavaram has been examined but it has not been found feasible due to operational and resource constraints.

#### **Shortage of Pilots/Co-Pilots**

585. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:  
SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:  
SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is huge shortage of pilots and co-pilots in the Government owned airlines;

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

(c) the steps taken by the Government to meet the shortage in the Government owned airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) While there is no shortage of pilots in Indian Airlines. Alliance Air has a shortage of 10 pilots each for its B-737 and ATR aircraft fleet. Air India and Air India Express have a shortage of 85 and 22 pilots respectively.

(c) Air India and Alliance Air are in the process of recruiting additional pilots to fill up the vacancies within the country as well as from the international market. Besides, Government have taken following measures to cope up with the shortage of pilots *viz.* (i) pilots are permitted to fly beyond the age of 58 years till 65 years of age under certain conditions; (ii) plans to increase the number of pilot pupils up to 100 at IGRUA, (iii) A National Institute of Flying Training is proposed to be set up at Gondia, Maharashtra, and (iv) type rated foreign pilots are permitted to operate aircraft.

#### **Decongestion of Flights at International Air Terminals**

586. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:  
SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the airports proposed to be added to the international map by linking air services directly to the places abroad in the near future; and

(b) the steps proposed to be taken to decongest the traffic at the existing international air terminals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) All International airports are linked with international air services on continuous basis.

(b) Action has already been initiated for restructuring and modernization of Delhi and Mumbai Airports through Joint Venture route. Besides, for decongesting the traffic at Chennai and Kolkata airports, other international airports and non-metro airports, actions such as expansion and modification of existing terminals, construction of new

international terminal complex, expansion and addition of aircraft parking stands and strengthening, extension of runways and associated facilities, improvement of access system from city to terminal and vice-versa and provision of efficient taxiway system have been initiated.

*[Translation]*

#### **Increase in Reservation Quota for SCs**

587. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE:  
SHRI KAILASH NATH SINGH YADAV:

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

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to increase the reservation quota for Scheduled Castes in proportion to the increase in their population;

(b) if so, whether rate of increase in the population of Scheduled Castes has been assessed;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which the proposal in this regard is likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) to (d) Representations have been received for providing reservation for Scheduled Castes in proportion to their population percentage. In accordance with the 2001 Census, the population of Scheduled Castes is 16.23% of the total population.

*[English]*

#### **Review of Military Laws**

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

(a) whether the Government is considering to review military laws;

(b) if so, whether the Government has received any requests/representations from various quarters in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which the decision is likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) A statement is attached.

(d) It is not possible to lay down any time frame in this regard.

#### **Statement**

Review of military laws is a continuous process. These laws are amended from time to time as per operational needs of the Armed Forces as also to bring them in consonance with latest judicial pronouncements and development. So far sixteen (16) amendments have been made in the three Armed Forces Acts *i.e.* the Army Act, 1950, the Navy Act, 1957 and the Air Force Act, 1950.

In the existing system of administration of justice in the Armed Forces, there is no provision for an independent adjudicatory forum for hearing appeals against the judgement of Courts Martial or for hearing complaints of defence personnel relating to service matters. The Supreme Court, Law Commission and the Estimates Committee of Parliament had earlier drawn attention to this aspect and made recommendations in this regard. The issue was also engaging the attention of the Government for quite some time. After careful consideration the Government has proposed to set up an independent Armed Forces Tribunal and accordingly a Bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha on 20.12.2005. The Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Defence by the Hon'ble Speaker for examination. The Standing Committee in its 10th report related to Armed Forces Tribunal Bill, 2005 presented to the Lok Sabha on 23rd May, 2006 and laid on the table of Rajya Sabha on the same date, have made several recommendations on the Bill.

The Standing Committee has also suggested that an expert committee be constituted to thoroughly review the Service Acts to bring them in tune with the norms being followed in other democratic countries. The Standing Committee has further desired that since the proposed Tribunal would deal with cases of all the three forces, a common disciplinary code be made so as to bring uniformity in dispensation of justice to the Armed Forces Personnel.

#### **Indo-Myanmar Gas Pipeline**

589. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have conducted the feasibility study for alternative route of Indo-Myanmar gas pipeline through the North-Eastern part of the country bypassing Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(c) the follow-up action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) GAIL (India) Limited has got a Detailed Feasibility Report (DFR) prepared for a pipeline for evacuating Myanmar gas to India through the North Eastern States bypassing Bangladesh. The execution of the Project will depend upon the gas tie-up with the Myanmar side. The matter has been taken up with the Myanmar Government.

#### **International Convention Centre at Thiruvananthapuram**

590. SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up an International Convention Centre at Thiruvananthapuram; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

No project report for International Convention Centre at Thiruvananthapuram has been received from the State Government of Kerala.

#### **Discovery of New Oil and Gas Reserves**

591. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:  
SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN:  
SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA:  
SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL:  
SHRI RASHEED MASOOD:  
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

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

(a) whether new oil and gas reserves have been found in certain areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the quantity assessed thereof, location-wise;

(c) the time by which the commercial production is likely to be started from these reserves; and

(d) the extent to which these discoveries will meet the domestic demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, under the Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) regime, total 24 oil and gas discoveries

have been made during the year 2005-06 and 2006-07 (till July 2006). The details are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) and Oil India Limited (OIL) have made 5 hydrocarbon discoveries each during 2005-06 in their nomination blocks. The details are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

(c) and (d) These discoveries are under various stages of appraisal. The amount of production will depend on their commerciality and, thereafter, their Development Plans. Since all production is meant for domestic sale and consumption it will entirely go toward meeting the domestic demand.

*Statement I*

*Discoveries of hydrocarbon made by PVT/JVS during last two years (till July, 2006)*

2005-06	RJ-ON-90/1 (Rajasthan)	Calm	Ni#2 GS-V-1 NC-West-1	U.E. U.E. U.E.
	CB-ON-2 (Gujarat)	GSPC	Tarapur-1	U.E.
	CB-ON-3 (Gujarat)	Essar Oil Limited	ESU-1	U.E.
	KG-DWN-98/3 (Eastern Offshore)	RIL	Dhirubhai-18 Dhirubhai-19 Dhirubhai-22 Dhirubhai-23	U.E. U.E. U.E. U.E.
	NEC-OSN-97/2 (Eastern Offshore)	RIL	Dhirubhai-20 Dhirubhai-21	U.E. U.E.
	KG-OSN-2001/3 (Eastern Offshore)	GSPC	KG-8	U.E.
	KG-OSN/2001/2 (Eastern Offshore)	RIL	Dhirubhai-24 Dhirubhai-25	U.E. U.E.
	RJ-ON-90/1 (Rajasthan)	CEIL	NE-1	U.E.
	KG-DWN-98/2 (Eastern Offshore)	ONGC	DWN-U-1 DWN-A-1	U.E. U.E.
	2006-07	KG-DWN-98/2 (Eastern Offshore)	ONGC	DWN-W-1

RJ-ON-90/1 (Rajasthan)	Caim	NP-2 MA-6	U.E. U.E.
KG-OSN-2001/3 (Eastern Offshore)	GSPC	KG-17	U.E.
Panna-Mukta (Mumbai Offshore)	BGEPIL	SWP-1	U.E.
RJ-ON-90/6 (Rajasthan)	FOCUS	SGL#1	U.E.
CB-ONN-2000/1 (Gujarat)	GSPC	Sanand East (1)	U.E.

**Statement II**

*Discoveries of hydrocarbon made by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) during the year 2005-06*

Basin/States	Find	Inplace (O+OEG), MMT
KG Onshore—Andhra Pradesh	Turputullu	0.27
Assam & Assam Arakan—Assam	Mekeypore	2.04
Kutuch Saurashtra	B-9	2.26
Western Offshore	RV-1	Not Assessed
KG Shallow water	GS-15E	0.72

*Discoveries of hydrocarbon made by Oil India Limited (OIL) during the year 2005-06*

Field/Structure	Initial In-place Reserves (Oil+OEG) (MMT)
North Moran	0.39
Bazaloni	2.31
North Chandamari	2.53
Baghjan	5.10
South Moran	0.08

[Translation]

**'Palace on Wheel' Train**

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

(a) the profit earned by 'Palace on Wheel' train during each of the last three years;

(b) whether there is any demand for running similar type of trains on other sections;

(c) if so, the details of demands/requests received in this regard and the action taken thereon; and

(d) the time by which these are likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The profitability of the coaching services of the Indian Railways' trains is not worked out. However, the revenue earned by the Railways from running of the Palace on Wheels during the last three years are as below:

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Year	Revenue earned
2003-04	1103.38
2004-05	1423.10
2005-06	1571.76

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. There is a proposal for running a luxury tourist train in the Karnataka Sector. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been entered into between the Railways and the Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) in this regard. The design layout of the coaches for this train has been finalized. No timeframe has been set for introduction of this train.

*[English]*

**Reservation for Girls in National Scholarship Scheme**

593. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to make reservation for Scheduled Castes girls students in the National Scholarship Scheme to enable them to study in foreign countries; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women in its Sixth Report (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) in May, 2006 has recommended that the possibility of allocating at least 30% of the seats to women under National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Castes, etc. candidates should be looked into.

**Construction of Additional Rooms in ITDC Hotels**

594. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to construct additional rooms in various India Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. (ITDC) Hotels in Delhi;

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

(c) the estimated expenditure likely to be incurred thereon, hotel-wise; and

(d) the time by which construction of such additional accommodations will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The Government has not received any proposal from ITDC regarding construction of additional rooms in various India Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. hotels in Delhi.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Does not arise.

*[Translation]*

**Gauge Conversion under Nagpur Railway Division**

595. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether gauge conversions of all the narrow gauge railway lines under the Nagpur Railway Division have been carried out;

(b) if so, the details of the gauge conversions undertaken during the last three years;

(c) if not, the length of the remaining narrow gauge railway lines yet to be converted into broad gauge;

(d) whether there is any scheme to complete gauge conversions of the narrow gauge railway lines under the Nagpur Railway Division; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) 701 Kms. in the two Divisions—one on South East Central Railway and the other on Central Railway.

(d) and (e) Gauge conversion of Balaghat-Jabalpur, Balaghat-Katangi and Nagpur-Chhindwara sections has been taken up.

*[English]*

**Withdrawal of Facilities at Airports**

596. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the facilities provided to the passengers free of cost at the Airports;

(b) whether the Government proposes to withdraw all such facilities available at the airports; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Facilities provided to the passengers free of costs at major airports *inter-alia* include baggage trolleys, drinking water, flight information display, child care/infant lobby, lounge, special toilets and reserved car park for physically challenged persons, toilet facility, departure, arrival and transit lounges, flight announcement, elevators, reserved lounge, conveyor belts, information and guidance system, etc.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

[*Translation*]

#### **Mandatory Requirement of Pilots in Cockpit**

597. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether on the one hand there is shortage of pilots and on the other hand thousand of pilots are still unemployed in the country;

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

(c) whether the Government has recently done away with the mandatory requirement of one Indian and one foreign pilot in the cockpit;

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

(e) the likely impact of this decision on the Indian pilots?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Due to sudden growth in the aviation sector there is an increase in the demand for type rated pilots. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) have estimated that there is a requirement of large number of pilots *vis-a-vis* that being trained annually by all Flying Training Institutes

in India leading to a shortage of pilots in the industry. No records regarding unemployed pilots are maintained by the Government.

(b) The Government has taken various steps to reduce the gap between demand and supply. These include conditionally increasing the age-limit to 65 years for exercising the privileges of their licences for commercial transport operations under prescribed conditions for pilots, upgradation and modernisation of training infrastructure of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) to enhance its training capacity, setting up of a world class flying training institute at Gondia, Maharashtra and assistance to flying clubs by allocating trainer aircraft through DGCA/Aero Club of India.

(c) to (e) An order has been issued delegating powers to the DGCA to allow foreign pilots for a period not exceeding twelve weeks at a stretch with an Indian Pilot in the cockpit for training purpose. This would facilitate training of Indian pilots for type endorsement on the particular type of aircraft, which would enhance the employability of Indian Pilots.

[*English*]

#### **Security to Women at Airports**

598. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the airports in the country are unsafe for women;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken to provide adequate security to the women at the Airports?

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

(b) and (c) do not arise.

#### **Modernisation of Terminal at Thiruvananthapuram**

599. SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN:  
SHRI PANNIAN RAVINDRAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the stage at which the implementation of the proposed Modern International Air terminal at Thiruvananthapuram stands;

(b) whether the sanction of the Public Investment Board has been received;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which the work on the project is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has a proposal for construction of an International Terminal Building with related infrastructure at Thiruvananthapuram airport at an estimated cost of Rs. 245 crores in two phases. The Public Investment Board in its meeting held on 6.2.2006 recommended the proposal for consideration of the competent authority. Action has already been initiated for obtaining the approval of the competent authority (Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs) to the proposal.

#### **Repairing of Aircraft**

600. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:  
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Airlines (IA) is facing problem in getting aircraft repaired due to shortage of spare parts;

(b) if so, the number of aircraft grounded as a result thereof;

(c) the loss of revenue to the IA due to such delay in repairing of aircraft; and

(d) the steps taken by the IA for getting the aircraft repaired expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Normally, about 6 A-320 aircraft remain grounded for

scheduled maintenance. Presently, 12 A-320 aircraft are grounded for major maintenance/want of engines as also for scheduled maintenance checks and not due to shortage of spare parts.

(c) The exact loss of revenue is difficult to compute as different aircraft are under scheduled maintenance & otherwise for different periods of time.

(d) Since the grounding of aircraft is primarily due to shortage of engines, Indian Airlines Ltd. is vigorously pursuing all possible means to increase engine availability through outsourcing of engine overhaul to outside agencies, continued retention of 3 short-term leased engines till January/February, 2007, leasing three more engines on short-term basis and implementing an engine upgrade programme.

#### **Functioning of Newly Created Salem Division**

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

(a) whether the newly created Salem Division has started its functioning;

(b) if so, whether adequate funds have been allocated and the areas demarcated for the same; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The demand for creation of a new Division at Salem has been agreed to in principle with a view to improve efficiency. However, the Division has not yet started functioning, as its detailed territorial jurisdiction has not yet been finalised. A Project Report on the subject has been received from Southern Railway and the same is under examination.

(b) No funds have been allocated for the proposed Salem Division, as its detailed territorial jurisdiction has not yet been finalised.

(c) Does not arise.

12.00 hrs.

## PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

*[English]*

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (Hindi and English versions) between the Hindustan Paper Corporation Limited and the Department of Heavy Industry, Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 4506/2006]

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:—

- (1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619 A of the Companies Act, 1956:—
  - (i) Review by the Government of the working of the India Tourism Development Corporation Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.
  - (ii) Annual Report of the India Tourism Development Corporation Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.
- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 4507/2006]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Board of the Trust (Amendment) Regulations, 2006 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 403 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 6th July, 2006, under section 36 of the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999.

[Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 4508/2006]

12.01 hrs.

## MOTION RE: TWENTY-SEVENTH REPORT OF THE BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*[English]*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): Sir, on behalf of Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi, I beg to move:

"That this House do agree with the Twenty-seventh Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 26th July, 2006."

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That this House do agree with the Twenty-seventh Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 26th July, 2006."

*The motion was adopted.*

12.02 hrs.

## SUBMISSION BY MEMBERS

Re: Reported infiltration of militants  
in Armed Forces

*[Translation]*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, please ask the hon'ble Minister not to interrupt every now and then.

MR. SPEAKER: Do not mind that.

*...(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Sir, this is not the way. The Ministers are standing in the aisle.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, they should not be. It should be followed on all sides. There should be no mutual discussion on meeting there. All discussions should be outside this House please.

*...(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I would like to draw the attention of the House to a very important matter which is jeopardizing the security of the country. It has been published in yesterday's and today's newspapers that

*[English]*

Army has detained three of its personnel for their suspected links with the *Lashkar-e-Taiba*. Police have arrested two constables on the charge of working as couriers for the outfit. All the five are said to be part of the group. Nearly a dozen people, including three policemen and a manager of a BSNL franchise, have been arrested. A hunt is on for a female who went underground after the module was busted. The two Armymen, who have been picked up hail from Gursai in Poonch district and their names were so and so and they have been working for the last three years and seven months for *Lashkar-e-Taiba*. Three Armymen have been detained for questioning over alleged militant links.

*[Translation]*

Several such reports have been published in the newspapers. Shri M.K. Narayanan, who is the National Security Advisor, had already cautioned the nation including the Chief Minister of the States through a letter addressed to them. The other day the leader of the House and Minister of Defence said that the matter was investigated into and the apprehension was not found true.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the army apprehended those Lashkar-e-Taiba operatives who were serving in military for so many months and reported clearly about them. It is a very serious matter involving the security of the country. The hon'ble Prime Minister stated that Lashkar-e-Taiba is responsible for bomb explosions in the country. SIMI and Lashkar-e-Taiba operatives are under scanner all over the country. The infiltration of such militants and their continuous service in the armed forces is a dangerous trend for the country. Shri Shivraj Patil and Shri Jaiswalji submitted there that they were not serving the armed force rather they were the jawans of Rashtriya Rifles. How does it make any difference if they are serving in military or paramilitary force? the infiltration of Lakshar-e-Taiba militants in armed forces, paramilitary forces or the police force of that area is very dangerous for the

country. It has also been mentioned that earlier they were also deployed in anti terrorist duty. They were supposed to check the terrorist activities but one can imagine what will happen if the persons entrusted to check terrorism themselves and aid and abet terrorist groups. I demand that a statement should be made in the House on such an important matter and a discussion should be held on it. During that discussion it should be pondered over seriously.

Mr. Speaker, Sir the second news is of great importance. The Chief Minister of Assam has said that two square kms of land of the state. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH (Allahabad): Mr. Speaker, Sir, should he raise one matter after another? ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: It is a related matter. I will call you later.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, two square k.m. land of India has been usurped by Bangladesh. It is the statement of the Chief Minister of Assam. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: That is a different matter.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Sir, we have not made the charge. The Minister of Assam is making the charge. The Prime Minister is here. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

Indian territory has been usurped by Bangladesh, which has stepped up the presence of its border force, the BDR, in the area and ironically the Government is sleeping over the matter and nobody is expressing concern of making a statement in this regard. ...*(Interruptions)* It should be clarified whether two sq. km. of our land has been lost or not and what happened to that land? Both the leader of the House and the hon'ble Prime Minister are present in the House. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You please sit down. What is this going on?

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: What is this going on?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK (Ahmedabad): Sir, this is a very serious matter concerning our country.  
...(Interruptions)

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

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: A Minister of Assam has said this. ... (Interruptions)

[English]

One of the Ministers from Assam has made this statement, and he has raised this very serious matter. The position of the Government on both these serious matters should be clarified in this House. ... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhunjharpur): Sir, how can some hon'ble members raise two matters?  
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I will look into it, please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Next Member to speak is Shri Rewati Raman Singh.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Sir, how can he say this?  
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I will look into it. It is not your jurisdiction. It is my jurisdiction.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I will decide about it. Why are you bothered?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Only Shri Rewati Raman Singh's observations are to be recorded.

...(Interruptions)\*

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Malhotra, why are you getting upset? I have not deleted your observations, and they are on record. Anybody may comment, but I have not deleted it from the records. Why are you getting upset?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Will everybody in this House be of the same view on a matter? Let us listen to Shri Rewati Raman Singh. He is a senior Member of this House.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Prime Minister is also here to make a statement on a very important issue.

[Translation]

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, just now hon'ble Malhotra ji has set a good tradition in the House that several issues can be raised at the same time. I would like to request you to give a ruling regarding such tradition for future.

Sir, he is looking at the issue of Lashkar-e-Taiba from a different angle, however, I would like to say something different in this regard. Some eight months back Shri R.K. Narayanan had written a letter to the Government in which he had expressed apprehension regarding such infiltration. As far as I remember, I as the hon'ble Minister of Defence had denied it. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down, do not shout.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Sir, the hon'ble Minister of Defence had denied that and, yesterday, the hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs, Shri Shivraj Patil said in the Rajya Sabha. ... (Interruptions)

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\*Not recorded.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Please do not refer to it. You are a very senior Member of this house, and you know it.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY (Berhampore, West Bengal): Sir, the hon. Defence Minister had denied this in the House regarding the Air Force. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: No, please take your seat.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: The hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs, Shri Shivraj Patil said that those militants were not serving in the military but in paramilitary forces. I would like to say that it is a serious issue and there is contradiction in the statements of both the Ministers. Regarding this serious issue, I would like to request you to ask the hon'ble Minister of Defence to make a statement on this issue in the House.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Next Member to speak is Yogi Aditya Nath.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

YOGI ADITYA NATH (Gorakhpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the apprehension expressed by the National Security Advisor Shri Narayanan regarding the armed force. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please do not raise your hands. I will only call the names of those hon. Members who have given notices.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: No, nothing will be recorded.

...*(Interruptions)\**

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\*Not recorded.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Sir, it is a very serious matter. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Tripathy, please take your seat. You are the leader of a party. Please do not disturb the House.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

MR. SPEAKER: This does not behave you.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, the Defence Minister had categorically denied about this issue in this House only day-before yesterday. ...*(Interruptions)* The hon. Prime Minister is also sitting here in the House. The Government should come forward with a response on this issue, as it is a very serious matter. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. I have called an hon. Member of this House to speak.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV (Sa-m-bhal): Sir, hon. Minister is ready to make statement on this issue.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please do not raise your hands. I am only calling those hon. Members who have given notices. I cannot convert this into a discussion.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

YOGI ADITYA NATH: Sir, the hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs had categorically denied the issue when the House was discussing the issue of Mumbai blast the day before yesterday.

Sir, this Government is playing with the security of the country. The manner in which serious subject like

the national security and the defence forces is being treated that much lightly, points to creeping in a very dangerous tendency. And there is a need to put a check on the tendency of giving clean chit to the terrorists organizations. This is a very serious development and in this very House it is clearly refuted that no such incident had taken place and yesterday Minister of Home Affairs had replied that the people belong to the para-military forces and not the armed forces. If it is really the case then the hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs is directly responsible for the act and he should either tender his resignation or be dismissed from the Cabinet.

Sir, whether the incidents involves the personnel of the para-military forces including Rashtriya Rifles. They are engaged in the security of the frontiers in Jammu and Kashmir and also at Indo-Bangla border. If the people of Lashkar-e-taiba or other terrorists organizations have crept into such para-military force it is a dangerous sign for the national security.

MR. SPEAKER: Please do not repeat.

YOGI ADITYA NATH: Through you, I would like to request that there should be a probe into the statement made by hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs. He has misled the House that the incident does not involve military personnel and there is a need to conduct an enquiry into whether it is actually the case or not. I would like to make one more submission.

MR. SPEAKER: It's enough, there is no need to make further submission as you have made your point.

*[English]*

The hon'ble Minister wishes to respond.

*[Translation]*

YOGI ADITYA NATH: Sir, the political parties of the country are in the rat race to give clean chit to the organization like SIMI. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

...*(Interruptions)\**

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\*Not recorded.

*[Translation]*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: It is a very serious matter.

MR. SPEAKER: All right. You have made your point.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister wishes to respond and you should be happy about it. We have no time, and you have not given the notice in time. The hon. Minister is responding.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to clarify one point. Hon. Member Rewati Raman Singh and Prof. Malhotra raised the issue about my denial of the matter which was referred to by the Leader of Opposition while making his observations. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You are getting a response.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: That reference was in respect of two Indian Air Force personnel and not Army. Surely, the hon. Member will have to distinguish it. When hon. Rewati Raman Singh said that I misled the House, it is not misleading. That matter was related to August, 2005. Thereafter, we checked up and we found that the information was not correct. So, there is no contradiction.

In respect of the information relating to three Army personnel, it is correct. I have the preliminary information which is available with me and I can share it with you. These three persons, namely, Naik Mohd. Sharief Kalas of 4 Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry, Lance Naik Shakeel Iqbal Kalas of 1 Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry, and Rifleman Abdul Haq Kalas of 12 Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry were arrested sometime in the month of June. Two overground terrorist workers were detained by the Police; when the Police started interrogating them, in the process of interrogation, the Jammu and Kashmir Constable was also detained. After further investigation, the names of these three persons came and they were detained. Home Minister has not misled the House, though they belong to the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, presently, two are deployed in the Rashtriya Rifles, one is deployed in Jammu and Kashmir.

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI (Garhwal): So, they do not belong to the Army.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Of course, they belong to the Army.

MR. SPEAKER: He said that; let him clarify.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: General, you should not do that. Do not record anything.

(Interruptions)\*...

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I am not saying that. They are now serving in Rashtriya Rifles. Therefore, factually, it is not incorrect. They belong to the Army, but currently, they are now serving in Rashtriya Rifles. So, there is no question of misleading the House.  
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is very unfortunate. It does not look nice; you are a disciplined Member.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: What about the Assam and Bangladesh issue?

MR. SPEAKER: He is not obliged to answer you now.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I do not know why he is shouting, but when the hon. Member has referred to a matter, definitely, he will give some time to the Government to ascertain the facts, and after that, I will inform him.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, let us hear the Prime Minister. Please do not disturb.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: We are not satisfied with the statement of the hon. Minister of Defence, therefor we stage walkout from the House.

12.14 hrs.

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

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You have a right to go out, but do it without creating trouble.

[Translation]

You sit down.

12.15 hrs.

## STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER\*

### Situation in Lebanon and evacuation of Indian Nationals

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Prime Minister has offered to make a statement on a very important matter.

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members are aware of the current situation in Lebanon. Taking into account the concern that Members may have on this score, I rise to apprise the House of the current situation and our responses to the evolving situation, especially the efforts made by us to aid and assist Indian nationals who have become victims of the escalating crisis in Lebanon.

West Asia is our extended neighbourhood and tensions in that affect our security and our vital interest. We are seriously concerned about the escalation of the conflict between Israel and the Hezbollah extending across the Lebanon-Israel border. These developments have inflamed an already tense and delicate situation in the region.

On July 12, India had condemned the abduction of two Israeli soldiers by the Hezbollah cadres and called for their immediate release. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please keep quiet. Show respect at least to the Prime Minister of the country.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please come quietly. You are welcome. I am very happy that you have come back.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Simultaneously, we had condemned in the strongest possible terms the excessive and disproportionate military retaliation by Israel. We had

\*Not recorded.

\*(Placed in Library, See No. LT 4509/2006)

particularly expressed concern that the actions of the Israeli Defence Forces had resulted in the killing and suffering of innocent civilians, including women and children that is likely to exacerbate an already tense situation. We also condemn the attacks that led to the deaths of four United Nations Observers in Lebanon.

India had also condemned the wholly unjustified arrest and continuing detention of Ministers of the Palestinian National Authority and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. There can be no justification whatsoever for taking such action against the duly elected representatives of the Palestinian people.

The virtual destruction of a country which has been painfully rebuilt after two decades of civil war, can hardly be countenanced by any civilized state. In response to the appeal issued by the Government of Lebanon, I would like to inform the House that the Government of India has decided to contribute Rs. 10 crore to humanitarian and relief efforts to rebuild Lebanon.

In our view, there should be an immediate cease-fire so that the destruction of Lebanon is ended and humanitarian assistance could be provided. All sides must immediately halt the violence and give diplomacy a chance. Diplomacy to succeed should have a long-term solution that involves and addresses the legitimate concerns of all parties in the region, leading to a comprehensive and negotiated solution.

The safety and welfare of Indian nationals who were residents in that country has been our foremost concern. On 17 July, anticipating a further deterioration in the security situation, an advisory was issued to all Indian nationals, particularly those living in Southern Lebanon, to take suitable precautions regarding their personal safety. Consultations were initiated to work out solutions on how to facilitate the return of those of our nationals in Lebanon desirous of doing so. All Indian nationals have been advised to remain in contact with the Embassy of India in Beirut, who has been instructed to render necessary advice and updated information on the evolving situation.

Since Beirut airport remained closed and the land route between Beirut and Damascus was unsecured, it was felt that the best way to evacuate Indian nationals was through Beirut port. Four Indian Naval ships INS Mumbai, INS Brahmaputra, INS Betwa and INS Shakti which were in the Red Sea were redirected to Beirut to assist in the evacuation.

The first evacuation effort was undertaken on 21st July, 2006. 598 Indian nationals, and as a humanitarian gesture, nationals from Nepal, Lebanon and Sri Lanka, were evacuated by INS Mumbai from Beirut to Larnaca in Cyprus. From Larnaca, Air India arranged two aircraft to ferry the evacuated Indians to Mumbai and Chennai.

A second evacuation out of Beirut was undertaken on 24th July. This comprised 887 people including 784 Indians, 41 from Nepal, 57 from Sri Lanka and five Lebanese nationals. All Indian nationals, and nationals from Nepal and Sri Lanka were airlifted from Larnaca to India and have arrived safely. A third phase of evacuation was completed on 26th July bringing the total number of those evacuated to 1,870, including 1,687 Indian nationals.

It is our estimate that approximately 12,000 Indian nationals were in Lebanon at the time of the outbreak of hostilities. They are mostly semi-skilled and unskilled workers who were working in farms and factories. Of these, a large number have not indicated their desire to leave Lebanon. Some of them appear to have decided to stay back, others may have been unable to reach Beirut because of the disruption in communications. We have so far received confirmation of the death of one Indian national in an air strike on a glass factory in Bekka valley.

Our Embassy continues to function in Beirut, and is in touch with various organisations and agencies with which Indian nationals were associated. For the time being, our naval vessels will continue to be in the region in case they are required to be used in the service of our nationals. Any further evacuations will be planned taking into account the ground situation in Lebanon.

We also have a contingent of 672 Indian officers and soldiers as part of the UN peace-keeping forces in Lebanon (UNFIL). Our peacekeepers are safe, though currently confined to their barracks.

I would like to place on record appreciation for the efforts of various Ministries, Departments and agencies of the Government for the swift and successful manner in which they have responded to the task of helping our fellow citizens in distress.

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*[English]*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri):  
Compensation to the casualties should be given in your presence. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Acharia, yesterday, I allowed you to raise this matter.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): India is the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: May I earnestly request you. Please sit down. I can only say that this is very unfortunate. When I am requesting you repeatedly, you are not taking your seat. I am very-very sorry.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: We are very much thankful to the Prime Minister. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded. Only Shri D.V. Sadanand Gowda's statement will be recorded.

(Interruptions)\*...

MR. SPEAKER: I am prepared to allow discussion. Nothing will be done now.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Only Shri Sadanand Gowda's statement will be recorded. I shall allow the discussion through a Motion. Bring in a notice for Motion. I will not allow this. I will not start the practice of putting questions after a Statement here. Rules do not permit me.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned till 1.30 p.m.

12 25 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till thirty minutes past Thirteen of the Clock.*

13.35 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled at thirty-five minutes past Thirteen of the Clock.*

13.35 hrs.

[Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

### (I) Need to lay a railway line between Nagapattinam and Vallankanni in Tamil Nadu

[English]

SHRI FRANCIS FANTHOME (Nominated): I would like to draw the attention of the Government that the Ministry of Railways had agreed to establish a railway line between Nagapattinam and Vallankanni for which a 10 per cent advance was paid to the Railways by the Shrine of Our Lady of Health at Vallankanni.

Despite repeated requests, several representations and a foundation stone being laid, work on the railway line has not started. The former Railway Minister had also assured the Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Health that work would begin shortly.

The hon. Minister of Railways is requested to initiate this project at the earliest as lakhs of pilgrims to the shrine are facing problem due to the delay in implementation of the project.

### (II) Need to take steps for release of Indians held in Kurdistan, Iraq

SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA (Machilipatnam): One more instance of how Indians, particularly, people belonging to Andhra Pradesh, are being exploited and abused in Gulf has come to light. About 90 people belonging to West Godavari, Khammam, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Adilabad districts of Andhra Pradesh were sold to a company in Kurdistan in Iraq by a Gulf agent. The agent had taken Rs. 1.5 lakh to Rs. 2 lakh from each individual and sent them to Dubai on a tourist visa in April, 2006, and were given employment in ACC Company. But, as soon as the period of tourist visa was over, some sub-agents came to them in a police uniform and said that they would be deported to India since their visa period had expired and took signature on some documents. But, actually, these workers were sold to Arabic International Company in Kurdistan for 50,000 dollars. Their real woes have started from here. These people are being treated like slaves by paying just 4 dollars per day and they are made to work for 16 to 18 hours a day. The company is not even giving them proper food. If they refuse to work, they are beaten with iron rods.

The Home Minister of Andhra Pradesh had also talked to the Minister of Urban Development and the Home Minister for release of Indian nationals from Kurdistan. But, nothing has been done so far. So, I sincerely request the Government to immediately take measures through diplomatic and political channels and see that these people are released immediately.

**(iii) Need for proper maintenance of the strategic Sansari-Kilar-Thirot road linking Himachal Pradesh with Jammu and Kashmir**

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH (Mandi): I had the opportunity to visit tribal areas of Lahaul and Spiti and Pangi sub-Divisions of Chamba District of my constituency this time extensively. The road popularly known as Sansari-Kilar-Thirot road is being looked after by Border Road Organisation being a strategic road, which links Manali-Leh road at tandi with Jammu-Udhampur-Srinagar at Batot. This road traverses through Kishtwar-Doda area of Jammu and Kashmir and thus is a lifeline for the connectivity in far-flung areas of the States of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. I have found that the standard of maintenance of road is not small portion, entire length is unpaved and at many points the formation deficiencies require widening. Based on my site experience, I propose the following suggestions for immediate action:-

1. Re-surfacing of road from Tamil to Thirot.
2. Immediate metalling and tarring from Thirot to Madgran near Udhampur.
3. Immediate construction of bridges on three *nallahs* between Udhampur and Tindi as this gets flooded as a result of melting of snow causing disruption of traffic.
4. Re-alignment of road at Bambal as Forest clearance has already been obtained.
5. Re-alignment and widening of road between Sidh Mandir and Kilar bridge.
6. Immediate metaling and tarring of road between Kilar bridge and Sansari *nallah*.

I would request the Government to look into these suggestions and take immediate action by providing special budgetary allocation, machineries and equipment so that this strategic road is maintained in larger public and national interest.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Giridhari Lal Bhargava—Not present.

**(iv) Need to construct an expressway between Vadodara and Mumbai**

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA (Surat): Sir, I would like to draw the kind attention of the Government that during the Budget speech for the financial year 2006-07, the hon. Finance, Minister had declared that the expressway between Vadodara and Mumbai will be taken up on DBFO system. There is tremendous traffic density on Ahmedabad-Mumbai Section and the existing National Highway is already overcrowded beyond its capacity. It is very important that the survey work and land acquisition be started at the earliest for the proposed Expressway. Government of Gujarat has frozen the 300 m width of land along the proposed alignment of the Expressway. It is required to start the land acquisition procedure at the earliest.

I would like to urge upon the Government through Parliament to start the construction work under time bound limit.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Jual Oram—Not present.

**(v) Need to revise the royalty rate on Coal**

SHR: ANANTA NAYAK (Keonjhar): The coal producing States in general and Orissa in particular is incurring a huge loss, as the royalty rate on coal is not being revised as per schedule. As provided in the Mines & Mineral Act 1957 the royalty rate should be revised in every three years. The Eleventh Finance Commission has also made similar recommendation to the Central Government. But it is unfortunate that the Central Government is not paying any attention to revise the royalty rate of minerals particularly coal. As a result, the coal bearing States are incurring huge losses. The State of Orissa is incurring a loss of Rs. 750/- crore annually. The State is already facing financial crisis as it is experiencing drought, flood, cyclone or some kind of natural calamities or the other. Since the demand of the State and other coal producing States for that matter are genuine and justified, I demand that the royalty rate on coal be revised without any further delay.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat—Absent.

**(vi) Need to make budgetary provision for linking Agartala-Subroom railway line in Tripura**

SHRI KHAGEN DAS (Tripura-West): Sir, there has been a long-standing demand of the people of Tripura for extension of railway line from Agartala to Subroom. In 1998-99, Agartala-Subroom new broad gauge line survey was sanctioned and a preliminary survey was completed. The survey report was updated in 2004-05 and the report was sent to the Railway is extremely important for the State as also the North-Eastern Region for the following reasons:

1. Once the line is extended up to Subroom it would cater to the needs of the rest 50 per cent of the State population.
2. South Tripura is quite rich in natural gas, rubber and other natural resources which could not be exploited due to inadequate transportation facilities.
3. Effort is being made to exploit the existing Inland Water Transport Protocol route through Bangladesh for movement of goods and essential commodities from the mainland to the State which can be further transported by rail to different parts of the State.
4. Once Subroom is connected, it would be easier to connect Chittagong Port, at a distance of only 75 kms through the existing Bangladesh Railway network.
5. With this link in position, Tripura can be the gateway for trade and commerce to a host of South East Asian countries.
6. Once the project comes up, this will have a tremendous impact on the economy of the entire North-East region.

Therefore, I strongly demand that a Budgetary provision be made for this project in the Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2006-07.

**(vii) Need to release funds for construction of buildings of primary schools in rural areas of the country**

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, even after the passage of 58 years of

independence, the condition of primary education in the country is pathetic as either there is lack of buildings at some places or lack of adequate teaching staff at some other. Out of total 10 lakhs 4 thousand schools of the country, 30% of the primary school building in the rural areas are not pukka. While 25.7% of such buildings exists in urban areas. There is not a single state in the country which can boast of having the buildings of all primary schools pukka.

As per the survey conducted by national education programme and administration Institute in 29 states and the Union Territories of the country, 41079 primary schools are being run without building, 14.6% of such schools have got only one class room, 35.26% have got two class rooms and 39.96% primary schools have got three or more class rooms. In absolute terms there are one lakh seven thousand eight hundred forty two schools which have one class room and 94.73% of such schools exist in rural areas and 5.17% exist in urban areas. 66.22 percent of the schools in Assam have got single class room while the condition of room in 68.48 percent schools is not upto the mark. While 31.52 percent class rooms require immediately repair.

Education is the basis for our development. The primary education in rural areas is in a pathetic condition. The Government should release funds for the improvement of primary education. So that a bright future for the children of a country could be ensure.

**(viii) Need for repair and maintenance of National Highways No. 110, 98 and 83 passing through Jahanabad, Bihar**

SHRI GANESH PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, National Highway 110, 98 and 83 passing through my constituency Jahanabad have reached in a dilapidated condition due to which the road link between capital city Patna to Gaya, Jahanabad and Arvel has got disconnected. The bridge at the national highway 83 has been in a dilapidated condition for the last two years but it has not been constructed so far. The stretch of national highway 110 between Jahanabad and Bihar Sharif is also in dilapidated condition and so is the case of National Highway 98 from Agnoor to Pali Vikram.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I demand to the Government that repair work of all these three national highways be started without delay.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Mahendra Prasad Nishad—Not present

Shri Prabhunath Singh—not present.

(ix) **Need to restore the name of "Tamil Nadu Government Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme" as "National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme" in Tamil Nadu**

DR. K. DHANARAJU (Tindivanam): National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme by an Act of Parliament was launched by the Union Government. Its aim is to provide employment to every rural household whose adult member volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The scheme is 100 per cent sponsored and supported by the Union Government. It is being implemented in 200 districts of the country through panchayats according to the guidelines issued by the Union Government.

It is surprised to note that the previous Tamil Nadu Government has changed the name of the scheme as "Tamil Nadu Government Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme". The identity cards to those who were given employment were also issued under the same name. It is a very important matter. Hon Prime Minister and the concerned Minister of Rural Development in the Central Government should take serious note of it. Fresh guidelines should be issued to each State Government in this regard and also periodical checks should be exercised by visiting the Central Government teams to the States so that it may not happen again. The name of the scheme should be restored as "National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme" and implemented in all States and UTs. Hence, I draw the attention of the Programme Implementation Department to take necessary action.

(x) **Need to check the spread of Chikungunya disease in Karnataka**

\*SHRI M. SHIVANNA (Chamrajanagar): Chikungunya viral fever spreads through mosquitoes. So far lakhs of people are suffering from Chikungunya disease.

Earlier this disease was present only in North Karnataka. Now, this is rampantly present in Bangalore City, rural Bangalore, Tumkur, Kolar, Chamaraj Nagar and

\*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada

other Districts. So far Chikungunya is present in 101 Talukas and 15 Districts. If it is not controlled, it will spread like Cholera, Malariā and would become an epidemic to kill thousands of people.

The Central Government should immediately send Scientists and Doctors to the affected districts and see that the disease is not spread further. Therefore, I urge upon the Government to supply necessary drugs and ensure that timely treatment is given to those who are suffering from the disease.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Sir, I want to make one submission. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This will not go on record. I have said it earlier also.

[*English*]

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Sir, I have no translator. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Whatever you have given to the Notice Office and has been approved by the hon. Speaker will only go on record.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Sir, for about six months. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This will not go on record.

(*Interruptions*)\*...

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What you are saying will not go on record.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Sir, the Government of Karnataka. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. Anything added later on will not go on records.

\*Not recorded.

[English]

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Sir, please listen to me.  
...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing should be recorded now.

...(Interruptions)\*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What can I do? Rules do not permit.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Sir, I am asking for an interpreter because I am always speaking in Kannada.  
...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What you are saying is being interpreted and I am listening in Hindi.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Sir, a Kannada interpreter has been called from Rajya Sabha who is interpreting the matter in Hindi but I am not getting the copy of my speech in English that I want. The interpreter of our secretariat has retired. ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is under hon. Speaker's jurisdiction and not in my jurisdiction.

...(Interruptions)\*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This not going on record.

...(Interruptions)\*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am listening the interpretation of your speech in Hindi, how can I accept that your speech is not being interpreted.

[English]

If you have any problem, you can see the hon. Speaker in his Chamber.

...(Interruptions)

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\*Not recorded.

**(xi) Need to declare birth anniversary of Srimanta Sankardev, the 16th Century Vaishnava saint of Assam as a National Holiday**

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (Lakhimpur): I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards a very popular demand of the people of Assam about declaring the birth anniversary of Srimanta Sankardev, the 16th century Vaishnava Saint of Assam as a National Holiday. Born in 1449, a contemporary of Guru Nanak, Srimanta Sankardev founded the doctrine of Vaishnavism and pioneered the Neo-Vaishnavite movement in North-Eastern part of India. With his inherent universal love, he was successful in binding all sections of the society including religious and ethnic groups and could successfully infuse the spirit of a glorifying Indian nationalism. He was not only a Vaishnavite Guru of the medieval period but also the multi-faceted genius. Srimanta Sankardev, as a philosopher and social scientist, was instrumental in the creation of a distinct social structure taking village as a unit of local governance resembling the present day Panchayati Raj institutions. With his immense command in dance, drama, literature, art and culture, he was able to integrate all categories of interest in evolving a unique Cultural Heritage of India, now being recognized by World Heritage Committee of UNESCO. The contribution of such a great personality deserves appropriate recognition of the Nation not only to guide the young generation of our country but also to emotionally integrate a region.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to consider declaration of his birth anniversary as a National Holiday. I also appeal to ensure that the contributions of Srimanta Sankardev find adequate place in the official publications of the Government and the CBSE curriculum as well.

**(xii) Need to check the rise in prices of essential commodities**

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sorry for being late. You can term it either my good fortune or my misfortune that the House is going to have a debate on the same subject which I wanted to raise.

Sir, currently the prices have been on the rise in the country. At present people are facing a lot of difficulties in this regard and the prices of all commodities required by the consumers are sky-rocketing. Along with this, the prices of the diesel and petrol have been hiked three to

four times in a year owing to which the poor have been deprived of all these things. If we do not a stop to the price-rise and if it continues in the same vein, then in coming days the poor will find it difficult to earn their means of subsistence.

I urge the Central Government to take immediate steps to prevent price rise so that the poor could earn their livelihood.

I would like to have reply from the hon'ble Minister regarding price-rise control.

13.56 hrs.

## DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

### Rise in prices of Essential Commodities

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, we will take up Item No. 11. Dr. Chinta Mohan has to raise a discussion on the rise in prices of essential commodities. First of all, I would like to request Dr. Chinta Mohan to initiate the discussion.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN (Tirupati): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I would like to say that we are taking the price rise issue, the general price rise wounding the common man. This is the general situation not only in our country but also in other Asian countries.

Recently, the oil prices have gone up. Earlier, the price was about \$28 per barrel. Now, it has come to the extent of \$78 per barrel. This pushing effect of oil has caused rise in prices. Here, I would like to say that my party, the Congress Party, is committed to the poor. My Congress Party is committed to the middle-class. My Party is committed to the farmers, youth, women and everyone in the country. Keeping this commitment and the philosophy in mind, my party leader Madam Gandhi called for the Congress Working Committee meeting and discussed the issue of price rise. She is more concerned about the price rise. After that, Madam Gandhi, the Congress President, invited all the Chief Ministers of the Congress-ruled States which no other party has done. She invited all the Chief Ministers and discussed the issue of price rise. She has put all power and pressure

on the Chief Ministers to see that the prices come under control. The hon. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, who himself is an economist, knows everything of this country. He is doing his best to improve the economy of this country and also to keep the prices under control. This price rise of essential commodities is not a new phenomenon.

14.00 hrs.

This was there in 1950s also when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister. At that time, the inflation was 2.8 per cent. Then, there was rise in prices in the late 1960s also when Shrimati Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister. At that time, in 1960, when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister, Comrade P. Sundarath—they used to call him 'PS'—was a Member of Parliament and he came in a bicycle to Parliament to highlight the rise in prices. Now-a-days, most of the Members of Parliament are coming to Parliament in big cars, but the late Comrade P. Sundarath rode a bicycle to Parliament wearing a half-pant. He brought vegetables to Parliament and showed tomatoes and potatoes to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and raised the issue of price rise. So, this is not a new phenomenon. He criticized the Government because at that time the price of pulses was very high.

This problem was there in 1970s also. Then, on 1st August, 1985, late Madhu Dandavate raised the issue of price rise. He mentioned about the rise in the prices of milk and pulses. At that time, the rise in price was about 35 per cent.

Then, late Indrajit Gupta raised the issue of matchbox. He mentioned about the matchbox in Lok Sabha. He said that it was costing about 10 paise earlier and said that now the price of matchbox had gone up to 30 paise. He was so committed to the common man that he raised the rise in the price of matchbox. These days, nobody raises the issue of the price of matchbox in Lok Sabha. In 1985, the price of a matchbox was 30 paise and now the price is 50 paise.

In 1990, we raised the issue of price rise. In 2006, the Opposition leaders have raised the issue of the rise in prices of edible oil, pulses etc. As you are aware, the international price of crude oil is not in our control and the rising price of crude oil has pushed up the prices of cement, steel and other essential commodities.

[Dr. Chinta Mohan]

Today, the common man's interest lies in about 70 essential commodities. Out of that, prices of some essential commodities have gone up. We are also equally concerned about it. Our Government is trying its best to bring the prices under control. To keep the prices under control, we have taken several measures.

We have a wonderful Public Distribution System available in this country today. Nowhere in the world we have this kind of a Public Distribution System. We have 4,83,000 Fair Price Shops all over the country and each Fair Price Shop is covering about 465 families. With this system, we are helping the poorest of the poor in this country.

Then, through the *Antyodaya Yojana*, the Government is helping more than two crore families. Our Government is now planning to raise the number of families covered under this scheme to 2½ crores. Through this scheme, we are giving rice at the rate of Rs. 3 per kg. If a poor man gives Rs. 100 to a Fair Price Shop, he will get 35 kgs. of rice. This is a pro-poor measure.

The UPA Government has taken various measures to see that the prices are under control and the common man is protected. Coming to families living below the poverty line, there are about 7½ crore families who are living below the poverty line. Through Fair Price Shops that are functioning under the Public Distribution System, we are giving them rice at an affordable price which is half of the price that is available in the market. We are also providing them wheat at half the market price. We are giving them oil, we are giving them sugar through the Public Distribution System.

Coming to the people living Above Poverty Line, there are about 13 crore people that this Government is covering under this category. We are giving them sugar at affordable prices, oil through Fair Price Shops. Out of all, 23 crore families we are covering through the Public Distribution System and this is how we are protecting the poor man, the common man and trying to see that the effect of prices should not fall on them.

Now, I come to another pro-poor programme, which is a wonderful programme and which no other Government has done earlier. This was started again by the Congress Government in 1995. That is the Mid-day Meal Programme. It is also meant for the poor people of this country. About 12 crore children in the primary schools, studying between First Class and Fifth Class,

are getting good mid day meals. We are providing 2400 calories in the form of wheat and rice to the children. Not only that, at some places, like in West Bengal, we are providing fish to these children. In Andhra Pradesh, we are giving them one egg per day. This is the type of pro-poor programme which this Government is extending to the people.

As far as Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is concerned, to give the benefit to the poor people, this programme was brought in by the same UPA Government and this is covering about 200 districts. It is a 100 days employment guarantee programme. We are giving approximately Rs. 100 to a family who is living below poverty line and who want to work. We are giving about Rs. 10,000 per annum per family. With this, we are spending about Rs. 13,500 crore of money on Rural Employment Guarantee Programme.

Not only that but to help the farmers and to see that the effect of price rise should not fall on them, we are giving them subsidies, like subsidy on urea, etc. We are spending about Rs. 11,500 crore on urea itself, both imported and indigenised. This is to see that the effect of price rise should not fall on the common man. Under NPK, we are spending about Rs. 5,200 crore through NPK subsidy. A total of about Rs. 16,700 crore of money this UPA Government is spending on the farmers through subsidy on fertilizers.

As far as LPG cylinders and kerosene are concerned, from Tatas to a poor man, we are giving LPG cylinders.  
...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No running commentary please.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): The debate has not even started and those people are already giving replies.  
...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing should be recorded except the speech of Dr. Chinta Mohan.

*(Interruptions)\*...*

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\*Not recorded.

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Present your views when your turn comes.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded Mr. Swain.

(*Interruptions*)...\*

DR. CHINTA MOHAN: Sir, we are giving kerosene at subsidised rates through Public Distribution System to every poor man. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record, except the speech of Dr. Chinta Mohan.

(*Interruptions*)...\*

DR. CHINTA MOHAN: Sir, you see the subsidies that we are extending to the poor man. We are providing to everyone in this country about 80 per cent subsidy on the price of an LPG cylinder.

At this stage, what the Government should do? I want the Government to see that the pulses should also come under the Public Distribution System. We have to bring in the pulses definitely under the Public Distribution System to help the common man. When we look at the history of the Lok Sabha, we find that in every Monsoon Session, the issue of price rise is taken up. In the month of July-August the *da*/ prices are going up. This is not a new phenomenon. I want that pulses should come under Public Distribution System and see that every poor man today gets the pulses at a fair price.

Under Mid-day Meal Programme, every poor man. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your speech is not being recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Manvendra Singhji, he needs no assistance from your part.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Only the speech of Dr. Chinta Mohan will go on record and nothing else.

...(*Interruptions*)\*

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Handique ji, member of your party are causing disturbances in the House.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing should be recorded except the speech of Dr. Mohan.

(*Interruptions*)...\*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Silence please.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chinta Mohanji, you please carry on with your speech.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please address the Chair.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mohan Singhji, when your turn comes for speaking, use it to the fullest, but now you please let him make his speech.

...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

DR. CHINTA MOHAN: I want the Government to strengthen the Public Distribution System. The Government should strengthen the Public Distribution System. We have about 4,83,000 Fair Price Shops. They should at least increase the Fair Price Shops to about six lakhs. They should cover more poor people of this country, the poorest of the poor, who are living below the poverty line.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: In Punjab also more Fair Price Shops should be opened.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN: As far as essential commodities are concerned, earlier there were 79 essential commodities; the Government brought them down to 50 commodities. Now, again the Government should bring it back to 79 essential commodities. Though it is difficult for them yet they should see that the earlier 79 commodities come back to the control.

Also, under this Act there should be surveillance on the Public Distribution System. There should be Vigilance and Monitoring Committees to strengthen and see that the subsidised rice, wheat, kerosene and whatever we are giving to the poor people, they should reach them directly. They should see that no middleman should take advantage of this. Also, in the Essential Commodities Act we have to give them more teeth. We must see that the poor man and the common man should not be affected by black-marketing etc. Also, I would like to warn the Government that they may be tempted to raise the prices of LPG and kerosene but they should see that at no cost LPG and kerosene should be touched. It should be affordable to the people. They should see that the interest of common man is protected.

The other day some Members of the Opposition were saying that the Left Parties should raise their voice and the Left Parties should withdraw their support on this small issue of prices. I would like to tell the House that Left Parties are not going to withdraw their support. They will continue to support the UPA, and this House will continue for five years. The UPA Government will continue and it will last its full five-year term.

I would request the Government to take corrective measures to see that the common man and the poor man are protected. I would also request the Government to see that the poor man should not be hit by price rise.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now. Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, today the House is discussing a very important subject. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): Malhotraji, are you speaking in favour of price increase?

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No running commentary please.

[Translation]

Yadavji, when Mr. Chinta Mohan ji was speaking, I did not allow anyone from opposition to interrupt.

... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please do not disturb him. Please listen to him.

... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record except the speech of Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra.

... (Interruptions)\*

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that this House is having a discussion on a very important subject. I keenly listened to the speech made by Shri Chinta Mohanji. He made a mention about the wonderful and important schemes of the Government and the steps taken by the Congress Party. I do not want to dwell much on what he has said. He said that they were operating Public Distribution System, I would like to tell him that the Public Distribution System has been in vogue since second World War *i.e.* since the year 1944. He mentioned about Government providing subsidies, it would have made more sense had

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\*Not recorded.

he made a mention about the extent of increase in subsidies. I have a number of newspaper cuttings with me about price rise situation and its status, I would like to present only a few of those paper-cutting before you. Under the caption 'Manmohan ke raaj main mahangai maar gayi' a newspaper has reported that. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SURENDRA PRAKASH GOYAL (Hapur): Malhotraji, why are you always take resort to Newspapers? ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Goyal, you please first go to your seat.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Sir, the daily life of more than 100 crore poor and middle class people of this country has been made difficult, their condition has become very miserable even after all this, making such remarks does not behove them.

"Manmohan ke raaj mein mahangai maar gayi, sarkar ne chora garib ka saath".

(During the tenure of Manmohan Singh, the price rise is taking a heavy toll, Government disassociates itself from the poor)

and along with this, Congress Party's supporter Newspaper, National Herald which is considered as party's mouthpiece, has also published such type of remarks:

"Mahangai Ne Bigara Aam Admi Ka Jayka". (Price-rise impairing the food habits of the common man)

"Ek varsh mein mahangai ne sabhi kirtiman thode. (Price-rise at an all time high in the span of one year)

Hindustan Times, editor of which is a Member of Congress Party, has written that.

[*English*]

"Cong's *Aam aadmi* takes a hit."—"The Congress concerns for *aam aadmi* has taken a beating with the hike in the price of petrol, diesel, and even the common man's staple—*atta* and *dal*"

"Inflation: How it affects daily life."

"Price hike: cup of woes of common man reaches its brim."

"*Aam aadmi* may become a self-goal."

"Inflation homes in on your budget."

"Sarkar ne chora garib ke haath"

"Garib ke saath vishwasghat"

"*Aam aadmi* may become a self goal."

"Basic food items rates soar."

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in addition to these, there are several more newspapers which reflect the same sentiment. There is not a single newspaper in India which has not made a mention about the impact of price rise and the way the people are affected by it. When the statistics regarding price-rise were presented in the House, it was stated that the price-rise is a phenomenon which has been going on for a long period of time and it is nothing new. It was also said that during the tenure of Nehruji somebody brought a matchbox in the House, even though the talks were on about the price of milk. I would not like to talk about it. I would like to say that they should go through the period of the six years of our Government's rule. They would find that except for the price of onion, there was not any escalation in prices of other commodities. Here also except on the onions, no discussion was held about the price of any other commodity.

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH (Mathura): At that time also, the prices of items like potato, tomato etc. had increased.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Manvendra Singh, please take your seat.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav ji is present here. At that time he was the Chairman of Standing Committee on Public Distribution. At that time Godowns were full of foodgrains and there was no taker for that stock. Therefore, the Committee had recommended to throw the surplus foodgrains in sea. At the time, this Standing Committee had recommended that either it should be distributed free of cost among the people or thrown in the sea, because storage rent of foodgrains would had cost more. There was a time when

[Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra]

godowns were full of foodgrains and there were no takers. At that time the Government had announced that any state Government can take foodgrains free of cost and can use it under Food for Work Programme in the its State. The State Government of Rajasthan said that it did not had money for transportation, how can they take it free of cost. The Government replied that it would give them transportation charges, but they should lift the stock of the foodgrains. There was such a time. The Government is saying that price rise has always been there, it is a universal phenomenon, worldwide phenomenon, and it reveals their real intentions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, these days all newspapers have published figures in regard to price rise. If rates of commodities are compared from the 24 May, 2004, when this Government came to power and Shri Chidambaram took the oath, on 10 June, 2006, then it would be known that the prices have risen upto what extent. Had the prices increased by 2, 4 or 5 percent, then it could have been justified, but wheat which was earlier being sold at the rate of rupees Rs. 10 per kilogram is now being sold at the rate of Rs. 15 per kilogram. Similarly, price of wheat flour has also risen from Rs. 10 to rupees Rs. 17 per kilogram. Bread which was earlier available for Rs. 8, is now being sold at Rs. 12. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SURENDRA PRAKASH GOYAL: You are not right. I myself have purchased it. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Goyal ji, please sit down.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Goyal, please take your seat.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record except the speech of Prof. Malhotra.

...*(Interruptions)\**

*[Translation]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is not the way. The hon'ble Minister will reply on your party's behalf and other

Members will also speak. You should listen to him also and you can make your point at the time of reply, or can get your views added through other Members' speech.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Goyal, I would not allow you like this. Please take your seat.

*[Translation]*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if they continue to interrupt in this manner. I will stop speaking.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, No. Please continue. I request all the hon'ble members not to disturb others.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just have mentioned how much increase in wholesale prices, Super Bazar and other market prices has been registered from 22 May, 2004 to 10 June, 2006. Earlier, the sugar was being sold at the rate of Rs. 14 per kilogram which is now available at the rate of Rs. 25 per kilogram. The price of tea has risen from Rs. 135 per kilogram to Rs. 180 per kilogram. The price of rice has also risen from Rs. 10 per kilogram to Rs. 20-30 per kilogram. The pulses which were earlier available at the rate of Rs. 20-25 per kilogram, are now being sold at the rate of Rs. 50-75 per kilogram. It means the prices have increased by 200-300 per cent. In India's history, such an increase has never taken places the Government owe an explanation in this regard.

Petrol which was earlier available at the rate of Rs. 33 per litre, is now available at Rs. 47 to 51 per litre. He may even comment that he has just purchased petrol; god knows why he requires it at home. Diesel which was earlier available Rs. 22.50 per litre is now Rs. 32-33 per litre. The cement which was earlier available at the rate of rupees 125 per bag is now available at Rs. 180-205 per bag. Similarly, the prices of bricks have also increased.

I know that that the prices of same items have come down also. I would like to name those items also. The price of cars has decreased. Similarly, the price of AC, Scotch, Whisky and liquor has decreased, but the prices of milk, flour, rice and tea are sky-rocketing. Therefore it

\*Not recorded.

should be taken into account. The duty on liquor has been reduced to bring scotch in India. The price of refrigerator has been decreased. The prices of luxury items have been reduced. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please sit down.

[*Translation*]

If you do not allow others to speak on Government's behalf, they will also do the same to you.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: I would like to ask as to why these prices have increased. Whether any natural calamity, earthquake or war has occurred? The cause of price rise has to be assessed. First of all, as everybody mentions it, the price of petrol and diesel has been increased seven times; the prices were increased by 58 per cent and it was said that prices are increasing all over the world, therefore, they were compelled to increase the prices.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, 60 thousand crore rupees are earned from excise duty on petrol and diesel. Out of one lakh twenty thousand crore rupees 60 thousand crore rupees is solely earned from excise duty and when prices are increased, excise duty is also increased. In this manner, what would be the figure of earnings from this duty? In India, the prices of petrol and diesel have registered the highest increase. Pakistan and Bangladesh are our neighbouring countries and they too import petrol and diesel. Petrol and diesel exploration does not take place over there also. But when other countries of the world can keep check on prices of petrol and diesel, why can not we do it? These prices have been increased to increase customs and excise duty. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please sit down. No running commentary please.

[*Translation*]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the time of purchasing wheat on minimum support price from farmers, they announced minimum support price of Rs. 650 per quintal. The wheat was being sold at the rate of Rs. 1000-1100 in the open market, but FCI did not purchase even wheat at the

announced support price and all wheat was purchased by the middlemen and black-marketeers at the rate of Rs. 700-750 per quintal from farmers because the Government was purchasing wheat at the rate of Rs. 650 per quintal only. I have allegation against this Government that FCI deliberately did not purchase foodgrains so that traders may purchase it. FCI entered the market after traders had already purchased the entire foodgrains. One can understand who will sell foodgrains to them, at the rate of Rs. 650 per quintal. After that they announced to import 5 lakh tonnes of foodgrains. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, can there be a bigger corruption than the incident where wheat is not deliberately procured during the season and when the stock of food grains decline in the market and is stocked in the godowns of hoarders, the Government announce that it will import wheat. ...(*Interruptions*) If they will disturb like this then I would not like to speak. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

...(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing should be recorded except the speech of Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra.

...(*Interruptions*)\*

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is a very wrong practice. When the Member of the other party is speaking, you please allow him to speak. Otherwise, it will not be possible for me to control other Member when you or your leader would like to speak. Shri Handique ji, you please tell him to maintain silence and not unnecessarily disturb the House. When any Member is speaking please try to listen him or her. When I will give you time, you may speak whatever you want. However, one should cultivate a habit to listen others.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Sir, I was submitting that it is a serious corrupt practice on the part of the Government which is manipulating situation in such

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\*Not recorded.

[Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra]

a way that the produce of the farmers is sold at the rate of Rs. 675 or Rs. 700 per quintal while the same grain is sold in the market at the rate of Rs. 1300 to Rs. 1400 per quintal. The Government announced that it would import five lakh tonnes of wheat from Australia and that through a defamed company which was allegedly involved in food for oil scam. That company of Australia faced same allegations as allegations levelled against a Minister of India and the Congress Party in the food for oil case. While Rs. 1000 per quintal was paid for the imported wheat, the farmers of our country were offered only Rs. 650 per quintal with a maximum bonus of Rs. 50. The Government will pay Rs. 1000 per quintal to the farmers of other country while it is reluctant to pay even Rs. 50 more in the Rs. 650 per quintal to its farmers. 15 lakh tonnes were imported. Initially grains were not procured but when businessmen lifted grains from market and filled their godowns, the Government announced for the import. First scarcity was created then it was told that it would import grains even at zero duty. Meanwhile the prices of wheat increased in the international market as well. The cost of wheat increased over there because it was perceived that India is in dire need of wheat. This is the reason that the price of wheat in the country shot up.

Secondly, in our country there is satta bazaar, future trading, commodity exchange and forward trading. It is correct that it was started during that time. ...*(Interruptions)* I am coming to that point. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing except the speech of Shri Malhotra ji will go on record.

...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: When the said practice was started, all parties were in favour of it.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): We had not agreed to that.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: He should make his submission on his turn. All the Chief Ministers of India assembled and discussed the observation of Shri Devendra Prasad Committee that suggested for dumping of good grains. Later on, it was suggested to lift the ban on the transportation of grains. If there is heavy production of grains and there is no sufficient space for its storage then such type of ban should be lifted. Two years have elapsed since the formation of the present Government and during the last three months heavy forward trading

of grains has been done. What will happen if the quantum of purchasing done for sugar and pulses through forward trading is more than its stock available in the country. The forward trading will create scarcity of goods in the country. Pulses are imported from other countries at the rate of Rs. 10-12 per kg and the same is sold here at the rate of Rs. 50-60-70 and 75 per kg. If this system was started during the previous regime then what was the difficulties in discontinuing this system during these last-two-years. At that time, the prices of pulses were not increasing. The prices of anything were not increasing at that time when exchange was introduced. Why did the present Government not discontinue that system? We are continuously raising voice against it for the last two years. The Government have commodity exchange and forward trading system. I have stated earlier also that first purchasing was done more than the total yield of crops and after the purchasing it was announced that the Government would import at zero duty. It was second announcement. When the pulses exporters found that it is being imported at zero duty, they declined to sell it at the rate of Rs. 15 and told that they would sell it at the rate of Rs. 40-45. The farmers of those countries are prospering. Such a situation is being created with the connivance of the foreign traders and the ruling party of the country and by speculative trading and forward trading. Why are the prices of sugar and tea increasing? If one goes into the details about what items are being imported and how it is being imported, he will find that to what extent the policy of the Government is responsible for all these malaise.

Just now Shri Chinta Mohan ji mentioned about a meeting which was convened by Shrimati Sonia Gandhi ji. In that meeting the issue of price rise was discussed and serious concerns were expressed in this regard. It was reported under the caption 'keep watch on prices: Sonia Gandhi.' It is a commendable step that meeting was convened. However, I would like to submit that it is notable that when the meeting was called by Shrimati Sonia Gandhi elections were being held all over the country, Sonia Gandhi was visiting different places, farmers were committing suicide, prices were on a rise and there were irregularities in import. Today, it is not the issue of suicide of farmers. Nearly 50 farmers have committed suicide since the visit of Shri Manmohan Singh to Vidarbha. Daily about three farmers are committing suicide there. Nearly more than 3-4 thousand farmers have committed suicide during the last two years of tenure of the present Government. However, it is a different issue whether the farmers are getting appropriate prices

of their produce or not. I would like to submit about price rise. She convened a meeting and advised the Government to control price rise. She wrote a letter to Shri Manmohan Singh and told him that the prices of diesel and petrol should not increase at all. Next day the hon'ble Minister told that there would be no roll back. Sonia ji is telling that the prices should not be increased and the hon'ble Minister is telling that there will be no roll back and there will be no reduction in prices. She asked as what should be done. She asked her Chief Ministers to decrease sale tax and VAT. One paisa, two paisa, four paisa was reduced and the issue was settled. Sonia ji asked to control the prices of petrol, diesel and other common goods, but nothing happened. Did prices come down? They said that the new form for income tax will not be used. But the new Saral form for the poor, middle classes and the government-servants was changed to contained six pages. If it were implemented, every person would have been burdened with one-two thousand persons to approach some CA to fill up the form. She told that it was wrong. She told in the meeting of the Parliamentary Committee of the Congress Party that the new Saral form should be withdrawn. However, presently, the same form is in use. The faulty form is being withdrawn. I would like to know two three things. Shri Chidambaram ji is sitting here. Sonia ji said so many things but no attention was paid to her suggestions. Should we perceive that rein of the party has slipped from her hand? Sonia ji would get annoyed.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): Sir, this is not fair. ... (Interruptions)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Why not? ... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

I have not said anything unparliamentary. ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is not unparliamentary.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH: He may keep saying anything, but I can't say anything. ... (Interruptions)  
Sir what he is saying may be expunged. ... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will see.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing should be recorded.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mistry Ji, nothing is going on record.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if Sonia Gandhi Ji, gets annoyed, she can remove anyone from the cabinet. It so happens if she feels otherwise. But if he says that Sonia Ji wants something to be done and that is not done, I would like to ask, why?

[English]

I am saying this because she is the de-facto Prime Minister, and she is also the Leader of the Congress Party.

[Translation]

If she says that the prices of diesel or other commodities should be brought down, it will have to be done. ... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mistry Ji, please take your seat.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: I wanted to know it that. ... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, silence.

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: I made a mention of it since Chinta Mohan Ji had mentioned the name. He had said that the Leader of the Congress Party had called a meeting wherein she desired the prices to be checked. But it could not be controlled. Economic Times reported that:

*[English]*

An article in Economic Times says that.

"CWC Meet Stages Mock Fight with the Center—The Congress wants UPA Government to control rising prices, help the *aam aadmi*. This is just to fool the people."

*[Translation]*

This is just an attempt to befool the stable people. It has been reported by the Economic Times, I am not saying it. As per the Economic Times Smt. Sonia Gandhi Ji is perhaps targeting Shri Sharad Pawar stating that the prices of foodgrains have sky-rocketed and he has failed to control the price-rise. Is Sonia Ji targeting Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji or staging a mock fight? Efforts are being made to befool the country. The Congress President is saying that the prices should be controlled, but, who is responsible for price-rise. If Dr. Manmohan Singh or Shri Chidambaram Ji says that prices should be controlled, then who would control it? Persons holding responsible positions in the Government are saying so. I have stated the reasons for price-rise and the Government should pay attention to what I have said.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, interest rates are being increased. First Shri Chidambaram is imposed service tax on housing loan and now the rate of interest has been increased. If a poor person, say a slum dweller, wants to constant a small dwelling unit, it will not be possible for him, as interest on loan has been increased and the prices of land have also increased. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is going on in this regime? I am living in Delhi. I have been living in Delhi comfortably for the past many years. I would like to tell him that yesterday, a plot measuring one acre in Delhi was sold for Rs. 173 crore. Is he aware that when New Delhi was being given shape the same plot, which is located at Man Singh Road was acquired from farmers at the rate of 5 paisa per square yard and the same plot has now been sold for Rs. 173 crore. Prior to that a Congress M.P. had bought a plot for Rupees 178 crore. See the difference,

on the one hand there are people who can afford purchasing a plot for Rs. 178 crore. Not only that, recently a newspaper reported about a watch costing Rs. 56 crore put on sale. So, in India there are people who can afford buying a watch for rupees 56 crore. A number of cars costing crores of rupees are purchased. On one side there is such a vulgar demonstration of money and on the other hand see the plight of such poor farmers who get nothing as compensation in lieu of acquisition of their land.

When I came to Delhi in 1948, I bought a house at the rate of four Aanas per square yard because Aanas were in circulation at that time. Land of a farmer is acquired and he is not given any kind of employment, nor he is properly compensated. His land is acquired by paying him negligible compensation and he is not paid the justified prices for the foodgrains or the other crops produced by him, whereas, the land acquired from him is sold for Rs. 200 or even 400 crore. A plot reserved for construction of dwelling units for slum dwellers was sold to DLF for Rs. 2000 crore. This price war has resulted in steep hike in prices. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please maintain silence in the House. No running commentary in allowed in the House.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Now I would come to food, clothing and shelter. I have spoken on food, so far as clothing is concerned, I would like to say that not lakhs but crores of people were working in Khadi Board. But, they have destroyed Khadi Board. No work is going on in Khadi Board these days, it has lost its existence. So, how can a poor person manage food or clothing? If the situation is such, how can he think of constructing a House? Therefore, I hold the present Congress led Government responsible for present spate of high price-rise. Therefore, its days are numbered. They were shouting slogans as if they would do everything for the poor. But there is hue and cry everywhere that the Government have done nothing for the common-man. Everywhere, the people complain that what a common man has achieved during the last two years? I feel deeply ashamed that high prices have made the common-man

to weep, whereas, the Members make a mockery of it here. Whenever, the Congress came in power, it resulted in price-rise, imposed more taxes and created horrible situation for the public. Thus, if the Government fails to control the price-rise, it is incapable, useless and therefore, we must change it.

[*English*]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, the issue of rise in prices of essential commodities was debated in this House in the last Session also. At that time, the hon. Finance Minister gave a small reply while replying to the debate, and he said that:

"...As regards essential commodities, we will use every power in our hand to ensure that goods are not only available, but they are available at reasonable prices..."

He mentioned that the Government would ensure that the essential commodities are not only available, but they are available at reasonable prices. Further, it was mentioned that they would use every power to achieve this objective. Therefore, I hope that he will tell us about the same while replying to this debate. I am emphasising this point because his reply on this issue was given in this House on 23 May, and after a gap of two months we are again discussing this issue in this House. The House would like to know about the powers that he has used or he is using to make the essential commodities available at reasonable prices. I am saying this because we do not see any impact that has been there during these two months in the prices of essential commodities, that is, from 23 May to 23 July.

Sir, I have the figures that show how the prices are increasing abnormally, and this is quite unprecedented. I have the figures of the wholesale prices of all commodities of 7th January and then 17th June. In almost all essential commodities, in respect of wholesale prices, there has been an abnormal increase. We do not find that the Central Government has taken any concrete measures to control the prices.

Sir, the situation has become so worse today that people have to spend 60 per cent to 70 per cent of their income on food. Look at the plight of the workers who are in the unorganised sector, that is, the agricultural labourers, who constitute 37 crores. How much do they earn? They earn a maximum of Rs. 60 per day. They have to spend Rs. 16 on one kilo of rice; they have to

spend Rs. 17 on one kilo of *atta*, and not less than Rs. 60 on any type of *dal*, or the pulses. If they are to spend 60 per cent to 70 per cent of their income on food, how will they survive? Their condition has become so precarious that today lakhs and lakhs of people go to bed with empty stomach. That is the situation today which is prevailing throughout the country, both in rural and urban areas, and not in some parts.

Why has the situation become so grave? There was a debate in the last Session and we made several suggestions. What we found at that point of time was that procurement of foodgrains was not done properly. Prof. Malhotra was saying that this year, the Minimum Support Price is Rs. 650 plus a bonus of Rs. 50, which totals to Rs. 700, but the traders and the businessmen are purchasing the produce from the farmers by giving more than the Minimum Support Price, and as a result of this, the procurement fell. The situation will be grave next year when there will be no food security in our country. We are heading towards such a situation. What is to be done is that we have to procure more so that people can sell their foodgrains and their produce to the Food Corporation of India. The Food Corporation of India will have to offer a higher price to the farmers for their produce. We are importing wheat at a landed cost of Rs. 10,000 per tonne while our farmers are getting only Rs. 7,000 per tonne. That is a difference of Rs. 3,000 per tonne.

While this has been happening, do we really have a shortage of wheat? There is stagnation in the production of wheat. This year the production is about 78 million tonnes. That is sufficient for us if we compare it with our domestic demand which is only three million tonnes. There has not been any increase in the production of wheat in the country. There is no shortage of wheat in the country either. When there is no shortage of wheat in the country, why did the Government of India decide to import five lakh tonnes of wheat of in the first lot, 30 lakh tonnes in the second lot, and now 50 lakh tonnes?

Another cause for this situation in the country is the weakening of Public Distribution System.

[*Translation*]

I was listening to Malhotra ji's speech, he did not utter a single word about PDS. What had happened during their regime?

[Shri Basu Deb Acharia]

[English]

We asked for strengthening of PDS in the country. It has been committed by the United Progressive Alliance in its Common Minimum Programme that Public Distribution System should be strengthened, that it should be universalised.

During the time of NDA, the policy of Targeted Public Distribution System was adopted. There was an artificial line of poverty created with people having a monthly income of below Rs. 350 were called below the poverty line people. During the NDA regime, prices of PDS commodities for both APL and BPL beneficiaries were increased. For BPL people the price was half the economic price and for the APL people it was full economic price. As a result of this, Public Distribution System was virtually weakened and the market started to determine the prices of food grains.

It is not a fact that there was increase in the price of onion only now. During the NDA regime, in the 13th Lok Sabha, we had raised the issue of rising prices at least four times. The record will show that. There was an increase of prices during that time also because of some of the wrong policies they pursued. We are now asking the Government to reverse those policies. That has not been done. Because of that there has been adverse impact on the price situation in our country.

15.00 hrs.

We have an Essential Commodities Act of 1955. A number of commodities was designated as essential commodities. It stood at 79 in 1989. It was reduced to 15 during the NDA regime. What they did was that they issued an order in 2002 removing licensing requirement, stock limits, movement restriction as specified food items under the Essential Commodities Act. All licenses were removed—there was no control, no restriction and anybody can freely buy, stock, sell, transport, distribute, dispose any quantity in respect of wheat, coarse grains, sugar, edible oil seeds, edible oil without any requirement of licence or permit. All the restrictions in respect of more items of food stuff, pulses, *gur*, *maida*, *atta*, *vanasptai* were removed in 2003. Because of this dilution of the Essential Commodities Act of 1955, now the Central Government has no control over hoarding, black marketing, stockpiling of essential commodities.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: But the prices did not come down. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I have been demanding for two years. What can be done, what did their Government do, his Government is also doing the same they. There is no difference between the both. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

There is no difference between what the NDA did, and what they are also doing. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI ANANT KUMAR (Bangalore South): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Since they are so much unhappy with the Government, they should withdraw the support. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Only the speech of Shri Acharia should be recorded.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: The NDA Government has allowed hoarders, black marketeers to play havoc with the supplies and prices of essential commodities. It should be reversed. Now, the Government has no control. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what action has been taken against the hoarders; as to how many have been arrested till then. I am asking this because the prices are rising and rising in the last six months starting from January. Till today, there has not been any let out. What I demand is that the public distribution system should be strengthened. The artificial line of APL and BPL should be removed. The public distribution system (PDS) should be universalised. More items should be included. Not only rice, wheat, *atta* and sugar but essential items like pulses, edible oils should also be supplied through the public distribution system so that majority of the people would benefit. Eight per cent of the people are already facing this problem. Majority of the people can get essential commodities at a cheaper price. For that, if the Government has to spend a few thousand crores of rupees, the Government will have to spend to save the people of our country. Then, Prof. Malhotra mentioned about futures trading and forward

trading, which they introduced in 2003. Because of that, there was supply contract between buyer and seller.

Last year, the price of wheat was less than that of this year. A contract was made; and the wheat was not lifted last year, but it was lifted this year. So, the farmers get the price that was existing one year before. This is the forward contract between the buyer and seller—the buyer is obligated to take delivery and the seller is obligated to provide delivery of a fixed amount of commodity at a pre-determined price, at a specific future date. Forward and future trading is used by those who hold large stocks of a commodity for commercial reasons. Future contracts are also used to purposefully accumulate stocks in order to make speculative profits. This is happening in our country for the last three years. Since speculative activities dominate the forward and future trading and they instill greater volatility in the commodity prices, such a trade was prohibited for essential commodities under the Forward Contract Act of 1952. That was prohibited.

But when the NDA was in power, they issued an order, withdrawing this prohibition; they allowed future and forward trading. I would like to know from the hon. Finance Minister, what steps the Government will take to rectify this and whether the Government will withdraw the order which was issued in 2003 because of which the speculative activities are dominating the market today in our country?

It has grown sharply in two years and the prices of commodities have increased simultaneously. The farmers and small traders however who do not have access to the commodity exchanges have not gained anything from the price increases. Farmers and small traders suffer whereas big traders' profit is increasing. So, there is a need to reverse the order which was issued by the earlier Government. The Government should undo what was done by the earlier Government.

There has been a deceleration in the agricultural production. This is not a recent future. Over the last several years, the capital formation in agriculture has not been adequate. As a result of that, there has not been expansion of irrigation and irrigated area in our country. As a result of this, there has been an adverse impact in the agricultural production. Only last year, there has been some growth of about 2-2½ per cent, whereas the GDP is set at eight per cent. The growth in agricultural sector is only about 2.5 per cent. There is a need to increase

production in our country, particularly of pulses. During 30 years there has been only 10 lakh tonne increase in production of pulses. As there is less production during these years, the Government has decided to import pulses. Pulses are proteins for the poor people of our country but the per capita availability of pulses is reducing gradually.

Another problem is with regard to the allocations for Antyodya Yojana, BPL and APL. The Antyodya Yojana was started to help the poorest of the poor. They get one kg. of rice at two Rupees. The allocation for Antyodya Yojana has been slashed from 2.81 lakh tonne to 2.51 lakh tonne. Why has this allocation been reduced? The allocation for BPL families has also been slashed from 5.25 lakh tonne to 4.46 lakh tonne. For APL families also the allocation has been drastically slashed from 15 lakh tonne to 1.94 lakh tonne.

There is a proposal to increase the price of foodgrains supplied through the PDS to both APL and BPL families. There is also a proposal to reduce the quantum of foodgrains supplied through the PDS. So, on the one hand the quantum of foodgrains is being reduced and on the other hand the price of foodgrains supplied through the Public Distribution System is being increased. The main purpose of this is to destroy and dismantle the Public Distribution System. If the Public Distribution System of our country is dismantled and destroyed what will happen to the poor and lower middle class people of our country? There is a need to strengthen the Public Distribution System. There is a need to universalise the Public Distribution System. I am sure when the Finance Minister will reply to the debate he will definitely tell us what steps the Government is thinking to take to strengthen the Public Distribution System.

We had elaborately discussed in the last Session when we participated in the debate on hike in the prices of petroleum products. This House was almost unanimous, I heard the speeches of almost all the Members, that there was no need to increase the prices of petroleum products. Why were we opposing the hike? We were not opposing only for the sake of opposition. We made several suggestions. We had a series of discussion and we made several suggestions. One such suggestion was to reduce or restructure the duties and the cess.

*[Translation]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Achariaji please conclude now, time allotted to your party was 26 minutes.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I shall conclude. I have got to make 2-3 important points. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have taken more than 26 minutes.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: All right. You have to extend the time. It is a very important subject, please give me some more time.

*[English]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I know the seriousness of the matter.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I have spoken for only 15 minutes. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have spoken for more than 26 minutes.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

MD. SALIM (Calcutta-North East): We are persuading the Government, what else can we do. ...*(Interruptions)*

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA (Khajuraho): I do not understand, why Achariaji is becoming weak.

*[English]*

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Today, the revenue collection of the Central Government and the State Governments in a year from petroleum products is Rs. 132000 crore. It is increasing everyday. Whenever the international price increases, the collection of the Central Government also increases. Due to the recent increase of Rs. 2 to Rs. 3, Mr. Chaidambaram will get

Rs. 36,000 crore. I do not know what he will do with that money. After the increase in the prices of petroleum products, he told me that the burden on the common man will be only Rs. 12,000 crore. But it is not Rs. 12,000 crore. The direct and indirect burden on the common man is much more. As per my calculation, it will be more than Rs. 30,000 crore.

As regards the prices of the vegetables, if you go to the market you will find the prices of vegetables abnormal as there is increase in the transport cost. We cannot blame the transporters. Sometimes they do charge much more than they should but because of the hike in the prices of diesel, there is a cascading effect on all commodities. It has its impact on the transport cost and the transporter is passing his burden to the common man. As a result of this, the prices of all the commodities are increasing. If you compare the vegetable prices prior and after the hike in the prices of petroleum products, you will find the difference.

Now he is advising the States to reduce the Sales Tax. There is one saying in Bangla: '*apani achari dhamo, aporey shekhai*' which means charity begins at home. so he is not agreeing to reduce even one rupee. Shri Gurudas Dasgupta and myself had a discussion with Shri Murlidhar Deora in this regard. It was a very transparent meeting. Even the press was invited to the meeting. But none of our suggestions were accepted. We spent at least four to five hours but none of our suggestions was accepted by Shri Deora. He said that he is helpless. How can he help us? I thought he is my good friend. We were together in 1980. We thought that at least one of our suggestions which my leader, Shri Sitaram Yechury and myself gave would be accepted but none of them was accepted.

The second remedy which we suggested was to remove import parity. Who is benefiting by this? One particular company is benefiting due to this. When NDA was in power, it dismantled the administrative price mechanism.

The NDA Government dismantled the Administered Price Mechanism. Why can this Government not re-introduce it? What is the difficulty? The NDA and the UPA Governments are not the same. But this Government does not agree to this.

Sir, the Budget was prepared on the basis of estimates and revenue collections. But when internal

prices are increasing, revenue is increasing, what is then the need for additional funds? The excess should be distributed amongst the poor people and the people belonging to the middle class.

We should honour the mandate of the 2004 General Elections. The verdict was against the policies pursued by the previous Government and not in favour of any political formation or combination. It was against the policies pursued by the previous Government. This Government should not pursue the same set of policies. This Government sometimes forgets the tenets of the Common Minimum Programme. We are extending support to the Common Minimum Programme. Our concern is for the majority of the people of this country. The farmers are committing suicide. Thousands of people today go to bed with empty stomach. Such is the situation. ...(*Interruptions*) Such was also the situation during the NDA regime. Now, there is a need to reverse the policies that were pursued by the previous Government. This Government should listen to the voices of the people of our country. The condition is gradually deteriorating and would continue to deteriorate if some concrete measures are not taken.

What did the hon. Finance Minister assure this House in regard to essential commodities? I would like to quote him again.

"In essential commodities we will use every power in our hand."

I would say that the powers, if any, if he does not have, he should try to have that power in order to check the prices of the essential commodities. The Government should reverse the order that was issued in regard to the Essential Commodities Act of 1955. The Government should withdraw that power to allow future and forward trade. This is in the hands of the hon. Finance Minister and he can immediately present the report. ...(*Interruptions*)

To make goods available at reasonable prices the Government would have to strengthen the Public Distribution System. It was mentioned in the National Common Minimum Programme, rather a commitment was made, that this Government would strive to strengthen and universalise the Public Distribution System. More commodities should be added to its list and supplied to the people at a cheaper rate. Do not reduce food subsidy. In order to reduce food subsidy, you are increasing the prices and you are reducing the quantum of food to be supplied through the Public Distribution System.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMJILAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Mr. Speaker, Sir, this House is discussing a very serious issue like increasing prices. The prices of commodities are skyrocketing which has intensified the problems of the people across the country. Today the essential commodities are getting beyond the reach of the common man. When our colleague Shri Chinta Mohanji started the discussion on rising prices, I believed that he would come out with some good and concrete suggestions. Today, instead of making counter allegations it is more important how we provide relief to common man. If the Opposition has some useful and positive suggestions then the Government should accept them. The Government should apprise the House as to what effective measures are being taken to check the rising prices. Chinta Mohanji, instead of giving suggestions for taking concrete measures, however, stated that there was nothing new if prices were rising. There was price rise even during the Government of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in 1950s. Similarly, the prices escalated even during the year 1960.

15.26 hrs.

[SHRI GIRIDHAR GAMANG *in the Chair*]

Prices also soared high during the Government of Shrimati Indiraji. Chinta Mohanji, this is no logic. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): It is the offshoot of those rising prices. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: This is no basis. Not only Chinta Mohanji but the Hon. Minister of Defence Shri Pranab Mukherji also opined that the prices of the consumer commodities have not risen for the first time. When Shrimati Gandhi was the Prime Minister in the year 1974, even then there was 24 per cent increase in the prices. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: It is an appropriate tribute to the lady. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, Hon. Minister of Finance is present here. His statement has been published in the newspapers that unnecessary hue and cry is being raised over the issue of rising prices. Our colleague from the Opposition is sitting here. They must have committed some mistake because of which

[Shri Ramji Lal Suman]

they are in the Opposition. The people expect better governance from the present Government. There is no logic in justifying the present increase in prices. Hence, I would urge upon Chidambaram Saheb that it is not important that for how many days Government remains in power, rather better governance is more important. They should run the Government is engaged in public welfare and are working for the interests of the common man. Otherwise, it may not take long for them to find themselves once again in the Opposition. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur): We may form the Government. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Your possibilities are grim. We shall form a coalition government. ...*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Chairman Sir, it is not important that how long a Government is in power. Rather, it is more important that what is the orientation of the Government? I would request them to govern with the objective of providing relief to the common man. We have representatives of various political parties here. We are from the Samajwadi Party. Similarly, we have people from the Congress and the B.J.P., however, there is a nation apart from the political parties. The total membership of all political parties would be 10 or 12 crore whereas the population of 100 crore have nothing to do with the organizational set up of political parties.

Chidambaramji would cite figures in his reply but this Government is not run through figures, it is run with the confidence of people. That is why public opinion and faith is greater than any figure. I would like to submit that their Government has been a failure in the issue of price rise and they have no right to remain in the Government. No positive measure has been taken by them to check price rise. I well understand the powers and jurisdiction and Government wields irrespective of whether the present price rise is caused by speculators or black marketeers or the Mafia, if the Government is strong willed then there is no power which can stop them from checking price rise. I allege that the Government lacks the will. The reiteration that price rise has not taken place for the first time and that it even existed earlier entirely reflects negative mindset. They will have to take certain concrete and effective measures on the issue of rising prices. The issue of price rise was discussed in Rajya Sabha and in reply to the discussion the hon. Minister of Finance stated that the basic reason for price rise is shortage in production. I believe it is not an

appropriate reply. It is not a correct interpretation. If these facts are examined we would find that it is a misleading campaign. The stock of rice and coarse grain in Indian godowns on 1st June 2006 was higher in comparison to that of on 1st June 2005. It is correct that the stock of wheat was definitely low, however, the stock of rice was 115.85 lakh tonne and 119.50 lakh tonne in June 2005 and June 2006 respectively. The coarse grain reserve was 6.06 lakh tonne and 10.27 lakh tonne in June 2005 and June 2006 respectively. As I have stated earlier that the stock of wheat was indeed less and the present situation has developed owing to the erroneous policies of the Government. In February the Government announced that it would import wheat. At that time the new crop of Rabi was due and it spread a message among people that the wheat imported by the Government would cost approximately Rs. 1000 per quintal. The farmers decided not to sell their wheat for Rs. 700 per quintal and consequently they pulled out from the market. There was no shortage of wheat in the country and with the farmers since the initial estimate of wheat production in the Rabi, crop was approximately 73 lakh tonnes which was three lakh tonne more in comparison to that of the last year. It sent across a wrong message amount people and the farmers began to think that the increase in prices of wheat was likely. Consequently the Government could only procure 92-93 lakh tonne against the targetted procurement of 160 lakh tonne. There are about five hundred small companies in the country. They bought from 60 to 70 per cent of wheat from farmers and mandis. I would humbly request that in exercise of a wrong policy it was for the first time after eight years that the Government could procure less than 100 tons of wheat. Mr. Chairman, who procured the wheat, it was procured by multinational companies like ITC, Glenkor, Australian Wheat Board, Ruchi, Soya, MK traders and Adani etc.

Hon'ble Finance Minister and the Government have no control over these companies and these companies will sell wheat according to their own convenience, this is my allegation. The Government has provided opportunity to private and multinational companies to purchase and sell wheat on their own terms and conditions. The declaration regarding the importing of wheat by the Government sent such a signal in the country that the Government failed to purchase wheat to the extent to which it had intended.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, today farmers are not getting remunerative prices for their produce. A few days back, a newspaper of Rajasthan had reported that for producing

wheat, there is an expense of Rs. 20,000 per hectare and the income from wheat per hectare is Rs. 16,500. In this way wheat producing farmers are at a loss. Government talked about buying wheat from the farmers at the rate of Rs. 650-700 per quintal and there is a talk of importing wheat at the rate of Rs. 1000 per quintal and private sector companies are purchasing wheat at the rate of Rs. 800-850 per quintal. This is the outcome of the wrong policies of the Governments. This situation has been deliberately created. Everyone is aware of the fact that during the tenure of the previous Government also wheat was imported and this was reported in the Newspapers also. I would like to say that the Government have a liking for importing wheat instead of buying it from our own farmers and one can guess the reasons behind the Governments liking for this type of importing. ...(*Interruptions*) What did the Government do during the last four years? The price of petrol has risen from Rs. 27 per litre to Rs. 53 per litre and that of diesel from Rs. 17 per litre to Rs. 40. The Government says that the price of crude oil in the international market has increased; therefore, they are compelled to hike the price of the petroleum products.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister for how long we are going to be dependent upon the international market in this regard? The Government should also spell out the reasons for not been able to increase production during the last few years. This is a strange spectacle. All the countries of the world are exploring the possibilities of an alternative fuel in the place of petrol and diesel but our Government is not giving attention to that direction, scant attention is being paid to bio-diesel options. Recently the prices of the petrol products have increased more than 16% and as a result common consumers have suffered losses but the income of the State and Central Governments have increased due to it. In the year 2005-2006 revenue received from the petrol sector was Rs. 62873 crore as compared to Rs. 56358 crore that was earned during the previous year as revenue. Compared to the last year more revenue was received during the current year. Our country's budget comprises of about Rs. 5.5 lakh thousand crore out of which the petroleum sector contributes maximum revenue to the kitty. The Government gets about one third of the income from the petroleum sector. Government of India is getting about Rs. 160 crore daily from petrol and diesel. I would like to know from the hon'ble Chidambaramji that he always counsels the States to reduce the taxes, to reduce their prices.

The Government of India has no moral right to ask the State Governments to cut down the prices unless it cuts down its own taxes. The State Governments have limited resources and they have to work within those limited resources. If the Government is a little bit concerned regarding the prices of petrol and diesel, then the Government should set an example and first of all, the Central Government should take steps to reduce the prices.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, 60 billion hectares of land in our country is lying unused. We can produce 60 billion bio-diesel by cultivating Rattan Jyoti (*Jatropha*) in 30 billion hectares of land, but the Government have not paid any attention towards this direction. Then how can we attain self-sufficiency in this field of petrol, diesel and how can we be self-reliant in this regard? The Government are unconcerned about all these things. The Government says that the oil companies are running into losses. All this is fallacious and misleading campaign. Oil companies are earning profits. The Government is talking about the losses of the oil companies. Oil purification factories and oil producing companies are earning record profits, however profits are not being extended to the common consumers.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the price of the commodities shot up. Like the case of wheat which I have mentioned, the prices of the items produced by the farmers have increased. The prices have increased, but profits are being cornered by the middlemen. Recently in Delhi while tomatoes were sold at rate of Rs. 50 per kilo, then the farmers were getting Rs. eleven per kilo for that. The original producer is getting beaten all ends up. He is not provided relief from any corner. I have got the data of the price-rise during the period June 2005-06. There has been indiscreet rise in the prices. The price of Sabut Urad Pulses was Rs. 27 per kilo in June 2005 and in June 2006 it has reached Rs. 50 per kilot. The price of urad pulse rose from Rs. 30 to Rs. 52, the price of Mung Sabut's pulses shot up to Rs. 45 from Rs. 21, Arhar Daal's price rose upto Rs. 37 from Rs. 24, wheat price rose upto 16 from Rs. 10, Sugar price increased from Rs. 15 to Rs. 25. Shri Chinta Mohanji don't you ever purchase these things? I cannot comprehend what kind of euphoria are being harboured by them. The Government have taken a few steps. The Reserve Bank's report released on 14th July, 2006 states that the rate of inflation is 18.8% percentage. The Government in order to prevent inflation decided to import Wheat, Sugar, Pulses. State Trading Corporation signed an agreement

[Shri Ramji Lal Suman]

to import 35 lakh ton from foreign countries and placed orders. Out of that, there are reports of one lakh 61 thousand 500 ton material is arriving at southern port by the end of July.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please conclude your speech.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Sir, I am going to conclude my speech soon. We have to address the root cause of the problems. From which corner are the producers taking a beating? We have to cut out those sources. Swaminathan ji has rightly observed that there is no other alternative but to increase the agricultural produce and pay remunerative prices to the farmers. While presenting the data and while giving reply the Government should keep in mind that there is a word of difference between the prices of wholesale and retail markets. They present the data regarding the wholesale market. One should face the ground reality of what rate the commodity is available to the common man in retail market.

15.46 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Minimum wage is different in various states of the country. In some states it is Rs. 58 and in some other states it is Rs. 60. Per capita income per mensa in Bihar is Rs. 1880, in Uttar Pradesh it is Rs. 1633, in Andhra it is 1634, in Orissa it is Rs. 1062 and in Rajasthan it is Rs. 1698. Generally it is below Rs. two thousand. Out of this income how can a common man lead his life when he has to buy milk at the rate of Rs. 22 per litre, Sugar at the rate of Rs. 25 per kilo, Rs. 15 to Rs. 17 per kilo wheat, Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 per kilo pulses, Rs. 20 per kilo tomatoes? The Government should definitely have to seriously ponder over it. The Government give Rs. 25000 for Indira Aawas Yojana. The prices of Bricks, Cement and Iron are sky-rocketing. Now-a-days a common man cannot construct a house of his own. You please understand the statistics and instead of concealing the fact, realize the ground reality and please take some concrete steps which would send the signals to the common man of India that this Government is honestly trying to put a stop to growing price-rise. Speculative trading have to be checked, they should strengthen the Public Distribution System and also they should stop black marketing which causes artificial scarcity of the commodities. At one or another level, these black marketeers have a tacit understanding with the Government. There might be a nexus between them in

one or other way otherwise these big fishes of the black marketeers cannot evade the grip of governmental administration. If willing, the Government can initiate action against them. The laws of Government are so potent that these illegal black marketeers cannot carry on their business for a long period of time.

I hope that Shri Chidambaramji would certainly take some positive steps after hearing the views of the hon'ble Members so that the price rise could be checked. Soniaji is present here. The Congress Party itself has expressed concern. But Soniaji, the Government is yours, the Prime Minister belongs to your party. So, when she says that the Government is not functioning properly, the following couplet appears to be relevant "Mein khali jaam Rakhkar iaiye aansu bahatha hun, tumhari baat reh jaye mera paimana bhar jaye". I feel that this would not be so. I hope that the Government is going to take tangible measures in this regard and this is what I had to submit.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jharnjharpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, a very serious and important issue is being discussed in the House today and many hon'ble Members have participated in this discussion. I feel that we have to carry on this discussion rising above the party lines and deliberate upon this issue as it is related with the interest of the people. Everybody is concerned with the way prices are rising, therefore we should have a wholehearted discussion regarding this matter because hardships of common man are mounting due to this escalation in prices. Hon'ble Finance Minister is present here. As per the Planning Commission, what was the estimate of the people living below poverty line during their tenure? Right now Malhotraji is not present here, he was hinting towards this party, but there it is not a question of any particular party, rather it is a question of the heart. He was dropping hints that whenever the Congress party assumes power, price-rise occurs. Irrespective of the party, be it UPA or NDA—they should ponder over that who made the Planning Commission to conduct the sample survey in which the figure for the BPL was pegged at 26% and on whose regime this exercise was carried out. The survey of the people living below the poverty line was conducted during the year 1996-97.

I would like to raise a few basic questions here as to who are the worst hit by the price rise today. I would like to say that the people who are living below the poverty line are the worst hit by the price rise and not the upper classes who are possessing all the sources

and facilities. They hardly bother about the prices of commodities. They cannot realize what poverty is. The people who have not felt the pains of poverty cannot realize what poverty is. They can merely express concern. I would like to tell this thing because during 1996-97, 35.90% people were living below poverty line however during 2000-01, this percentage declined by 10% though poverty had not been alleviated nor employment opportunities had been generated or the purchasing power of the people had increased. The Government of India have accepted this figure of 26% as it was given by the Planning Commission. However, I would like to dwell upon the difficulties being faced by these 26% people earlier also. Fortunately, Hon'ble Sonia Gandhiji is also present in the House. She has also expressed her concern in the House. We have seen in the newspapers that the Congress Working Committee has also expressed its concern on this matter, however, I would like to say that merely expressing concerns is not going to serve any purpose. For this purpose, a policy should be formulated after serious contemplation as to ensure a check on price rise. I have not demanded that price rise should be stopped, but it is a big issue when this price rise reaches sky high leaving people dependent. Today, prices have sky rocketed. Prices of every commodity have increased. I do not want to quote figures. The hon'ble Minister of Finance will mention the figures regarding price rise. I leave this on him, it is he would tell as to what was the Development Rate during the 10th Five Year Plan. The per capita purchasing power among the weaker sections, the per capita income and the future plan of the Government's long term economic policy to increase the growth rate. The prices of diesel, kerosene and agricultural equipments have increased as a consequence of price rise. Hence, the Government has to spell out the mechanism, the future strategy and the policy by which the price rise could be controlled. However, through you, I would like to know whether any rule will be framed to regulate price rise and whether the Government would formulate any policy in this regard? There should be some parameters as to how much hike in the prices of the factory goods and how much in respect of agriculture products could be allowed to take place. How much burden could be passed on to the consumes? Some parameters have to be evolved in this regard that the prices would be increased every year, after every five or ten years. Just now I had seen the debate. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, the great philosopher and thinker of this country, had raised discussion over this issue and had said that prices should not go beyond one and a half

times of the cost of production. Production cost of the materials when it reaches the consumers should not cross one and a half times of the price at which it was produced in the factories. It is not a proper practice when a material which costs only one rupee is available to the consumers at more than one and a half of its actual cost. There should be some limit, some ceiling for the soaring of prices. The price rise of the agricultural produce, materials of the villages should be limited to one rupee per kilogram on the actual production cost incurred. He mentioned about a policy matter that is why I have mentioned here about Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. Today, the poor people are reeling under abject poverty. Are we not competent enough to check the speculators, the hoarders and the dishonest people?

Today, we have ample laws like the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and the Prevention of Adulteration Act, 1980 which are meant for checking the hoarders. In this way, though we have laws but we fail to punish the guilty people. Hence I would like to say that laws should be changed as the Government have several Committees to review the prices. Prices are always reviewed. There are many Committees like Committee of Secretaries, High Powered Price Monitoring Board and Cabinet Committees on prices. Are these Committees not competent enough to take decisions on price rise? Can't the Government decide to adopt a procedure to check price rise under a price control policy? Today, I would like to raise this basic question only. I do not want to go into the details as to how much is the price rise? If I go into that it will reveal a very painful situation. If one views the situation of the year 2005-06, one will see that the situation is very bad. That's why I do not want to go into it.  
...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: What he has said will not be recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)\*

[*Translation*]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV: There has been an overall increase of 25 percent in a year, in prices of commodities say wheat, pulses, flour, maida, sugar and masoor. I can present the details of how the prices have

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\*Not recorded.

[Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav]

increased. After all, what are the reasons in this regard? The common man is bearing the brunt of price rise. The Government takes firm decisions, regarding price rise also Government should take firm decisions. The Government would have to take firm decisions in order to strengthen economic order and to check the price rise. They should not compromise in this regard as the life and general problems of common man are linked with it. So if they do not take firm decisions, there is a possibility that our Government will have to pay a heavy price on account of the price rise. The people have borne the brunt of inflation. I would like to speak cutting across the party lines. I am part of the UPA allies. The Government should understand the hardships faced by the common man and I feel that if we do not formulate a policy for price control then the Government may have to suffer losses and once the Government will feel the heat they will start mulling over it, but by then they will not have the opportunity to rectify the mistake. The Government should take a policy decision this year itself in 2006 about it. It is a serious issue. Just now Shri Ram Kripal ji was telling about it. I would like to submit that the guessing and speculation is getting out of control. It is all right that there are some issues. We will see how it is being done in regulatory Authority. Investigation is going on in this regard. However, whether it is multinational company, Kargil, IPC or it is Glancore or Australian Wheat Board or Rachi Soya, M.K. Traders or Adani group.

16.00 hrs.

Till now nearly one third purchasing of wheat in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh markets have been done. Private traders are purchasing wheat where as the wheat is not reaching in the Central Pool of FCI. In the very beginning I had submitted that I would like to raise some basic question as farmers are facing difficulties. FCI procures, however its offering price is Rs. 650 plus Rs. 50 as bonus. Altogether the support price which is given to farmers is Rs. 700 per quintal Private traders offer Rs. 750 per quintal in place of Rs. 700. The agricultural produce of the farmers are being hoarded by private traders by paying Rs. 25 to 30 more. The same produce is sold by them at the rate of Rs. 1400 or Rs. 1500 per quintal. The Government have fixed the rate at Rs. 1050 for the forward market trading upto December. What type of trick it is? The farmers are not being benefited. The farmers who produce grains get paltry benefit while the middle men are getting maximum benefit. So the middle men should be eliminated and black

marketeers and hoarders should be arrested immediately. Whatever stringent law is required in this regard should be enacted.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is on account of the economic policy of the Central Government that the proper licence has been given for the purchasing of two lakhs tonnes of wheat in Uttar Pradesh. The multinational companies have got full freedom in the market. I mentioned it because I want that the Government should ponder over it. Recently, one statement was given by the Government that was painful for me. It was stated that the prices of the food grains being distributed through P.D.S. will be increased and its quota will be decreased. It is a matter of concern. I would not like to go into the authenticity of the statement. ...*(Interruptions)* I would like to submit whatever has been published in the newspapers.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Please do not respond to him.

*[Translation]*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to quote Shri Swaminathan who is an agriculturalist. He has said:

*[English]*

"Supply cereals through PDS, says M.S. Swaminathan."

"This is necessary to enhance nutrition security and productivity.

Shri M.S. Swaminathan, Chairman, National Commission on Farmers, called on Monday for making available cereals through the public distribution system permanently to enhance nutrition security and productivity and economic sustainability of rain-fed agriculture."

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is on account of the new policy that 50 percent population of the country have become victim of malnutrition. Poor pregnant women are not getting required nutrition and it is on account of this that the child born to such women are not healthy. The children are the future of this country. What will happen to the country if the future generation is not healthy? I would like to submit that the poor labourers who should

have survived upto 80-90 years die at the age of 50-55 due to malnutrition. If terrorists blast the bomb in Mumbai or any such incident occurs in Delhi, there is much uproar everywhere but nobody cares if poor persons do not get balanced diet and become anaemic. The Government should seriously ponder over all these things. Coarse grains and cereals like madua, jawar, bajra, ragi etc. are nutritious for poor people. Rich people do not eat them. These grains are consumed mainly by the people below poverty line. These grains should also be introduced in PDS. Why subsidy is reduced by the Government? How much subsidy is given to the farmers in America and Europe and in other countries? Will the quantum of subsidy given to poor people be reduced in the countries of the Third World? I would like to submit it on the record that if the death rate among poor people is kept on increasing in the absence of balanced diet then whether it is wheat or paddy, madua or other coarse grains the national production will decline. If the national production of the said grains declines then there will be problems of starvation. If there is problem of starvation it will lead to epidemic. The Government will have to face the problem of famine like situation and the problem of famine cannot be tackled by merely providing relief. That is why I would like to submit that it is essential to increase the agricultural production. The Government should increase the national production by enhancing the physical strength of poor people by way of providing them proper food through PDS. The Government must take some policy decision to tackle the food problem of the poor people so that their labour power may increase.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell one more thing that education is very costly in America. The education is costly in India as well. Private companies have upper hand in education sector in America and the same thing is going to happen in India as well under the current policy of the Government. So, I would like to submit that the ideals and moto of the private companies and profiteers have nothing to do with the interest of the common people. The Government should counter their effect and should check them. Health care facilities are very costly in America and other developed countries and here to there are hospitals like Escort for providing health care facility to rich people. There should not be two type of India in terms of health care facilities available to people. There is one Bharat that is outside of the India Gate and what is inside India gate is India. So the country must not be divided in India and Bharat. In fact India is worst hit by price rise be it India gate of Gateway of India. If one goes out from here he will find the real face

of poverty. One should go Vidharve where he will find farmers. It is only Bharat which is affected by price rise where as India is not that much affected by price rise. People of salaried class live here who are enjoying all facilities. They do not have any direct interface with financial hardship. That is why I have submitted that it is a commendable stand on the part of the Government who is opposing WTO proposal and has not accepted the proposal as yet. The Government have taken a commendable step in the comprehensive interest of the farmers and the country. They told to reduce subsidy, we will not reduce support price. WTO said that the domestic support or MSP of India is trade distorting support price. This is the stand of India. All such things are being done with the intention to weaken our peasantry by depriving them of the support price. ...(*Interruptions*)

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Devendra Prasad Yadav, please conclude now. In this way, we would never be able to complete this debate.

*[Translation]*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, complying your order now I would like to focus on a particular point like the suggestions regarding the food security and the present requirement of the food security for the country. During the NDA regime no restrictions were imposed on the stock limit regarding the food security. One could keep unlimited stock. The plea at that time in support of it was correct. Shri Malhotraji has rightly said that he had submitted strong report in the Committee. At that time the stock of food grain was excess and the Government was spending on its unkeep. That is why it was suggested to find out a way to get it disposed either by auction or by free distribution. The foodgrain was so excess that it was suggested even to throw it in the sea for fishes but the Government should not be burdened with it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the end I would like to suggest that the permit for procurement given to the private traders should be cancelled as there is no accountability on their part. Our Public Distribution system can be strengthen only when the food grains of the farmers are directly procured by FCI and directed to the Central Pool. We are talking about strengthening the Public distribution System. I urge the Government of 'focus on BPL and not on APL.'

[Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav]

My second suggestion is that APL should be excluded from PDS System. Those states that want to operate APL from its internal resources and want to run rational PDS should be allowed to do so and are free to do so, however, the subsidy being provided by the Central Government for APL should be stopped and it should fully focus on BPL. There are many persons living below poverty line. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Yadav, please cooperate, You have taken almost double the time you were allotted.

*[Translation]*

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV: My third suggestion is that stringent law should be formulated to arrest hoarders.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the list of all the hoarders should be provided to all the states and the State Government should ensure the number of hoarders to be arrested by them in one month. The entire situation can be monitored by the Central Government. I would like to submit that unless its monitoring is done at the Central Government level, the price mechanism cannot be enforced. Unless the policy of price control is enforced, the prices cannot be controlled. With these words I conclude.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members may please realise this. If every Party exceeds its time by twice the time allotted, then you carry on till midnight. I do not mind.

Now, Mr. Palanisamy, you have eight minutes. I do not know when you will complete.

*[Translation]*

\*SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY (Karur): Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, this august House is now discussing the situation arising out of price rise. I thank the Chair for giving me an opportunity to speak on this important issue on behalf of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

I would like to point out that price rise is not the creation of traders and retailers. Small traders and retail sellers are not the real cause for this menace. In fact,

the real factor among other factors for the price rise is the manipulation by the big traders, moneyed people who go for fast buck, black marketeer and hoarders. Price trends are determined by them and market trends are guided by them. Some of them even make use of certain beneficial schemes of the Government to their advantage and to the disadvantage of consumers and the common people. For instance, this online trading facility is being misused by big trading communities, big traders. It is enough they pay a mere rupees 5 lakhs of rupees to register and they are entitled to trade on line goods worth 5 crores of rupees. This is how they buy and fix price according to their whims and fancies jacking up the prices of cereals, pulses and other essential commodities. Foodgrains are being traded this way and permitting this kind of system is very dangerous because this only benefits the middle men but not the farmers who grow and cultivate crops. Unless and otherwise Government intervenes and control price rise, there cannot be a remedy to this problem. I request the Union Government to even withdraw this facility to invest a mere Rs. 5 lakhs with a licence to handle the prices of foodgrains worth Rs. 5 crore. Let there not be any online trading as far as foodgrains that form part of the essential commodities.

It is only after our UPA Government assumed power at the Centre, multi-entry Sales Tax has been withdrawn and this has resulted in a price reduction to the tune of Rs. 300/- per bag of foodgrains. It is only after our Leader Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi formed a new Government after the recently concluded elections, sales tax on cereals, pulses, foodgrains and edible oil have been withdrawn. This has resulted in a price reduction of at least Rs. 100/- per bag. Hence, I urge upon the Union Government to see that effective steps are taken to keep the prices of foodgrains under control. Centre may also provide tax relief to ensure that the prices of essential commodities, especially food items are kept under check. Needed concessions may be extended to food grain sector and you may kindly ensure that price rise do not affect both the producers and the consumers.

Similarly, vegetables face the vagaries and fluctuations of price rise from one place to another. There is manifold difference at least to the tune of ten times from one market centre to another. What costs rupees three per kilo in Tamil Nadu where the vegetable is grown, costs rupees thirty per kilo in Northern States and marketing centres like Mumbai and Delhi. I would like to impress upon the Union Government to take viable measures in

\*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

this regard to keep vegetable prices, especially the essential amongst them check. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, when Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi took over as Chief Minister, he introduced a wonderful scheme called 'UZHAVAR SANTHAI' (farmers' market). He had set up marketing centres in several cities and small towns to sell fresh vegetables direct from the fields. Transporting them from villages to these marketing centres has been subsidised. Farmers can sell their agricultural produce at a remunerative prices which is found to be cheaper to the consumers. This way both the producers and the users were greatly benefited by the novel scheme. I would like to impress upon the Union Government to study such beneficial schemes and to take this benefit to all the vegetable growers and farmers all over the country. The buyers can get fresh and quality vegetables at a reasonable price much cheaper than the prices fixed by unscrupulous market forces. This scheme if implemented throughout the country will help curtail the rise in vegetable prices.

As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, especially after Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi coming to power, the food grain prices have come under control. During the recently concluded polls, the prices have come under control. During the recently concluded polls, he promised that the poor living below poverty line would get rice for Rs. 2/- per kg. He is now implementing this scheme distributing rice at a subsidized price through public distribution system to benefit the people living below poverty line. Definitely this has a bearing on the price of foodgrains in the open market. In Tamil Nadu to check prices of essential commodities enough care is being taken against the hoarders. Severe laws like 'Goonda Act' were used against the black marketeers and unfair traders, especially those who hampered public distribution system. This has helped to stabilize the prices of foodgrains. I urge upon the Union Government to study measures like this to ensure that prices of essential commodities and foodgrains are managed and effectively controlled.

When quality rice is distributed through public distribution system, the rice price has definitely seen a remarkable stabilization in the market. I can vouchsafe this as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned and we find that people heave a sigh of relief. This can be taken up all over India and I urge upon the Centre to take up this seriously.

As far as oil prices are concerned, when the Union Government had to enhance it rather helplessly, our Tamil

Nadu Government headed by our Leader Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi gave a relief to the transport sector and the industry sector by way of withdrawing sales tax on diesel which has resulted in a reduction in price to the tune of 26 paise per litre.

As far as building materials are concerned, we find price rise to the tune of a whopping 25 per cent. They say that it is all because of the cascading effect right from the increase of oil prices. If we ask for the reasons, they say that cost of every other thing including production and transportation has increased heavily. Price increase pertaining to building materials has affected construction industry heavily. Many contractors find themselves in swoop. Many contractors working for the Government are abandoning their contracts half way through because they find the cost escalation to be enormous and unbearable. The price increase in this sector ranges from 25% to 40% on certain items. So, construction industry is in doldrums now. I urge upon the Government to take some effective measures to save construction industry and workers in that sector whose livelihood is also much dependent on the construction activity that must go on without which they cannot carry on.

Hence, I humbly request our dynamic Finance Minister to conceive viable schemes and measures to check price rise. I would like to request our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, an eminent economist, to come with suitable relief measures to help the middle class and the poorer sections of the society. I hope our UPA Chairperson, Madame Sonia Gandhi, would be providing right guidance to the Alliance and the Government led by this Alliance to keep prices under control so that common man is not burdened further.

With this I conclude.

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK (Unnao): Mr. Speaker, Sir, today discussion is being held on a very serious issue in the House. ... (*Interruptions*) Common and poor people are severely affected by the price rise. Since the independence of our country, we could not control the price rise. I am elected from Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh which played a vital role during the struggle for freedom. Shri Chandra Shekhar, who was a great freedom fighter belonged to this area. The great poet of the country, Shri Shukla ji also belonged to this area. He wrote—"Bhara Nahin jo Bhavon se, jisme behati ras dhar nahin, hridaya nahin woh pathar hai, jis me swadesh ka payar nahin".

[Shri Brajesh Pathak]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is the question of prestige of our country. If we cannot provide basic things to poor people, no one has the right to rule the country, whether it is ruling party or the opposition.

Sir, we had not waged the freedom struggle to provide poor people the petrol at the rate of Rs. 50 per litre and sugar Rs. 52 per kg. These items are becoming out of reach of the common people and we are hoarding them. We too are helpless as we are unable to check this process to control prices.

People vote, Governments are formed and the regime changes. Their Government was formed and then they were out of the Government. Those who come would go as well—this is the law of nature. Nobody can stop it. The middlemen and traders are like woodworms among us who are exploiting the common people.

The production of wheat in our country is so much that we can feed the people of other countries as well. The Central and State Governments have set up centres in our state to procure wheat. However, the foreign companies have purchased wheat at the rate of Rs. 800 per quintal and from the same company we imported wheat from Australia at the rate of Rs. 1000 and Rs. 1100 per quintal. Who is responsible for this? There is no law to check such things. Nobody is held responsible for all these things.

Till the people fix responsibility of the Government after five years, a lot more water flows down ganges by that time. The people vote out the Government and new party comes to power and they get involved in next irregularities. So, we will have to fix responsibility. There are some people who allowed foreign countries to purchase wheat. Hon'ble Sumanji and other Members have told about those persons who allowed foreign companies to purchase wheat in the country at cheaper rates and imported the wheat at higher prices and the poor people had to bear the burden because it is the public money. We are not kings and there is no monarchy in the country. Everything of the Government belongs to the people. The money earned by the people should be spent in the interest of the people, however, the unfortunate things is that we could not take any effective steps in this direction. The manner in which prices are increasing the main issue remains that of petroleum products. When there is increase in the prices of petroleum products the prices of pulses, wheat, cement, steel rod, bricks which are used by poor people also increase.

Now, I would like to say what I sincerely feel because you give very little time to speak. I am going to submit what I really feel. When the King used to come out his inner self reflected on his face. Today you are occupying the supreme chair of the House. I can read the emotions of love and anger for us on your face. However, the unfortunate thing is that nothing can be read from the face of those people who are in position to check the price rise. One cannot know anything from their face as to what is their feeling in this regard. It is very unfortunate. I am submitting it from my heart. Members of Parliament are elected by lakhs of voters. It is the House of the people. When a person like me approaches the Government to convey the voice of the people, nobody listens. In reply to our letter, the acknowledgement is sent stating that the letter has been referred to the concerned authority for the necessary action. Few days back there was a big agitation on the issue of price rise when the price of petroleum was increased and people asserted their views. I would like to know as to why the price of petrol was increased while the price of wine, computers and mobile phones were reduced. Instead the price of petroleum should not have been increased and the excise duty should have been reduced. We cannot survive by eating mobile and reading computers. Unless the peasantry is strengthened the condition of the common people will not improve. One day the common people and the youth of the country will rise against each other and there will be bloodshed because they know that tomorrow they are not going to get opportunities for plundering. Today the youth of the country is sitting calm because he thinks that one day he will also be elected in the House like Brajesh Pathak and he will get opportunity to plunder. It is a very unfortunate state. We will have to control all such things and unless effective steps are taken by the Government in this regard and the Commission is constituted to control the prices, the situation will not improve because the price of soap has increased from Rs. 5 to Rs. 12, petrol from Rs. 27 to Rs. 52, pulse from Rs. 24 to Rs. 42 and these items have gone out of the reach of the Common people. Torai vegetable is Rs. 10 to 15 per kg. I feel that the majority of the Members presently sitting in the House come from rural background, however, I beg pardon from all the hon'ble Members but after getting elected to this House, all the Member live in Delhi. They do not go themselves to purchase vegetable, pulses, milk etc. either these things are purchased by their servants or those who are well off have food in Hotels. Gurudev, they don't know when there is price hike it renders some parents incapable of

paying fees of their children, some mothers can not afford to buy milk for their children, some elderly persons have to go without medicines and some parents find it difficult to marry of their daughters.

Hon'ble Finance Minister, today the discussion is going on a very important issue. If you would listen to the voice of the public than you would realize that there ought to be control on these middlemen. Foreign companies are buying our potatoes at two rupees per kg and we are buying those potatoes at rupees 300 to 500 per kg for our children. Foreign companies are selling our potatoes as uncle chips and taking the money away, the proprietors of those companies are getting richer, and they move in big cars and the farmer who grows potatoes is getting ruined. Farukhabad, Hardoi and Unnao produce potatoes, but the same gets rotten lying on roads. Foreign companies buy potatoes from these farmers at negligible rates of two rupees, four rupees eight rupees and even fifty paise per kg and we buy the same potatoes at rupees 300 per kg. in the form of uncle chips. When our kids ask for the same than we have to buy it for them. I ask the Hon'ble Finance Minister whether it is not possible to make any law in this regard? He will have to make a law and on behalf of the house I appeal to him to set up a National Price Commission to regulate the prices so that the poor people could be saved from exploitation and middlemen. The prices of food items and small items of daily use like soap, oil, comb etc., have risen and medicines like Dependol which used to cost around Rs. two, is now available at rupees four under these circumstances how can a poor man purchase medicines. If we do not consider this matter seriously then one day we all shall have to pay a heavy price and the future generations shall not forgive us. In the older days the King used to mix among the common men under disguise to know whether the people were happy or not under his rule. Presently we have Intelligence System. The Government must have been receiving such reports that people are in distress, be it Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal or any other State of India, people are getting restive in each state due to price rise. We are also unhappy about this.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to request the Government to control the prices. There should be strict regulation regarding the prices of the items of daily use and the prices of Petroleum products should not be raised at all. If hike in prices is inevitable then let the prices of computer and mobile phones be raised and the prices of liquor should be raised to such an extent that

no one can afford to drink it. The role of middlemen in the trading should be done away with. For instance, more the hands an item will pass through, more will be its price, *i.e.* if a pen costing rupees two passes through five hands in the process of trading. Its price becomes rupees ten for sure. What I want to say is that items should be manufactured and sold directly to the consumers. The middlemen directly reach the field of farmers to purchase their wheat. My contention is that the products should directly reach the consumers and the poor men, only then we shall be able to save our country.

I would also like to mention that the Government should realize what poverty and price, hike mean. Once famine hit Rome and the people of Rome gathered around the palace of the queen, on this the King asked the people why they had gathered around his palace, cannot they even afford bread and butter? Therefore, I would like to state that the Government should understand the problems of the poor. This would help them in earning the blessings of the public and in coming back to power. I conclude with these words.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Next speaker is Shri Braja Kishore Tripathy.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please do not interrupt. This is a serious matter being discussed in the House.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members are expressing their views on this very serious issue. This is not a ridiculous issue being discussed in the House.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are discussing the issue of rise in prices of essential commodities in the House. This is a very serious matter, and we have debated the very same issue in this House in the last Session also. However as expected, the Government has not taken any steps, which has made it necessary for us to discuss this issue again in this Session as well.

[Shri Braja Kishore Tripathy]

The common man of this country has been betrayed and cheated by this Congress led UPA Government by the galloping price rise, and the campaign of *sam sadmi* has become a mockery. The Union Government has miserably failed to control the rise in prices of essential commodities, which has hit the poor man badly. The Government is preparing the public mentally to accept the rise in prices rather than taking steps to check it. Virtually, the Government has lost control over the price-control mechanism in the country.

The prices of almost all the essential commodities including, rice, wheat, sugar, pulses, red chilli—the hon. Minister hails from South India where most people use red chilli—drugs, medicines, etc. have increased. This has led to a massive increase in the prices. It is a pity that the Government is not showing any concern on the continuous rise in prices of food items and other essential commodities. It is quite clear that the Government is bungling in food policy and forward trading in food grains, the failure of public distribution system and hoarding are some of the major reasons for the rise in prices. The Government is lacking not only in fiscal management, but the people are also suspecting that this Government is in the clutches of hoarders and black-markeeters.

The three national commodity exchanges, NCDEX, NMCE and MCX, have been witnessing huge volumes amidst hectic speculation. Part of the volatility in the commodity market can be traced to a new breed of investors, the debt traders. This segment of the investors, very common in the Stock Market, diverts their money into commodities sensing a huge treasure. The debt traders jack up the prices by creating huge demand and book their profit within a day. In addition to this, wheat has been imported, which has angered the farmers' lobby, who harvested about 73.6 billion tonnes. The estimate has been arrived at on the basis of reports from the producing States. But this Government deliberately scaled down the estimate to 71.54 million tonnes just to justify the imports. Moreover, low quality wheat is being imported at higher prices and also relaxing the Phyto-Sanitary norms.

This Government has taken the reins of power at Centre with a strong economy, comfortable foreign exchange reserve position, and stable market condition, including foodgrains. There was no need of any control-

raj. Now, within just two years, there is a sea-change in the scenario of the country. The *sam sadmi* for whom the Congress was shedding crocodile tears has been totally betrayed. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID (Periyakulam): Do not say that.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: The prices have risen very high.

MR. SPEAKER: Please do not disturb him.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: The Wholesale Price Index of some of the essential commodities is sky-high.

MR. SPEAKER: Your time is already over.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, I am just giving some examples. On the 5th of June, 2005, the cost of wheat was Rs. 900—Rs. 1,000 per quintal, and now it is Rs. 1,175—Rs. 1,525. In case of rice, on 5th June, 2005, it was Rs. 1,000—Rs. 1,060, and now it is Rs. 1,125—Rs. 1,175. In case of *urad dal*, it was Rs. 2,150, and now it is Rs. 4,100. In case of *moong dal*, it was Rs. 2,700, and now it is Rs. 3,900. In case of *masoor dal*, it was Rs. 2,100, and now it is Rs. 2,700. One year back, per quintal cost of *Gram* was Rs. 1,500, and now it is Rs. 2,450. In case of sugar, it was Rs. 1,750, and now it is Rs. 2,060. In case of Mustard Oil, it was Rs. 3,800, and now it is Rs. 3,950. In case of Refined Oil, it was Rs. 3,100, and now it is Rs. 4,050.

Not only these items, in non-food articles category, cotton seed became more expensive by two per cent, and copra, raw cotton and groundnut seeds prices were higher by one per cent each. The board paper got dearer by five per cent, the prices of zinc during the week increased by two per cent, and the prices of other aluminium metals have shown an upward trend of four per cent. In machinery and machine tools category, powerlooms (automatic), cranes and power driven respectively. The cement prices have also gone up dramatically, and the Government is expressing its helplessness.

If you compare it with the prices of 2004, you will be astonished to know as to how the spiralling prices of food items, pulses and vegetables have hit the common man hard.

MR. SPEAKER: Please give your suggestions on how to control. You have already exhausted your time. You have exhausted your Party's time by more than double.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: I am just comparing the prices of pulses with the prices that existed two years back, when this Government came into power. The price of *urad dal* was Rs. 20 per kilo, and now it is Rs. 48 per kilo. The price of *urad dhuli* was Rs. 25 per kilogram, and now it is Rs. 60 per kilogram. In case of *moong dal*, it was Rs. 21 per kilo, and now it is Rs. 44 per kilo. In case of *chana*, it was Rs. 22 per kilo, and now it is Rs. 32 per kilo. In case of *arahaar dal*, it was Rs. 15 per kilo, and now it is Rs. 36 per kilo. Masoor was Rs. 18 a kg. but now it is Rs. 29 a kg. These are Government statistics. Prices of essential commodities have increased in the range of 100 per cent to 60 per cent in the last two years. So, I would say that this Government has miserably failed in arresting the rise in the prices of essential commodities.

To add fuel to the fire, Government hiked the prices of petroleum products also. It increased the price of diesel by Rs. 4 and petrol by Rs. 2 a litre. One of the reasons for the rise in prices of essential commodities is this decision of the Government to hike prices of petroleum products.

You will be astonished to know that the Government collects about 57 per cent of revenue from the petroleum products alone. Out of this, the share of the Union Government is 40 per cent and that of the States is 17 per cent. On diesel, the total revenue collected is 35 per cent out of which the Union Government's share is 25 per cent and the share of the State Governments is 11 per cent.

In 2002-03, the Centre had collected Rs. 64,595 crore and all the States put together had collected Rs. 32,156 crore. In 2003-04, the Centre had collected Rs. 69,195 crore and the States collected Rs. 35,180 crore. In 2004-05, the Centre collected Rs. 77,692 and the States collected Rs. 43,252 crore. In 2005-06, both the Centre and the States together collected Rs. 1,36,000 crore from taxes alone. This year, the hike in prices of petroleum products are expected to yield Rs. 36,000 crore to the Union Government.

While all are worried about the hike in prices of petroleum products, cheer has come to the face of the Finance Ministers of the Union as well as of the States.

They are happy that they will get their share of the taxes proportionately. However, the common man is suffering due to the hike in prices of petroleum products. Inflation rate has also increased to about 5.4 per cent.

MR. SPEAKER: I have given you more than double your time. Prices are rising but that does not mean that your time is also increasing.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: My suggestion is that the Government should carefully monitor the price levels of essential commodities and take measures to check the same. If the rise in prices is to be arrested, the Government should take action against hoarders and blackmarketeers.

The Government should also take steps to strengthen the Public Distribution System. The Government should also purchase wheat and rice from the farmers. If all these measures are taken together, the prices of essential commodities can be checked. The Governments at the Centre and the States should follow principles of monetary discipline. I hope the Government will take all the steps necessary to arrest the rise in prices.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPAN (Trichur): Sir, I do not want to narrate statistics to explain the situation because it is sufficiently explained here. I think this Government has pulled the wrong triggers of our economy as a result of which we are in this situation today.

One of the policies where the Government has gone wrong is enhancing the prices of petroleum products to a limit intolerable to the people. Another is their policy towards the Public Distribution System.

There is a cut in the quantity of food grains and other essential commodities. Prices are increasing. One of the devastating things is the decision to import food grains when the country was producing. I do not say sufficient but reasonably well, and the production was there in the food grains sector. Instead of purchasing it, instead of offering a better price and helping the farmers, the Government was keen to import and imported in such a manner that it would have a far reaching consequences on the country, its ecology. We will have a lot of problems in future.

Forward trading is merrily continuing. Despite the Finance Minister's repeated statements on forward trading, it failed in liquidating the black economy. All these coupled

[Shri C.K. Chandrappan]

together, we have come to a situation where the market is now being controlled by black marketeers, hoarders and people who have amassed a lot of riches otherwise. We are not discussing academically the question of price rise in terms of economy, in terms of the life of common man as to how does it affect him. We have got a large number of poor people. If people who are living below the poverty line are taken in absolute terms, we are one of the countries having the largest number of poor people. Those poor people are becoming more poorer because of this price rise. They are eating less than they were eating yesterday. They are clothing less than what they were clothing yesterday. They are becoming more unemployed, especially in the rural side. Women and their children are becoming the victims of malnutrition. These are some of the shocking impacts that we will have to take into account when we discuss the issue of price rise.

Let us take some of the recommendations that came before the Government and how it has responded to them. The Government have appointed Prof. M.S. Swaminathan—about whom references were made—as the Chairman of the Agricultural Commission. Sixty per cent of the population of our country depends upon agriculture. They are agriculturists or agricultural workers or otherwise. Prof. Swaminathan has recommended to create conditions conducive to them. The Finance Minister has always been telling that he is giving credits and that credit is enhanced. Unfortunately, suicides of peasants are also getting enhanced. It is not that the Government has no programme. I do not have any complaint like that. Even when the Government have programmes, and even when special packages are announced, suicides are increasing, even in Vidarbha, where the Prime Minister has gone and announced the package. Instead of offering credits—not instead, credits are very good—credit should be extended at lower rate of interest, which would create a better situation. Prof. Swaminathan has recommended that credit be provided at the rate of four per cent. We are eager to provide cheaper credit to those who are building huge mansions and also buying cars. What about these poor peasants who are sustaining the economy and who are providing maximum employment in this country, whose products make the country self-sufficient in food, who produce so much products which helps industries to get raw material.

These are some of the important things that he has pointed out. He said that you give credit to farmers at

four per cent. But they never considered it. This is the time that you have to consider that. Why should we not consider it? Some of the countries tried it. If farmers are given credit at zero per cent interest, Heavens will not fall because you say that the economy is growing fast. The rate of growth is nine per cent; you want to attain even more than nine per cent. If we can make that success and make it sustainable, then probably you can make the farmer happy and make him act more decisively. If you provide him credit at zero per cent, even we can find a solution to the suicide problem and also, the farmer will contribute greatly to our economy; thus, we may even touch ten per cent rate of growth.

Then of course marketing is there. When you are saying 'produce more', the poor farmer is producing more, but the marketing is zero. Mr. Swaminathan suggested that you might create mechanisms, institutional guarantees, etc. so that marketing of agricultural products would be better and the farmers would be benefited. I am emphasizing on farmers because they are more than 60 per cent of our country's population. Their contribution to the economy of our country is great.

Somehow, we have failed so far to draw your attention to that part of it and so, I am drawing your attention to this. Helping the economy in India means, helping the agrarian economy, providing him all support and then making the country vibrant.

There is one more point to make and then, I will conclude. One of the most important programmes of poverty alleviation is Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. There are a lot of complaints coming in this Scheme and I am not exaggerating the complaints and minimizing the importance of that Scheme. That Scheme is very good. But it is only in 200 districts. What is the experience of implementation of that? These are affecting the prices because if the poor man who is unemployed is given an income of Rs. 60 a day, that makes an impact on the economy of millions of people. May I know whether the Government has any plan to expand it speedily to 600 districts that we have in our country? In this way, if the Government approaches the problem more creatively, probably we will be able to put a reasonable brake on the price rise. I hope the Government will consider these things.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Shrimati Kiran Maheshwari. Please speak from your seat.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI (Udaipur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Dr. Chinta Mohan has started this discussion. Dr. Chinta Mohan ji said that there is no need to worry, the Government is performing very well and there is no need to worry about the price rise also. All the Hon'ble Members sitting in the House have been elected by the people and are accountable to their respective constituencies and people thereof.

Sir, during 2004 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress gave the slogan 'Congress Ka Haath, Aam Admi Ke Saath' and not only this whenever the budget was presented, the same was repeated in the budget. I am happy that hon'ble Finance Minister is available in the House now. And it was said about the present budget also that it has been prepared keeping in view the common man and this budget is to serve the interest of common man. But unfortunately hardly 4 months have passed since the presentation of the budget and we have noticed how prices have increased exceedingly. The prices are rising in such a way that household budget of all of us has got disturbed. The hon'ble Minister had said that this is a common man's budget and the congress also declared in its manifesto that "Congress ka haath aam adami ke saath" but this amounts to cheating and breach of trust which the public reposed in them. The public had expressed its confidence in the party by casting its vote in its favour, now the public is feeling that it has been deceived. I have observed that during this discussion even the alliance parties who have extended their support to the UPA Government and are enjoying power have not missed the opportunity to raise their voice against the Government as the entire country is watching and listening us. The country will know that there is a lot of difference what we say and what is actually done. This is only lip service. The dearness has increased upto 200 percent from 20 percent. There is a lot of difference between what the Government says and what it actually does. The people of country are well aware that they had said that they would stage a dharna from 13th to 19th in protest of the price hike and on 11th they said that they would not stage any dharna. They given green signals to price hike in the closed rooms and show their opposition on the streets saying that they are against price hike and it should be checked. Their double standard has been exposed to the people. The people are now well aware about the difference in their statements and their deeds. The people have come to understand this quite well. Apart from being a Member of Parliament I

am a housewife also and keeping in view the hike in prices and some figures presented by some of our colleagues I would like to say that I have realized that the monthly income is the same but the house hold budget gas got disturbed.

16.54 hrs.

[SHRI BALASAMEB VIKHE PATIL *in the Chair*]

The household budget has got disturbed because out of the same salary today I can purchase only half of the things from the market in comparison to earlier. ...(*Interruptions*) I think you can not be bothered about that. This is a serious matter and you are taking it lightly. The peoples of country are in deep distress but you are not worried about that. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Madam, kindly address to the Chair. I request the hon. Member to address to the Chair so that there are no interruptions.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: All the running commentary will not go on record. Anything, spoken without the Chair's permission need not be recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)\*

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Shrimati Sonia Gandhi who is Chairperson of UPA has also accepted that prices are rising and they should be contained. But the Minister of UPA Government says that there is no price hike and we are not going to roll back the prices of anything. The prices will remain as such.

I can not understand these double standands. We give a certain kind of statement and when in power we speak a different language. It is beyond me. I want to give an instance with regards to the increased prices. Though, prices of everything have risen and there has been a considerable increase in the prices of food items, but I would like to mention few items. The price of sugar which was Rs. 15 per kg. in May 2004 has increased to Rs. 40 per kg. now. The price of wheat has also increased. The price of pulses which was around

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\*Not recorded.

[Shrimati Kiran Maheshwari]

Rs. 25 per kg. earlier has increased upto Rs. 60 per kg. ...*(Interruptions)* They will have to listen to this, as the prices have increased under their regime. I am giving these figures about price hike from my own experience because I have purchased those items. I can provide the bills of wholesale stores, if so desired. The price of tea leaves, which was Rs. 80 per kg. has increased to Rs. 180 now. Tea, Sugar and pulses has become dearer. The price of LPG has increased by Rs. 50 during last two years.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now. You had only five minutes. You kindly focus on the main issues.

[Translation]

other Members from your party are also to speak.

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: All right, they will also speak. Since my party has asked me to speak you all listen to me. If my party has no objection to it why should they have? I would like to draw attention of the Government towards black-marketing which has resulted in price rise. Adequate LPG was available during NDA's regime, whereas, now one has to wait for 1-2 months to get it. The increase in the black-marketing has put a big question mark over the functioning of the Government.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw attention of all the Ministers in the present Government and would request them to ponder over as to who are responsible for black-marketing.

The Government should be seriously concerned about the points raised by Shri Chinta Mohan in his speech. Incidence of suicide by the people because of steep hike in the prices of essential commodities needs to be seriously pondered over.

Some of my colleagues have raised the issue of hike in the prices of petrol and diesel. I too daily buy diesel and petrol for my vehicles. The price of petrol has touched Rs. 50. The prices of petrol and diesel have now been hiked seventh time since the present Government came to power. The NDA Government imposed a cess of Re. 1 per kg. on diesel and petrol. But it expanded the road network to the villages. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is their brain child. The increase in the price of diesel and petrol by just Rs. 1

helped in expansion of road network throughout the country. Previous NDA Government developed infrastructure throughout the country. They hike the price by just Re. 1, whereas, the present Government has done so seven times and infrastructure has not been expanded. Not only this, even the social sector. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you do not conclude now, your speech will not go on record.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: I would provide some figures before I conclude my speech. The figures are factual. I would like to tell about the stock of food grains during NDA's regime, *i.e.* during 2002.

17.00 hrs.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you do not conclude now, your speech will not be recorded. Please co-operative with the Chair. Kindly conclude now.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Sir, I am concluding my speech, but before that I would place some factual position before the House. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You may sit down. Your speech will not go on records. You have spoken for over 12 minutes, whereas, you were allotted only five minutes.

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: I am concluding. I would like to ask the Government to roll-back the price hike, otherwise, a countdown for the Government has begun. It is not the voice of the Members sitting in the Parliament but the voice of public.

[English]

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY (Berhampore, West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to add a few lines to the on-going debate on price rise in the country. The hon. Members are at liberty to score political brownie points over one another by blowing this issue out of proportions. But the fact is that the onus of controlling price cannot entirely be put on the shoulders of the Union Government. There are various instruments available with

the State Governments as well to keep a check on rise in prices.

We all know that the genesis of price escalation of essential commodities lies dates back to 15th February, 2002 when the then NDA Government abrogated all control orders under the Essential Commodities Act, thereby making it difficult for any Government to deal with the hoarders, profiteers and blackmarketeers. The main constituency of the BJP lies with the unscrupulous traders and in order to please them they had indulged in the act of rescinding all control orders. Forward trading had started to take place entailing huge hoarding. The private parties have been allowed to enter into buying agricultural produce without any restriction. This has resulted in hoarding thus entailing resulting in food shortage in our country that we are now witnessing. Government has its own time for procurement and this is very much confined to various *mandis* in our country. Therefore, I would like to urge upon the Government to provide more teeth to the State Government so as to enable them to control the unscrupulous traders from hoarding and also put in place the control orders under the Essential Commodities Act.

Sir, this Government has already taken a number steps in order to curb the rise in prices. Our leader Smt. Sonia Gandhi has taken personal interest in the matter which is evident from the fact that she called CWC meeting in order to find ways to stem the wrought arising out of rise in prices of essential commodities in the country. She has been in constant touch with the Government to get rid of this situation. The FCI has proposed future trading to bring down the prices of essential commodities.

The Government is ready to import pulses and wheat to stabilise the market. Already the margin money in the futures market has been increased from 5.3 per cent to ten per cent. The additional margin money of ten per cent has been imposed on the buyer to reduce the price advantage. Already NAFED has been engaged to import the commodities to fill the gap because we know that there is a supply and demand gap. Now, we have to devise a mechanism to fill this gap so that the situation could be improved. We know that there is a huge demand of sugar in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Quantitative restriction has been phased out during the NDA regime and import and export can be made by any trader and the huge demand of sugar in Pakistan and Bangladesh has pushed by the export market resulting in the shortfall

of sugar in the country. Therefore, the Government has banned export of white sugar. Secondly, there should be additional release of sugar for free sale, and make it mandatory for mill owners to sell their quota within a month. Otherwise, it will be converted into levy sugar.

Therefore, I must appreciate the Government for taking various steps keeping in view of the problems and the plight of the poor people. Already we have been spending a huge sum on the social sector on how to upgrade the livelihood of the vulnerable sections. The Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has been in force in 200 districts and the Governments has promised to cover the rest of the 400 districts within a span of five years. The Members who are representing the concerned States may please note this point. If the Rural Employment Guarantee Act is implemented in the right perspective, then the poor people and the vulnerable sections of our society would be helped in a greater way. We know that in schemes like ICDS, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme and other schemes relating to the social sector, the Government is taking keen interest to revamp them. The Government has proposed various programmes for the poor people. Credit flow to agriculture has been increased to a margin of more than Rs. 1,67,000 crore. Bharat Nirman programme has been going to be implemented throughout the country. The Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme is being implemented. What is the objective of all these programmes? The objective of all these programmes is to enhance the livelihood of the poor people including farming sector in our country. Those who are shedding crocodile tears in this House should know that the plight of the poor people has been deteriorating not from now but from their regime itself when the administered price mechanism was dismantled and the PDS infrastructure were dismantled. The fault being committed by our predecessor is being borne out by us.

We know that price rise is very much related to inflation. Inflation is evident in the country. Economists believe that inflation is as old as market economy. Inflation is classified into various categories. They are: (1) low inflation; (2) galloping inflation; and (3) hyper inflation. I think we are in the regime of low inflation. Low inflation will have a modest impact on the economy. As we observe, our economy is performing very well. It has become a robust economy. Our industry is performing well; our manufacturing sector, service sector, etc. are performing well. The present inflation is contributed by various sources. Half of the inflation is contributed by the

[Shri Adhir Chowdhury]

food sector, particularly by pulses and vegetables. Other half of the inflation is contributed by rise in prices of manufacturing items.

These two kinds of inflation have different roots. On the one hand, the rise in prices of pulses and vegetables has been caused by shortfall in production. On the other hand, the rise in prices of manufacturing items was due to excess demand. There is a supply-demand constraint. So, we have to manage the supply-demand portfolio.

The third contributing factor is the external one. That is the increase in the prices of crude oil internationally, which results in the increased prices of domestic oil, like petrol and diesel, leading to inflation. Therefore, we have to take into account all the dimensions before making any adverse comment against this Government. I strongly believe and I am optimistic that this Government, on its own competency and on its own economic performance, will tide over this situation and that we will be able to contain the price rise. The Wholesale Price Index is already showing positive signs. It is within the range of five per cent. Therefore, there is no need to exaggerate the price rise issue.

I hope that this situation will be controlled. I am sure the Government will be able to put in place all right mechanisms which will contribute to the growth of the economy, and solve the problems of the poor people who are facing the ill effects of this price rise, which is not advisable. We are also equally concerned over the issue of price rise. But we have to be rational; we have to be realistic and we should not be carried away by emotions. It is because some Members are showing emotions and emotions would not solve the problem. Rather we should be rational and reasonable in our attitude.

\*SHRIMATI PARAMJIT KAUR GULSHAN (Bhatinda):

Thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this important subject in my mother-tongue. In 2004, when the Congress-led UPA Government came to power at the Centre, it coined a catchy slogan: "UPA Government is with the common man". The common man eats two square meals a day. He eats pulses and bread. He takes onions along with his food. He uses tomatoes in his food. But, Sir, tomatoes are being sold at Rs. 50 per Kg. Onions are being sold at Rs. 15 per Kg. Hence, the slogan coined by the UPA Government has now become an empty slogan. It has lost its meaning.

\*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

Sir, I would like to give an instance. The Government provides a meagre amount of Rs. 60 to a daily wage labourer. But the pulses are being sold at a whopping Rs. 60 per Kg. If a family comprises of five members, at least half a Kg. of pulses is needed. It has to be cooked using oil and spices. Take into account the cost of these items also. It will include the VAT imposed by the Government on these items. These items will also cost around thirty rupees. The pulse itself will cost around thirty rupees. That means a daily wage labourer can eat only pulse in rupees sixty that he earns. Then, how will he teach his children, buy clothes or buy medicines? He gets a paltry sum of Rs. 60 per day. There can be more than five members in his family. What will happen to his family then?

Sir, the UPA Government has miserably failed to check the menace of rising prices of essential commodities. The policies and thinking of this Government is flawed and lop-sided. Whenever the Congress Party has been in power, the prices of essential commodities have sky-rocketed and black-marketeers have had a field day. The price of gas-cylinders (LPG) for domestic use has risen from Rs. 200 a few years ago to almost Rs. 400. These cylinders are also not easily available.

The cost of living of industrial workers has risen from 3.6% to 6.1% in the last one year, whereas in the case of agricultural labourers, it has increased from 3% to 6.4%. This Government had coined a populist slogan. Compare this with the ground reality. The last six months have been, very painful for the common man.

The retail prices of almost all items have doubled. The price of wheat flour has increased from Rs. 12 per Kg. to Rs. 15 per Kg. The price of pulse has increased from Rs. 30 per Kg. to Rs. 60 per Kg. The Government has got the rate-list of all these items. I need not dwell at length regarding the rate-list of all these items. The house wife is at sea. She does not know how to balance her budget in the wake of this exorbitant increase in the prices of all essential commodities. As a result, the common man is disappointed and disillusioned. Entire families are committing suicide due to the vicious cycle of poverty. Electronic and print media are replete with the news of such suicides.

The price hike has been mind-boggling. Even if you purchase a salt-packet worth Rs. 10/-, you have to pay an additional Rs. 3/- as VAT on it. As on 25th July, the price of wheat in Kerala was Rs. 1750 and in Jammu, it

was being sold at Rs. 1700. Middle-men are responsible for this price-hike. They are hand-in-glove with some bureaucrats and other officials. Hoarding and black-marketing of these items is on the rise. The middle-men gobble away the profits. So, the need of the hour is to do away with these middle-men.

The Government claims that the price-hike is a result of decreased production of food-grains. But, our farmers are very hard-working. The price-hike is the result of flawed and lop-sided policies of the Government. When the Government announced that wheat will be imported at the rate of Rs. 1060 per quintal, the price of flour skyrocketed as a result.

The Government has no control over private players. It is pursuing wrong policies. There is no dearth of sugar-cane in our country. However, the Government is importing sugar at high rates. As a result, the common man is forced to purchase sugar at the rate of Rs. 25 to Rs. 30/- per Kg.

If the Government is really serious about bringing down the prices of essential commodities, it will have to rectify its topsy-turvy policies. The Central and State Governments must streamline the Public Distribution System. Dealership should be provided to honest people from among the common man. Strong steps should be taken to stop the pilferage of food-grains. The problem of storage should be solved. There should be no role of middle-men in the selling and purchase of any commodity. The middle-men are responsible for the price-hike. The producers and consumers must have direct links. Only then can we bring down the price.

'Fair Price Shops' should be opened. Only those items should be imported which are not produced in our country or which are available at cheaper rates in foreign countries. The Government should ensure sufficient buffer-stock of all food-grains in the Central godowns. The RBI should ensure that the private-players in this field do not violate norms and rules.

Excise and custom duty on crude-oil should be lowered. The farmers should be encouraged and given assistance so that productivity of food-grains increases.

If the Government fails to check the menace of skyrocketing prices, it will have disastrous consequences and the Government will be responsible for this. A Government, which cannot provide food, shelter and

clothing to the common-man at a reasonable price, has no moral right to remain in power.

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' (Begusarai): Mr. Chairman, Sir, today the House is deliberating upon a very serious issue, which has made a hue and cry all over the nation. The House has been debating on this issue since 2 O'clock and several hon'ble Members raised quite important points during their speeches. I was quite pained to hear them as even while debating on such an important issue they could not rise above party politics. Many Members raised issues regarding NDA's regime. I would like to ask—why they are raising fingers at the previous Government, they themselves have been in power for the last two years. I would like to ask the hon'ble Finance Minister as to what he has done during the last two years as the present Government has completed its two years out of five years tenure.

Sir, I would like to clarify it with an example. The result of annual examination of a school was about to be declared. When a child, after learning about the result came to his house, his father asked, has the result been declared. The child replied in the affirmative and he started telling about the result of this colleagues. After a while, his father asked why do not you tell about your result. The child said that he has failed. Now I would like to say that the result is out and the Government has failed. The Government has failed to fulfill the promises it made. Hoarders have joined the Government and that's why the Government is framing the policies in their interest. But they should accept it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have gone through the press statement of the Minister of Finance. He has stated that the WPI has increased merely by 5% and it is manageable. The House devoted enough time for debate on rise in the prices of essential commodities. However, I would not like to waste the time of the House by just repeating all that. I would like to present the comparative figures of only 2-3 items. I would compare the present prices of those items with the prices prevailing in the month of February. I would say that the Finance Minister has failed in total management and he has misled the people of the country. The price of Arhar, which was Rs. 36 per kg. in February has increased to Rs. 45 per kg. The price of Moong, which was Rs. 30 per kg. then has increased to Rs. 60 now. The price of Chana, it was Rs. 25 per kg. has increased to Rs. 40 per kg. So far

[Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh Lalan]

as vegetables are concerned; the price of tomato has increased from Rs. 12 per kg. to Rs. 45 per kg., the price of potato from Rs. 6 per kg. to Rs. 14 per kg. But the hon'ble Minister has said that the wholesale price index has increased only by 5% which is manageable. I would like to ask him what kind of management it is?

Various people have discussed about Congress Working Committee here. Why are they shedding crocodile's tears and deceiving the public. To confuse the people of the country the Working Committee of the ruling party, whose own leader is the Minister of Finance, says that we are asking the Government to control price hike. The public wants to know what has been done in this direction so far after the statement of the Congress Working Committee.

The hon'ble Minister of Finance has stated that price rise in petroleum products and the decrease in production are responsible for it. I would like to say that petrol has been a topic of discussion quite often in the House. The tax fixation policy of this country is responsible for it. The Government policies are responsible for it. This House has discussed this issue several times and the Government has been asked to decrease the tax on petroleum products and reduce the excise and custom duty. 130 percent tax is realized on petroleum. The cost of petrol is 20 rupees per litre after refining. But they are selling it at 47 rupees per litre. Cost of diesel is 20.10 rupees per litre but it is being sold at 30 rupees per litre.

Sir, you can take the example of other countries of the world. The hon'ble Minister of Finance is himself well versed in the company affairs. In France, 65 percent and 47 percent tax is levied on petrol and diesel respectively, Germany charges 60 percent tax on petrol and 50 percent tax on diesel. In UK it is 68 percent on petrol and 60 percent on diesel and Japan charges 45 percent tax on petrol and 34 percent on diesel. What to talk of developed countries even in a small country like Nepal 31 percent tax is levied on petrol and 22 percent on diesel. Bangladesh charges 24 percent tax on both petrol and diesel and in Sri Lanka it is 37 percent on petrol and 5 percent on diesel. But this Government is charging 130-135 percent tax and saying that price rise in petroleum products is responsible for it. Entire House is with him. It is the demand of the whole country that he should decrease the price of petroleum products.

Discussion regarding the production of foodgrains has also taken place here. The production of foodgrains has

never decreased in the country. The production of foodgrains is same as it was last year, it is not less than that in any way. They have failed in procuring it. They have failed in procuring the foodgrains due to their wrong policies. The Government has stated that it began importing foodgrains as there was scarcity of foodgrains in the country and this message has gone to the whole country that there is scarcity of foodgrains in the country. But the fact is that the Government has not put a check on hoarders. It has encouraged hoarders.

Various foreign companies have been discussed here. I do not want to waste time by discussing it. Hoarders have got encouragement due to the Government's wrong policies and as a result of this encouragement hoarding of all foodgrains has been done. And the Government talks about scarcity in production. I can give the data of production that this year we have produced even more foodgrains than last year. So, it is the result of their wrong policies. Today it is necessary that the Government should make a move for market management and bring down the taxes on petroleum products. After that they should formulate a long term agricultural development policy, only then they would be able to control the prices.

The Government can feel complacent by showing fake sympathy and giving misleading statements in the newspapers to deceive the people of this country but the entire country has come to realize that there has been steep price hike since UPA Government came to power.

*[English]*

PROF. M. RAMADAS (Pondicherry): Sir, I join other Members of this House in sharing their concern about the rising prices in the country today. There are no two opinions of the fact that the prices of essential commodities are rising and that this rise in prices, whether it is escalating price or creeping price or walking price, has got a perceptible impact on the life of the people, especially of those who have fixed income. This increase in prices for the fixed income group of people is like robbing their incomes and putting them at a lower level of living.

Therefore, there is no quarrel about the fact that there is inflation and that inflation affects the weaker sections of the society and the common man. But where the difference in perception comes is how to analyse this malady and how to suggest remedies for this malady of increasing prices. It is here I feel that the House should

come to a consensus and give a package of measures to the Finance Minister on how to control the prices of essential commodities in the country.

Most of the rise in prices, especially, in the last six months or so is not directly under the control of the Government. But mostly non-governmental and exogenous factors have contributed to the rise in prices. Therefore, when we search for a solution, we must search for the causes of this increase in prices. As many Members have expressed, today the petroleum products constitute about 17 per cent of the Wholesale Price Index and 70 per cent of our requirements are met from the imports of petroleum products.

Today, fortunately or unfortunately, we have opened up the Indian economy for the onslaughts of the imports, exports, etc. Once we have accepted this philosophy, whatever happens in the international markets, the brunt of it will have to be borne by the Indian economy as well. Today, we are importing not only crude oil, but also metals and edible oils, sometimes sugar, sometimes pulses, etc.

17.33 hrs.

[SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV *in the Chair*]

The prices of these commodities are rising in the international markets and we cannot avoid this and it has to exert an immediate and direct impact on Indian prices. If you take the trade multiplier into account, the rise in prices in the Indian economy is several times more than the international prices. Therefore, the international factors will have to be taken into account while assessing the price situation in the country.

Secondly, we also will have to make a decision whether we want to have higher growth rate and higher inflation or we would like to have lower growth rate and lower prices. The simple mechanics of inflation is that in all countries, whether it is a developing country or developed country, when there is one per cent growth rate, when you work out a multiple regression model on the forces of the prices, you can find that an increase in the growth rate of an economy by one per cent is always accompanied by seven per cent increase in price. This has been amply proved by the empirical evidences in all the countries in the world.

Today, what is the situation? In the last two years this UPA Government has initiated a large number of

laudable innovative measures to promote economic growth in this country to take this country on a higher trajectory of growth from 5.5 per cent to 8 per cent growth and a large amount of liquidity has been flushed into the economy as a result of all these measures.

The hon. Members have said that the Government has launched National Rural Employment Programme; the Government has launched National Rural Health Mission programme; the Government has given Rs. 1,70,000 crore as credit to the people; and Accelerated Water Programme has been taken up. The implementation of all these programmes will have a tangible benefit on the economic growth of the country, but at the same time the Government has injected money into the economy. Sir, Rs. 1,70,000 crore in a year go into the economy, go to the farmers, go to the banking system, go to the suppliers of raw materials etc. and this constitutes the purchasing power in the hands of the people. Under the National Rural Employment Programme, the Government has injected Rs. 14,000 crore in the last one year. Where has it gone? It has gone to the landless farmers, to the people who are seeking employment in the market, and their purchasing power has gone up. Therefore, the immediate impact of liquidity increase in the economy is that it increases the demand for commodities, for food grains, for edible oils and for pulses. But the production of all these things requires a time lag. Production of these things cannot come through a magic wand; it has to come through a process of production by a combination of factors of production, and the nature has to cooperate in all these things. We have seen that nature has been a villain of peace in this country. The nature has been niggardly as far as Indian is concerned. Nature has not been abundantly favouring this country. Perhaps, if nature had been rightly helping this country, India would not be spending nearly 40 per cent of its Budget either on a drought or on flood or on natural calamities or on natural disasters. Unfortunately, the destiny of India is oriented towards nature. Therefore production cannot come immediately overnight, but the money will go into the economy and ask for the purchase of commodities. Therefore, this creates an immediate pressure on the prices, and this is what has happened. The House will have to decide whether we need this kind of a growth of 8 per cent in the economy by creating infrastructure in the economy, by providing employment, and by providing water facilities to the people. It has to decide whether we require this growth with a mild rise in price. This is what we have to assess in the context of the present

[Prof. M. Ramadas]

rise in prices. We cannot attribute political motives and then discuss this. This is purely more of an economic issue. The mechanics of economics of supply and demand will have to be taken into account. Therefore, in my view, the present rise in prices cannot be attributed to the mismanagement of the policies of the Government or the failure on the part of the Government although there are certain factors which could have been controlled by the Government if it had taken certain prompt measures. Only I can say that maybe the policies of the Government have not worked well, have not percolated down only to the extent of 5 per cent. Therefore, given this scenario, appreciating this problem and the picture of Indian economy in this respect is macro issue. It is a macro issue of money supply; it is a macro issue of public expenditure; it is a macro issue of deficit budget; it is a macro issue of revenue deficit. Unless you take all these factors into consideration in combination and give a wider picture, you cannot appreciate the rise in prices in the country. Given this situation, what the Government needs to do today? The Government can still bring the rising prices under control through monetary policy route or the fiscal policy route or a combination of both. Already, the Finance Minister and the Reserve Bank of India have done enough to use the interest rate variable which is one of the very critical variables in arresting price in the country. The Reserve Bank of India's REPO rate has now been hiked from 4.5 per cent to 6 per cent already. Therefore, correspondingly all the rates have gone up. Then, you will ask a question whether the farmers should be given loan at a higher rate or at a lower rate. Perhaps, the Government may think of a differential rate of interest, lower rate of interest to those who cannot afford to pay higher rate of interest like common man, landless farmers and small farmers etc. You can think of a differential rate of interest and also you can think of whether we can use the credit requirement ratio, credit reserve ratio or the statutory liquidity requirement ratio in the economy, whether that can also be tried again in the emerging situation today. But in my view there is only little scope for monetary instruments to be used in the present situation.

But what can be done on the fiscal side is this. We have enough scope for using fiscal instruments of indirect taxes to reduce the inflationary forces in the country. Now, we are undertaking a large number of investment activities and expenditure activities. We should be able to distinguish between productive expenditure and non-productive and non-Plan expenditure. We have to see

whether we can reduce some of those expenditure without causing much damage to the multiplier effect on the economy. Therefore, the Government will have to consider whether the expenditure side can be used.

Secondly, with regard to indirect taxes, definitely I have a feeling that the Government can reduce indirect taxes especially on imported oil, petroleum prices, etc. because there is enough scope for reducing it. For instance I would give only one figure. I could have given a large number of figures but I would give only one figure. Before the recent hike in the prices of petroleum product, at the refinery level the petroleum product was sold at Rs. 20.423 per litre and in the retail market it is sold at Rs. 43.49. Sales tax takes Rs. 7.248; delivery charges take Rs. 0.044; education cess takes Rs. 0.293; and excise duty takes Rs. 14.634. Now, the Government can think of reducing the price without affecting its own revenue base. It is because we find now that there is a lot of buoyancy on the direct tax revenue, and the revenue is zooming up. Therefore, in the given situation, if you want then you can reduce the price actually so that you can reduce the cascading effect of oil price on the economy. You should take a bold decision of reducing the education cess on oil, reducing the excise duty as well as persuading the State Governments to reduce the sales tax on crude oil. If that can be done, perhaps 17 per cent of inflationary pressure on the economy can be reduced.

Finally, the Government should import, wherever possible, goods which are required and which cannot be increased in supply overnight. Also we should not export those commodities which are in short supply. The argument that we are only exporting a smaller proportion of commodities does not hold water in the present situation. Therefore, the Government should take a set of physical measures, fiscal measures and monetary measures, and try to stabilize the Indian economy but not sacrificing the higher trajectory of growth.  
...(*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Prof. Ramadass, could you tell what are the physical measures? (*Interruptions*)

PROF. M. RAMADASS: The physical measures are in terms of fruits, for example. Fruits and vegetables have got a lot of volatility. They are perishable commodities. If you can provide cold chain facilities, chains, etc. and if you can keep them there as a buffer-stock measure,

whenever there is a dire need in the market you can increase the supply and reduce the price as we do in the case of the procurement of rice and also in the case of the FCI operations.

Secondly, we should understand that the productivity of many other crops today is at the lower level in India when compared internationally, and we should take larger measures in terms of these things.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Kumari Mamata Banerjee.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta South): Mr. Chairman, Sir, everybody is concerned about the price hike. The prices of essential items have gone up sky high. The situation is very alarming. Our pulse rate became very high because of the rise in the price of pulses. Sir, it is a fact

*[Translation]*

if some one goes to market to buy something and he puts his hands in his purse he doesn't find enough money to buy any product as the prices have gone up enormously.

*[English]*

Everybody mentioned about this. I do not want to go into the details because everybody mentioned what the prices are. Many of my colleagues have already given the figures. In the last two years, there is about 35 per cent increase in the price of wheat, about 44 per cent increase in the price of sugar, about 70 per cent increase in the price of pulses, about 49 per cent increase in diesel; and about 58 per cent increase in petrol. I am sorry to point out that the Agriculture Minister is not present here now.

He should have been present here because

*[Translation]*

when we are discussing about price rise,

*[English]*

then he should have been present in the House. He should take it seriously. When the whole country is very much concerned about the price rise, why is that the Agriculture Minister is not concerned about and he is not present here? The Finance Minister is here. Regarding price rise, three Ministries are mainly concerned, namely,

the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. As an umbrella, they work together.

Sir, from the beginning, I have been watching that the Agriculture Minister is not here. I do not know whether he is serious about the situation of price rise or not.

Of course, the prices of every commodity have risen greatly. Every hon. Member has said about the import of wheat, and Mr. Chairman, Sir, you also mentioned about it when you were speaking. I do not understand whether the imported wheat is sweeter than the Indian wheat. What is the cause of wheat import? I demand a thorough investigation regarding import of wheat. The Government should enquire as to why wheat is being imported.

Sir, our farmers are capable enough to produce sufficient quantity of wheat and other things but the unfortunate part is that we are not taking care of these farmers.

Sir, I want to say something about the agricultural land. The agriculture land in India is the goldmine of our country. But why is that it is being given to some so-called capitalists? Without agricultural land, our farmers are dying of starvation. Though the Agriculture Minister is not present here, I would again say, that the price rise is always related to the Ministry of Agriculture. I would request the hon. Minister to please find out from any agency of the Government of India or from whatever agency that suits them, whether agriculture land is being reduced and the number of landless labour is being decreased. Is it not a fact that agricultural land is being reduced?

Sir, let me cite one example. Though it is not the place to discuss all these things, yet then, I do not have any opportunity to speak anywhere. This is a public forum and I thought that it is my duty to inform you. If I am incorrect, you may correct me and I would welcome your suggestions. In my State, I know, more than six lakh acres of agricultural land is being diverted to the so-called promoting business. If six lakh acres of agricultural land is not producing any agricultural goods, how do we expect food production? Where would the food production come from? Would it come from the sky? No. If every year, in a particular State, you are going to hand over, about 50,000 acres of land to the so-called promoters, obviously there would be food crisis.

[Kumari Mamata Banerjee]

It is a fact, and the Central Government has not denied their responsibility to curb the price rise hike. I appreciate that. But at the same time, if we are impartial and if we are serious, then only we would be able to solve this problem. I must tell the whole House that the Central Government and every State Government have to work together. Some time, we see that some States are blaming the Centre and sometimes, the Centre is blaming the States. This way, we would not find any solution.

Let me tell you that in my State, the Sales Tax on petrol, diesel, LPG gas cylinder and other things, is the maximum as compared to other metro cities. It is 30 per cent more than what is there in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore in regard to petrol and diesel products. Why is the Government not bringing a comprehensive and uniform policy. Why should the people of a particular State suffer more?

Sir, Leftist people are doing *dhama* here. I am not blaming all the Leftists. I am saying about the Leftists of the CPI(M) party, in particular. ...*(Interruptions)* They have the double face.

It is your double face that you are saying do not allow FDI here. ...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. BASUDEB BARMAN (Mathurapur): Sir, no Party's name should be taken here.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: All right, I am not taking. I am withdrawing his Party's name. I am withdrawing your Party's name. I am taking the name of the State Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: She is taking the Government's name.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

...*(Interruptions)*

[*Translation*]

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Mr. Chairman, Sir, these people. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sit down please, you are not helping madam by doing all this.

...*(Interruptions)*

[*English*]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Here, they are saying this. Finance Minister, Sir, please let us know the truth in the House. I do not want that you should not tell the truth. You should tell us the truth in the House. Is it not a fact? They are agitating here for allowing the FDI in the retail market. We appreciate that. I am not opposing it. Friends, I am supporting your views. ...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. BASUDEB BARMAN: Retail market is not there. It is not in the State but in the Central Government.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: I said, 'State Government'. ...*(Interruptions)* I had withdrawn that. Since you are angry, I had withdrawn your Party's name. ...*(Interruptions)* I am taking the name of my State Government. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, no cross-talks please.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: I said: 'Our State Government.'

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please address the Chair.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: If I am not correct, I will request the Finance Minister to correct me. I may be wrong. If I am wrong, you please tell the House that I am wrong. I said it categorically. Is it not a fact? Here, my good friends—I do not want to mention their names—are correctly saying that. I appreciate that. They are saying do not allow outsiders, FDI to invest in retail marketing. But in West Bengal, it is a very unfortunate matter that they are allowing it in retail market and even agricultural market for the industrialists. Is it not a fact?

PROF. BASUDEB BARMAN: It is not correct.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: It is absolutely correct. I will challenge it. If it is not true, I will resign as a Member of Lok Sabha. If it is not true, I would ask the Finance Minister to ask for the papers from West Bengal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, please take your seats.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

...(Interruptions)\*

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: You cannot say that agriculture is a particular State's subject. In Andhra Pradesh, people are starving to death. You can mention that. I cannot mention that in my State the farmers are agitating. You are giving their lands. ...(Interruptions) I will not take lesson from you. You are not my guide or philosopher or friend. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Except the speech of Kumari Mamata Banerjee, nothing will go on record.

...(Interruptions)\*

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Sir, you see the intolerance. When they spoke, I did not disturb them. I am the only Member from the Opposition. Out of 42 seats, I am the only Member from the Opposition. They do not want to allow me to speak. When your chance comes, you speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

...(Interruptions)\*

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Sir, can I not discuss the farmers' issue? I cannot discuss the farmers' issue. I cannot discuss the price rise. I mentioned the name of Andhra Pradesh.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: They disturbed me for five minutes. Please tell me why I should conclude.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You address the Chair.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: In Andhra Pradesh, the farmers are dying. In Maharashtra also, the Prime Minister himself had given a package of about Rs. 1,450 crore to Vidarbha. Is it wrong? ...(Interruptions) I am a common citizen of India. That is why, we came to know all the reports. It is a fact. Otherwise, why are we saying all these things?

Yes, the Government has to set up its Monitoring Cell very strongly. There must be a monitoring system from the Central Government, State Government, Ministry of Food, Ministry of Agriculture and from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. It is because of lack of co-ordination, price has gone sky high.

We have enough power production. Our farmers can do it but they are not getting the support price.

They are not getting their support prices in a proper manner. The cold storages are not there for storing their products. Take vegetables like capsicum, chillies, tomato, potato, etc. The prices of all these products have gone up. Where will the people go? They ask for justice from the Government. Sometimes you have to think that we are not saying these things only with the aim to criticise the Government. We are giving suggestions also. They are constructive suggestions. We are making a constructive discussion. Sometimes, please take us into confidence.

I would request the Government that the Government must bring a law not to allow any destruction of the agricultural land. That is my first point. Please encourage the farmers by giving them the supporting price also. Do not allow the middlemen to finish their business. Do not allow the agricultural markets to be taken away by the big businessmen. Otherwise, the poor people, the common people will go out from the country. They will go for starvation deaths.

At the same time, I want an investigation from you. If you think so, it can be an investigation by the CBI. I think, Sir, I can mention the name of my State. Is there any objection? ...(Interruptions) I am proud to say that yes, I am born in West Bengal. I am mentioning one thing. You see the population figures there. The number of population is less and the number of ration cards is more. ...(Interruptions) You are sending food from here, from the Food Department. ...(Interruptions) According to the census, Kolkata has a population of 85 lakh. But there are 1.02 crore ration cards. The Central Government is sending wheat, sugar, rice, etc. But there is no accountability, no audit. Nothing is there. The number of population is less than the number of ration cards.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mamataji, please conclude now.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Is it not a scandal? The financial involvement is there. The financial implication is there. I would like to request the Government to start an investigation and see the reality for themselves regarding the fake ration cards.

I am giving a few suggestions. The retail market and the agriculture market should not be allowed for the big business houses. Otherwise the agro-based industries, the poor people, the farmers survive through this business. The monitoring system should be very strong. There must be some controlling system as to how to control the price hike. In different markets there are different types of prices. If you go to Mumbai there are various types of prices. Even within Mumbai, there are differences in prices between one market and another. There must be some monitoring or controlling system.

The hon. Minister of Finance is here. That is why I am requesting the hon. Minister of Finance. The Government should try to set up a 'land bank'. In every State there is so much of non-agricultural land is there. If you can convert it as an agricultural land which is freely available, it will be good. Nothing is there. They are only dry lands. Then you can give some land at least to encourage the farmers to produce the food grains. This will be our request for such a 'land bank'.

If you want to create some ore markets we do not have any objection. There must be some land map and land bank so that our farmers could get help from them and also they should know whose land is it and whose land is being earmarked for them. ...*(Interruptions)* I would request you to kindly give interest-free loans to the farmers. Where there is acute crisis there like in Mumbai, there must be some interest-free loans given. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (Midnapore): Sir, I would like to know how the land map is related to price hike? ...*(Interruptions)*

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: It is related because the farmers are involved. You have forgotten. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

...*(Interruptions)\**

18.00 hrs.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Regarding landless labourers, I would say that they have become unemployed.

*[Translation]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mamata Banerjeeji, your time is over.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Sir, I haven't taken much time. You should check the people who were interrupting me.

*[English]*

I would also request the Government to cover all the agricultural land through crop insurance scheme. In my State, this five per cent thing is not there. They will talk too much, but they will not do anything. They will say something in West Bengal. They will say something else in Delhi. They cannot say the truth. They can go for *dharma*, but they cannot bring a No-Confidence Motion on the issue of price rise. The Congress Party is in the Government, but the remote control is the CPI(M). They are the people who can disturb the Government and they are taking all sorts of advantages from the Government. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now.

*[English]*

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Why is that for me? I did not mention the political thing. They should have realised. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already spoken for 18 minutes. It is more than the time allotted to your party and you are not addressing the Chair also.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Sir, while I am speaking other Members are interrupting me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are provoking other Members also.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, with heavy heart, I am telling you...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I am not allowing you.

...(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Please take your seat. Nothing will go on record now.

...(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, now it is 6 o' clock. I have a list of twenty more speakers to speak on this discussion under Rule 193. If the House agrees, the time for discussion may be extended by one hour.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

[*Translation*]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Sir, please give me a chance to speak. I only want to give my clarification that I haven't provoked anybody instead people have provoked me.

[*English*]

This House should not be divided like this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

...(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing is going on record.

...(*Interruptions*)\*

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH (*Kanakapura*): Sir, I am seeking your permission to speak from here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH: Thank you, Sir.

Sir, it is not a very convenient position for me to speak from the Ruling Benches, especially on a sensitive issue like price rise. For any Ruling Party, whoever it is, it is not a convenient position unlike opposition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can speak as a Member of the House. There is no problem.

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH: Sir, but today I am very conveniently standing here to defend the stand

of my Government regarding the price rise because I know that my Government is very transparent, very candid and very committed to guard the interest of the common man of this country. That is why, confidently, I am defending the stand of my Government. Even while I am defending the stand of the Government, I will not forget those faces who voted us to power today, those slum-dwellers, those poor farmers, those housewives, those unemployed youths with lot of hopes and dreams in their hearts of their better tomorrows. They had a lot of expectations from us about their better tomorrows.

With this conviction, I would like to prove here with realities and objective arguments that my Government, the UPA Government headed by Dr. Manmohan Singhji is doing justice to guard the interest of the people through its policies. How? Sir, like others, I am also very much stunned and surprised as to why my leader, Shrimati Sonia Gandhiji intervened to check the price rise menace. It surprised and stunned me because it is our own Government, but I learnt that she has not spared anybody. While taking up this issue, she has not looked at the interest of politics and she has not looked at the interest of any individual in addressing the growing impact of price rise. She only looked at the interest of the people.

Sir, numerous speakers in this House referred to Shrimati Sonia Gandhi's intervention. I must congratulate them all, and thank them all for providing me an opportunity to clarify two things. ...(*Interruptions*) Firstly, by referring to Shrimati Sonia Gandhi's intervention, they have provided me an opportunity to convince them that the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, and the Government have complete freedom and confidence of my Leader to take any pro-people policy decisions and to run an independent Government. They, the opposition were always trying to depict that Shrimati Sonia Gandhi controls this Government, and that the Congress Party controls this Government. This stand of the Government provided an opportunity to convey to the world and show the world that my Government is free from any such control.

Secondly, her intervention proved one more point. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (*Balasure*): Do you mean to say that the Congress Party does not control this Government?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Swain, please take your seat.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH: No, Sir, kindly allow me to clarify the point. They have accused Shrimati Sonia Gandhi. Therefore, I am saying this point. Definitely, it is the UPA Government, which not only enjoys the confidence of the Congress Party, but enjoys the confidence of the UPA partners as well. I always say that it is the UPA Government. I need not clarify this point to my friends as they are already aware of it.

Secondly, it has provided me an opportunity to mention this point. Why did Madam intervene in running our Government? It is to reassure the country and to reaffirm the common people of this country that if—while running the Government if our policies cause any inconvenience, difficulty or hardship, then we are here to take care of it. We are not egoists. We are very humble and straightforward. We are committed to show the world that we are self-critics, and we are ready to accept and introspect our own mistakes. We are also ready to correct those mistakes, and to lead the Government on a proper path. Therefore, I would like to congratulate the Opposition Party Members who gave me an opportunity to clarify these two things to the nation.

Shrimati Sonia Gandhi is a true democratic person who always encourages the spirit of democracy. One should respect the sentiments of the common people. Our UPA Government respected and reflected the common people's demands without any ego problem. I even congratulate my UPA partners as they have always fought for their cause with humility and commitments. Therefore, we respect the demand of the Left Parties wherever possible. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Do you mean to say that Shrimati Sonia Gandhi intervened, but nobody in the Government listened to her?

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH: No, Sir. Where all do we find price rise? Usually we find it in essential commodities like rice, onion, dal, vegetable oil, etc. All the people including rich, poor, middle-class want the essential commodities for their consumption. It is the highest responsibility of any responsible Government to control the prices of these commodities.

But, I would proudly say that our Government controlled the rising prices of rice, vegetable oil, etc. All right, I do agree, for argument sake, that there is a slight hike in the prices of dal and wheat. But I would like to ask one point in this august House. Who will get the

money collected from this hike in prices of these commodities? This money will go to the farmers, and not the middlemen. It is the farmers who will get this money. If at all there is rise in price of wheat, it would only go to the farmers. As a consumer I have many alternatives, but the farmers do not have any other alternative of livelihood, as they are totally dependent on their agricultural produce. Therefore, we must try to guard the interest of the consumers as well as the farmers. The hike in the prices of chilli, dal, and wheat is all going to the brethren of the agriculture sector, and one must appreciate that this is guarding the interest of the farmers.

Thirdly, I do feel that this Government should maintain buffer stocks to deal with this sort of crisis. We must have buffer stocks to maintain the supply of these items. I am aware that it is maintained for rice, but there is a cut-down for wheat. Therefore, I would request the Government to look into this matter. They must check the stock of wheat also.

As regards PDS and BPL, every Party in this country has assured the people to eliminate poverty from this Nation. So, we must achieve this target, and we must ensure food supply to the BPL people through proper implementation of the PDS. I appeal to the Government that we must strengthen the PDS through strict monitoring.

Regarding rise in crude oil prices, how can my opposition friends blame our Government? My NDA friends planted neem saplings, but are expecting mango trees. When you planted neem saplings, you cannot expect mango trees. My colleagues and friends in the Left can tell their respective Governments to sacrifice the taxes a little in order to take care of the common people. In Congress-ruled States, we are doing that. Left MPs told No, No. ...*(Interruptions)* They may not agree, but it is my argument. I respect their sentiments, but it is my argument.

Coming to cement and steel, where there is a hike in their price? Today, you can see a lot of infrastructure growth and progress in the country. You have to particularly look at the growth graph of India and China. When there is such a speedy growth, naturally, there will be a lot of demand, but we must first take care of the domestic supply, which should be given priority. After giving priority to the domestic supply only, we must give priority to others.

18.12 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

If you look at the growth rate during the NDA Government's six-year tenure, that is, from 1998-2004, there was stagnation in the economic growth rate. As far as the Golden Quadrilateral is concerned, during their time, between 1998-2004, they used to build one kilometre road per day. Today, four to six kilometres of road is being laid per day by the UPA Government. We have to cope up with the situation according to the speed. Naturally, the cement and steel prices rose. In addition, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme created more job opportunities and enabled them to earn money. Today, the carpenter, the plumbers and the painters are earning around Rs. 250 per day. One will agree with me on this point. Even the agricultural labourers are earning Rs. 100 per day. Naturally, the savings rate is increasing. The savings of shares, gold and land indicates that people are earning more money. Moreover, in the days of globalisation, we cannot escape from the good and bad effects of any civilisation.

That is why, the Government while accepting all positive and good suggestions. We strongly denounce the Opposition Parties if they politicise this issue of price rise, which misleads everyone. With this argument, I would like to assure you that our Government is a pro-poor Government.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There are more than 20 Members who are yet to speak. I want the hon. Members to be very brief. I hope, they would finish their speeches within five minutes. Now, I give the floor to Dr. M. Jagannath.

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool): Respected Deputy Speaker, Sir, the earlier speakers were given more time. So, it is not fair. Even in the morning also, injustice was done to me. I was not allowed to put my second supplementary in the morning.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We are helpless. Please do not waste your time now.

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a moral responsibility of any Government—whether Central or State Government—to ensure that essential commodities are made available to its citizens at affordable prices. So, irrespective of rising prices, essential

commodities should be made available to the poorer sections of the society.

About 80 per cent of people in our country live in the rural areas and they are poor. They are mainly working as agricultural labourers. While initiating the discussion from his party, hon. Member Shri Chinta Mohan described the price rise as a usual phenomenon. Sir, his name itself contains '*chinta*'. However, he does not seem to be having any '*chinta*' over the plight of the poor people while the prices of essential commodities have doubled in such a short time.

Before the UPA Government came in to power, the prices of essential commodities were affordable to the poor people. I would like to give an example to show how the prices of essential commodities have risen between July, 2003 and July, 2006. Rice was selling at Rs. 12 per kg. during July 2003. It is now selling at Rs. 21 per kg. ...(*Interruptions*). These are all facts given by the Government. These are not my figures. These figures can be verified. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No running commentary please.

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Ever since the UPA Government came to power, the prices of essential commodities began to rise at alarming rates. This is especially the case in the State of Andhra Pradesh. My hon. friends from Andhra Pradesh know this very well. In fact, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh himself has said a couple of days ago that prices of essential commodities in Andhra Pradesh have gone up.

During the 26-month rule of UPA Government, prices of essential commodities both at the Centre and in the States have risen by about 100-150 per cent. This percentage varies from commodity to commodity.

Prices of consumer items like edible oils, pulses, tamarind and vegetables have gone so high that they have gone beyond the purchasing capacity of the common man, leave alone the poor man. Poor people cannot even dream of these things now. ...(*Interruptions*) My friends from Andhra Pradesh know very well that tamarind was sold at Rs. 60 per kg. in Andhra Pradesh. Their own leader Shrimati Sonia Gandhi called the Chief Ministers of all Congress-ruled States and asked them to take steps to check the prices. ...(*Interruptions*)

Sir, they are obstructing my speech. Please do not count these disturbances in my time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing but Dr. Jagannath's speech will go on record.

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Even a most commonly used food item like tamarind was not spared. In Andhra Pradesh, there is a good preparation called *Pattchi Pulusu*. When a poor man does not have anything to cook for the meal on a particular day as curry, he soaks a little bit of tamarind in water and cooks it like a curry and eats it as curry. Such a basic item like tamarind was sold at Rs. 60 per kg. in Andhra Pradesh. Its price reached an all-time high. ...*(Interruptions)*

During the last two years, the prices of diesel and petrol were hiked six times resulting in the net increase of Rs. 17.06 on petrol per litre and Rs. 11.70 on diesel per litre. Apart from this, the State Government imposes 36 per cent of sales tax. One can imagine as to how much this will be costing the Exchequer and the common man. Will it not affect the transport system? This is how the prices are going up.

With the prices of steel, cement and sand are going up, common man in Andhra Pradesh can never think of constructing his house now-a-days. It is said that this is the trend all over India. It is done only to create artificial scarcity and to help some people in the ruling party. That is why the prices of cement, steel and sand have gone up. The situation has come to such a state that poor man and the common man will not even dream of constructing his house. The prices of wheat and sugar have also gone up. The price of wheat which was selling at Rs. 1,100 per quintal last year is selling at Rs. 1,525 per quintal this June. In the case of *dal*, it was sold at Rs. 2,250 per quintal last June, it is sold at Rs. 4,100 per quintal this June. Likewise, prices of *atta*, sugar, flour, red chillies have gone up. What are the reasons for this steep hike in prices? One of the reasons is because of the faulty decision of the Government.

Low procurement of the essential commodities is one of the reasons. The Government claims that it is a pro farmer Government. It has done many things for the farmers. Then, why are the prices going up to such an extent? ...*(Interruptions)* Low procurement would create scarcity in the Government godowns. Private parties would purchase these essential commodities and hoard till such time the prices go up very high. Had the Government taken corrective steps to procure these essential

commodities in a bigger scale and kept the buffer stock, this situation might not have come at all. Low procurement would lead to inadequate availability of commodities. With low procurement naturally there would be scarcity in the domestic market. Naturally, prices would go up. Apart from this, hike in the prices of petrol and diesel would directly affect the transport system, which is one of the reasons for high level of hikes in prices. This price hike would create rise in inflation.

Sir, it is suspected that the prices of important primary articles and manufactured goods expected to rise, there is a fear that inflation rate could be higher than 5.6 per cent projected by the Reserve Bank of India in April this year.

It is also feared by Economists that on account of firm price trend in primary commodities and the statistical impact of lower Wholesale Price Index base in March, 2005, the inflation in March, 2007 is likely to be in the higher range of 5 to 5.6 per cent. ...*(Interruptions)* My time has been taken away. I need five more minutes.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is not possible.

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Whichever Government is in power, it should be sincere and the efforts taken by the Government should yield results. The present UPA Government is not sincere in its efforts to curb the price hike. There is no firmness in implementing the laws to curb price hike. There are many Acts and laws to curb the price hike. We have the Essential Commodities Act also to curb the price hike. The present Government is not in a mood to curb it. The ruling party Members refer to their leader, Madam Sonia Gandhi and hold her in high esteem. We too respect her. What is the outcome? She had a meeting of Congress Chief Ministers recently and she specifically asked them to implement the Essential Commodities Act which is a stringent Act, and also see that hoarding is not done. Which Government has taken care of that? No Government has done that. ...*(Interruptions)* Sir, please control them and when they get their chance, let them speak.

In spite of their leader's intervention, the prices have increased. ...*(Interruptions)* What are the rates today? Somebody was telling that *atta* was selling at Rs. 60; how can a common man or a rickshaw puller purchase items?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He is going to conclude his speech.

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Sir, they have taken my time and so, I must be given three more minutes.

Within a short span of two years of UPA Government, the prices are soaring and they are not within the reach of the poor people, the middle class people, lower middle class people and the common man. The UPA Government should keep in mind this factor and they must take serious steps.

Coming to my own State of Andhra Pradesh, my friends are claiming that they started *Rathu Bazaars*. When did they start providing things through *Rythu Bazaars*? After we brought to the notice of the people, we took steps and then the Government has realized. Now, they started giving through *Rythu Bazaars*.

I will come to the prices that were prevailing in Andhra Pradesh in July 2003 and the existing prices. Rice was selling at Rs. 12 a kg. in July 2003 and now, it is Rs. 21 a kg. *Toor Dal* was selling at Rs. 20 a kg. and now, it is Rs. 36 a kg. *Moong Dal* was selling at Rs. 24 a kg. and now it is Rs. 58 a kg. *Urad Dal* was selling at Rs. 22 a kg. and now it is Rs. 55 a kg. *Chana Dal* was selling at Rs. 22 a kg. and now it is Rs. 30.85 a kg. Tamarind was selling at Rs. 29 a kg. and now it is Rs. 60 a kg. ...(*Interruptions*) I will conclude in two minutes. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please do not disturb him. Dr. Jagannath, you may also conclude now.

DR. M. JAGANNATH: If this is going to be the hike in prices, I would not be able to afford to purchase items.

When we compare the prices that existed in July 2003 with the prices prevailing now, in some of the items, there is more than 120-130 per cent increase. This shows the callous attitude and the unconcerned attitude for the poor people by the UPA Government.

I have got two demands to make. What did Telugu Desam Party did during its term? During the period of elections, the Congress Party promised in Andhra Pradesh that it would set aside Rs. 500 crore as stabilization money to control prices. Let them say whether they have done it. Have they allocated even a single pie towards that, even after 2½ years of its rule in Andhra Pradesh?

During the days of Telugu Desam Party, we have set aside Rs. 100 crore for that purpose and when the prices were rising, we had purchased items and provided them through GCCs, Markfed and *Rythu Bazaars* at affordable prices.

Coming to my demands, I would say this. Due to the rise in prices and non-availability of credit, nearly 4,000 farmers committed suicide within two years of its rule.

Finally, I come to my demands from the Government of India. As the Congress Party made tall promises and failed to implement them in controlling the prices of essential commodities, I demand:

1. To allocate separate funds for price stabilization and regulation and to make the FCI to purchase foodgrains.
2. All sections of the society should be brought under the purview of one Civil Supplies Organisation.
3. All consumer items should be distributed through the Civil Supplies Corporation only and through the PDS. The PDS is to be strengthened.
4. Creation of Special Fund for stabilisation of prices.
5. Restoration of subsidy ration, and ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your Leader has already spoken for 37 minutes. Please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. M. JAGANNATH: Finally, Sir, the National Employment Guarantee Scheme should be implemented in all districts of the country.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, Shri N.N. Krishnadas Your Party has got only three minutes.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (*Paighat*): Sir, how can I make my points in three minutes? I have some very important suggestions to make. I will try to be brief and conclude my speech within ten minutes.

Sir, we are debating this subject, regarding price hike of essential commodities and suicides by the farmers, in

[Shri N.N. Krishnadas]

almost every Session. Time and again we are discussing the same matter. As per your advice, I will be very brief.

At the outset I would like to emphasise that controlling market and intervention into the market are important to control the prices of essential commodities in our country. There should be uniformity all over the country and as per the guidance of the Union Government all the State Governments should function. So, a combined intervention of the Union and the State Governments should be there to control the market. Unfortunately, very feeble intervention, by the Union Government into the market, is there in our country. Now, even that feeble intervention by the Union Government is being withdrawn.

I come from Kerala. Our State is a well-known consumer State. The strongest Public Distribution System of the country exists in Kerala. Unfortunately, the Union Government is not supporting the PDS in our State. It is disturbing the PDS with the wrong policies. I would like to give one example. Wheat used to be supplied from FCI to the PDS in our State and through our Civil Supplies Corporation we are converting it into *atta* and distributing it to the controlled shops. Unfortunately, the Government of India informed the State Government that it cannot make *atta* and that only wheat should be distributed through these controlled shops. This is the attitude of the Union Government. So, I would again say that the Union Government's intervention into the market was very feeble and even that feeble intervention has now been withdrawn. It is very disturbing. Our State had a very strong PDS but that also has now been disturbed.

In the Common Minimum Programme of the Union Government it is mentioned that the PDS will be given importance and it will be strengthened but in two years of its functioning, the Union Government has not fulfilled its promise of strengthening the PDS in our country.

The second thing which I would like to mention is a surprising phenomenon that is happening in our country. I would like to cite some examples. While the price of paddy is coming down, the price of rice is going up; while the price of raw cotton is coming down, the price of cotton fabric is going up; while the price of wheat is coming down, the price of *atta* is going up; and while the price of sugarcane is coming down, the price of sugar is going up. This dual exploitation of the farming community and the consumers is taking place. It is all due to lack of uniformity of the intervention into the market. The earlier speakers before me have also

emphasized the gravity of the situation. The prices of all the essential commodities like vegetables, cereals, foodgrains, medicines, cooking gas, etc. are going up. They are unaffordable for the common man of the country. How the people are surviving in the country is also very surprising. So, I demand that the Government should come forward to fulfill the commitment made in the National Common Minimum Programme of the UPA Government. It should control the market and issue necessary instructions to the State Governments also. Otherwise, the common man and the poor man cannot survive in this country. There is a serious situation.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): You withdraw your support to the Government.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS: If we withdraw the support, would the prices come down? During your time, the prices went up. You are politicising the matter.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please address the Chair.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS: My third point is that if you take the year after year figures, the investment by the Government of India in the agricultural sector is coming down. There is no development of infrastructure in the agricultural sector. These kinds of wrong policies of the Union Government are responsible for this unaffordable hike in the prices of essential commodities. The people of the country are agitating. This is the supreme body of the common people of the country. Therefore, we should take into account the feelings of the common people and the Government should come forward to control the situation through intervention in the market. It should control the prices of the essential commodities.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI NEETA PATERIYA (Seoni): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the people are distressed due to steep price-rise throughout the country. The prices of essential commodities are very high. But the people in power often forget that they have to go back to the people and to reply as to when they were in power, why public had to suffer that much? Who was responsible for price rise? You are responsible for it. It is your duty to check the price rise. The Minister of Defence Hon. Pranab Mukherjee said that price rise is nothing, it also happened during Indrajit's tenure, Hon. Minister of Finance said that this hullabaloo over price rise is unnecessarily being created

throughout the country. Chinta Mohanji's name is Chinta Mohan only, what he had said is just opposite that there is nothing to worry, let price rise continue. Seeing all this people are of the view that the UPA Government is complete failure when it comes to control price rise, and it has no right to remain in power.

Nobody has control over this Government. Now, nobody listens to even hon. Sonia Gandhiji in Congress. Sonijai said in the meeting of the working committee, but nobody listened to her. One is P.M., while other is super P.M., who will dominate, nobody knows and the condition of the country is getting worse day-by-day. Today, people have come out of their houses and crying aloud with one voice:-

'Gali-gali mein goonj authi,  
Jan-jan ki aawaz, uthi,  
Daal-roti mushkil hai,  
Mahanga loha-petrol hai.  
Mahangai Sursa si badh gayi,  
Chai ka swad feeka kar gayi,  
Khana-pina mushkil hai,  
Ghar chalana mushkil hai.  
Ab Sarkar chalna bhi mushkil hai.'

I would like to submit to the UPA Government that price-rise should be controlled, satta bazar, vayada deal should be banned and the prices of wheat, pulses, sugar and tea should be controlled before price-hike bills the common men, before it is too late to make decision. The day Congress-led UPA Government has come into power, the blackest chapter of its two years tenure would be remembered as price rise. The common man is distressed due to price-rise. They cannot afford to fulfill even their basic food needs. There is a saying 'if your basic food requirement is fulfilled, thank God for it (Daal-roti khao, Prabhu ke gun gao), but it seems now one has to say, O God! Give us food, so that we could move forward (Bhukhe bhajan na hoe Gopala). Food is being replaced by starvation due to steep price-rise. The poor are unable to make both ends meet. Common men is bound to live a miserable life.

The allied parties of the Congress extend their support in the Parliament, but they mingle with public and support their cause to avoid their wrath. This way they play dual role.

The soaring prices of the foodgrains have not only shaken the budget of common household it has distressed the growers as well. Thousands of farmers have committed suicide and the prices of foodgrains have hiked by one and a half times. The common man and the farmers are distressed, then who is taking all the cream? When Rabi crop was ready, the Government decided to import wheat relatively on higher price. People know that the price of wheat is high but the farmers could not get its due price. And the reason for all this is the Congress led UPA Government in whose rule prices hiked, black-marketing is on the rise while our Prime Minister is an economist, but economics is zero. Economy management turned into economy of deficit instead of surplus.

In the regime of NDA Government, prices were stable, there was control on price rise. Even Rickshaw-puller and auto-drivers are found discussing that the scene was different during NDA Government and we were not worried about price rise in petrol or other things, or wheat, pulses, ice, etc. Warehouses were full to the capacity and we were in a position to export foodgrains. But, within two years, wheat is being imported on a higher price than minimum support price that was being given to the farmers. The reason is that the Congress Government has allowed storage of wheat by the private companies to meet its vested interests which smells corruption.

Atalji's Government had a plan to provide wheat and rice to the poor at a cheaper rate. One cannot stumble by the same stone. The hand of the Congress which used to be with the poor, cannot deceive the poor anymore. Hon. Atal ji was of the view that no one should die of hunger. That is why the Government made wheat, rice and sugar available in fair price, but the present Government is trying to weaken Food Corporation of India and Public Distribution System. The prices are rising uncontrollably due to wrong policies of the UPA Government. It's only job to appease allied parties. Why does Congress not feel ashamed? Why dare not to step out, while Gandhiji started Satyagrah for salt, even price of salt is high. Poor cannot have roti with salt even. Womenfolk love jewellery most, but middle class women cannot afford to buy gold jewellery while poor women can not afford to buy even silver jewellery because prices of gold and silver are sky-high. In a country like India where nature has provided climate, fertile soil, mineral assets in a plenty, why do the Congress-led alliance Government not formulate such policies that make farmers and population depending on agriculture happy and prosperous? People are always apprehensive about the

[Shrimati Neeta Pateriya]

prices of petrol and diesel. The prices of petrol and diesel have been hiked on six occasions during the last two years, as a result, transportation got costlier, farmers found diesel and petrol unaffordable for their pumps and then, manure, seeds also got costlier. That is why farmers are committing suicides throughout the country. I would like to submit that when there was hike in prices of petrol and diesel in international market, the country was not affected much in this respect. It was only then when they imposed tax over 50 per cent on petrol and diesel, the prices of petrol and diesel rose. The UPA Government has no funds for the programmes of control price-rise or for developmental programmes, whatever funds they have provided whether it is for rozgar guarantee or for other schemes, it has come from the public, and poses as if it is giving from its own fund for development. I would like to know from the Government the amount of tax imposed by the Governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh in their respective countries?

The train fare has also been increased by the Central Railway Board in the name of converting several trains into superfast trains, while, neither those trains got speedier, non routes were changed nor passengers provided with extra facilities but the increased fare is being charged from them.

As a result, resentment is prevailing among the common man and communities. Out of basic needs of man, that is, food, cloth and shelter, people are managing rags somehow, but they have no food, loans at a lower interest rate, nor iron, cement or bricks to make a house which they can call theirs. So, UPA Government is total failure and it has no moral right to continue.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH (Udhampur): Sir, with your permission I too would like to express my views on price rise and give suggestions in this regard. There is no doubt that prices have increased, otherwise, Madam Sonia ji would not have asked the Government for taking measures to check price rise. It means they are not required to say anything in this regard. They need not worry about our ouster. I mean to say that something is lacking somewhere in the planning. When conspiracies are being hatched to kill farmers, and farmers not being given remunerative prices, then the prices will definitely increase. The farmers grow crops, but neither remunerative price nor support price or any other assistance is given to him. All these things are provided to him after his crop is sold, this is a reality. Basically, anybody failing to understand the problem of farmers has

to face the consequences of one's mistakes irrespective of the status of that individual or party. Merely indulging into blame game and saying that NDA did this or that and start making claims about achievements, will not serve any purpose.

Sir, the NDA Government had abolished the Inspector Raj. The NDA Government had given the ruling that there would be no inspector to check the stocks, and anybody would be able to stock unlimited amount of foodgrains. If limits are violated and stock capacity is made unlimited, then what will happen? Now, the traders are having more stocks than FCI. I would like to advise the hon'ble Minister that instead of giving long speeches he should take action against the hoteliers, traders who have hoarded the pulses and edible oils. Earlier nobody was ready to purchase mustard from the farmers, then how come the price of it has increased. It means there are same people who want to ruin the farmers. But we people are here to fight for their cause.

18.51 hrs.

[SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN *in the Chair*]

I dare challenge, whether anybody agrees or not, that this problem can be solved within fifteen minutes. There is a need to conduct raid from Kanyakumari to Kashmir. If it is not done, then you would be questioned. ...*(Interruptions)* Please listen to me. ...*(Interruptions)* We are paying for NDA deeds, and they will pay for our deeds, why are they worried about it. ...*(Interruptions)* I mean to say that there is no mutual coordination. There is no link between the consumer and producer and touts are earning commission. When money would be earned by middlemen and touts, the consumer and producer would get devastated. The real issue is that as how to save the producer. We talk a lot of food security. If the producers of foods are not secured, then how can food security be achieved with the help of gun? My submission is that they are guilty of keeping no check whatsoever even though the fact remains that the person is conditioned according to the environment in which he is brought up. The person who is born in house of a capitalist get accustomed to leading a life in capitalist style, he thinks of first class style and in terms of the eye of the first world. But this is a Third World, India is still in Third World. Need of the hour is the upliftment of country. They cannot build castles in the air. The policy for farmers has not been formulated. It is appropriate to provide irrigation facility. Many good schemes have been

launched under 'Bharat Nirman', but now a scheme to save farmers, and to put them on path of progress is required. The farmers are suffering. I know it because I, myself, had sold the onions, I am an agriculturist. They are saying that onions are being sold at the rate of Rs. 15 per kilogram, but my onions were sold at the rate of Rs. 2 per kilogram. My wheat was sold at the rate of Rs. 6.50 per kilogram and the Government are importing wheat at the rate of Rs. 60 per kilogram. It is not right. Whenever the discussion about giving proper remunerative prices is raised, everybody backs out. The Government is talking about petrol and vehicles but in rural areas, the condition of agriculture is very poor, first of all, the condition of agriculture should be improved. ...(*Interruptions*) Mr. Chairman, Sir, please listen to me. You are such a nice man. ...(*Interruptions*)

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you have always talked about the interest of farmers. You have always talked about the interest of the country. ...(*Interruptions*) You must listen to me also. PDS has not been improved. It is ruined. I would like to say that the Government should reconstruct it and strengthen it. There is no need to make any compromise in this regard. It should be strictly implemented.

[*English*]

There is no need of any compromise with any hoarder, with any blacklist or with any middleman. There should be no compromise.

[*Translation*]

The Government should make an agenda for it. The Government should give subsidy to the poor. The downtrodden, the poor and BPL people should be given subsidy on the pulses. Why subsidy to them will not be given? I would like to say one more thing that pulses are costly, but one can purchase as much pulse as one required by paying more. When pulses are available, then why their rates have been increased, it has to be understood. It has to be seen who is doing all these things. It means that pulses are there. If they are not available, then it has to be seen how to produce pulses in next three months. How come they will increase the production of all pulses? If production of pulses is to be increased, then where something is lacking, and persons who do not intend to solve their problems, it has also be seen. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. C. Krishnan, Please start your speech.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Chaudhary, please conclude.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH: I am very happy with it. I would like to request all hon'ble Members to speak against the price rise. The Members who have spoken against it have done the commendable job. The persons who are unable to discharge responsibilities given to them, should at least try to transform themselves. In the end, I would like to say that if they are not able to deliver justice even by holding this Chair, then are they aspiring for heavens kingdom? Therefore, I would like to say

[*English*]

use this chair properly and give justice to the downtrodden people.

DR. C. KRISHNAN (Pollachi): Sir, I am speaking on behalf of the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam headed by Thiru Vaiko, the leader of the DMK and a famous leader of the Tamils.

As we are speaking about price rise in the country, there is an alarming price rise of common man's day-to-day articles causing great concern and burden for his daily bread.

Price hike on diesel and petrol has repercussion on the prices of vegetables and other goods and food articles due to rise in the freight charges. When the food materials have to pass from North to South, there is an increase of about Rs. 2,000 per truck. The Government should take proper action to control the price rise. But, at the same time, blaming the price rise of petrol and diesel due to international situation should be curtailed. The sales tax of the State Governments can be reduced and the price hike of these petroleum products can be brought down.

We have good faith and good belief over the Central Government headed by Dr. Manmohan Singh under the

[Dr. C. Krishnan]

guidance of Madam Shrimati Sonia Gandhi. We are the good supporters of the Government as well as we are part and parcel of the UPA Government even though we are not taking part as Ministers in the Government.

19.00 hrs.

At the same time, I want to bring to your notice one point here. I would like to cite an example. This is based on a news item reported in the *India Express*, a national daily Newspaper dated 2nd May, 2006.

It has been reported that ...\*

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (Sriperumbudur): Sir, this should be expunged. How is it relevant to price rise?  
...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him raise it.

...(Interruptions)

DR. C. KRISHNAN: It was reported in the "Indian Express" that the TATAs, the age-old nationally renowned corporate body, was ...\*

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: Sir, how is it relevant? It should be expunged. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will look into that.

...(Interruptions)

DR. C. KRISHNAN: It was also reported that the Minister himself had demanded. ...\*

...(Interruptions) So far, neither the Government nor the CMD, TATA Group have denied the news.  
...(Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: How is it relevant to price rise? It is irrelevant. ...(Interruptions)

DR. C. KRISHNAN: Hence it is taken for granted as a true occurrence. Sir, this act of the hon. Minister is a sheer violation of the ethics as a Minister. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: Sir, how is it relevant to price rise? It is irrelevant. ...(Interruptions)

\*Not recorded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will look into that and make necessary corrections. Please resume your seat. Shri Krishna, please conclude now.

DR. C. KRISHNAN: ...\*

Threatening the TATA Group of companies, who are the pioneers in the development of major industries in the country ever since 1917, ...\*

MR. CHAIRMAN: This cannot be recorded.

...(Interruptions)\*

MR. CHAIRMAN: If there is any objectionable statement, that will be corrected. If there is any objectionable statement, I will look into that and see that necessary corrections are made.

...(Interruptions)\*

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: Sir, how is it relevant? It is not relevant.

DR. C. KRISHNAN: The hon. Minister is expected to take the country's interest rather than his personal profiteering. ...\*

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: Sir, he is supporting Dr. Manmohan Singh and Shrimati Sonia Gandhi.  
...(Interruptions)

How is it relevant? ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. I have already made it perfectly clear.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

...(Interruptions)\*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. I have already made it perfectly clear. You have to behave like a Member.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: How are you allowing him? How are you permitting him?

\*Not recorded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have made that perfectly clear. If there is any objectionable statement, that will not find a place in the record. Please take your seat.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: Sir, how is it relevant? It is irrelevant. It should be deleted. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

...(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You continue your speech but it will not be recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, the time is Seven of the Clock. I have a list of 14 more Members to speak. If the House agrees we will extend the time. Or, we will disperse.

...(*Interruptions*)

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: We can continue the discussion tomorrow. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I presume that the House is extended up to Eight of the Clock. Is it the sense of the House?

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: We can have this discussion tomorrow also. ...(*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): Sir, it was decided that the debate would be concluded today and tomorrow only the reply would be there. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: How long will we sit here? Will we sit throughout the night? Sir, you say that you have a list of 14 Members to speak. It is already Seven of the Clock. If 15 Members are to speak, it means that we have to sit up to Ten of the Clock in the night.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: This is a very important subject. Let us discuss it. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Hon. Members are sitting here to raise 'Zero Hour' matter.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: This is a very important subject. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Two hon. Members are speaking together. Even after repeated request from the Chair, they are not stopping. This is not fair.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: But how are you permitting him to speak irrelevant things? ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, both of them belong to UPA. Then, why are they fighting among themselves? ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has made it perfectly clear that if there is any objectionable statement, it will be removed from the record. But both of you are continuing to speak. Is this the way you behave in this House?

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. C. KRISHNAN: Sir, the Ministers of the UPA Government should take interest in reducing the prices of essential commodities rather than planning for making profit in their private business interests to become richer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time of today's sitting of the House is extended up to 8 o'clock.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAV (Jaipur): Sir, please start the 'zero hour'.

[*English*]

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Sir, let there be no 'Zero Hour' today. This is a very important discussion which was started at the instance of the Opposition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If hon. Members behave properly, I can finish it at 8 o'clock. But both hon. Members are speaking together. That is the way our friends from Tamil Nadu are behaving.

DR. C. KRISHNAN: Sir, you allowed me to speak. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is not Tamil Nadu, this is Lok Sabha. In spite of repeated assertions from the Chair that any objectionable statement will be removed from the record, you both continue to speak simultaneously. This is not correct.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Sir, have you extended the time of the House for fighting also! ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: There will be no 'Zero Hour' today. The House will sit up to 8 o'clock, but there will be no further extension.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Sir, you please adjourn the House today. This discussion may be continued tomorrow. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Sir, if you are going to adjourn the House now, it means we are concluding the debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If all of you cooperate with the Chair, we can conclude the debate today.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have to conclude this debate today. If there is no further discussion today, then tomorrow the Minister will reply. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: We want to conclude the debate by 8 o'clock and on no account the time will be extended further. Please cooperate and speak briefly.

Shri Shailendra Kumar will speak now.

*[Translation]*

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak on the Discussion under Rule 193. The Government says that the price rise is attributable to prevailing circumstances and not on account of any shortcoming in policies of the Government but the fact is that the present state of affairs is attributable to the loopholes in the policies of the Government. Dr. Chinta Mohan initiated discussion on price rise, but I wanted this discussion to be initiated from the opposition side, which would have been better. The poor struggles for food, clothing and shelter and all hon'ble members present here are people's representatives and our concern is genuine. Our main concern is that how to make food, clothing and shelter available to the downtrodden poor people. It is very sad

that due to rising prices nothing has been left with the people during last one year. Now it seems that the Government has given ear to this problem, though the voices are being raised since very long time. First time, the hon'ble Minister of Finance has accepted that the prices have inflated. The Finance Minister agrees that there are three reasons for rising prices. He said that cost of production has increased due to rise in prices of steel and petroleum. It has also been said that prices have increased due to rise in prices of certain commodities. Thirdly, he said that the economy has suffered some setbacks in supply sector also. He indirectly pointed towards agriculture though for last ten years neither any new technique has been introduced, nor any big investment has been made in this sector. Today, the growth rate of production has become stagnant. The price rise can be checked by making 0.25 per cent increase in repo rate and reverse repo rate. The Government is taking initiatives in this direction, but it has to be seen upto what extent success is achieved in this regard. Even if price rise can be checked by tightening liquidity, it is not a novel measure. It will have an adverse effect on growth rate. As it has been heard that growth rate will remain between 7.5% and 8%. But recently the price rise was also discussed in the Chief Minister's seminar, it was accepted over there that the prices have increased in the country and it will be abolished by 20 July.

*[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. I have called Shri Shivanna's name.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Sir, I am concluding. No effective step has, however, been taken in this regard. The prices have risen as a result of 70 per cent increase in the prices of essential commodities, and petroleum. Through you, I would like to urge the Government to take stringent measures to check the rising prices.

*[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record, except the speech of Shri Shivanna.

...*(Interruptions)\**

\*Not recorded.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA (Chamrajnagar): Sir, I am speaking in Kannada.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please speak in either English or Hindi. There is no interpretation available.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Sir, I have already written so many letters during the last six months. It is unfair not to allow me to speak in Kannada. I always speak in Kannada. Why have they not arranged for the interpreter?  
...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You cannot raise this issue here. I am not responsible for this.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: They should arrange for the interpreter. This is very unfair. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: How can you speak in Kannada when there is no interpreter?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: I will speak in Kannada, please arrange for the interpreter. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member, you can meet the hon. Speaker and inform him about the position. I am helpless in the matter because the interpreter is not available.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Sir, I have already written letters to the hon. Speaker and I have given notice also to speak in Kannada. Please allow me to speak in Kannada. ... (Interruptions) This is very unfair. ... (Interruptions) I have given the notice also. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you do not want to speak in English, then I will call the next speaker.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE: Sir, let him speak please.  
...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: He should speak in either English or Hindi.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: I have decided to speak in Kannada only. I can speak in English and Hindi also, but I will speak in Kannada. It is your duty to arrange for the interpreter. I have also given a notice to speak in Kannada. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You must realise that for Malayalam there was no interpreter for months together!

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: For nearly a year there was no interpreter for Malayalam for which we suffered. You have a right to speak in Kannada but there is no interpreter.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have taken note of his complaint. So, let him speak in whatever language he wants to speak. I am taking note of his complaint. I assure you that it will never happen again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it will not go on record. I am helpless. I have the same feelings like you for mother tongue. I must have a right to speak in mother tongue; but the situation is like that. What can I do?

...(Interruptions)\*

SHRI MANJUNATH KUNNUR (Dharwad South): You have to appoint an interpreter. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: There was no interpreter for some of the Indian languages for a long time.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI K.S. RAO (Eluru): Shri Shivanna, kindly speak in English today. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kannada interpreter will be coming; it is under process. He will be recruited and he will find a place here. Just like the Malayalam interpreter was not available and a new person is recruited and appointed, we suffered. Now the Kannada people also should suffer like Malayalees. We, Malayalees were under the same difficulty for months. There was no interpreter but I spoke in English. It is under process.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: It is their duty. ... (Interruptions)

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\*Not recorded.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Sir, kindly permit him to lay his speech on the Table of the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you tell me, what I should do?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI MANJUNATH KUNNUR: Let him lay his speech on the Table of the House. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can lay your speech on the Table.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: I have decided to speak in Kannada. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Sir, if the speech is in Kannada; he cannot even then lay it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have decided to finish the business by 8 o'clock. If you do not cooperate, we would not be able to finish it.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Okay, Sir, I will lay my speech in Kannada. It must be translated.

\*Sir, we had given about two dozen assurances to the people of the country at the time of elections, two and a half years ago. Unfortunately, none of them has been fulfilled so far. We had also assured to protect and strengthen the agriculturists. But weavers and agriculturists continue to commit suicide. Their purchasing capacity has been weakened. Poor labourers, SCs/STs, daily wage earners and even middle class people are unable to make both ends meet.

The price of computer has been slashed. Many other items have become cheaper. But as usual the price of essential commodities is touching the sky. The price of Ragi, Jowar and other cereal is more than Rs. 12 per kg. The price of Toor dal, Udad dal and other dals is Rs. 70 per kg. and above. The price of edible oil has

gone up beyond Rs. 100 per kg. Similarly, all other essential commodities are costlier today. Both the Governments NDA and UPA have failed miserably to contain the price rise. It is shocking that we are not able to help the poor masses of this country to lead a peaceful life even after 59 years of Independence.

One kilo apple costs Rs. 45 per kg. Mango also costs Rs. 35 per kg. and above. The poor people cannot think of eating any fruit. Tomato is also costly. They are being crushed severely and hence their survival itself is in danger. The price of construction material like cement, iron, etc., has gone up. The petrol price is Rs. 48 per litre in Delhi and the same petrol is sold for Rs. 56 in other cities like Bangalore, Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai. Everyday, the prices are rising and the poor people, the down-trodden are the worst hit.

Agriculturists are demanding for support price for their produce. They are not getting it. On the other hand, the price of agricultural produce is very high. It is the middle man who is playing the trick by grabbing all the profit. This kind of exploitation of farmers should be stopped immediately. Here, banks are charging 6% to 8% interest on agricultural loans but in China no interest is charged on these loans. In Tamil Nadu agriculturists are getting free electricity. These are the ways in which we have to help agriculturists and the poor masses of this nation.

Now, it is high time for the Centre to come forward and take immediate steps to bring down the prices. At first instance, they should make the essential commodities like onion, garlic, chilly, brizol, dals, edible oil and cereals available to the poor people at a very cheaper rates. Labourers who earn hardly Rs. 2000 per month, should also get all essential commodities at cheaper rates because they too have a right to lead a peaceful and decent life like us. I hope the Centre will consider this matter very seriously and help the poor people of this country by bringing down the prices of all essential commodities. With these words, Sir, I thank you and conclude my speech.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri Ganesh Singh may speak.

[Translation]

SHRI GANESH SINGH (Satna): Hon. Chairman, Sir, today the discussion is going on in the House on the

\*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada and also laid on the Table.

most burning issue of price rise. Ever since there has been the U.P.A. Government, we are discussing the issue of rising prices for the fourth time. The most surprising fact is that the prices are rising like floods in a river. The entire country seems flabbergasted as to why all this is taking place? Our colleagues from the ruling party maintain that rising prices is not a new phenomenon. Definitely it is true that there has been price rise even in the past however, there used to be some control as well. In the present scenario the Government has lost its control over the market and the price rise seem to be arbitrary.

Sir, in this very House one of our colleagues was discussing that the price of any commodity should not be more than one and a half times of the cost of its production but no one is aware of this phenomenon. The prices are rising unabated. Everyone knows that three big economists are running the country. The Hon. Prime Minister is a great economist. The Hon. Minister of Finance and the Hon. Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission are great economists. Given the present economic scenario, I would like to ask the reasons and the economic policy owing to which we are not able to exercise control over rising prices. The imported goods have entirely captured the market owing to the open market policy but what would be the policy to decide the prices. Today, the market has been completely entrusted in foreign hands and that is why the Government is unable to control the prices. The Government should show some concern in this regard. The prices have risen by two hundred per cent. It has been a record. The condition of poor man has become such that he cannot even afford two square meals a day. Today, the people can afford only one time meal. They eat pulses and vegetables only once a week. Has the hon. Minister of Finance ever tried to ponder over their hapless situation. He should visit such people who slog themselves throughout the day and cannot even afford an evening meal. He should visit such people who are rickshaw pullers, labourers, who work day and night and he should meet class-III and IV employees. I had conversation with a class-IV employee who was telling me that they are not able to bring up their children. What will be the result if they are not able to put a check on rising prices. What is the role of the Government. What are the duties and responsibilities of the Government.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is the same country where the food items were so cheap that one could eat one's fill by paying a meagre sum. We used to have barter system. One could barter one kilogram grains for one litre milk. It is the same country where salt was available for free in the market. Salt used to come free with any food item in the market. Today, what is the price of salt and from where it is pouring in. It is not being imported. It is being produced indigenously. What it has become so costly. This is because I feel that the market has gone completely out of control.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it was discussed that which Governments were there in the year 2004 and 2006. In the year 2004 there was N.D.A. Government and now we have U.P.A. Government in the year 2006. I want to put it emphatically in the House so that the people could come to know the reality. I would like to draw a comparative chart. At the time of the N.D.A. Government during the year 2004 the price of wheat was Rs. Nine while during the N.D.A. Government the price of wheat varied between Rs. 12 and Rs. kg. Earlier the price of flour was Rs. 10 per kg., now it has reached Rs. 21 per kg. Earlier the price of rice was Rs. 10 per kilogram, it now varies between Rs. 16 and 22. Earlier Maida was Rs. 12 per kilogram, it is now Rs. 13 per kilogram. The price of bread was Rs. eight, it is now Rs. 10. The cost of Semolina was Rs. 12 per kg., it has now become Rs. 15 per kg. Earlier the price of Sag was Rs. 28 per kilogram it has now become Rs. 35 per kilogram. The cost of grams was Rs. 30 per kilo, it now costs Rs. 50 per kg. The price of Sugar was Rs. 14 per kilogram, now it is Rs. 22 per kilogram. The price of tea was initially Rs. 80 per kilogram, whereas now it is Rs. 120 per kilo. The price of Desi Ghee was Rs. 130 per kilogram, now it is Rs. 160 per kilogram. The price of mustard oil was Rs. 40 per litre, now it is Rs. 48 a litre. The price of Dalda was Rs. 40 a kilogram, it is now Rs. 48 per kilogram. The price of Moong Dal was Rs. 24 per kilogram now it is Rs. 67 per kilogram. The price of Arhar Dal has increased from Rs. 26 per kilogram to Rs. 54. Masoor Dal was Rs. 22 per kilogram, it is Rs. 28 per kilogram. Chana Dal was Rs. 25 per kilogram, it is Rs. 25 per kilogram. The price of Jaggery was Rs. 14.50 per kilogram, it now costs Rs. 35 per kilogram. The price of milk was Rs. 14 per litre, it now costs Rs. 20 per litre. Earlier the price of Paneer was Rs. 62 per kilogram, it now costs Rs. 110 per kilogram. Today, the price of Urad Dal is Rs. 74 per kilogram in the market.

[Shri Ganesh Singh]

Similarly, the price of Kerosene oil has now risen from Rs. 18 per litre to Rs. 25 per litre. The price of L.P.G. cylinder was Rs. 244, it now costs Rs. 328.94. The price of petrol was Rs. 33.15 per litre, it now costs Rs. 51.33 per litre. The price of diesel was Rs. 22.50 per litre, today it is Rs. 40 per litre. The price of cement was Rs. 125 per bag, it is now Rs. 198 per bag. The price of steel was Rs. 23 thousand per tonne, it is now Rs. 28 thousand per tonne. This way the prices of all the commodities are sky rocketing. I would like to ask if the Government has no control over market prices? I would like to say that there are approximately 125 essential commodities, which have been entirely brought into speculative trade, that is why their prices are rising. No control over the prices can be exercised until the Government withdraws these essential commodities from the speculative trade. The Government should keep an eye on the increasing quantum of imported goods in the market. Allegations are being levelled on the State Government for failure in discharging their duty in this regard. Just now, I was going through a statement of the Hon. Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance in a newspaper. Sonia Gandhi ji has rightly expressed concern over the rising prices. The Hon. Minister of Finance stated that the prices have not risen for the first time. The Hon. Prime Minister has asked the State Governments to fulfill their duties. Today, the market is out of the control of the State Governments. How they will fulfill their duties? Similarly, the Hon. Minister of Defence stated that our Government knows how to tackle the problem of price rise. I would like to ask how they are tackling it?

19.26 hrs.

[SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV *in the Chair*]

He should tell if the Government has been able to control the price of even a single commodity. The present scenario belies the image of the U.P.A. Government and the Hon. Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance as an efficient economist. Even a student would understand, how we should exercise control over the market.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI GANESH SINGH: Sir, I would like to say that there has been price rise even in the past. I am quoting official figures. Today, thirty crore people are living below poverty line in the country. Twenty crore people are on the verge of poverty line. Out of fifty crore population sixty five per cent are paupers. They have no money

today. They are not able to compete with the market. In such a situation, the Government should consider to reduce the prices of essential commodities. For last 58 years we had been talking of basic needs like bread, cloth and shelter. But it is deplorable that we could not provide them either of these necessities. After all, what is our priority? The foremost priority in a democracy is to provide commodities to the people at cheaper rates. It is shameful for us that our Governments are formed under a democratic set up and they fail to provide foodgrains at fair prices? Today we are importing wheat from abroad. The farmer of our country is bound to sell the wheat at Rs. 650 per quintal but we are importing wheat from abroad at the rate of 1000 per quintal. We have much attraction for foreign goods. Some say that the prices are soaring high because of less production. I do not agree with that. The production will come down if the farmers are neglected. If the farmers get remunerative prices for their products and the Government gives them facilities and the subsidy is increased. Then surely the production will increase. Thus we can make available all these things namely pulses, flour, wheat, rice at cheaper rates to the people by producing them in our country itself.

As the time is limited. I would like to say in the end that it is a very serious matter and the Government is required to pay attention towards this matter. The subsidy for Rs. 150 billion which was being released in agriculture sector, perhaps the Government is not aware of it, more than Rs. 50 billion out of it is being wasted in corruption and going to the speculators. That benefit is not going to the producers of foodgrains. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now. Many members are yet to speak. The time of the House would not be increased after 8 o'clock.

SHRI GANESH SINGH: Sir, I am concluding. At present the godowns of the Government are empty. We are not giving grain to the B.P.L. people for the last two months whom we gave 35 kg. of grain under the Antyodaya Yojana.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ganesh ji, it is a very important topic and other Members also want to speak. So, now please conclude.

SHRI GANESH SINGH: Sir, the definition of the below poverty line is totally wrong. I agree with you. Our colleagues have said that the definition regarding poverty

line is not correct. The poverty line should be redrawn. The names of those people who were included in this list earlier have been removed from the list of BPL. We are not giving them foodgrains at the cheaper rates. Public Distribution Systems have broken down completely. There is no foodgrains with them. How can they distribute foodgrains when there is no foodgrains. So dearness has increased. I would like to make two points to the U.P.A. Government. First, Public Distribution System should be run properly. They should be given foodgrains in sufficient quantity. They should coordinate with the State Governments. Speculators should be sternly dealt with. If the Government do so, then I can claim that the dearness would be fully controlled and the Government should have a check on the goods coming from abroad.

With these words I conclude my speech.

*[English]*

SHRI K.S. RAO (Eluru): Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is absolutely no doubt that this issue is a very critical issue, about which everyone of us is concerned irrespective of whether he is on the side of the Government or in the Opposition. But the only thing is the neither the NDA nor any other Government can take pride out of criticism. It is their duty to criticise the Ruling Government.

This is happening. This discussion is going on almost every year in every Government. Whenever we were in the Opposition, we used to criticise them. Now, they are in the Opposition and they are criticising this Government. But ultimately it is the poor people who are getting affected; the common man who is getting affected; the man who has fixed income is getting affected; and the middle class people who are getting affected. Every one of us has to take this issue very seriously.

We must be happy or at least you must accept the truth that though Shrimati Sonia Gandhi is the Chairperson, she herself said it is a serious concern. She convened the meeting of the CWC and also convened the meeting of the Chief Ministers and she did express her mind that it is time that we have to control the prices by whatever method we adopt. It indicates her concern, our concern and everybody's concern.

Now I heard the BJP Member speaking. He was also asking for giving remunerative prices to the farmers about which you also spoke and every one of us is speaking. We are interested in paying the right price, the

remunerative price to the farmers so that he can produce more, which automatically controls the prices. Naturally, in that case the prices to the commoners or the consumers will go up.

Similarly, when there is a boom in economy—now in the present Government, the GDP growth has gone up to eight per cent—that also contributes to the rise in prices. Internationally and nationally everybody accepts that now there is bulging economic activity in this country. So, naturally that also contributes to inflation and increase in prices. Still we have to control the prices for the sake of the common man. So, my opinion in this regard is that it is all common sense that price normally will go up depending upon the demand and supply position. When the production has gone down or when the demand has gone up, the prices usually will go up. Similarly, the production may come down if the remunerative prices were not paid to the farmers. So, that also has to be taken care of.

But our experience invariably is that the Governments are not fixing up the minimum support price before the crop is planted or taken up. They are deciding this after that. That means, once the paddy goes out of the hands of the farmers into the hands of the trader, then the prices are going up. That means, the beneficiary is neither the consumer nor the producer but the intermediary. So, this has to be checked and this has to be taken care of immediately.

Similarly, laws must be stringent. Every one of us said about this. Basically, the main reason is not because of less production. It is because of hoarding, black-marketing and profiteering. The Essential Commodities Act, which was earlier there, used to be non-bailable. If it were to be found that a particular trader was hoarding essential commodities beyond what is permitted, immediately a case has to be booked. No amount of pressure on the Government can release him out of the punishment. It is non-bailable.

But one must agree that this Essential Commodities Act was liberalised; and all those stringent controls were removed during the NDA Government in February, 2000. Now, you must accept this. The previous BJP Member was telling that black-marketing has gone up today. If it were to go up really, it is because of the liberalisation in the Essential Commodities Act. Even now the Government has to think seriously to bring some stringent law to check profiteering, black-marketing and hoarding.

[Shri K.S. Rao]

I am of the opinion that, of course, today the FCI has not procured substantial quantity. But my opinion is that if this procurement business were to be given to the SHGs, Self-Help Groups, of women, if the requirements of the local area were to be assessed and then the finance is made at a lesser rate of interest to the Self-Help Groups and if you were to ask them to purchase, take it to stores and then supply to the Public Distribution System at a specific price throughout the year, it does not increase the price at all because the price is fixed. In that process, if they are to make money, it is only the poor people in the villages, who make money. So, we are satisfying both the ways.

So, we must think in that way in controlling the prices. Another point is the high interest rates. One of the reasons for this price rise is the interest rates. In my opinion, both the farmers as well as the self-help group and small traders must be given extensive credit to meet their requirements at either zero interest or at a nominal interest of three per cent. It will reduce the cost of production and it encourages more production and will keep them happy and increase their income. In industry even if the prices were to go up, even if the interest rates were to be high, they will incorporate it into the product. They will not be losers. Let any percentage of interest be charged to the industrialists or traders, they are never affected. Even if the prices were to go up, they are not affected because they will be pushing it to the consumer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Rao, please conclude. We have a time constraint. I am sure, you would understand.

SHRI K.S. RAO: Yes, Sir. In this context I want to mention one thing. With regard to the essential commodities, if the people below the poverty line were taken care of, by supplying the basic commodities, the essential commodities that are required by them at affordable prices and fixed prices, without an increase, like food, clothing, shelter, even in housing, education, healthcare, insurance, etc. it would help them. If we can provide them to all those below the poverty line and also provide pensions to the old people and finally social security, then we do not need to discuss these things here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now.

SHRI K.S. RAO: Yes, Sir. Even if the prices were to go up they will be applying only to the rich and the

affordable sections of the society. So, all of us together, including the Government and all the corporate sections should work together. The present Government is willing to take it in terms of priority to provide all the basic requirements to the poor people, those who are below the poverty line at affordable prices. I am very confident that this Government will take care of them very soon and this price rise situation need not be discussed any more in future by taking these measures.

[Translation]

SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA (Alipurduar): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak on a very important topic. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Baxla, time is short. Please begin your speech. We have to finish the discussion on 8 p.m. and you can understand that ten Hon'ble Members are yet to speak. You give your suggestions in brief. You speak about solutions, not the reasons.

SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would be very brief on this topic. It is a good sign that the treasury benches have noted that the common men are passing through thick and thin because of dearness. As, it has been said earlier that U.P.A. Chairperson felt it and the Treasury Benches were compelled to analyze it. It is a good thing. In it there are two points to be pondered over. We see that the common people are facing dearness due to price hike and the producers too get low price for their products. At that time we feel compelled to discuss this issue.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, as it has been mentioned here, Hon'ble members have told that the prices of a number of commodities are going end up. I would especially like to make a mention of tea, wheat and sugar, etc. As it is said here that price of tea has increased very much and the common man finds himself unable to purchase it. The condition of tea industry is very bad. The employees and labourers working in these industries have a different problem. Due to the closure of the tea gardens they are not getting the salary. Because of this they are not even able to purchase ration. They are not getting the money which they need to purchase essential commodities. Therefore, it is a different kind of problem. Both types of problems should be solved by the Government. One, the problem of the producer would have to be seen by the Government and secondly, the problem of the consumers which they face due to the dearness of the

essential commodities and consequently they remain unable to purchase them, should be solved by the Government.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it would not do by merely expressing concern by the Government. They are so many hoarders and middlemen in our country. They should be stopped from doing so. Now Congress led U.P.A. Government is there in the country. Earlier, there was BJP led N.D.A. Government. Then we used to accuse that Government. Now we are accusing this Government. The responsibility of this Government is that it should take steps to reduce the dearness and remove the difficulties faced by the people. The Government should not make excuses regarding solution of the problems faced by the people and to reduce the dearness. The problems of the people cannot be removed if the Government go on excusing. The import of wheat would not reduce the dearness. Import of an item may be a temporary solution to reduce the dearness but it cannot be a permanent solution. We should seek permanent solution to reduce the dearness and to keep it under control.

Sir, there are great economists in our country. Our Finance Minister is an established economist in the world. Our Prime Minister is great scholar of economics. I therefore, hope that the Congress-led U.P.A. Government would do well as per the Common Minimum Programme. The Common Minimum Programme is being supported by the left parties. I would like that the people of the country should not face any difficulty. I would also like to say that the promises made by the U.P.A. Government under the Common Minimum Programme and the decision it has taken to work in favour of the common man, should be fulfilled by the Government and it should reduce the dearness. The Common man can not get relief unless the dearness is reduced. I would like to say that the Government should fulfill the promises made under the Common Minimum Programme and implement that programme so that the common man can get relief. With these words I conclude my speech.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to express my gratitude towards you for giving me an opportunity to speak on such an important subject. However, I would like to request you to give me some more time as the time allotted to me is very less.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ram Kripal ji, no concession in time will be given. Please try to conclude your speech within time limit.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir, the population of India is more than one billion. The spirit of India lives in villages. In context of ongoing discussion I would like to tell that there are two kind of cultures in our country. One culture belongs to the upper class people who eat cake and drink champagne and other one belongs to those people who eat roti-dal and drink country made liquors. Till today, our government have paid less attention towards people of lower classes whether it is present UPA Government or former NDA Government. Both Governments have paid less attention towards the people who are poor.

Sir, I would like to say with responsibility in the House that due to price rise today the condition of the poor people of country has become pathetic. The people work hard, even then they are unable to feed their families. Unless the poor people of the country gains prosperity, the country cannot become prosperous. Though we are holding this chair, we do feel that it is very difficult to make ends meet in the salary and allowances given to us. Till the poor people of the country get the proper food, the country can not progress. Today, the price of not only one commodity has increased, but every commodity, has become costlier.

Sir, some hon'ble Members said that till the producer is made prosperous, the country will not become prosperous. Who does the production? Farmer produces food, but support price given to farmers is not being increased. They are not getting loans on lower rate of interest. The result is this that farmers are getting buried under debt and are committing suicides due to their inability to repay the loans. The report of Swaminathan Commission is before us, but have any of the recommendations of the report been implemented to benefit the farmers? I would like to thank the UPA Government for reducing rate of interest upto some extent on loans being given to the farmers. This too was a long awaited step and resultantly the rate of interest has been reduced to 7 to 8 percent. But it should be further reduced. As per the Swaminathan Committee's report it should be reduced upto 4 percent. The Support Price is not being increased to help the farmers due to which production is not increasing. For how long the farmer will bear it? When the farmer go to market to sell his produce, he does not get any buyers.

Sir, now-a-days trends are being set up. New markets are being opened under new economic policy, but support price being given to farmers is not being increased. Therefore, farmers are selling their produce to foreign

companies and later are hoarding it. In Economic Survey Report it has been stated that this year production has decreased by 15 to 20 lakh tones. It is not a good trend. I would like to quote figures from report. In June, 2005-06, the wheat stock was 15738 tonnes which reduced to 9620 tonnes in year 2006. Private holders came to know about this and they purchased wheat from the entire market by paying higher prices and are now selling at the rate of Rs. 900 to 1000 per quintal. They are raising prices by creating artificial shortage. It is the small farmers, rickshawpullers, hawkers and labourers who are at the receiving end due to poverty. I understand that the Government is unable to take any concrete decision. We people are of ruling side, but we too have openly expressed our views on price rise before the Government and the Government should definitely find solution to this problem. They should fulfill the Commitment made by them to the people of country.

Sir, I would like to tell you that as to why did this situation arise? The colleagues from opposition also spoke a lot on the subject but it is worth remembering that we still are paying for the pro-trader measures taken during the tenure of their Government. Until the essential commodities are taken out of future market, the prices will not be controlled.

Sir, besides, the rising prices of diesel and petroleum are also taking a toll on our economy.

In the end, I would like to say that the people of country are witness to the performance of the Government, and we all share this responsibility. We have promised the people to voice their opinion, and protect their interests, check price rise and extend our cooperation to them, but it is not happening.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ram Kripal ji, now the time allotted for your speech is over, please take your seat. The Chair orders you to conclude your speech.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir, I am just concluding.

Therefore, it our moral responsibility to rise above the party lines. The hon'ble Minister has compassion for the poor, he speaks a lot for the poor, now what has happened to him, he must try to feel from heart, what hon'ble Members has spoken. He must speak from heart and look towards the poor and should enact stringent law and take stringent measures to check price rise and provide relief to common man, farmers, labourers,

otherwise our situation will become grim. The people will never forgive us, therefore please check this price rise.

SHRI RAM PRAKASH VERMA (Kheri): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am really grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to participate in this discussion led by hon'ble Chinta Mohan ji. I will not take much time, as I have to say only two things.

This Government has been so influenced with the open market system that it feels that as a result of this the economic growth of the country has touched 8 percent. They have forgotten that there are only 8 crore such people of this vibrant economy who are its active components, the rest are still waiting for increase in their income and that the Government should take some special measures for this purpose and perhaps this is the reason that the open market system has not yielded the desired result. Even today, a large number of people of our country feel that they need Government protection and that some special efforts should be made to enhance their role in the economy. In my opinion our PDS system is a big challenge and it is time for its overall review also. The sensex is going high and people are tensed. It is surprising that if there is a slight movement in the sensex, the Government also immediately move but when there is an inflation rise, the Government keeps deliberating and people suffer. I want to say that we should acknowledge that Sonia ji has drawn our attention towards this otherwise, the situation would have gone beyond our imagination. It is the housewife only who has to suffer at the end. Let another month pass and the results would be before you, there is no need to say anything. This is not inflation, this is killing the common man. Everyone knows that poverty is a sin but now it has become an insult. The newspapers are flooded with such news everyday and I have such newspaper cuttings with me. The farmers were already committing suicides, now entire families in urban areas are committing suicide. Some are committing suicides, some are committing murders, some are has themselves to death whereas some are jumping before the train to commit suicide. The Government failed to provide a solution so they have found their own solution to the problem. Whether you are satisfied with this, and if not then you must awake yourselves?

I want to say one thing that we must fear the starving person, he will never forgive us. It's been long since we have been running after the open market system and in all this we have forgotten our responsibility towards the

common man. The common man who has elected the Government and who has participated in the formation of this Parliament and democracy. I will not talk for long, I just want to say that it is time now to review and revamp the PDS system on the whole. They must look into it in its entirety as to where it is lacking. Even after allocating Rs. 27 thousand crores as subsidy on food security, there is no such region from where reports of loot are not being received. Be it north or south, food subsidy is being on a large scale. It was this PDS system only on the basis of which the poor man of the country was surviving. The responsibility lies on them to review this PDS system on their own in the minimum possible time and strengthen it so much that all the shortcomings in this system are overcome for once and for all.

The manner in which open market economy was defended and efforts were made to weaken the F.C.I., are dangerous. We can refer to the earlier discussions held in the House, Hon'ble Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Sahab, who was the Minister of Agriculture at one time. What was the resolution at the time of establishment of Food Corporation? It was stated that food security is to be created. Open market cannot provide that food security. The income of our people is not enough to make it possible for them to depend on the open market system. They are distributing food grain under PDS and I want to fully support this. In the annual meeting of FICCI, which was held recently on the 24th December, 2005, hon'ble Prime Minister had stated that in our system the manufacturing sector should have twenty five to thirty five per cent contribution in the GDP. If we do not move towards food processing and fail to develop each village as a production and processing unit then we will never be able to benefit the farmer. Today there are nearly forty crore youth in our country who are in search of employment. 4.5 to 5 crore people are registered in employment exchange offices. All these people need employment. The Government will have to decide that not only raw food grains but also the processed and preserved food items are distributed amongst the people through the PDS system as there is an immediate need for doing this. Without taking much time I would like to say that whereas on the one hand the housewives are bearing the brunt of inflation, the unemployed people are also bearing it on the other. I would like to say that they must pay heed to the need of the hour or else they will stand nowhere the situation will go out of control. Therefore, wake up before it is too late.

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI (Kutch): Sir, a lot of my colleagues have said a lot of things, I do not want to repeat their words. The fact is that the rise in inflation during the tenure of this UPA Government has made it difficult for the common man to survive. It is to be seen as to how the labour class people and those people amongst them who are extremely poor, and work for merely two to three thousand for the rich class do survive and how do they manage their expenses for rent, milk etc. In earlier times it was possible for a person to survive in 2 to 3 thousand rupees. Why there has been so much rise in inflation? What are the reasons for inflation rise? During the tenure of NDA Government inflation was never discussed even for once. Now, during the tenure of UPA Government we are discussing it for the forth time in two years. It was the slogan of the Congress that—"Congress ka hath aam aadmi ke saath". That common man is suffering the worst today. What is the condition of the farmer of the village and the labourer. The previous speaker had stated that the farmers are committing suicides but it is really sad that along with farmers labourers are also committing suicide. The Government should particularly control the prices of essential commodities. The Union Government along with the Communist party people are deceiving the common man. The Communist party people are proving supportive of every decision of the Government, which is against the public policy, where as outside the House, they are pretending to oppose the same. This fraud is not going to work for long. The entire day they support them over here and then they behave different outside. How long this trickery will continue? Today, this is happening with the common man. Due to the unchecked rise in inflation, the two years period of the UPA Government has become a burden for the common man. What is called the Common Minimum Programme by the Union Government has become Congress-Communist inflation Programme. It is no more the Common Minimum Programme. We are the people who talk about CMP and we are related to this. CMP has now become Congress Communist inflation Programme. During the last two years the prices of petroleum products have gone up. As my colleagues have mentioned that they must realize as to what would be the condition of the people if they keep supporting all this, they are aware of the situation, as they have lived with the poor and the backward people. They know as to what kind of difficult life they are living? They must think as to how long this drama of CMP will continue. This drama is not going to work for long.

[Shri P.S. Gadhavi]

20.00 hrs.

What did the UPA Government do, it worsened the condition of common man in two years. I would not repeat the fact as to how much prices have increased, but the rates of wheat which was selling only Rs. 9 per kg. has gone up to Rs. 15 per kg. now while the prices of flour have gone-up to 17 to 20 per kg. from Rs. 10 per kg., pulses which were selling only at the rate of Rs. 20 to 25 per kg. are now Rs. 60-70 per kg. ...*(Interruptions)* The poor who used to eat Khichri of Moong and Urd don't have 'moong dal' for Khichri. ...*(Interruptions)* as all have been said, I won't say much and am going to conclude. ...*(Interruptions)* Ours was a protein rich area and today it is hard to obtain moongdal which is causing adverse effects on their health. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member's speech may be considered as concluded. Now three more hon. Members will speak. This discussion has to be completed today itself so if the House agree the time of the sitting of House can be extended by 15 minutes.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: All right.

*[English]*

DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM (Bhadrachalam): Sir, I want to make two suggestions because two of my senior colleagues have spoken on this issue. The issue of price rise is alarming and unprecedented. The first thing is as to why the prices are rising like birds. It is not because of the lesser production as we are able to produce essential items sufficiently. This rise in prices is because of the scarcity in the market because of the hoarding and black marketing, which are the most crucial things in the rise in the prices of essential commodities. To curb the price rise, we have so many Acts, rules and regulations, etc. and the State Government are implementing them. But I would like to know as to how many cases were booked against the hoarders and black marketeers. This was the practice followed previously but now-a-days everybody is doing this but they are having links with the ruling party or its Members, thereby they doing all these things.

Firstly, my suggestion here is, kindly curb this practice of hoarding and black marketing of essential commodities. Please treat it as a crime towards the nation thereby we can regulate or control the prices of essential commodities.

Secondly, I want to suggest that whether it is the Central Government or the State Government, they are not learning from the past experiences. As regards the Public Distribution System, I would like to say that we must learn and expand its scope. There are two markets in our country—free and controlled. Controlled market is available or accessible to the poor man—*aam aadmi*—and that should be controlled by the Government. This Government machinery is unable to control the prices of the essential commodities. We must send some teams to Kerala where there are success stories of implementing the Public Distribution System.

In the case of Andhra Pradesh, Public Distribution System supply only three items—rice, sugar and kerosene. But in West Bengal, 14 items are supplied through the Public Distribution System to the public. Therefore, we must learn from West Bengal and Kerala. We must learn from the failures of Andhra Pradesh and other States because there the Public Distribution System was ill-treated and they are highly corrupted and has not expanded up to the desires of the people and consumers. That is why, I would say that we have to stop the black marketeers and hoarders and strengthen the Public Distribution System to a certain extent so that we would control the prices of essential commodities. In our system, in our capitalist mode of production, any Government cannot control or curb the prices entirely. It can only control to some extent through the Acts, rules and regulations, etc. I would request the Government to kindly implement them and control the prices of essential commodities.

*[Translation]*

SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHTO (Jamshedpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, we are discussing the rise in prices of essential goods. Today this discussion has been taken up the House and our Government keeping in view the grimness of the situation, I have listened to the concerns of hon. Minister of Finance and the views of people of this side and that side. As Ram Kripal ji has also said so and the fact is that majority of the people are facing this problem. We are here to represent and lead our community. Jharkhand in particular where I belong to, is in worst economic condition. Prices of essential

commodities are rising but they do not have any means of employment. Even today they are unable to feed their children properly though they toil whole day. All the agro products like wheat, rice, potato, etc. are being grown but big multinational companies have monopolized all of that. Take the example of Chips or Kurkures. They sell these products for Rs. 800 per kg. in the market after value addition which do not cost them more than Rs. 8.00 per kg. Same is the condition in respect of other commodities. Big businessmen are ruining the country by creating artificial crisis of all the commodities. Government needs to take strong steps at such a time so that we can provide maximum relief to the common man. The hoarders and blackmarketeers should be punished stringently. Particularly in our area common men are not getting employment. Industries are giving Rs. 40 to Rs. 60 to the poor. They are not checked by any labour law. They are making labourers to work at that rate. They are working like bonded labourers and are not getting the minimum wages. Central Government has taken a initiative by introducing Employment guarantee scheme. The scheme has been introduced in every state. Half the foodgrains have been earmarked for the scheme. I would like to know to where those foodgrains are being sent? State Government is not lifting those foodgrains because of that people are not getting foodgrains these days. The condition of PDS system is very poor. Poor people are not getting any foodgrains under red or yellow cards. Already there is a large number illiterate people in Jharkhand. When people go to Fair Price shops there, the shopkeepers make three months entry together. Frustrated with the condition, people in all the Jharkhand area are turning towards terrorism. Jharkhand youth is unable to get job and employment. They are not able to get food to satisfy their hunger. In such a situation, 18-19 Districts have become terrorist infested areas. The Central Government is not dealing with the condition in an impartial way. Government should make a law to provide food items to poor as the same is currently under the possession of few influential people. We will have to strengthen that law and punish such people stringently. Central Government should increase employment resources particularly in terrorist infested areas. Only some days back while we were sitting with the hon. Minister, we told him that the maximum number of unemployed people are in Jharkhand. There is iron ore in that State which is mined by machines and shifted to other States. The work is being done there with machines and heavy equipments and as result thereof common man is not getting work today. The labourers are fleeing to other

States. Thus the situation there is very bad. We want that the law should be strengthened so that we can provide relief to maximum number of poor.

*[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Tapir Gao, you are the last speaker.

SHRI TAPIR GAO (Arunachal East): Sir, please allow me to speak from here.

*[Translation]*

Sir, I have to raise the voice of 100 crores of Indians in just 4 minutes, I may be allowed to finish as soon as possible.

Sir, it is a fact of the Congress history that whenever it comes to power, prices go up. Today the prices of essential goods are rocketing to sky. There is no difference of opinion in this regard and Congressmen have also accepted this. I submit that the petro products,

*[English]*

If this is the central point for raising the prices of essential commodities then why is the Government of India not utilizing the country's resources? We have got water resources, coal reserves, Uranium and all other resources.

*[Translation]*

We have not been using these resources in India so we put all the blame on petrol and diesel. That's why I have been pointing it out again and again in the House that Arunachal Pradesh alone can generate 5000 Megawatt power. In place of begging oil from other countries. Why can't we use Hydroelectricity or coal? We are loosing at agricultural products from also and suicides are being committed in Agricultural resource State like Punjab. All this is the result of wrong policies of the Government. Hence, I want to submit that unless this tax structure is changed and Import Export duty is reduce we will not be able to control price rise, till then common man will continue dying of hunger and we, politicians, will continue the same discussions in this House.

*[English]*

As more than hundred speakers have also said, I have doubt as to whether the Congress and the UPA

[Shri Tapir Gao]

Government will respond positively because the history has shown

*[Translation]*

That Congress has never found any remedy to that. So, I request the Government to change the Taxation structure. All participants in this discussion have given their views in this regard. We can control the rising prices if we put natural resources of our country to proper use.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, in view the limited time, I would like to submit that... only 12 States of the country are affected by Naxalites but the fact is that the whole country is affected with this ill. ... Along with this, I also want to submit that the parties and the groups which are supporting this Government own double responsibility on their shoulders. They should also give a thought as to why they should support such a party or Government.  
...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir, that is very objectionable. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, you may please sit down. Whatever is objectionable or irrelevant, will be deleted. Nothing irrelevant will go on record.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir, hon. Member is comparing government and the Congress party with terrorist organisation. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

*(Interruptions)...*

*[Translation]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why are you speaking, nothing will go on record.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing is going on record. You may please sit down.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

...*(Interruptions)\**

*[Translation]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: None of your words will go on record. Hon. Member's speech is concluded.

*[English]*

Now the discussion under Rule 193 is over and the hon. Finance Minister would reply tomorrow.

The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow on the 28th July, 2006 at 11.00 a.m.

20.15 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, July 28, 2006/Sravana 6, 1928 (Saka).*

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Published under Rules 379 and 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha  
(Eleventh Edition) and printed by Jainco Art India, New Delhi.

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