

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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Fourth Session
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)



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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, April 28, 2005/Vaisakha 8, 1927 (Saka)

(The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock)

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I would once again wish to refer to the unfortunate absence of the Opposition. I have already written to the Leader of the Opposition to re-consider their decision. I am waiting for a favourable response.

11.01 hrs.

RE: ALLEGED TAPPING OF PHONES OF CHIEF MINISTER OF UTTAR PRADESH AND A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have confirmed information that the phones of the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav; the Chairman of Uttar Pradesh Development Council and the Member of Rajya Sabha Shri Amar Singh and the Minister of Public Works Department, Uttar Pradesh, Shri Shivpal Yadav are being tapped. Yesterday Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav had also given a statement regarding this in his Press Conference. ...*(Interruptions)* I am concluding my speech within one minute. The Prime Minister's office was also informed in this regard. We are the coalition partner of the ruling party and I would like to submit quite politely to the people in the Government that they should not forget that we have also contributed in the formation of the government. ...*(Interruptions)* If the Samajwadi party had not stopped BJP in Uttar Pradesh, the present Government would not have come in power. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I have already instructed that the Government should make a statement.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a part of the conspiracy ...*(Interruptions)* They have intentionally. ...*(Interruptions)* I would like that. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Home Minister is here and he is making a Statement. I have asked him. He is here to make a Statement. I have requested him and he has come to the House.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): Sir, after reading the news in the newspaper and after getting information that this issue is likely to be raised in the House, we have collected information.

There is a procedure which is followed. The Home Secretary of the State Government can write and also the Union Home Secretary can write for this. The information which I have received, up to this time orally, shows that this is not factually correct.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Sir, earlier also. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: It is over, now you please sit down.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The Home Minister of India has said that it is not correct. I am sure, that is so. Certainly, so far as I am concerned, I shall always see that such matters do not take place in this country, except strictly according to the law. But the Home Minister has said it that he has no such information.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, we have made very careful oral enquiries. I am very carefully making a statement. Yet, I would again go into it and get in writing as to what is the factual position because I have to get information from the State Government also.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I think, this is the way we should function.

11.03 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Incentives to Profit Making Airports

+
*461. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:
SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Airports presently maintained by the Airports Authority of India;

(b) the number of profit making and loss making airports separately during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the Government has taken some steps to minimise the losses suffered by loss making Airports;

(d) if so, the results thereof;

(e) whether the Government is giving any incentives to the airports making profits; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

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

Statement

(a) Airports Authority of India (AAI) is at present maintaining 126 airports (including 28 Civil Enclaves) in the country.

(b) The number of profit making airports and loss making airports during the year 2003-04 are 11 and 115, for 2002-03 are 11 and 114 and for 2001-02 are 9 and 115, respectively.

(c) Yes, Sir. Various initiatives improving the demand side, the supply side and the structural factors determining the profit of airports have been taken.

(d) Generally, the results have been positive across the airports. At the aggregate level the profit of AAI in 2004-05 (provisional) has increased by approximately 21% (before tax) and 19% (after tax) over 2003-04.

(e) and (f) Facilities are constantly upgraded and modernised to optimise the profit given *inter-alia* the profit potential, the availability of funds.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Asaduddin Owaisi. Q. 461.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: The answer clearly shows that the profits of the Airports Authority of India have increased—before tax 21 per cent and after tax it is 19 per cent.

Sir, eighty per cent of the revenue of the Airports Authority of India comes from Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and other remaining seven airports. The profits from these airports are cross-subsidised to run the loss-making airports. The network of airports has to be regarded as a basic national infrastructure. It would make good economic sense if the profits that have been achieved is pumped into these loss-making airports.

Why is it that—when these profit-making airports are the umbilical cords and their profits are cross-subsidised to run the loss-making airports—the Government is contemplating, in the name of modernisation, to privatise or lease these two airports?

I would request the hon. Minister to please give a specific answer to this question.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: It is a fact that we have few profit making airports due to the low traffic density in some of the smaller cities and towns which are being connected by air at the moment. But with the increase in the air traffic over a period of time, definitely, even smaller airports which are, at the moment, loss making will eventually turn out to a situation that either they will not incur losses to the extent that they are incurring today or in future, they may also get converted into profit making airports. But the hon. Member has rightly said that there are a few airports which are substantially making money and cross subsidise the loss making airports. However, with the changing trends in the international aviation and also in domestic aviation, the airport infrastructure is one priority area which we must not ignore. One of the reasons for this is, in the last decade or so, the airports of cities or countries especially to the East and West of India have been able to not only expand their air services but also become hubs for their country like Singapore, Dubai, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok and many other cities which I can name. This is primarily because their aviation infrastructure has attained levels which we are used to seeing only when we travel abroad but we are unable to experience that in our own country. The main reason for this is like this. Major investments have been made in the last decade or so. I would give you a small example of a new airport which is just coming up in Bangkok at an investment of four billion dollars upwards. Similarly, more investments have been made in Singapore, Kuala

Lumpur, Dubai and other places. These are large investments for which we definitely need some public and private sectors participation and that is our objective. We are not selling these assets. We are going in for restructuring and modernisation exercise where public and private sectors are involved. It would be unfair to say that the entire revenue of Airports Authority of India would be lost on account of this exercise because the Airports Authority is also going to be a partner in this joint venture exercise. Besides this, whoever will be the chosen partner, this joint venture company will also be sharing revenue with the Airports Authority. Therefore, this would not be a fair statement to make.

There is one more point to be mentioned since the hon. Member has raised it. Sir, 50 per cent of the profit of Mumbai and Delhi Airports and other major airports come under ATC operations. The ATC operations continue to remain in the domain of the Airports Authority of India and 50 per cent of the profit will continue to remain or increase in future and the balance of the revenue loss on account of hiring of this activity to a joint venture will more or less be made up by revenue sharing model which will bring in revenue to the Airports Authority.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Sir, before I put my second supplementary, I would say that the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA Government says that profit making public sector units will not be privatised. The answer given by the hon. Minister goes contrary to the Common Minimum Programme.

I would like to bring another point to the notice of the hon. Minister. He has given examples of various international airports. But is it not a fact that Singapore Airport, Hong Kong Airport and the Malaysian Airport are being run by the State Autonomous Board?

My second supplementary over here is this. Is he planning to invest these profits to introduce new technologies and expansion of Delhi and Mumbai Airports because it is the need of the hour as there is a lot of air traffic there? And because of the air traffic, the fuel consumption has increased.

Then, as regards the loss making airports, will the hon. Minister go in for commercial centres? The example of Amsterdam Schiphol Airport can be given here wherein the loss making airports can become commercial centres.

I would like the hon. Minister to please give a specific reply to my question. How is it that he has replied contrary to the Common Minimum Programme which says that

profit making bodies will not be privatised in the name of restructuring and modernisation? We are not against modernisation. It is also a known fact that Airports Authority of India has reserved funds to the tune of Rs. 2500 crore.

They have given a profit of Rs. 500 crore. He has very cleverly avoided the first question. ...(*Interruptions*) He should have clearly stated whether he is going in for privatisation or not. Basing on the facts that I have put forward, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what is his reply.

MR. SPEAKER: Let us wait for his reply.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: I would categorically state here that there is no deviation from the NCMP. There is no privatisation of Airports Authority of India, as the hon. Member is concerned about. As I said, two airports are going in for a joint venture because these are the major gateways at the moment. As you have rightly pointed out, they make the maximum money. We have to maximise our profits in future. As far as Airports Authorities of India's reserves are concerned, I would disagree with the figures which you have mentioned. I do not have the exact figures now. That being so, however, money has also to be put into airports which are spread across all over the country. Every hon. Member of Parliament—hon. Speaker has also mentioned it many a time—wishes that airport in his constituency should be upgraded to a reasonable standard. Money has to be put into these kinds of airports also. That is the endeavour. In fact, for the first time we have shifted the focus from the major six metros of India to thirteen other airports. That is exactly the exercise, which we wish to take up from this year onwards in a phased manner to complete the upgradation of thirteen other non-metro airports. That would require substantial money. In fact, even if the money which you have mentioned is available with us, it is not going to be suffice. We are going to go in for borrowing even for development of thirteen other non-metros, let alone building up these major airports. Therefore, it has to be calibrated. The country's interest is in seeing that the growth of aviation is much more so that it reaches the common man. I think we are moving in that direction. Our aviation infrastructure is the single biggest constraint so far. That has to be addressed. We will have to look at private public partnership as one of the models. We are not privatising Airports Authority of India. I categorically state it here. But we will have to see how more money can be brought into the system.

Then, you have asked one small question about utilising some of the commercial lands or otherwise at airports. There is a programme to see how some of the city side lands of the airports can be used for commercial development to cross subsidise the development of the air side of the airports.

MR. SPEAKER: I think it is a very exhaustive reply.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Mohd. Shahid, I cannot give you an opportunity as you are not in your seat. You have to go to your seat to put a question.

[Translation]

MOHD. SHAHID: One hon'ble member is sitting on my allotted seat.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Somebody may be sitting. You go to your seat. When decisions are taken, they are meant to be complied with.

[Translation]

MOHD. SHAHID: The Hon'ble Minister has just stated that every one should have the facility to travel by air in the country. For that upgradation the airports of the country and more investment is required

MR. SPEAKER: You please ask your question.

MOHD. SHAHID: Hon'ble Minister has stated that all the hon'ble Members wish that airports in their respective parliamentary constituencies should be upgraded. I would like to know from the Government whether there is any proposal to introduce new flight from the parliamentary constituencies of those Members in which airports already exist. There is an airport in my parliamentary constituency Meerut, however, no flight is being operated from there. Whether the Government propose to operate flights from Meerut.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: One sentence would have been sufficient viz. whether you are going to have flights from Meerut.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: As I said there is an exponential growth in aviation in India. I am sure, once more airlines are started and more flights come into operation, in future the expansion will have to reach smaller cities. I cannot specifically say about Meerut as of today. But with more and more routes, there will be better connectivity. I am sure Meerut will be a beneficiary in the future.

[Translation]

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Mr. speaker, Sir, just now the hon'ble Minister submitted that 13 airports are being upgraded through joint venture I would like to know as to by what time the airport in Mumbai and Delhi will be upgraded through joint venture and by what time 13 airports will be upgraded. Whether the Government have fixed time limit for the same.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, in reply to the question of the hon'ble Member I would like to submit that the Mumbai airport and Delhi airport are proposed to be upgraded in first five years and then in every subsequent five year period. Alongwith that the hon'ble Member has also asked about the upgradation of other airports. There are not only 13 but 30 such airports. The Government propose to upgrade those 30 airports within five years from now.

[English]

SHRI M. APPADURAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, more than ten years back, an airport was constructed in Tuticorin, a port city but it has still not started functioning. I would like to know whether the Government have any decision to operate it.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: As I mentioned earlier and as I mentioned in my reply also, there are 126 airports including the 28 civilian enclaves. However, all are not fully operational. There are some airports within the domain of the Airports Authority and some are outside the domain of the Airports Authority also. As I said, the traffic and demand will definitely increase. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: It is very difficult to answer such a question. If you just mention about the individual airport, how can he reply?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: These things will definitely, in the years to come, increase. Aviation, like so many other sectors of the economy, has reached the last point,

the last mile. In the same way, growth in aviation will take aircraft also to places like this.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Many major airports in the world have been upgraded to international standards without privatisation. Here, about two major airports of our country, Mumbai and Delhi, there is a proposal to privatise in order to modernise and upgrade them as international centres.

MR. SPEAKER: He has already mentioned about it fully.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: The employees are agitating all over the country against the privatisation of the two airports. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government has received an alternate proposal from the Airports Authority Employees Union in regard to modernisation and upgradation of these two airports without privatising them.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: It is a good question. I am happy the hon. Member Acharia has asked the question. The fact of the matter is that internationally some countries do have airports which are run by the State or State companies. However, in India, I must assure all the Members that neither the Airports Authority nor the Indian Airlines or the Air India—these are all State-owned companies—does not received any budgetary support or any other support from the Government at all. However, that being the case, in Mumbai and Delhi, we have undertaken the joint venture exercise. We have not excluded the employees' proposal also in our future scheme of things. We are still examining it. No final decision has been taken either way—either on this proposal or on any other alternative proposal which may be received in future. However, I must assure you that the one thing which we have factored very categorically is that in any eventuality, not a single employee of the Airports Authority of India in the domain of Mumbai and Delhi Airports shall lose his job. Even in the eventuality of a joint venture, they will be on deputation for three years with the joint venture company and after the joint venture period also, 40 per cent of the employees of the Mumbai and Delhi Airports have to be absorbed compulsorily by the joint venture. About the balance employees, not even one of them—this is an assurance—will lose his job. Nobody will lose his job. They will continue to be employees of the Airports Authority of India. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: There is no question of losing the job. But it is about privatising the two airports. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: I have said already that no decision has been taken so far. I have said about it. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: He has answered that question. Now, Dr. Arun Kumar Sarma to put the question.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: The profitability of any airport depends on how many flights are scheduled, it depends on the number of passengers and whether it is used for cargo movement also. The Guwahati Airport was declared as an International Airport. Also, there was a declaration that it would be made a regional hub. To have effective utilisation of the Guwahati Airport for the North-Eastern Region, what is the proposal? I want to know from the hon. Minister one thing because he has assured the hon. Members of the North-Eastern Region.

MR. SPEAKER: Please put the question. We have already taken 20 minutes on this question itself.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: What is the proposal for utilisation of the Guwahati Airport in order to make it a profitable one and to reintroduce the international flights.

MR. SPEAKER: That is the simple question.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Once the international flights were introduced and then that operation was discontinued.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, Guwahati is one of the most important cities not only of the North-East but also of the country. It is not exactly a hub in the classical sense, but of course, it is one of the connecting points to most of the cities and the States in the North-East and the traffic is increasing. I cannot immediately give all the figures, but if one looks at the growth of the aviation and the traffic in Guwahati and in the entire North-East in the last 5 to 10 years, I think, over a period of time, this can only increase.

As far as international flights are concerned, we have a new flight which, of course, goes from Guwahati to Bangkok. The response could be better, but I would also definitely see as to how international connectivity from Guwahati can be further increased.

*SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Mr. Speaker Sir, it is reliably learnt that Bangalore airport is incurring huge losses for the last 10 years. If so, what are the reasons for such a heavy loss and what steps are being taken by his Ministry to avoid losses.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, from whatever little I followed—of course, I was a little late—I will try to answer his question. The hon. Member is concerned about the Bangalore airport. Definitely Bangalore airport is one of the most important airports of the country not only because of the flights it handles but also because of it being a big city and also a gateway to South India. Bangalore airport is not losing money as the hon. Member is trying to suggest. However, I can say that a new green field airport is coming up at Bangalore. In fact, it is the first green field airport awarded in our country and it will definitely be of world standards. I think that would be good enough for the future requirements of Bangalore and the entire State of Karnataka.

Exodus of Pilots

462. ⁺ SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY:
SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVARAJ:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that there is a continuous exodus of pilots from Indian Airlines/Air India/Alliance Airlines to private airlines;

(b) if so, the number of pilots who have left national carriers during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the Ministry has analysed the reasons for this exodus;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government has chalked out any plan to check this flight of experienced pilots to private airlines; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

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

Statement

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. During the last three years, 4 pilots have left Air India and 13 left Indian Airlines. During

the same period, 38 B737 Pilots and 4 ATR Pilots also left Alliance Air. During the same period Pilots from other airlines have also joined Air India/Indian Airlines and their subsidiaries.

(c) and (d) In view of the liberalized policy of the Government, there has been an overall increase in the capacity induction by the existing as well as new scheduled airlines. Further, national carriers are also expanding their fleet by induction of aircraft on dry lease basis. This has led to increased requirement of trained pilots.

(e) and (f) Steps are taken by the Public Sector airlines on continuous basis to retain the pilots. Some of the steps taken are as follows:

- (i) Keep the emoluments at comparable levels vis-à-vis the established Indian carriers.
- (ii) Offer higher level of job security.
- (iii) Revision of Loss-of-license Insurance and Insurance Coverage for pilots to provide them high degree of security.
- (iv) Retain services of pilots beyond the age of superannuation subject to the validity of the license.

Recently meetings of all airlines have been held where all airlines together are considering anti-poaching measures.

SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, after the UPA Government took over, there is a considerable change in the working of the airlines for the better. There is no doubt about it. But when I saw the Statement of the Minister, the exodus of pilots from the national carriers to the private carriers is very astonishing. We saw in the newspapers that the Minister had a meeting with the private airlines. I would like to know from the Minister as to what is the outcome of it. The CMD of Indian Airlines also held a meeting with commercial pilots. What is the outcome of it?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, first and foremost, let me admit that pilots are in great demand and there is a big shortage of pilots in our country because of the huge growth in aviation and pilots, not the pilot *per se*, but the commander who sits on the left seat is the most sought after person in the field of aviation today and that comes only with experience and one can become a commander

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada.

after clocking certain number of mandatory hours. Having said so, the pilots moving from one airline to the other airline is not something which is happening for the first time. This had happened in the past also. Legally also there is no restriction on anybody from moving from one airline to the other airline. It is a job and anybody is free to move from one job to the other. However, I must inform the hon. Member that the movement of pilots out of Air India and Indian Airlines is not as much as is being made out in the media.

There are some movements of pilots, definitely, from Alliance Air. Alliance Air, again I would like to tell the hon. Member, is a company which employs people on contract. It does not give permanent employment like Air India or Indian Airlines, plus Alliance Air has also been saddled with a very old fleet and pilots would definitely like to move to a newer generation aircraft and to maybe a permanent job.

However, that being so, the movement of pilots is not being only one way out of the public carriers, there have been a lot of pilots who have joined from the private carriers to a public carrier also. That is the situation which has arisen and developed. I do admit that there is a huge shortage of pilots in the country and that is why this movement is taking place.

However, we did call a meeting of all the airlines, public and private, and did ask them to exercise some self-discipline, some self-regulatory mechanism because overnight the pilots leave and next morning flight of any airline, be it a public airlines or a private airlines, gets cancelled, it inconveniences the passengers and it throws the entire system into disarray. Therefore, we have cautioned them.

However, as I said, earlier, pilots do move from airlines to airlines, both from public to private and *vice versa*. This phenomenon, however will stabilise over a period of time. This is because of sudden mushrooming growth of airlines and fewer Commanders to take charge of the controls.

SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, particularly about this Alliance Airways. This Alliance Air was created some time back to substitute some other airlines that was there in the country. This seems to be a feeling in the employees and also in the passengers that they are being treated as second class employees and their treatment towards passengers is also similar. Does the hon. Minister think that it should be converted into a regular airlines?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, the Alliance Air is a regular airlines. Alliance Air was formed many years ago as a subsidiary of Indian Airlines. However, it was planned to be a lower cost arm of the airlines and all employees were on a contractual basis because the high cost structure of the Indian Airlines was not making it affordable for them to be economical on certain routes. That was the background to Alliance Air.

However, unfortunately, due to shortage of aircraft and the huge demand, Alliance Air continued to function almost cannibalising on the same existing routes of Indian Airlines. Unfortunately, Alliance Air is saddled with aircraft as old as 20 years and plus, which we are actively trying to see that at least even as a short-term method through leasing to substitute these aircraft.

Again, unfortunately, in the last one year, the leasing market internationally has firmed up plans of Alliance Air to upgrade its fleet in the shortest possible time could not take place. However, I can assure the hon. Members that a lot of things have moved since then and hopefully by the beginning of next year, Alliance Air will start getting some of the newer generation planes on lease to be able to make more effective and more competitive.

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: Sir, the hon. Minister in his reply has said that the shortage of pilots and shifting of pilots is more of demand and supply. The demand for outstrips the supply and the only way to stop poaching of pilots is to increase the supply.

In that respect, I remember reading recently that the hon. Minister is starting a new academy in Maharashtra. But it is also a fact that there already exists an academy, called the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi in Uttar Pradesh. It is my understanding that the capacity utilisation of that Academy is very low. It is not functioning to optimum capacity and therefore, you are creating enough pilots.

Therefore, my question is this. Would they consider bringing in a joint venture partner to increase the capacity utilisation of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi to make it more optimum, which would not only allow them to generate more pilots for the domestic sector, but would also create an enormous opportunity for training foreign pilots, particularly from Islamic countries? They are no longer allowed to travel to the US and now the EU after 9/11.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: It is a good question that he has asked. I would say that 'yes', there is this problem with regard to the total utilisation of IGRUA. The Akademi has not been up to the standards which we would have liked to.

In fact, the bulk of all our goods pilots today in India, whether it is Air India or Indian Airlines, have come from the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi. We have taken various steps. We are looking at various methods where we can strengthen this Akademi in the shortest possible time. We are getting new trainer aircraft, we are trying to bring in jet trainer aircraft also. One aspect which I must also admit is in addition to the shortage of pilots, the good instructors have also sought greener pastures. However, we have now changed the pattern, and in a very short time we will see that IGRUA will be not only reaching optimum standards, but it will be scaled up from its current position to a much higher level.

On the issue of foreign pilots being allowed or foreign students being allowed to come here and trained as pilots, I do not think there is any restriction. However, we will have to first increase the overall intake of the Akademi to be able to cater to the needs from everywhere.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Mr. Speaker Sir, the public sector airlines have to be competitive, while continuing to bear the responsibilities like covering the uneconomic destinations. Now, even their domain of trained and experienced personnel are subjected to continuous poaching. There have been a number of suggestions earlier from the Government, from the airlines and also from the All India Pilots Association about the deterrent measures.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any deterrent measure including penalty for the offenders has been considered in the latest meetings held for stopping this continuous chronic poaching.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Mr. Speaker Sir, India is a free country, we cannot stop people from moving from one job to the other. Of course, as I have said, it should not be something which does happen overnight and which creates chaos in the whole system. That is what we tried to impress upon all the airlines that what is good for one could be bad for the other, the other day. It has to be a self-regulatory mechanism. I think, over a period of time, all the airlines, at least in the meeting realised that what afflicts one could afflict all.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Why not? The Association had suggested that those who had joined the other should not be allowed to come back. This was one of the decisions of the All India Pilots Association.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, there is All India Pilots Association but every pilot still does exactly what he or she likes.

[Translation]

SHRI CHHEWANG THUPSTAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my parliamentary constituency Laddakh region is worst affected due to exodus of pilots. The Hon'ble Minister is well aware of the fact that during the seven month of winter season air plane is the only means of transportation in Laddakh as all the access roads and passes remain closed due to snow. One can reach Laddakh only by air. It was on account of shortage of pilots that scheduled flights from Jammu and Srinagar could not be operated for Laddakh during the entire winter season after of withdrawal of operation of Boeing 737. The flight for Chandigarh has been completely closed, Delhi Laddakh flight has also been adversely affected on account of this. The Hon'ble Minister has just now submitted that new revised schedule has been announced for Laddakh since May. I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister as to how the shortage of pilots and aeroplane are being met by the Government.

Second thing that I would like to know from the Minister as to why Private airlines are not permitted to operate from Jammu to Leh and Srinagar to Leh, if there are certain constraints with Indian Airlines.

[English]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: I must admit that certain regions do not have connectivity to the desired extent. However, we have tried to correct some of the connectivity issues coming this summer schedule. However, on the issue of private airlines wanting to go, there is no restriction on any airlines operating to any airfield. I am sure if there are commercial considerations, any airlines would be willing to look at it. We would be happy to allow anyone to go wherever they would like to go.

MR. SPEAKER: There are some places which need special attention like Leh.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Thupstan, I have spoken on your behalf.

[*Translation*]

SHRI CHHEWANG THUPSTAN: If it is not commercially viable for the Government, it should compel private airlines to operate in such areas as a part of social obligations.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: It is a matter for consideration.

SHRIMATI M.S.K. BHAVANI RAJENTHIRAN: May I know from the Minister if there is any proposal for increasing the salary of the pilots in order to stop the exodus of the pilots? Is it possible to make an agreement between the Airports Authority and the Pilots with the condition that they should work compulsory for a particular time?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, the pilots are paid by the respective airlines. But I am sure all the Airlines—I am talking only for our public carriers at least—do pay on par with any other commercial organisation. Otherwise, naturally they would not be able to retain the pilots they do have even today. So, that is definitely an issue that we are aware of. I think the public carriers at least do pay well or even higher than some of the private carriers.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DINSHA PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister in his reply to part 'e' and 'f' has submitted that the validity of licence of pilots continues even after the pilots attain superannuation. I would like to know as to how long they can serve as pilot after the retirement and who decides the validity of licence of pilots and how long it remains valid?

[*English*]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, the Hon. Member has raised a good question because earlier our retirement age of the pilot was 60 years, but in view of the shortage, the DGCA has now given the validity of commercial pilots to fly beyond the age of 60 and it has raised it to 61 years now. However, there are stringent steps, which have been advised by the DGCA, so that those pilots undergo free monthly medical check up and so on to make sure that there is no physical issue of the pilots'

health. Otherwise, the safety of passengers, which is of paramount importance, should not be compromised.
...(*Interruptions*)

Review of Air Safety Rules

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*463. SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:
SHRI ANIRUDH PRASAD ALIAS SADHU
YADAV:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to review the Air Safety Rules in the light of frequent air crashes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has received any suggestion from Indian Air Force in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to improve the safety standards keeping in view the increasing air crashes?

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

Statement

(a) and (b) No, Sir. The existing air safety rules, promulgated by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), are in accordance with international standards stipulated by International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), are considered sufficient to ensure safe air operations.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) DGCA ensures, on a continuous basis, strict compliance of safety norms by all air operations, including private operators by way of safety audits. Besides, spot checks on maintenance activities are also carried out by the DGCA. DGCA also keeps updating the Civil Aviation Requirements/Circulars to strengthen aviation safety aspect. To provide better airworthiness schedule for enhancement of air safety aspect, Government is running

two international training programmes for the officials of DGCA and airlines viz. Co-operative Development of Operational Safety & Continuing Airworthiness Programme (COSCAP) and European Union-India-Training Programme.

[Translation]

SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to ask the hon. Minister as to how many incidents of air crash have taken place in the country during the last few years.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: This is regarding exodus of pilots.

[Translation]

SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD: Sir, I am asking a supplementary on question 463.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry I stand corrected.

[Translation]

SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD: I would like to ask the hon. Minister the number of incidents of air crash during the last few years? The details of the inquiry report and what action has been taken thereon?

[English]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, I would like to state that there have been crashes in the past one year and they are mostly in the category of helicopters. Regarding the exact number of accidents, I am sorry I can only say that at the moment I am not fully updated with the number of accidents which took place. But I would be happy to furnish the exact number and details to the hon. Member. There have been cases of helicopter accidents.

[Translation]

SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the details of flight personnel of all the airlines, their schedule of working hours, staff training, qualifications, medical record and validity of their license etc. should be computerised. It is mandatory. I would like to know that how many airlines have done it so far and what are their details? Hon. Minister may state the number of airline companies which have computerised this information?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: It is regarding computerisation.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, this question is not directly related to the main Question. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Computers now apply to everybody.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: First, it is a rage of computers. A lot of automation is taking place. However on all parameters of safety and other issues, the DGCA has laid down strict norms. I do not think, there is any deviation on that. If anything were brought to my notice, I would be happy to take note of that.

I have the details which the hon. Member had earlier asked, about the number of accidents on multi-engines. He has asked about last year. I have the details year-wise. In 2002, we had two accidents; in 2003, we had four; and in 2004, we had two.

DR. SUJAN CHAKRABORTY: All of us would agree that air safety is very important for the overall consideration. The question of rules is there, the question of engines is there and, I believe, there is also the question of having effective pilots. You are aware that the Calcutta Flying Club is one of the oldest flying clubs in the country and probably the State Government has also proposed that it should be upgraded effectively. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You are putting a question related to the earlier Question under this.

DR. SUJAN CHAKRABORTY: My question is somewhat more related to the earlier question but I am taking the chance given to me. I would like to know whether the Government is really interested to develop the Calcutta Flying Club, which is one of the oldest in the country. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: So that the safety rules are maintained!

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Of course, pilot training is of paramount importance. Nobody could be a pilot of any commercial aircraft unless he is fully trained.

The Calcutta Flying Club and many other flying clubs have been very active in the past but over a period of time all the flying clubs, due to lack of support from either the State Government or otherwise, have gone on a decline. The aviation costs have been rising rapidly and the needs are also growing very much that it really makes a big difference. However, through the DGCA, even now, we support some flying clubs in the country not financially but by giving them some training aircraft or some other kind of instrumentation. I do not know the current status of the Calcutta Flying Club. I know that it is not operational. Is he talking about the Behala Flying Club?

MR. SPEAKER: It is the Behala Flying Club.

DR. SUJAN CHAKRABORTY: How could it be made operational?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: These flying clubs, in the long run, would have to have some private sector participation because they have to be run like commercial organisations. That is the only key to the growth of aviation. The market dynamics would have to rule in this matter. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No, please. You may go and meet the hon. Minister later.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Hon. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has said that many helicopter accidents have taken place. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether his Department has conducted any investigation to find out whether these accidents are due to defects of the machine or human errors or whatever other reasons that could be there. Have they conducted a study to ensure the safety of passengers of helicopters because the occurrences are alarming? Shri O.P. Jindal has died in a helicopter accident only a few days ago. It is a regular occurrence now. So, what steps are going to be taken by the Government to see that they do not recur?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: There have been accidents in the recent past also, which make us sit back and see what is the reason why so many of these helicopter accidents are taking place. Regular Committees of Inquiry have been held and investigations have been held in the past. Every crash has an investigation conducted. There are various reasons for crashes. Some could be attributed

to pilot or human error; some could be attributed to engine failure. There are various reasons. However, this has been an eye opener for us also that we should further strengthen our entire mechanism by which better checks could be conducted.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of hon. Minister to the fact that owing to fog the take off and landing of aircraft generally becomes difficult for the pilot, that is why training of take off and landing in fog conditions is required to be given to the pilots because only during this time there are possibilities of accident. What is his opinion regarding imparting training to our pilots during fog? Such kind of training is imparted in other countries. Similar training is required in our country as well.

[*English*]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, pilot training is, of course, an on-going exercise even for regular pilots. The commanders do go through an upgradation programme. For fog, there is certain special training which has to be undertaken by the pilots and, of course, at the expense of the airlines because the airlines has to invest in this kind of training. It is now being done in the Indian Airlines and some other airlines are also doing it. In India, fog is relative to a month or two in the year and that also in the northern part of India, and that too in one or two major airports. That is why all the pilots in India have not been able to be trained to these conditions. Besides Delhi, there is no other airport in India which has got a Category-III fog-landing system. Over a period of time, this process is on. I think in the years to come, we feel that, there will be more relief on this account.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, four years back a major air accident took place in my parliamentary constituency-Patna, the capital of Bihar in which there were several casualties. Several kinds of inquiries were made by the Aviation Ministry in regard to the accident and several safety measures were also contemplated upon. Several lacunae were found to be the cause of the accident which were even stated to be plugged.

Sir, at that time it was stated that if plane would be landed in such circumstances then there could be more

accidents in future. I would like to know the measures which were taken to plug the lacunae found during the inquiry and if the measures have not been taken so far the time by which these lacunae will be plugged so that no accident takes place in future while landing planes at Patna airport.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to assure the hon. Member that no flights are allowed to operate from any airport of the country until the DGCA grants air worthiness or landing procedures permission to flight services. The Patna plane accident of the year 2000 referred to by him was the result of human error. Its inquiry report has come. I can send him the information regarding the causes due to which the accident took place. But I would like to assure him and the entire House that no compromises are made with the safety while operating flights at any airport in the country.

[English]

SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR: Thank you, Sir. Patiala Flying Club has been one of the oldest in Punjab and it has produced a lot of very good pilots.

MR. SPEAKER: This question is on air safety.

SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR: I thought they were asking about flying clubs.

MR. SPEAKER: You ask this question next time. Mr. Minister, you better answer the hon. Member. Shrimati Preneet Kaur, you send a letter to the Minister.

SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR: I will send a letter. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I have procured an answer for you.

[Translation]

SHRI SHANKHLAL MAJHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question is related to the previous one. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Would you like to ask a question regarding air safety?

SHRI SHANKHLAL MAJHI: No Sir, my question is related to the last one. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: That question is over.

[English]

Next time I will try to help you.

Review of National Policy on Older People

*464. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has reviewed or proposes to review the National Policy on Older Persons in view of sudden spurt in crime against older persons and to provide them better health care and nutrition and other social/financial needs;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith changes needed in the Policy for its better implementation; and

(c) the steps being initiated to provide them better facilities as is being provided to their counterparts in developed countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) to (c) A Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The National Policy on Older Persons contains adequate provisions to address the issues of protection, better healthcare facilities and social/financial security. The Central Government as well as the State Governments have taken a number of measures such as giving grant-in-aid for maintenance of old age homes, day care centres, mobile medicare units, tax rebates and fare concession in rail and air travel etc. to ameliorate the position of older persons.

(c) Information regarding facilities available to the aged in developed countries is not available. Besides our cultural ethos and the level of resource availability being different from that of developed countries.

SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the details of the monitoring agencies responsible for implementation of facilities being provided by the Government to the isolated and neglected segments of the society in the changed scenario and social culture and the so-called modernisation of society, and more particularly in the rural areas where they are worst hit and the efforts to make them economically independent.

MR. SPEAKER: You have mentioned every gamut of old persons.

SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN: Sir, taking into account the fact that the old persons are soft targets for criminal elements and also become victims of fraudulent dealing, and physical and emotional abuses within the households, to prevent this, in view of the sudden spurt in crimes against the older persons, we have written to all the States' Chief Secretaries and Directors-General of Police to take suitable action to ensure the security of life and property of older persons.

SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA: Sir, I would like to know if any awareness campaign is likely to be launched to sensitise people in general about care to be taken of the elderly people of the society.

SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN: Sir, through non-governmental organisations, we are giving this awareness to all the people and also advising the older persons on the importance of keeping contact on phones with relatives. Friends and neighbours and on precautions to be taken on matters such as unauthorised entry, hiring of domestic help, visits of repair and maintenance persons, vendors and the handling of cash and valuables.

[Translation]

SHRI MITRASEN YADAV: Hon. Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Minister is saying that older persons are served through NGOs and are also rendered services as and when required. They have neither any funds nor any service programmes run by any department. I would like to tell the hon. Minister that there are many such older persons in rural areas who have been working in the fields throughout their life but upon attaining old age get neither medicines nor protection and die a dog's death. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the Union Government is likely to formulate any policy to provide assistance to the State Government so that medicines, financial help and protection could be ensured to older persons residing in rural areas, whether the hon. Minister is likely to evolve such a policy and extend help?

[English]

SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN: Sir, we have already evolved a National Policy on Older Persons. Under this Policy, there is a scheme 'Integrated Programme for Older Persons' through which financial

assistance up to 90 per cent of the project cost is provided to the NGOs for establishing and maintaining old age homes, day care centres and mobile medical units and to provide non-institutional services to the older persons. There are schemes of assistance to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, voluntary organisations, self-help groups for construction of old age home and multi-service centres for older persons under which funds are provided for construction of old age homes.

DR. R. SENTHIL: Hon. Speaker, Sir, India has the largest number of old age persons in the world. The hon. Minister's answer is unsatisfactory in this respect that the Government does not have any concrete programme to help the old people. Tamil Nadu Government provides a monthly sum of around Rs. 200 to all old people and also noon meal to the old people. I would like to just suggest to the hon. Minister, on the lines of Tamil Nadu, to start a scheme under the Central Government for providing the noon meal to all the old people and some pension for the old people.

MR. SPEAKER: Would you consider that?

SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN: Sir, there is already a scheme. Through additional Central assistance of Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Home Affairs, under the scheme for National Old Age Pension and National Family Benefit Scheme, Annapoorna Scheme, a sum of Rs. 1,189 crore has been allotted to the States.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Hannan Mollah, do you want to put a question?

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: No.

SHRIMATI MINATI SEN: Sir, joint-family, which was the Indian heritage and culture, has now been changing its shape and forming into nuclear family. Many old persons, particularly old-aged parents, are living in humiliating and distressed condition in the absence of social security and proper guard from the members of the family.

May I know from the hon. Minister, through you, whether the Government of India has taken any initiative to enact a law providing social security for old persons so that those persons are not uprooted from their families?

SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN: Sir, there are already two laws that are existing—one is

Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the other one is a special provision in the Indian Penal Code.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, that is found inadequate, hon. Minister. Now, I call Shrimati Purandeswari.

SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI: Sir, my question about 'violence against senior citizens' stands answered.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for your cooperation.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Union Government is definitely running all kinds of schemes like old age scheme for older persons or several programmes through NGOs but I feel that all such schemes are a flop now. Whichever rural area may be visited one would find that the condition of poor old farmers is such that they are fighting with diseases in the absence of drugs and facing all kinds of difficulties. Through you, I would like to know from the Minister that if any State Government intends to send a financial package to the Union Government for Old Age Pension Scheme or for drugs within a definite time period then whether the Union Government or hon. Minister would like to extend further cooperation.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Would you consider any proposal?

SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN: Sir, there was already a scheme, and that scheme has now been shifted to State Plan. We are giving financial assistance under the Pension Scheme.

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID: Old age people, who are living alone in their houses, have been looted and some of them have been murdered for some gains. These incidents have occurred in the State of Tamil Nadu. Recently, it has appeared in the newspapers, an old lady was murdered in her house.

Will the Central Government provide Old Age Homes both for paying as well as non-paying old age persons who have been left out by their children? Will the Union Government open Old Age Homes like in France, Great Britain and USA?

MR. SPEAKER: The answer has been already given.

SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN: I have already answered this question that Non-Governmental Organisations are running Old Age Homes, Medical Care Centres and Mobile Medical Units. Besides, private Old Age Home, Pay and Stay Homes, are there for taking care of them.

MR. SPEAKER: Q. 465: Dr. Rattan Singh Ajnala—absent; Sardar Sukhdev Singh Libra—absent.

Casualties of Army Personnel during 'Operation Parakram'

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

(a) whether it is a fact that 60 Army personnel dies and 142 wounded while laying outdated and defective mines with unworkable fuses during 'Operation Parakram' from December 19, 2001 to October 16, 2002;

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal to inquire into the mine accidents and to fix the responsibility for the use of outdated mines and disregard of laid down safety procedures;

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

(d) the details of measures taken to replace old and defective mines and fuses with modern, State-of-the-art mines and latest excavation equipments for demining?

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

Statement

(a) to (d) A total of 60 Army personnel lost their lives while 142 were wounded while laying mines during 'Operation Parakram'.

Mine laying is a hazardous operation and the majority of mine related accidents occurred despite all safety measures and prescribed procedures being observed due to adverse environmental, terrain and battle related factors such as need for mines being laid during hours of darkness to prevent detection by the enemy, severe fog and winter conditions and thick undergrowth in some areas. Most of these factors were beyond the control of the field formations. Only those stocks of mines and fuses which were validated as serviceable on the basis of

prescribed procedure were used. Under these circumstances holding of an enquiry and fixing responsibility was not considered.

However as an added precautionary step, stock of mines upto 1975 vintage have been declared unserviceable and are being disposed of. Further, procurement of a new family of 'state of the art' mines and modern mine laying, recording and recovery system is being conceptualised as a part of the continuous process of modernization. Soldiers involved in demining operations after 'Operation Parakram' were provided with protective gear like helmets with visors, bullet proof jackets and anti mine boots. Mechanical mine recovery equipment was also procured and deployed after 'Operation Parakram' to ensure safety in demining operations.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Minister has admitted that 60 Army Personnel lost their lives while 146 were wounded during 'Operation Parakram'. My question was that the explosion was caused due to defective and outdated spare parts while laying the mines in which so many jawans were killed. In reply to the second part hon. Minister had said that these stocks of mines were validated and they were certified, so the need to conduct an inquiry was not felt. On the other hand, it has been admitted in Para 119 from Page 1 to 30 of the Report of the Standing Committee on Defence—2000-2005 that stock of mines upto 1975 vintage was used which had defective and outdated parts owing to which such a heavy casualty was caused. I would like to know from the hon. Minister that whether he will hold an inquiry of this case on this basis?

[English]

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: There is an established procedure. First of all, I would like to assure the hon. Member that 1975 batch mines have been decommissioned and they will not be put into operation. Though the normal life is ten years, even after the expiry of ten years, random testing of mines are done. As you know, mines have the potentiality even for a longer period of time. So, there is a procedure for random testing. Samples are picked up and if they are found effective, then they are put into operation; if they are found to be ineffective, then they are not put into use. Similarly, even within the lifespan of ten years, if from the visual expression it appears that they have deteriorated, those are also discarded. Therefore, there is a set procedure which is being followed in this respect.

12.00 hrs.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, inquiry has not been conducted at all, that is why the Standing Committee on Defence has concluded that it was caused due to the use of defective parts and not paying attention to the expiry date. What is the objection in holding an inquiry.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: He has said that he has answered it.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The hon. Member is confusing with two items. One item is about the mines. In respect of certain other items, the Standing Committee on Defence has suggested that whether some of the weapons were used after the expiry date. That is being subjected to inquiry.

MR. SPEAKER: That is being inquired into.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Militant Activities in J&K

*465. DR. RATTAN SINGH AJNALA:
SARDAR SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the improved ties with Pakistan have not reduced militant activities as infiltration attempts are still occurring and militants getting trained across border;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that militants are still operating their activities from LoC and PoK;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and

(e) the number of infiltration incidents occurred during the last three months?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) There has been a perceptible decline in the terrorist activities in 2004 as compared to the previous two years. However, there is no evidence to suggest that long term steps have been initiated by Pakistan to dismantle the infrastructure supporting terrorism in the area under its control.

In order to strengthen the security measures Government has taken various steps like construction of a fence along the Line of Control (LoC), counter infiltration deployment of troops, deployment of sensors and electronic devices in conjunction with the fence to check infiltration. Besides this, civic action program 'Operation Sadbhavana' has been launched with the aim of winning 'hearts and minds' of the people. The criticality of the fulfilment of President Musharraf's commitment of 6th January 2004 not to permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner has also been emphasized upon Pakistan through diplomatic channels.

According to inputs available with the Government, 16 terrorists are assessed to have infiltrated in the period 1st January-31st March 2005. In addition, Army has foiled 6 bids of infiltration between 1st January and 22nd April 2005 killing 15 terrorists on the LoC.

[Translation]

Air Service Agreements with China and UK

*467. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA:
SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently signed civil aviation agreements/MoUs with China and UK;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the terms and conditions thereof;

(c) the extent to which these agreements are likely to be helpful as far as India is concerned;

(d) whether any talks have been held with the European countries for increasing the flight operations; and

(e) if so, the details thereof alongwith the progress made so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. As part of the on-going process to review traffic rights, bilateral air services consultations have recently been held with China and UK. In pursuance to these discussions, an MOU was signed with China on 11.4.2005 providing for gradual increase in entitlements for operation of air services between the two countries to 14 services per week with immediate effect and to 42 services per week by summer 2006. Designated airlines of either country have also been permitted to operate to any six destinations in the territory of the other country.

As regards UK, entitlements on India-UK sector will go up to 56 services/week on Delhi/Mumbai-London Heathrow route by winter season 2006. The increase in entitlements on these routes will be as follows:

(i) Winter, 2005	42 weekly services
(ii) Summer, 2006	49 weekly services
(iii) Winter, 2006	56 weekly services

As regards other routes, from the beginning of Winter 2005 the designated airlines of India may operate without any capacity limit between India and UK. The designated airlines of UK may also operate on all other routes to India except Heathrow/Delhi and Heathrow/Mumbai subject to a total capacity limit of 7-services/week to/from each airport in India, except that in the cases of Bangalore and Chennai, the total capacity limit will be increased to 14 services/week each from the beginning of summer, 2006. All these services may be operated with 5th freedom rights to/from intermediate and beyond points.

The revised arrangements with China have been entered into in the backdrop of significant growth in trade between the two countries paving way for adequate direct connectivity. The enhancement in entitlements on India-UK sector will also remove the constraint on direct connectivity and enable the passengers to travel directly instead through a 3rd country. This will also provide an opportunity to the Indian carriers to optimally use the commercial opportunities on this sector.

(d) and (e) Among the European Countries, bilateral talks have been held with France recently besides UK. It has been decided to enhance entitlements to 35 weekly

flights from 14 weekly flights and to amend the existing agreement to provide for designation of multiple airlines. Airlines of France have also been permitted to operate to Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad in addition to Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. Reciprocally the Indian carriers have been permitted to operate to New York, Montreal, Toronto and 4 new points in North America via France.

[English]

Utilisation of Foreign Exchange Reserves on Gas Pipeline and Crude Oil Projects

*468. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:
SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

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

(a) whether the Government proposes to utilize the foreign exchange reserves on gas pipeline and crude oil projects for Oil Safety of the country;

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

(c) whether Ministry of Petroleum has sent such proposal to Ministry of Finance/Reserve Bank of India in the matter; and

(d) if so, the present status of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) To ensure the country's energy security, the available foreign exchange reserves are being utilized to the extent required.

(c) and (d) No specific proposals have been sent to the Ministry of Finance and Reserve Bank of India by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas as the foreign exchange requirements for energy security are being met in the normal course through existing procedures.

[Translation]

Helicopter/Aircraft Crashes

*469. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA:
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that due to frequent helicopter/aircraft crashes many VIPs alongwith other passengers died in the recent years;

(b) if so, the number of persons died in such incidents during the last three years;

(c) whether the Government has set up Inquiry Committees to probe the causes of these incidents;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Inquiry Committees have since completed their investigations and submitted their reports to the Government;

(f) if so, the findings thereof; and

(g) the remedial measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in the light of findings of the Committees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Out of the 21 accidents in Indian Civil Registered aircraft/helicopters in the last 3 years i.e. from 2002 till date in 3 accidents VIPs were involved. In all these 21 accidents, 63 persons including crew members and 4 VIPs met with fatal injuries.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. In an accident to Deccan Aviation Bell 206 helicopter near Vijayawada on 03.03.2002 in which Shri G.M.C. Balayogi received fatal injury in addition to 2 others on board, a Committee of Inquiry investigated the accident. In the remaining accidents Inspector of Accidents were appointed by Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for investigating the cause of accidents.

(e) to (g) The Committee of Inquiry set up to inquire into the accident of M/s. Deccan Aviation's helicopter near Vijayawada on 3.3.2002 has submitted its report. According to the Committee the accident was caused when the pilot unable to continue the flight due to poor visibility while searching for an appropriate place to land, made an error of judgement by making the pond water as land surface. After realising so when he attempted to lift the helicopter from a low height, the tail boom contacted water surface and got separated causing the helicopter to spin and crash. The recommendations of the Committee are under implementation by DGCA.

In the remaining investigations safety recommendations emanating from various accident investigations as and when received and accepted by the Government were followed up for implementation with the concerned agencies so as to prevent recurrence of similar accidents.

AIR Stations In Border Areas

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

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

(a) the number of AIR stations functioning in border areas of Rajasthan, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir;

(b) whether the Government is aware that services of the AIR stations in the border areas of these States are not being utilized to their full capacity;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether there is acute shortage of staff in AIR stations located in border areas;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to meet the shortage?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (f) Prasara Bharati has informed that currently, following thirteen AIR stations are functioning in the border areas of Rajasthan, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir:

Rajasthan

1. Barmer
2. Bikaner
3. Jodhpur
4. Jaisalmer
5. Suratgarh

Punjab

6. Jalandhar

Jammu & Kashmir

7. Jammu
8. Kathua
9. Kupwara
10. Naushera
11. Poonch
12. Rajouri
13. Srinagar

Except for five AIR stations namely Jaisalmer, Kupwara, Naushera, Poonch and Rajouri which are not operating at full capacity due to paucity of staff, all other AIR stations in border areas are operational at full capacity.

Military Cooperation between India and U.S.A.

*471. SHRI Y.G. MAHAJAN:
SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any discussion/negotiation to promote military cooperation has been held between India and U.S.A.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

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

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

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) United States (US)-India military relations are advanced through the Defence Policy Group (DPG) and its constituent groups. Six meetings of the DPG have been held since it was constituted in 1995. The last meeting was held in June 2004. Discussions in the DPG cover a security dialogue, military-to-military cooperation, defence procurements, cooperation in defence Research & Development and defence technology security issues.

(c) and (d) There has been steady progress in US-India defence cooperation. Progress has been most visible in the area of military cooperation covering training, joint exercises and exchange of experience. Cooperation in other areas is also growing. Decisions on cooperative activities are taken by mutual agreement under the DPG as and when they meet.

[English]

Autonomy to Oil PSUs

*472. SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY:
SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT:

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

(a) whether the Government is considering to give more autonomy to the public sector oil companies to enable them to compete with multi-nationals and the private Indian companies; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Public sector companies, including oil companies, are governed by the general guidelines regarding autonomy laid down by the Department of Public Enterprises. Under the existing guidelines, Navratna oil PSUs viz. Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), GAIL India Ltd. (GAIL), Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL) have been delegated powers to *inter alia* incur capital expenditure without any monetary ceiling, to enter into technology Joint Ventures/Strategic Alliances, to effect organizational restructuring, to create and windup below Board level posts, and to raise capital from domestic and international markets.

The Department of Public Enterprises have constituted an ad hoc group of experts to consider issues relating to autonomy, delegation of financial powers, corporate governance, research and development, technological upgradation, effective functioning in a competitive environment etc. related to Central Public Sector Undertakings in the context of the mandate under the National Common Minimum Programme. The Government are yet to take decisions on the recommendations of the ad hoc Group.

To strengthen competitiveness in initiatives for sourcing oil and gas from abroad, the Board of Directors of ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) has been empowered to approve overseas projects involving investments up to US \$ 75 million or Rs. 300 crore, whichever is less. For investment decisions above this financial limit in Exploration & Production (E&P) projects overseas, OVL are required to secure Government approval through the Empowered Committee of Secretaries of the Ministries of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Finance, External Affairs, Planning Commission, Department of Legal Affairs and Department of Public Enterprises. Similar empowerment is being considered for overseas projects jointly undertaken by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Oil India Limited (OIL).

Loss to Railways in Transportation

*473. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:
SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Railways has over a period of time lost its share to other competing modes of transport;

(b) if so, the broad details alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there is a need for a strategic shift in the objectives of the Railways so that it can regain some of the market it has lost to other competitive modes of transport; and

(d) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Railways to reorient their objectives in order to cope with a more competitive market and to become more user-friendly which responds quickly to customer needs?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) The data with regard to Market Share of the Railways with other competing modes of transport is not notified.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. There is need for improvement of throughput of traffic to increase productivity and efficiency of the Indian Railways. The various steps that are being taken to regain the market share are as under:

1. Preferential traffic schedule for supply of wagons has been rationalized and simplified. Higher

- priority within the same class will be accorded to customers adopting Engine on Load (EOL) Scheme, Wagon Investment Scheme and Mechanised round-the-clock working etc.
2. Electrification of diesel sidings located on electrified sections will be done at Railway's cost where justified by traffic.
 3. Engine-on-Load Scheme, has been further liberalized and made attractive; scheme has also been extended to selected goods shed and for customers not having their own private sidings.
 4. Formulation of Terminal Incentive Scheme including cash incentives, aimed at reduction of detention at terminals, in consultation with industry.
 5. Upgradation of facilities at freight trains examination centres for qualitative improvement in examination and for providing longer intervals between successive examinations.
 6. Electronic Payment Gateway facility has been implemented in January 2005 for Badarpur Thermal Power Station, and the facility will be extended to major customers.
 7. Freight customers will be encouraged to develop their private sidings through cost sharing. The cost of a new railway siding shall be shared by the Railway, if the industry comes up with a long-term commitment of traffic, say for 10 years or more of which a cost benefit analysis would be done by the Zonal Railway. The cost of removable superstructure including railway track, sleepers and the overhead electrical equipment shall be borne by the railways. The cost of the sub-structure of the track including land, earthwork, ballast, etc. shall be borne by the customer.
 8. Introduction of scheme for development of integrated Warehouse Complexes to provide single window service to customers through Public-Private partnership.
 9. Goods tariff has been made simple, rational and transparent. The rationalised Goods Tariff shall contain only 80 groups of commodities instead of over 4000 commodities at present.
 10. Total number of Classes in the Goods Tariff have been reduced from 59 in March' 2002 to 19 w.e.f. April, 2005.
 11. The highest class has been reduced in stages from Class 300X in 2001-02 to Class-240 in 2005-06.
 12. A new 'Premium Registration Scheme' has been drawn up for those customers who are willing to pay freight at two classes higher than the prescribed class to be accorded higher preference in allotment of rakes within the same class of priority.
 13. Two days in a week shall be reserved for allotment of rakes strictly as per the date of registration.
 14. A new attractive 'Wagon Investment Scheme' has been formulated assuring guaranteed supply of wagons to customers investing railway wagons. Scheme also envisages freight rebate and higher priority for such customers.

Increase in Speed of Trains

*474. DR. M. JAGANNATH:
SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways Safety Commissioner has refused to give green signal for increasing the speed of some Express trains as reported in the 'Times of India' dated April 3, 2005;

(b) if so, whether the Railway tracks and signalling system are not found suitable to run high speed trains;

(c) if so, the reasons for not upgrading the tracks and signalling system; and

(d) the corrective measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Railways in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir. The news item pertain to introduction of Shatabdi Express at 150 KMPH on New Delhi-Agra Cantt section. The Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety (CCRS) has not so far cleared the running of train at 150 KMPH speed on New Delhi-Agra Cantt. section. The CCRS has forwarded the applications for

permission to run the said train of Northern Railway and North Central Railway, with certain observations, to Railway Board. These are under consideration of the Railway Board, who have to take a final decision in the matter.

(b) No, Sir. The track and signalling system available on New Delhi-Agra Cantt. section, is adequate to run such a train.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No corrective measures are required for track and signalling system. However, CCRS has drawn attention to issues like provision of fencing throughout to prevent cattle straying on to track, train protection and warning system as an additional measure to prevent a driver passing signal at danger, provision of frills on lifting barrier at level crossing gates as an additional measure to prevent entry of road users in a closed gate, Ultrasonic Flaw Detection (USFD) of rails by SPURT car in addition to manual testing etc.

Action has been taken to satisfactorily address all these issues, before the train is run. The observations made by CCRS shall be kept in view while taking a final decision in the matter.

Use of Hydrogen Gas for Fuel Purposes

*475. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPIPARAI:
SHRI DEVIDAS PINGLE:

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

(a) whether Hydrogen gas mixed with natural gas is being considered for use as automobile fuel;

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

(c) the advantages/benefits accruing out of mixture of Hydrogen gas in natural gas and its efficacy as efficient fuel;

(d) the total investment proposed to be made in this regard;

(e) whether there is any proposal to take assistance from the private sector for mobilising resources for generation of Hydrogen power; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (f) It has been technically established that a mixture of natural gas and Hydrogen could be used as a transportation fuel. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas have recently set up a Hydrogen Corpus Fund of Rs. 100 crore to support research and development into various aspects of so using Hydrogen. Demonstration projects in the pipeline include using 10% Hydrogen in Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) at the Indian Oil Corporation Research & Development Centre at Faridabad (planned for July 2005), and a similar demonstration project later in Delhi.

Tests suggest that Hydrogen blended natural gas can reduce emissions, particularly, Nitrous Oxide when burn in Internal Combustion engines without affecting the efficiency and performance of natural gas engines. However the advantages and problems relating to mixing Hydrogen with natural gas, and its efficacy as a fuel in Indian road conditions can be judged only after the demonstration projects come into operation and sufficient data has been generated.

There is no firm proposal under consideration of the Government to take assistance from the private sector for mobilizing resources for the generation of Hydrogen power. However, the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources has constituted a National Hydrogen Energy Board, which has high level representation from Government, industry, academic institutions and experts. The Board is providing guidance in the preparation and implementation of the National Hydrogen Energy Road Map, covering all aspects of Hydrogen energy starting from production, storage, transport, delivery, safety to applications. The Road Map will assist in developing specific projects with Public Private Partnership, which would also facilitate generation of resources from the private sector.

Kelkar Committee Report on Defence Purchases

*476. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Kelkar Committee on defence purchases has submitted its report to the Government;

(b) if so, the details of recommendations made by the Committee;

(c) the extent to which the Government has accepted the recommendations of the Committee; and

(d) the steps being taken to implement the recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Part-I of the Report of the Kelkar Committee on review of Defence Procurement Procedure to Integrate Users, Ministry of Defence and the Industry has been submitted to the Government on 5.4.2005.

The recommendations of the Committee revolve around:

- (i) Preparation of a 15-year long term plan forming the basis for acquisition programme;
- (ii) Information sharing of requirement of Armed Forces with the Industry;
- (iii) Identification of entry points for the private sector in the acquisition process;
- (iv) Accreditation and fostering of Raksha Udyog Ratna (RUR)/Champion;
- (v) Policy framework to promote participation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in defence production;
- (vi) New institutional architecture for defence acquisition;
- (vii) Defence R&D opportunities both with DRDO and Industry;
- (viii) Promote transparency in decision making;
- (ix) Optimum utilization of existing capacity;
- (x) RFP to include an Offset clause for contracts valued at Rs. 300 crores and above; and
- (xi) Re-examine the concept of Negative List for Defence exports and setting up of Export Marketing Organisation.

The recommendations made by the Committee are under consideration of the Government.

[Translation]

Electrification of Rail Lines

*477. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the policy of the Railways regarding electrification of rail lines;

(b) the rail-sections electrified during the last three years;

(c) the expenditure incurred thereon, zone-wise;

(d) the details of proposals received from the States regarding electrification of rail-sections; and

(e) the present status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Electrification projects are considered primarily on economic considerations excepting projects justified as operational necessity. The criterion/guidelines being followed in this regard are as under:

- (i) Each electrification project will be justified on Rate of Return, which should exceed 14% with the Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) method.
- (ii) In certain specific cases, electrification will be justified on considerations of operational flexibility.
- (iii) Electrification of a single line section (main line) will normally not be considered.
- (iv) While proposing electrification of a route, the rail network in the region in totality should be considered to include, if necessary, short route lengths, which would otherwise remain non-electrified and reduce operational flexibility.

(b) and (c) Sections electrified during the last three years from 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 and expenditure incurred thereon, are as under:

Section electrified during 2002-03	Route Kilo-metres	Section electrified during 2003-04	Route Kilo-metres	Section electrified during 2004-05	Route Kilo-metres	Railway/ Zone	Approximate Expenditure incurred thereon (Rs. in crore)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Barsat-Hasnabad	52	—	—	—	—	Eastern	28.80
Gaya-Jahanabad	43	Jahanabad-Patna	49	—	—	East-Central	56.72
Kusunda-Jamuniatand	23	—	—	—	—		
Bhubaneswar-Barang-Meramandoli	96	Barang-Cuttack	10	Kapilas Road-Kendupada & Salegaon-Nergundi	15	East Coast	136.22
—	—	Rajalgarh-Kapilas Road/Nergundi & Radhakishore pur-Machapur	27	Kendupada-Jakhapura	33		
—	—	—	—	Kapilas Road-Haridaspur	25		
—	—	Talcher-Station Yard	03	Khurda Road-Puri	41		
Amrda Road-Balasore	37	Balasore-Ranital	50	Ranital-Bhadrak	11	South Eastern	47.50
Ludhiana-Phagwara	36	Phagwara-Amritsar	101	Roorkee-Dausani	14	Northern	110.66
Malhaur-Safedabad-Barabanki	18	Saharanpur-Roorkee	31	Laksar-Muazzampur narain	27		
—	—	Tapri bye pass line-Hindol Cabin	02	—	—		
—	—	Lucknow Passenger Line	04	—	—		
Kanchipuram-New Kanchipuram	01	Kanchipuram-Takkolam	21	—	—	Southern	164.27

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Tindivam-Villupuram	37	Emakulam-Sheritalai	30	Sheritalai-Kayankulam	69		
Emakulam-Kuruppantara-Changancheri	35	Kuruppantara-Changancheri	37	Changancheri-Kayankulam-Quilon	81		
Renigunta-Ballapalle	22	Ballapalle-Nandalur	64	—	—	South Central	38.52
Vyara-Lakkadkot-	23	Dhekwad-Lakkadkot	75	Bhestan Neyol bye pass line	04	Western	63.87
Dondacha-Nandurbar-Dhekwad	32	—	—	—	—		
Total	455		504		320		

(d) and (e) The proposal for electrification of the following sections have been received from the

Chief Ministers of the various States, the details are as under:

States	Section	Status
Rajasthan	i. Kota-Baran-Chhabra-Guna-Bina	Not yet approved, final decision to electrify this section depends upon the appraisal of the project report.
	ii. Jaipur-Swai Madhopur & Ratlam-Neemuch-Chittorgarh	Not considered, due to relative priority for electrification of other high density routes.
Pondicherry	Villupuram-Pondicherry	Approved. Included in the Budget 2005-06.
Uttaranchal	Laksar-Dehradun	Not yet approved, due to operational reasons.
Kerala	Shoranur-Mangalore	Not considered, due to relative priority for electrification of other high density routes.

[English]

High Speed Bullet Trains

*478. SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for a development study for running high speed bullet trains on some selected routes has been sent to the Government of Japan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government of Japan thereto;

(d) the amount spent on the study so far; and

(e) the time by which the bullet trains are likely to ply on selected routes?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) to (e) Ministry of Railways had posed High Speed Rail Link Project between Mumbai-Ahmedabad under Development Study Program of Japanese Technical Cooperation Programme for the year 2005-06,

through the Ministry of Finance. Government have subsequently communicated to Japanese authorities that the feasibility study on the project may not be taken up in view of the change of priority of the project.

Ministry of Railways had not made any expenditure towards the proposed development study.

Critical Care Ambulance Compartment in long Distance Trains

*479. DR. K. DHANARAJU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had a proposal to augment a Critical Care Ambulance Compartment in long distance trains running for more than 24 hours to cater the need of sick passengers particularly the senior citizens;

(b) if so, the reasons for which the said proposal has not yet been implemented;

(c) whether in view of the great demand, the Government proposes to start the same; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the said proposal is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Allotment of Petrol Pumps to Families of Kargil Martyrs

*480. SHRIMATI KALPNA RAMESH NARHIRE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had earlier announced to allot petrol pumps to the families of Kargil martyrs;

(b) if so, whether the Government is aware that many families of Kargil martyrs are yet to get the allotted petrol pumps;

(c) if so, the reasons for delay in allotment of petrol pumps to these families; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for allotment of petrol pumps to the families of martyrs expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Government had introduced a special scheme in 1999 for the allotment of retail outlet dealerships (petrol pumps) and LPG distributorships to the widows/next of kin of the defence personnel killed in action in 'Operation Vijay' (Kargil). Under the scheme, the Director General Resettlement (DGR) under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, recommends to the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas the names of the beneficiaries, and the locations where they would like to set up the dealerships/distributorships. Allotments are approved by the Government on the recommendations of the oil industry, after undertaking feasibility studies of the locations opted for by those beneficiaries.

Under this scheme, 308 retail outlets (ROs) were to be commissioned, but eight allottees were not interested in securing dealerships. In addition, there are 12 cases where Letters of Intent (LOIs) have not been issued owing to such reasons as allottees seeking a change of product/location; failure to produce the required documents; locations suggested by allottees not being found viable, etc. The status of the remaining 288 allotments, where LOIs have been issued, is as follows:

ROs commissioned	—	249
Land obtained and work in progress	—	4
Land obtained	—	2
Land identified	—	9
Looking for land	—	24
Total		288

In 6 cases where land has been obtained, work is in progress and the ROs are expected to be commissioned early. In 9 cases where land has been identified, the formalities for acquisition of land are in progress. In the balance 24 cases, where land has not yet been found, every effort is being made by the OMCs concerned with Government authorities/private parties to obtain land for the expeditious commissioning of these allotments.

*[English]***Smuggling of Antiques**

4975. SHRIMATI MINATI SEN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of large scale smuggling of antiques on Indo-Bangladesh border through Siliguri corridor;

(b) if so, the number of persons arrested during the last three years;

(c) whether it is a fact that in the past the State Administration of Cultural Heritage in China cautioned India of the increasing outflow of antiques through the Siliguri corridor; and

(d) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to check the smuggling of antiques through Siliguri corridor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) The information is being collected & will be laid on the Table of the House.

*[Translation]***Hiring of Aircraft for Haj Pilgrims**

4976. SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of aircraft used for to and fro journeys for Haj pilgrims to Saudi Arabia during 2004-05;

(b) the amount of fare charged per passenger;

(c) the names of the countries from which aircraft were hired alongwith number thereof during the said period;

(d) the number of Haj pilgrims who availed free travel facility during the said period; and

(e) the number of the office bearers/members of the Haj Committee who visited the Saudi Arabia on Government expenses during the said period alongwith details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Five aircraft were deployed by Air India/Indian Airlines for the Haj-2004-05 operations.

(b) The fare charged was Rs. 12,000/-per adult, Rs. 8,000/-per child and Rs. 1,200/-per infant.

(c) The aircraft that were used to transport the Haj pilgrims were from the existing fleet of Air India and Indian Airlines. In addition, Saudi Arabian airline also deployed aircraft for Haj operations.

(d) None. However, 81,022 pilgrims (including 48 Children and 236 infants) travelled to Jeddah on subsidised fares.

(e) Eighteen visits of the office bearers/members of the Haj Committee of India have been made to Saudi Arabia during the year 2004-05 in connection with the Haj Arrangements. No Government money has been spent on these visits.

Inclusion of Dhanger and Herdsmen Castes in SC List

4977. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra has sent any proposal to include 'Dhanger' caste in the List of Scheduled Caste;

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

(c) whether the caste traditionally engaged in work of herdsmen outside Maharashtra has also been included in the Scheduled Caste; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Communities are included on the basis of fulfilling the criteria namely, "extreme social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of traditional practice of untouchability".

*[English]***Change in Road Alignment**

4978. SHRI CHEWANG THUPSTAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Border Roads Organisation has proposed to change in the road alignment of the proposed road to link Darcha in Himachal Pradesh with Nyemo in Ladakh via Padum, Zaskar;

(b) if so, the details of changes proposed;

(c) whether the proposed change in alignment would deprive road connectivity to a large segment of habitations in Lungnag valley of Zaskar Sub-Division;

(d) if so, whether the Government would consider road connectivity to these habitations through Border Roads Organisation; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) to (e) Does not arise.

*[Translation]***Import of Crude Oil from Saudi Arabia**

4979. SHRI JAI PRAKASH (MOHANLAL GANJ): Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether out of total crude import, 26% is imported from Saudi Arabia;

(b) if so, whether the Government has any plan to double the import of crude oil from Saudi Arabia;

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

(d) the issues discussed with the leaders of Saudi Arabia during his recent visit to that country and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Crude oil import from Saudi Arabia during 2004-05 was 24.96% (prov.) of the total crude imports into the country.

(b) and (c) Saudi Arabia has assured supply of any additional requirement of crude oil to India. With the expected import of crude likely to double over the next twenty years, it is possible that our import from Saudi Arabia might also increase considerably.

(d) Minister had wide range of political and economic discussions with the Saudi leadership pertaining to bilateral relations, the situation in the region and Indo-Saudi cooperation in the hydrocarbons sector. The main items were discussed as follows:

(i) Indo-Saudi partnership for the promotion of peace and development in the region was emphasized particularly in the context of prevailing uncertainties and insecurities.

(ii) The Saudi Government agreed to meet all of India's future crude oil requirements.

(iii) Both sides agreed to pursue investments in each other's hydrocarbons sector, particularly in respect of refineries and the exploration and production of gas.

(iv) The Saudi side agreed that the Round Table of Asian Oil Ministers which first met in New Delhi in January, 2005 should now be an annual event.

*[English]***Popularisation Measures for Welfare Schemes**

4980. SHRI DAHYABHAI VALLABHBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Radio is considered to be the strongest medium for imparting information and knowledge about various Government welfare schemes;

(b) if so, whether the Government has been making full use of this medium for propagation of its welfare scheme;

(c) if so, the names and nature of Radio programmes being produced and broadcast for this purpose;

(d) if not, the reasons for not utilizing this popular media; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to exploit the full utilization of the medium to popularise welfare schemes of the Ministry?

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

(c) "Sanwari Jayan Jeevan Ki Rahen" a weekly radio programme of 15 minutes duration has been produced and broadcast in 04-05.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Construction of Level Crossings

4981. SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN:
SHRI Y.G. MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of railway level crossings constructed in the country during the last three years, State/zone-wise;

(b) the expenditure incurred on their construction during the said period; and

(c) the details of railway level crossings proposed to be constructed in the country during 2005-06 along with their locations, State/zone-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) As per existing rules, provision of level crossings is made in consultation with the State Govt. at the time of laying a new line or within 10 years from the date of its commissioning to traffic as part of accommodation works. Thereafter any level crossing can be provided at a technically suitable

location on deposit terms, if such a proposal is sponsored by the State Govt./Local bodies duly agreeing to bear the initial cost of construction of the level crossing and one time capitalized cost of recurring maintenance and operational charges. Further, as per policy of Railways, no new unmanned level crossing is permitted on existing lines on safety considerations.

Keeping in view the extant policy, no new level crossing has been constructed on existing lines from Railway funds during the last three years. At present, there is no proposal for providing new level crossing on existing lines out of Railway funds during 2005-06. However, new Railway crossings are constructed as part of projects as enumerated above.

[English]

Upliftment of Handicapped

4982. SHRI RANEN BARMAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any plans and programmes under consideration of Government to uplift the conditions of handicapped in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of funds allocated during 2005-06 under these schemes, Scheme-wise, State/UT-wise and NGO-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) to (c) The Government implements a number of schemes/programmes for the welfare of persons with disabilities. Funds for these schemes are not allocated State/UT-wise and NGO-wise. The scheme-wise fund allocation for the year 2005-06 is enclosed as statement.

Statement

Scheme-wise fund allocation for the year 2005-06

		(Rs. in crores)
1.	Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee NIOH, Kolkata	4.00
2.	Chandra Singh Garwali NIVH, Dehradun	5.00
3.	AYJNIHH, Mumbai	9.00

4.	Swami Vivekanand NIRTAR, Cuttack	6.25
5.	Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Institute for the Physically Handicapped, New Delhi	2.00
6.	Mahatma Jotiba Phule NIMH, Secunderabad	10.00
7.	National Institute for Multiple Handicapped	6.50
8.	Indian Spinal Injury Centre	3.50
9.	Rehabilitation Council of India	3.00
10.	Employment of Handicapped	0.01
11.	National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation (NHFDC)	11.00
12.	Implementation of the Persons with Disability Act	20.34
13.	S&T Projects in Mission Mode	2.00
14.	Deen Dayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme	80.00
15.	Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances	60.00
16.	Misc. Scheme	
	(i) IT Plan	0.50
	(ii) Others	1.50
Total		224.60

*[Translation]***Publication of Foreign Newspapers**

4983. SHRI BALESHWAR YADAV: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to accord approval to the foreign newspapers for bringing out their publication in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) The policy is under review.

Digitalization of Private Channels

4984. SHRI CHANDRABHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of private channels has increased manifold during the recent past;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to digitalize them in view of the problems being faced by Cable Operators in proper telecasting of so many channels;

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

(d) whether the Union Government is contemplating to allow the terrestrial channels in private sector; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The availability of private TV channels has increased over a period of time. As many as 151 TV channels have been permitted to uplink from India. Besides, a large number of TV channels, which are uplinked from outside, are available for viewing in India.

(b) and (c) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued a consultation paper on the issue relating to digitalisation of Cable Television on 3rd January, 2005. It has so far not made any recommendations in the matter to the Government.

(d) and (e) Terrestrial Television Transmission in India is presently being done by only Prasar Bharati, a public service broadcaster. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has only issued a consultation paper on 25th February 2005, on "issues relating to private terrestrial television broadcasting services", seeking inputs from various stakeholders and to generate a discussion on the appropriate policy and licensing framework for introduction of private terrestrial TV broadcast service in India. TRAI has not formulated its recommendations so far. The Government shall take a view only after TRAI's recommendations are received.

[English]

Heritage Trains

4985. SHRI SUBODH MOHITE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the heritage trains started during last year by South Eastern Railway and Central Railway to give tourist a glimpse of the national beauty and treasured monument of Vidarbha and Madhya Pradesh are still languishing in the loco-sheds;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Maharashtra Tourism Development Council has failed to fulfil its commitment;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to start the train at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) A heritage train was run between Nagpur and Jabalpur as a part of the 150th year celebrations of the Indian Railways. The train was formed with existing old wooden coaches and this train was not a regular tourism exercise.

(c) The Maharashtra Tourism Development Council had no role to play in the operation of the above train.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The running of such train would be examined as and when demand arises.

[Translation]

Construction of Coast Guard Air-Squadron Complex

4986. SHRI ATIQ AHAMAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had acquired land in Kolkata for construction of coast guard air-squadron complex;

(b) if so, when the land was acquired and the cost thereof;

(c) the reasons for delay in constructing the said complex; and

(d) the time by which the construction work of this complex is likely to be started?

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

(b) The land was taken over on 29th March 1996 at a total cost of Rs. 15.86 crores.

(c) Due to induction of an additional Helicopter squadron, need for additional office and married accommodation and other changes in construction that were necessitated, the project got delayed.

(d) The building construction is likely to start within a year.

*[English]***Rail Projects with ADB Loan**

4987. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the rail projects in West Bengal which are to be taken up with the Asian Development Bank loan;

(b) the time by which the works on the projects are likely to be taken up; and

(c) the time schedules for completion of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There are no projects in West Bengal for which funds have been tied up through Asian Development Bank.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

*[Translation]***Gandhi Darshan and Darshan Samiti**

4988. SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA:
SHRI ASHOK ARGAL:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount spent on construction works in Gandhi Darshan and Darshan Samiti during the last two years;

(b) the details of the companies engaged for carrying out these works;

(c) whether tenders were floated before awarding the construction works;

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

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

*[English]***Print Media Policy**

4989. SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether in September, 2004 the Government had decided to set up a panel of Group of Ministers (GoM) to take a comprehensive look at the print media policy;

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

(c) whether GoM has submitted its report to the Government;

(d) if so, the salient features thereof; and

(e) the follow-up action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The Cabinet, in its meeting dated 29th September 2004, while considering the Amendment to Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, directed that the matter may, in the first instance, be considered by a Group of Ministers. Accordingly, the Government has constituted a Group of Ministers.

(c) No Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

*[Translation]***Lalitpur-Singarauli Rail Line**

4990. SHRI GANESH SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of work done on the Lalitpur-Singarauli rail line till date;

(b) whether the work on the said rail line is undertaken from one side only;

(c) if so, whether the Government is contemplating to start work from Satna, Rewa and Singarauli side also; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) The work of construction of new broad gauge line between Lalitpur-Singarauli and Mahoba to Khajuraho has taken up in phases and in the first phase the work on Lalitpur-Mahoba and Khajuraho-Mahoba are in progress. On these sections, land acquisition, earthwork and bridges are in various stages of progress. 8.83 lakh cubic metres of earthwork, 31 minor bridges have already been completed. Final location survey on balance length i.e. Khajuraho-Satna and Rewa-Singarauli is in progress. The work in these sections would be taken up once the alignment is firmed up and estimate sanctioned, depending upon the availability of resources. An outlay of Rs. 25 crore has been provided for the project in the budget 2005-06.

Opening of 'EGHS' Dispensaries

4991. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of dispensaries opened so far under Ex-servicemen Group Health Scheme (EGHS) in Maharashtra;

(b) the number of EGHS dispensaries proposed to be opened in the current financial year with locations thereof; and

(c) the total amount sanctioned and spent under the scheme during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) The details of 12 ECHS polyclinics opened so far in the State of Maharashtra are given in the enclosed Statement-I. The number of ECHS polyclinics proposed to be opened in the State of Maharashtra during the current financial year (2005-2006) with locations thereof is given in the enclosed Statement-II.

(c) The scheme came into operation w.e.f. 1st April, 2003. The amount allotted and spent under the ECHS during each of the last two years is as under:

2003-2004

		Allotted	Spent
(a)	Capital	Rs. 15.00 Crores	Nil
(b)	Revenue	Rs. 150.0 Crores	Rs. 17.22 Crores

2004-2005

		Allotted	Spent
(a)	Capital	Rs. 17.98 Crores	Rs. 17.98 Crores
(b)	Revenue	Rs. 93.42 Crores	Rs. 93.42 Crores

Statement I

Details of Dispensaries (Polyclinics) Opened so far Under Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) in Maharashtra

Sl.No.	Regional Centre	Polyclinics	Type	Military/Non Military
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Pune	Satara	A	Non Military
2.	Pune	Kolhapur	B	Non Military

1	2	3	4	5
3.	Pune	Mumbai	B	Military
4.	Pune	Pune	B	Military
5.	Pune	Nagpur	C	Military
6.	Pune	Akola	D	Non Military
7.	Pune	Nasik (Deolali)	D	Non Military
8.	Pune	Aurangabad	D	Military
9.	Pune	Sholapur	C	Non Military
10.	Pune	Ahmednagar	C	Military
11.	Pune	Mumbai (Upnagar) Pawai	D	Military
12.	Pune	Buldana	D	Non Military

Statement II

Details of Dispensaries (Polyclinics) Proposed to be Opened in Current Financial Year (2005-2006) with Location thereof Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) in Maharashtra

Sl.No.	Regional Centre	Polyclinics	Type	Military/Non Military
1.	Pune	Sangli	B	Non Military
2.	Pune	Ratnagiri	C	Non Military
3.	Pune	Sindudurg	C	Non Military
4.	Pune	Thane	C	Non Military
5.	Pune	Amravati	D	Non Military
6.	Pune	Jalgaon	D	Non Military
7.	Pune	Osmanabad	D	Non Military
8.	Pune	Alibagh	D	Non Military
9.	Pune	Latur	D	Non Military

Air Services in Rajasthan

4992. SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received proposals from Government of Rajasthan for the extension

and improvement of air services in view of the vast potential of developing industries and tourism in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Requests have been received from Government of Rajasthan and others for starting air services on Jaipur-Bangalore-Jaipur route; commencing air services between Jaipur and Hong-Kong; introduction of air services to Bikaner and Kota; augmentation of air services with/within Rajasthan, restoration of air transport services in Udaipur-Aurangabad sector; introduction of direct flight between Jaipur and Chandigarh etc.

(c) Indian Airlines already provides air connectivity to tourists points in Rajasthan namely Jodhpur, Jaipur and Udaipur. Indian Airlines also links Jaipur to Singapore, Bangkok and Dubai. Indian Airlines is unable to start/restore air services as requested for various reasons such as aircraft constraints, inadequate traffic potential, commercial non-viability of the operations etc.

However, Government has laid down Route Dispersal Guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country including North Eastern Region. It is, however, upto the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. As such, the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of Route Dispersal Guidelines issued by the Government.

New Railway Stations in Maharashtra

4993. SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up new railway stations in Maharashtra particularly at Hiroj (District Solapur); and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Does not arise.

[English]

Opening of International Routes to Private Airlines

4994. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT "BACHDA": Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government has decided to open up international air routes for private airline Jet Airways and grant it passage rights to the United States;

(b) whether Government is also considering to open up international air routes for other private airlines;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the decision to open up international air routes for Jet Airways was announced on the day the Jet Airways issued its public offer to equity thereby facilitating over subscription of equity on the same day;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to avoid announcing such decisions which may favour private airways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Indian scheduled carriers having continuous operations of at least 5 years in the domestic sector and having a minimum fleet size of 20 aircraft have been permitted to operate on all international routes except UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. So far, entitlements have been allocated to the following private carriers for operations on international routes:

Jet Airways: Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, UK, Belgium, USA, Malaysia, Singapore

Air Sahara: Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, UK, Malaysia, Singapore.

(d) to (f) The decision to permit eligible Indian scheduled carriers to operate on international routes was under Government's consideration for some time and this was also one of the recommendations of Naresh Chandra Committee. This decision applies to all eligible private carriers equally and has nothing to do with the public offer of Jet Airways.

Marine Archaeology

4995. SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of steps taken by the Archaeological Survey of India for enlarging its activity in marine Archaeology;

(b) whether ASI has fixed any annual target to upgrade museums in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the funds allocated by the Government for various activities of ASI during 2004-2005 and funds proposed for 2005-2006?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The Marine Wing in the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was established in 2001 and took up archaeological exploration and identified areas for excavations. During the season 2001-2002 to 2003-2004, the Marine Wing of ASI carried to exploration work at Mahabalipuram, Bay of Bengal and excavation in collaboration with Indian Navy of a shipwreck, Princes Royal in Lakshadweep waters in the Arabian sea. offshore and onshore explorations were also taken up at Elephanta Island, Kaveripattinam, Pondicherry, Arikamedu, Mahabalipuram.

During the current season (2004-2005) the excavation has been taken up in the explored area of sea as well as offshore of Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu in collaboration with Indian Navy.

To enlarge academic environment the Marine Wing organized an International Seminar with the Indian Navy on Maritime Heritage in March 2005.

(b) and (c) The upgradation of the Archaeological site museums is a continuous process and various items relating to the public amenities, better display and the publication of popular literature on museum objects are taken up from time to time.

(d) The funds allocated by the Government for various activities of the ASI during the financial year 2004-2005 were Rs. 224.24 crores, and for the year 2005-2006, the total funds allocated are Rs. 251.00 crores.

Restarting of Steam Locomotives

4996. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the railways has constituted a Task Force to identify routes where steam locomotives could be restarted;

(b) if so, whether the Task Force has identified routes in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether some environmentalists have registered their objections for restarting steam locomotives by the railways;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the reaction of the railways thereto?

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

(b) to (f) Do not arise.

Low Cost Petrol Pumps

4997. SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has instructed the oil PSUs to install low cost petrol pump under Kisan Vitran Kendra Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the dealer's selection policy for such ROs has finalised;

(d) if so, whether the Government propose to relax the multiple dealership norms in case of selection of dealers for such petrol pumps to make the scheme successful;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the steps taken to make such petrol pumps economically viable?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (f) While Government have not instructed the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) to install low cost petrol pumps under the name of the 'Kisan Vitran Kendra Scheme', the OMCs have been asked to conduct a survey to expand their network to cater to the requirements of the agricultural sector and to develop a business model to meet the petrol/diesel requirement of rural areas. Government have also advised OMCs to draft an Approach Paper on how to set up low

cost retail outlets replacing the barrel points/unauthorized pumps across the country.

In the meantime, Indian Oil Corporation Limited has initiated steps to set up retail outlets in rural areas under the name 'Kisan Seva Kendra' in line with their own policy during the year 2005-06.

[Translation]

Amount Spent on Advertisements

4998. SHRI MUNAWAR HASSAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount spent on advertisements by Delhi-based offices of various public sector oil companies during each of the last three years, till date;

(b) whether the advertisements were arranged through registered contractors;

(c) if so, whether all the contractors were registered with Delhi-based offices of these oil companies;

(d) whether contracts were also awarded to unregistered contractors;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the reasons for awarding advertisement contracts to unregistered contractors?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Submersion of Sangameswara Temple

4999. SHRI G.V. HARSHA KUMAR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the centuries old Sangameswara Temple in Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh is facing permanent submersion as reported in 'The Hindu' dated December 26, 2004;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to protect the Sangameswara Temple?

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

(b) The Rupala Sangameswara Temple at B. Tandrapadu, Kurnool Taluk, Kurnool District was reconstructed by the State Government during Srisaillam Project. It is not protected by the Archaeological Survey of India is not facing any submersion.

Another temple called Kudali Sangameswara in District Mahaboobnagar was transplanted to safer elevation by the Archaeological Survey of India as it was liable to submersion due to the construction of Srisaillam project. The dismantling of this temple was started in the year 1979 and was transplanted to the west of Navabrahma Group of temples, Alampur in Mehboobnagar District. The reconstruction was completed in the year 1989.

(c) The State Government has constructed a protection wall along the left bank of the river Tungabhadra near the group of temples at Alampur, so that the flood water does not inundate the Group of Temples.

[Translation]

Purchase of Vehicles by R.P.F.

5000. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA:
SHRI BHUPENDRASINH SOLANKI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Finance has issued any guidelines/instructions that any Central Government Department except Defence/Central Police Organizations will purchase no new vehicle, is applicable to Railway Protection Force or otherwise;

(b) if so, whether under the garb of Central Police Organisation, Railway Protection Force has purchased new vehicles amounting to Rs. 10 crore in December 2004 in violation of the instructions issued by Ministry of Finance;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether any inquiry has been ordered in this regard;

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

(f) the follow up action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Ministry of Finance have in September 2004 issued the following guidelines on purchase of vehicles. "Purchase of new vehicles is banned until further orders. Exceptions will be allowed only for meeting the operational requirements of Defence, Central Para Military Forces, etc. New vehicles shall not be purchased even in replacement of condemned vehicles. Hiring of private from outside shall be limited to the number of vehicles condemned".

(b) Railway Protection Force has purchased 48 nos. of buses, 152 diesel vehicles and 119 motor cycles at an estimated cost of Rs. 8.94 crore for the security department to take over the safety and security of passenger and the passengers area of the station premises in addition to safeguarding railway property following recent amendments to the Railway Protection Force Act and Railways Act, 1989 in December 2003. The Railway Protection Force Act 1957 was amended in the year 1985 and Railway Protection Force was declared an Armed force of the Union Government under Section 3 of the Act.

(c) to (f) Do not arise.

[English]

Revival Package for Instrumentation Ltd.

5001. SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS:
SHRI RAGHUVeer SINGH KOSHAL:

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

(a) the losses incurred by Instrumentation Ltd. during each of the last three years;

(b) whether any revival package for Instrumentation Ltd. is under consideration of the Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government is aware that the employees of the said company are being forced to take VRS by adopting transfer method;

(e) if so, the details thereof alongwith the concrete steps taken/proposed to be taken to safeguard the interests of the employees;

(f) whether the Government proposes to merge the said company with any other public sector company; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) The net losses incurred by Instrumentation Ltd. during the last three years is as under:

(Rupees in crore)		
2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
(-) 30.49	(-) 29.18	(-) 29.02

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Keeping in view BIFR directives, the Government of India have decided to place a Modified Revival Scheme, proposing financial restructuring of the company, before BRPSE.

(d) and (e) The surplus manpower is rationalized by the company through a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) by way of counselling and motivation. The employees are availing VRS voluntarily.

(f) No Sir.

(g) Question does not arise.

Inclusion of Washermen (Dhobi) Community in SC List

5002. SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN:
SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN:

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

(a) whether the Union Government is aware that the washermen (dhobi) community in Tamil Nadu is classified as SCs only in Kanya Kumari District and Senkottai Taluk of Tirunelveli District whereas in other parts of the State it is classified as OBCs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government has received any requests/representations from the State Government and various quarters to include the entire washermen community in the State in the SC list;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether there is also any proposal under consideration of the Union Government for inclusion of 'Dhobi' community into the list of scheduled caste throughout the country; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the proposal is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) No, Sir. Washermen (Dhobi) is neither specified as Scheduled Caste as per the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 nor it has been included in the Central List of Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Requests have been received from certain associations of the community for inclusion of Dhobi community in the list of Scheduled Castes of Tamil Nadu.

(e) No Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

**Financial Assistance to SC/ST by
Ambedkar Foundation**

5003. SHRI A. VENKATESH NAIK:
SHRI M. SHIVANNA:

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

(a) whether 'Ambedkar Foundation' is providing financial assistance to SCs and STs for getting treatment of cancer, heart etc. diseases;

(b) if so, whether SCs/STs of all the States are getting financial assistance from the Ambedkar Foundation;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the names of the States whose SCs/STs are getting financial assistance; and

(d) the steps taken to provide financial assistance to SCs/STs of the remaining States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) to (d) Dr. Ambedkar Foundation is providing financial assistance for medical treatment facility to the Scheduled Caste patients suffering from serious ailments relating to kidney, heart, liver, cancer and brain or any other life threatening diseases. At present the scheme is being implemented for all SCs through following 10 hospitals:

- (1) All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi.
- (2) Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- (3) Patna Medical College Hospital, Patna, Bihar.
- (4) Jabalpur Hospital and Research Centre, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.
- (5) B. Barua Cancer Institute, Guwahati, Assam.
- (6) Birla Heart Foundation, Kolkata, West Bengal.
- (7) Kalinga Hospital Ltd Chandra' Shekharapur, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.
- (8) Tata Cancer Research Institute, Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- (9) Nizam Institute of Medical Sciences, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, and
- (10) The Voluntary Health Services, Chennai.

Heritage Sites

5004. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has secured maintenance of UNESCO recognised heritage sites in India during 2004-05;

(b) if so, the expenditure incurred on maintenance and upkeep of each of them during 2004-05; and

(c) the steps taken for maintenance and upkeep of these heritage sites?

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

(b) The expenditure incurred on maintenance and upkeep of each World Heritage Sites which are under the Archaeological Survey of India during 2004-05 is as per the enclosed statement.

(c) High priority is attached to the maintenance and upkeep of World Heritage Sites. The Archaeological Survey of India is drawing up detailed Site Management Plans in respect of all World Heritage Sites under their jurisdiction. Pending the finalisation of the Site Management Plans, regular protection and conservation measures are being undertaken which include periodical/ structural repairs, scientific preservation, provision of tourist facilities and environmental development.

Statement

The expenditure incurred on World Heritage Monuments during 2004-05

(Amount in Rupees)

1.	Taj Mahal, Agra	1,58,64,661
2.	Agra Fort, Agra	1,92,42,625
3.	Fatehpur Sikri, Agra	1,28,35,822
4.	Qutab Minar, Delhi	39,86,665
5.	Humayun's Tomb, Delhi	13,71,327
6.	Ellora Caves, Aurangabad	89,44,105
7.	Ajanta Caves, Aurangabad	70,07,945
8.	Sun Temple, Konark	1,29,25,378
9.	Chapaner-Pavagarh Archaeological Park	37,17,026
10.	Group of Monuments at Pattadakal	44,09,437
11.	Group of Monuments at Sanchi	9,64,090
12.	Group of Monuments at Khajuraho	23,82,799
13.	Rock Shelters at Bhimbetka	6,00,102
14.	Elephanta Caves, Mumbai	23,26,530
15.	Churches and Convents of Goa, Old Goa	96,88,350
16.	Monuments at Hampi	1,15,05,502
17.	Great living Chola Temples at Thanjavur	16,91,968
	Extension of Brihadeswara Temple	
	(i) Airavateshwara Temple, Dhurasuram	35,71,248
	(ii) Brihadeswara Temple, Gangaikondacholapuram	11,17,058
18.	Group of monuments at Mahabalipuram	62,25,715

*[Translation]***Allotment of Railway Land on Lease Basis**

5005. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO:
SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has allotted the railway land to railway staff on lease basis for producing foodgrains;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the reasons for giving railway land on lease basis to railway staff;

(c) the rate at which the land given on lease basis; and

(d) the work done in this direction during the last two years, zone-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. The land has not been given on lease basis. However, in order to save precious railway land from encroachment, it can be given to Railway employees working in Group C and D categories only on licensing basis for cultivation viz. growing vegetables etc. in identified urban areas.

The licence fee in such cases shall be fixed on the revenue generating potential of the land and shall be between 1/4th to 1/3rd of the annual revenue expected to be earned by the employee.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

*[English]***Requirement of Wagons**

5006. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU:
SHRI ANANTA NAYAK:
SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has made any assessment about the number of wagons required in the country, till 10th Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is a wide gap between the requirement and the availability of wagons at present; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to remove the shortage of wagons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) For the X Plan, Railways had projected a requirement of 65,000 wagons (in terms of four wheeler units) based on the proposed revenue earning originating freight loading of 624 Million Tonnes for the terminal year 2006-07. The acquisition of wagons has been revised to 94214 wagons (in terms of four wheeler units) in the Mid Term review of the Tenth Plan for the planned freight loading.

(c) and (d) Requirement of wagon is broadly assessed for five year plan period and fine tuned on annual basis keeping in view volume of freight traffic expected to be carried in that particular year. The total wagon production in the first three years of Tenth Plan was 53148.5 wagons in terms of four wheeler units despite under performance of the public sector units. Necessary assistance is being extended to the Public Sector Units for improving their productivity.

*[Translation]***Encroachment on Defence Land**

5007. SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large area of Defence land has been encroached upon by Mafia Groups in Gorakhpur division;

(b) if so, whether the Government has made any assessment as to how much its land is under unauthorised occupation;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to remove such encroachments?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) No defence land has been encroached upon by Mafia Groups in Gorakhpur division. However, an area of 30.45 acres is under the possession of State Government authorities and 4.17 acre of land from camping ground has been encroached upon by

private individuals. These encroachments are 20 years old. The land under private encroachments are as given below:

Temple	—	0.27 acres
Shops and houses	—	0.934 acres
Morari Inter College	—	2.84 acres
Other private individuals	—	0.129 acres

There are four cases of encroachment at Air Force Station, Gorakhpur totaling 18.75 acres of land.

(d) The land pertaining to camping grounds at Gorakhpur division has been declared surplus to the requirement of Defence Services and has to be disposed of as per existing procedure. Action for removal of encroachment at Air Force Station, Gorakhpur was initiated. However, the matter is now sub-judice and is presently pending at Allahabad High Court.

Wheel and Axle Plant in Bihar

5008. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to set up a passenger coach factory at Harnaut and a Wheel and Axle Plant at Chhapra in Bihar;

(b) if so, the amount allocated for the purpose;

(c) the status of the progress made in this regard; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Projects have been sanctioned for Coach Repair Workshop at Harnaut and Wheel manufacturing Plant at Chhapra in Bihar.

(b) The anticipated costs of these projects is Rs. 98.74 crore and Rs. 470.09 crore respectively.

(c) The detailed plans and estimates are under preparation/finalisation.

(d) The likely completion of these projects will be known once the detailed plans and estimates are sanctioned.

[English]

Modernisation of Production Units

5009. SHRI T.K. HAMZA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have any plan to modernize its production units;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds allocated for the purpose; and

(d) the progress so far made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The modernization of Production Units is a continuous process and inputs into specific areas are made as and when there is a change/upgradation of technology and processes and when the need arises.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Doordarshan Kendra at Jalpaiguri

5010. SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA:
SHRI HITEN BARMAN:

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that the Doordarshan Kendra at Jalpaiguri is under-utilized for many years;

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

(c) whether it is a fact that due to shortage of staff at Doordarshan Kendra at Jalpaiguri the relay of programmes affecting and these are being relayed from Kolkata;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the time by which the said Kendra will be able to relay its own programmes?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. This is on account of non-sanction of full complement of staff required for its full operation.

(c) and (d) Programme Generating Facility (PGF) at Jalpaiguri has been set-up to produce local area specific programmes for telecast from Doordarshan Kendra, Kolkata and DD-Bangla Satellite Channel. In addition to the above programmes, Jalpaiguri PGF is producing five programmes each of half-an-hour duration per week on agricultural and allied subjects under narrowcasting mode for telecast from the adjacent HPT, Kurseong which is covering Jalpaiguri area.

(e) No time frame can be indicated at this juncture.

[Translation]

Pending Cases of Railway Ticket Refund

5011. SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of railway ticket refunds pending with the Railways, zone-wise;

(b) the total outstanding amount of refund of rail tickets since January 2004 date, zone-wise; and

(c) the corrective measures taken to expedite refund of rail tickets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Details of the number of cases of railway ticket refund pending with Zonal Railways as on 31/03/2005 are as under:

Name of the Railway	Approximate number of pending ticket refund cases
1	2
Central	1059
Eastern	204
East Central	538
East Coast	187
Northern	3323
North Central	6318
North Eastern	164
Northeast Frontier	4584

1	2
North Western	295
Southern	491
South Central	979
South Eastern	856
South East Central	442
South Western	619
Western	481
West Central	5673

It is not feasible to calculate in advance the outstanding amount to be refunded in these cases as the amount of refund granted varies from case to case based on genuineness of the claim.

(c) Railways have been advised to process all the pending refund cases on priority.

[English]

Laying of Railway Line in Karnataka

5012. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for laying the Bangalore-Tumkur-Chitradurga-Davangere Railway line in Karnataka;

(b) if so, whether any survey has been conducted for this purpose;

(c) if so, the details of the survey conducted;

(d) the time by which the work is likely to be started: and

(e) if no survey has been conducted, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) A survey for construction of new rail line from Tumkur to Davangere via Chitradurg was completed during 1998-99. As per the survey report, cost of construction of 195.76 kms. long

line had been assessed as Rs. 299.59 crore with Rate of Return of (-) 51.376%. In view of heavy throwforward of ongoing projects and acute constraint of resources, the proposal could not be considered.

Research on Iron Pillar

5013. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a panel of scientists has recommended more research on the iron pillar in Qutab Minar premises;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) In 1998, a Department of Science and Technology project for non destructive evaluation of Iron Pillar by Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, Kalpakkam was undertaken. Scientists of Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur were also associated with the research work. Scientists of the above organizations have suggested further research on the iron pillar in a meeting held on March 11, 2005. However, no formal request has yet been received by the Government in this regard.

(c) In case a proposal is received for further research by non-destructive testing on the iron pillar, it will be considered on scientific research requirements.

Promotion of Sports in Railways

5014. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the efforts made by the Railways to promote sports during the last three years;

(b) the achievements made during the said period; and

(c) the amount spent to promote sports during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) For the promotion of

sports, during the last three years, Indian Railways have recruited eminent sportspersons, provided infrastructure to them for better performance at National and International levels. Railways also provided incentives to the sportspersons like out-of-turn promotion, additional increments, and cash awards for their meritorious performance at National and International levels.

(b) During the last 3 years, Indian Railways have contributed a galaxy of players to the Indian Teams in International Meets, encompassing various disciplines and contributed more than 50% of the total medals won by the country.

At the national level, Indian Railways' teams declared winners in 51 events and runner up in 33 events, out of total 115 participation in different sports, during last three years.

(c) Besides the amount spent by Zonal Railways for staff benefits and promotion of sports, an amount of about Rs. 20.28 Crore during the last three years has been spent purely on sports activities and promotion of sports by the Indian Railways through Railway Sports Promotion Board.

Development of Shimla Airport

5015. DR. COL (RETD.) DHANI RAM SHANDIL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to upgrade Shimla airport with a view to operating more flights to different destinations;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the funds allocated thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The airport at Shimla belongs to Airports Authority of India (AAI) and is suitable for operation of 20 seater type of aircraft in good weather condition. There is no proposal at present to expand the runway at this airport due to site constraints.

[Translation]

**Protected Monuments/Cultural Heritage Sites of
North-East India**

5016. SHRI RAM CHANDRA PASWAN:
SHRI SURAJ SINGH:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that maintenance of Protected Monuments/culture heritage sites of North-East India is very poor;

(b) if so, the measures taken by the Government for the protection of these protected monuments/cultural heritage sites;

(c) whether the Government is also aware that Mithila Painting and various cultural heritage of Mithilanchal are not flourishing for want of resources and Government's aid; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) There are 77 centrally protected monuments in the North-States of India which are properly maintained and preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India.

The Archaeological Survey of India undertakes regular conservation and protection works in respect of these monuments, which include annual maintenance, special repairs, chemical preservation and environment development programmes. An expenditure of Rs. 156.16 lakhs has been incurred during 2004-05 for the maintenance and conservation of monuments in North-East India.

(c) There is no centrally protected monument in Mithilanchal. The information with regard to Mithila paintings and other cultural heritage is being collected.

(d) Does not arise.

Recruitment in Army on Fake Documents

5017. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE PATIL:
SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO:
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Delhi Police has unearthed a racket for allegedly supplying forged domicile certificates and affidavits to those seeking jobs in the armed forces as reported in the 'Hindu' dated April 14, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of Army officials found involved in the said racket and the action taken against them;

(d) the number of people recruited in the past on the basis of forged documents; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) There is a media report that local police authorities have apprehended three persons, who were issuing forged domicile certificates to the candidates of recruitment, away from the recruitment area.

(b) The case is being investigated by the local police.

(c) No involvement of serving Army personnel has been reported so far. In case, any Army personnel is found to be involved, strict disciplinary action will be taken.

(d) and (e) A stringent system of verification of each candidates status is being followed for recruitment in the Army. Documents submitted by the candidates are always sent to the issuing authority for confirmation before the candidate is finally recruited. If at any stage, documents are found to be forged, the candidature of the candidate is cancelled and the candidate is discharged from service. In addition, the recruiting procedure is being constantly reviewed to ensure transparency and openness. Measures like verification of character certificates, antecedents and domicile certificates have also been put in place to curb malpractices and touting activities.

*[English]***Public-Private Participation for New Trains**

5018. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:
SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission in its Tenth Plan mid-term appraisal has suggested to Railways, to pitch for Public-Private Participation (PPP) for new trains;

(b) if so, whether the Commission has also pointed out that PPP route could be allowed for passenger trains between tourist destinations and for goods trains between specified points such as collieries and power stations;

(c) if so, the details of suggestions of the Planning Commission in this regard;

(d) whether the Railways has accepted the suggestions of the Planning Commission; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken/to be taken to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) The Planning Commission in the draft chapter on Mid Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan included a paragraph on the private sector participation in owing and marketing passenger trains for tourist destinations and private goods trains between specified destinations.

However, Railways have already set up Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation for taking all steps to boost up rail based tourism, including running of tourist trains. Railways are tying up with different State Governments for running tourist trains on the pattern of 'Palace on wheels' and 'Deccan Odyssey'. For private participation in goods traffic, Railways have already decided to open up container type operation and introduce wagon investment schemes. Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV) like Pipavav Rail Corporation Limited (PRCL) are being set up for private participation for port connectivity.

Railways in its comments to the Planning Commission on the draft chapter on Mid Term Appraisal has, therefore, suggested that the reference to private tourist and goods trains be excluded.

Rehabilitation Council of India

5019. SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of composition of the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI); and

(b) the criteria/method adopted for selection of the Chairman and Members of the Council?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) The composition of Rehabilitation Council of India as per the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 and its subsequent amendment in 2000 is as under:—

Chairperson	—	1 (one)
Members	—	27 (twenty seven)
Member Secretary	—	1 (one)

(b) The Chairperson and Members of the Rehabilitation Council of India are appointed/nominated/ elected as per the provision of Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 and its subsequent amendment in 2000.

Reduction in Staff Strength

5020. SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any steps with regard to reduction in the staff strength in the light of recommendations of Rakesh Mohan Committee report; and

(b) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The recommendations of the Rakesh Mohan Committee are under consideration of the Ministry of Railways.

(b) Does not arise.

Vacant Posts

5021. SHRI PRASANTA PRADHAN:
DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the posts of Director, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts and Director, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library are lying vacant for several months;

(b) if so, since when these posts are lying vacant; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to fill up these vacant posts?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) There is no vacancy of Director in Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts. However, the post of Director in Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is vacant since 1st March 2004.

(c) The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library has notified this vacancy to the Central Employment Exchange as per rules. The Government has decided that the Executive Council of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library will work as Search Committee for the post of Director. The action to fill up the post of the Director is already in progress.

Ticket Issuing Facility at Stations

5022. SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that ticket issuing facility is not presently available at some railway stations;

(b) if so, the details thereof, Zone/Division-wise;

(c) the reason for not having such facility at these stations;

(d) whether the passengers are allowed to travel free of cost from these stations;

(e) if so, the total losses suffered by the Railways on this account annually; and

(f) the steps taken/to be taken by the Government to provide ticket issuing facility at these stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Tickets are issued from the stations, where commercial halt of trains have been provided.

(b) to (f) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Selling of Eatables at Stations of High Prices

5023. SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:
SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that eatables being sold at new Food Plazas on railway stations are much costlier than those sold in market;

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

(c) the corrective measures taken/to be taken by the Government to make available eatables at cheaper rate at these food plazas on railway stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Food plazas have been established at stations in addition to the existing catering facilities provided earlier at controlled prices, with a view to provide multiple choices to railway passengers and users, who can avail of either facility. The rates for eatables at food plazas are as per competitive prices prevailing in the market.

(c) Does not arise.

Manufacturing of Advance Jet Trainers

5024. SHRIMATI ANURADHA CHOUDHARY:
SHRI MUNSHI RAM:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of Advance Jet Trainers (AJTs) being manufactured by the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.; and

(b) the time by which these are likely to be inducted into the Armed Forces?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) The project activities for manufacture of Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer aircraft (AJT) under licence from BAE Systems (Operations) Limited are progressing on schedule at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

(b) Delivery of AJTs to be manufactured at HAL to Indian Air Force is planned to commence from 2007-2008.

[English]

Renovation of Tindharia Workshop

5025. SHRI D. NARBULA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to modernise/renovate the narrow gauge rail line of Darjeeling Himalayan Railways and the Tindharia workshop;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the works on these projects are likely to be undertaken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Modernisation/renovation of rail lines and workshops is a continuous process and is undertaken depending on the age-cum-condition, operational need and availability of funds.

(b) During the year 2004-05 about 12 Km of Through Rail Renewal (Secondary) [TRR (S)] and 2 km of Through Sleeper Renewal (Secondary) [TSR(S)] had been completed, in the Narrow Gauge line of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. There is no plan, at present, to modernize/renovate Tindharia workshop.

(c) Renewal works to the extent of 61 Km of TRR (S) and 85 Km of TSR (S) are sanctioned, as of 1-4-2005, and are planned to be completed by the end of 2006-07.

[Translation]

Grant of Short Service Commission in Indian Navy

5026. SHRI SAJJAN KUMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to grant short service commission in the Indian Navy to the commercial license holders of sail ships;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of persons likely to be given commission?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Commercial license holders of sail ships are eligible to apply for Short Service Commission in Navy if they fulfil the age and educational criteria prescribed for recruitment in Navy. There are no earmarked vacancies. Those persons who qualify in Services Selection Board and come within merits, are granted Short Service Commission.

[English]

Use of Manganese Based Octane-Enhancer

5027. KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government is aware that some oil companies are allegedly using Manganese based Octane-enhancer called Methylcyclopentadienyl Manganese Tricarbonyl (MMT) which is harmful for human brain and also for the vehicle emission system;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Except for Numaligarh Refinery which uses marginal quantities of MMT as a trimming agent for a marginal increase in the octane number of Motor Spirit, other Public Sector Oil Refineries are not using Methylcyclopentadienyl Manganese Tricarbonyl (MMT) any more. Numaligarh Refinery Limited too will discontinue the use of MMT by March 2006, by when the new facilities being set up by them for producing Motor Spirit are expected to be completed.

[Translation]

Rehabilitation of Civilians

5028. SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR CHOUDHARY:
SHRI RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether eviction of civilians from cantonment areas in various parts of the country has posed a major problem regarding their rehabilitation;

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

(c) the alternative arrangements made by the Government for rehabilitation of such civilians?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The defence lands in the Cantonment areas are meant for the active use of the Armed Forces. The encroachers, if any, on the defence land are evicted as per law. No arrangements are made by Ministry of Defence for the rehabilitation of encroachers evicted from the defence lands.

[English]

Documentary Films by DD Srinagar/Jammu

5029. SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) amount allocated to DD Srinagar and DD Jammu for making documentary films and video coverage during each of the last three years;

(b) the number of documentaries produced during the last three years pertaining to Jammu and Kashmir State; and

(c) the number of short feature and full-length documentaries produced by Kashir Channel and the amount actually spent during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Prasar Bharati has informed that the amount allocated are as follows:—

Sl.No.	Year	Amount (Rs in crore)
1.	2002-2003	05.988
2.	2003-2004	14.7351
3.	2004-2005	19.3797

(b) and (c) Details regarding number of documentaries and features being produced/acquired by Doordarshan are being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

The details regarding expenditure incurred on commissioning of programmes in different categories are as follows:—

Sl.No.	Year	Amount (Rs. in crore)
1.	2002-2003	18.6811
2.	2003-2004	20.4402
3.	2004-2005	26.0900

[Translation]

Time Table for Goods Trains

5030. SHRI TUFANI SAROJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to draw a time table for operation of goods trains and operate them accordingly;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the date from which the said scheme is being implemented or proposed to be implemented;

(d) whether movement of passenger trains will be affected due to the implementation of the said scheme; and

(e) if so, the manner in which the Government deal with this situation?

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

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

[English]

One Rank One Pension

5031. SHRI P.C. THOMAS:
SHRI SURESH CHANDEL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ex-servicemen have been demanding to implement 'one rank one pension' formula to remove anomaly and to bring parity in pension;

(b) if so, whether the Government has conducted any study in this regard and have tried to find out the total amount would entail on exchequer;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the time by which the Government proposes to implement 'one rank one pension' formula; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) to (e) A Group of Ministers has been constituted to look into the issue.

[*Translation*]

Educational Schemes for Disabled

5032. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Special Schemes have been launched during the last three years and till date for providing education to the physically disabled people in the States including Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of the specified institutes in the country, particularly in Uttar Pradesh in this regard for the deaf and blind; State-wise;

(d) the agencies including the Governmental ones which run these institutes for the deaf and blind; and

(e) the details of the proposals received from the Non-Government Organisations for the welfare of the deaf and blind particularly from Uttar Pradesh and the present status of those proposals, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, Government is implementing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan through State Governments since 2001 with the goal of eight years of elementary schooling for all children including children with disabilities in the age group of 6-14 years 2010. Additionally, the Government is implementing the Scheme to Promote Voluntary Action for Persons with Disabilities since 1998-99 through

voluntary organisations. Under this scheme grants-in-aid is given to voluntary organisations in various States including Uttar Pradesh for implementing various projects such as special schools, vocational training centres, community based rehabilitation programmes, rehabilitation of leprosy cured persons, man power development programmes in mental retardation, visual impairment, and hearing impairment, early intervention and pre-school training, home based training, etc. etc.

(c) and (d) Names of Non-Government Organisations, State-wise including Uttar Pradesh, which are supported under Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme for running schools for deaf and blind are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(e) The number of proposals received from Non-Government Organisations, State-wise including Uttar Pradesh, are given in the enclosed Statement-II. New proposals are being taken up to the extent of funds available after meeting committed liabilities for ongoing projects under the scheme, availability of all necessary documents and information from the NGOs, the details of projects already being implemented under the scheme in the districts from where the new proposals have come, etc.

Statement I

State-wise details of NGOs running special schools for Deaf and Blind under Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme

State	Name of the Organisation
1	2
Andhra Pradesh	Navajeevan Blind Relief Centre, Chittoor
	Nehru Yuva Jan Seva Sangham, Chittoor
	Victory India Charitable Tent of Rescue Yacht, Chittoor
	Helen Kellers' School for the Deaf, Cuddapah
	Voice, East Godavari
	Zion Educational Society, East Godavari

1	2	1	2
	Deaf & Dumb Blind People Service Society, Khammam		Hellen Kellers' School for Deaf & Mentally Retarded Children, Rangareddy
	A Handicapped Service Foundation, Khammam		Itirroddd, Rangareddy
	Annamma Schools for the Hearing & Physically Handicapped & Baby care Centre, Krishna		Sweekar Rehabilitation Institute for Handicapped, Secunderabad
	Immaculate Heart of Mary Society, Krishna		Sunlight Educational Society, Srikakulam
	Vani Educational Academy, Krishna		Hindustan Shipyard Ladies Club, Vishakhapatnam
	Voluntary Organisation of Rural Development Society, Kumool		Omkar Lions Education Society for the Deaf, Vishakhapatnam
	Residential School for the Blind, Mahaboobnagar		Priyadarsini Service Organisation, Vishakhapatnam
	Asha Jyothi Welfare Association for the Disabled, Nalgonda		Chaitanya Institute for the Learning Disabled, Vizianagaram
	St. Francis Educational Society, Nellore		Society for Education of the Deaf & Blind, Vizianagaram
	Pragathi Charities, Nellore	Assam	Assissi Sisters of Mary Immaculate, Warangal
	Gracy Organisation for Development Services, Nizamabad		Ashadeep, Guwahati
	Sneha Society for Rural Reconstruction, Nizamabad	Bihar	Sahayika, Guwahati
	Chaitanya Mahila Mandali, Prakasam		Foundation for Integral Human Advancement, Arrah
	Mother Teresa School for the Blind, Prakasam		Shri Jain Mahila Vidyapeeth, Arrah
	Devnar Foundation for the Blind, Rangareddy		Girija Shankar Drishti Bihin Balika Vidyalaya, Bhagalpur
	Durgabai Deshmukh Vocational Training & Rehab. Centre (Andhra Mahila Sabha), Hyderabad, Rangareddy		Gaya Netraheen Vidyalaya, Gaya
			Baba Baidyanath Balika Mook Badhir Vidyalaya, Monghyr
			Shubam, Muzaffarpur
			Akhil Bhartiya Gramin Vikash Avam Seva Mandal, Patna

1	2
	Bihar Institute of Speech & Hearing Research Centre, Patna
	Bihar Netraheen Parishad, Patna
	J.M. Institute of Speech & Hearing, Patna
	Janta Samaj Kalyan Sansthan, Vaishali
Chhattisgarh	Lions Charitable Trust, Bilai
	Netraheen Va Viklang Shikshan Prashikshan Evam Dharmarth Samithi, Korla
	Shravan Mook Viklang Abhibhavak Sangh, Raipur
	Gyanodaya Association, Surguja
Delhi	Chandrabhushan Singh Memorial Mahila, Bai Evam Shravan Viklang Shiksha Evam Punarvas Sansthan, Delhi
	Suniye, Delhi
	Akhil Bharatiya Netraheen Sangh, Delhi
	Delhi Association of the Deaf, Delhi
	Institution for the Blind, Delhi
	Janata Adarsh Andh Vidyalaya, Delhi
Goa	Lokvishwas Pratisthan's School for Handicapped Kids, Nort goa
Gujarat	Saddbhavna Rural Development Trust, Ahmedabad
	Shri K. L. Institute for the Deaf, Bhavnagar
	Akshar Trust, Vadodara
Haryana	Rotary Welfare Society for the Deaf, Ambala

1	2
	Educational-cum-Vocational Association for the Disabled, Ballabhgarh
	Association for the Welfare of Handicapped, Faridabad
	All India Confederation of the Blind (Gurgaon), Gurgaon
	Indian Red Cross Society (Hissar), Hissar
Himachal Pradesh	National Association for the Blind (Kullu), Kullu
	H.P. State Council for Child Welfare, Simla
Jharkhand	Shri Shri Bhajan Brahmachari Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Dhanbad
Karnataka	Sri Shathashruna Vidya Samsthe, Bangalore
	Dr. S.R. Chandrasekhar Institute of Speech & Hearing, Bangalore
	Karnataka Handicapped Welfare Association, Bangalore
	Shree Ramana Maharishi Academy for the Blind, Bangalore
	Ajay Welfare Association for Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Belgaum
	Belgaum Integrated Rural Development Society, Belgaum
	Adarsh Educational Society, Bellary
	Shri Manik Prabhu Shikshan Samithi, Bidar
	Sangram Education Society, Bidar

1	2
	Sri Paramananda Janaseva Samithi, Bijapur
	Karnataka Federation for the Blind, Chikamagalur
	Margadarshi Rotary Trust for Disabled, Chitradurga
	Sri Vinayaka Education Society, Devengere
	Honnamma Education Society's Residential School for Deaf Children, Dharwad
	Priyadarshini Janaseva Sagar, Dharwad
	Sri Aroodha Educational Society for Disabled, Dharwad
	Dr. Puttaraja Gavaigalavar Blind Education Society, Gadag
	Sri B.D. Tatti (Annavaru) Memorial Charitable Trust, Gadag
	Blind & Handicapped Childrens Residential Welfare Association, Gulbarga
	Dakshin Bharat Dalit Education Society, Gulbarga
	Rotary Trust, Hassan
	Seva Trust for the Blind, Haveri
	Shri Channa Baseveshwara Grameen Vidyha Samasthe, Haveri
	Ashakiran Educational and Rehabilitation Society, Kolar
	Jai Bharat Deaf Children's Residential School & Rural Development Trust, Kolar
	Montford Educational and Charitable Trust of the Brother of Saint Gabriel, Mandya

1	2
	Sri Adichunchanagiri Shikshana Trust, Mandya
	Daughter of Our Lady of Mercy Deaf and Dumb School, Mysore
	Rangarao Memorial School for the Disabled, Mysore
	Sai Ranga Vidya Samasthe, Mysore
	Smt. Putteramma Viswastha Ashram, Mysore
	Bapuji Grameena Vikas Samithi, Uttar Kannada
	Uttar Kannada District Disabled Welfare Association, Uttar Kannada
Kerala	Ernakulam Women's Association, Ernakulam
	Society for the Service of Women and Children, Kasargod
	Karuna, Kozhikode (Calicut)
	Sravana Samsara School, Palakkad
Madhya Pradesh	Deaf Dumb Association Indore M.P., Indore
	Mook Badhir Sansthan (Deaf Dumb Association) Indore M.P., Indore
	Viklang Evam Drishtibaditarth Kalyan Sangh, Jabalpur
	Sritulsi Pragyachakshu Higher Secondary Vidyalaya, Satna
	Ashadeep Viklang Vikas Evam Kalyan Sangathan, Seoni
Maharashtra	Parivartan Shikshan Sanstha, Bhandara
	Ankur Gram Vikas Sanstha, Dhule
	Rawalnath Shaikshanik and Sanskrutik Mandal, Dhule

1	2
	Shantivan Apang Niradhar & Adivasi Vikas Shikshan Sanstha, Gadchiroli
	Ahilyadevi Holkar Shikshan Prasark Mandal, Latur
	Mauli Mahila Mandal, Sindhudurg
Manipur	Institute of Social Development for Weaker Sections, Imphal
Meghalaya	Bethany Society, West Garo Hills
Mizoram	Samaritan Association for the Blind, Aizawl
	Society for Rehabilitation of Spastic Children, Aizawl
Orissa	Sisusakha Sangha, Bhubaneswar
	Association for Social Work and Social Research in Orissa, Boudh
	Red Cross School for the Blind, Ganjam
	National Institute of Tribal Welfare and Social Action, Khurda
	Nilachal Seva Prathisthan, Puri
Pondicherry	Shri Patchaeappane Society for Education, Research & Rehabilitation of the Hearing Impaired, Pondicherry
Punjab	Institute for the Blind, Amritsar
	Indian Red Cross Society (Bhatinda), Bhatinda
	Punjab IAS Officers' Wives Association, Chandigarh
	Indian Red Cross Society (Faridkot), Faridkot

1	2
	Dr. Satya Paul Khosla Charitable Memorial Trust, Jalandhar
	District Red Cross Society, Jalandhar
	Indian Red Cross Society (Ludhiana), Ludhiana
Rajasthan	Jeevan Nirman Sansthan, Bharatpur
	Badhir Bal Kalyan Vikas Samiti, Bhilwara
	L.K.C. Sri Jagdamba Andh Vidyalaya Samiti, Sriganaganagar
Tamil Nadu	Ajay Memorial Foundation, Chennai
	Murthuzaviya Educational and Cultural Foundation of South India, Chennai
	The School for Young Deaf Children (Bal Vidyalaya), Chennai
	E.K.R. Kalvi Sangam, Dharmapuri
	Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf, Kanyyakumari
	Kanmani Trust, Karur
	Hellen Keller Service Society for the Disabled, Madurai
	YMCA Kamak High School and Home for the Deaf, Madurai
	Indian Association for the Blind, Madurai
	Hellen Keller School for the Hearing Impaired, Perambalur
	Arivalayam, Tiruchirapalli
	Vela Institution for Social Action and Development, Tiruchirapalli

1	2
	Florence Swainson Higher Secondary School for the Deaf, Tirunelveli
	Life Aid Centre, Tiruvallur
	Holy Cross School for the Hearing Impaired, Vellore
Tripura	North Tripura Deaf and Dumb School, Kailashahar
Uttar Pradesh	Sur Smarak Mandal, Agra
	Prag Narain Mook Badhir Vidyalaya Samiti, Aligarh
	Israji Devi Shikshan Sansthan, Allahabad
	Adarsh Janta Shiksha Samiti, Allahabad
	Uttar Pradesh Mook Badhir Vidyalaya, Allahabad
	Badhit Bal Vikas Samiti, Azamgarh
	Rama School for the Blind Evam Physically Handicapped Children, Banda
	Sri Sant Kabir Mook Badhir Vidyalaya Samiti, Basti
	A.K. Model Public School Samiti, Bijnor
	Bhavana Institute for the Defriendly Disabled, Fathepur
	Paohari Smriti Parishad, Ghazipur
	Goonge Behron Ka Vidhyalaya, Kanpur
	Adarsh Mook Badhir Vidyalaya, Lakhimpur
	Chetna, Lucknow
	N.C. Chaturvedi School for Deaf, Lucknow
	Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Shiksha Vikas Samiti, Lucknow
	Saraswati Badhir Sewa Samiti, Lucknow

1	2
	Shri Virindaban Andh Mahavidyalaya, Mathura
	Deaf and Dumb School, Meerut
	Vaani (Friends of Handicapped), Meerut
	Queen of Apostle Education Society, Varanasi
	B C G School for the Deaf, Varanasi
	Sri Hanuman Prasad Poddar Andh Vidyalaya, Varanasi
	The Society of Khrist Jyoti, Varanasi
Uttaranchal	Bajaj Institute of Learning, Dehradun
	Jyoti School for Handicapped (Shri Bharat Mandir School Society), Dehradun
	Nanhi Duniya Badhir Vidyalaya, Dehradun
West Bengal	Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission, 24 Parganas (North)
	North 24 Parganas Disabled Persons Association, 24 Parganas (North)
	Dr. Sailendra Nath Mukherjee Muka Badhir Vidyalaya, Bankura
	North Bengal Handicapped Rehabilitation Society, Darjeeling
	Pratibandhi Kalyan Kendra, Hooghly
	Srirampur Child Guidance Centre, Hooghly
	Parents Own Clinic for Deaf Children, Kolkata
	Voice of World, Kolkata

1	2
	Kotwali Saleha Memorial School for Hearing & Mentally Handicapped, Malda
	Sevayatan Kalyan Kendra, Midnapur
	Blind Persons' Association, Kolkata, Nadia
	Karimpur Social Welfare Society, Nadia

Statement II

*State-wise details of numbers of proposals received
from NGO, for the Welfare of Deaf and Blind*

Sl.No.	State/UT	No. of proposal received from NGO
1.	Andhra Pradesh	8
2.	Bihar	2
3.	Delhi	1
4.	Gujarat	5
5.	Haryana	1
6.	Jharkhand	1
7.	Karnataka	12
8.	Madhya Pradesh	3
9.	Maharashtra	3
10.	Orissa	5
11.	Punjab	1
12.	Tamil Nadu	4
13.	Uttar Pradesh	9
14.	West Bengal	1
Total		56

**Involvement of Private Sector for Maintenance
of Monuments**

5033. SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV:
SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA:
SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:
SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to involve private sector for upkeeping and lighting of the monuments in the country;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the monuments identified for the purpose; and

(c) the terms and conditions laid down in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) There is no proposal to involve private sector for upkeeping of the centrally protected monuments. However, provision exists for public private partnership in heritage preservation under the National Culture Fund. The illumination of certain protected monuments have been undertaken by the private sector.

(b) Illumination at Humayun's Tomb, New Delhi was undertaken by M/s. Oberoi Group of Hotels, New Delhi.

Illumination of Misra Yantra of Jantar Mantar, New Delhi is entrusted to M/s. Apeejay Surendra Hotels Pvt. Ltd.

(c) Under the terms and conditions, the Archaeological Survey of India would maintain the installations and bear the energy charges.

Conversion of Airbase Into Civilian Airport

5034. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a very old airbase exists in Gurbishnoi/ Salawas village of Jodhpur district of Rajasthan;

(b) if so, whether this airbase is proposed to be converted into civilian airport;

(c) if so, by when; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir. This airbase is being used by the Indian Air Force.

(b) No such proposal has been received by the Indian Air Force.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

[English]

Corruption in Canteen Stores Department

5035. SHRI GIRIDHARI YADAV:

SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of widespread corruption in the Canteen Stores Department regarding purchase of various items that are canalised through this organisation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the norms prescribed for the purchase of the alcoholic beverages are consistent with overall purchase policies;

(d) if not, whether there are different norms governing such purchases;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Servicemen are receiving their wide choice of products from the Canteen Stores Department that are available in the market;

(g) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(h) the norms adopted in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There is no widespread corruption in the Canteen Stores Department (CSD). Appropriate measures are already in place to check corruption in the purchase of various items. However, isolated cases of corruption are not ruled out in such a large organisation.

(c) Introduction of all the items in Canteen Stores Department (including general stores and liquor) are as per prescribed norms and overall purchase policy.

(d) and (e) Not applicable in view of answer at (c) above.

(f) Yes, Sir.

(g) and (h) Not applicable in view of answer at (f) above.

Smuggling of Timber between Rangia-Rangapara

5036. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry is aware of a large scale transport of smuggled timber between Rangia-Rangapara rail section;

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

(c) whether the Guwhati-Jogighopa rail line remain under utilized since beginning; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken for utilization of the said rail line fully?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Action is being taken to eradicate the menace of smuggling of Timber in Rangia-Rangapara section. During the year 2001 to 2004, a total of 89 raids were conducted with recovery of 5776 pieces of timber worth Rs. 20,41,129 and arrest of 40 outsiders. The recovered timber has been handed over to the State Forest Department for further disposal. In addition, joint raids are also organized with forest officials to curb the above menace.

(c) No Sir, the Guwhati-Jogighopa Rail section is not being under utilized.

(d) Does not arise.

Radio and Television Coverage

5037. SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of Radio and Television coverage in Orissa;

(b) whether the percentage of coverage in Orissa is much less as compared to other parts of the country;

(c) whether there is any proposal for expansion of the coverage in the near future; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) It has been informed by Prasar Bharati that 99% of the population of Orissa is covered by radio signals against the National coverage of 99.13%. Besides, the whole of Orissa is also covered by 50 kW SW radio transmitter at Jeypore. The T.V. coverage is available to about 93.3% of the population of Orissa as compared to the National average of 90.7%. The entire State of Orissa along with the rest of the country (except A&N Islands) has been provided with multi-channel coverage through Ku-band (free-to-air) DTH transmission service of Doordarshan. The DTH bouquet consisting of 33 TV and 12 radio channels can be received throughout the country (except A&N Islands) with the help of a small sized dish receive unit.

(c) and (d) In order to expand the radio coverage, new transmitters are proposed to be set up at Baripada, Bhawanipatna, Bhubaneswar, Doegarh, Parlakimidi, Rairangpur and Raygada in Orissa during the Tenth Five Year Plan subject, however, to approval and availability of funds. After implementation of these schemes, 99.7% of the population of Orissa is expected to be covered by radio signals in addition to the expansion of F.M. radio service in the State. A low power T.V. transmitter has been set up at Bahalda in Orissa which is also ready for commissioning.

Age Limit of General Duty Soldiers

5038. PROF. CHANDER KUMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to increase the age limit of General Duty Soldiers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Keeping in view the decision of the State Parties to the United Nations Protocol on "Convention on the Rights of the Child" of which Government of India is a member, it has been decided to raise the minimum age for recruitment of Soldier (General Duty) to 17.5 years.

Empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions

5039. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:
SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD:
PROF. M. RAMADASS:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the measures taken by the Government to empower Panchayati Raj Institutions financially;

(b) the gist of recommendations of the Twelfth Finance Commission with regard to the devolution of financial resources to Panchayati Raj Institutions;

(c) whether the Union Government has accepted all the recommendations made by the Twelfth Finance Commission;

(d) if so, the financial commitment on the part of Union Government when these recommendations are implemented;

(e) whether there is a proposal to stop the financial grant to those States which have failed to conduct elections to local bodies; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The measures taken by Government to empower Panchayati Raj Institutions financially are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(b) The gist of the recommendations of the Twelfth Finance Commission with regard to the devolution of financial resources to Panchayati Raj Institutions is given in the enclosed Statement-II.

(c) The Government has accepted the recommendations in respect of local bodies made by the Twelfth Finance Commission in their Report.

(d) When these recommendations are implemented, the financial commitment on the part of the Union Government is expected to be of the order of Rs. 20,000 crore for Panchayats for the five year period from 2005-06 to 2009-2010.

(e) and (f) Guidelines are under formulation to govern the release of grants as directed by the Twelfth Finance Commission.

Statement I

The Constitution has three articles that speak of the financial strengthening of the Panchayats. These are as follows:

- Under Article 243H, the Legislature of a State may, by law, authorise a Panchayat to levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees. It can also assign to a Panchayat such taxes, duties, tolls and fees levied and collected by the State Government. It can provide for making such grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the States' Consolidated Fund and provide for constitution of such Funds for crediting all money received by or on behalf of the Panchayats and also for the withdrawal of such moneys therefrom.
- Under Article 243-I, the Governor of a State shall every five years, constitute Finance Commission to review the financial position of the Panchayats and to make recommendations as to the principles which should govern the distribution between the State and the Panchayats of the net proceeds of the taxes, duties, tolls and fees leviable by the State, which may be divided between them and the allocation between the Panchayats at all levels of their respective shares, the determination of the taxes, duties, tolls and fees which may be assigned to, or appropriated by, the Panchayats, the grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the Consolidated Fund of the State and measures needed to improve the financial position of the Panchayats.
- Under Article 243J, the State Legislature may by law, make provisions with respect to the maintenance of accounts by the Panchayats and the auditing of such accounts.

Between July and December 2004, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj held seven Round Tables of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj, in order to formulate a draft action plan towards achieving the objective of strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions so that they emerge as institutions of self-government as envisioned in the Constitution. The first round table held at Kolkata dealt *inter-alia*, with the issue of devolution of finances to Panchayats. The sixth Round Table at Guwahati considered the issue of audit and account of Panchayats. The details of the consensus arrived at in these Round tables, insofar as they pertain to the issue of Panchayat finances are enclosed as Annexure I & II.

A Committee of Chief Secretaries of States and State Panchayati Raj Secretaries has been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Secretary (Panchayati Raj) to monitor the progress on the implementation of the 150 recommendations of the Seven Round Tables.

A Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj of States/ Union Territories has been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Panchayati Raj, Government of India to monitor the implementation of the 150 recommendations of the Seven Round Tables.

The Ministry has now initiated a process of visiting each of the States/UTs to review with the authorities concerned the progress in implementing the points for action agreed upon in the Round Tables.

It is expected that these initiatives would accelerate the pace of strengthening of Panchayat finances.

Annexure I

First Round Table of Ministers-in-Charge of Panchayati Raj, Kolkata

24-25th July, 2004

Effective Devolution of Functions

- (i) The Constitution (Article 243G) provides for "devolution", that is, the empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to function as institutions of self-government for the twin purposes of (i) making plans for economic development and social justice for their respective areas, and (ii) implementing programmes of economic development and social justice in their respective areas, for subjects devolved to the PRIs, including

those listed in the Eleventh Schedule, and subject to such conditions as the State may, by law, specify. Therefore, the key objective is to ensure that Panchayati Raj Institutions function as institutions of self-government rather than as mere implementing agencies for other authorities in respect of such functions as may be devolved on them;

- (II) While devolution must eventually comprise the entire range of subjects provided for in the State legislation in a time-bound manner, States/UTs may prioritise their devolution programme to ensure that for such functions as are prioritised, there is full and effective devolution in empowering PRIs as institutions of self-government in respect of these functions;
- (III) To this end, the essential step is the identification of activities related to the devolved functions with a view to attributing each of these activities to the appropriate tier of the 3-tier system. To the extent possible, there should be no overlapping between tiers in respect of any given activity;
- (IV) In determining the tier of the Panchayati Raj System to which any given activity is to be attributed, the principle of subsidiarity must, to the extent possible, be followed. The principle of subsidiarity states that any activity which can be undertaken at a lower level must be undertaken at the level in preference to being undertaken at any higher level;
- (V) On the basis of the identification of activities relating to devolved functions, and through the application of the principle of the subsidiarity, States/UTs may review/undertake time bound activity mapping with a view to completing this exercise within the fiscal year 2004-05;
- (VI) The activity mapping model as evolved in the Ministry of Rural Development in the Report of the Task Force on Devolution of Powers and Functions upon Panchayati Raj Institutions, and the information provided about existing State-wise activity mapping in the Fact Sheets presented to the Round Table, might be drawn upon by State Governments/UT Administrations for preparing their respective activity mapping exercises;

(VII) The Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj could, on request, furnish technical assistance and expertise to State Govts./UT Administrations to accomplish activity mapping within the time-frame indicated;

(VIII) With a view to promoting a measure of irrevocability of devolved functions, devolution may be routed through legislative measures or, alternatively, by providing a strong legislative framework for devolution through executive orders.

Effective Devolution of Functionaries

- (I) The devolution of functionaries to the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be patterned on the activity mapping of activities related to devolved functions;
- (II) Where the devolved activity requires the deputation of State Government officials to assist the elected PRI in planning or implementing the devolved activity, the officials concerned must be primarily responsible to, and under the disciplinary supervision and control of, the elected authority;
- (III) With a view to building a cadre of officials and technocrats specialized in the devolved functions of the PRIs, State Governments/UT Administrations may consider instituting a Panchayati Raj Administrative and Technical Service, with the State Government discontinuing further recruitment of staff to State services for such devolved functions;
- (IV)
 - (i) Reconceiving the role of District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) as an important instrument for Panchayati Raj development through the progressive merger of DRDAs with the District Panchayats. The technical expertise and other facilities of the DRDAs should become available to all tiers of the PRIs under the overall responsibility and disciplinary control of the elected authority in the PRIs at the appropriate level;
 - (ii) The activities of the reconceived DRDAs with respect to the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj system should be patterned on the activity map for the devolution of functions, functionaries and funds so that all the three tiers of PRIs have equitable access to the resources, expertise, facilities and manpower of the DRDAs.

Effective Devolution of Finances

- (I) The “sound finances” of the Panchayats is a Constitutional obligation enjoined on the States by Article 243-I. In pursuance of this Constitutional obligation, the States and the Centre, in a true spirit of fiscal federalism, should work together to strengthen the finances of the elected local bodies;
- (II) To this end, the devolution of finances to the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj System should be patterned on activity mapping for the devolution of functions and functionaries, thus securing effective devolution of powers to the PRIs through the linking of the devolution of finances to the devolution of functions and functionaries;
- (III) On the basis of the principles adumbrated above, the State Governments might attempt to prepare a road map, to be made effective as soon as possible, and, in any case, by the end of the next fiscal year 2005-06, which might include the following components:—
- (i) Devolution, tier-wise and based on activity mapping of:
 - (a) Planning;
 - (b) Budgeting;
 - (c) Provisioning of finances.
 - (ii) Inclusion of a PRI component in the budget of each State/Central Government department based on activity mapping;
 - (iii) Provision of progressively larger united funds, tier-wise, to the Panchayats by State/Central Governments;
 - (iv) Provision of united grants from the Planning Commission to the PRIs, tier-wise, based on activity mapping;
 - (v) Tier-wise allocations, based on activity mapping of the PRIs, of hitherto unallocated grants, if any, made by previous Finance Commission, and a pre-determined pattern for the tier-wise allocation within a time bound framework of grants from the 12th and future Finance Commissions;

- (vi) A schedule, to be determined by each State Government/UT Administration, of the time-frames within which State Finance Commissions should prepare their reports; for the submission of State Finance Commission recommendations, along with Action Taken Reports (ATRs), to the Legislature; and for the executive to act on recommendations/ATRs endorsed by the State Legislature;
- (vii) Steps to encourage PRIs to raise their own resources, especially through the provision to “appropriate” revenues raised by them for their own purposes (Article 243-H).

Gram Sabhas

- (I) Article 243-A of Part IX of the Constitution provides for the establishment of Gram Sabhas to “exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide”;
- (II) A strong system of Gram Sabhas is the indispensable foundation of good governance through Panchayati Raj;
- (III) Based on the two principles stated above, State Governments may review the extant legislation to determine the legislative and other steps which remain to be taken to ensure that the “powers” and “functions” mentioned in Article 243A of the Constitution are adequately incorporated in the State legislation. In particular, the following points may be examined:
- (i) The need for constituting Sabhas below the Gram level (such as Gram Sansad, Upa-Gram Sabha or Ward Sabha, by whatever name called) with the aim of ensuring that the adult population in each ward is given the opportunity of conveying to the Gram Sabha their views on issues coming up for consideration as also holding the elected Ward representative responsible to the adult population in each Ward;
 - (ii) The periodicity of meetings of Gram Sabhas and Ward Sabhas;

- (iii) Provision for full and satisfactory consultation with special or disadvantaged categories of the population, such as women, SC/ST, landless labourer etc;
- (iv) Provision of Mahila Sabha meetings, comprising all the adult women of a Ward/ Gram Panchayat area, to deliberate upon, and decide the modalities of, expressing their views in the Gram/Ward Sabhas;
- (v) Endowing the Gram/Ward Sabha with meaningful empowerment through such measures as:
 - (a) Right/entitlement to all the information required for the Gram/Ward Sabhas to contribute to transparent and good governance, as well as to make the elected Panchayat truly answerable to the Gram/Ward Sabha;
 - (b) Approve before implementation commences, plans and programmes (including budgets) for economic development and social justice prepared by the Gram Panchayat;
 - (c) Authorize the issuance of utilization certificates of funds allocated for the plans, projects or programmes of the Panchayat;
 - (d) Identification of beneficiaries.
- (vi) Such social audit measures may also be appropriately institutionalised at the Block and District level.

Annexure II

Sixth Round Table of Ministers in-Charge of Panchayati Raj, Guwahati, 27-28 November 2004

Ministers in-charge of Panchayati Raj and their representatives, bearing in mind the spirit of cooperative federalism which must inform the effective implementation of Panchayati Raj as set out in Part IX of the Constitution of India and related provisions, agreed to recommend to their respective Governments, for joint acceptance by the Centre and the States, the following points of action:—

Elections

- (i) The Indian voter is one and indivisible. The principle of parity between parliamentary and assembly

elections, on the one hand and panchayat elections, on the other, must therefore be maintained, especially as it is noticed that people's participation in panchayat elections is substantial and generally equal to or higher than in parliamentary/assembly elections. Thus, for example, even in States with difficult geographical terrain, 88% of the electorate has participated in panchayat elections in Himachal Pradesh and 83.5% has participated in Sikkim.

- (ii) While all matters relating to panchayat elections have been vested by the Constitution in State Legislatures/Governments, there is a need to work towards commonality, if not uniformity, in election procedures and provisions. To this end, it would be desirable to vest all responsibilities for the election process in State Election Commissions rather than splitting these up, including:

- (a) preparation of electoral rolls;
- (b) delimitation of constituencies;
- (c) reservations and rotations;
- (d) qualifications of candidates;
- (e) conduct of elections; and
- (f) functioning as the first stage of adjudication in election disputes.

- (iii) The Union Government might consider the preparation of model code relating to the supervision, direction and conduct of elections to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

- (iv) With a view to evolving a common electoral roll for all levels of elections, consultations between the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the State Election Commissioners (SECs) might be encouraged with a view to resolving practical problems that might arise in the preparation, maintenance and updating of such electoral rolls for elections to be held at different times for different levels of Governments. The Panchayat and Nagarpalika wards should be regarded as the building blocks for electoral rolls for all levels of election.

- (v) Consideration may be given to incorporating in the laws pertaining to PR elections the same provisions of disclosure as apply to Parliament and State Assembly Elections.

- (vi) The Election Commission of India (ECI) might be approached for establishing a forum for institutional interaction between SECs and ECI on issues such as directives being issued by the State Election Commission; the use of radio broadcasting for disseminating election-related information; anomalies arising out of migration; linking delimitation with census operation; uniformity in service condition of SECs; and proposals like sealing the electronic chip in the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), and not the machine itself, for evidentiary purposes, thus leaving the machine free for use in panchayat elections.
- (vii) States may consider according the same salary and emoluments to State Election Commissioners as High Court Judges are entitled to.
- (viii) It is recommended that the Delimitation Commission be regularly in contact with the SEC's, who are members of the Commission, to sort out practical difficulties arising out of delimitation process.
- (ix) To facilitate the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in panchayat elections, the Union Government in consultation with Election Commission of India and the SECs, might consider issues relating to the funding of the purchase of EVMs for the use of State Election Commissions.
- (x) Elections to District Planning Committees provided for in Article 243ZD of the Constitution might also be brought within the purview of State Election Commissions to ensure full conformity with Constitutional provisions, which has not always been the case.

Audit

- (i) Since local bodies are now Institutions of local self-government, It is necessary to upgrade the work of the Director of Local Fund Audit (DLFA) and other similar bodies to the level required by Constitutional imperatives and, to this end, for DLFA and other similar bodies to work in concert with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (C&AG).

- (ii) In recognition of PRIs being Institutions of local self-government, PRIs themselves should be associated with the preparation of standards and norms and the emphasis should be on fund management and fund tracking, rather than simply on fund flow, to ensure greater accountability.
- (iii) In order to ensure that such audit contributes effectively to capping, reducing and eventually eliminating the scope for corruption in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), it is necessary that audit & accounting standards appropriate to the work of the Panchayats be established and observed. These standards should be elementary, simple and easily comprehensible to the elected representatives, and should focus on:
 - when transactions should be looked into;
 - what should be monitored;
 - how the transactions should be documented; and
 - how they should be disclosed.
- (iv) There is need to establish an internal audit system at every tier of the Panchayati Raj system and to regard C&AG audit (or audit by bodies certified or technically guided by C&AG) as complementary external audit.
- (v) Audit, to be effective, might include the establishment of a National Accounting Standards Board (NASB) for local government accounts and be complemented by the establishment of audit commissions or similar such regulatory bodies at the State level.
- (vi) Besides, arrangements may be made in State Legislatures for the establishment of Public Accounts Committees (PACs) specifically for PRIs or for the accounts of PRIs to be submitted to PR Committees of the State Legislatures. State level committees, as in Andhra Pradesh, for the settlement of audit paras may also be considered.
- (vii) It may be useful to complement such institutional arrangements by legislating an appropriate Fiscal Responsibility Act for elected local authorities.

- (viii) Outsourcing of accounting by such measures as village panchayats being authorized to employ certified Chartered Accountants against standard contracts might be considered.
- (ix) The training of both officials and elected representatives in sound accounting and audit practices is a high priority. To this end, State Governments are invited to make full use of the Regional Training Institutes (RTIs) functioning under the aegis of the C&AG, in particular the RTI at Kolkata which has been declared a centre of excellence; as also of the Institute of Public Auditors of India (IPAI). Substantial additional funding from the Union Government to facilitate training is a high priority.
- (x) Those State Governments which have not as yet availed of the arrangements for bringing the C&AG into the exercise of accounting and audit, including the C&AG's Technical Guidance and Supervision (TGS) Scheme for the PRIs, are invited to do so and the attention of all concerned is drawn to the publications of the Indian and Audit Accounts Department, in particular—
 - (a) Auditing Standards for PRIs and Urban Local Bodies
 - (b) Guidelines for Certification of Audit of Accounts of PRIs
 - (c) Training module of Audit of Gram Panchayats
- (xi) Given the shortage of staff for undertaking formal accounts and audit work in the lakhs of Village Panchayats, thousands of Intermediate Panchayats and hundreds of Zilla Parishads around the country, it is essential that automation and computerization of accounts be undertaken with all deliberate speed and to this end software like the one being prepared by the Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar for the Orissa State Government, for maintaining day-to-day accounts, which is expected to be ready by early 2004, be deployed as widely as possible everywhere.
- (xii) Social audit is an important complement to formal audit and for the sound and healthy development of Panchayati Raj, it is essential to establish a symbiotic relationship between social and formal audit.
- (xiii) Social audit must necessarily be undertaken at the level of the Gram Sabha but might also be undertaken at higher levels of the Panchayati Raj system, as in West Bengal.
- (xiv) For social audit to be effective and based on the best practices available in different States, consideration might be given to the preparation of Social Audit Policies for adoption by State Legislatures/Governments so as to provide a framework within which social audit is undertaken. Such Social Audit Policies may be targeted at facilitating popular participation in fighting corruption in Panchayats, as also complementing formal audit processes by quality assessment, ascertainment of preferences and the provision of choices. At the same time, Social Audit Policies may provide for institutional measures to prevent needless harassment.
- (xv) to ensure appropriate follow-up to issues raised through social audit, legislative bodies and regulatory authorities might treat social audit resolutions on par with formal audit paras to ensure consideration and disposal within a time-bound framework.
- (xvi) Given the critical importance of total disclosure of information for effective social audit, States might consider passing Right to Information legislation, taking into account the legislation already on the books in such states as Rajasthan.

Statement II

The following are the important recommendations of the 12th Finance Commission for the Panchayati Raj Institutions:—

- i. The best practices listed in para 8.19 of the report may be considered for adoption by States to improve the resources of the Panchayats.
- ii. The States should avoid delays in the constitution of State Finance Commissions; their constitution in phase, frequent reconstitution, submission of reports and tabling of the action taken reports in the legislature.
- iii. State Finance Commission Reports should be readily available to the Central Finance Commission when the latter is constituted so that

an assessment of the States need could be made by the Central Finance Commission on the basis of uniform principles.

- iv. SFCs must be constituted with people of eminence and competence with qualification and experience in the relevant field.
- v. The convention at the national level of accepting the principal recommendations of the Finance Commission without modification should be followed at the State levelling respect of SFCs Reports.
- vi. The SFCs must clearly identify the issues which require action on the part of the Central Government to augment the Consolidated Fund of the State and list them out in a separate Chapter for the consideration of the Central Finance Commission.
- vii. The suggestions made by SFCs regarding raising the ceiling on professional tax is endorsed for action by Central Government.
- viii. SFCs should follow the procedure adopted by the Central Finance Commission for transfer of resources from the Central to the States in respect of resource transfers from State Governments to local bodies. The SFC reports should contain estimation and analysis of finances of the State Government as well as the local bodies at the pre and post transfer stages alongwith a quantification of the revenues that could be generated additionally by the local bodies. The gaps that may still remain would then constitute the basis for measures to be recommended by the Central Finance Commission.
- ix. while estimating the resources of the local bodies, SFCs should follow a normative approach in the assessment of revenues and expenditure.
- x. A permanent SFC Cell may be created in the Finance Department of State Governments as the collection and collation of data would need to be done constantly and made available to the SFCs and when it is constituted.
- xi. The PRIs should be encouraged to take over the assets relating to water supply and sanitation

and utilize the grants for repairs as also the O&M costs. The PRIs should, however, recover 50% of the recurring cost in the form of users charges.

- xii. Most States do not have credible information on the finances of their local bodies. States may assess the requirement of each local body in this regard and earmark funds accordingly out of the total allocation recommended by the 12th Finance Commission.
- xiii. No conditionality over and above those recommended by the 12th Finance Commission be imposed by the Central Government for releasing the grants in aid.

Tilting of Minarets and Towers

5040. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that some of the minarets and towers in the country are reported to be tilting;

(b) if so, whether the Government has conducted any study in this regard;

(c) if so, the findings thereof; and

(d) the follow-up action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, sir. Archaeological Survey of India is aware of the tilting of minarets of Taj Mahal and Qutub Minar, Delhi.

(b) Survey of India has carried out periodical surveys to check verticality of four minarets of Taj Mahal since 1941 and recently Geodetic and Research Branch of Survey of India has carried out studies and observations of verticality in March, 2005.

Survey of India has also carried out studies of tilting of Qutub Minar from 1975-1994 and recently studies have been carried out in April, 2005.

(c) From the triangulation, traverse and levelling data, Survey of India has concluded that the dome and four minarets of Taj Mahal remained quite stable in plan as well as in elevation from 1940 to 1994.

Based on the triangulation, traversing and levelling data which was observed from 1975-1994, Survey of India, *vide* the report dated 16.02.1998 confirmed that the extent of tilt of Qutub Minar has been very negligible being at the rate of 9-10 arc seconds per year.

(d) Survey report of Taj Mahal and Qutub Minar conducted in March/April, 2005 is awaited. Future course of action will be decided on receipt of the same.

Amendment in Guardianship and Wards Act, 1890

5041. SHRI RAJENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received representations to amend the Guardianship and Wards Act, 1890;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) No such representations have been received.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Exploration of Oil Reserves

5042. SHRI HITEN BARMAN:
SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA:
SHRI SUBRATA BOSE:
SHRI RANEN BARMAN:
SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:

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

(a) the target fixed for exploration of oil and natural gas reserves during Ninth and Tenth Five Year plan;

(b) the number of oil wells drilled by the public sector oil companies in different parts of the country during the said period along with the quantity of oil and gas explored therefrom;

(c) the expenditure incurred on drilling of these wells, during the said period; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to dig more oil wells in the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Targets fixed for hydrocarbon exploration for 9th and 10th Five year plan are as under:

	9th Plan (1997-2002)	10th Plan (2002-2007)
2D Seismic survey (KM)	34745	98327
3D Seismic survey (Sq. KM)	7450	48305
Exploratory wells (Nos.)	776	871
Development wells (Nos.)	952	883
Total No. of wells	1728	1754
Reserve Accretion (Million Metric Tonne)	663-862	785-914

(b) and (c) The number of wells drilled, in-place reserve accretion and expenditure incurred on drilling of these wells by public sector oil companies are given below:—

	9th Plan (1997-2002)	10th Plan (First 3 year <i>i.e.</i> 2002-2005)
Exploratory wells (No.)	750	411
Development wells (No.)	828	637
In place reserve accretion (MMT)	563.30	293.07
Expenditure incurred on Drilling (Rs. in crore)	10667.33	11839.59

(d) For exploration of hydrocarbons, Government have taken the following steps:—

(i) New areas for further exploration have been opened up under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). Under NELP, 90 exploration blocks have been awarded to various companies in four rounds of exploratory bidding held till now. The exploration work in NELP blocks has led to 19 oil/gas discoveries so far. 20 more

exploration blocks have been offered for international competitive bidding under the fifth round of NELP.

- (ii) Accelerated exploration programme by National Oil Companies (NOCs) in areas awarded to them on a nomination basis.

Apex Fare Scheme

5043. SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Airlines proposes to introduce Apex Fare Scheme for Bhubaneswar-Delhi and Bhubaneswar-Kolkata Sectors; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which these sectors are likely to be included under the Apex Fare Scheme?

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

(b) Does not arise.

Rail Connectivity to Paradeep Port

5044. SHRI JUAL ORAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Paradeep Port Authority has requested the Ministry of Railways to provide better rail connectivity to that port;

(b) if so, whether the Port Authority has also asked for additional number of wagons for the smooth movement of cargos from the port; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Occupancy Ratio of Rajdhani Train

5045. SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has monitored the occupancy ratio of Rajdhani train between Nizamuddin and Chennai during off season;

(b) if so, estimated losses suffered by the railways in running a full Rajdhani train during off season;

(c) whether the Government is considering to pull off Rajdhani train during off season; and

(d) if so, the time by which the decision in the matter is likely to be taken?

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

(b) 2433/2434 Chennai-Nizamuddin, Rajdhani Express trains are required to be run in off season also as the actual occupancy in 2AC and 3AC classes during this period has been of the level of 70-80%.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Railway Projects in Madhya Pradesh

5046. SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of ongoing Railway Projects in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh;

(b) the amount spent on these projects so far and the estimated cost of each project;

(c) the funds allocated during 2005-06 for these projects;

(d) the time schedule for completion of these projects; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to complete these projects in time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) The project-wise progress long with the target dates of completion, wherever fixed, anticipated expenditure up to 31.03.2005 (actual expenditure will be known after finalization of the yearly accounts of the last financial year) and budget

allocation provided during 2005-06 for various ongoing New Line, Gauge Conversion, and Doubling projects

passing fully/partly through Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are as given under:—

Sl.No.	Name of the Project	Present Status	Anticipated Cost (Rs. in crore)	Anticipated Expenditure up to 31.03.2005 (Rs. in crore)	Budget allocation provided during 2005-06 (Rs. in crore)
1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>New Line</i>					
1.	Guna-Etawah via Shivpur- Gwalior-Bhind (348.25 Kms.)	Guna-Bhind (308 Kms) has been completed and commissioned. Earthwork, bridgeworks and ballast supply are in progress on Bhind-Etawah (36 Kms.), where overall physical progress is 77%.	423.00	381.69	25.00
2.	Lalitpur-Satna, Rewa- Singrauli & Mahoba- Khajuraho (541 Kms.)	Work is being taken up in phases. Final Location Survey (FLS) for Lalitpur-Khajuraho (167.5 Kms.) & Mahoba-Khajuraho (65 Kms.) has been completed. FLS for Khajuraho-Satna (116 Kms.) & Rewa-Singrauli (191.6 Kms.) is in progress. Earthwork & bridgeworks have been taken up in the entire length, where land has been made available.	925.00	83.96	25.00
3.	Godhra-Indore via Dahod, Sardarpur, Dhar & Dewas-Maksi (316 Kms))	Dewas-Maksi (36 Kms.) has been completed and commissioned. Work on balance project would be taken up once the necessary clearances are obtained. FLS has been completed.	946.16	67.70	15.00
4.	Ramganj Mandi-Bhopal (262 Kms.)	FLS has been completed. Work between Ramganj Mandi-Jhalawar (25.72 Kms.) has been taken up.	726.05	30.44	15.00
5.	Dallirajahara- Jagdalpur (235 Kms.)	The first phase of this railway line, viz., from Dallirajahara to Rowghat, is to be constructed entirely at the cost of M/s. Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) who have not yet deposited the cost of this part-	369.00	0.44	0.01

1	2	3	4	5	6
		project with the Railways for want of mining permission in Rowghat area and forestry clearance. The work would be taken up as soon as SAIL deposits the money with the Railways and the State Government hands over the possession of the requisite land.			
6.	Bishrampur-Ambikapur (19.88 Kms.)	land has been acquired fully. Overall physical progress is 85%. One block section, <i>i.e.</i> , Bishrampur-Kamalpur, has been completed.	80.33	48.49	22.06
<i>Gauge Conversion</i>					
1.	Jabalpur-Gondia incl. Balaghat-Katangi (285 Kms.)	Gondia-Balaghat section has been completed and trial engine run has been done. On Jabalpur-Balaghat section land acquisition is in progress. Earthwork and bridgeworks have been taken up on Gwarighat-Kachhepura stretch and Balaghat-Katangi sections.	511.86	147.87	25.00
2.	Neemuch-Ratlam (135.38 Kms.)	Earthwork & bridgeworks and ballasting are in progress. The work is targeted for completion during 2005-06.	167.51	90.99	20.00
3.	Chhindwara-Nagpur (149.522 Kms.)	New work included in the Budget 2005-06.	383.79	0.00	4.00
<i>Doubling</i>					
1.	Kalapipal-Phanda/Maksi Bhopal (41.49 Kms.)	Land has been acquired partially. Earthwork & bridgeworks are in progress.	97.64	19.11	25.00
2.	Akodia-Mohammad Khera-Shujalpur (13.15 Kms.)	Preliminary arrangements are being made to take the work.	31.36	0.10	12.12
3.	Manikpur-Katiadandi (32.68 Kms.)	Earthwork, bridgeworks and ballast supply have been completed, Track linking is in progress. Overall physical progress is 90%. The work is targeted for completion during 2005-06.	50.74	35.83	0.99

1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Korba-Gevra Road (8 Kms.)	Gevra Road-Kusumunda (3 Kms.) has been completed and commissioned. Overall progress of Kusumunda-Korba is 95%.	46.80	42.95	3.50
5.	Bilaspur-Urkura (3rd Line) (110 Kms.)	Bilaspur-Dagori has been completed and commissioned. On Dagori-Bhatapara, mid-section linking has almost been completed. Bhatapara-Urkura is being implemented by Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. (RVNL).	227.36	171.36	56.00
6.	Bilaspur-Salka Road (39.4 Kms.)	FLS between Uslapur-Salka Road is being taken up.	90.02	6.81	10.00
7.	Bhilai-Durg (3rd Line) (13.15 Kms.)	New work included in the Budget 2005-06.	33.00	0.00	2.00
8.	Bilaspur-Anuppur (except Kalachand-Khongsara) with flyover at Bilaspur	New work included in the Budget 2005-06.	84.00	0.00	12.00

(e) The works are being progressed as per the availability of resources. Railways have taken a number of initiatives to get additional resources from sources other than the normal budgetary support to expedite the progress of the projects.

Special Recruitment Drives

5047. SHRI SURESH CHANDEL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recruitment in defence services from the States like Himachal Pradesh is proportionately declining since new criteria for recruitment in Indian defence services has been adopted;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government has received any requests from the Government of Himachal Pradesh and also MPs from the State for relaxation in new criteria and to organise special recruitment rallies in the State;

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

(d) the number of special recruitment rallies organised in Himachal Pradesh during the last three years alongwith the number of persons recruited in those rallies?

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

(b) and (c) Requests from Members of Parliament have been received for relaxation in physical and educational standards. This aspect is reviewed periodically by High Power Study Groups, keeping in view the overall geo-social environment and the genetic pool of all regions across the country. This is done to improve the physical profile of the troops in the Armed Forces. In the Army the height requirement has been increased from 163 centimetre to 166 centimetre from August 2004, applicable to the entire Western Himalayan Region.

(d) In the Air Force, two special recruitment rallies were held in the year 2002 at Shimla and Hamirpur and one in 2003 at Chowari. In the Army, the response and intake was satisfactory *vis-a-vis* the vacancies allotted. In the Navy "All India Merit" based intake was also adequate.

Technology from Brazil for Blending of Ethanol with Petrol/Diesel

5048. SHRI PARAS NATH YADAV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Brazil is providing technology for blending of ethanol with petrol/diesel and giving consultancy on various related aspects;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the foreign exchange saved by the Government by mixing ethanol in petrol and diesel during the last two years;

(d) the States where ethanol mixed petrol is being sold at present;

(e) whether the Government exported the petrol rendered surplus through its blending with ethanol;

(f) is so, the details thereof;

(g) whether the Government has conducted any study regarding impact of ethanol mixed petrol on environment; and

(h) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Government have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Brazil on 8.4.2002 under which Brazil would share the technology for blending ethanol with petrol/diesel and provide consultancy on various related aspects of the technology. However, the MoU will become operational only after the Brazilian Congress has ratified it.

(c) to (f) India does not import petrol and is, by and large, self sufficient in diesel. There is, therefore, no direct implication of foreign exchange being saved by mixing ethanol in petrol. There is however, the indirect consequence of conserving foreign exchange on importing

the crude oil required for refining that quantity of petrol/diesel. The technology for blending ethanol in petrol for use in transportation sector is established, but such a technology for blending ethanol in diesel is not yet established for commercial use.

Government are implementing the ethanol-blended petrol programme in the notified sugar producing States/ adjoining States and Union Territories. The States where the programme is notified for implementation are: Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Haryana, Punjab, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh (All districts except Chittoor & Nellore) & Tamil Nadu (only in Coimbatore, Dindigul, Erode, Kanyakumari, Nilgiri, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin & Virudhunagar) and in the Union Territories of Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Chandigarh. In terms of Gazette Notification No. GSR 705 (E) dated 27.10.2004, the supply of 5% ethanol-blended petrol in notified areas in mandatory provided the price at which ethanol is offered for the programme is comparable to the price of ethanol for alternative uses, and is comparable to the delivered price of petrol at the notified locations, and provided further that if the supply of ethanol can be maintained at such prices.

India has provisionally exported a total of 2979 thousand metric tonnes of petrol in 2003-2004 valued at Rs. 4021 crore, which could include petrol saved by blending ethanol with petrol.

(g) and (h) Yes, Sir. Emission studies indicated that there was reduction in carbon monoxide (CO) emissions from two wheelers with the use of 5% and 10% ethanol petrol blends but with a marginal increase in hydrocarbon (HC) emissions. Two-wheelers fitted with catalytic converters show substantial reduction in both carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon emissions. In the case of passenger cars, a marginal increase in nitrogen oxide (NO) emissions was observed. However, there is substantial reduction in CO and HC emissions.

Production in Gun Carriage Factory, Jabalpur

5049. SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gun Carriage Factory at Jabalpur has sufficient work according to its production capacity;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken to utilise the production capacity of the said factory fully?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) Yes, Sir. For the year 2005-2006, Gun Carriage Factory, Jabalpur has sufficient work according to its production capacity.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

[English]

Training to Foreign Soldiers

5050. SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of foreign soldiers trained by the Indian armed forces during each of the last three years, country-wise;

(b) whether India is sending its soldiers to developed countries for training;

(c) if so, the number of soldiers deputed for training during the above period; and

(d) the benefit derived from exchange of training and joint exercises?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) 5483 foreign soldiers were trained by Indian armed forces during the last three training years. Year-wise and country-wise details are given in the enclosed Statement.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The number of soldiers deputed for training to developed countries during the last three years are:—

2002-2003	—	96
2003-2004	—	78
2004-2005	—	102

(d) The exchange of training and joint exercises helps in building up defence cooperation with other countries. The soldiers from friendly countries are also exposed to our history, culture and society. Our armed forces, by availing courses abroad, are exposed to the current and emerging global trends in organisational practices, equipment tactics, training and procedures.

Statement

Country-wise Details of the Number of Foreign Soldiers Trained by the Indian Armed Forces in the Last Three Years

Country	Number of Soldiers trained in			Total
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	
1	2	3	4	5
Algeria	Nil	01	Nil	01
Australia	01	02	01	04
Bangladesh	41	26	33	100
Benin	Nil	04	Nil	04
Bhutan	08	224	258	490
Botswana	Nil	37	31	68
Cambodia	24	18	10	52
Czech Republic	Nil	01	Nil	01

1	2	3	4	5
Egypt	01	01	Nil	02
Ethiopia	01	Nil	Nil	01
France	01	02	03	06
Ghana	02	02	06	10
Indonesia	09	03	10	22
Kazakhstan	02	06	06	14
Kenya	08	06	11	25
Korea	01	01	01	03
Kyrgyzstan	01	06	02	09
Laos	01	07	04	12
Lebanon	01	01	Nil	02
Lesotho	Nil	03	03	06
Malaysia	15	16	09	40
Maldives	56	77	105	238
Mauritius	25	36	27	88
Mongolia	05	05	01	11
Myanmar	10	29	25	64
Namibia	01	Nil	Nil	01
Nigeria	15	17	14	46
Nepal	05	216	151	372
Oman	04	02	01	07
Philippines	01	02	Nil	03
Qatar	04	Nil	Nil	04
Seychelles	07	15	09	31
Singapore	Nil	01	07	08
South Africa	Nil	01	01	02
Sri Lanka	359	1776	1414	3549
Syria	01	01	01	03

1	2	3	4	5
Tajikistan	04	47	26	77
Tanzania	01	Nil	06	07
Thailand	02	02	01	05
Uganda	01	04	03	08
UK	04	04	04	12
USA	03	06	08	17
Uzbekistan	03**	05	02	10
UAE	01	02	02	05
Vietnam	16	08	15	39
Zambia	Nil	04	Nil	04
Total:				5483

Coal Gasification

5051. SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) has entered into Collaboration with "Shell" for Coal gasification process;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any feasibility studies has been undertaken by GAIL for coal gasification; and

(d) if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL) had an Umbrella Agreement with Shell, relating to various types of gas sector co-operation, non-conventional gas production and end use-sectors.

Both parties have now agreed to revive the Umbrella agreement.

GAIL is keen to utilize the Shell Coal Gasification Process (SCGP) for setting up a Coal Gasification Project in eastern India.

Shell have indicated that SCGP is suitable for Indian coal which inherently has a high ash content.

Shell have carried out a study for GAIL based on coal sample analysis from Eastern Coal Fields Ltd., Mahanadi Coal Fields Ltd. and Central Coal Fields.

(c) and (d) A detailed feasibility report (DFR) is in the process of being prepared by M/s. Uhde, Mumbai in collaboration with their parent company M/s. Uhde, Germany, based on coal data from Eastern Coal Fields Ltd., Mahanadi Coal Fields Ltd. and Central Coal Fields. The DFR is expected to be ready by the end of August 2005.

[Translation]

Recruitment in Defence Forces

5052. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of recruitment made for the three wings of defence forces from other States including Maharashtra especially from tribal areas during last three years and till date;

(b) whether the number of persons recruited in Maharashtra especially in tribal areas is less as compared to those recruited in other States;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the number of recruitment centres in the country especially in tribal areas as on date, location-wise

(e) the recruitment centres especially in tribal areas of the country in which recruitment was made during the last three years and till date; and

(f) the tribal areas where recruitment of tribal people is proposed to be made during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Statement-I showing State-wise recruitment made during the last three years,

including the State of Maharashtra is enclosed, No separate data for recruitment in defence forces from tribal areas is maintained.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) to (f) the recruitment in the Navy and the Air Force is made through the application system by establishing examination centres/Airmen selection centres at different places of the country. In the Army, recruitment is made through the rally system. Statement-II showing Recruitment Offices in the Army is enclosed.

Recruitment data for a particular region, religion, caste or creed is not maintained. All districts are covered at least once a year by the recruitment process.

Statement I

Name of States/UTs	2002			2003			2004		
	Army	Navy	Air Force	Army	Navy	Air Force	Army	Navy	Air Force
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Andhra Pradesh	6614	323	268	7193	303	337	5648	317	748
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	49	03	05	22	03	18	22	08	00
Assam	1555	27	20	1650	65	52	1618	55	36
Arunachal Pradesh	191	02	02	61	01	00	82	00	00
Bihar	5105	814	1762	3895	605	838	5707	588	2265
Chandigarh	11	01	12	07	00	00	04	01	02
Chhattisgarh	1030	14	10	1183	34	54	1072	21	16
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Daman and Diu	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Delhi	1210	82	74	1460	46	35	1388	43	40
Gujarat	1899	12	18	3656	14	03	2128	01	55
Goa	140	09	03	20	05	00	125	02	00
Haryana	3922	418	333	3099	674	168	2927	493	473

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Himachal Pradesh	2747	59	45	2884	133	40	2336	99	79
Jammu & Kashmir	3638	66	47	4266	125	16	3261	55	297
Jharkhand	1574	56	234	1987	40	153	1715	34	230
Karnataka	3994	06	38	3077	39	16	4686	18	101
Kerala	3037	318	292	3529	229	242	2599	180	334
Lakshadweep	00	00	00	18	00	00	00	00	00
Madhya Pradesh	4084	41	60	4726	55	16	4011	68	103
Maharashtra	7998	103	36	10290	86	51	6723	80	60
Manipur	644	16	17	302	57	99	371	38	43
Meghalaya	120	04	00	139	05	07	119	05	03
Mizoram	296	02	04	178	01	27	329	04	05
Nagaland	578	02	02	253	31	06	528	16	02
Orissa	1929	261	208	2460	247	54	1814	198	225
Pondicherry	06	03	01	23	01	01	06	00	02
Punjab	6995	59	32	5843	158	08	7944	101	71
Rajasthan	6595	229	211	7271	345	121	5566	371	420
Sikkim	62	15	02	64	13	00	64	15	02
Tamil Nadu	5462	61	82	5615	39	52	4492	49	127
Tripura	157	00	00	151	00	54	159	00	36
Uttar Pradesh	12582	598	1352	16442	629	680	12650	656	848
Uttaranchal	5966	95	149	3698	88	195	4077	75	200
West Bengal	4760	133	149	5417	129	92	4268	193	217
Nepal	1880	01	00	1542	01	00	1412	00	00
Total	96810	3633	5468	105421	4201	3435	89841	3784	7040

Note: The recruitment figures in Army is maintained on calendar year basis and in Navy and Air Force it is maintained on financial year basis.

Statement II*Location of Recruitment Offices as on date:***(1) Headquarter Recruiting Zone, Ambala**

1. *RO HQ Ambala
2. BRO Rohtak
3. BRO Hissar
4. @ BRO Charkhi Dadri
5. BRO Palampur
6. BRO Hamirpur
7. BRO Shimla
8. BRO Mandi

(2) Headquarter Recruiting Zone, Bangalore

9. RO HQ Bangalore
10. BRO Mangalore
11. BRO Belguam
12. BRO Trivandrum
13. BRO Calicut

(3) Headquarter Recruiting Zone, Chennai

14. RO HQ Chennai
15. BRO Trichirapalli
16. BRO Coimbatore
17. BRO Secunderabad
18. BRO Guntur
19. BRO Vishakhapatnam

(4) Headquarter Recruiting Zone, Danapur

20. RO HQ Danapur
21. BRO Muzaffarpur
22. BRO Gaya
23. BRO Katihar
24. BRO Ranchi

(5) Headquarter Recruiting Zone, Jabalpur

25. RO HQ Jabalpur
26. BRO Gwalior
27. BRO Mhow
28. BRO Bhopal
29. BRO Raipur

(6) Headquarter Recruiting Zone, Jaipur

30. RO HQ Jaipur
31. BRO Alwar
32. BRO Jhunjhunu
33. BRO Jodhpur
34. BRO Kota

(7) Headquarter Recruiting Zone, Jalandhar

35. RO HQ Jalandhar
36. BRO Amritsar
37. BRO Ferozpur
38. BRO Patiala
39. BRO Ludhiana
40. BRO Jammu

(8) Headquarter Recruiting Zone, Kolkata

41. BRO Srinagar
42. RO HQ Kolkata
43. BRO Siliguri
44. BRO Kanchrapara
45. BRO Cuttack
46. BRO Sambalpur
47. BRO Gopalpur

(9) Headquarter Recruiting Zone, Lucknow

48. RO HQ Lucknow
49. BRO Meerut
50. BRO Bareilly
51. BRO Agra

52. BRO Varanasi
 53. BRO Amethi
 54. BRO Lansdowne
 55. BRO Almora
 56. BRO Pithoragarh
 (10) **Headquarter Recruiting Zone, Pune**
 57. RO HQ Pune
 58. BRO Mumbai
 59. BRO Nagpur
 60. BRO Kolhapur
 61. BRO Aurangabad
 62. BRO Ahmedabad
 63. BRO Jamnagar
 (11) **Headquarter Recruiting Zone, Shillong**
 64. RO HQ Shillong
 65. BRO Jorhat
 66. BRO Narangi
 67. BRO Rangapahar
 68. BRO Silchar
 (12) **Gorkha Recruiting Depot (GRD)**
 69. ORO Kunraghat
 70. GRD Ghoom
 (13) **Independent Recruiting Office (IRO)**
 71. IRO Delhi Cantt.

*Recruiting Office
 @Branch Recruiting Office

[*English*]**Loss Incurred by AI on Purchase of Aircraft**

5053. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the C&AG in its Report No. 3 of 2005 (Commercial) has observed that Air India had incurred an expenditure of Rs. 26.33 crore in enhancing payload limit of its aircraft, which did not yield desired results due to unrealistic estimation of cargo growth;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the remedial measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. An expenditure of Rs. 26.33 crore was incurred in May, 2000 to enhance the payload limit (increase in "Maximum Zero Fuel Weight") of six B737-400 aircraft. This was necessitated due to the reconfiguration of the aircraft to accommodate 26 additional economy Class seats. Subsequently, during June 2000 to March 2001 (Financial Year 2000-01), the cargo revenue went up by Rs. 7 crore as compared to 1999-2000. Similarly, the passenger seat factor on the India/USA/India sector went up to 77.9% as against 72.4% in previous year representing a growth of 5.5%. As against a capacity of 423 seats available on B747-400, this translates into carriage of average 23 passengers more per flight in one direction i.e. 46 passengers more per return trip. This increase in number of passengers required additional space/weight of baggage as well as increase in weight on account of additional passengers and would have reduced the payload availability for cargo to the following extent:

	Average weight of Baggage per passenger 64 kgs.	Average weight per passenger 77 kgs.
46 additional passenger	(46 X 64) 2944	(46X77) 3542
10 flights per week	29440	35420
52 weeks per year	1530880 (A)	1841800 (B)

Additional payload utilized on account of increase in passengers: (A) + (B) = 3372.7 Tons

In spite of additional use of payload to the tune of 3373 tons on account of increase in number of passengers carried during 2000-01 compared to the previous year, Air India cargo was able to carry almost same tonnage and earned higher revenue of Rs. 7 crore. Had the above expenditure of Rs. 26.33 crores not been incurred, the cargo uplifts could have come down by 3373 tons and would have resulted in subsequent revenue loss of Rs. 2271 crore in a year @ cargo yield existing during 2000-01.

Rolling Assets

5054. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of state-of-art electric and diesel locos and state-of-the-art coaches imported during each of the last three years, Country-wise;

(b) the number of state-of-the-art locos and coaches produced indigenously during the above period;

(c) whether the rolling assets are not available as per the volume of traffic;

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

(e) the steps taken by the Government to meet the growing demand of rolling assets?

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

(b)

Year	Coaches (LHB)	Locomotives	
		Diesel (GM Locos)	Electric (ABB Locos)
	Rail Coach Factory	Diesel Locomotive Works	Chittaranjan Locomotive Works
2002-03	27	20	14
2003-04	76	24	16
2004-05	77	15	22

(c) The actual growth in freight traffic of Indian Railways has been 5.3% in 2002-03, 7.45% in 2003-04 and 7.98% in 2004-05 against the targeted traffic growth of 4.29%, 4.85% and 5.45% during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 respectively. Therefore, during the peak season, railways do face inadequate availability of rolling assets.

(d) and (e) During 2004-05, against budget provision of 20,000 wagons, Four Wheeler Units (FWUs), a total of 19,991 wagons (FWUs) were manufactured by wagon industry. It is proposed to acquire 23,300 (FWUs) during 2005-06 to meet the growing demand of traffic.

Gas Pipeline Projects

5055. SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of major gas pipeline projects recently completed; and

(b) the details of gas pipeline projects which are under construction and the time by which these are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) GAIL (India) Ltd. (GAIL) have completed their 610 Km., 17.5 MMSCMD capacity Dahej-Vijaypur pipeline on 31.3.2004 at a total cost of about Rs. 2228 crore.

(b) GAIL plan to implement the following major gas pipeline projects in the near future:—

Pipeline Project	Scheduled date of completion
(i) Dahej-Uran	August, 2006
(ii) Thulendi-Phulpur	April, 2006
(iii) Vijaypur-Kota	December, 2006
(iv) Jogoti-Dewas-Pitahmpur	July, 2006
(v) Kelaras-Malanpur	July, 2006

In addition, M/s. Gas Transportation and Infrastructure Company Ltd. (GTICL), a company promoted by M/s. Reliance Industries Limited, is also in the process of setting up Kakinada-Hyderabad-Uran-Ahmedabad Pipeline, which is scheduled to be completed by mid 2008.

Inter-Station Local Train Service

5056. SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are planning inter-station local train service on the electrified tracks in the near future;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the timeframe set for the commencement of the service?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Introduction of passenger carrying trains including Electric Multiple Units (EMUs) is a continuous process over Indian Railways subjected to operational feasibility and availability of resources. These are informed to the public through the public Time Table and notifications issued by Zonal Railways well in time.

Akola Airport

5057. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the closure of Akola Airport in Maharashtra for the air traffic;

(b) whether the Government proposes to re-open the Akola airport; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) This airport is at present non-operational as no aircraft operates through this airport. Operationalization of this airport will depend on firm commitment from airline operators to commence their scheduled operation to/from this airport.

Cooking of Eatables at Tea-Stalls

5058. SHRI BRIJBHUSHAN SHARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Western Railway/Railway Board has made a policy to discourage cooking of tea/eatables at Tea-Stalls on railway stations/platforms;

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

(c) whether the policy is likely to affect the public amenities adversely regarding providing fresh and good quality eatables to the passengers; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Railways/Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) Ltd. are gradually shifting to the concept of serving pre-cooked food items packed in bio-degradable and eco-friendly containers, in which food could be warmed before serving. This is being done to discourage cooking/deep frying on the platforms of railway stations. Cooking is being confined to centralised kitchens and food is being dispensed through heating equipment such as bain-maries, infrared/microwave ovens, etc. with a view to keep environmental pollution under control, surroundings clean and ensure safety of railway passengers.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Scarcity of Petroleum Products

5059. SHRI NITISH KUMAR:
SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 310 dated March 24, 2005 regarding 'Export of Petroleum Products' and state:

(a) whether the export of petroleum products has caused scarcity of these products in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) No, Sir. At present, exports of petroleum products are freely allowed except for Kerosene and LPG, for which no objection certificate from MoP & NG is required. This provision has been made with a view to ensuring adequate availability of PDS Kerosene and domestic LPG, which are subsidized products of mass consumption, in the domestic market before allowing their exports.

Implementation of Mandal Commission's Recommendations

5060 PROF. M. RAMADASS: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to implement all recommendations of the Mandal Commission;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is considering to permit the State Government to determine the quantum of reservation to backward classes in proportion to backward classes in proportion to the respective population of each State;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government is considering to provide reservation to OBCs in Judiciary also; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the State services is decided by the respective State Governments within the parameters laid down by the Supreme Court in the Indira Sawhney case. There is no requirement to seek permission from the Central Government.

(e) and (f) The Central Government is concerned only with the appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts. There is no proposal to reserve the posts in the appointment of Judges in the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts.

[Translation]

Pilot Project for Handicapped Cooperation with RCI

5061. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to launch a pilot project in Chhattisgarh with the cooperation of the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) for the welfare of the handicapped;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the funds allocated for the purpose?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

[English]

Rail Projects in Maharashtra

5062. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether proposals for construction of new railway lines, conversion of existing narrow gauge lines and doubling of existing railway lines in Maharashtra are pending with the Ministry; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The details of ongoing/new surveys for New Lines, Gauge Conversion and Doubling falling partly/fully in Maharashtra are as under:—

Sl.No.	Name of the Project	Kms.
1	2	3
1.	Durg-Nagpur 3rd line	256
2.	Solapur-Tuljapur-Osmanabad New Line	60
3.	Chinchwad-Roha New Line	95
4.	Achalpur-Murtjapur-Yavatmal, Pulgaon-Arvi Gauge Conversion	225
5.	Itarsi-Nagpur-Wardha-Ballarshah Doubling	306
6.	Pune-Miraj-Kolhapur Doubling	326

1	2	3
7.	Pandharpur-Lonand New Line	145
8.	Ballarshah-Kazipet 3rd Line	192
9.	Wardha-Yavatmal-Pusad-Nanded New Line	260
10.	Shirpur-Mhow New Line	185
11.	Igatpuri-Bhusaval 3rd Line	308

Further consideration of the above projects would be feasible depending upon the results of the surveys.

Issue of NOC for Installation of Petrol Pump

5063. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the norms and time fixed for issuing No Objection Certificate (NOC) for installation of a petrol pump;

(b) whether the Government has received complaints regarding irregularities in issuing the NOC particularly in Haryana;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government has conducted any enquiry in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Generally, No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for the installation of retail outlets (petrol pumps) are given by the District Magistrate after obtaining clearances from various authorities like the Police, the Fire Service, the Public Works Department, etc. Under the provisions of the Petroleum Rules 2002, the District Authority is required to complete both its enquiry and action for issue or refusal of the NOC, as the case may be, as expeditiously as possible, but not later than three months from the date of receipt of the application.

(b) to (f) Government have received occasional complaints regarding delays on the part of district authorities in the State of Haryana in the issue of NOCs for setting up retail outlets in the State. After the matter was taken up with the State Government, the State Government issued instructions to its Deputy Commissioners to dispose of all pending cases relating to the issue of NOCs on a priority basis. The work seems now to be progressing satisfactorily.

[Translation]

Accident at Kanhanpur Level Crossing

5064. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of unmanned level crossings under Nagpur division of South Central Railways;

(b) whether the Government is aware of the accident occurred at Kanhanpur level crossing recently;

(c) the details thereof including loss of life and property and compensation paid to the victims/their families;

(d) the action being taken or proposed to be taken for manning of the said level crossing; and

(e) the details of un-manned level crossings proposed to be manned during 2005-06 alongwith their locations, State/Zone-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Nagpur Division is not a part of South Central Railway. However, in Nagpur Division of South East Central Railway where accident at Kanhanpur Railway crossing had taken place, there are 576 unmanned level crossings.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. There was an unmanned level crossing accident between Kanhan-Ramtek Stations of Nagpur-Ramtek section of South East Central Railway's Nagpur Division on 3.2.2005. In this unfortunate accident, 58 persons lost their lives and 14 suffered grievous injuries. The damage to Railway property in this accident was Rs. 5,000/-. Humanitarian aid of Rs. 1 lakh each for the dead and Rs. 25,000/- each for the injured has been sanctioned.

(d) Manning of the unmanned level crossing where accident had taken place has been sanctioned on out of turn basis.

(e) Manning of the unmanned level crossing is planned Zone-wise and not location-wise/State-wise. A total number of 255 unmanned level crossings on all India basis is targeted for manning during 2005-06. Zone-wise distribution of 255 unmanned level crossings is as under:—

Railway	Target
Central	6
Eastern	0
East Central	4
East Coast	15
Northern	50
North Central	4
North Eastern	20
Northeast Frontier	13
North Western	15
Southern	34
South Central	33
South Eastern	7
South East Central	15
South Western	15
Western	20
West Central	4
Total	255

Air Services for N.E. Region

5065. SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN:
SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any scheme has been formulated to improve the air services in the North East Region;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the amount spent/likely to be spent by the Government for implementation of the scheme; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Alliance Air, a wholly owned subsidiary of Indian Airlines Ltd., has leased 4 ATR aircraft for improving connectivity in the North Eastern Region (NER). This project has been supported by a budgetary assistance of Rs. 35 crore per annum by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region through the North Eastern Council (NEC), for a five year period beginning with the financial year 2002-03. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Alliance Air and the NEC for this purpose. As a part of the MoU, Alliance Air is required to operate the ATR aircraft exclusively to provide connectivity to/in NER, in consultation with NEC and to make Guwahati as a operational base. Till date Rs. 105 crore have been released to the Indian Airlines/Alliance Air for this purpose. Alliance Air is operating 148 flights/week with ATR aircraft to 8 stations in North East Region and carrying approximately 3100 passengers/week.

Payment of Dues to Employees of HMT Chinar, Kashmir

5066. SHRI ATIQ AHAMAD:
SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI:
SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN:

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that employees of HMT Chinar Watch Company Ltd., Kashmir have not been paid their salary for the last several months;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the measures taken by the Government to ensure that employees of the said company are paid their dues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) H.M.T. Chinar Watches Ltd., Srinagar has been continuously incurring heavy losses and has not been able to generate internal resources to meet the expenditure on salary/wages. The losses incurred during the last three years are as under:—

(Rupees in crores)

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Profit/Loss	-6.31	-21.92	-25.72

(c) It is primarily the responsibility of the public enterprises to pay salary to its employees. In order to assist the enterprise in special circumstances, Government has from time to time made available resources to HMT Chinar Watches to pay such salaries, the last being in October, 2004 when such support was provided for payment of salary/wages upto July, 2004.

Reservation Centres Issuing Indrail Pass

5067. SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD:
SHRI Y.G. MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to

provide the facility of reservation centres issuing Indrail Pass at all the railway stations in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of stations where this facility is available at present; and

(d) the time by which this facility is likely to be provided at remaining railway stations?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Presently this facility is available at 17 stations.

(d) Does not arise.

Crime in Trains/Stations

5068. SHRIMATI KALPNA RAMESH NARHIRE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 1489 dated December 9, 2004 regarding crimes in trains/stations and state:

(a) whether the information has since been collected;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the time by which the information is likely to be collected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The assurance given to the said Question has already been fulfilled on 31.3.2005. However, information is given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

There has been an increase in the number of cases of crime (Murder, Dacoity, Robbery and theft of passengers' belongings) reported on the Railways during the year 2004 as compared to the year 2003.

The number of cases of Murder, Dacoity, Robbery and Drugging of passengers and theft of passengers' belongings reported over Zonal Railways during the year 2004 is as under:—

Year		Murder	Dacoity	Robbery	Drugging of Passengers	Theft of Passengers belongings
2004	In Trains	49	107	224	467	7055
	In premises	220	25	183	81	4645

The above cases of crimes on railways are reported to, registered and investigated by the concerned Government Railway Police (GRP) of the State Governments.

Yes, Sir. On 25.6.2004, 10-12 dacoits threatened the passengers of train No. 2322 Dn. (Mumbai-Howrah Express) between Bhabhua Road and Kudra Stations, at the point of fire-arms and knife and looted cash amounting to Rs. 1,00,000/- (Rs. One lakh) alongwith personal belongings. They also caused knife injury to a passenger, who was travelling in AC-3 Tire Coach. The injured person was rendered Medical Aid. In this connection, Government Railway Police (GRP)/Sasaram (Bihar) has registered a case No. 32/04 dated 25.6.2004 under sections 395 and 397 of the Indian Penal Code.

In order to improve safety and security of passengers travelling by trains, the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957 and the Railways Act, 1989 have been amended to enable Railway Protection Force to effectively supplement the efforts of the Government Railway Police (GRP) of the State Governments in controlling Crime. As such, RPF escort parties, as far as possible are deployed for escorting of important trains, withdrawing them from various scheduled duties, to assist GRP actively w.e.f. from 1st July, 2004. Approximately 1,288 train escort parties of RPF are deployed daily for this purpose, in addition to strengthening security in Railway premises, to supplement the efforts of Government Railway Police (G.R.P.). Investigation and prosecution of crime under the Indian Penal Code (including theft, robbery and dugging) as well as sabotage related cases under the Railways Act continue to be with the GRP (State Police).

[English]

Acquisition of Deep Submergence Rescue Vessels

5069. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Navy proposes to acquire Deep Submergence Rescue Vessels (DSRVs) as reported in the 'Times of India' on April 10, 2005;

(b) if so, whether the staff evaluation process of the DSRV system of two foreign firms has been completed;

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

(d) the main features of the proposed vessels; and

(e) the time by which these vessels are likely to be inducted into the Navy?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) Proposed acquisition for the Deep Submergence Rescue Vessels (DSRVs) are of contemporary design and would cater to the specification of the Indian Navy. Acquisition would be made only after the evaluation of the vessels offered by the short listed firms.

The DSRVs would be inducted after all necessary approvals are accorded.

Abuse of Human Rights by UN Peace Keeping Forces

5070. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:
SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of reports on abuse of human rights by UN Peace-Keeping Forces;

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

(c) whether the Government plans to call back Indian Troops from UN Peace-Keeping Mission; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the precautionary measures taken/likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. However, no such report involving Indian Armed Forces personnel deployed in United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Missions, has been brought to the notice of the Government. The services of Indian troops on UN Missions have been commended by the UN. All precautionary measures such as high standards for selection of personnel, adequate pre-induction training, regular briefing to the troops are taken to ensure that Indian troops do not get involved in human rights violations.

Commission on Muslim Community

5071. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has set up a High Power Committee to study the social, economic and educational status of Muslim community;

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

(c) the time fixed for the Committee to submit its report;

(d) whether the Committee has any legal status to ask for information from the State Governments; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to ensure that every State Government helps the Committee in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A High Level Committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Justice Rajender Sachar. The Committee comprises 6 members besides the Chairman.

(c) The time fixed for the Committee to submit its report 15 months with effect from the date of its notification, *i.e.* 9th March, 2005.

(d) and (e) In accordance with the terms of reference of the Committee, it will obtain relevant information from relevant sources including from departments/agencies of the Central and State Governments.

Agreement for Business Promotion

5072. SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVRAJ:
SHRI ILYAS AZMI:
SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

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

(a) whether the public sector oil companies have recently signed any agreement/MoUs with the Bangladesh Business Development Corporation Limited for promotion of its business in Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof; and

(c) the investment likely to be made by the oil companies in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL) and ONGC have signed MoUs with M/s. Business Development Corporation Limited (BDCL) of Bangladesh.

The MoU signed by GAIL is with a view to cooperating and promoting their business interests in Bangladesh mainly in the areas of gas pipelines, distribution and O&M opportunities. At present, both sides are conducting preliminary level discussions for identifying possible opportunities. No definitive project has as yet been identified for investments by GAIL in Bangladesh.

ONGC's MoU is for promoting their business interests in Bangladesh by way of identifying, assisting and securing business opportunities in the upstream and downstream segments of the hydrocarbons sector in Bangladesh. The scope of assistance under the MoU encompass the following major areas:—

- Facilitating acquisition of oil & gas acreages.
- Facilitate award of Services, Training and Consultancy contract in oil & gas sector.
- Facilitate interaction between ONGC and Governmental bodies of Bangladesh and execution of agreements pertaining to ONGC's business interest.
- Providing market intelligence and tender information and to pursue ONGC's tender on submission.
- Facilitate marketing of petroleum products.
- BDCL to provide exclusive services to ONGC in respect of the business areas identified.

ONGC have thus far provided services in Bangladesh for the drilling of 10 developmental gas wells and carried out work-over operations in 8 wells.

Women Territorial Army

5073. SHRI ANIRUDH PRASAD *ALIAS* SADHU YADAV:
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:
SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Army is planning to raise a Women Territorial Army in the light of violation of human rights in Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) If so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Presently women are enrolled only in General Hospital Territorial Army Units as Doctors and Nursing Staff. There is no proposal to raise Women Territorial Army Units.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Bhatinda Refinery

5074. DR. RATTAN SINGH AJNALA:
SARDAR SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:
SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 546 on March 3, 2005 regarding Refinery at Bhatinda and state:

(a) whether Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited has since concluded a Deed of Assurance with Government of Punjab on Refinery Project at Bhatinda;

(b) if so, whether the work on refinery has been started; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir, but agreement has been reached on the Heads of Agreement to be incorporated in the Deed of Assurance and formalities with regard to concluding the Deed are expected to be completed shortly.

(b) and (c) Work has started with regard to the finalisation of the configuration of the refinery at Bhatinda. Engineers India Limited have been assigned the task of optimising the process units and product slate of the refinery.

[Translation]

Modernisation of Airports in N.E. Region

5075. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA:
SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme for modernisation of the airports in the North-Eastern States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds likely to be spent on the implementation of the scheme; and

(d) the time by which the work on the scheme is likely to be completed?

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

(b) The proposal for upgradation, improvement and modernization of infrastructure facilities available at the airports in the North-Eastern Region has been taken up in phased manner depending upon the availability of land from respective State Governments in consultation with airlines, based on type of aircraft operated by them. North-East Council has accepted the proposals and is funding 60% towards the development cost.

Various development works like extension of runways at Agartala, Lilabari, Dimapur, Imphal and Guwahati airport; construction of new terminal buildings at Agartala, Lilabari, Tezpur, Dimapur and Imphal; Installation of Ground Lighting facilities and Instrument Landing System at Agartala, Imphal, Guwahati and Dibrugarh etc. have been completed in NE Region during 9th and first three years of 10th Five Year Plan. The rest of the work viz. Installation of Instrument Landing System (ILS) at Dimapur, Lilabari and Silchar, extension of runway and associated pavement at Silchar (IAF Airfield) and Dibrugarh have been taken up for the remaining period of 10th Five Year Plan.

(c) Rs. 243.32 crores have already been spent during 9th and first three years of 10th Five Year Plan and Rs. 36 crore is likely to be spent during the remaining period of 10th Five Year Plan.

(d) The major development works are likely to be completed by the end of the 10th Five Year Plan *i.e.*, by 2007.

[*English*]

Recasting of 15-Point Programme for Minorities

5076. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to recast the 15-Point Programme for the welfare of the minorities in the country;

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the time by which it is likely to be finalized; and

(c) the details of the programme proposed to be incorporated therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. No time frame has been fixed. It is under preparation.

[*Translation*]

Private TV Channels

5077. SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:

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

(a) whether some private TV Channels have been found guilty of showing the footage of Indo-Pak match;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken by the Government against those TV channels; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for preventing such incident in future?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Several private TV channels namely NDTV India (Hindi), Star News, Zee

News, Headlines Today, Aaj Tak, Sahara Samay, NDTV 24x7 (English), Sun News, ESPN, TV9, India TV, Star Sports, ETV2, Asianet Global, Ten Sports, CNBC, were found to have used the footage of India-Pakistan matches in excess of permissible limits.

(c) and (d) Prasar Bharati has informed that legal notices were issued to such channels to stop unauthorised use of footage. Bills would be raised against channels that have used the footage beyond the permissible limit.

Irregularities in Awarding D.T.H. Contract

5078. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA:
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:
MOHD. SAHID:
SHRI MUNSHI RAM:

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

(a) whether irregularities have been committed in awarding D.T.H. contract of Doordarshan;

(b) if so, the company to which D.T.H. contract has been awarded;

(c) whether a loss of Rs. 600 crore has been assessed on account of awarding the contract by the Doordarshan;

(d) if so, whether the Government has conducted any enquiry in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(b) Prasar Bharati has informed that an order for supply and installation of Ku-band (DTH) Earth Station was placed on M/s. Arraycom India Ltd., Gandhinagar, Gujarat, in January, 2004, at a cost of Rs. 10.82 crore after inviting tender offers through global tender enquiry.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) to (f) Does not arise.

Jobs to Disabled Persons

5079. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken initiatives for allotment of tea-stalls, PCO booths to the disabled persons at the railway stations on the priority basis and has asked other Ministries to provide more and more jobs to them; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the progress made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) and (b) The following guidelines for allotment of tea-stalls and PCO booths in Railways are being followed:—

- I. Two percent of all reserved category catering units are allotted to the persons with disabilities. The reserved category units are based on the following criteria:—
 - (i) 'B' & 'C' category stations—25% of all Restaurants/Refreshments rooms are in reserved category.
 - (ii) 'A', 'B' & 'C' category stations—25% of all Stalls & 25% of all Trolleys are in reserved category.

(iii) 'D', 'E' & 'F' category stations—49.5% of all small units are in reserved category.

II. Twenty five percent STD/ISD/PCO booths in the Railway stations are reserved for allotment to the Physically Handicapped persons with disability 40% and above.

III. The persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 provides for 3% reservation against identified posts in Government establishments for employment of persons with disabilities of which one per cent each shall be reserved for persons suffering from (i) blindness or low visions; (ii) hearing impairment; and (iii) locomotor disability or cerebral palsy, in the posts identified for each disability. According to the information available, 3% of identified posts in the Government of India establishments are filled by the persons with disabilities.

[English]

Infrastructure Projects

5080. SHRI T.K. HAMZA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state the amount spent by Railways on infrastructure projects during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): The expenditure incurred on infrastructure projects during the last 3 years have been as under:—

(Rs. in crore)

Plan Head	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05 (Revised Estimates)
New Lines	1415.11	1540.76	1644.18
Gauge Conversions	847.52	1217.56	1067.24
Doublings	583.41	537.71	437.08
Rly. Electrification	251.97	149.27	143.63
Metropolitan Transport	314.15	352.52	331.10

The above expenditure do not include funds spent through Build Own Transfer (BOT), State Governments participation, Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. & Defence funding.

New Exploration Licensing Policy

5081. SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY:
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:
SHRI KIREN RIJIJU:

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

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to modify the new exploration licensing policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to start single window facility keeping the investor's convenience in view;

(d) whether the Government has received any representation from the Investors in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Government of India approved the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) in 1997 and it became effective in 1999, since when licenses for exploration are being awarded through an international competitive bidding system. National Oil Companies are required to compete with Indian and foreign companies to secure Petroleum Exploration Licenses. Four rounds of bidding have so far been completed under NELP. The fifth is underway with bids closing on 31 May 2005. While the overall fiscal and contractual terms under NELP have remained more or less the same, consultations are held with all stakeholders at the end of each round to suggest and incorporate improvements for succeeding rounds. The same process was followed for the fifth round of NELP, announced on 4 January 2005. The fifth round also incorporates some new features which constitute an improvement over earlier rounds. A summary of the improvements made in the Fifth Round may be seen at the Statement enclosed.

(c) to (f) A single window facility is being established in the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas to facilitate investor interaction with the other authorities concerned after the PSC is signed. In order to address problems being faced by the various operating companies from time to time, this Ministry has constituted two Inter-Ministerial Committees (IMC); one under the Chairmanship of Minister (P&NG) and another under the Chairmanship of Secretary (P&NG). The Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary (P&NG) is, *inter-alia*, to discuss and facilitate the resolution of issues related to co-ordination between different Government agencies in the matters of clearances for security, environment, defence etc. The IMC set up under the Chairmanship of

the Minister is to review matters relating to the expeditious exploration and production of crude oil and natural gas in the country. These Committees are designed to facilitate the resolution of any problem that might be encountered by the investors, expedite various clearances, and monitor the exploration and production activities of operating companies.

Statement

- (i) All geo-scientific data has been made available online through the internet to enable companies to view data at their own convenience and location.
- (ii) Work stations equipped with software were provided at data centers at London, Houston, Calgary and Dubai. This enabled companies to analyse and interpret the data at the data centre itself.
- (iii) In order to provide marketing stability to the companies, the government shall exercise its option to take its profit share of natural gas in cash or kind for a block of 5 years instead of such option being made every year as in the previous rounds.
- (iv) Data packages and information dockets can be purchased at a discounted price.
- (v) In order to encourage small and medium size investors, companies having a net worth of US \$ 500 Million or more will not be required to give a bank guarantee towards Minimum Work Programme commitment in respect of onland and shallow water blocks. This threshold value in the previous round was US\$ 1000 Million.
- (vi) In order to bring more transparency in the bidding process, weightages for all bid evaluation criteria including weightages for sub-criteria have now been made public under NELP-V for the first time.
- (vii) Details of all operational blocks from earlier rounds such as work programme, fiscal terms etc. were available at Data Centres. This enabled companies to assess existing work programme as well as other bidding parameters while formulating their own bids and may also help them in forming strategic alliances.

Engagement of Outside Producers

5082. SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID:
SHRI D.B. PATIL:

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

(a) whether the Prasar Bharati has been engaging the services of private producers for certain programmes like Kashmir Affairs and North East;

(b) if so, the details of the private producers engaged in the last two years alongwith the programmes telecast and payment made to them;

(c) whether the Prasar Bharati proposes to enlarge its scope and rope in enterprising producers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) The Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) and (d) Prasar Bharati has informed that, commissioning of programmes is undertaken by Doordarshan based on its programme requirements and availability of funds in accordance with the provisions in the Guidelines for Commissioned Programmes.

Captive Thermal Power Plants by Railways

5083. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the abnormally high tariff on power being charged by the State Electricity Boards (SEBs) has put an extra burden on the Railways;

(b) if so, the amount paid to different SEBs on account of power tariff during each of the last three years;

(c) whether in view of the high electricity tariff being charged by the State Electricity Boards the Railways are exploring the possibility of setting up dedicated captive thermal power plants to meet their needs and to reduce expenditure on electric traction energy bills;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

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

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

(b) The amount paid to the different State Electricity Boards (SEBs) on account of power tariff for traction purpose during the last three years are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) Yes, Sir. Railways is setting up Captive Thermal Power Plant in Joint Venture with National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC).

(d) and (e) Public Investment Board (PIB) has in its meeting held on 13.02.2004 recommended submission of this project for approval to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) after obtaining the environmental clearance.

Environmental clearance has since been received on 03.08.2004.

Joint Cabinet Note is being finalized in consultation with Ministry of Power.

Statement***Amount Paid to Different States on Account of Power Tariff for Traction Purpose***

(Figure in Million Rs.)

Sl.No.	Name of States	Amount paid in Million Rs.		
		2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	4161	4879	5096
2.	Bihar	1288	1300	1473

1	2	3	4	5
3.	Gujarat	2044	2051	2117
4.	Haryana	756	929	868
5.	Karnataka	141	152	172
6.	Kerala	86	154	167
7.	Maharashtra	4617	3854	4079
8.	Madhya Pradesh	5438	6033	5988
9.	Orissa	822	1078	1225
10.	Punjab	327	307	319
11.	Rajasthan	964	1043	993
12.	Tamil Nadu	1890	1884	2379
13.	Uttar Pradesh	3001	2695	2645
14.	West Bengal	1973	2133	2466
15.	Chhattisgarh	2409	2484	2457
16.	Jharkhand	1532	1706	1900
Grand Total		31449	32682	34344

Railway Projects in Karnataka

5084. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA:

SHRI M. SHIVANNA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of on-going Railway Projects in Karnataka; and

(b) the steps being taken by the Union Government for speedy implementation of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The details of ongoing railway projects in the state of Karnataka along with expenditure incurred upto March, 2005, Outlay for 2005-06, and status with targets, wherever fixed, are as follows:—

(Rs. in crores)

Sl.No.	Project	Year of inclusion in Budget	Cost	Anticipated Expenditure upto March 2005	Budget Outlay 2005-06	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NEW LINES						
1.	Munirabad-Mehbubnagar (246 kms)	1997-98	497.47	29.44	5	Final Location Survey has been completed. Land

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
						acquisition proceedings are in progress. Doubling between Krishna-Yeramara has been completed.
2.	Gadwal-Raichur (60 kms)	1998-99	108.91	19.25	4	Final location survey has been completed. Land acquisition is under process.
3.	Hubli-Ankola (167 kms)	1996-97	997.58	67.55	5	Earthwork and bridge works are in progress in 33 kms on Hubli-Kirvatti section. Land acquisition for remaining length of this section is also in progress and the proposal for diversion of forest land for this project is also being pursued.
4.	Gulbarga-Bidar (140 kms)	1997-98	369.7	35.07	4.45	Final location survey has been completed. Land acquisition papers for 31 Kms from Bidar end submitted to State Government and for further 22 Kms are under process.
5.	Kottur-Harihar via Harpanhalli (65 kms)	1995-96	124.03	10.57	3	This work is being executed on 2/3rd cost sharing basis with the Government of Karnataka. State Government is not depositing their share regularly which is affecting the progress of the work. Earthwork and bridge works have commenced for 60 kms from Kottur end.
6.	Kadur-Chickmagalur- Sakleshpur (93 kms)	1996-97	274.29	48.83	8	The work has been taken up on Kadur-Chickmagalur section. Balance is forest land for which the case is under process with the Ministry of Environment and Forest. Earthwork and bridge works in 40 Kms stretch are in progress.
7.	Hassan-Bangalore via Shravanabelagola (166 kms)	1996-97	412.91	150.3	20	On this project, works on Hassan-Shravanabelagola (42 kms) and Bangalore-Neelamangala (14 kms) are in

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
						advanced stage of completion. For balance section <i>i.e.</i> Shravanabelagola-Neelamangala (110 kms) land acquisition is under process.
8.	Bangalore-Satyamangalam (260 kms)	1998-99	901.62	0.36	0.01	Final location survey for 207 kms has been completed. On the balance length, survey is under process.
GAUGE CONVERSION						
9.	Solapur (Hotgi)-Gadag (300 kms)	1993-94	342.7	223.77	15	On this project, gauge conversion of Solapur-Bijapur (110 kms) has already been completed and commissioned. The balance work <i>i.e.</i> gauge conversion of Bijapur-Gadag (190 kms) is being executed on cost sharing basis (50:50) with the Government of Karnataka. On Bijapur-Basavana-Bagewadi (45 kms) track linking has been completed. The work is also in progress in the balance section as per the availability of resources.
10.	Mysore-Chamarajanagar with extension to Mettupalayam (148 kms)	1997-98	606.58	52.49	16.54	Earthwork, bridge works and ballast collection are in progress on Mysore-Chamarajanagar section. Survey report for the balance length is being updated.
11.	Bangalore-Hubli and Shimoga Town-Talguppa (630 kms)	1992-93	441.24	401.42	0.1	The work on the line from Bangalore-Hubli & between Birur & Shimoga has been completed. On Shimoga-Talguppa section, earthwork and bridges are in progress.
12.	Yeshwantpur-Salem (197 kms)	1995-96	199.78	195.12	1.45	Work on the main line has already been commissioned. Residual work for a bye pass line at Yeshwantpur is in progress.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	Arasikere-Hassan-Mangalore (236 kms)	1994-95	357.43	224.1	0.01	Work on Arsikere-Sakleshpur and Mangalore-Kabakaputtur-Subramanaya Road have already been completed. Subramanaya Road-Sakleshpur is targeted for completion during 2005-06.
DOUBLING						
14.	Hospet-Guntakal (115 kms)	1996-97	157.73	147.2	26	This project is proposed under K-RIDE funding with a view to expedite the progress. Doubling of Tornagallu-Hospet and track linking on Guntakal-Hagari has been completed. Work on Hagari-Bellary (14 kms) and Bellary-Tornagallu is targeted for completion during 2005-06.
15.	Raichur-Guntakal (81.1 kms)	2003-04	136.62	10	19	Final location survey has been completed. This work is being implemented by Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. (RVNL).
16.	Bangalore-Kengeripatch doubling with Electrification (12.45 kms)	1995-96	29.19	5.19	5.2	Karnataka Government is sharing 2/3rd cost of this work. Formation work has been completed and ballasting is in progress. This work is targeted for completion during 2005-06.
17.	Kengeri-Ramnagaram (32.43 kms)	1997-98	58.9	9.66	10	Karnataka Government is sharing 2/3rd cost of this work. Doubling of Kengeri-Bidadi section (15 kms.) of this project is targeted for completion during 2005-06.
18.	Yeshwantpur-Tumkur (64 kms)	1997-98	98.14	57.38	35.55	Work on Yeshwantpur-Golahalli (26 kms) is targeted for completion during 2005-06. Major bridges have already been completed and earthwork, minor bridges, Road over bridges and ballast collection are in progress.
19.	Bangalore-Whitefield Bangalore City-Krishnarajpuram-quadrupling (23.08 kms)	1997-98	85	0.02	0.01	Work will be taken up after obtaining necessary clearances.

*[Translation]***Provision of Helicopter Underwater-Escape-Trainer-Technique**

5085. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to provide Helicopter-Underwater-Escape-Trainer-Technique to the defence services;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether evaluation of the aforesaid technique in protecting lives and properties in helicopter crashes on sea waters has been made;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the countries with whom the said technique is available?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) A case has been initiated to procure an advanced under-water-escape-trainer for Indian Navy.

A large number of countries such as Canada, USA, Australia, Holland, Indonesia, Brunei, UK, Pakistan, Malaysia, Scotland, Norway, South Korea and Nigeria have this type of facility.

*[English]***Renaming of Airports**

5086. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to rename some of the Airports in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the airports which are likely to be renamed; and

(c) the time by which the proposal is likely to be materialized?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Proposals are received from time to time for renaming of

various airports in the country. Proposals for renaming of airports at Jodhpur in Rajasthan as Maharaja Umaid Singh Airport, Gaya in Bihar as Gautam Buddha International Airport and Umroi (Shillong) in Meghalaya have been sent for views of the concerned State Governments, which are awaited. Some other proposals received for renaming of airports are: Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh as Maharaja Chhatrasal Airport, Dehradun in Uttaranchal as Veer Chand Garhwali Airport, Bhuj in Gujarat as Krantiveer Pandit Shyamji Krishna Verma Airport, Tura in Meghalaya as Captain W.A. Sangma Airport, Raipur's Mana airport in Chhattisgarh as Swami Vivekananda Airport, Amritsar Airport after Guru Ram Das, Rajkot Airport after Shri U.N. Dhebar, Lucknow Airport after Chanderbhanu Gupta, Varanasi Airport after Lal Bahadur Shastri, Leh Airport after Kushok Bakula Rimpochhe and Lengupui airport in Mizoram as Laldenga Airport. The proposals of naming have to go through the process of approval from time to time.

Bilateral Pact with Singapore

5087. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether bilateral pact of operation of flights between India and Singapore has been turned down by Singapore;

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

(c) the corrective steps being taken in this regard?

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

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

New Gas Reserves in Bay of Bengal

5088. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPAPARAI:
SHRI JUAL ORAM:

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

(a) whether new gas reserves namely 'Gas Hydrates' has been discovered in Bay of Bengal offshore;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the estimated quantity thereof;

(c) whether India has the technology to exploit this gas hydrates; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir. The presence of Gas Hydrates in offshore Bay of Bengal has been inferred from the interpretation of seismic surveys carried out in that area. However, it is yet to be established by drilling and coring technology.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Worldwide, the production of gas from Gas Hydrates is at the Research & Development (R&D) stage. India has also started its efforts in carrying out R&D in this area under the National Gas Hydrate Programme (NGHP).

Examination of Arbitration System

5089. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:
SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways has set up a one Member Committee to examine the arbitration system; and

(b) if so, the details alongwith terms and conditions thereof?

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

(b) Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have constituted a 'One-man High Level Committee to examine the Arbitration System on the Indian Railways' under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Justice Bhuvaneshwar Prasad, Judge (Retd.), High Court, Patna with effect from 16.11.2004. The tenure of the High Level Committee is for a period of one year. The Committee shall examine the following:—

- (i) study the reasons for growing number of arbitration cases relating to Railways in various fora including Departmental Arbitration Tribunal, subordinate Courts, High Courts and the Supreme Court;

(ii) suggest ways and means to reduce the number of arbitration cases, including changes necessary in the extant contractual provisions;

(iii) with a view to minimize delay in settling arbitration cases, to suggest most appropriate alternative dispute resolution mechanism;

(iv) suggest ways and means to attract the best legal Counsels to work for the Railways to deal with the arbitration cases effectively;

(v) suggest in-house arbitration settlement mechanism;

(vi) advise possibilities of use of International Center for Alternative Disputes Resolution (ICADR) in cases where Railway is a party; and

(vii) any other appropriate means or measures, which the Committee feels, may result in more effective handling of arbitration cases.

Serving of Foods

5090. SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received complaints regarding poor service and serving of poor quality of foods in the Air India and Indian Airlines flights;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) In terms of total passengers carried by the national airlines, the percentage of adverse feed-back received about the services offered/quality of meal served on board is negligible. Immediate corrective action on complaints/feedback which specify the area of drawback is taken at the caterers/staff level including penal action, wherever necessary.

[Translation]

Use of Mass Communications

5091. SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is making any special efforts for better use of means of mass communications for education, public health, agriculture, rural development and women and child development;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is utilizing the services of 'Eduset' for this purpose; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati and all the media units of this Ministry have been engaged in disseminating information to people about various schemes and policies of the Government on education, public health, agriculture, rural development and women, child development etc. AIR and DD broadcast/telecast programmes such as documentaries, discussions, interviews etc. These programmes are broadcast in major languages and dialects spoken by various smaller communities.

Press Information Bureau (PIB) issues press releases, handouts, features backgrounders etc. to Print Media. Publicity is also undertaken by using latest technologies like Internet. PIB also conducts annual conference called Editors Conference on Social Sector issues (ECSSI) to sensitize the media on developmental programmes on rural development, education, women and child development etc.

The Directorate of Field Publicity (DPF) is making special efforts by organising Multi-Media Campaigns on rural development, Public health etc. by way of film shows display of exhibition kits, distribution of print material, live song & drama programmes, oral communication programmes etc. Song & Drama Division is also presenting programmes on these themes.

DAVP has undertaken a number of campaigns in the area of education, public health, agriculture, rural development and women and child development through various modes of publicity for mass communication viz. press advertisements printed publicity, audio visual publicity outdoor publicity, exhibition and mass mailing of the printed material.

Publications Division makes efforts for better use of means of mass communications for education, rural

development and woman and Child development mainly through its journals like Yojana, Kurukshetra, Bal Bharti etc. as well as authentic books on these subjects.

(c) and (d) As informed by Ministry of Human Resource Development, 'EDUSAT' Satellite is exclusively dedicated for educational purposes. A Core Group has been constituted to suggest ways of sharing EDUSAT resources for all sectors of education including school education.

[English]

Accounting Systems

5092. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the present accounting system followed by the Railways is not transparent;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Expert Group on Railways has suggested that the accounts of the Railways should be in accordance with the standard business procedures; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Railways in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No Sir. The present Accounting System followed by the Railways is transparent as per Government Accounting Rules.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Expert Group on Railways has suggested that Capital basis of Indian Railways should be restructured and its accounts recast under the Indian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles to reflect Indian Railways' operations in the nature of commercial going concern and its viability and that the manner of operation of Depreciation Fund should fit into the standard depreciation norms laid down in the Companies Act and the amounts allocated to Depreciation Reserve Fund not fixed in an adhoc manner.

(d) Ministry of Railways has decided to undertake a study for Accounting Reforms to provide an accounting structure capable of meeting the various governmental and commercial purposes while conforming to the standards of government accounting being put in place by Government Accounting Standard Advisory Board.

[Translation]

Safety of Women Passengers

5093. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken/to be taken for the safety of women passengers with reference to the report of National Commission on Women on public hearing of women rail passengers;

(b) the percentage of trains having separate coach for women passengers;

(c) whether the Government is considering to appoint Women Traveling Ticket Examiners in trains; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith name of trains selected for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Special care has been taken by the Railways to provide security to women passengers. Special squads in the form of Surakhsni, Tejaswani, Durgavahni and Bhairavi consisting of lady Railway Protection Force constables and lady Ticket Examiners have been deployed in the affected areas of Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad and Patna sub-urban sections. Further, armed Government Railway Police personnel are also escorting ladies compartment in night hours over Mumbai sub-urban sections. Additional Railway Protection Force staff have been posted in affected sections to enhance security of women passengers.

(b) In all the passenger carrying trains, one compartment or such number of berths/seats, as required, are earmarked for the exclusive use of ladies.

(c) For appointment as Ticket Collector on Railways, both men and women can apply. No earmarking is done on the basis of gender.

(d) Does not arise.

Establishment of Armed Forces Tribunal

5094. SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to establish an Armed Forces Tribunal to deal with the service matters and appeals arising out of the verdicts of the court martial concerning the three services;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) A proposal to establish an Armed Forces Tribunal to deal with service matters and appeals arising out of the verdicts of the courts martial concerning the three services, is under active consideration of the Government.

[English]

Transfer of Airforce Land

5095. SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD: SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received a proposal for transfer of Airforce land for the creation of Multi-model International Passenger and Cargo Hub Airport at Nagpur;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

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

(b) The Government of Maharashtra proposes to acquire approximately 686 acres of land belonging to the Indian Air Force (IAF) for establishment of Multi-Model International Passenger and Cargo Hub Airport at Nagpur. In exchange, the IAF has been offered 400 acres of land south west of the existing runway by the Government of Maharashtra, recently.

(c) The matter has been taken up with the Government of Maharashtra and is being processed keeping in view the operational requirements of the Indian Air Force.

Theft of Rails

5096. SHRI SUBODH MOHITE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways is losing lot of money due to thefts of rail which are lying scattered along the railway tracks all over the country;

(b) if so, the losses suffered due to thefts during last one year;

(c) whether the Railways proposes to start centralized storing of rails to curb thefts as recommended by Nagpur Division of Central Railways;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(b) During the year 2004-05, the loss suffered by the Railways due to thefts of rails which are lying scattered along the railway track is Rs. 4,67,653/-, as rails worth Rs. 58,62,136 was stolen, out of which rails worth Rs. 53,94,483/- was recovered.

(c) to (e) The rails are normally stacked in station yards, track depots or near level crossing gates. Suitable watchman arrangements are also made to prevent theft etc.

[Translation]

• **Preparation of Press Releases**

5097. SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:
SHRI GIRIDHARI YADAV:

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

(a) whether most of the press releases in P.I.B. are prepared in English only and Hindi is ignored;

(b) if so, the rules for preparation of press release in this regard; and

(c) the remedial measures taken by the Government for preparation of press releases in Hindi also?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Press releases/features are prepared both in Hindi and English. It is totally incorrect to say that Hindi is ignored.

(c) Hindi software has been installed in the PIB offices and training is provided to staff so that more releases are prepared in Hindi.

Marketing Plan for Semi Urban and Rural Areas

5098. SHRI DEVIDAS PINGLE:
SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK:

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

(a) whether the Government has advised the public sector oil marketing companies to draw up Marketing Plans for covering semi-urban and rural areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the response of public sector oil companies thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Based on their commercial assessments, public sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are authorized to set up dealers/distributors. However, Government have advised them to set up atleast 5.6% and 5.3% of their total Retail Outlets (ROs) in remote areas and low service areas respectively under their future expansion plans. Similarly, for LPG distributorships, Government have advised OMCs to concentrate their future plans on semi-urban and rural areas to increase supplies in these areas. OMCs have reported that they are formulating their Marketing Plans on the basis of these guidelines.

[English]

Rail Lines

5099. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of the new rail line projects namely Dausa-Gangapur city, Kolayat-Phalodi and Ajmer-Pushkar of Rajasthan;

(b) the funds sanctioned for these projects during the current financial year and the total funds required for completion of each of these projects; and

(c) the time schedule for completion of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) The details of Dausa-Gangapur city, Kolayat-Phalodi and Ajmer-Pushkar new line projects alongwith anticipated cost, allocation of funds, status and the target date wherever fixed are given as under:—

(Rs. in crore)

Sl.No.	Name of Project	Anticipated cost	Funds allocated 2005-06	Status and the target date wherever fixed
1.	Dausa-Gangapur city (92.67 kms.)	208.83	5.00	Land acquisition is in progress. Possession of 372.91 hectare out of 448.25 hectare of land has been taken so far.
2.	Kolayat-Phalodi (111.394 kms)	171.00 (Funds deposited by Ministry of Defence)	5.00	Earthwork, construction of minor/major bridges, staff quarters, station buildings, supply of ballast and loading of sleeper and rails are in progress. State Government has not yet handed over the land for 700 metre length (2.88 hectare). The work is targeted for completion by 31.03.2006.
3.	Ajmer-Pushkar (31.40 kms.)	88.40	10.00	Final location survey has been completed Rs. 9.90 crore has been deposited with the State Govt. for land acquisition. Possession of 85% of land has been taken over by the Railway.

Passenger Amenities Committee

5100. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any Committee existing to look into railway passengers amenities;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the details of recommendations made by the Passenger Amenities Committee;

(c) whether any new initiatives have been taken in the light of the recommendations made by the Committee; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Passenger Amenities Committee is constituted at the national level for a specific tenure, to check the passenger amenities provided at railway stations and on trains from time to time. The tenure of the previous Passenger Amenities Committee expired on 21.05.03. Exercise to constitute a new Passenger Amenities Committee is under-way.

(b) to (d) Since the New Passenger Amenities Committee is yet to be constituted, the question of recommendation and new initiative does not arise.

Attachment of Crash Worthy Doors in Long Distance Trains

5101. DR. K. DHANARAJU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that at the time of train accidents many passengers died as it takes a lot of time to cut the door of the train and take out the passengers;

(b) if so, whether the Government had decided to attach 'Crash Worthy Doors' in long distance trains in order to rescue the people at the time of accident;

(c) whether the provision to provide such facility in trains has been implemented;

(d) if so, the details of trains in which such doors have been attached;

(e) if not, the reasons for not providing such facility in trains; and

(f) the time by which the plan for providing 'Crash Worthy Doors' is likely to be implemented?

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

(b) to (f) No, Sir. There is no concept of 'Crash Worthy Doors' in trains. However, Emergency Exit Windows are provided in all passenger coaches so that in case of accidents, passengers can get out of the coaches easily. Railways are also pursuing design developments to enhance the overall crash worthiness of coach bodies which includes doors made of Fibre Reinforced Plastic which can be broken with less effort than steel doors.

Gas Exploration on Orissa Coast

5102. SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) has opposed Gas Exploration on the Orissa coast as it would pose a serious threat to the breeding Olive Ridley Turtles;

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

(c) whether the matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Environment and Forests for clearance;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the response of the Ministry of Environment and Forests in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) have given their views on the possible impact of exploration and production operations on Olive Ridley Turtles on the Orissa coast. Executive Director, PCRA has opined that there is a need for a detailed study on the issue of Olive Ridley Turtles along the Orissa coast and until such a study is undertaken, it might be to withhold permission for exploration and drilling activities in this area.

All operators are required to take environment clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, which is the nodal Ministry for granting environment clearances. This Ministry fully support the imperative of sustainable development of hydrocarbon resources keeping the environment and bio-diversity fully protected.

(c) to (e) Obtaining environmental clearances is the responsibility of the operating companies. Normally, they make applications along with Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) studies and other required details of Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) has applied for environmental clearances in respect of two exploration blocks, namely, NEC-OSN-97/2 (in North-East coast offshore) and MN-DWN-98/2 (in Mahanadi deepwater area).

The Ministry of Environment and Forests have allowed exploratory drilling in the block NEC-OSN/97/2 during the period April to November subject to normal terms and conditions mentioned in the environment clearance, but have stated that under no circumstances, should exploratory activity be undertaken during the remaining period of the year *i.e.* December to March. It further stipulated that exploratory drilling operation for the block MN-DWN-98/2 should be deferred till the area of mass congregation and migratory routes are identified through qualified researchers. Specific approval of the Ministry of Environment and Forests is review to be obtained before commencing drilling operations in the block. Further, it has been stipulated that RIL should commission a multi-disciplinary study immediately through qualified researchers on the marine life forms and the movement of Olive Ridley sea turtles and to complete the study by May, 2005. This study should include satellite telemetry studies

at all the three nesting and congregating sites adjoining the exploratory grounds. RIL may involve Wildlife Institute of India and other experienced agencies for undertaking the study.

Special Fare Package of IA/AI

5103. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines and Air India have offered any special fare package to various destinations;

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

(c) whether any other domestic private airlines and foreign airlines have reciprocated the IA/AI's proposal; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In order to promote domestic tourism as well as to attract foreign tourists, both the airlines offered special fare package to various destinations. Air India has offered special group/individual tour based fares in combination with land packages. The fares are offered to the tour operators/travel agents ex-India on the destinations viz. Frankfurt/Paris, London, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Birmingham, Toronto, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Shenghai, Tokyo, Osaka, Nairobi Dar-es-Salaam and Jakarta.

Indian Airlines had launched holiday packages as 'IA Flyaways' in the year 1999. It negotiated attractive rates with leading hotels and coupled the hotel rates with special air fares and launched single window holidays packages for the convenience of the travellers. These packages are available on 8 international and 22 domestic sectors covering more than 80 destinations. The Indian Airlines Package includes Return airfares in economy class, airport-hotel transfer, room, meals, various sight-seeing options, etc. The package duration ranges from 2 nights/3 days, for a regular one stop package upto 12 nights/13 days in case of some of the itinerary packages.

(c) and (d) No such information is maintained in this regard. It is, however, usual practice for carriers to come up with lucrative packages in order to sustain them in the competitive market.

[Translation]

Integrated Train Enquiry System

5104. SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an integrated train enquiry system/ computerised train enquiry system is found to be successful on trial basis in Patna and Bangalore;

(b) if so, the places where such facility proposed to be started;

(c) whether the contract regarding inquiry work is being given to private companies;

(d) if so, whether the trial in cities where the contract for the above work has been handed over to private companies has proved to be successful; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Integrated Train Enquiry System (ITES) consisting of both Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) and Manual enquiry provisions has already been set up at Patna and Bangalore and based on its successful working, this System is now going to be set up in all the remaining telecom circles covering all the Zonal Railways.

(c) to (e) Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) will appoint franchisees to set up Integrated Train Enquiry System (ITES) through open offers to telecom operators/service providers.

[English]

Acquisition of Land of NTC Mills

5105. SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to acquire land belonging to closed NTC mills located near to Coimbatore Railway Station for being used by Railways for development works;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the land would be acquired by the Railways?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Radio Centres

5106. SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the details of radio centres opened in the country during the last three years; and

(b) the number of AIR centres proposed to be opened during 2005-06?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Prasar Bharati has informed that the following new Radio Stations have been commissioned during the last three years *i.e.* 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05:

1. Bhadarwah (J&K)—6 KW FM Tx with studio
2. Khalsi (J&K)—1 KW FM Tx (Relay Centre)
3. Naushera (J&K)—20 KW FM Tx (Relay Centre)
4. Rajouri (J&K)—10 KW FM Tx (Relay Centre)
5. Shantiniketan (WB)—3 KW FM Tx with studio
6. Bellary (Karnataka)—1 KW FM Tx (Int. Set-up)
7. Kupwara (J&K)—20 KW MW Tx (Relay Centre)
[Tx stands for Transmitter]

(b) 1 KW FM Transmitter at Rairangpur in Orissa and 25 Low Power FM Transmitters at new locations are proposed to be completed during the year 2005-06. The schemes will be implemented subject to the approval and availability of funds.

Road Over Bridges

5107. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the General Arrangement Design (GAD) for Road Over Bridges (ROBs) are prepared by Railways;

(b) if so, whether the GAD for ROB along NH-47 between Allapuzha and Cherthals Railway Stations and ROB between Alappuzha and Ambalapuzha railway stations has been submitted by the Railways; and

(c) the funds allotted for these ROB's?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The General Arrangement Drawings (GADs) for Road Over Bridges (ROBs) are prepared by Road Authorities, and got approved from the Railways.

(b) The two Road Over Bridges (ROBs) between Alappuzha and Cherthal Railway station and between Alappuzha & Ambalapuzha Railway station is being constructed on Alappuzha bypass highway on deposit terms for State Road authorities/NH Wing. The General Arrangement Drawings (GAD) and designs of both ROB's have been prepared by Chief Engineer/National Highways/Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala which are under scrutiny by Railways. Some modifications suggested the Railways have not yet been incorporated by them. Revised GAD with suggested modification have not yet been received by the Railways.

(c) These two ROB's are to be executed on deposit terms, thus the fund provision is to be made by State Government/Road Authorities/NH Wing.

[Translation]

Change in Route of Navjeevan Express

5108. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to change the route of the 'Navjeevan Express' train running from Mumbai;

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

(c) whether the concerned DRM has been consulted in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

*[English]***Machinery of Arbitration for CPSU's**

5109. PROF. M. RAMADASS: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to create a permanent machinery of arbitration for the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs); and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) A Permanent Machinery of Arbitration (PMA) was set up in the erstwhile Bureau of Public Enterprises (now Department of Public Enterprises), in 1989 to settle commercial disputes (excluding disputes on income-tax, customs and excise) between public sector enterprises (PSEs) inter-se and between a PSE and a Government Department. A Joint Secretary level officer of the Ministry of Law posted in Department of Public Enterprises is appointed and functions as Arbitrator in each case in the purview of PMA.

Licenses for Oil/Gas Discoveries

5110. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the companies to whom licenses have been issued under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) for oil/gas discoveries;

(b) the guidelines, terms and conditions for issue of the license under NELP and whether these companies fulfil those conditions;

(c) the quantum of oil/gas discovered during the last three years, State-wise; and

(d) the steps taken to reduce the widening gap between the demand and production?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Petroleum Exploration Licenses (PELs) are issued after the Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) are signed with the Government of India. PELs

for offshore blocks are issued by the Government of India. For onshore blocks, PEL, are issued by the State Government concerned. Pursuant to 90 PSCs signed under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) by the Government of India, PELs have been issued to seven oil sector public sector undertakings and 11 private companies. The list of companies with whom the Government have signed contracts in the first four rounds of NELP, and PELs issued in regard to these, is enclosed as statement.

(b) PELs under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) are issued after the signing of the PSCs. Blocks under NELP are offered through an international competitive bidding system. The bidding companies are required to fulfil the bid evaluation criteria prescribed in the Notice Inviting Offers (NIOs) in regard to technical and financial capabilities. Bids are then evaluated on the basis of transparent quantitative bid evaluation criteria taking into account technical and financial capabilities, the work programme offered and the fiscal package proposed by the bidding companies. The main terms and conditions of NELP are as under:

- No signature, discovery or production bonus.
- Income Tax Holiday for seven years from start of commercial production as per Income Tax Act, 1961.
- No customs duty on imports required for petroleum operations.
- Biddable cost recovery limit upto 100%.
- Option to amortise exploration and drilling expenditures over a period of 10 years from first commercial production.
- Sharing of profit petroleum based on pre-tax investment multiple achieved by the contractor and is biddable.
- Royalty for onland areas payable at the rate of 12.5% for crude oil and 10% for natural gas. For offshore areas, royalty payable at the rate of 10% for oil and natural gas. Royalty for discoveries in deep water areas beyond 400 miso-bath payable at half the applicable rate for offshore areas for the first seven years of commercial production.
- Fiscal stability provision in the contract.

- Freedom to the contractor for marketing of oil and gas in the domestic market.
- Provision for assignment.
- Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, based on UNCITRAL model, applicable.
- PSCs are subject to laws of India.

The terms and conditions of PELs are subject to the terms and conditions of the PSCs and such other conditions as obtaining defence, security and environment clearances for carrying out petroleum operations.

(c) The quantum of oil/gas discovered during the last three years, State wise are as under:

State/Area	Inplace Hydrocarbon Accretion in the year 2001-02 to 2003-04 (in Million Metric Tonnes)
Andhra Pradesh	16.46
Assam	108.81
Gujarat	87.22
Rajasthan	144.04
Tamil Nadu	20.82
Tripura	6.34
Arunachal Pradesh	6.51

(d) The following major steps have been taken to reduce gap between demand and supply of gas:—

- improving the recovery factor from existing major fields by implementing Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) schemes;
- increasing exploration efforts through the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). Under the four rounds of NELP, Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) have been signed for 90 blocks. The Fifth Round of NELP has been declared open as of 4 January 2005 to invite bids for 20 exploration blocks; Bids close on 31 May 2005;
- exploring new areas, especially deep waters and difficult frontier areas, as also the deeper layers of already producing fields; and
- developing newly discovered fields speedily and stepping up the use of new technologies for seismic surveys, work over, stimulation operations, drilling of wells etc. in producing areas;

Besides, in keeping with the objectives of the Energy Security section of the National Common Minimum Programme, ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL), as well as other national oil companies such as IOC, OIL and GAIL, have been pursuing the acquisition of equity oil and producing and prospective properties abroad.

Statement

Oil Sector Public Sector Undertakings

- Oil & Natural Gas Corpn. Ltd.
- Indian Oil Corpn. Ltd.
- Oil India Ltd.
- Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Ltd.
- Gas Authority of India Ltd.
- Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd.
- Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd.

Private Companies

- Reliance Industries Ltd.
- Hardy Exploration & Production (India) Inc.
- Jubilant Enpro Pvt. Ltd.
- Calm Energy India Pty. Ltd.
- Hindustan Oil Exploration Company Ltd.
- Niko Resources Ltd.
- Geo Global Resources (India) Inc.
- Prize Petroleum Company Ltd.
- Geo Global Resources (Barbados) Inc.
- Enpro Finance
- OAQ Gazprom

[Translation]

Funds to New Railway Zones

5111. SHRI GANESH SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that new railway zones set up in the country are not functioning properly;

(b) if so, whether the newly created railway zones are facing financial crisis for undertaking developmental works; and

(c) if so, the amount provided to the each of the newly created railway zones in the country alongwith the details of the works for which this amount has been provided?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. All the seven new Zonal headquarters have been made fully functional w.e.f. 31.3.2004. However, they shall take some time to stabilize.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[English]

Pending proposals under Pre/Post Matric Scholarship Schemes

5112. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of proposals pending with the Union Government for release of funds under Pre-matric and Post-matric Scholarship Schemes for SCs and OBCs from various State Governments/UTs including Uttar Pradesh, State/UT-wise;

(b) the reasons for their pendency; and

(c) the time by which the proposals are likely to be cleared and funds to be released thereunder?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) to (c) A provision of Rs. 313.24 crore was made for the Post-Matric scholarship scheme for Scheduled Castes students under BE 2004-05. However, additional funds were mobilised through re-appropriation and an expenditure of Rs. 338.27 crore was incurred under the scheme during the year. Funds under the scheme were released to all the States/UTs. However, full demand of the State of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal could not be met due to

paucity of funds during the year. In case of the States of Assam, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Manipur also full demand could not be met as the progress of expenditure of the funds already released to these States was not intimated by them.

In case of Pre-matric scholarship scheme for OBCs, funds could not be released to the State Governments of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan as information relating to utilization of funds released during earlier years was not furnished by them. Similarly in case of Karnataka, Punjab and Sikkim, the proposals were not found in order as they were not following the norms of the scheme.

Pre-Matric scholarship scheme is for children of unclean occupations and no proposal is pending under this scheme from any State Government.

In case of Post-Matric scheme for OBCs, proposals of Bihar and Pondicherry are pending as the information about utilization of funds released during earlier years has not been furnished. The State Government of Madhya Pradesh is not implementing the scheme and they have been requested to refund the funds released to them earlier.

[Translation]

Construction of New Railway Station/Junction

5113. SHRIMATI ANURADHA CHOUDHARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey for construction of new railway station/junction on Delhi-Shamli-Saharanpur rail route has been conducted;

(b) if so, the details stating inter-alia the year in which survey was conducted;

(c) whether the Government has given sanction for construction of railway station;

(d) if so, the time by which construction work is likely to commence thereon; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) No survey for construction of new railway station/junction on Delhi-Shamli-Saharanpur route has been conducted. However,

surveys have been done in the past for new lines between Panipat-Muzaffar Nagar and Meerut-Panipat sections and for doubling of Meerut-Saharanpur line, but these proposals could not be considered due to heavy throwforward of ongoing project and constraint of resources.

Menace of TTEs

5114. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases come to the notice of Government against TTEs for taking bribe from ticketless passengers to allow them to board the trains during the last three years till date;

(b) the action taken against the TTEs found guilty on such matters; and

(c) the stringent measures taken/to be taken to curb such practice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Some cases of unauthorised passengers travelling in reserved coaches with the connivance of the ticket checking staff do come to notice. However, statistics of such cases is not maintained separately.

(c) Action is taken against the ticket checking staff, if found indulging in such malpractices, under Discipline & Appeals Rules.

[English]

Involvement of PRIs In Implementation of Development Oriented Programmes

5115. SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY:
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Advisory Council (NAC) has decided to evolve a strategy for involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the implementation of various development oriented programmes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) In pursuance of the commitment made by the UPA Government in the National Common Minimum Programme to strengthen Panchayati Raj and local government institutions, the National Advisory Council have made certain recommendations based on an analysis of the present status of devolution under Part IX of the Constitution. These recommendations pertain to issues of financial devolution, accountability and the performance of Panchayats; implementation of the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996; gender empowerment; extensive use of simple Information Communication Technologies (ICT) interventions for transparency and easier access to information and services; empowering Gram Sabhas and providing institutional linkages to user communities; activity mapping of functions relating to subjects listed in Schedule XI of the Constitution; and capacity building of Panchayat members.

(c) The Recommendations of the NAC are under examination.

[Translation]

Discontinuation of Parcel Booking In Express Trains

5116. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to discontinue booking of railway parcels in the express trains;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the name of the trains in which booking of railway parcels have been discontinued;

(d) whether the Government is considering to increase the timings of stoppage of express trains and restore parcel booking facility at such railway stations of commercial importance of the country where the facility has been discontinued due to stoppage of express trains for a very short time; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) In the larger public interest and for the convenience and safety of traveling public, maintenance of punctuality of trains and reduction in the transit time of parcels, booking and carriage of parcel traffic was rationalised in February 2004. The rationalisation does not permit booking of parcels by such Mail/Express trains which have stoppage time of less than five (5) minutes at intermediate stations to avoid over-carriage of parcels and to maintain punctuality of trains. This rationalisation has been resorted to reduce the overall transit time of parcels through end-to-end movement by different trains providing faster and better services. In fact, there is an indirect savings from avoidance of claims for compensation which had become an essential feature of the erstwhile system of booking & carriage of parcels. In the interest of traveling public and also in the interest of trade, it is not feasible to withdraw the rationalisation. However, stoppage time of some of the Express trains has been increased wherever it is found operationally feasible.

Promotion of Tourism through Railways

5117. SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD:
SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme to promote tourism through the Railways in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds allocated by the Government under the scheme; and

(d) the benefits likely to be accrued to the Railways as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) The Railways have taken steps for promoting tourism by running special trains/coaches; luxury trains like the Palace on Wheels and the Decan Odyssey; the Bharat Darshan special, a tourist train for the common people; and by providing Indrail Passes, foreign tourists reservation quota, facilitation centres for the foreign tourists etc. A new company, the Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)

has also been set up by the Indian Railways for providing value added tourism packages. The company is actively engaged in promotion of tourism by rail. All the above measures have been taken with a view to promoting tourism and not as a measure for accruing benefit to the Railways.

[English]

National Information Commission

5118. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to constitute National Information Commission;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) The information is being collected from the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Personnel & Training and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Development of Good-Sheds

5119. SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVRAJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways proposes to invite bids for development/re-development of good-sheds by private sector in full-fledged warehouses;

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

(c) whether the Railways would make available such warehousing facilities to the public sector undertakings and other organizations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

KU Band Satellite Distribution Project

5120. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:
SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY:

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

(a) whether the Government has approved KU Band Satellite Distribution Project for covering 100 per cent T.V. watching population;

(b) if so, the cost of the project and the areas specified thereunder;

(c) the funds allocated for the purpose;

(d) the time by which the project is likely to be completed and made operational; and

(e) the manner in which the Government plans to bear the annual recurring expenditure?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) Prasar Bharati has informed that the KU band project of Doordarshan with an approved cost of Rs. 164.35 crores (including cost of earth station, dish receive units and satellite transponder charges) came into operation from 16.12.2004 with the launch of DD Direct+, Doordarshan's free-to-air DTH service with a bouquet of 33 TV and 12 Radio channels. This service is available for reception in the entire country except A&N Islands.

(e) The expenditure is being met out of Government grant and Prasar Bharati's internal resources.

Requirement of Gas by Gas-based Projects

5121. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:
SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

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

(a) whether the demand of gas by various gas-based projects has increased in the recent past;

(b) if so, the details of the demand raised during 2004-05 by the gas based projects in the country, State-wise;

(c) the quantity of gas allocated out of the available gas to these plants during the said period, State-wise; and

(d) the steps taken to make available the gas in the country in future?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The details of state-wise allocation of natural gas and supplies made during 2004-05 are given in the enclosed statement.

(d) To meet the growing demand of natural gas various initiatives are being undertaken, including the intensification of domestic production of natural gas by awarding blocks under the New Exploration Licensing Policy and importing gas both as LNG and through transnational gas pipelines.

Statement***State-wise Allocations and Supplies During 2004-05***

MMSCMD

Region	Allocation			Supply (2004-05)
	Firm	Fall Back	Total	
1	2	3	4	5
Delhi	4.59	—	4.59	3.45
Madhya Pradesh	5.75	—	5.75	4.61
Uttar Pradesh	19.54	—	19.54	15.08

1	2	3	4	5
Haryana	2.65	—	2.65	1.67
Gujarat	17.61	9.31	26.92	13.13
Rajasthan	4.22	—	4.22	3.12
Maharashtra	16.71	0.79	17.50	10.17
Tamil Nadu	3.68	1.84	5.52	1.52
Pondicherry	0.18	0.32	0.50	0.18
Andhra Pradesh	14.71	2.52	17.23	7.07
Assam	8.15	0.45	8.60	4.58
Tripura	6.78	—	6.78	1.38
Total	104.57	15.23	119.80	65.96

[Translation]

Operation of Old Aeroplanes/Helicopters

5122. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA:
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:
SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN:
SHRI HEMMAL MURMU:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that most of the aeroplanes and helicopters of the airline companies in operation are 15-25 years old;

(b) if so, whether the Directorate General of Civil Aviation has laid down any rules for operation of such old aged aeroplanes and helicopters;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government is aware that these rules are not being followed scrupulously by the airline companies; and

(e) if so, the action taken against the companies for violating the rules?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Of the total of 184 aircrafts operated by scheduled operator permit holders only 48 aircraft are more than 15 years

old. Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued necessary "Civil Aviation Requirements" Section 2, Series F-Part-X-Air worthiness of ageing aircraft and "Airworthiness Advisory" circular No. 4 of 2000-Maintenance of Ageing aircraft for proper maintenance and operation of aircrafts which are more than 20 years old.

(d) The DGCA ensures, on a continuous basis, strict compliance of safety norms by all air operators, including private operators by way of safety audits. Besides, spot checks on maintenance activities are also carried out by the DGCA. DGCA also keeps updating the Civil Aviation Requirements/Circulars to strengthen aviation safety aspect.

(e) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Gauge Conversion

5123. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to cover all the meter gauge into broad gauge lines in the country;

(b) if so, the names of meter gauge rail lines/sections in Bihar alongwith details of schemes for their gauge conversion;

(c) the names of rail lines/sections in Bihar where gauge conversion works are currently undergoing along with the amount allocated thereof; and

(d) the time by which the gauge conversion work of rest of the rail lines/sections in Bihar is likely to be taken up along with the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The details of the gauge conversion works falling partly/fully in Bihar currently in progress with outlay provided for 2005-06 together with anticipated expenditure incurred upto 31.03.2005 and current status are as under:—

Sl.No.	Name of Project	Anticipated expenditure incurred upto 31.3.2005 (Rs. in Crores)	Outlay provided during 2005-06 (Rs. in Crores)	Current status
1.	Jayanagar-Darbhanga-Narkatiaganj (268 kms)	58.05	20.00	Earthwork and bridge works have been taken up.
2.	Kaptanganj-Thave-Siwan-Chhapra (233.5 kms)	31.09	8.00	Earthwork and bridge works have been taken up.
3.	Katihar-Jogbani (including Katihar-Radhikapur) (201.26 kms)	122.61	20.50	Earthwork and bridge works have been taken up. Barsol-Radhikapur is targeted for completion in 2005-06.
4.	Mansi-Saharsa-Dauram Madhepura & extension from Dauram Madhepura-Purnea (142 kms)	110.62	10.01	Earthwork and bridge works in progress. Mansi-Saharsa targeted for completion in 2005-06.
5.	Samastipur-Khagaria & Mansi-Khagaria (94 kms)	18.44	35.04	Earthwork and bridge works are in progress.
6.	Sakri-Laukha Bazar-Nirmali & Saharsa-Forbesganj (206.06 kms)	0.51	10.00	Funds for this work will be provided by Ministry of Defence. The detailed estimate has been prepared and is under process of sanction.

(d) No time frame for taking up gauge conversion of remaining lines in Bihar has been fixed.

[English]

Shifting of Railway Line

5124. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that in the past

several animals died of accidents on a railway line passing through the Dudhwa National Park in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal to shift the said rail track outside the national park;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the alternative steps taken by the Railways to avoid such accidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. There have been few instances of animal run-over cases on railway line passing through Dudhwa National Park. During last year, there was only one such case, in this section.

(b) to (d) The animal run over cases have been very few and as such there is no proposal to shift the railway line or for other alternate steps.

Creation of Backward Caste Department

5125. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been any demand for creating an exclusive Backward Caste Department specially for their welfare;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The demand for creating an exclusive Backward Caste Department has been raised by the Backward Classes Associations.

(c) The Backward Classes Division of this Ministry looks after issues relating to welfare of OBCs. There is

no proposal to create a separate Department for the purpose at present.

Shortage of Staff in ASI

5126. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Archaeological Survey of India has not been able to maintain monuments and heritage sites due to shortage of staff;

(b) if so, the present staff position and the actual requirement for the upkeep of the monuments and heritage sites; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) In spite of some vacant posts of different levels, Archaeological Survey of India is able to maintain monuments and heritage sites properly.

(b) Statement showing the sanctioned strength and vacancy position of conservation cadre in Archaeological Survey of India is enclosed.

(c) All efforts are being made to fillup the vacant posts.

Statement

CONSERVATION CADRE

Sl.No.	Name of Cadre	Sanction Strength	Filled	Vacant
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Director (Conservation) Rs. 12,000-16,500/-	1	—	1
2.	S.A. Engineer Rs. 10,000-15,200/-	9	2	7
3.	Dy. S.A. Engineer Rs. 8,000-13,500/-	25	10	15
4.	Asstt. S.A. Engineer Rs. 6,500-10,500/-	27	19	8

1	2	3	4	5
5.	Sr. Conservation Assistant Rs. 5,500-9000/-	58	53	5
6.	Conservation Assistant Gr-I Rs. 5,000-8000/-	86	61	27
7.	Conservation Assistant Gr-II Rs. 4000-6000/-	106	96	10
8.	Caretaker Rs. 3250-4590/-	68	62	6
9.	Foreman (Works) Rs. 3250-4590/-	123	121	2
10.	Monument Attendant	6170	6020	150

New Exploration Blocks

5127. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:
SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:
SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:
SHRI SWADESH CHAKRABORTTY:

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

(a) the details of oil blocks likely to be announced for exploration under the New Exploration Licensing Policy; and

(b) the time by which the work on these oil blocks are likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Under the Fifth Round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-V) Government have invited bids for exploration and production of oil and gas in 20 blocks, viz., 12 onland, 2 shallow offshore and 6 deep water blocks. The list of these blocks is enclosed on statement.

(b) The last date of submission of bids under NELP-V, is the 31st May, 2005. We expect to announce the awards by the end of July, 2005 and to sign the contracts towards the end of September or early October 2005. Work on the blocks awarded would start thereafter.

Statement**Details of Exploration Blocks on offer under NELP-V**

Sl.No.	Block Name	Basin	Area (Sq. Km.)	State/Offshore	District
1	2	3	4	5	6
Deep Water Blocks					
1.	KK-DWN-2003/1	Kerala Konkan	18245	Western Off.	
2.	KK-DWN-2003/2	Kerala Konkan	12285	Western Off.	
3.	KG-DWN-2003/1	Krishna-Godavari	3288	Eastern Off.	

1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	MN-DWN-2003/1	Mahanadi	17050	Eastern Off.	
5.	AN-DWN-2003/1	Andaman Nicobar	9970	Andaman Off.	
6.	AN-DWN-2003/2	Andaman Nicobar	13110	Andaman Off.	
Shallow Offshore Blocks					
7.	CB-OSN-2003/1	Gulf of Cambay	2394	Western Off.	
8.	GS-OSN-2003/1	Saurashtra	5970	Western Off.	
Onland Blocks					
9.	AA-ONN-2003/1	Assam-Arakan	81	Assam	Golaghat
10.	AA-ONN-2003/2	Assam-Arakan	295	Arunachal Pradesh	Changlang
11.	AA-ONN-2003/3	Assam-Arakan	275	Assam	Tinsukia
12.	GV-ONN-2003/1	Ganga Valley	7210	Uttar Pradesh	Deoria, Gorakhpur
13.	VN-ONN-2003/1	Vindhyan	3585	Rajasthan	Kota & Jhalawar
14.	RJ-ONN-2003/1	Rajasthan	1335	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer-Barmer
15.	RJ-ONN-2003/2	Rajasthan	13195	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer-Barmer, Jodhpur
16.	CB-ONN-2003/1 Part-A & B	Cambay	635	Gujarat	Ahmedabad, Kheda
17.	CB-ONN-2003/2	Cambay	448	Gujarat	Bharuch
18.	DS-ONN-2003/1	Deccan Syneclise	3155	Maharashtra	Dhule
19.	KG-ONN-2003/1	Krishna-Godavari	1697	Andhra Pradesh	Krishna, Guntur
20.	CY-ONN-2003/1	Cauvery	957	Tamil Nadu	Thanjavur

Acquisition of Farmers Land in Maharashtra

5128. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of projects/plants established by the various public sector oil companies in Maharashtra;

(b) whether these oil companies have acquired lands of the farmers to establish their projects/plants on certain conditions/assurances;

(c) if so, whether those assurances have not been fulfilled by these companies;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) the approximate number of persons affected thereby; and

(f) the steps taken/being taken to help the project affected persons?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Online Rail Booking through Internet

5129. SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:
SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway's programme of online rail booking through internet has increased the volume of booking as reported in the 'Business Standard' dated March 28, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any study has been made to assess the growth or otherwise in this programme;

(d) if so, the results of such assessment; and

(e) the measures taken/to be taken by the Railways for popularisation of the programme and strengthening of the infrastructure accordingly to deal with the growth rate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The total number of rail tickets booked through internet during April' 2003 to March' 2004 and April' 2004 to March' 2005 were 7,28,404 and 12,81,033 respectively thus, showing upward trend of 76%.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Indian Railways are making every effort to popularise the booking of railway tickets through internet and accordingly strengthening the infrastructure. The facility for booking of rail tickets has now been extended to mobile phone users also. Three mobile operators have already integrated with Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) in this regard and other mobile operators are also negotiating.

The payment options have also been liberalized. The payment can now be made through American Express Credit Card also against the earlier option of Master & Visa cards. In addition, the payments can now be made through 15 banks by direct debiting of the bank accounts of the customers. Further, cash cards can also be used for making payments.

The facility for delivery of tickets booked through internet was earlier available in Delhi National Capital

Region only in the beginning, whereas, it has now been extended to 133 cities in India.

IRCTC has accordingly strengthened both the hardware and networking infrastructure, software support infrastructure and the administrative infrastructure of the Internet ticketing system to enable it to handle the growing demand for Internet ticketing.

Construction of Ramganj Mandi-Bhopal Rail Line

5130. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the target date for completion of the construction of the Ramganj Mandi-Bhopal Rail line has been revised;

(b) if so, the new target date;

(c) whether the land acquisition for the said line has been completed; and

(d) if so, the allocation of funds made for the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No target date for completion of the project has been fixed so far.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Encroachment Around World Heritage Sites

5131. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the details of World Heritage Sites/Monuments in the country which are threatened by encroachments; and

(b) the steps taken by the Government to stop such encroachments around World Heritage Sites/Monuments?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The details of World Heritage Monuments/Sites under the jurisdiction of the Archaeological Survey of India which are threatened by encroachment alongwith the steps taken by the Government to contain such encroachment are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Details of World Heritage Monuments/Sites under the control of Archaeological Survey of India which are threatened by encroachment alongwith the steps taken by the Government to contain such encroachment

Sl.No.	Name of Monument/Site	Details of Encroachment	Steps Taken
1.	Pre-historic rock shelters Bhimbetaka, Distt. Raisen, Madhya Pradesh	A natural rock-shelter is encroached within the protected site.	Demolition order has been issued by the Archaeological Survey of India and District Collector, Raisen has been requested to implement the same. Encroacher has approached the district court for a decision; therefore, the matter is sub-judice.
2.	Hampi Group of Monuments, Hampi (Karnataka)	Illegal encroachment is reported in the protected Bazar in front of Virupaksha Temple at Hampi	Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority has been constituted under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner, Bellary who is vested with the powers to administer and govern the World Heritage Area including removal of encroachments. The Ministry of Tourism, in association with the Government of Karnataka has taken up a programme to resettle the shopkeepers who have encroached in the protected Bazaar.

[Translation]**International Air Services from Small Cities**

5132. SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN:
YOGI ADITYA NATH:
SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to start international air services from airports of small cities in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any proposals have also been received from the foreign airlines in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the cities proposed to be connected with international air services during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) Presently 14 airports in the country are designated as

international airports. In order to promote international connectivity out of points in India, bilateral rights are being exchanged liberally with foreign countries. In this process traffic rights have been granted to many foreign countries to smaller cities as well. As far as the Indian carriers are concerned, they are free to operate from any airport in India. However, actual operations are left to the commercial judgement of the airlines and traffic demand.

[English]**Financial Restructuring of Tungabhadra Steel Products Ltd.**

5133. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether IDBI has recommended the Government for financial restructuring of Tungabhadra Steel Products Ltd. and also to find a joint-venture partner;

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

(c) the steps taken by the Government to protect the interest of the workers of the company?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (c) The IDBI Caps had submitted a financial restructuring proposal of M/s. Tungabhadra Steel Products Limited (TSPL), Tungabhadra Dam, Hospet, Karnataka on 5.6.2002 as a precursor to joint venture formation. The Ministry of Disinvestment (MODI) was carrying the exercise of joint venture formation of TSPL. As the joint venture formation exercise of TSPL did not materialize, the approval on financial restructuring does not arise. However, in line with the stipulations contained in the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), the Government of India will take an appropriate decision on the future of TSPL.

Training Institutes for Mentally Retarded Children

5134. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of National Level Institutes for the training and rehabilitation of mentally retarded children and services rendered through these centres, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government is considering to start any such national level institutes in Kerala and other States;

(c) whether any such proposal from Government of Kerala and other State Governments have also been received in this regard;

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

(e) the details plans for the expansion of this programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped (NIMH) Secunderabad, and its three centers at Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata render training and rehabilitation services to children with mental retardation.

(b) and (c) No Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Availability of Drinking Water

5135. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that drinking water is not available at many Railways Stations;

(b) if so, whether Ministry of Railways has formulated any scheme to make available potable water in all trains and at railway stations in the country; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Indian Railways have more than 8000 stations. Railways endeavour is to provide drinking water to passengers at all stations. Some small stations do not have adequate water source either due to absence of water supply from municipality or presence of brackish water, inadequate ground water yield from hand pumps. Further, even at some of those stations where piped/hand pump supply exists, water scarcity occurs in summer due to lesser supplies by municipality, lowering in ground water table etc. and increased demand. In such cases, availability of drinking water is ensured at stations by arranging water through private water tankers. Even water special trains are run in areas facing heavy shortage of water. Water coolers, mobile water trollies, matkas are arranged for better availability of water to the passengers. Many 'Non Government Organisations' also supplement water to passengers. In addition, packaged drinking water/natural mineral water is made available for sale through static as well as mobile catering/vending units. Passenger coaches carry water only for washing purpose. Drinking water is not provided in tanks of coaches.

[English]

Rail Neer Plants

5136. DR. K. DHANARAJU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the detailed output of 'Rail Neer' plants per month, its distribution at different places since its inception, plant-wise; and

(b) the profits/losses of the said plants since its inception, plant-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) Ltd. has been entrusted with the task of setting up packaged drinking water plants under the brand 'Rail Neer' on behalf of Indian Railways at various locations in a phased manner. In the initial phase, two Plants have been set up at Nangloi in New Delhi and Danapur in Bihar. Nangloi plant was inaugurated on 6.5.2003 and Danapur plant was inaugurated on 27.2.2004.

Month-wise production and distribution in number of cartons of 12 bottles each of both Rail Neer plants since inception till February 2005 is given in the enclosed statement. Nangloi plant is supplying 'Rail Neer' to Delhi Division, some parts of Lucknow Division, Moradabad Division, Firozpur Division of Northern Railway, some parts of Gorakhpur Division, some parts of Lucknow Division of North Eastern Railway, Allahabad Division, Jhansi

Division and Agra Division of North Central Railway, Ajmer Division of North Western Railway, A.P. Express train of South Central Railway, Grand Trunk Express, Tamil Nadu Express and Kerala Express trains of Southern Railway, New Delhi-Mumbai Rajdhani Express and Nizamuddin-Mumbai August Kranti Express trains of Western Railway and New Delhi-Howrah Rajdhani Express train of Eastern Railway.

Danapur plant is supplying 'Rail Neer' to Howrah Division, Asansol Division, Malda Division and Sealdah Division of Eastern Railway, Danapur Division, Mughalsarai Division and Samastipur Division of East Central Railway, Kharagpur Division, Ranchi Division and Chakradharpur Division of South Eastern Railway, Katihar Division and Lumding Division of Northeast Frontier Railway, some parts of Lucknow Division of Northern Railway, some parts of Gorakhpur Division and some parts of Lucknow Division of North Eastern Railway.

(b) Since inception till February 2005, Nangloi Plant has incurred a net loss of Rs. 131.01 lakhs and Danapur Plant has incurred a net loss of Rs. 119.92 lakhs.

Statement

Month-wise production and distribution in number of cartons of 12 bottles each of 'Rail Neer' plants at Nangloi and Danapur since inception till February 2005

Month	Nangloi Plant		Danapur Plant	
	Production	Distribution	Production	Distribution
1	2	3	4	5
May 2003	25450	9892	—	—
June 2003	106156	92059	—	—
July 2003	37968	46506	—	—
August 2003	67062	75434	—	—
September 2003	87234	82761	—	—
October 2003	106423	105336	—	—
November 2003	107976	106060	—	—
December 2003	88012	90194	—	—
January 2004	92236	93851	—	—
February 2004	104099	105392	—	—

1	2	3	4	5
March 2004	122086	123927	34621	10920
Total 2003-04	944702	931412	34621	10920
April 2004	146414	144678	43994	51185
May 2004	140322	142211	57689	61445
June 2004	152192	150578	97491	94416
July 2004	125026	124514	100644	94921
August 2004	81873	84012	35573	47787
September 2004	120883	118893	81253	77300
October 2004	112610	112741	78283	79916
November 2004	107567	109022	86970	78606
December 2004	122044	118964	108085	106790
January 2005	120398	115201	107550	97495
February 2005	108819	113567	51048	60918
Total 2004-05 (upto February 05)	1338148	1334381	848580	850789
Grand Total	2282850	2265793	883201	861709

Export by BEL

5137. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bharat Electronics Limited has exported radio communications set, fly catcher Radar and weather control system during 2004-2005;

(b) if so, the details of orders received by BEL and the names of the countries to which such equipments were exported during 2004-2005;

(c) the profit earned by the BEL during 2004-2005; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to bring efficiency in the Company?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY

OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has earned an estimated unaudited profit (before tax) of Rs. 656 Crores for 2004-2005.

(d) BEL is a 'Mini Ratna' company with autonomy in its functioning. The company has taken several important initiatives to improve productivity and efficiency including introduction of cost reduction measures on a regular and systematic basis. It has implemented of company-wide Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Quality initiatives such as six Sigma, Torque, Quality circles etc.; and bench marking of best practices across all Units. The company takes continuous steps towards technology upgradation and modernization to bring about efficiency.

Development of Indigenous AWACS

5138. SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has shortlisted a few foreign aircraft manufacturers to purchase the aircraft needed for developing indigenous Air Borne Early Warning and Control System for the Air Force;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for transparent and fair deal?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Operational requirements for the Air Borne Early Warning and Control System platform are being finalized in consultation with the Indian Air Force. Tender notice for the platform has not yet been issued.

(c) In all procurements, established procurement procedures and guidelines of Central Vigilance Commission are followed to ensure transparency and fair deal.

[Translation]

Construction of LNG Terminal at Dabhol

5139. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any hurdles in the construction of liquefied natural gas terminal in Dabhol in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the quantum of gas Maharashtra is likely to receive after the construction of the said terminal?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Dabhol Power Project has a provision for a 5 MMTPA LNG terminal, which was at an advanced stage of completion, when the project was abandoned in May 2001 on account of contractual problems. Efforts are being made by the Government to revive the project, including the LNG terminal, by financial and project restructuring.

(c) Dabhol LNG terminal has capacity of 5 MMTPA, out of which 2.1 MMTPA would be required for the integrated power plant. The balance quantity of 2.9 MMTPA of LNG would be available for other gas markets.

[Translation]

Outstanding Dues against Government Departments

5140. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a huge amount of Air India is outstanding against different Government departments/travel agencies due to credit facilities and exchange orders;

(b) if so, the details of the amount outstanding at present, Department-wise; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by Air India to realise the outstanding amount?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) The up-to-date information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Outstanding Dues Against Oil Companies

5141. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the revenue earned by the Railways through transportation of petroleum products during each of the last three years;

(b) whether payments for transportation of petroleum products are pending against the various oil companies;

(c) if so, the details of dues pending against the oil companies as on date; and

(d) the steps taken to recover the outstanding dues from them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The revenue earned by the Railways through transportation of petroleum products during each of the last three years is as under:—

Year	Rs. in crore
2002-2003	2754.61
2003-2004	2428.30
2004-2005	2760.73

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The dues pending against the oil companies as on 28.02.2005 are Rs. 7.51 crore. The details are as under:—

Sl.No.	Name of Company	Amount (Rs. in crore)
1.	Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited	3.56
2.	Bongaigaon Refinery & Petrochemicals Limited	0.08
3.	Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited	0.90
4.	Indian Oil Corporation	2.50
5.	Indo-Burma Petroleum	0.11
6.	Numaligarh Refinery Limited	0.33
7.	Oil India Limited	0.03
Total		7.51

(d) The steps taken to recover the outstanding dues from oil companies are as under:-

Accretion and clearance of dues is as on going process. However, the matter of recovery of dues is pursued vigorously and co-ordination meetings are conducted with various oil companies at the Divisional and Headquarters level. The outstanding amounts are adjusted, wherever possible, from the claims preferred by the oil companies. Staff as well as officers at senior level periodically contact major defaulting parties in this regard. Extension of facility of electronic payment to all major customers was also announced by Hon'ble Minister for Railways in his budget speech, which would facilitate speedy crediting of railway dues.

Outstanding Dues Against Railways

5142. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:
SHRI MUNAWAR HASSAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether huge amount on account of expenditure incurred by the various State Governments on Railway Police are outstanding against the Railways;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the outstanding amount of each State against the Railways as on date; and

(d) the steps taken by the Railways for payment of outstanding amount to the concerned State Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes Sir, an amount of Rs. 130.28 crore is payable to various State Governments on account of Railway Police.

(b) The outstanding is mainly on account of excess operation of Government Railway Police posts by State Government without the approval of Railway Administration and non-submission of Accountant General Certificate by State Authorities.

(c) A statement is attached.

(d) Railways have standing instructions to pay all clearly admissible bills.

Statement

An amount of Rs. 130.28 crore is payable to various State Governments on account of Railways Police. The details are as under:—

Sl.No.	Name of State	Amount outstanding (Rs. in crore)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2.20
2.	Bihar	10.61
3.	Chhattisgarh	2.23
4.	Gujarat	8.28
5.	Haryana	0.07
6.	Jharkhand	3.16
7.	Karnataka	6.15
8.	Kerala	1.44
9.	Maharashtra	52.34
10.	Madhya Pradesh	10.51
11.	Rajasthan	5.84
12.	Tamil Nadu	3.32
13.	Uttar Pradesh	4.08
14.	West Bengal	20.05
Total		130.28

Review of Functioning of Prasar Bharati

5143. DR. M. JAGANNATH:
SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT:
SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:
SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA:

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

(a) whether the Government has decided to take a relook at the functioning of Prasar Bharati as reported in the Hindustan Times, dated April 4, 2005;

(b) if so, whether the Government has constituted any Committee for financial restructuring of Prasar Bharati;

(c) if so, the composition of the Committee; and

(d) the time by which the Committee is likely to submit its report to the Government?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) On 30th March, 2005, the Government has constituted a Committee to suggest a viable capital and financial structure for Prasar Bharati to strengthen its functioning. The ten Member Committee is headed by Secretary (I&B) and represented by senior-level officers of the Ministry of I&B as well as the Prasar Bharati, Advisor (C&I), Planning Commission, and Joint Secretary, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. The Committee may also invite experts from within and outside the Government to participate in its deliberations and contribute towards finalizing its recommendations.

A time-limit of three months has been prescribed for submission of the Report by the Committee.

Upgradation of Chetak Helicopters

5144. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to upgrade the entire fleet of Chetak helicopters;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which the upgradation is likely to be completed;

(d) whether there are some doubts on the capability of the upgraded helicopters; and

(e) if so, the corrective measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) After carrying out inaugural flight of the first upgraded Chetak helicopter on 1st February, 2005, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has prepared technical proposals for the Upgrade programme.

(b) to (e) The proposal envisages upgradation of Chetak helicopters by re-engining with more powerful modern engine and incorporating contemporary cockpit instruments/equipment and is in the process of evaluation.

*[Translation]***Transportation of Goods**

5145. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received any suggestion from the World Bank for bringing improvement in transportation of goods by the Indian Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

*[English]***Mumbai-Delhi Container Freight Rail Corridor**

5146. SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up a dedicated container freight rail corridor between Mumbai and Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the estimated cost involved thereon;

(c) whether any feasibility study has been undertaken; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Ministry of Railways has initiated a proposal for dedicated freight corridors on the Golden Quadrilateral and its diagonals which would include the Mumbai-Delhi route. The details of costs are still to be worked out.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

COCO Outlets

5147. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Public Sector petroleum companies are running retail outlets of their products on 'Company Owned Company Operated' basis in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, the number thereof, PSU-wise; and

(c) the reasons for running these outlets by the companies themselves instead of allotting them to dealers?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs), viz., Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPC) and IBP Co. Limited (IBP), are operating some of their retail outlets on a Company-Owned-Company-Operated (COCO) basis in various parts of the country.

(b) As on the 1st March, 2005, these OMCs had 1,298 retail outlets operated on a COCO basis in various parts of the country. The OMC-wise break-up was as under:—

IOC	—	297 nos.
HPC	—	357 nos.
BPC	—	215 nos.
IBP	—	429 nos.
Total	—	1298

(c) The following categories of retail outlets are operated on COCO basis:—

- (i) Jubilee Retail Outlets/Flagship retail outlets, which OMCs plan to run permanently on a COCO basis.
- (ii) Company-owned ('A' site) retail outlets, where the original dealership has been terminated and the new dealer is yet to be appointed, or where facilities have been installed but a regular dealer is yet to be appointed.

Revamping of National Security Council

5148. SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY:
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to revamp the National Security Council; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No proposal to revamp the National Security Council is under consideration of the Government.

(b) Does not arise.

Special Coach for Handicapped Passengers

5149. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:
SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new design of Second Class, Guard-cum-luggage type coach for handicapped passengers has been inducted by the Railways;

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

(c) the details of trains with which such coaches are attached/likely to be attached, zone-wise; and

(d) the manner in which the Railways inform the handicapped passengers about such coaches in various trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A new design of Second Class, Guard cum luggage type coach (SLR) with accommodation adopted to the need of handicapped passengers has been introduced in new built of such coach since April 2001. These coaches have special facilities like wider door-way, aisle and knee space to permit easy movement of wheel chair. Toilet adopted to the needs of disabled persons have also been provided.

(c) Alongwith the disabled friendly coaches the earlier design would also continue to remain in service till these are phased out in normal course. Presently both designs run interchangeably in trains.

(d) Such coaches providing additional facility to handicapped persons bear the relevant notice on the body of the coach which can be clearly seen by the passengers.

Reimbursement of Expenditure

5150. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways do not reimburse the expenditure incurred on posts created by the Government of Maharashtra for the purpose of railways;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of amount pending with the Government on this account; and

(d) the objections raised by the Railways in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The reimbursement of expenditure is admissible to State Governments for creating posts of Government Railway Police subject to prior approval of the newly created posts by the Railway Administration. In this case State Government of Maharashtra did not seek prior approval of the Railway Administration for creating posts.

(b) Now State Governments of Maharashtra has sought Railway Board's post facto sanction for originally created posts for which post facto sanction has been accorded with the condition that arrears may be released after Board's approval which is under process.

(c) A claim for re-imbursement to the State of Maharashtra amounting to Rs. 52.34 crore is outstanding.

(d) Although Railways have standing instructions to pay all clearly admissible bills, the outstanding is mainly on account of excess operation of posts by State Government without the approval of Railways Administration and non-submission of Accountant General Certificate by State Authorities.

[*Translation*]

Air Surveillance

5151. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a spurt in infiltration from Bangladesh border;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to start air surveillance through helicopters on Indo-Bangladesh border to check infiltration; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Indo-Bangladesh border is manned by the Border Security Force (BSF) under the administrative control of Ministry of Home Affairs. According to information received from the BSF, there is no spurt in infiltration from the Bangladesh border and at present there is no proposal to start air surveillance through helicopters on the Indo-Bangladesh border.

Project to Check Aircrash

5152. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has launched any project to prevent the incidents of air crashes by bird hit in the cities with Air Force air-base station;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the expenditure likely to be incurred thereon;

(d) whether the Sub-Committee constituted under Inter-Ministerial-Group to suggest ways to prevent incidents of crash of Air Force planes by bird-hit has submitted its report;

(e) if so, the main recommendations of the Report; and

(f) the time by which these recommendations are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (f) The Government had constituted an Inter-Ministerial Joint Sub-Committee (IMJSC) in 1989

to reduce the cases of aircraft accidents/incidents due to Bird Hits. The main recommendations of the Sub-Committee were to set up the following facilities in the vicinity of affected airfields:

- (i) Setting up of Modern Slaughter houses;
- (ii) Setting up of Carcass Utilisation Centre (CUC);
- (iii) Implementation of Water Supply Schemes; and
- (iv) Sewage/Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Schemes.

Cleaning of the environment around the Indian Air Force (IAF) airfields is a continuous process. In the first phase, ten, IAF airfields have been selected for the project at a cost of Rs. 99.35 crores. The remaining airfields will be taken up in phase. In order to implement the recommendations of the IMJSC projects have been formulated by Government in consultation with the State Governments and the local Civil authorities/bodies. These are at various stages of implementation. However, no timeframe can be given since it involves coordination with various agencies for implementing the same.

Digital Library

5153. SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA:
SHRI Y.G. MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to set up a digital library in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the objectives for setting up of the said library;

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

(e) the funds allocated for the project?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir. A proposal is being formulated.

(b) and (c) It proposes to make available in digital format cultural contents like books, music, paintings etc. It will facilitate wider dissemination and better accessibility.

Most institutions within Ministry of Culture have on-going individual digitization programmes of their material.

(d) and (e) Preliminary work is expected to commence during this year to consolidate these efforts.

Expenses for this initiative will be met from the funds allotted to the respective institutions.

[English]

Procurement of Artefacts

5154. SHRI FRANCIS FANTHOM: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any irregularities in procurement of artefacts for museums has come to the notice of the Government;

(b) if so, the number of cases which have come to the notice of the Government during the last one year;

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to streamline the procedure for procurement of artefacts for museums in the country?

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

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[Translation]

News in Regional Languages

5155. SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to stop broadcasting of news in regional languages from AIR, Delhi and start the same from the capitals of the respective States; and

(b) if so, the time by which the aforesaid move is likely to come into effect?

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

S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Prasara Bharati has informed that they have decided to shift the broadcast of national news bulletins in five regional languages from Delhi to respective State capitals due to shortage of qualified staff at Delhi. Telugu, Kannada and Sindhi news bulletins have already been shifted to respective State capitals.

However, it is clarified that the content of the national news bulletins in regional languages will continue to be made in Delhi only as before. It is also further clarified that the area of broadcast of these regional language national news bulletins remains unchanged and undiluted.

Financial Assistance to U.P. for Taj Mahal Celebration

5156. SHRI JAI PRAKASH (MOHANLAL GANJ): Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Uttar Pradesh Government has sent any proposal to the Union Government for providing financial assistance for the celebration to be held on the occasion of celebration of 350 years of the Taj Mahal;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

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

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

[English]

Central Advisory Board on Culture

5157. SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has constituted a Central Advisory Board on culture; and

(b) if so, the composition and terms of reference thereof?

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

(b) The composition of the Board is as under:

Minister for Culture	—	Chairman
Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan	—	Vice Chairman
Prof. Yashpal		
Prof. Mrinal Miri		
Shri Adoor Gopalakrishnan		
Shri Shyam Benegal		
Shri Ramachandra Guha		
Shri Ayyappa Panikkar		
Shri Ranesh Ray		
Prof. Mohammad Amin		
Secretary (Culture)	—	Member Secretary

The Board has the following terms of reference:

- (i) To advise the Ministry of Culture at the policy level to evolve programmes which would focus attention on the creativity at different levels of Indian society, and in different regions, which hitherto has been either neglected or not sustained through the existing institutional mechanisms.
- (ii) To identify the human repositories in the diverse sub-fields and advise on the strategies to ensure a continuity of transmission and to recommend to the Government programmes that will integrate the creativity of these long traditions with the processes of development.
- (iii) To coordinate the functions of each of the bodies under the Ministry so as to bring about a greater measure of cohesive policy.
- (iv) To examine the extent and manner in which various facets of Indian Culture are being addressed by concerned agencies.
- (v) To help provide inputs for the formulation of new, need-based programmes in the field of culture.
- (vi) To advise on the work of the National Missions set up by the Ministry of Culture.

[Translation]

Development of Historical and Religious Places

5158. SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any special scheme has been implemented for promotion and development of historical and religious culture in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, whether the support of the N.G.Os. is being taken in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) and (c) However, regular schemes are being implemented for preservation and promotion of culture in Maharashtra.

[English]

Furnishing of Undertaking by DTH Companies

5159. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether DTH companies have been asked to furnish an undertaking to the effect to ensure that a doubtful content anti National messages will be blocked before it grants Internet Service Provider (ISP);

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

(c) whether DTH companies have been represented the Government to review its decision;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) M/s. ASC Enterprise Ltd., the sole DTH licensee was requested to clarify about the type of technology and the process through which it would

be able to block pornographic content and anti national messaging through the proposed internet service and the monitoring arrangement to enforce blocking of such objectionable contents, in the context of Andhra Pradesh High Court order dated 30.9.2004 in WPMP No. 22740/2004 in WP No. 17351/2004. The company has replied that the ISP licensing conditions shall be adhered to.

(e) The Government is armed with adequate powers to deal with the misuse of any devices. Besides, constitution of an authority to regulate content is being contemplated.

Zero Emission Bus

5160. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether after several years of research funded by the Oil Industry Development Board, IIT-Delhi is ready with a zero-emission bus;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which these buses are likely to ply on roads?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The Instrument Design Development Centre of IIT, Delhi has reported that Zero emission technology is ready for vehicles of upto 25 to 150 passengers capacity.

(b) IIT, Delhi have developed the technology in collaboration with Crompton Greaves, Eicher Motors, Tata Motors and the Delhi Energy Development Agency. The project has been funded by the Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB). At present, two test vehicles are reportedly in running condition. The vehicles can run at a maximum speed of 65 kms. per hour up to a daily range of about 250 km.

(c) IIT, Delhi have reported that prototypes/trial fleets could be assembled in 12 months of any user agency coming forward to provide financial assistance for the commercialisation of the technology.

Guidelines for Cultural Programmes at Heritage Monuments

5161. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether ASI has framed guidelines for the cultural programmes held at the heritage monuments;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these guidelines are binding on all the protected monuments across the country;

(d) if so, the amount of fee and security to be deposited for organizing functions in different monuments across the country including Hyderabad;

(e) whether the Government departments are exempted from this fee for organizing State function; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The details of the guidelines for the cultural programmes are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(c) No, Sir. The list of centrally protected monuments/sites where cultural events could be permitted is enclosed as Statement-II.

(d) The details of fee to be charged and security to be deposited for organizing the functions are as under:—

(a) For conducting an event in the land attached (outside) to a protected monument Rs. 25,000/- per day and where a part of the built monuments (inside) is also likely to be used along with the land Rs. 50,000/- per day would be charged (in select monuments at Delhi).

(b) In other circles for conducting cultural event, Rs. 10,000/- would be charged per day (for one day only) for using area attached (outside) to a protected monument and where a part of the protected monuments is also likely to be used, Rs. 25,000/- per day would be charged.

(c) In addition to the above, Archaeological Survey of India would also demand a refundable security deposit of Rs. 50,000/- per day in all monuments in Delhi. In other circles, this refundable security deposit would be Rs. 30,000/-.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Question does not arise.

Statement I

The details of guidelines framed relating to usage of specific areas/protected areas of the protected monuments/sites for holding cultural events

1. As a matter of course, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will not like to permit the use of monuments and land attached to such monuments for holding functions/events. The circles may, however, permit such use only as an exception if the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India/Superintending Archaeologist, Circle is fully satisfied that the function/event is unlikely to cause any damage, whatsoever, to the monument, its land and other built structures standing thereon.
2. The circles would accord permission in only those monuments, which are identified for holding cultural events. They will also delineate the area/parts of the monument where such events can be held.
3. The Director General, Archaeological Survey of India/Superintending Archaeologist, Circle may refuse permission to hold functions in the identified monuments/sites in case Archaeological Survey of India had undertaken recent renovation/beautification works and the holding of such event may interfere with the work/damage the renovations.
4. If a monument is not listed for allowing the holding of cultural events, the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India may grant such permissions after calling for a report from the concerned Superintending Archaeologist. The Director General, Archaeological Survey of India however reserves the right to disallow any such request. His decision will be final.
5. Permission can be granted for holding cultural events of a high standard, preferably classical. For this purpose, cultural events would mean classical music, dance and drama. In deciding whether an event is a cultural event or not, the decision of the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India would be final.
6. No permission would be granted for any function/event where the admission is regulated by sale of tickets or by levy of admission charges.
7. No permission would be granted for any event which involves any commercial/religious activity like sales, exhibition-cum-sales etc.
8. Permission for holding functions would be granted only to Government departments and public bodies. No permission would be granted to private individuals, private bodies or other commercial organizations. In deciding whether the requests for holding a function is from a public body or not, the decision of the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India would be final. While considering the requests from public bodies, the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India/Superintending Archaeologist, Circle would consider the previous history and activities of the organization the purpose for which the event is being held and the nature and duration of the cultural event.
9. Permission issued will be valid only for one day except in exceptional cases where for reasons to be recorded, such permissions may extend to more than one day. All temporary structures must be constructed and removed within the same day by 11 P.M. All function must conclude by 10 P.M. No music or loudspeaker etc. will be allowed thereafter. Any violation will lead to a police complain by Archaeological Survey of India.
10. No construction activity of any type will be permitted except for putting up a temporary rostrum or stage, which can be moved away. In putting up such temporary structures there will be no masonry activity.
11. As the conduct of the event within the monuments or its precincts is likely to cause damage to the built infrastructure and its environs, the Archaeological Survey of India would levy the following charges for usage:—
 - (a) For conducting an event in the land attached (outside) to a protected monument Rs. 25000/- per day and where a part of the built monuments (inside) is also likely to be used along with the land Rs. 50000/- per day would be charged (in select monuments at Delhi).
 - (b) In other circles for conducting cultural event, Rs. 10000/- would be charged for day (for one day only) for using area attached (outside) to a

protected monument and where a part of the protected monuments is also likely to be used, Rs. 25,000/- per day would be charged.

Director General, Archaeological Survey of India may decide if other differential needed.

In addition to the above, Archaeological Survey of India would also demand a refundable security deposit of Rs. 50000/- per day in all monuments in Delhi. In other circles, this refundable security deposit would be Rs. 30,000/-. This security deposit would be refunded within a week after the function after deducting expenditure, if any, that the Archaeological Survey of India has incurred in clearing the area of litter/garbage etc. or in repairing damages, if any.

The Archaeological Survey of India would be free to impose, appropriate conditions or various aspects like parking, maximum number of visitors, noise and luminous levels etc. to ensure that the monument and its environs are protected and preserved and the conduct of the event would not cause any damage to the monument (physically) or its cultural integrity.

A list of monument where cultural events could be permitted under the jurisdiction of circle is at Annexure-II. This list is not exhaustive and the Archaeological Survey of India may amend this list as and when required.

The above guidelines will come into immediate effect and will remain valid until further orders.

Statement II

List of Monuments/Sites where cultural events could be permitted

1. AGRA CIRCLE

- (i) Ram Bagh
- (ii) Akbar's Tomb (outside)
- (iii) Diwan-i-Aum (Agra Fort)
- (iv) Kankali Tila, Mathura
- (v) Open area outside Bashahi Gate, Fatehpur Sikri

2. AURANGABAD CIRCLE

- (i) Lawns of Bibi-Ka-Maqbara, Aurangabad

- (ii) Open area in front of Rock-cut-caves, Ellora
- (iii) Open area Fort, Daulatabad

3. BANGALORE CIRCLE

- (i) Open area Elephanta stable, Hampi
- (ii) Open area Vithala Temple Complex, Hampi
- (iii) Open area east of Keshava Temple, Somnathpur
- (iv) Open area Hoysaleswara Temple, Halebidu
- (v) Open Courtyard, Chenna Keshva Temple, Belur
- (vi) Open area and cloistered court of Bahubali statue, Shravana Belogola
- (vii) Open area surrounding the Bahubali statue, Karkala
- (viii) Open area Fort, Chitradurga
- (ix) Open lawns, Tipu's Palace, Bangalore
- (x) Open area surrounding, Tipu's Tomb, Srirangapatna
- (xi) Open area-Daulatabad Bagh Palace, Srirangapatna
- (xii) Shri Harishreshwara Temple, Harihara
- (xiii) Eshwara temple, Arasikere
- (xiv) Fort Devanahalli
- (xv) Someshwara temple, Kolar
- (xvi) Open area Group of temples, Nandi
- (xvii) Anantapadanabha Temple complex, Karkala
- (xviii) Fort, Bellary
- (xix) Open area around monuments, Hampi

4. BHOPAL CIRCLE

- (i) North of Chitragupta Temple, Khajuraho
- (ii) Tansen Tomb, Gwalior
- (iii) Open area around Sas bahu Temple, Gwalior
- (iv) Open area to the west of Shiva Temple, Bhojpur
- (v) Open area Jahaz Mahal, Mandu

5. BHUBANESHWAR CIRCLE

- (i) Open area around Raja Rani Temple, Bhubaneshwar
- (ii) Open area Mukteshwar temple
- (iii) Parashu Rameshwar Temple
- (iv) Open area Sun Temple, Konarak
- (v) Sita Bhanji
- (vi) Haripur Garh
- (vii) Site at Ratnagiri

6. CHANDIGARH CIRCLE

- (i) Open area surrounding Jal Mahal, Narnaul
- (ii) Fort, Narpur
- (iii) Open area, Kangra Fort
- (iv) Dakhni Sarai
- (v) Fort Bhatinda

7. CHENNAI CIRCLE

- (i) Brihadishwara temple, Tanjavore
- (ii) Brihadishwara Temple, Gangaikonda Cholapuram
- (iii) Aravateshwara Temple, Darasuram
- (iv) Group of temples, Rock cut caves, Mahabalipuram
- (v) Open area Group of temples, Moovar Koil
- (vi) Fort area Sadras

8. DELHI CIRCLE

- (i) Arab ki Sarai (Humayun's Tomb Complex)
- (ii) Outer lawn Isakhan tomb (Humayun's Tomb Complex)
- (iii) Talab Mahal
- (iv) Roshnara Garden
- (v) Open area Qutb Minar Complex
- (vi) Lawn and outer open area, Purana Qila
- (vii) Open area Quila Raipithora

- (viii) Open area Red Fort (area of Ram Lila and inside)

9. DEHRADUN CIRCLE

- (i) Rudranath Temple Complex, Gopeshwar, Distt. Chamoli

10. DHARWAD CIRCLE

- (i) Open area Durga Temple Complex, Aihole
- (ii) Open area Jyotirling Group of Temples, Aihole
- (iii) Open area north of Temples, Pattadakal
- (iv) Open area between Group of Temples, Ashtur
- (v) Open area within the Fort Gulbarga
- (vi) Open area Mahmud Gawans Madarasa, Bidar
- (vii) Open area surrounding Gol Gumbaz, Bijapur
- (viii) Lawns of Imbrahim Rauza, Bijapur
- (ix) Open area, Navaraspur
- (x) Open area Group of monuments, Lukkundi
- (xi) Open area around Mahadevi Temple, Ittagi
- (xii) Open area towards west of Siddeshwara Temple, Haveri
- (xiii) Madhukeshwara temple complex, Banavasi
- (xiv) Mukteshwara temple Chandadanpur
- (xv) Open area Fort, Souda

11. GOA MINI CIRCLE

- (i) Open area within the Fort, Aguda
- (ii) Mahadev Temple Complex, Tambdi Surla
- (iii) Open area Safa Masjid, Ponda

12. HYDERABAD CIRCLE

- (i) Area within in Golkonda Fort
- (ii) Siddhout Fort, Cuddapah
- (iii) Sankaram, Vishakhapatnam
- (iv) Ramappa Temple, Palampet
- (v) Area within the Fort, Warangal

(vi) Open area around transplanted monument Nagarjunkonda and Anupu (during day only)

(vii) Area surrounding Amaravati, the Stupasite.

13. JAIPUR CIRCLE

- (i) Anna Sagar, Baradari
- (ii) Ancient Site at Bhangarh
- (iii) Deeg Palace, Deeg, Distt., Bharatpur
- (iv) Fort, Bayana
- (v) Group of Temples, Badoli
- (vi) Mahanal Temple, Menal
- (vii) Group of temples, Bijolia
- (viii) Fort, Chittaurgarh
- (ix) Fort, Kumbalgarh
- (x) Fort, Ranthambore
- (xi) Fort, Jaisalmer
- (xii) Archaeological Site, Ludrava
- (xiii) Ghat/Jahangiri Mahal, Pushkar

14. KOLKATA CIRCLE

- (i) Open area in front of Cooch Behar Palace
- (ii) Open area surrounding Bishnupur Group of temples, Bishnupur

15. LUCKNOW CIRCLE

- (i) Residency Lucknow
- (ii) Open area Fort, Jhansi

16. MUMBAI MINI CIRCLE

- (i) Open area Elephanta
- (ii) Fort Raigarh
- (iii) Palace Complex Shaniwarvada, Pune

17. PATNA CIRCLE

- (i) Archaeological Site, Samath
- (ii) Archaeological Site, Nalanda
- (iii) Open area Sher Shah Tomb, Sasaram

18. RAIPUR CIRCLE

- (i) Group of monuments, Sirpur

19. RANCHI CIRCLE

Nil

20. SHIMLA MINI CIRCLE

- (i) Open area Vice Regal Lodge, Shimla

21. SRINAGAR CIRCLE

- (i) Palace Ramnagar
- (ii) Open Area of the Fort, Ramnagar

22. THRISSUR CIRCLE

- (i) Open area within the Fort, Bekal
- (ii) Area within Fort St. Angelo, Kannur
- (iii) Fort at Pakkad

23. Vadodara Circle

- (i) Open area/Garden around Sun Temple, Modhera
- (ii) Open area within the citadel, Pavagarh
- (iii) Fort Diu
- (iv) Fort area, Moti Daman
- (v) Fort Area Nani Daman
- (vi) Area around step well, Patan

12.01 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions):

- (1) Memorandum of Understanding between the Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited and the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 1978/2005]

- (2) Memorandum of Understanding between the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited and the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 1979/2005]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): 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 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 1980/2005]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): 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 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:
- (i) Statement regarding Review by the Government of the working of the Vayudoot Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004.
 - (ii) Annual Report of the Vayudoot Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004, along with 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 1981/2005]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): 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 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:
- (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation Limited, Mumbai, for the year 2003-2004.

- (ii) Annual Report of the Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation Limited, Mumbai, for the year 2003-2004, along with 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 1982/2005]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): I beg to lay on the Table:

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute for the Orthopaedically Handicapped, Kolkata, for the year 2003-2004, along with Audited Accounts.
 - (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Institute for the Orthopaedically Handicapped, Kolkata, for the year 2003-2004.
- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 1983/2005]

12.02 hrs.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Tenth, Eleventh and Thirteenth Reports

[*English*]

DR. R. SENTHIL (Dharmapuri): I beg to present the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Public Accounts Committee (2004-2005):

- (1) Tenth Report (14th Lok Sabha) on "Excesses over Voted Grants and Charged Appropriations (2002-2003)".

[Dr. R. Senthil]

- (2) Eleventh Report (14th Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by Government on the Observations and Recommendations contained in the 51st Report of PAC (13th Lok Sabha) relating to "Allotment of PAN".
- (3) Thirteenth Report (14th Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by Government on the Observations and Recommendations contained in the 38th Report of PAC (13th Lok Sabha) relating to "Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)".

12.02½ hrs.

RAILWAY CONVENTION COMMITTEE

Second Report

[English]

SHRI RAJESH VERMA (Sitapur): I beg to present the Second Report (Hindi and English versions) of Railway Convention Committee (2004) on 'Rate of Dividend for 2005-06 and Other Ancillary Matters'.

12.03 hrs.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

One Hundred Sixty-Second Report

[English]

DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA (Inner Manipur): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the One Hundred Sixty-second Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Human Resource Development on "Functioning of Kendriya Vidyalayas".

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE*

Situation arising out of the huge non-performing assets in the banks due to default in payment of loans mainly by big borrowers and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto

[English]

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (Panskura): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Finance to the following

matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"Situation arising out of the huge non-performing assets in the banks due to default in payment of loans mainly by big borrowers and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto."

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government is aware about the incidence of non-performing assets of public sector banks and share of big borrowers in this. This has been a constant cause of concern for the Government, as high incidence of NPAs would curtail the availability of funds to the banks for effective deployment. At present, the level of non-performing assets of public sector banks as on March 2004 is 7.8 per cent of their gross advances. The Net NPA is below 3 per cent at present.

There are various factors, internal to a bank and external, to it which lead to an asset turning non-performing. The internal factors basically pertain to deficiency in credit appraisal and supervision, diversion of funds by the borrower and wilful default in repayment and inefficient management of the unit financed. The external factors on the other hand are non-viability or sickness of the unit due to change in technology, demand pattern and other policies, non-completion of project due to cost, time overruns and other factors, such as non-availability of raw materials, labour problems, natural calamities, environmental factors such as pollution control, ecological damage and delay in disposal by courts/DRTs of suits filed by banks for recovery.

The performance of public sector banks has shown overall improvement in the last three years especially in the area of income, profits and the level of NPAs. The gross NPAs, which were Rs. 56,473 crore as on March, 2002, came down to Rs. 51,538 crore as on March, 2004. There has been a similar decline in the net NPAs also. The net NPAs came down from Rs. 27,958 crore to Rs. 18,860 crore for the same period. Accordingly, the percentage of Net NPAs to Net Advances also came down from 5.82 per cent to 3 per cent during the above period. Thus, there has been a consistent decline in the level of NPAs. This has been made possible by stringent measures adopted by the Government and the Reserve Bank of India with the help of the banks concerned. These include:

*Also placed in Library. See No. LT 1984/2005.

Banks are effecting larger number of compromise settlements through the forum of Lok Adalats.

"The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002" has been enacted empowering Banks for speedy recovery of overdue loans. I may add, it was recently amended by this House.

A scheme of Corporate Debt Restructuring (CDR) for restructuring of corporate debts has been put in place.

The management Committee and the Board of Directors are periodically reviewing the top 300 NPA accounts and NPA accounts of Rs. 1 crore and above respectively.

Banks have strengthened the risk management systems by putting in place institutional framework for identifying, monitoring and management of credit risk.

The seriousness and success of the Bank managements to recover thousands of crores of NPAs can be seen from the following:

Total recoveries effected by Public Sector Banks (including write-offs) increased from Rs. 18,730 crore on 31st March, 2003 to Rs. 20,704 crore on 31st March, 2004.

As on 31st March, 2003, the public sector banks have settled 8.87 lakh NPA accounts involving Rs. 4,649 crore under the RBI's One-Time Settlement Scheme for NPAs up to Rs. 5 crore.

Till September 30, 2004, the 27 Public Sector Banks have issued 70254 notices for an outstanding amount of Rs. 21,988.74 crore and have recovered an amount of Rs. 2,237.95 crore from 29301 cases filed under the Securitisation Act.

Out of 63131 cases (involving Rs. 90,852.01 crore) filed by the commercial banks, DRTs have adjudicated 27373 cases (involving Rs. 25,402.74 crore) resulting in a recovery of Rs. 7,592.98 crore till 31st March, 2004.

Despite the aforementioned measures, the process of recovery has somewhat been eclipsed by the fact that the big industrial companies/borrowers have been the top

defaulters to the Public Sector Banks. An amount of Rs. 3,908 crore has been outstanding against ten top companies. Government is concerned on this and has clearly spelled out ways to tackle wilful defaulters. The strengthening of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 after certain amendments has further tightened the grip over these defaulters. I would like to submit that in the next few months we are likely to recover more of our outstanding NPA through this legal reach.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I express my deep respect for admitting this Calling Attention on this matter of urgent public importance.

Sir, I refrain from making any statement, general statement or general comment, on the figures given by the hon. Finance Minister.

If I am frank, it will be too brutal. If I make a cosmetic remarks, that will go against my conscience. At the beginning, let me say that the hon. Minister must have his eyes to look at things; must have ears to hear; must have his judgement.

MR. SPEAKER: Come to the subject.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Let us believe that the hon. Minister is led by the statement of the officers.

MR. SPEAKER: Naturally, he has to. Come to the subject.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: I have with me a copy of the list of defaulters with the magnitude and the names published by the All India Bank Employees Association. I shall seek your permission to lay it on the Table of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: That I will have to see first.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: It is for you to decide. My information says that the hon. Minister has not been truthful.

MR. SPEAKER: You should say that he is not factually correct instead of that word.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: He has not been accurate or has been devoid of material fact. I can give you more parliamentary expressions.

MR. SPEAKER: Let us debate it in a proper atmosphere.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: In March, 1997, the total volume of NPA was Rs. 47,000 crore, according to my assessment. According to my assessment today, NPA as on March 31, 2004, was Rs. 96,000 crore. Therefore, it is not correct to say that NPA has been reduced. It has, on the other hand, increased. On March 31, the total profit of the nationalised banks had been Rs. 39,458 crore and the provision that the banks had made to meet the liability of NPA was Rs. 14,353 crore. Nearly 36 per cent of the profit had to be set aside under which to which the liability arising out of the non-payment of dues by the borrowers. According to my information, every year, nearly Rs. 10,000 crores are being written off by the banks. Let the hon. Finance Minister look into papers and find out if my statement is true. My statement again, during the last 10 years, is that the horror is in written in the figures—horror is not in the statement. During the last 10 years, Rs. 1,00,000 crores has been written off. What does it mean? It means that the corporate delinquency is sought to be cross-subsidised out of the profit of the banks. Surely, this is not the sign of propriety in the policy of the banking of the Government of India. Who are the defaulters? Let the country know as to who are the defaulters. 75 per cent of the poor farmers make their repayment or pay back the loan. 97 per cent of the retail traders pay back the loans. Cat must be out of the bag if I say 50 per cent of the corporates do not pay back the loans. This is the crux. They do not pay back the loan. This is the corporate delinquency, which is allowed to be cross-subsidised by the Ministry of Finance and the management of the nationalised banks.

Hon. Minister speaks of securitisation. May I humbly and respectfully say that this Act empowers the Government only to attach the propriety of the company but the delinquent borrowers are more intelligent than our Finance Ministers. They divert the money and make properties in their own names or in the names of their wives.

Since it is in the name of a company, this Act does not empower the Government to touch the property of the defaulted borrowers. I complimented you because I had been raising this issue for over decades. I had been raising this issue of default in the payment of loans for decades. I did it in the other House during the time of other Governments. I did it because it is a downright loot of the public money. Successive Governments have failed

to contain the increasing process of corporate delinquency leading to mounting of non-payment of loans. The recovery, I claim, has been nominal; the punishment has been selective; enforcement of the law has been weak; and the courts set up to recover the loans have been a few. There have been large-scale vacancies. Therefore, I come to the conclusion, I come to the concrete conclusion that there is a lack of political will to realise the money of the default made by the big borrowers. Why is it so? It is because these big borrowers are often well-connected and are often patronised.

MR. SPEAKER: You tell about how to recover this money.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: They take the loan, divert the fund and make the company sick. The company is made sick but the owners of the company become rich. They go to the bank and say that they are sick and they ask for a little more time. They want the concessional rate of interest. They want lengthening of the repayment time. After having done that, they engage good lawyers and get stay after stay. Prolonged litigation has become most lucrative for the delinquent borrowers. Where is the law to prevent it?

Hon. Minister speaks of the new law. I would like to know what are the provisions which will take care of the prolonged litigation to make it lucrative for the default and loot of the public money? The point is very concrete. According to my book, the total NPA is nearly Rs. 95,084.14 crore. This is also another statement. This is according to this book. Kindly add Rs. 1.00 lakh crore to it which has been written off during the last ten years.

Thirdly, there are two other components. The banking norm says that after an account is identified to be sick, from that day, interest rate is not calculated, not to speak of penal rate of interest. Therefore, the amount stands still. If we calculate the interest including the penal interest from the day the account is declared to be sick, then the loss caused to the bank is much more.

Then, he is speaking of one time concession. Big borrowers are given generous concessions and not the farmers. If you take into account the loss sustained by the banks because of the generous concession and add up these three components,—amount written off, failure of the bank to calculate the amount and the interest during the default period and the concessions given—according to me, the total loss to the banking industry, not notional but actual, is around Rs. 3.00 lakh crore.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Please conclude now.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Now, I come to the questions. Firstly, may I ask you, Mr. Finance Minister, as to why do you not allow this wilful default as a criminal offence?

Sir, he is saying, 'wilful default'. Let us make a provision in the law, which will enable the Government to treat wilful default as a criminal offence. ...(*Interruptions*) I wish you give me more applause. I am coming to it.

MR. SPEAKER: I am sure, you are not doing it only for applause.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: No, Sir. I am only saying that I am speaking or many; I am not speaking for myself. I am speaking for many.

MR. SPEAKER: But it does not mean that you will have much more time.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: I do not know if I am speaking for the hon. Finance Minister.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): He is playing to the gallery. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: My gallery is there in the House also.

MR. SPEAKER: Very good.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: I feel privileged.

Secondly, why the Government will not publish the list of the defaulters? When I am here publishing, why will the Government not publish? The point is, the Government makes a distinction between 'suit filed account' and 'not suit filed account', which means, the account under litigation is published, but the account not under litigation is not published. I seek to publish it.

I want the Government to make a statement here and now that those who have looted the money of the country will be put to shame. I do not know whether they will go to jail because the judicial system has its own limitations. But let the country put them to shame that this person has looted the money of the Government.

Thirdly, will the Minister of Finance agree to recommend to the Election Commission that those who have defaulted in the payment of bank money, should be debarred from contesting elections?

MR. SPEAKER: It should be the other way. They cannot make a law. The Government can make a law. It is for the Legislature to do it.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Sir, with your generosity, I say that in the other House, I had met the Minister of State for Finance at that time, in connection with those who have defaulted the money. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot refer to the other House. We are the House of the People.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: I am saying the other House. Anyway, I want the list to be published.

Fourthly, I want special courts for the trial of these white collared crime, and the special courts should try the wilful defaulters within a stipulated time.

MR. SPEAKER: All right.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Then, again, Sir....

MR. SPEAKER: No, you have to conclude now. You have already taken more than 20 minutes.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: I am saying that the private property of the people who have defaulted, should be confiscated and even the group companies and the family members should be debarred from getting the bank loans. I say with anguish—I am concluding, Sir—and my anguish is that we have nearly 40 per cent of our people living below poverty line. We have the high incidence of poverty, we have no creation of jobs, and it can be all attributed to lack of funds. When the country is going through a period of agonizing poverty and unemployment, should the Government allow loot of the bank money and allow the evasion of taxes? ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: At no point of time they should do that.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Therefore, Sir, I appeal to the Government. It is my last appeal. I appeal to my friend not to use his linguistic bombards but to tell us in concrete terms his Action Plan. We want an Action Plan to take care of the wilful defaulters, most of whom

[Shri Gurudas Dasgupta]

are big borrowers, most of whom are associated with corridors of power in Delhi and in States. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I think, the Minister was bombarded!

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Shri Hannan Mollah. You may please ask only one question, without any preface, please.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia): Sir, there is not much preface. Our party defines the character of the Indian Government that it is a bourgeois, landlord Government led by big bourgeoisie and they are ruling the roost as this issue also shows.

MR. SPEAKER: Very well. Now, put the question.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: Sir, firstly I would request the hon. Minister to reply to this question. What is the amount of money written off?

MR. SPEAKER: He said it.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: The Minister should say that.

Secondly, I would like to say that we have got ten top names of the defaulters from the reply of the hon. Minister. Out of that, we know one Company's name.

MR. SPEAKER: No. No. Do not give the names.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: Their names are found everywhere, in all Banks and financial institutions as defaulters. They are loitering around the corridor; they are collecting money to contest elections; they have become leaders of the people. Who are they to do all these things? They are looting.

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question?

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: May I know whether these people are spared as they have political connections, high political connections?

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Now, Shri Chandrappan. Please put only one question. We have taken a lot of time on this.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN (Trichur): I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any legal

difficulty in publishing the names of the defaulters about whom Shri Dasgupta has mentioned? He mentioned about the huge number of defaulters. May I know whether there is any legal difficulty in publishing their names and placing it on the Table of the House?

MR. SPEAKER: You have put a question. Now, Shri Shailendra Kumar.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell hon. Finance Minister that if a poor man is unable to repay loan as RC is issued whereas there are big industrialists in the country who has taken second loan without repaying the first one and no action is taken against them. My submission is that the Government should come out heavily on them and auction their property to recover the loan.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the hon. Minister. No more time will be allowed for you. I am sorry. You are making the same point. That is not fair. That is not the way.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please do not misuse the opportunity that I have given to you.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: It seems that bank are meant only for the rich and not poor ones. Money should be recovered from the defaulters by auction their property and a list of defaulters should be published.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I will not allow it to be recorded. You are repeating the same thing. Shri Rupchand Pal, please put a specific question.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): I have a specific question to ask. The Indian Banks' Association has recently drawn the attention of the Government to an anomalous situation—that is, DRT and the latest amendment say that the banks cannot go for simultaneous action under SARFAESI Act and DRTA. They have to

withdraw from DRTA, if they have to take action under the other. The attention of the Government has been drawn to this Act. The latest amendment to Section 19 of the Act is standing in the way and the time is consumed in the process. DRT has informed from the very beginning that there is want of judges and want of infrastructure. So, the latest amendment is standing in the way and the Government must do something to help the IBA to recover the NPAs and loans.

MR. SPEAKER: it is a good question. Now, the hon. Minister.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I thought I spoke rather in a simple language. I will try to simplify my language even more and I am learning from Shri Jaipal Reddy Garu to speak in a simpler language.

I think that one must appreciate the progress made in recovery of NPAs. I would have liked hon. Members to have a word of praise for our banks; and as I said in my statement, the gross NPAs have come down from a high of 13.98 per cent in 2000 to 7.8 per cent in March 2004, almost by one-half.

Likewise, net NPAs have come down from 7.42 per cent in March 2000 to a shade below 3 per cent in March 2004. There has been a reduction of almost 60 per cent. Even in absolute terms, the net NPA in the banking system, which was Rs. 26,187 crore in March 2000, has come down to Rs. 18,860 crore in March 2004. I think, recognising that there is improvement in the recovery of loans in the banking system, we must continue to address the difficulties. We must continue to address the constraints which slow down the recovery.

Sir, there is a general impression that some sectors are more prone to NPAs and some others are less prone to NPAs. Well, that may be broadly correct. I think it is necessary to set the record straight. By the end of March 2004, the percentage of net NPAs to total advances in agriculture was 8.4 per cent. I have always maintained that agriculture is a good sector to lend. One of the reasons why last year, as soon as this Government took over, the first major policy announcement was that we will double the credit to the agriculture sector. We will lend more because according to me farmers are among the best borrowers and the best re-payers.

The net NPA of SSIs is among the highest, which is 15.16 per cent. For others, which includes the big

borrowers, NPA is 8.17 per cent. The non-priority sector, which also includes big borrowers, the NPA is 8.4 per cent. Therefore, broadly we are dealing with three different kinds of problems. Although the net NPA of the people who borrow large amounts, as a proportion appears to be on the decline, since the amounts they borrow are large, the total amount which is outstanding in their names is large because the proportion of borrowing is large.

Then we have farmers, who are good borrowers yet adequate credit is not given to them. We will have to see more credit is given even while keeping the NPA at the same level.

There is a third category. SSIs, which I am afraid are more prone to default because of the competitive environment in which they have to function. So, I do not think there is a one size fits all answer. One has to have a different response to the big borrowers and big industries; a different response to the small and medium enterprises and a different response to the farmers.

I think the thrust of the questions that have been put to me today is about the big borrowers who have got large amounts of defaults against their names. I have said that their net NPAs are in the region of about 8.4-8.5 per cent and we need to address those problems. We have amended the Securitization Act. When that Bill was discussed here, I pointed out, because the bill was under challenge in the Supreme Court effectively for ten months, that remedy was not availed. That is behind us now. You were kind enough to pass the amendment. The Bill has been amended. More cases are now being filed and I am confident that speed will pick up now in implementing the Securitization Act.

Questions were asked about or comments were made about generous concessions granted to certain industrial houses and the machinery of debt restructuring. Here I wish to take a minute to explain the purpose of debt restructuring. Banking is a business. It is like any other business. In every business there will be a cycle where there will be losses in some year and there will be profits in other years.

Hopefully, the profitable years would be more than the loss making years. Even in one business, a part of the business may make losses and another part of the business may make profit. To assume—as I think some hon. Members are assuming—that every rupee lent must be recovered is, I am afraid, a rather simplistic assumption.

[Shri P. Chidambaram]

As I have said in my Statement, there are external factors which will cause a business to make losses. For example, in the last two, not the last year, but the three years previous, all steel companies were making losses. So, the steel industry went into a dive. Tatas made losses; ESSAR made losses; and SAIL made losses. I am sure many of those companies—and I know some of those companies—did not service their loans. Now, in such a case, if the banks do not take a sympathetic attitude and they simply go after the steel companies and say that you have not serviced your loan therefore we will attach your property and we are going to sell your property, what would happen to employment? What would happen to production of steel? Now, because the banks held the hands of steel companies during that period, last year all steel companies have turned around. They are making good profits now and they are giving dividends. They are paying taxes. So to assume that every rupee lent will come back and not a single rupee will be defaulted, with great respect and in my respectful submission, does not reflect a proper understanding of banking which is a business. In banking also, some parts of banking or some parts of the loans will turn sour in a competitive economy. It happens even in non-competitive economy. It will happen in a competitive economy.

Therefore, the CDR is an instrument devised where there is no wilful default. CDR is an instrument devised in order to help industry to tide over a crisis, continue production, maintain employment, turn around the corner, and then pay back over a re-scheduled period. Now we can look at aspects of the CDR but to condemn the whole approach of CDR, I submit with great respect to hon. Members was wrong. Banking is as much a business as any other business.

Let me come to the specific questions. The specific question was that Rs. 10,000 crore is written off every year. Now I do not know where hon. Member gets those figures.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: I am ready to tell you that.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Let me tell you my figures. As regards public sector banks including the State Bank group, the total amount of recoveries in FY 2004 is Rs. 20704 crore, out of which—and I will explain this in a moment—recovery through compromise and write off is Rs. 11308 crore which means cash recovery was Rs. 9396 crore. That is the first aspect which I want to

emphasise. The cash recovery is Rs. 9396 crore. Now presumably, the hon. Members are looking at this figure of Rs. 11308 crore and saying that it is a write off. It is both compromise and write off. In a write off, I admit, a portion of the outstanding is written off. It is usually the penal interest and the funded interest. Then there is another part which is mainly compromise and the word 'compromise' means you are re-scheduling it over a period of time and once the industry turns around, a part of this Rs. 11308 crore will indeed be recovered over the next few years.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: I am speaking of one time settlement.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Even in one time settlement, a part is written off and a part is re-scheduled. Both together is called one time settlement. Mostly one time settlements are for small borrowers who have borrowed Rs. 20 lakh or Rs. 15 lakh or Rs. 18 lakh. When their business has gone into losses and they cannot run the business any more, they come and say that they will pay upfront 60 per cent so please write it off. Now banks are entitled to make a judgement.

MR. SPEAKER: I did it as Chairman of WBIDC.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: It is quite right. Sir, you will recall in 1996-97, the United Front Government advised banks to appoint a Committee headed by a retired judge of the High Court in order to decide whether the OTS should be given in any case. I think most of the banks have got such committees headed by a retired judge.

It may be, in one or two cases, one can have a difference of opinion. One could say that in this case you should have done an OTS and in this case you should not have done an OTS. But please remember that as Government I cannot second guess every decision taken by every bank. If there is any *malafide* action by any bank management or any bank committee, please bring it to my notice. But one must trust the judgement of the bank management and the committees which advise the bank managements which are invariably headed by a retired judge of the High Court.

Sir, the next point was about the action taken against promoters or directors or their property. In many cases, promoters and directors offer, what is called, a personal guarantee. If personal guarantees are given, then certainly

action is taken against the promoters. If they pledge their personal property, usually they pledge their shares, action is taken against those shares. But the company is a legal entity, if there is no personal guarantee and if there is no security offered of their personal property, then obviously neither can action be taken against their private property nor can action be taken against their personal property. Invariably, in most of these cases, there is either a Non-alienation agreement of shares or there is a pledge of shares. When this security is available, action is taken against these securities also.

A question was asked: Is there a section which preserves confidentiality? Now, this Section is in the RBI Act and the Section is Section 45(E). Let me read this section.

"Any credit information contained in any statement submitted by a banking company under Section 45(C) or furnished to the bank by a banking company under Section 45 (D) shall be treated as confidential and shall not, except for the purpose of Chapter IIIA, be published or otherwise disclosed."

There are exceptions. This section was introduced as part of Chapter IIIA in Act 35 of 1962. This Section was there in the RBI Act. There are similar sections in most Central Bank laws. The exception is in case of suit filed actions—where a suit is filed for recovery. That list is published and that list is indeed available, as I am sure, it is available to anyone and it is also available on the website.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: That is the precise point. Why cannot this Act be amended? That is why this book has been published.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: We can discuss this point.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: We have been discussing this point for decades. You had been the Finance Minister earlier also. Government is avoiding this point that this particular provision should be amended. *...(Interruptions)* In case of the wilful defaulters. *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): There should be transparency.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: In case of wilful defaulters, in my view, there is no difficulty. There should be no difficulty in disclosing once an action is taken. But until

action is taken, when the matter is still under discussion between the borrower and the bank, I think, there is a lot to be said for moderation and restraint in disclosing the name. It is because it could affect the market perception of a company; it could affect the company's market prices; it could affect the shareholder's confidence and it could affect a number of things about the company. Once action is taken, once suit is filed, the name is published. The answer to this problem is to quicken the process of recovery and quicken the process of filing the suit. That is the reason why I came up with the amendment of the SARAFESI Act. Now that we have amended this Act, where action has been taken, in every case where action has been taken, the name will be published and is indeed being published.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: That means the Government does not want to publish the names.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, my friend is drawing his own conclusions.

MR. SPEAKER: Conclusion is not a question. You need not worry about that.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: All I am trying to say is that this Section is in the Statute Book since 1962.

Sir, the hon. Member has asked that one can go under one Act and cannot go under another Act. That is not my reading of the Section. In fact, our reading of the Section is that after the amendment, they can now go under the SARAFESI Act if they find that the DRT procedure is dilatory. I would explain the difference. DRT is an individual action by a bank.

SARAFESI is an action where 75 per cent of the lenders have collectively decided to take action. If an individual bank has filed an action on the DRT and then later 75 per cent of the lenders have collectively decided to take action, then obviously you cannot allow the individual banks action to proceed separately because the collective action of the bankers will be affected. If the bank is part of the collective action where 75 per cent of the lenders have decided to go to the SARFAESI, then obviously the individual bank which went to the DRT will have to withdraw it. Otherwise, recovery by the collective of the banks will indeed be affected. But the bank can say that it is not willing to join and if 75 per cent is not achieved, then you cannot act on the SARFAESI. This is the reason. If you decide to go on the SARFAESI by applying 75 per cent rule, then the individual bank has to withdraw it.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: I seek your indulgence. The Standing Committee on Finance has submitted a Report which is a public document. And we have quoted what the Finance Ministry has to say about the position taken by the IBA. The IBA has written that, in this particular situation, simultaneous action cannot be taken and this is delaying the process because they have to withdraw the case from the DRT. Meanwhile, time lag is there. This is the position taken. Evidence has come to the knowledge of the Standing Committee and we have incorporated it as part of the public document.

MR. SPEAKER: This is what he has said.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: I have asked categorically about special court? What about that?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I will come to that. Sir, you are an eminent lawyer and you will appreciate that.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Now, he is the Speaker of the House.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I know it. I said that he will appreciate it. If an individual lender has gone to the DRT, then that is the right of an individual lender. SARFAESI Act does not recognise action by an individual lender. It recognises action when 75 per cent of the lenders collectively decide that they will act collectively, recover collectively and share the recovery collectively. That Act was passed by Parliament and 75 per cent lenders decision binds all lenders. Therefore, when 75 per cent of the lenders have decided to take action in order to protect their collective interest, obviously an individual lender who went there, without regard to the other lenders, must withdraw his action. Otherwise, the collective security and collective action of the lenders as on the lenders collection will be jeopardised. That is why we say that if you decide collectively, you have to withdraw the DRT action. But if you do not decide collectively, then you can always say, "I am sorry, we will not agree to join this collective action. We will not contribute to the 75 per cent majority." So, you cannot take action under SARFAESI. Obviously, the individual action will proceed. Therefore, this is a choice that you have to make. And if you make a choice in favour of collective action, then obviously the individual action cannot proceed independently.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: The Government's position is not being accepted by the IBA.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: This is my understanding. I will advise the IBA on my understanding of the law. So, that answers the question.

The other question is about the electoral disqualification and special courts. I shall certainly consider these two suggestions. But obviously, I have to consider it in consultation with the concerned Ministries and I will certainly consider these suggestions.

On the question of whether we are sparing anyone for their political connection, I cannot speak for anything that happened in the last five years. I can only speak for what has been happening for the last ten months. I have not spared anyone for any political connection. I think every borrower and every bank knows that none can come to me or anyone can ask to be spared on the ground of political connection. In fact, the criticism is that we are not sympathetic to anyone. We have explained the legal action of DRT and SARFAESI. I think we should continue it.

The hon. Member had very harsh words about recovery. I agree that recovery can be better and punishment can be made more deterrent. But now that we have amended the SARFAESI Act, the NPAs are coming down. I will ensure that we will make recovery better and punishment more deterrent.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Will you disagree with the figures that I have given? I am ready to stand any inquiry. I say that NPAs have increased and not declined. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Gurudas Dasgupta, you cannot go on like this. You are giving one figure and the Minister is giving another figure.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: I am contesting his basic point. NPAs are increasing, not declining. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: How is it to be resolved here?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: ...*(Interruptions)* He is entitled to tell me how the figures given by me are wrong. But I am confident of the figures given to me. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This cannot be resolved here. If you think that it is not correct, there are methods open to deal with it.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Can I place this book on the Table of the House?

MR. SPEAKER: I will have to consider that.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: You will have to consider that in the light of the law.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, certainly, I will have to consider that. I am not immediately permitting him to do that. I will have to look into that.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, we will take up Special Mentions.

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (Durgapur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I draw the attention of this House to a very serious question being asked by the people of India in the last few years. This happened during the tenure of the NDA Government. Unfortunately, my friends on the other side are not present today. They took those public sector undertakings as rhetoric and sold them at throw away prices to the private entrepreneurs. Most importantly, though the CAG has already received the comments of the Ministry of Disinvestment on their Preliminary Inspection Report in respect of Modern Food, Balco, Hindustan Teleprinters, that have not yet been placed on the Table of the House as yet. Similarly, the CAG has started the scrutiny of the transaction in the case of Paradeep Phosphates Limited, ITC hostels, Hotel Corporation of India, VSNL, Jessop, IBP Limited. But the country is yet to know its findings.

MR. SPEAKER: What is your point?

SHRI SUNIL KHAN: I may be excused to call this past action as blatant attack on the CAG to create political pressure. I do not know whether the CAG is still under political pressure. I request the Government, through this House, to further inquire as to how the valuable assets of those undertakings were frittered away by the private entrepreneurs. I demand that a Commission of Inquiry be constituted to inquire into the details of the strategic sale of these units. An assurance was given by the private entrepreneurs that the employees will remain in the units. But they have thrown away the employees.

MR. SPEAKER: Not much time is left.

SHRI SUNIL KHAN: They have already closed four units of Modern Food. What will happen to those employees? The Minister should come out with a statement. The hon. Finance Minister is present here.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL (Dibrugarh): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I am highlighting an issue which is very important for the people of North-East. It is about inter-State border problem between Assam and Nagaland.

We certainly welcome the peace process between the Government of India and the NSCN (IM) and also sincerely want the permanent solution of longstanding problem of Nagas. It is now clear that NSCN (IM) has proposed the formation of Nagalim which includes the vast areas of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. The proposal itself created unrest and misunderstanding. The people of these States have resolved not to concede any land to the proposed Nagalim.

I would like to suggest that Government of India should carry forward the peace process keeping in view the sovereign rights of the States over their land. In this regard, the territorial integrity must be strictly maintained. Peace in one region should not lead to political unrest in other region. A dispute is already pending regarding the border between Assam and Nagaland. The Government of India appointed Shri K.V.K. Sundaram on 7th August, 1971, the then Chairman of the Law Commission, as Advisor in the Ministry of Home Affairs in respect of the Assam-Nagaland border problem.

On the suggestion of the advisor Shri K.V.K. Sundaram, with a view to maintain peace and tranquility along the Assam-Nagaland Border and without prejudice to the respective claims in regard to the location of the Assam-Nagaland boundary, pending the submission of the report, four interim agreements were entered into by the two State Governments but nothing has come out positively. Very often, the Central Security Forces failed to maintain the neutrality at the border particularly in Sector A, Sector B, Sector C and Sector D. The Government of India should urgently take steps to resolve the pending border issues among the States of the North Eastern Region.

Finally, I would like to say that North East, as a whole, has a distinct identity and we are very proud of it. We are determined to solve our problem through

[Shri Sarbananda Sonowal]

discussions and goodwill without hurting each other's sentiments. Thank you.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (Lakhimpur): I would like to associate with this very important aspect of the North-East. I request your special intervention and that of the Government. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You can associate with it. While associating with it, you cannot add.

Shri Hannan Mollah. You have to speak on the second part of your notice about the CBI inquiry and not on the other part.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia): Sir, you are aware of the incident.

MR. SPEAKER: I am not aware of anything.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: Sir, you are aware of the genocide conducted in a State in the western part of our country in which 6000 plus people were killed and 61,000 people are still homeless. You know that a lot of cases and inquiries are going on. But my particular point is this. Recently, a revelation was made by a high police official through the submission of his semi-official diary containing 207 pages before the CAT. It has been made by the Addl. DGP of the State of Gujarat. It has been revealed that that was a document which was signed and stamped by the Government officer and counter-signed by the Police Commissioner. So, it is a legal and Government document. It shows that he got instructions from the officer and he noted it down in his diary. One instruction was there. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: No. Do not refer to any individual thing.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: There is no individual thing. An instruction was there. I demand an inquiry by the CBI. The instruction was: "especially from my village."

MR. SPEAKER: No. That will not go on the record. You ask for a CBI inquiry on that.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: The entire matters and all the new revelations must be enquired by the CBI. I demand an inquiry on the telephone tapping of those officers, what happened in Gujarat etc. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You have made your point.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: I demand a CBI inquiry in all these things. *...(Interruptions)* An inquiry should be conducted as to what happened in Gujarat. *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): I want to associate with it. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You have made your point. Please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You associate with it. Only the names will be associated.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhanjharpur): I do want to associate with it. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please corporate with me. Your names will be associated. But your matters, the notices of which were given, were not proper. Only Shri Hannan Mollah, with regard to that, has asked for an inquiry by an agency which is in Delhi, which comes under the Central Government.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I have also give a notice.

MR. SPEAKER: It is not on that. I have carefully been looking into it. Therefore, you can associate with it now.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The same subject does not allow you to say anything you like.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh): We will come to you to learn how to give the notice! Then, we will formulate it.

MR. SPEAKER: Then, you come to me!

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is very unfortunate. Nothing will go on record.

*...(Interruptions)**

* Not recorded.

* Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: No, I will not allow you. Do not mis-utilise this opportunity.

Now, Shri Narendra Kuamr Kushawaha to speak.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing else will be recorded. I am sorry.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Mistry, this is very unfortunate. Please take your seat. This is not being recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Narendra Kumar Kushawaha.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is very unfair. Shri Mistry, you are making a reflection on the Chair. This is very unfortunate.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA (Mirzapur): Hon. Speaker, Sir. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. Nothing is going on record.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am raising a very important issue in the House. Several temples and monuments of national importance are in dilapidated condition. The Government of India should view it seriously.

The temple of Lord Gautam Budha is located in Bihar. It is in Bodhgaya and Nalanda. The tallest stupa of Gautam Budha measuring 170 feet was at Kesaria, district Motihari. It collapsed in an earthquake in 1834. Patna based archaeological department is conducting excavation at its site but the Government of India have taken no steps for its reconstruction and renovation.

13.00 hrs.

I would like to say as to why the people of India do not follow Budha's 'Eight fold path' through which we can easily garner support of at least 44 countries in the world. The Central Government should suggest the Archaeological Survey of India to ensure that illegal encroachments from all Bodha temples in the country should be removed. Mosques and temples have come up on Bodha sites. These should be removed and Budha temples should be constructed at such sites and effective steps should be taken for their development.

[English]

DR. COL. (RETD.) DHANI RAM SHANDIL (Shimla): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of this august House to a very important issue regarding one-rank-one-pension which is pending with the Government for a long time. The moot point is, there is a disparity in the pension being drawn by those who retired prior to April, 1979 and those who are retiring now and this has caused a lot of resentment across the nation among our ex-Servicemen who gave their best years for the cause of motherland. Successive Governments have promised action, but somehow nothing happened. Now, the ex-Servicemen have raised this point very emphatically. They are of the view that a Defence Force pensioner, irrespective of his date of retirement, should get the same length of service and whenever pensions are revised the same should be applicable automatically with prospective effect to the existing pension.

Similarly, all types of pensions, whether family pension, widow pension etc., whenever raised should automatically be applicable in the same manner as it is applicable to the judges of High Courts and the Supreme Court and also hon. Members of Parliament. Then, a statutory commission on the lines of the National Commission for Women, SC/ST Commission and Minority Commission should also report every year to the Parliament on this issue. As a retired defence personnel myself, I would like to request, through you, the hon. Finance Minister, who is sitting here, the Defence Minister and the Central Government to please pay particular attention to this aspect. It is not a very big deal. We have worked on it. I think it is just about Rs. 300 crore which can be given to them. It will raise the morale of our defence personnel. Those who were not joining the Armed Forces will now join with a lot of incentives and it will be in the interest of our nation.

* Not recorded.

DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME (Birbhum): Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I want to raise an issue of national importance. In our country, even after 58 years of Independence, the infant mortality rate is very high. Out of the babies who die, the component of newborn babies is very high. After birth, upto one month, these now-born babies are very much vulnerable to infections due to both medical as well as surgical problems and they need immediate emergency and specialised care. But there are a very few hospitals in our country, which are equipped with the required facilities to attend to these newborn babies. So, I urge upon the Government that the time has come to set up at least the minimum scientific infrastructure down to the district hospital level for giving care to the newborn babies. Then, for specialised training, teaching and research in our vast country, neo-natal institutes should be set up immediately in all the regions without further loss of time.

[Translation]

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH (Allahabad): Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you for calling me.

If third world war breaks out, especially on Indian soil, it would be for water. The condition in India is explosive one. Water level has been depleting constantly. It has created a very serious condition in our country. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: It was discussed in the House. You just mention it.

[Translation]

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Let me go in some details. Water level in 362-363 districts in 23 States and Union Territories has depleted so much that it has assumed alarming proposition. 40 such districts are in UP alone. If no immediate steps are taken in 150 villages in trans-yamuna maja, Karchana and Koranu tehsils under Allahabad district people and animals would start dying for want of water.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: There was a full discussion on this.

[Translation]

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: I would conclude by raising one more point. As per the report of the survey conducted during 1995-2004 by the Government of India, water level has been decreasing each year by 20 cms. It is a very serious problem. My submission is that the Government should take immediate action on it.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Raghuraj Singh Shakya may associate. He is not here.

[Translation]

SHRI FURKAN ANSARI (Godda): Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw attention of the Government towards unprovoked firing by the personnels of Bangladesh Rifles on our defence personnel and BSF jawans. BDR take resorts to firing on our forces at will. Our troops and officers, though brave, are unable to take any retaliatory action because of strict discipline. They wait for the orders from senior officers. Our armed forces personnels are second to none. Our Government should take up this matter with Bangladesh Government and warn them of its dire consequences. Sending of mere protest note is of no use. Earlier also, many an Indian troops have died because of unprovoked firing by Bangladesh Rifles. Whereas our forces took no retaliatory action. My submission is that our forces should be given free hand so that in future they dare not resorting to unprovoked firing on our men.

Such incidents have been occurring repeatedly and the Government says that it has sent a note of protest. Such note is not going to deter them from firing. So, my submission is that our forces should be given free hand. They are competent enough to take appropriate decision in this matter.

[English]

*SHRI M. SHIVANNA (Chamrajanagar): Mr. Speaker Sir, the Prime Minister relief fund is helping the poor people who are suffering from various diseases like cancer, heart problems, etc. Generally an amount of Rs. 30,000 is being granted to the patients who are getting treatment in various hospitals. Similarly Ambedkar Foundation is also helping patients belonging to SC/ST communities who are undergoing medical treatment. But strangely only ten hospitals have been included for this

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada.

purpose. These hospitals are: 1. AIIMS, New Delhi, 2. Sanjay Gandhi Hospital, UP, 3. Patna Medical Hospital, Patna, 3. Jabalpur Hospital, Jabalpur, 5. B. Barua Cancer Institute, Guwahati, 6. Birla Heart Foundation, 7. Kalinga Hospital, Bhubaneswar, 8. Tata Cancer Research Institute, Mumbai, 9. Institute of Medical Science, Hyderabad, 9. Nizam Institute of Medical Science, Hyderabad, and 10. One Health Services in Chennai.

Sir, not even a single hospital from Bangalore has been included in this list. As this august House is aware there are a number of very good hospitals which are treating patients from foreign countries also. Some of these are: 1. NIMHANS, 2. Kidwai Cancer Institute, 3. Narayana Hrudalaya, 4. Manipal Hospital, 5. Mallaya Hospital, 6. Victoria Hospital and 7. Bowring Hospital.

I therefore request the hon. Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment, through you Sir, to consider my genuine request to include at least two Bangalore hospitals in the list and the patients should be given financial assistance from the Ambedkar Foundation. I hope my humble request would be considered favourably and all the SC/ST patients undergoing treatment in Bangalore will also be given financial assistance.

Thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Sir, what happened yesterday is the rearrest of the former Prime Minister of Nepal along with at least six other eminent political personalities. Instead of restoration of democracy there, as assured by Raja Gyanendra on the sidelines of Jakarta, as reported by the hon. Prime Minister of India, it seems that it is going in the reverse direction. We, in India, particularly this House, cannot be silent spectators to the developments. We had all along been demanding from our side that arms supply should not have been resumed. But, we were explained that on the sidelines of the Jakarta deliberations, Raja Gyanendra had given the assurance that he is moving towards that. But yesterday's happenings are ominous; signs are there. It seems the situation is worsening. I would urge upon the Government to apprise this House about the latest developments and the position taken by the Government as regards resumption of arms supply in the backdrop of what is happening and what has happened yesterday. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Radhakrishnan to associate. You have put two matters this week.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil): No, I have to add one more. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: By association, you can do so.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: It is because the military assistance was offered at the time when the Afro-Asian Conference was being held at Jakarta. Now, the question is the former Prime Minister of Nepal was arrested and ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You know that he has mentioned it.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: My question is this. The Government of India is supplying arms with a view to counter the Maoist insurgency, but that should not be dealt with according to military assistance. It has to be dealt with politically. So, until and unless. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you Shri Radhakrishnan. Shri Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy. Speak for one minute, please.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: So, until and unless the Government takes its own stand, it will go on like this. So, I would request the Government of India to see that normalcy is restored and democracy and elected Government is put in Nepal. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, very much. Only Shri Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy's statement would be recorded. Please be brief.

...(*Interruptions*)*

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY (Nalgonda): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the following matter. The Ministry of Finance (Economic Division) has called for tenders from private entrepreneurs for the supply of bi-metallic coins to make ten rupees coins. The last date for the tenders is 29th April. This is shocking and highly objectionable which may affect the security of the country.

Sir, there is a privatisation mania from some of the people of the NDA. Now, unfortunately, the present Government is also continuing it. Earlier, we have seen this. Even this morning, during the Question Hour we heard about the privatisation of airports and banks. Now, it is going to the mints. It may go even to the Security

* Not recorded.

[Shri Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy]

Press. We have four excellent mints in our country which are modernised. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Bikash Chowdhury may associate please. The matter has been mentioned.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: We have the capacity to mint the coins. I would request the Government to stop these private entrepreneurs entering into the field of minting, manufacturing the coins and our mints should be given the full opportunity. Our mints are starved of work. The Reserve Bank of India has said there is no demand for the coins in the press. Why are they being called now? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. Now, Shri Bikash Chowdhury. Just associate yourself.

[Translation]

SHRI BIKASH CHOWDHURY (Asansol): Mr. Speaker, Sir, today 6.5 lakh workers of the Coal India Limited are ready to launch agitation as the tenure of their first wage Board has lapsed in June, 2001 but no action has been taken to constitute next wage Board. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, please conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI BIKASH CHOWDHURY: I would like to submit that the Coal India always adopts the policy of delay and it is on account of this that there is utter discontent among the coal mine workers. The efforts are also being made to curtail the remaining few rights of the workers of the Coal India Limited. Workers are continuously observing strike. If such things happen then the Ministry of Coal will be responsible for this. So, I urge upon the Government to make agreement with their Wage Board otherwise they will resort to agitation.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet again at 2 P.M.

13.16 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for lunch till fourteen of the Clock.

14.08 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at eight minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will now take up item no. 11—Matters under Rule 377.

- (I) **Need for speedy and effective implementation of Ganga Action Plan and preventing pollution of river Ganga near Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**

[Translation]

DR. RAJESH MISHRA (Varanasi): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my parliamentary constituency Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh is a holy religious city. Its importance has increased on account of its location on the bank of Ganga. However, the Ganga water in Varanasi is most polluted. Ex Prime Minister late Shri Rajiv Gandhi had inaugurated Ganga Action Plan in Varanasi. As long as he was the Prime Minister the project was being implemented but after his relinquishing from the post of the Prime Minister, the Project is till now lying incomplete.

So, I urge upon the Government to ensure the speedy implementation of Ganga Action Plan so that Ganga Water may be made pollution free and the pilgrims visiting holy city Varanasi may get holy water of Ganga river.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri J.M. Aaron Rashid—Not Present.

- (II) **Need to install high-power TV transmitters in high altitude remote areas of Shimla Parliamentary Constituency, Himachal Pradesh**

DR. COL. (RETD.) DHANI RAM SHANDIL (Shimla): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw your attention towards the problems related to Doordarshan facility in remote area of my parliamentary constituency, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh. Sir, it is on account of the geographical and environmental condition that the life of

the common mass is very difficult, on the other hand diligent innocent farmers and fruit growers are deprived of Doordarshan Programme regarding the methods of modern agriculture. It is very unfortunate.

Sir, the reception of the programmes telecasted by Shimla Doordarshan Centre is not satisfactory. This problem can be solved only when the modernisation process is expedited and State of the art high power TV transmitter, disc antenna and TV tower is installed to strengthen the television network so that people in remote area may watch television programme. Through you, I would like to request the Central Government to install high-power transmitter and disc antenna in high attitude area of Shimla region like Khada Patthar, Bari Dhar of Solan and Churdhar of Sirmaur at the earliest.

- (iii) **Need to rehabilitate people who have constructed their houses in revenue estates of different villages under duly registered sale deeds in Chandigarh before demolition of their dwellings**

[English]

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh): Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, during the last many years, a good number of people belonging to lower middle class in Union Territory of Chandigarh have bought small pieces of land in revenue estates of different villages under duly registered sale deeds and raised their modest houses, spending their life long earnings thereon. These are not encroachments. After registering all such sales, the Administration is now contemplating to demolish all the constructions. Such an action will leave the poor, hapless persons homeless, much against the policy of the Government.

If the land is needed for any planned development, the best course is to frame a scheme for constructing quality houses for them before depriving them of their existing shelters.

I urge upon the Government to take up this work under its Urban Renewal Scheme so that the people do not suffer because of some lapse on the part of registering authorities in the past. No demolition should be undertaken till allotment of new houses/flats/plots.

- (iv) **Need to ensure effective implementation of welfare schemes for beedi workers in Tirunelveli and Thuthukudi districts of Tamil Nadu**

SHRI DHANUSKODI R. ATHITHAN (Tirunelveli): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in Tirunelveli and Thuthukudi districts

of Tamil nadu, lakhs of beedi workers are living below poverty line. Even though the Labour Ministry wishes to implement various beneficial schemes for the beedi workers, such as scholarship, free medical treatment, housing schemes etc., still there are lot of hurdles to implement these schemes. Earlier all school-going children got the scholarship regularly in time. But in 2003 and 2004, no scholarship was distributed to the students in the Southern District which affects the poor students. In 2004-2005 academic year also, scholarship was partially distributed. I am informed that the Ministry has allotted Rs. 7 crore against the total estimate of Rs. 11.5 crore. Since the beedi workers are living in a bad economic condition, I request the Labour Minister to sanction Rs. 4.5 crore for this academic year and Rs. 7 crore for the academic year 2003-2004 to enable the students to get the scholarship amount.

Present housing scheme for beedi workers has also got delayed in processing. So, I request that the District Monitoring and Vigilance Committee constituted by Rural Development Ministry, headed by a senior MP of that District, may be given power to sanction the houses and the Ministry can give the amount directly to the beneficiaries which will facilitate speedy implementation of the scheme. In some places, beedi workers are not getting the required land as specified in the scheme. So, I suggest that the Ministry may allow to construct the multi-storey building with all amenities like park, play ground, library etc. and also enhance the amount from Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 60,000.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Pankaj Chowdhary—absent.

Shri Kishan Singh Sangwan—absent

Shri Suresh Chandel—absent

Shri Kailash Meghwal—absent

Shri Raghuvir Singh Kaushal—absent

Shrii A.P. Abdullakutty—absent

Smt. P. Satheedevi.

- (v) **Need to forestall the move to abolish Calicut Unit of Directorate of Field Publicity in Kerala**

SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI (Badagara): Sir, it is learnt from reliable sources that there is a move to abolish the Calicut unit of the Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP), Government of India.

[Shrimati P. Satheedevi]

The DFP and its present activities are to be sustained while considering the backwardness of the district of Calicut, which remains far behind in literacy and health standards in the Kerala State. It is also important to note that the DFP, Calicut is the only such Centre situated in the tribal belt including Calicut and Wayanad districts, where education and health programmes are highly reckoning. The recent outburst of communal violence, and the consequent communal tension in the district also seeks much intervention from the DFP through intense and dynamic awareness generation programmes. The district also stands first in the number of reported AIDS cases, and the social stigma attached to the disease also remains to be tackled with DFP's support.

Considering the above facts, the reported move to abolish the Calicut unit of DFP is to be halted urgently, and it is requested that all needed measures to strengthen the unit may be taken, at the earliest, under the aegis of the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

(vi) Need to take over the Irrigation Research Institute at Haridwar, Uttaranchal by the Central Government

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDER KUMAR (Haridwar): World famous Irrigation Research Institute is located in my parliamentary constituency Haridwar, which is being operated by the Uttar Pradesh Government since 1954 (prior to reorganisation of Uttaranchal). However, efforts are being made by the Uttaranchal government to change the form of the institute and make it an autonomous body. Sir, nearly 500 employees of various categories working in the Irrigation Research Institute and the Field Research Station, Beharabad are continuously protesting against the proposal to make it an autonomous body. Their demand is justified in the public interest. The petition to include Haridwar district in Uttar Pradesh is under consideration of the Court.

So, I urge upon the Government that the form of the Institute should not be changed in any circumstances by way of making it an autonomous body, rather the Central Government should take over the said institute of national and international fame.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Rajesh Kumar Manjhi—absent

Shri Lalmani Prasad—absent

Shri Anandrao V. Adsul—absent

Shri Sugrib Singh—absent

Shri Shriniwas Patil—absent

Shri Ramdas Bandu Athawale—absent.

14.19 hrs.

FINANCE BILL, 2005

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, the House will take up item No. 12 of today's Revised List of Business.

The Business Advisory Committee, in their meeting held on 20 April 2005, decided that the Finance Bill, 2005 would be discussed on three days', that is, on 28 April 2005, 29 April 2005 and 2 May 2005. The total time available for discussion on the Finance Bill on these three days' would be 9 hours and 30 minutes. If the House agrees, we may allot eight hours for general discussion, one hour for clause-by-clause consideration, and half-an-hour for the Third reading of the Bill.

Now, I would request the hon. Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram, to move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to give effect to the financial proposals of the Central Government for the financial year 2005-2006, be taken into consideration."

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to give effect to the financial proposals of the Central Government for the financial year 2005-2006, be taken into consideration."

SHRI SANDEEP DIKSHIT (East Delhi): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise in support of the Finance Bill that was presented by the hon. Finance Minister. However, Sir, before I make any comments on the Finance Bill, I just would like to place before the House my extreme sadness at seeing the Opposition boycotting this extremely important debate. In a democracy, the Opposition has the full right to express its resentment at various things,

but the manner in which they are boycotting this extremely important discussion, at least, from the viewpoint of a very, very new entrant to this august House is a case of extreme sadness.

I now begin with my comments on the Bill. I would first like to congratulate the hon. Finance Minister for what I would consider as an excellent Budget, especially the provisions of taxes that he has proposed in the Budget. The Finance Bill especially is to be commended for the broad vision and the boldness which implies the kind of assessment that the Finance Minister has and the projection that it gives at the heavy raises in various taxes that they think they can collect in this year. It is truly a very, very bold vision that the Finance Minister has articulated in his Budget.

Now, I come to some of the major elements that are something that needs to be welcomed. The total tax revenue that is projected to be collected this year is about 21 per cent in increase to the previous year's, and the Finance Minister needs to be commended for that. They are estimating to collect about Rs. 3,70,000 crore as against Rs. 3,06,000 crore that was collected in the previous year. It is truly something that is bold and, I hope, with the efforts of the Finance Minister and the efforts of almost everyone, we will be able to reach this target. The other massive increase that the Finance Minister has proposed is in terms of transfer to States. It is almost an increase of 38 per cent—from about Rs. 1,83,000 crore in the previous year to Rs. 2,54,000 crore this year. This also includes some of the provisions of the Finance Commission. Apart from that, the massive increase goes to most of the States which are reeling under a financial crisis. Much of the problems that they are facing due to the last Pay Commission's recommendations would start getting sorted out with this kind of a massive financial assistance that the Central Government tends to give to the States. I congratulate the Finance Minister for that.

In terms of Directs Taxes, there has been almost a widespread welcome of the increase in slab rates that the Finance Minister has done. There was a long demand to increase the slab rates. I think, most Finance Ministers desisted from that. But I think, bowing to the pressures from the Members of Parliament and, perhaps, many of us who pay taxes, the Finance Minister decided to raise the slab rates and I welcome that. There is also a welcome move to do away with some of the other concessions that were given. Once you have raised the

slab rates, doing away with many of the concessions do not really mean much. I think, the Finance Minister's assessment that there will be an almost 30 per cent increase in income-tax collection this year would probably come from the fact that there is also simplification of some of the tax rules. There is an expanding tax base that he and his Ministry tend to focus on.

Coming to the widening of tax base, some of the new provisions make it more simple and easier for people to start paying taxes. Some of the provisions that have been mentioned, for example, the last tax-payer unit, help the small tax payer, which is commensurate with what is happening internationally. That is something that is really to be commended for.

There is one small change that the Finance Minister has made in the six basic things that the Finance Ministry used to attach to in terms of people who are to fill the income-tax returns. There, the Finance Minister has said that anybody who pays electricity bills in excess of Rs. 50,000 a month should also come into this tax net instead of those who have a cell phone. Perhaps, he should lower this to about Rs. 35,000 to Rs. 40,000; I think, Rs. 50,000 is a considerable amount. Anybody who pays about Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 4,500 on an average per month is somebody who probably would be earning anything in excess of Rs. 16,000 to Rs. 20,000 a month. If we compound the fact that many of us, perhaps, actually take in more electricity than what we pay for, perhaps, a decrease in this amount will be called for.

I know it is normally controversial to ask for such changes, but the Finance Minister could consider mine.

If you read some of the details in the Bill and in the papers presented by the Finance Minister, there is a very very interesting area which he has talked about and that is the change in treatment of savings from the EEE system to the EET system. This kind of rationalisation makes it much easier for people to invest in. It probably makes it much more efficient both for the economy and for the people investing. Probably, over time most people who depend largely on savings would gather a lot in this. The Finance Minister's proposal to change to the EET system is something that he needs to be congratulated about.

There are a few things in terms of slab rates for both retired and senior people and perhaps for those who have been physically challenged. Maybe an increase

in the slab rates from the present Rs. 1.5 lakh to about Rs. 2 lakh will be called for. These are people who do need certain sensitivities on behalf of the Government and all of us. May be an increase in this could be considered by the Finance Minister.

Coming to the corporate tax, it is a welcome move to rationalise it and to coincide it with the peak personal income tax rate. The Finance Minister has projected a massive 33 per cent increase in the collections of corporate tax. I think this kind of increase would start coming in with the kind of changes he has got into the depreciation regime. I think that has become more progressive. Also, with the attempts to start increasing the tax base, some of this could be achieved.

There is a part of the Finance Minister's proposals that is somewhat controversial, which is the Fringe Benefits Tax. I think the Finance Minister needs to be really congratulated on this extremely bold move. The corporate sector in India does talk about international practices in almost all things across the board. They must also realise that while in the international best practices most countries have tax contributions by the corporate sector quite near to what is estimated—around 30 per cent, they may be going just below by two or three per cent—in India we are about 10 per cent to 12 per cent below that. I think this is one of the Finance Minister's attempts to close the gap between what we have estimated as corporate tax and what really is paid. I think corporate India has contributed tremendously to the growth of this country. I think they must cooperate here in working with the Finance Minister.

There is one provision on which I would, through you, make a request to the Finance Minister. The Government and public sector units in some sectors are exempted from this FBT on the plea that how can you tax your own service and take money from one pocket to another. But, if you can have Fringe Benefits Tax within Government, it will just make the whole atmosphere a little more open. May be we will all come to know what are the kinds of fringe benefits people within the Government and in the public sector units get. It will just be a part of the overall philosophy of being more transparent and being more accountable to our people.

There is another part of the Finance Minister's proposals which has excited a lot of people and that is the Cash Withdrawal Tax. There is also some news that the hon. Finance Minister, on the recommendations and

the appeals by many many people, may even withdraw this tax. That may be so, he will let us know about it. But, Sir, it is commendable that after a long long time the Government and the Finance Minister have thought of doing something seriously about containing the black money. This may or may not be the best tool, it is for the people in the Finance Ministry to really think about. But the fact that the Government is committed to doing something about stopping the generation of black money is truly commendable. I personally do not think that the Cash Withdrawal Tax is an extremely bad idea. Perhaps raising the limit from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 35,000 or Rs. 40,000 would make it useful. If this is kept on, I will be happier. Otherwise, we are all awaiting the Finance Minister's new proposals to somehow ensure that the generation of black money gradually gets reduced in this country. There is also more compliance that is being built into the tax regime that is being proposed. The cut in depreciation allowances is a very very positive step.

The Finance Minister has also mentioned issues about sunset clauses in both the Special Export Zones as well as in the area exemptions that we give. I think this is critical. After certain periods of time, the kind of exemptions that are given when we try to promote industries in backward zones or the SEZs that are created, do need a sunset clauses. After a while, people do need to start paying to improve in overall tax collection in this nation. Also, I think there is already a move to stop the open-ended exemptions. I think that is a very very welcome move.

The Finance Minister has also given some very very substantial benefits to the small-scale industries sector; to the work on scientific research and development. I think along with this, something that has not really been done till now is, a lot more incentive could be given to industries and corporations investing in sports and education. A little more than what it is today would also be extremely welcome.

In terms of customs duties, the Finance Minister mentions that we are trying to reduce our customs duties to become compatible with our south-Asian neighbours.

In that sense, the maximum cap now is 15 to 20 per cent. In some cases, even less than this. There is a very welcome boost that has been given to the textile sector and to compensate and get some additional resources for the money that may be needed for the States while they shift to the VAT regime, there is a four

per cent additional tax on the IT items. I think, this is a very welcome step. This is an area which can take this amount of additionality. I do not think there will be any problem with anybody to comply with this.

In terms of excise duty, most of the excise duties by and large have been revenue neutral although there is a 21 per cent increase in excise duties, this will probably be because there is a tremendous growth in the manufacturing sector that has been seen and there will be better compliance.

The other thing that is welcome is the surcharge on *paan* and tobacco, which is going to go into the new health scheme that the Government proposes. So, through you, I would also request the Finance Minister to start using this kind of model so that we move into areas where the goods that are environmentally damaging and not just those goods which are health-damaging like tobacco, there may be surcharge which could go into specified schemes of projects for our environment. Here, the goods which are clearly known to be environmentally damaging could also be taxed further. On the one side, we are trying to decrease its consumption and on the other side, we are getting some good money to invest into our environment generation.

The work on the national highways where 50 paise increase in diesel and petroleum has been proposed which is again something which is extremely welcome. There is also a welcome step to bring as many people as possible into the CENVAT rate of 16 per cent.

Coming to the service tax, the Finance Minister in his previous Budget has increased the tax rate to 10 per cent and I think that has brought fair amount of revenue into the country. This time there has been an expected projection of about 24 per cent while bringing in new services. There was also an initiative by the Finance Minister to exclude almost all people who are below Rs. 4 lakh turnover. But there are a number of services that still we could bring into the tax net. My general impression has been that while there is some sort of unsurety or lack of clarity on what service taxes is really are about, there is a sense of acceptability amongst a lot of people who are in the service industry and who would probably join in the general movement to pay more and more taxes.

By and large if you come to some of the worries that perhaps may be there a little bit with regard to the

proposals, the only real worry I feel is the overall tax projection where we have projected a fairly heavy increase. But I know, increasing tax compliance and the kind of lowering of tax rate should lead to more and more people accepting the kind of tax rate that are today. With this, I am sure the Finance Minister will be able to achieve the very bold target and the kind of taxation that is very necessary to begin our commitments of the National Common Minimum Programme.

A few other things I would like to mention here before I end. One is the loans to States—the Centre's direct assistance which is being withdrawn. I am told that there is also a provision where the Government of India shall help the States to overcome this. But we must be careful and ensure that States do not go down or do not lose its critical resources that they otherwise get. They also worry that when the caps were released on the SLRs on banks, it may lead to some of the State Governments securities not being accepted by them especially those States, which own finances are weak. I think the Government of India must keep an eye on this and ensure that almost all the State Governments continue to get the benefits of the State Government's securities by public sector banks.

The securities transaction tax has been increased from 0.15 per cent, I think, to 0.20 per cent. May be, further increase in this could be contemplated. I am sure the Finance Minister is in touch with the people in this business. So, there is a little worry whether we could control inflow of hot money or not. There is something friends from the Left seem to be quite worried about. I hope the Finance Minister will take this suggestion into consideration and see that too much of hot money is not reduced. These, by and large, are my comments on the Finance Bill. I once again commend the Finance Minister for almost an excellent Budget and the kind of bold vision he has brought into the tax structure in this country.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (Barrackpore): Sir, in the course of discussion on the Budget and on the Finance Bill 2005-06, we must be alive to the concrete situation of the economy of our country. After achieving Independence and till date, this has been a developing economy ranking far below the developed ones. No figure work can ameliorate the impoverishment of the vast majority of the people and the toiling masses. Most of the milestones of our economic development have been installed by the Indian people through the Government and public investments out of the money generated and

[Shri Tarit Baran Topdar]

collected from the people in the form of indirect and some direct taxes along with some borrowings.

Modernisation was not done. Who is responsible for that? Are the people responsible for that? The successive Governments, the Planning Commissions and the high wings of the society are responsible. They did not modernise and have had any programme to do that. Why then blame the people and the workers that they do not have any work culture? Directly or indirectly, the people can never be blamed because the peasantry and the working class were very much obedient. They responded to all the calls given by the Government since the days of Pandit Nehru. They are very compliant. That was one of the most important things and that formed the most important plank on which our economy tried to develop on a self-reliant basis. That was one of the most important ingredients which we failed to understand and which we, at this point of time, forget that the working class and peasantry were all supporting the call of the nation. At this juncture of modern globalization, all the towers of our developing economy have to be compatible with the extrapolation of global scenario, on our country with a firm footing so that it does not become a satellite to or eclipsed by the great powers. The inept, incompetent and surrendering capitalist class is trying to grab the PSUs and the other public property doing little for the country on the one hand, and making a mess of their own organizations on the other. They did not modernise themselves. They were not cost effective. They were faltering behind. On top of that, the NDA has wrecked a havoc on our sovereignty and self-reliance. They all are propagating and perpetrating the theory of withdrawal of Government from different sectors. Despite that, there has been a little bit of growth in terms of international economic parameters which we must take into account on the one hand and the resultant increase in unemployment and mal-nutrition on the other. The core and strategic sectors and the public utility services are also sought to be done away with by the advocates of this theory of withdrawal of Government from different sectors.

To this end, I would like to mention a policy matter that the policy of the price preference to the PSUs has also been sought to be done away with. These business houses along with the foreign masters are the advocates of abrogation of the public distribution system and doing away with the subsidies to the poor and other poverty alleviation programmes. The UPA Government has to stand clear on these issues.

In the name of integration with the global economy, which is most definitely not a newly discovered phenomenon, rather a phenomenon intrinsic in all economies in the history, privatisation and reduction of import duties should not surface as volition of the Government. Every issue has to be judged on its own merit—social, political and practical consonant with the self-reliance of our country and also with the concrete situation prevailing among the people and the toiling masses.

Rationalisation of duties in order to integrate with the duty structure of the global economies. The tax net has to be widened so that the reduction of the duty amount is made good, and responsibilities are discharged by the Government through employment generation, productivity upgradation and assurance of food security, and protection of sovereignty and self-reliance of the country. That is the function of the Government, and that needs money. As for example, I can say that in order to collect that amount of fund, the kulaks should not get out of the tax net. A very strong step has to be taken; a determined step has to be taken; a revolutionary step has to be taken in order to bring the kulaks in the tax net. The corporation tax should have an upward revision. The corporate and big business houses must be tax compliant. They give sermons on it but they are seldom tax compliant. The Government has to show its colour and indicate its will and determination to adhere to the roadmap for all, attainment of the welfare-State concept, which was demolished by the NDA.

An appraisal of the concrete situation only suggest restructuring of the focus of the target of indirect taxation. As for the example, I would like to point out the taxation on petroleum and its products. Sir, the country has suffered from a fraud inflicted on the people in the name of oil pool deficit. Petroleum sector has been focussed as a source of ready collection of money in the form of tax, duties, cess and so on. The entire country paid cess for decades to make good the loss suffered during the Gulf War. This has been just like a goose laying golden eggs. The tax element here, has attained a critical limit and has drawn the Government into a tight corner.

In order to come out of this situation, the tax element on petroleum has to be thoroughly restructured in this manner. Sir, take the price of crude, for example, add import duty and excise duty which should be compatible with VAT and that will become the market price. If this can be done, I understand that for a long time to come,

the prices of petroleum products need not be hiked. In spite of these measures, if it is to be hiked, then there is nothing that could be done and it has to be hiked. This is the way.

The hon. Finance Minister has, on the whole, presented a sensible set of proposals in the Finance Bill. However, I am concerned about the inability to meet the deficit. If it is met, then, it is very much commendable and in that case, the Budget itself is very much commendable. But I express my concern about that. However, I am still saying that it is a matter of concern that tax revenues have already fallen short of projections. It is not a fact of life that if tax is less for the rich, the compliance is higher. It is not a fact. If you reduce the tax for the rich, their compliance level is more—this is not the fact of life. The advocates of this theory believe that the outcome of this will gradually increase and come to a culminating point; then it will take a huge 'U' turn. There will be compliance to a great extent, up to that limit; and then, it will just stop and take a 'U' turn. This is one of the theories advocated by the American Economist. So, this type of less tax for the rich and higher tax for the poor has to be viewed seriously with a definite mindset and a definite direction to the Budget proposals and further policies that are to come.

Therefore, blind adherence to the outdated, economic concepts like the one of Laffer Curve should be done away with. I hope that the Finance Minister's wishes of great tax inflows as a consequence of various tax reforms actually come about. I wish that there is an informed body of opinion that feels that the tax reforms proposed may actually increase compliance costs. If the Department wishes to attain it through more and more of smaller tax payers, the compliance cost becomes higher. International experience indicates that mere reliance on automation without organisation and incidental reforms particularly related to incentive structures of tax officials are not likely to succeed. I am sure our Finance Minister is aware of these concerns.

We have so far used tax measures to ensure greater equity. I earnestly request the Finance Minister to ensure that the equity is not unduly sacrificed at the altar of efficiency. If, after a number of benefits meant for the rich, tax revenues do not rise to the projected extent, the Government would have much to answer for. The Government will not be able to implement the programmes of the social and infrastructure sector and therefore, we should be prepared to come down heavily on the corporate sector and on the richer sections of the society.

I do support the fringe benefit tax proposed to be collected from the employers. However, care should be taken to ensure that this does not result in accumulation of large number of assesseees with small tax liabilities which on the other hand could end up with a very high level of compliance costs and move towards inspector raj, which we want to do away with or abrogate to a large extent.

I am not clear why Service Tax is sought to be imposed on the residential complexes. It is not clear. If it is cleared, I am ready to accept it. I hope the recent Government policy of hundred per cent FDI in the construction sector and in the retail marketing sector will be given up. This is not at all necessary, at least for the present moment. So, I would urge upon the Finance Minister to drop this idea at the moment.

We have supported the Education Cess. I would like to draw the attention of the Finance Minister and request him to give a clear picture as to whether the education cess fund has been constituted in its proper form. It will be a great injustice to the country if imposition of cess is not followed up with the creation and operation of the fund. This is the most important thing. The Education Cess Programme or the proposal is very-very welcome. This gives an indication of the intention of the Government to go back to the welfare concept of the State which has been destroyed by these people, who are absent today.

Abrogation of standard deduction for the salaried employees is not necessary. The Minister may have a re-look into that. It is very difficult to support it. The standard deduction has been done away with. It is only the propriety that demands such a provision for standard deduction. I would not go into the details. The salary structure has risen to an extent that the benefit which the hon. Minister has given by increasing the slab is not commensurate with the increase in the salary of the Government employees. If one compares with 1991 status, it is very much clear that much is not given to the salaried people. They are the most tax-compliant people. They, the middle class and salaried class, are the most honest taxpayers in the country. Therefore, they should be given due prestige and honour for being tax-compliant. I would urge upon the Finance Minister to have a re-look into the matter and provide for standard deduction to the salaried class in the coming days. I would like to conclude by giving another suggestion with regard to cash withdrawal tax.

[Shri Tarit Baran Topdar]

Much criticism has been made from all parties including the Right and the Left. The Rightists have criticised it the most. The Left and others have criticised it less. But they have also criticised it. The right side has criticised it the most. They are not at all ready to agree with this proposal. I wholeheartedly support this proposal. There is no common man or a middle class man or a high income group man who spends Rs. 10,000 per day in cash. I would like to know from the banks through a statement how many people do spend a cash of Rs. 10,000 per day. If there are a lot of people like that, then I am afraid there are a lot of people who are squandering or plundering black money. I may be criticised from many quarters. But in spite of that, I dare say that there should not be a slightest deviation in this. Let us try it for this year. The hon. Finance Minister need not make any changes in this.

Finally, I would like to say that the hon. Finance Minister should do away the damage done by the NDA regime in respect of philosophical level, conceptual level, practice and in making in-roads of bad elements into the administration. The trend of the fascist elements has to be rejected. In view of this, your role is very vital.

I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. I broadly support the Budget proposals made by the Finance Minister.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, today the Finance Bill 2005-2006 is being discussed in the House. Budget is a document which caters to our present needs and makes way for our bright future.

The budget of the year 2005-2006 amounted to Rs. 5,14,344 crore out of which the plan expenditure comprised Rs. 1,43,497 crore and non-plan expenditure amounted to Rs. 3,70,842 crore. During the discussion on Budget, I had made a humble request and again I would like to request the hon'ble Minister to curtail non-plan expenditure as the non-plan expenditure is almost two and a half times more than plan expenditure and the Government would fail to meet its objective if the non-plan expenditure is not curtailed. Therefore, I would urge upon the hon'ble Minister to inform the House at the end of his speech regarding the efforts being made by the Government to curtail the non-plan expenditure.

14.59 hrs.

[SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV *in the Chair*]

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the expected income of the Government through tax receipt and other sources would be around Rs. 3,70,025 crore which means that the external borrowings of the Government would be to the tune of Rs. 1,51,000 crore.

15.00 hrs.

The country is already reeling under the impact of internal and external debts. The Government would have to make a borrowing of such large amount from market and also pay its interest. This question needs to be pondered over. How will the Government mobilise money to meet its requirements and also increase their income.

The biggest problem of the country is that there has been a continuous increase in the prices of petroleum products in our country due to which neither agriculture nor the industry are progressing. It is true that the Government is forced to effect an increase in the prices of petroleum products following the increase of crude oil prices in the international market. However, the effect of such increase could be minimised in India. It is upto both, Prime Minister and the Finance Minister, renowned economists, to display their acumen and skills. Today the situation is such that instead of reducing the taxes hon'ble Finance Minister has increased taxes and duties on the petroleum products in the Budget. What I am saying is a different question but his Cabinet colleague Minister of Petroleum seems to be quiet disturbed with it. He has made repeated requests to the hon. Finance Minister to reduce the duties on the petroleum products so that rise in the prices of petroleum products could be checked in the country.

Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, in his speech hon'ble Finance Minister had said that a cess of 50 paise per litre would be levied for the construction of national highways. Recently hon'ble Prime Minister had said under a policy decision that from now onwards all the highways, roads would be constructed by private companies and BOT norms would be followed. Private companies would lay the roads, operate them, get their money back, earn profit and then after they would handover those roads to the Government of India. I would like to know the rationale behind levying a cess of 50 paise? When the Private Sector is being given the job of road laying, they are

getting toll tax from it, earn profit, earn their money and then handover the roads to the Government then I fail to understand the reason behind levying the cess by the Government. As I already said the Government increases the prices when there is an increase in crude oil prices in the international market. Ironically, both Government and oil companies are benefitting due to increase of crude oil prices in the international market. Primarily, ONGC is responsible for the production of oil. But this company has made no increase in the production during last three years. Besides that ONGC is earning a profit of 50 percent each year. What is the reason behind this? Did the Government ever try to explore the possibilities of increasing the production of crude oil through ONGC whose primary job is to produce oil crude in view of the fact that we are a large importer of crude oil. Did the Government explore the possibilities of developing alternative fuels in view of the fact that the entire countries of the world are searching for alternate fuels instead of entirely depending on petroleum products. China has said that within next two years, it will bring a three wheeler on roads that would be plying on Hydrogen.

ONGC should increase its production and search for an alternative fuel. We have never paid attention towards this. The Government keeps repeating the same thing that it is a compulsion for them to increase the prices of petroleum products since the prices of crude oil in international market have increased. Hon'ble Finance Minister needs to ponder over as to how can we become self-reliant and stand on our own.

Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, I have raised this basic question many times in the House that the condition of the country could not be improved without improving the condition of agriculture. Agriculture oriented budget and labour oriented Industry are two such steps through which the country can be saved. What have we done to improve the condition of Agriculture? In the year 1999-2000 National Agriculture Insurance Scheme was implemented by the then Government. There were a few drawbacks in that and a joint group was constituted to remove those drawbacks and its recommendations were sent to the Government. But the hon'ble Finance Minister implemented the old insurance scheme and no efforts were made to remove those anomalies.

I would like to submit that there is no need to comment on what the NDA achieved or what not during their tenure in power for it would be a negative thing to do. Our positive effort should be that we should perform

better than them so that the public could find a comparative difference between the working of this Government and the previous Government. Today this requires to be done.

The productivity can be increased in our country. The experts have said that we can increase the productivity from 100 percent to 300 percent in the Ganga basin region. We have a large network of research in agricultural sector but we are not utilising it to the optimum level. It is to be seen what kind of research is taking place and where. If research is taking place in the farmers name then it does not reach the farmers who live in far-flung areas. Then what is the purpose of these research? The benefits of the research should not remained confined to labs and reach to the people who are to be benefited by them.

I believe this requires more attention. The common people and farmers should receive the benefits of our new technology, experts views and their inventions.

The Government have started talking about agricultural diversification which implies that alternative crops like fruit, flowers, etc., should be grown in place of wheat and rice. I want to say that there has been a decrease in availability of grain per person in our country. Vegetable, fruits and flowers are being cultivated in place of rice and wheat. I can definitely say that this will bring a fall in the eatable items for a person. When the Government talks about alternate agriculture then it should know what are the priorities of our country?

Without serious thinking he said that the people should grow fruits and vegetables. What will be its consequences? Its far away results are not going to be good. The most important thing is that if we want to improve the condition of agriculture then we will have to strengthen our irrigation system. The irrigation system in our country is so poor that most of the irrigation projects from the first five year up to tenth five year plan since the times of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru are still lying pending. We have not been able to complete these projects. We talk about new projects without noticing how much we have completed the older ones. What is the current position. In the Irrigation sector the Government have announced a target to irrigate 1 crore hectare land in 4 years. This target is to be achieved in four years which means we will irrigate 55 lakh hectares of land per year.

[Shri Ramji Lal Suman]

[English]

Mr. Minister, do you understand Hindi or not?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): I am listening to the translation.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Sir, 136 million hectare land needs to be irrigated in our country. There is no proper co-ordination between our target and the area of land we have to irrigate. If the present pace is maintained then we need to consider in how many more coming years we will be able to irrigate the land. In July last year hon'ble Minister of Finance had talked about repair, renovation and re-establishment of different water sources in our country for *e.g.*, ponds, Bawdi etc. It has been stated in the budget for the year 2005-06 that the work on repairs, renovation and re-establishment of these water sources will be started in 16 districts of 9 states. The Government will repair around 700 ponds and Rs. 100 crore have been allocated for this purpose. Hon'ble State Finance Minister, approximately 2 lakh 90 thousand ponds have been rendered out of use in last ten years. Whether the Rs. 100 crore scheme of Government will be able to meet the requirement of water conservation? This is a very impractical step. This amount is too insignificant.

I would like to say that there is no shortage of water in this country. The biggest problem in this country is how to collect water? We have enough water to meet the requirements of our country but the problem is that we are not able to harvest water. An amount of Rs. 100 crore has been granted for the work that needs to be done on priority basis and a target of 700 ponds has been set whereas 2 lakh 90 thousand ponds have been rendered out of use in last ten years. Do not take such impractical decision. The Government should take practical decisions. The Government should spend money on priority basis on those projects which are connected to the welfare of common man.

The Government have set a target of irrigating 1.2 million hectare land by drip irrigation and the Government plans to extend it up to 3 million hectare in the 10th plan and 14 million in the 11th plan. There are only 2 years remaining in the 10th plan and within these two years 1.1 million hectare land would be irrigated through drip irrigation. The Government wants to bring 1.8 million

hectare land in two years and 11 million hectare land in the next 5 years under drip irrigation. Whether the Government would be able to accomplish this task? Do not say such thing which are difficult to digest. The Government should adopt practical approach and talk about those things that it can perform and which relate to truth. Therefore, the Government requires to re-consider this drip-irrigation once again. Besides, agriculture people can find employment through this. It is a kind of small scale industry. Instead of promoting small scale industries they are trying to change the character of this industry. Maximum number of people get employment in these small industries because they are based upon labour technique. The Government have increased the capital investment by clubbing the small scale industries with medium industries. The rise of capital would result into importance of capital in small industrial sector and thus the importance of labour would take a back seat. For the protection of small industries this time the Government have made a provision of Rs. 173 crore only, which is too meagre. I would like to tell the Government that there are approximately three lakh small scale industries which are registered. But there are many more which are not registered. What are the priorities of Government at the time of budget allocation? Unless the Government sets its priorities and identify the sectors to which priority is to be given, target groups to which it intends to extend benefits and make allocation of funds for the welfare thereof, there is a greater likelihood of committing mistakes and the chances of positive results also become bleak. Small scale industries are not getting the kind of protection and encouragement which they deserve.

Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, I would like to conclude with one or two more things. In the year 1989, it was decided under the National Education Policy that six per cent of our national income would be spent on education. Today the condition of education is very poor. The situation is so miserable that in primary schools five classes are being taken in a single room. If there are teachers then students are not there and if students are there then there are no teachers and if both are there then there are no rooms at all. There is no facility of toilets for girls. On the whole the condition of education in our country has worsened so much that people are getting allured towards private education sector. People are losing their faith in government education.

I may be pardoned for saying that education has been commercialised today. There is no criterion for evaluating the talent and capability of a poor child. Where

Rs. 40 to 60 lakhs are required for admission to an MBBS course it is not possible for a poor man to make his son a doctor or an engineer. Education has been commercialised. It is true that funds have been allocated for education this time. But it is not sufficient.

It is for the Government to ensure that the funds which flow down from the Centre to the States for various programmes are being utilised properly or not. We have said it many a time that only allocating funds is not sufficient. A mechanism should be developed to monitor the utilisation of funds. But it is not being done. Just see the condition of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Only 25 per cent of the funds which were floated from the Centre to the States have been utilised. Similarly, only 62 per cent funds have been spent in Bihar. But the Government of Uttar Pradesh has spent 98 per cent of the funds. So, it is necessary to develop a mechanism to monitor that the funds which are being floated for particular programmes are being utilised and spent properly.

I would like to submit that the sectors like agriculture, irrigation, small scale industry and those which are generally associated with the common man and where there are possibilities of generating employment should be strengthened and given protection. I firmly believe that this Government will try to contemplate in this direction. It is not proper to keep on blaming the erstwhile Government. Right now, our communist colleagues were commenting on what the previous Government did. But I hope that this Government will improve upon it. Earlier the NDA Government was in power.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you too were a Member in last Lok Sabha. 2 per cent cess was levied on education. But as per my information Rs. 5500 crore were collected. Where did this money go? Was the money collected in the name of education, spent to meet the budget deficit? It should be looked into. There could have been some improvement in the field of education if this money had been spent on education.

Lastly, I would like to request the Government to consider, taking initiatives in a positive direction for the welfare of the village, the poor and the deprived and I believe that it will do so.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would express my gratitude to you for providing me an opportunity to speak on the proposed Finance Bill, 2005. I rise to support the Bill.

Sir, the population of the country is rapidly increasing and perhaps it has crossed the one billion mark. But unemployment and poverty are increasing more rapidly than the increase in the population. I feel that if the Government does not pay attention towards checking poverty, unemployment and population the future of the country would be in dark. But we are extremely fortunate to have a Prime Minister and Finance Minister who are very learned and have deep knowledge of economic matters. The country has great expectations from these two learned men that they will provide stability to the country's economy. Poverty, unemployment and price hike would be checked and the labourer working in the fields will prosper. The UPA Government is completing its one year and the hon. Finance Minister and the hon. Prime Minister are making utmost efforts to work on the lines of the common Minimum Programme. But it seems that the desired results are not being achieved and the outcomes belie our expectations. I would like to request the hon. Finance Minister to contemplate upon the reasons as to why it is taking place and the reasons for increasing dearth and unemployment in the country's economy and what could be the policy to check this downward trend.

I feel that the hon. Finance Minister is capable enough to find a solution. Day by day the prices are rising. Ten years back the funds which were sufficient to fend for our family, but now even several times of it are insufficient to meet the family needs. More than, half of the country's population is living below poverty line. The condition of several states is critical. The economic condition of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and several other States is poor. If the economy of the country is to be streamlined then we will have to orient ourselves towards our farms and fields, farmers and labourers. The economy of the country depends upon the farms and fields. 75 per cent of the country's population depends upon the rural areas. Whatever we may do but until the farmers prosper the country's economy will not be streamlined. We will have to think about it honestly.

We have been elected to this House. We represent the people residing in villages. 57 years have passed since independence. We should think about it honestly. Mr. Chairman, Sir, you are a farmer and son of a farmer yourself. Have we ever thought properly about the farmers of our country? We have made investment on people working in the fields. Villages are the strong pillars of economy. We have made investment on villages. I would

[Shri Ramji Lal Suman]

like to thank the hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Finance Minister and the UPA Government that they have thought about the farmers in definite terms. Investment on these factors has increased several times in comparison to that during the erstwhile Government's regime, but it is still not sufficient. It is not going to work. How much investment did we make on irrigation, rural roads, rural electricity and the provision, drinking water in rural areas? It will be painful for you to know that production is declining. We say that India is a country of villages but the production is declining. Which is not a good sign. If the production declines it will affect the economy. I am talking on the basis of the economic survey prepared by the Government. Have we ever thought whether we are giving good support price to the farmers for the foodgrains we are procuring, whether the farmers are happy with it, and whether it is workable for them? Through procurement centres we are paying money to the farmers in exchange of foodgrains, be it procurement of wheat, rice or any other thing but farmers are incurring losses which is demoralising for him.

Recently it was discussed in this very House that farmers in several States have been compelled to commit suicide. They take loans but cannot repay it. They are taking loans from banks, from private money-lenders but are not in a position to pay even the principal amount, what to talk of the interest. Manure, seeds, diesel, kerosene oil everything is becoming costlier. Farmers use these things. Will we not be able to exercise control over their prices? The hon. Minister of Agriculture, during a discussion in regard to his Ministry, had stated that our farmer has become so capable that he can produce and feed other countries on his own. It all depends on labour. Our land is so fertile that if farmers get full support then they can feed the country alongwith many other countries with their yield, they are so capable. They can also do, business out of their yield. But it is not becoming plausible as they are paupers in their own country.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you may visit any farmer's house, he who toils everyday from morning till evening, is not able to provide one square meal to his children when he goes back home. It is a matter of great concern. If we do not pay attention to the farmers then it will not be possible to strengthen our economy. Only this way we can do away with unemployment, this is the only solution. Hon. Member Shri Ramji Lal Suman was talking of small scale industries. Small scale industries are gradually closing down, it is an era of computerisation, science is developing, it is quite welcome, but the sources of

employment are diminishing. There are no vacancies in several departments for the last so many years, vacancies are there but owing to shortage of means and funds these vacancies are not being filled. This is an era of computers, the work which used to be done by ten people is now handled by two people on computer. We will have to pay attention to it. Crime is soaring among unemployed youth. What is the reason? The reason is unemployment. Sir, the Finance Department has all the funds. Policies are formulated in various departments but remain restricted to files. Until the department releases funds, and accords its approval to proposals of other departments, nothing can be done. Thus, it depends on him. He needs to give it a consideration because he will have to handle it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw your attention towards Bihar. The economy of Bihar is in red. I have a figure, I know that there is no time to go in details, if you allow me. I will read it at length. It will be a surprise to know the details given by an economist in his book regarding the Central assistance given to Bihar and other States for the last four years and at present. What is the per capita income of Bihar and of other states? How much investment is being made on Bihar? It is the lowest on Bihar, everything is written in the book. At present my opposition colleagues are not sitting here.

The division of Bihar is owed to NDA and Jharkhand was created. It has ruined our economy. Mines and minerals were our sources of income, all those areas are now part of Jharkhand. Bihar has only the Ganga, Sand and drought. Bihar is always affected by two kinds of calamities. Mr. Chairman Sir, you belong to that area. As per the existing formula of the Union Government, Bihar will not get funds. The Central Government sanctions funds on the basis of internal resources. Bihar does not have such internal resources. That is why special provisions should be made for Bihar. As per the Gadgil formula this D.P. has been made and we do not have anything else except poverty, penury, destitution and unemployment. From the first Five Year Plan till today Bihar has always been cheated. According to the guidelines of Reserve Bank of India 35 to 40 per cent of the total amount deposited in the banks of a State would be spent in that particular State itself. But in my State this ratio is only 20%. Is justice being done to Bihar? Therefore, I request the hon'ble Finance Minister to look at Bihar. Our State requires special consideration.

Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, the Centre has waived off the loan and interest amount of other States. Whereas

the condition of Bihar is so bad that it is not able to return the loan. The amount of loan against Bihar is constantly increasing. Whatever money we have, goes in paying the interest. I would request the Government to waive off our loan also. When Shri Gujralji was the Prime Minister of the country he had waived off the entire loan and interest of Punjab State. We have no objection to that but we too want to move ahead with the country. Therefore, it is necessary that special attention should be given to us. We do not understand for how many more years we will be exploited further and for how long we will not be provided with an opportunity to improve our condition? At the time of joint Bihar all the rights regarding mining were vested with Union Government and Bihar could not do anything without their permission. Bihar is being discriminated since the independence of the country which is why Bihar has remained backward.

Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, the region to which you belong receives water from rivers originating from Nepal. The entire infrastructure of Bihar namely roads, bridges, culverts, houses etc. gets destroyed by it. There is a grave problem of water logging in Bihar. How will we survive without any kind of treaty with Nepal? Our State needs to be given a special package. The Union Government has a policy to give special package to the backward States. It is true that Rs. 300 crore has been given to Bihar under the Uniform Development Scheme (Sam Vikas Yojna) but this is not sufficient. This is not a package. The previous NDA Government had distributed the money. It was not a package. We want the Government to protect us from floods then we would not ask for funds from the Government.

The Government should sign a treaty with Nepal to stop the water coming into rivers and find a permanent solution for this. I would like to say this on record that we will not seek any assistance from the Government if they make arrangements for water logging caused by Nepal rivers in North Bihar. We, the people of Bihar have the efficiency that we can cultivate crops on our land and become self-sufficient. We do not have any industries and also do not foresee any scope for them. If we have anything it is farming and labour. ...(*Interruptions*) and heart too. With that heart we shower love on people like you and others. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: No cross-talk please.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir, through you, I would like to humbly request hon'ble Finance Minister to pay special attention towards this. We have been requesting but our request has not been accepted. We are your strong partners and colleagues. The people of Bihar have sent us here to cooperate with you, to run a secular Government in the country and for the progress of the poor. We are also poor, why are you not paying any attention to us? Some attention should be paid to this. If you are not able to help us due to any rules then please make some relaxations in those rules. I would like to tell how much injustice is being done to the farmers. Double standards are adopted while providing loans to us. Interest rate on the loan provided to farmers is 12-14 per cent whereas the loan provided to the rich people for purchasing Car, House and other luxurious items on the interest rate of 6-7 per cent. If the farmer, who is foodgrain provider to us is not survived then we would die of starvation and the economy of the country would collapse. Will you not change the rules for them? Do you not have any sympathy for the farmers? I believe that hon'ble Finance Minister is also a good farmer.

[*English*]

You are also a good farmer, I think. Am I correct or not? ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM: Yes. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: I am correct. Okay.

[*Translation*]

Therefore, I think that you would definitely consider this. I can not say about hon'ble Finance Minister but I believe that he has a soft corner for farmers, which is why, he would find some solution for this. He is so generous.

Just now, Shri Gurudas Dasguptaji was saying that many big industrialists and rich people of the country have taken millions of rupees as loan from banks and not repayed that loan but nobody bothers whereas if a farmer takes a loan of Rs. 10,000 and is not able to repay it his property and cattle is attached and he is arrested. What kind of justice is this? Whether the poor people of this country are not its citizens? Whether poor people can not live in this country? This kind of injustice will not be tolerated for long.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How much time you will take? Your time is running out.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: I am sure that I am the first person to speak from my party. There is nobody sitting on that side.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time of your party is over.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: I would like to urge upon you that you are very kind hearted, a good farmer and leader of farmers. Please give me some more time. *...(Interruptions)* They have already been defeated and next time they will lose their identity completely. Due to them agitation was taking place in the country and here in the House also. Now there is peace. Sir, I was requesting that you should pay attention towards the farmers and take some strong action in this regard.

Sir, small industries should be encouraged. How will the Government remove the unemployment by closing the industries? The Government should make provisions in the budget to increase funds. What was the dream of Gandhiji? All of us are the followers of Gandhiji's policies. ** We are followers of Gandhiji. He had said that if we want our country to progress then unemployment, poverty should be removed and the small-scale industries need to be encouraged. Today all the small-scale industries have closed down. Big industries are flourishing. Today it is a world of computer. Earlier labourers used to get work but now their retrenchment has been started. All the industries, fertilizer manufacturing units that were there in Jharkhand which was earlier a part of Bihar State, have now been closed down.

Why hon. Minister is not taking steps for their revival. Employees are being rendered jobless. As farmers have no means to earn livelihood so they are committing suicide. The Government should frame some policy. I feel the UPA Government is considering it. The Government which has been ousted was selling profit earning PSUs. It had adversely affected labourers. Profit making hotels have been sold off.

SHRI ILYAS AZMI (Shahabad): They sold out everything.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No talks please.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: I am thankful to Shri Azmi as he amended my words. The UPA Government, as per its new policy, is not going to sell PSUs. The

Government should promote small scale industries as it provides jobs to a very large number of people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude your speech.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Sir, he has just started.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir, I would conclude if you are telling me to do so. I cannot disobey your order. I was telling that we will have to improve condition of villages. Shri Ramji Lal Suman has rightly said that the Government will have to improve the condition of villages. Some of villages schools do not have buildings. Children have to study under trees. In which age we are living? We can do nothing without studies and how we would develop ourselves without education? One has to face various national and international level competition. There is no dearth of intelligent people in India. Our people have been leading others. One can find more intelligent people in rural areas than in posh colonies. The Government should provide funds for construction of school buildings. Though the Education for All Programme is in vogue yet there is a shortage of teachers. Thus Government has not been able to implement it effectively.

Even today, the roads in Bihar are not traffic worthy. Work has not been started under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna. Funds under this head should be increased. The country cannot become prosperous until and unless the villages attain prosperity. We cannot alleviate unemployment and poverty unless we promote small scale industries. I fell hon. Minister would surely pay attention to it. I am sure he would give special attention to Bihar and provide it a special package to bail it out from poor economic condition. 8-9 crore population of Bihar, who are economically quite poor, are hopeful that the present Government would do something in their interest. They are hopeful of hon. Finance Minister and hon. Prime Minister. The Government would provide them justice, land and soft-loan so that they can progress further and the Govt. would lower the prices of diesel, petrol, fertilizers and seeds.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, adding one more point, I would conclude my speech. In the absence of public toilets in rural areas women face a lot of problems. The Ministry of Rural Development has formulated a scheme for construction of toilets in rural areas in the country. And under the said scheme the Government provides assistance of Rs. 507 per toilet. It is quite inadequate. My submission is that it should be enhanced.

..... Expunged as ordered by the chair.

Sir, the Government promised constructing dwelling units in rural areas under Indira Gandhi Awaas Yojna. I would like to point out that in a State like Bihar hardly 10 houses are constructed in a panchayat whereas the number of needy poor people in one panchayat is in hundreds and thousands. In this way how many poor people will be provided dwelling units? The Government should pay attention to it also and ensure that more units are constructed under this scheme so that the dream of providing houses to the poor can be fulfilled.

The Government promised health, education and basic infrastructure but did not make provision for adequate funds for them. Unless these facilities are provided to the poor people the Common Minimum Programme can not be implemented in true spirit, and if it fails to implement the common minimum programme, people won't get justice. Therefore, my submission is that the promises made to the poor people through common minimum programme should be fulfilled at the earliest.

In the end, I would like to say that the Government should act upon the suggestions made by hon. Members, including me. I am thankful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak. Also, I am thankful to hon. Members who listened to me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have not stated whether you support the Budget or oppose it.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir, I had supported the Budget in the very beginning of my speech. Now, I reiterate that I support the Budget. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: Sir, why the Chair is soliciting support?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Chair can not give any order in this regard. The Member is fully independent to support it or oppose it.

[*English*]

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL (Vijayawada): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to participate in this debate.

Since ages, from the time the human being has come into existence, from Stone Age to this modern age, we have been moving on the path of development. The only difference is in the pace of development or in the pace of change. This UPA Government, which is pro-poor,

downtrodden and weaker sections, is not only acting with a human face, but also with a human heart. That is the reason why we are trying to work out various methods or various means on how to raise resources to improve the basic things. In this connection, our Finance Minister rightly referred to what Saint Tiruvalluvar said:

*"Pini Inmai Selvam Vilaivu Inbam Emam
Ani Enba Nattirkku Iv lyndhu"*

He explained its meaning, which is, "Health, wealth, produce, the happiness that is the result, and security, these five, the learned say, are the ornaments of a polity" These are the most essential things for a human being for a better living. In order to achieve all these things, we need resources. Finance is only a tool or medium through which we measure the relative value of our effort and the result. It is through this that we try to increase the pace of reforms, give incentives to people to make more efforts and try to be result-oriented in a very competitive world.

If you look at the resources, we have both Direct Taxes and Indirect Taxes. Over a period of time, the revenue from both these taxes is going up. Earlier, Indirect Taxes were substantially higher than the Direct Taxes. Now, if you look at the Budget, Direct Taxes as well as Indirect Taxes are more or less generating equal revenue. The reason is that we are trying to bring about a check economy where people are more forthcoming to pay taxes. We are trying to bring about reforms in the tax structure. We are trying to reduce the tax rates which are at their peak to ensure that people comply with their tax obligations in respect of Direct Taxes as well as Indirect Taxes. That is the reason why, today, in the Budget, they have proposed to collect more than Rs. 3,70,000 crore both from Direct Taxes as well as Indirect Taxes.

That is substantially, 30 per cent, higher than what we have got in the previous year. In the last few months, we have brought in the tax reforms. We have brought down the corporate tax from 35 per cent to 30 per cent. We have simplified the tax structure for individuals and raised limits of exemptions for individual taxpayers. In spite of these concessions, there has been a remarkable increase in the last few months in tax revenues when compared to the corresponding period last year.

At the time, when it comes to customs and excise duties, we have reduced the peak rates of customs from 20 per cent to 15 per cent. We have reduced excise

[Shri L. Rajagopal]

duty rates from 20 per cent to 8 per cent, 5 percent and 10 per cent in various sectors—be it textiles, be it steel, materials, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, IT and telecom equipment, drinking water equipment or anything. We have kept reducing the rates. This budget has substantially reduced all the taxes, both customs duty and excise duty, and also raised the limits of exemptions on income tax both for corporate sector and also for individuals.

In spite of all these reforms, in spite of these concessions, there has been a substantial increase in the revenues, to the extent of more than 30 per cent. That is an increase of almost Rs. 60,000 crore. However, all these resources are not enough to meet all the requirements like providing drinking water to each and every family in each and every village of the country; providing employment to each and every educated youth; providing irrigation facilities to each and every inch of land available in the country; trying to educate every single child; and also trying to provide health facilities for each and every family in the country. These are the five basic needs of the human kind. This Government is trying to make sure to create the best of the facilities, trying to improve the living standards and living conditions of not only people living in the urban areas but also people living in villages.

Hon. Finance Minister has said that India is not poor but a substantial number of Indians are poor. The reason for that is, there are a lot of disparities between the rich and the poor in the country. There are a lot of disparities between the urban and rural areas. We need to bridge these gaps. We need to try and pool up our resources so that we can effectively use them for the betterment of people and also to create the best of the facilities in this country. In order to do that, we have to see as to how we can increase our resources, how we can reform our administration so that there are no leakages in it. We also have to try and see how this could be implemented and reached to the most needy people of the society.

As regards tax reform, there is a need and there is also a potential to increase our revenue substantially. A sum of Rs. 3,70,000 crore is not a big amount. The potential is much more, three times to four times more. It is not that there is no money in the country. The only thing is that we have to see that people comply with the tax system.

In fact, if you look at the situation today, even tax evasion costs 15 per cent. That means, people have a

tendency to evade any rate above 15 per cent. That is the reason why we have brought the rates down from 90 per cent to 30 per cent. I am sure in the coming days, if the revenues go up, our Finance Minister will try and further reduce the tax slabs, and also increase the exemption limits. That is because any exemption that has been given goes back into the system for purchasing equipment and households goods. In turn, indirect tax revenues increase in the form of excise duty and customs duty.

I would like to suggest a few very specific points to the Finance Minister. Today agriculture is exempted from income tax. But we need to understand that there is corporate agriculture that is going on in the country. There are many corporate houses which own land and show substantial amount of income as agricultural income. There is nothing wrong in taxing them at a rate of five per cent to ten per cent. Because the cost of evasion is 15 per cent, people tend to pay tax at a rate below 15 per cent. I estimated as to how much is the revenue that we can get if we tax the agricultural income at five to ten per cent. I am sure we will get an amount not less than Rs. 10,000 crore for the state exchequer.

16.00 hrs.

In the same way, look at IT where today the tax is 3.5 per cent. What we are trying to do is, on the income, we are removing 90 cent and on the balance 10 percent, we are imposing a tax of 35 per cent, including the surcharge. I think that should be increased to 10 per cent because as I said anything below 15 per cent, there is a tendency or requirement to fulfil because tax evasion cost not less than 15 per cent. By doing that, we can get an additional revenue of at least Rs. 10,000 crore. I am not saying that we have to overburden them.

As a businessman, as an industrialist, I am telling you that none of the businessmen looks at the tax concessions when they start their business. It is only after he gets the profit, he looks at the income-tax, tax concessions and other tax benefits. It is not the incentive to start a business. Income-tax benefits or excise benefit or tax benefits are not an incentive for anybody to start a business. I never looked at any tax concessions when I started my business 20 years back.

At the same time, we also have to look at the vacant lands available in urban areas. There are many people who have got resources to build houses but they do not

have the land because the cost of land is 10 times to the actual cost of the building. In fact, development means consumption of steel and cement. Look at China. They consume more than 380 million tonnes of steel whereas India consumes only 30 million tonnes. What it comes to cement, China consume more than 1000 million or more than a billion tonnes of cement whereas in India we are consuming only 120 million tonnes of cement. That means, we have to see how to stimulate growth, how to stimulate the activity in the fields of construction, housing and infrastructure. We have to work out various methods as to how to bring in investment in all these sectors.

One of the proposal I would like to make is this. Why can we not look at or try to impose the wealth tax on property? It is only one per cent. There is a tendency to undervalue the property. I am talking about vacant land. I am not talking about building where already substantial development has taken place. I am talking of vacant lands. If you look at, actually assessing the values of land and impose 10 per cent of wealth tax on all the vacant land in and around the urban areas and semi-urban areas, I am sure, we will get thousands of crores of revenue. In order to see that everybody complies, then income-tax officials should go out and say that if you do not agree to the value decided by the authorities, then, we will auction the property. That way, land will be available to everyone who can construct.

Another important thing today is a lot of people think that real estate growth or the value of real estate is development. I do not agree with that because real estate value is not productive. Real development has to take place in the vacant land so that cement and steel consumption increases and the Government gets a lot of indirect taxes by way of customs duty, excise duty and income-tax from industrialists so that this money can be used for providing drinking water, health, education, etc.

At the same time, this Budget has been silent about disinvestment. I am not saying that you sell off these units to individuals. I am not saying that you sell off to Tatas or Reliance or any other top group of companies in India. Why can we not disinvest to common public where we can say that nobody can have or hold more than 1,000 shares or 500 shares. I think, my friend here would appreciate this because today economy of finance does not mean Left or Right. Economy of finance means forward versus backward; growth versus retardation. It is between past and future. It is no more Left or Right. All of us have to see that in terms of profit and loss, negative

and positive. We need to ensure as to how we can effectively have more resources. The reason I am saying is over a period of time, it becomes a drain on the Exchequer by running most of the public sector companies because there is lack of decision-making, inefficiency, complacency, lack of competitiveness, lack of accountability and lack of transparency. Slowly most of the public sector companies are becoming sick. So, what I am saying is the reason is not that lack of administration or good people, the reason is Government interference, Government holding and decision-making process which takes so much time. For example, in the Indian Airlines, if they have to purchase best of planes, it takes such a long time and in between there would be CBI inquiry and all sorts of inquiries. At the end, they cannot compete with the private airlines because either it should have a size or the speed. In fact, I am sorry to say that public sector companies are losing the size and they can never come up to the speed with which the private sector is functioning. The reason is that public sector is not efficient. I am not saying that employees are not efficient. The reason is that the Government holding and the bureaucratic control over which these companies function are under pressure to perform.

Why can't we disinvest in such a way that the holding is spread out and goes to the real public? Public sector does not mean Government, public sector means that the holding should lie with the public. There is no need for an intermediate medium for Government through which the holding can be controlled. Why can the public or the small investors not invest in the units like ONGC, IOC, HPCL, BSNL or so? It could be the whole lot of public sector companies. This way, the public will directly control these companies and the decision making will happen. The heads of the company are retained as long as they have faith of the people or of the shareholders. The moment he does not perform, he is removed. We have to be very clear about it when it comes to compliance. If we can do all these things, we can get huge resources and the money can go to the real needy sector.

The Government has imposed two percent cess on education. The Budget allocation for education was Rs. 2000 crore in 2003 and this year the UPA Government has increased it to Rs. 7,150 crore. It is a remarkable increase of about Rs. 5,000 crore. The entire money that has been obtained out of the education cess has been allocated throughout the country. I can tell you that now crores of rupees are available in each district for the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* where they are building

[Shri L. Rajagopal]

best of the infrastructure, best of the facilities and also recruiting teachers. The money is available and money is being put to the better use.

As Shri Chidambaram has said, it is not only the outlays but outcome that matters. Our Prime Minister has also said that it is not only the promise but the governance that matters. That is why, we are looking at it. We are looking at the governance and trying to see that the allocation goes to the real and the needy people. With these words, I say that we should ensure to bring more people into the tax net, try to increase the revenue and allot this to the needy people and needy regions.

[Translation]

SHRI ILYAS AZMI (Shahabad): Mr. Chairman, Sir. Since Bahujan Samaj Party supports the present UPA Government, it is obvious that we will speak in favour of budget and will not oppose it. But I feel necessary to say few things with regret. Last year also budget was passed without any discussion. Does it behove UPA Government to get the budget of all Departments passed without any discussion? I accept that last year it was due to compulsion as discussion could not be held due to uproar in the House till last minute, therefore budget was passed without any discussion. Had there been any compulsion like previous year, I would have accepted that it was necessary to pass the budget. If some people, who create disturbance outside also, had adopted the same attitude inside the House then it would have been a compulsion but this year there was no such compulsion. Yesterday, the manner in which budget pertaining to all the Departments was passed without any discussion, was not fair.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I don't want to say even a single word regarding figures of the budget. Prior to me many members have already spoken over this and many will speak after me also. The entire budget and all schemes are jugglery of figures. Even the meetings of District Planning Committee have become jugglery of figures. From the announcements, which the Government have made including those made in the President Address it seems that number of commissions would be constituted. Though, there are several existing commissions and several others in the process of being constituted. I request the Finance Minister that when a number of commissions are going to be constituted, constitute one commission to look into the fact as to whether or not the funds allocated for the schemes are spent for the purpose

for which these funds are released. If investigation is done properly, then we the Lok Sabha members, whom the people elect with great expectations by giving their vote, would be compelled to tell the people that we are powerless and bound by political compulsions. We are helpless witnesses of exploitation of public and that too through us*.....*Only 10-20% is being spent in the name of development and the rest of the funds are embezzled.

16.11 hrs.

[SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN *in the Chair*]

I request you to constitute one commission which should look into it. Whether the duty of the Government is merely to impose VAT increase oil prices and impose service tax arbitrarily and transfer some share from it to the State Governments and districts "...* so that they can loot the entire money. Whether we are left with this duty only? Whether besides this, we don't have any other duty? Whether the Government have accepted that the schemes which it formulates are verse of the Quran in which changes cannot be made or a "Shloka" of Geeta, which was written thousands of years ago and how to make changes in it.

Just now, the person who was in the Chair, had served as Food Minister at that time and the same Chidambaram Sahebji was Finance Minister of this country. He formulated a very good scheme after considering all aspects for the poor of villages, who were unable to purchase foodgrains. They were to get foodgrains at concessional rates. The scheme, which was formulated at that time, involved 8000 crore rupees. It was opposed within the united front and from outside too. I remember the Food Minister, Shri Devendra Prasad Yadavji called me and asked me not to go anywhere till the scheme was passed as he would need my support. I was also very happy because this scheme was to provide foodgrains to poor people at concessional rate and no one would die of starvation though it will put burden of Rs. 8000 crore on the Government. In 1997, I had also strongly supported this scheme in this House. But after few days itself rather within 2-3 years, I had realized that this scheme is formulated only for "...*. It is not formulated for poor people or when it was formulated the intention was good but afterwards the intention changed. But how every Government whether it is the previous one or the present Government, have accepted

*....*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

that the scheme is like verse of Quran, which was written 1400 years ago, and it could not be changed and that it has no right to make changes in it.

Sir, I can say with firm determination that out of the amount of Rs. 26,000 crore, which the Government releases for Antyodaya Scheme and BPL an amount of only thousand or two thousand crore actually reaches the poor. The Government can constitute any commission, however, I can say with firm determination that not more than Rs. two thousand crore actually reach the poor. If not Rs. 25,000 crore then atleast an amount of Rs. 24000 crore out of a total of Rs. 26000 crore is usurped in between the long chain of Food Department of State Government, FCI of Union Government to DRDA, blocks and contractors. Therefore, the Government should discontinue this scheme and evolve a scheme to see that this amount of Rs. 26,000 crore directly reaches the poor people and not to any officer, middlemen, any leader or some other person. When the new crop comes, the officers of Food Department of State and Central Government formulate such policy whereby the foodgrains become cheaper and then the people in connivance with the officers procure foodgrains from the market at the prevailing rate. FCI is an undertaking of Central Government. When FCI procures foodgrain then its higher officials and IAS officers in connivance with persons engaged in pilferage and corrupt officials formulate such policies in every State that during wheat and paddy season, the prices of wheat and paddy fall below procurement price. This year the procurement rate of wheat fixed by the Government is Rs. 646 per quintal. But when farmer goes to the market to sell wheat, then the middleman procure same wheat for Rs. 500 or 540 per quintal. Since I raised this issue in the Parliament several times therefore the Government have become a bit alert. Its result is that now they are procuring wheat at the rate of Rs. 600 per quintal from the farmers. They sell the same wheat to FCI at the rate fixed by the Government. We have seen that the same wheat goes to FCI by trucks. When a farmer brings his wheat to the market in bullock-cart or tractor-trolley, it takes 4-5 days to sell that wheat due to which he has to suffer huge loss. During last five years, the farmers have accepted that their wheat will not be procured. Therefore they are compelled to sell their wheat to middlemen. A Commission should be constituted to see as to how the poor people are being looted and loot is going on in the market. The Government have constituted thousands of commissions, I request that one more commission should be constituted for this purpose. Here we pass the budget after imposing

tax on poor people. A Commissions should also be constituted to see how the loot is going on.

The Government launched National Literacy Mission but even after spending millions and millions of rupees on this scheme, not even a single aged person has been made literate. During 11th Lok Sabha I challenged, while giving speech that an amount of three crore rupees have not been given to Hardoi for this scheme. The inquiry may be held by CBI or IB in this regard and I will resign from the Membership of Lok Sabha if the inquiry reveals that even three persons have become literate under the scheme. The inquiry was held in this regard.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: I have not taken much time while Members who have spoken prior to me have taken upto one hour time. I am the only Member of my party to speak. When the inquiry was held in this matter, the collector of that district was suspended and it was proved that all Rs. 3 crore was embezzled. I would like to inform as to how the funds were embezzled. Posters were used for the publicity of the scheme. Rs. 12-14 was changed for the posters which are printed for merely Rs. 3. Similarly 50 posters were printed and it was told that 50,000 posters were printed. Even today the fund that is given to the district under the National literacy mission is not making even one person literate. Have the Government admitted that the mistakes which have been committed in the past will not be corrected? The Government should discontinue this scheme as the funds are being embezzled.

The Government have no funds for the works which are essential Funds are available for the National Literacy Mission. Funds are available in BPL scheme just for the sake of their. The entire funds for small schemes of rural development are being embezzled and there is no lack of funds for them and such schemes are being implemented. However, it seems that the Government have decided that it will not spend any fund for secondary and higher education. Yesterday, discussion was to be held on education department but it could not be done. If the discussions has been held, I would have submitted in detail that the funds are not being spent on secondary and higher education. The Government is spending funds

[Shri Ilyas Azmi]

only on basic education. It is the constitutional obligation of the Government to spend 10 percent amount of the Budget on education. There are many such useless scheme in which the allocated funds are embezzled by right from CDO to secretary and subordinate employees of the State Government headquarters. Some dishonest politicians are also involved in that loot. The inquiry should be held to identify such scheme and it should be withdrawn.

Secondary and higher education have been left to the mercy of fate. Dual education policy was formulated during the regime of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi and today it has achieved to pinnacle and is being implemented with gusto. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time allotted to you is over. Please conclude.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have taken very few time. Prior to this hon'ble Members have spoken for one hour. I would like to the Government that a commission should be set up and if the commission report confirms that more than 50 percent amount of the allocated funds are embezzled, then such schemes should be withdrawn and Government should ponder over some new scheme for the benefit of the common people. It is not essential for the present. Government to continue the scheme launched by the previous Government if the funds allocated for the scheme are being embezzled.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to submit to the hon'ble Minister of Finance that the Government are imposing taxes to burden the common people and exploit them. I am very sorry to note that if Government collect taxes those underprivileged people who have no food to eat, no cloths to wear and no money for treatment and spend the money collected so on the schemes where allocated funds are being embezzled by the government officials right from the headquarters to the field units of DRDA, then it is very unfortunate and it is painful for me. The hard earned money of the poor is being wasted. I am unfortunate in this regard that the person occupying Chair just before you allowed long speeches. Today there are also not many speakers, however, when my turn came you started ringing the bell after seven-eight minutes.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I may remind the hon. Member that if any unparliamentary words have been used, they will be expunged from the record.

[Translation]

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, calling thief a thief is not unparliamentary and I have not mentioned any one. The Budget for HRD was passed yesterday. Dual education policy is the legacy of the Congress Party and not ours. They had also allowed to run degree colleges under the self financing scheme. That is being done under compulsion. The Government degree college do not have the capacity to accommodate all the students. It has been recognised by the Government, however, the UGC which is a department under the Central Government has formulated some impractical rule in certain cases which are difficult to implement. I would like to cite only one example. Those who do B.Ed. courses and have B.Ed. degree teach Primary level or maximum upto intermediate level as they cannot teach beyond that. However UGC has made a norm that those who will teach B.Ed. courses must have cleared NET or done Ph.D. and M.Ed. So I would like to submit that it is very difficult to find even hundred persons who have done Ph.D. have qualified NET and have done M.Ed. altogether.

The result is that the colleges which have recognition to offer B.Ed. courses do not find qualified teachers as per the UGC norms. However as per a section of the norms the institution can employ retired teacher in case qualified teachers are not available. Such colleges are being run by the retired teachers. I feel that the norms of UGC are impracticable. There are several other things like this. I had to speak on higher education yesterday and I had also made preparation for that. However, yesterday the Demand-for-Grants of the various ministries were passed. I thought that I should cite one example today. The Government should not make such norms which are not feasible. When impractical schemes are formulated, the funds for the schemes are wasted.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. You cannot have a discussion on Demands for Grants. You can speak only on the Finance Bill.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: The Government should seriously ponder over it. The Government should wind up all those schemes in which funds are being embezzled and the Government should ponder over preparing new schemes to give direct benefit to the poor.

[*English*]

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY (Nalgonda): Now though the NDA Parties have decided to boycott the most important discussion on the Finance Bill, we have to continue our discussion and pass the Bill. On behalf of the Communist Party of India, while extending the support to the Finance Bill, I would like to refer to a few things which the Finance Minister and the Government of India have to take into consideration to put important things on rails.

First of all, the Finance Bill and the Union Budget are different from that of the NDA Budget. But there are several problems. There were many things promised in the Budget Speech of the Finance Minister. Coming to the allocations, most of the allocations are nominal which will not fulfil the promises. We all again and again say that India lives in villages and the agriculture is the main profession for us. Unfortunately, there is no mention about land reforms. I am not speaking about the Common Minimum Programme and its commitment. I would like to remind the leaders of the Congress Party about the Karachi Resolution of 1936 in which the radical land reforms, comprehensive housing for the rural poor, food and clothing for common man, drinking water, rural connectivity, etc. were promised. A century has passed. We have come into the 21st century. People voted for a change. It is not for a change in the Government but for the change of political line and for the change of the economic policies that will change the lives of people of this country. But unfortunately the promises and the expectations of people are not being fulfilled. Still the time is there. It is still possible. We can fulfil these promises if important decisions are taken.

Sir, as I told you, in rural India, the conditions of peasants and agriculture labour is far from satisfaction. I do understand that it cannot be made satisfactory in one year or in one Budget. But the way in which we are moving is more important. Can we satisfy the needs and demands of rural India by the way in which the Budget has been proposed? Can we expect changes by this

way? I doubt it very much. It is not possible in this way. The Finance Minister should take a serious view about implementation of the radical land reforms. This is a very important aspect. This should be stressed to the States again and again. Several States have got Land Reform Acts, but they are not being implemented. When it is possible to get it implemented in Kerala and West Bengal, why is it not possible to get it implemented in other States? Without fulfilling this task and without giving irrigation facility to millions of acres of land, we cannot stop starvation deaths and suicides.

Then comes the question of the agriculture labour. An Employment Guarantee Act has been promised. Unfortunately it is getting delayed for technical reasons. Employment Guarantee Act promises hundred days of work and promises employment for one person in each family belonging to BPL. This is not enough. This is going to be limited, as I understand, to 150 districts. The entire country should be covered under this. This is what is expected as per the understanding of the Common Minimum Programme. There are several estimates regarding this. According to one estimate, for 150 days of work it may cost Rs. 38,000 crore to Rs. 42,000 crore if it is extended to the whole country.

Last year and the year before last, in fourteen States we have seen that there was continuous famine and in some States this is the third year of famine. This is the fifth year of famine in some other States. If there is no employment guarantee scheme and if there is no food for the agriculture labour, there will be very serious consequences in the rural India. A comprehensive Central legislation for the agriculture labour is the need of the hour. For a decade or so, it is being discussed again and again.

A Bill was drafted in the previous Congress regime. But some States objected to it. Hence, it was dropped. Then, during the NDA regime also it was discussed. Agriculture labour is the biggest contingent in the country. This is the biggest contingent of the unorganised labour. They are the people who are doing very hard work. They cannot depend on anything else except on their own work. They should get pension; they should get some guarantee for their lives; and they should get some minimum facilities. It can happen only through some Central legislation which should be on the lines of Kerala Act. Then only agriculture labour can have some minimum advantages. Unfortunately, there is no mention of it in the Finance Minister's proposals. I hope that at least in

[Shri Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy]

the coming period this will be taken up very seriously and the problem should be solved.

Then, I come to the problem of debt of peasants and agriculture labour in rural India. The Finance Minister has promised twice the amount of credit in the next three years for rural India.

It is a very good step. Even though the hon. Finance Minister himself has said "I stand guarantee for the peasants and let the banks give loans to the peasants" yet there is no such liberal attitude from the nationalised banks or from the other financial institutes. They are insisting on the guarantees for them. They say that the old debts should be paid back. If the peasant has got the capacity to pay back the old loan, where is the necessity of going in for the new loan again? The Government should intervene positively at this juncture.

Here, I would like to say that the Cooperative Act that has been brought into force at the national level is going to destroy the cooperative sector in this country. Before Independence, the Indian peasants were under heavy debt burden. Only after Independence, some measures have been taken to liberate them from the clutches of the money-lenders. Now, by destroying the cooperative movement, they are again being pushed towards the money-lenders, not the old type of money-lenders but the modernised financial companies which are sucking the blood of the peasants. An interest at the rate of two rupees to three rupees, five rupees is being taken for every hundred rupees every month. This is very heavy. That is the reason why the suicides of the peasants are continuing. So, it is not enough by only giving some more loans. There is a necessity to strengthen the rural cooperative movement, rural banking system and by strengthening it alone, the rural peasantry can be saved from the debt trap.

I would like to request the hon. Finance Minister to look into the promises made for the public sector. The previous NDA Government had taken the oath to destroy the public sector in this country. They went to carrying on disinvestment and privatisation. This was all done under the guise of globalisation. Even the most important Acts in this country are not respected. The labour laws have been thrown to the winds. Unfortunately, after the new Government has come into office, though privatisation has been stopped, yet it is not completely abandoned. I just heard the speeches of some of the Congress Members of Parliament. While supporting the Finance Bill,

they were saying that their Government is committed to carry on the economic reforms with a human face. We are requesting the Government that they should have a human heart. Human face without a human heart is like a *Gomukha Vyaghra*. It is very dangerous. Without a human heart by showing a human face, he will be continuing the economic policies by giving some sort of small benefits like the voluntary retirement benefits. This is not a human face. Why should the public sector be destroyed? Many public sector units, which were, closed, were to be reopened. But again, they are being referred to the BIFR. Why? The previous NDA Government tried to show that they are at losses. Why is the same old policy to be continued? There should be a fresh look at the new policy. HMT, HCL and other important units like the Cement Corporation of India, the ECIL and all these companies can be revived. They can survive. We, from the Left, are not demanding just to save the employment of some workers. Public sector is a very important part of the national life. In the last 50 years, if we look at the investment of the public sector and if the property of the public sector is counted, it is hundred times, may be thousand times more.

The public sector units are not making losses. If a public sector unit is making loss in some place, some way should be found to save it. It is not necessary to go on feeding the public sector unit if it is making loss continuously. But each public sector unit should be looked differently. They should be assessed properly and more money should be given so that they can be revived.

Sir, in this connection I would like to refer to a few things. It is not only the question of defending the public sector. Disinvestment is still going on. Some of the old policies should be revived. Why should there be disinvestment in oil companies?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your time is over. I am giving you more time. Please conclude.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: Sir, I would request you to give me more time because the NDA is not there. Please allow us to utilise the opportunity. When the Opposition parties are present here, we get little time. When they are not present here, we should get more time.

Sir, I would like to refer to the question of privatisation. This is the policy that is being pursued for the last 10 to 15 years in our country irrespective of the

party which is in power. Privatisation is now extended to the field of education, to the field of health and it is extended to all the fields.

This morning I raised an issue about the mints. At least the mints which manufacture coins should be saved. I was referring that 29th April 2005 is the last date for submission of tenders which the Economic Division of the Finance Ministry has called for the supply of Bimetallic blank coins to manufacture 10-rupee coins from the private sector. Last year, the Reserve Bank of India had said that there was no demand for 5-rupee and 10-rupee coins and our mints are starved of work. We have excellent mints in this country. We have excellent engineers. Yesterday, while we passed the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Science and Technology, our hon. Minister Shri Kapil Sibal had rightly claimed that India has got excellent engineers and technicians. It is true. But now I would like to ask as to why our mints are to be closed. Why are engineers to be starved of work? Why should the designs for new coins be called from Germany, from Italy and from other countries and crores of rupees are spent on this? This type of thing should be stopped. We have got excellent designers to make new coins. We have got hundreds of tonnes of metal in our mints, but now we are going to get them from private companies. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANIL BASU (Arambagh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, this should be inquired into. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Who has called for a tender from somebody abroad to supply coins?

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: It is the Finance Minister that has called for the tenders for the supply of 10-rupee coins from Indian companies and for the designs from German companies.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Have they called for a tender for the supply of coins or have they called for a tender for the design of the coin?

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: These two are different things. For the designs also, new machinery has been ordered from Germany. Please inquire about it.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I am making a note. I am surprised. That is why I am trying to find out. So, I must know your complaint first. Is it a tender for the supply of coin or is it a tender for the design of the coin? Which is the one?

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: I said, these two are different things.

First, an order has been negotiated for Rs. 30 crore from a German company for the designing of new coins.

Secondly, to make the raw coins, tenders have been called from Indian companies and tomorrow is the last date for the submission of tenders. This is done from the Economic Division of the Finance Ministry.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I will find out.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: There are several hundred tonnes of metal that are reserved in various mints including the mints of Hyderabad and Kolkata.

SHRI ANIL BASU: Something is happening, which the hon. Minister does not know. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: No, please do not come to any conclusion. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: Sir, I would like to refer to the problems that are being faced because of privatisation. The previous regime has tried to split the BSNL into BSNL and VSNL. The VSNL is sold for a SONG. It is sold to Tata company and a sum of Rs. 1,250 crore is said to be the amount that is fixed. Immediately, after the new Chairman has taken over, the same amount, added with Rs. 20 crore, has been invested from VSNL into Tata Telecom Company, Hyderabad. That means, without a single pie investment, private companies are able to manage the public sector companies. We understand that BSNL was split into Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited and BSNL. I read in the newspaper that again they are going to merge both. Why is it to be divided? Why is it to be merged? Why is it to be sold? Nobody understands what sort of *tamasha* is going on in the public sector.

As far as the utilisation of funds is concerned, I do not know the policy of the previous Government. The Food Corporation of India has got huge godowns in this country. They could have constructed some more, but the NDA Government has taken a policy of encouraging private godowns and private godowns are to be constructed with the amount advanced by the banks as loans and with a counter guarantee of Government and Food Corporation of India. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: Sir, this is a very important point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All points that you are important. There is nothing unimportant for you.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: Sir, the Food Corporation of India has given a guarantee whether we utilise your godown or not, we will pay the rent. Let the hon. Finance Minister inquire about it. Why is a private company to be paid the rent, whether the godown is utilised or not, while the Food Corporation of India's godowns are vacant? This is all to develop private capital at the cost of the public sector money. This is happening not only in Andhra Pradesh, but in most of the other States. Why do they not stop it? If it is to be paid, then nationalise these godowns. Take over these godowns. This type of unfortunate thing should not be continued.

Earlier, in the electricity sector, the same type of things have been taking place. Private power purchase agreements have been signed, whether you purchase electricity or not, we will pay the fixed charges. Why should we pay the fixed charges? The Government gives a counter guarantee to the bank. Why do not they give to Gencos? Why not the Government take the loan and produce the electricity by itself? Why do they want to give to a private fellow and stand counter guarantee and pay him whether you purchase or not?

On the other hand, they feel that they do not have money to pay for the employment guarantee scheme. They do not have money to waive the loans of the farmers. They do not have the money to give to the poor people of this country. This is not a proper policy.

I would like to say another important thing about Enron Power Project. Dabhol Power Project is closed. Maharashtra State Electricity Board expressed its inability to pay. The power project is closed. The mother company, Enron, itself is found to be a cheating company. Now, the Government of India has taken a decision to pay loans of foreign debts worth thousands of crores of rupees through State Bank of India, ICICI, Life Insurance Corporation of India. Why so much of money is to be invested for a company which is closed, which is found to be having faults? There are several scandals around the Enron Company and Dabhol Power Project.

The Government should have a re-look about these Projects. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Rupchand Pal.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Reddy, you have spoken for 25 minutes. I cannot allow you any more.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: I am not quarreling with you; I am appealing to you. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is very unfortunate.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to refer only a few points. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member, you have spoken for 25 minutes. The allotted time is only 5 minutes.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANIL BASU: Mr. Chairman, Sir, he is raising an important issue. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why do you support him? He can speak without your support. Your support is not required for him. He can speak any number of times.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. You have very very important points. You will take hours even then it will not be over; but our time is very much limited.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: I do not have that stamina to speak for days together but let me be allowed to speak; I am concluding it by giving a few more points.

For the first time the Finance Minister has tried to introduce a gender Budget. It is a good thing. In several countries it is being proposed. It may not give very huge benefits but gender justice should be done. For the last 7 or 8 or 10 years, we are discussing about the reservation in the legislature, in the Parliament for women. Gender justice can be done by bringing this legislation, one-third reservation for women. This is a Bill which is waiting. Now, a majority of the Parties and MPs are in favour of it. The Common Minimum Programme also proposes it. I think, it is high time that the Government should declare, courageously bring the legislation and do gender justice which is pending for quite a long time.

Sir, I would like to appeal to the Finance Minister about the freedom fighters' pensions. The Union Cabinet has taken a very good decision by accepting the proposals of the Telengana Freedom Fighters' Special Screening Committee's recommendations to give a few thousands of pensions more. But, in Punnapura, Vayalar and in other places still some pensioners are waiting. They are all in the last leg of their lives. Unfortunately, now these cases are pending for months and months together. Even on day's delay may do injustice to many freedom fighters. I would appeal to the Government that justice should be done to the freedom fighters and the other pensioners. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your finality will never end!

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: The new Pension Act is going to be proposed by the Finance Minister. It is a very serious issue that is being discussed. The new Pension Act and even the proposal about new slabs in the Budget are going to create very serious problems. There is a feeling that the pensioners are not getting justice. The previous advantage which was there for the pensioners should be restored. Otherwise, they will be in serious difficulties. The prices of essential commodities and food grains are increased but, on the other side, if the tax rate also increases, it will have a very hard effect.

At the end, I would like to say one thing that the UPA Government is committed for the common man, for good shelter, clothing, water, electricity, communications, etc. In the whole world, globalisation is taking place.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Shri Rupchand Pal.

Shri Reddy, you would not stop, I know.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: Lastly, I would like to mention that India has entered into the Billionaires Club. At the same time, the pauperisation is taking place. A very large number of people are getting pauperised.

About 40 per cent of the people are living below the poverty line. There is no use of the status of enjoying that India has entered into the Billionaires' Club. The gap between the rich and the poor is nine million times. This type of gap between the rich and the poor should be reduced. This should not be allowed to continue. Otherwise there will be very serious consequences. From the Left, while we support the Finance Bill, at the same

time, we would like the Finance Minister to take into consideration the common man's problem, and the Common Minimum Programme should be implemented.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think now you are fully satisfied.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY: Yes, Sir.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Finance Bill. But even as I support the general tone, tenor and direction of the several provisions in the Bill, I have serious reservation regarding some of the specific proposals.

Let me take up the changes being proposed in respect of the direct taxes. Of course, it is true that over the years the scenario has changed for the better that instead of the indirect tax being the dominating aspect, in the direct taxes the curve is rising. But if we take up the whole sort of proposals in the direct tax, I have three reactions to it. One, in some areas, the proposals are too inadequate, particularly for the richer sections, the corporate sections, the Government seems to be too lenient still now. Secondly, in some other areas, it is very confusing, and rather it seems to be regressive. It seems the Government has given by the right hand some thing and by the left hand, they have taken away more. This is more confusing. Lastly, in some areas, the proposals are broadly in conformity with the NCMP. They are acceptable to the Left and we have no hesitation in telling you that.

About the income tax proposals, if I take up one by one, there is a claim that there is a change in the tax regime, tax reforms both in terms of the rate and also in terms of the slab. The Government claims that a very important change has been made with regard to the tax philosophy also. I do not agree to that because the richer the people, the greater the income and larger the benefit as a result of the concessions given in the name of simplification of tax reforms. I shall come to that later.

If we group-wise categorise the tax people, say for example, in any welfare State, it is the senior citizens whose cause is addressed with the sincerest sort of motive, but here I am compelled to, constrained to make this observation that in the proposals made, the senior citizens have been duped altogether because it has been said that up to Rs. 1,50,000, the tax is nil while all the other sorts of rebates are taken away. The standard deduction is removed. The senior citizens are putting their

[Shri Rupchand Pal]

money in the post office or for that matter, small savings and all those things, and they are totally dependent on that income. On the one hand, the interest rates have been brought down and on the other hand, I believe there is some sort of artificiality in the calculation, in the measurement of the inflation.

17.00 hrs.

I have been repeatedly making that observation. Once I noticed that the hon. Minister of Finance had admitted that there were distortions in the calculation of the WPI and also the CPI. They do not reflect the reality. The service sector which accounts for more than 50 per cent of the GDP is not taken into account in the calculation of the WPI but inflation is measured on the basis of the WPI. That is a different issue.

The reduction in the deposit interest rates is affecting adversely the senior citizens of this country. On top of it, whatever concessions were earlier given in the form of exemptions have been withdrawn. It is being said that the limit has been advanced from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 1.5 lakh. I have some serious reservations on this.

The hon. Minister is claiming rightly that there are certain areas where he has made the sincerest attempts to take into account gender budgeting but in the case of income tax we find that the larger benefits have been given to those in the higher income groups but not to the ordinary working women who are dependent on fixed monthly incomes. I think, for the sort of commitments made in the NCMP, the Government should have been more serious about the constituents like senior citizens and womenfolk. I shall come to that again later.

Let us look at what has been done in the name of rationalisation. Changes have been made in the name of uniformity among the instrument subsidies saying that there have been distortions. There has been a shift from EEE to EET saying that these are global standards. I am not contesting it at this stage but the Indian objective situation and the Indian reality is different from the situation prevailing in a Scandinavian country or any western country.

The other day, a French Senate delegation comprising Members of their Commission for Finance, Budget Control and National Accounts had a meeting with our Standing Committee on Finance. During discussions, we found that 25 per cent of their GDP was given as social security and a large chunk of it was being given to senior citizens,

women neglected children and orphans. In our country, whatever little has been there in one form or another is being withdrawn but tall claims are being made that there were distortions in the instruments.

The Government claims that the overall average target in the Tenth Plan is seven per cent to 7.5 per cent. It is not eight per cent. The Hon. Prime Minister has said that it is never possible to reach that goal. How much savings do you require for that? How much investment in terms of percentage do you require to reach that growth target? Our savings are about 20 per cent and most of them are household savings. In such a situation, the common people who have been having the habit of savings should be benefited because it is a good thing for a country like India but the hon. Minister of Finance is trying to promote consumerism. He says: "I want to put more money in your pocket so that you can spend a portion of it and save a portion of it."

I am not going into that. It is a good philosophy. Unless you consume, how could the demand be created and how the industries and manufacturing will grow and all these things come? I agree with you. But still, there is a special feature in the Indian psyche. I can put it in another way. It is unlike the consumerist society's culture. Here even those who can afford three cars are having one car. But in the Western countries, it will be five cars for three people. I am not philosophically looking at the feudal psyche, consumerism and all these tints taken together. How this psyche is created is to be seen. The psyche is very important. Of course, the psyche varies from community to community and from region to region. I think the psyche in the Southern part is different from the Eastern part. Bengal psyche is different from Tamil psyche. I think so, I am not elaborating on that part.

I think that in the Indian conditions savings should be encouraged. The hon. Minister also sometimes says that—'yes, we will always go on encouraging savings'. We have noticed that in spite of the interest rates on deposits being brought down, people are not going to stock markets because they have already burnt their fingers. Therefore, they are putting their money in the banks, particularly nationalised banks. Even after the interest rates have been brought down, we find that there is a huge growth in the deposits in the banks and the banks do not know what to do with that. They are flush with money. Lazy banking is continuing. In spite of SLR being brought down, they put their money in the safe deposits. The Government is very happy. The interest rate has come down. They are having money at their

disposal at a lower interest rate. I think the Government has reason to be happy. But the senior citizens have no reason to be happy at all. Even in the backdrop of such a situation, we do find that those who are committed to NCMP, those who are committed to serve in a better way than the way the previous NDA people were doing, are neglecting the senior citizens. I think gross injustice has been done to the senior citizens.

I think the hon. Minister of Finance will revisit the proposal and re-assess and try to rectify the position by taking into consideration the object realities facing the senior citizens of this country and also the womenfolk. This will be as per the claim of the hon. Minister of Finance on gender justice which is required to be given to them.

About compliance part, the hon. Minister claims that he is very worried about tax evasion. It is true. In a country of more than one billion people, only three crore assesseees are there and out of those three crore assesseees, how many people pay the taxes?

17.08 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

It is only one-third of it, at best. Less than one crore people, that is less than one per cent of the population, are paying the taxes. I am not speaking about the assesseees submitting. Nil returns. Amazingly, our hon. Minister of Finance has publicly observed on it. I appreciate the public position taken by him that in a country like this, only 90,000 people are declaring that their annual income is more than Rs. 10 lakh in the same year. There are only 90,000 such people out of one billion plus population and one crore people paying their taxes materially. If you look at South Delhi, if you look at Nariman Point or if you look at NOIDA, you can see how many such people are there. Five lakh luxury cars are being sold in one year. More than 30 lakh people are going on foreign travel to Singapore, Thailand and to all these luxury places. Even the bookings by Cox and Kings and such other travel agents is not available in certain parts of the year. Marriage ceremonies are taking place in a grand way. The five-star hotels are being booked. Sometimes all the hotels of Delhi are being booked.

Still we find only 90,000 people declaring that their income is more than Rs. 10 lakh while the international

report of *Fortune* says—many others are also coming out with reports—that more percentage of Indians is growing richer and richer. I am not speaking about Shri L.N. Mittal only, the richest man in U.K. I am not speaking about Shri Premji, Wipro's Chairman or for that matter, certain other people. I am talking of new billionaires.

Only today I have found that the Minister is proposing an amendment to the Money laundering Act. Money laundering is taking place. The super rich are siphoning and stashing Indian money. They are not putting the money in Swiss Bank these days. Their money is coming back, the Minister knows, *via* the Mauritius route. The FIs, the sub-accounts and all these things have been mentioned in detail in the JPC Report on Security Scam, but the Government, unfortunately, is yet to take positive steps to trace the black money, to trace the parallel economy. It is a tip of the iceberg. It is not even a peanut.

If a sum of Rs. 10,000 is withdrawn, Rs. 10 will have to be given for every transaction. Will they keep black money in the banks? Maybe, sometimes it so happens. I know that once it so happened. Suddenly, a particular private bank, I can name it, could not provide money and their ATMs were not working in some stock exchanges in the areas like Ahmedabad and Mumbai. There was a hue and cry. A television news came that this bank was unable to provide money in its ATMs. At that time, Rs. 15,000 was the limit and the stock brokers had been going to the ATMs to collect cash because in the bull run, some stocks' prices were going up, up and up. What happened? During noon, the RBI came to the rescue of this private bank and Rs. 200 crore were provided and ATMs were refilled with cash. I know the role of cash for brokers, role of cash in drug money and role of cash in all these things. I also know that on Saturday evening, some money put in fictitious accounts in the banks is taken away and after Sunday, before 10 o'clock on Monday morning, it comes back and in the meanwhile, this cash is used by some people for some nefarious purposes, heinous purposes and anti-social purposes. I know that.

If the Home Ministry is serious about it, they can trace it. For that purpose, this transaction tax, withdrawal tax of Rs. 10 on withdrawal of Rs. 10,000 will be a heavy burden. Why do you not call it a tax? This tax of Rs. 10 for every withdrawal of Rs. 10,000 will be an imposition the other way round on the common people. They have got several suggestions for tracing black

[Shri Rupchand Pal]

money, if they are seriously interested in tracing the black money. This is not my suggestion. I am referring to the important suggestions made by important committees. For the last several decades, a number of suggestions have come from important committees and the latest one from the Standing Committee on Finance. It said that let there be a common identification number, as in the case of PAN, for customs, Central excise, bank transactions, income tax and all economic activities including passport. There should be that single identity and synergy between all these softwares. This is an important recommendation made by the Standing Committee on Finance repeatedly, not this time only. I was a party to this recommendation several times. We have been telling them how is it that their computerisation programme or PAN programme has delayed so much. Why is there so much of delay in respect of computerisation in Customs, computerisation in Excise, computerisation at airports, electronic transfers and synergy between all these things?

The hon. Minister knows better than me that rampant corruption is going on, even today, through under-invoicing and over-invoicing, and in the foreign banks. Billion and billion of dollars are not being brought back to our country. As a result of this India is losing. I am saying this because our money is going out, and it is coming through another route and looting the common people, small investors, etc. Money is being raised artificially, and the stock markets are taking the money away from the common people.

Is there any transparency in the system? The hon. Minister says that: "Yes, there is transparency in the system." But I do not agree with him, and I have got serious reservations on this issue. I am saying this because while speaking and referring to the "Measures to rationalise the tax treatment of derivative transactions" he says that: "Enough transparency will come as the technology has been updated." He states that:

"Recent systemic and technological changes introduced by stock markets have resulted in sufficient transparency..."

What will happen as a result of this measure? Perhaps, certain activities will no more be considered as speculation. Therefore, I do not agree with it at all. It is only encouraging the under-hand deals. The brokers have been holding the genuine and sincere small investors, and looting them.

It is said that there will be more compliance with the measure of bringing down the tax-rates. I am trying to get convinced by his argument. But I find that this measure does not work in the Indian psyche. I want a very very important functionary in this Ministry. Do you believe that there will be better compliance by bringing down the rate of taxes in the Indian situation?

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You please conclude your speech.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Sir, you can give me more time to speak. Kindly give me some more time to speak. I will conclude after mentioning some more points.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: You can mention the points and conclude.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Yes, I will do it. The hon. Minister says that the compliance will go up to a certain limit. But our experience is that after this there will be stagnation. Further there might be a negative and reversible process also. I can give you the evidence for it also because I have got the evidence with me. I have kept it separately. I do not take anything out of here. I depend heavily on the evidence given by the important people belonging to his Government, and belonging to his Ministry.

As regards the common identity programme, the billionaires, the rich escaping and evading black money, parallel economy, etc. are issues known by one and all, but I do not think that he is serious about it. At least, he is serious about it when he speaks about all these issues. He looks to be very serious about tracing the black money, but he should be more serious about this issue.

I can give you one concrete example. In his dream Budget, in 1997, he had introduced one amnesty scheme called the VDIS. But one important Parliamentary Committee states that those who enjoyed the VDIS did not pay a single paisa as tax. I asked the concerned people about the reason for not even a single paisa being paid as tax by the same people who enjoyed this amnesty, which was part of the contract. Does the august House know what reply has been given to me? It was

said that: "We cannot divulge the details." I told them that I know all the details on this issue. They said that: "What can be done if you know the details, but still, we cannot divulge the details." This is the tragedy of this issue. They cannot divulge the information that is known to the whole nation or known to everyone. This is the tragedy of this issue. I believe that this Ministry is very serious about it, and the hon. Minister wants to bring about changes in it. I believe, he is really sincere about it, and this piece of legislation with all the proposals and provisions reflects some part of it also.

About Customs and Excise, I have two points to make. One, there is a WTO commitment. I know, the duties have to be brought down. The Minister speaks about Asian levels and all those things. How it can be achieved, I do not know. However, it is adversely affecting our industry, particularly in respect of capital goods import and all those things. It is rather destroying employment. While, on the one hand, this Government is committed to create new employment—one of the priority areas of NCMP is employment generation—on the other hand, the steps that they have proposed here in respect of Customs will cause more harm to our domestic industry. There is hardly any balance between the Customs and Excise. Our own industry is suffering. I do not say that the Minister has no compulsions about because we are committed to WTO. Still, he could have been more creative. Taking into account the Indian realities, the condition of the Indian domestic industry, I think, he should revisit the proposals and make some changes so that our own industries are better protected.

Now, about the Customs and Excise, I have one very, very important point to make. This is one area on which our Party has already submitted a memorandum to the Government. How long will this Government depend on the revenue from the oil sector? While, on the one hand, the Government is speaking about the compulsions, international prices going up and all those things—50 dollars per barrel, then 52 dollars per barrel and then coming down, that is a fluctuating situation; there is volatility in the market—on the other hand, we find that during 2003-04, an amount of Rs. 50,732.79 crore, which included Rs. 10,582.21 crore of Customs duty and Rs. 40,150.50 crore of Excise duty, had been the share of the hydrocarbon sector. How long can you depend?

You are speaking about dismantling of the administrative price mechanism. You have committed, on the basis of a recommendation, about Price Stability Fund.

Now, again and again, you say that to protect all these things, you are bringing down the Customs duty by five per cent and bringing down the Excise duty by such and such per cent. Ultimately, in spite of the assurances given by the Minister that it is revenue neutral, we find that it is revenue positive. I am quoting from a very, very important document—it is the Report of the Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas, which was submitted very recently. "What the Finance Ministry has done in this." This is not my quotation; this is the quotation from the evidence given by the most important functionary in the Government. "What the Finance Ministry has done is this. Whatever it has given from one hand, it has taken away from the other hand or more than what it gave (concessions in Customs and Central Excise). In fact, the proposal of the Finance Ministry is revenue positive." On the floor of the House, the Minister has said that it was revenue neutral. Therefore, whatever they have lost by reducing the Customs duties and Excise duties on LPG and kerosene, more than that, they have increased the duties on petrol and diesel. This is a serious problem that we are facing right now. At this stage, the international prices are very high and the tariffs on petrol and diesel have become very high. It is due to the impact of the changes. It will abuse inflation. The whole economy will be seriously put into disadvantage. There is another point made here.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude now. You have already taken more than 30 minutes.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Another point made here is about the duties on petro-products or on crude. What is the international practice?

I want to know from the hon. Minister what the international practice is. The Government has already collected a certain amount, Rs. 3,000 crore, as revenue. Instead of raising the prices of petroleum products, this fund should be used to give relief to the common people who are struggling under the pressure of the overall burden of price rise. The prices of petroleum products, essential products like kerosene, LPG, diesel and petrol should not be allowed to rise. The revenue collected should be used to give relief or subsidy or support or whatever you call it. The common people have a right over this.

I now refer to another important thing. In the Finance Bill, 2004, Section 33AC of the Income Tax Act was deleted and that was replaced by the tonnage tax.

[Shri Rupchand Pal]

Dredgers and all those things are being given this concession this year. I think your intention was good. Ultimately we find that the shipping companies have demanded levy of tonnage tax to make it internationally competitive. Under the relevant Section 11BD of the Income Tax Act, the definition to qualify is a vessel of minimum tonnage of 15 tonnes and which registered under Merchant Shipping Act, 1958. Accordingly, only the vessels with a net registered tonnage of 15 or more, or which are registered under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 are qualified. All other craft which are availing Section 33AC benefit were left high and dry. Lakhs of them are there in West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu etc. ...*(Interruptions)* Barge operators in Goa, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal and Andaman and Nicobar have registered the maximum increase in cargo movement in the last few years. They should also be given this relief.

Service tax is the only area let for the Finance Minister to explore because there is hardly any scope in other areas. He says that central excise cannot go beyond apoint. On agriculture, he wonders as to how he can touch it. There is non-farm and non-agricultural income, which the Minister can touch. Maybe he does not yet have the political courage to do that. I have two or three points to make about the service tax.

Will the service providers just pass the burden to the consumers? Or, does the Minister have any mechanism to protect the consumers from the mischievous move that may be made by the service providers? My next point is about the small tools. The Minister has imposed a tax of 12.5 per cent on small tools, hand tools used by common artisans. They should be exempted. Hand tools used by the artisans, by the truck operators, by the small mechanics and all those people have to be exempted.

The Finance Minister must have received a letter from the Chief Minister of West Bengal with regard to gems and jewellery. A large number of people are involved in this particular field. The Minister must look after their interests. Lakhs of them are there. Their exports are worth about Rs. 63,000 crore. Many other countries are giving support to them. The Finance Minister should look into that. The Chief Minister's letter must be with him today.

About export support, transport support to potato exports should be given. There is a serious move to

export potatoes from West Bengal to Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Philippines, Japan, Middle-East, etc.

Support is required. Supporting agency, the APEDA, is ready. They are providing 80 paise to one rupee support. The Ministry of Agriculture is agreeable. Your Ministry should give concurrence to start this export. This will not only help West Bengal but also other States.

Sir, since you are insisting that I conclude, I would like to conclude with one remark. The intention is good; I appreciate your direction but still you have a long way to go. To quote the language of the Prime Minister—miles to go. If you continue to have the political will, you can trace the black money, you can impose tax on those who earn money and exempt the categories like senior citizens, women folk and others.

[Translation]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH (Hissar): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support Finance Bill 2005-2006. The hon'ble Minister of Finance has delivered his Budget Speech. He had delivered the Budget speech last year i.e. 2004-2005 also. Prior to this, till five years budget was presented by the NDA Government. Every Government says that it has given many benefits to the farmers.

I would like to bring to the notice of hon'ble Minister two-three things which are particularly related to farmers. Every party says that India is an agriculture oriented country. This is also true. The only way before the Government to solve the problem of unemployment in the country is that agriculture should be made profitable. Agriculture is the only activity which can provide employment to maximum number of people. Besides small scale industry also provides employment to people. But it is unfortunate that the farmers are not getting full benefits which they should get.

Last year the hon'ble Minister of Finance had mentioned about Kisan Credit Card. I belong to Haryana. Whenever I visit my village the farmers say that though the Government have issued Kisan Credit Card to them, but there is a big gap in the terms and conditions fixed and the limit fixed for farmers and the capitalists. If a factory owner or a capitalist takes loan from a bank or financial corporation he has to mortgage only those things where his factory is located. The Government have issued Kisan Credit Card however, it has fixed rupees four lakh as credit limit. The Kisan Credit Card has to be renewed

after every three year. It means that the farmer has to repeat the same procedure like visiting Patwari, Tehsildar and Kanungo and then he will approach the bank.

I would like to request the hon'ble Minister of Finance to make some changes in Kisan Credit Card. The rate of interest, particularly of co-operative banks, is very high. The Government take loan from World Bank and I.M.F. at lower interest rate whereas the State Governments extend it to the farmers at higher rate of interest. Through this budget, instructions may be issued to the State Governments that the rate of interest on crop loan provided by the State Government to farmers, should be reduced. At present 12-13% interest rate is being charged from the farmers on crop loan. If a farmer wants to purchase land, he is provided loan at the rate of 14% whereas banks give only 4-5% interest. Therefore the margin should be reduced. At the most 6% interest rate should be charged from the farmers. It should not be more than this.

If a farmer wants to purchase tractor then from whichever bank he takes loan, he gets loan at the rate of 12-14% whereas even private financiers do not charge more than 6% for car loan. Many companies provide loan at zero percent interest. Hence, I would like to tell the hon'ble Minister of Finance that such arrangement should be made which is in the interest of farmers because today agriculture has become losing proposition.

Last year there was good yield of Narma cotton, however, it was sold at lower rate due to which the farmers had to suffer loss. This year when the crop of mustard came in the market it was sold at lower rate. However, I thank UPA Government that the Ministry of Agriculture made arrangement to procure mustard atleast at the rate of Rs. 1700 per quintal this time otherwise the condition of farmer would have been very pathetic. I would like to request the hon'ble Minister of Finance that he should evolve a formula for farmers so that they may know the rates of their crop for the next year and accordingly they may sow next crop.

Power and diesel both are costly. Such an arrangement should be made for farmers under which they should be issued card for diesel similar to the one issued for Kerosene and they should be provided subsidy on that diesel card. The farmer uses tractor for agriculture purpose whereas other people use vehicle for commercial purpose. So there is difference between these two.

However, the rate of diesel is same for both of them. Therefore, subsidy should be provided to farmers atleast on electricity, diesel and pesticides, only then, the farmers would be able to get some benefit on their crop. Day by day the economic condition of farmers is deteriorating. In the country, where the farmers are poor, the problem of unemployment will increase continuously and the labourers would remain disturbed. Therefore, I request the hon'ble Minister of Finance to make some improvement in the Agriculture Policy. The size of land holding of farmers is decreasing day by day and the population is increasing. After conducting research, good quality seeds should be provided to farmers and they should be provided training so that they may know as to sowing of which particular crop would give them profit and sowing of which one may retail loss. All the States of India are facing natural calamities. Bihar State had to face drought alongwith flood. Haryana had to face drought and the farmers suffered loss due to natural calamities. The NDA Government kept on saying that it had implemented Crop Insurance Scheme but narrowed its ambit by not including wheat, sugarcane and paddy under this Scheme. If these crops are not to be covered then which major crop would be covered? When there is insurance scheme for vehicles then why there should not be a scheme for farmers when their crop gets damaged due to natural calamity. Hence, Crop Insurance Scheme should also be implemented for them and the prescribed amount should also be given to the farmers. The provision of conducting assessment of damage through Patwari is not proper. The affected farmer has to approach Patwari many times. If there is 70% loss of crop Patwari shows the extract of loss to 20%. I want to say that the farmers should be given the benefit of Crop Insurance Scheme without any discrimination.

As far as the question of education is concerned, funds are required for education. The Central Government grant funds to States for 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' however, I would like to say that today the States spend this money on pasting posters and advertisements. He can also inquire this thing as to whether a single person has been benefitted by this programme in Haryana.

My Suggestion is that more funds should be spent on primary education in rural areas. The children of poor people, farmers and labourers do not study in convent schools. They cannot afford to study in Doon school of Dehradun or schools or Dalhousie, Chandigarh and Delhi. Therefore major chunk of funds granted to states by the Central Government should be spent on Government schools of rural areas so that children of poor people

[Shri Jai Prakash]

and labourers became capable and they may participate in competition alongwith children of rich people and become eligible for appearing in IAS and IPS examinations. 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' has become a mockery. 90% of the fund, provided by the Central Government to states for this purpose is being misused. This matter should be investigated and this fund should be converted into funds meant for primary education and it should be spent on primary education only.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The state of Punjab should also be included in this.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH: Before you ask me to conclude, I request that Punjab should also be included in this as it is a large state.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: In Punjab the condition of primary education is not good.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH: Now it is not so.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The condition is worse now.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH: Now the condition has improved.

There are very few medical colleges in north India including Haryana and Punjab. Hence more Medical Colleges and Engineering Colleges should be set up there and for that the prescribed terms and conditions should be simplified. A medical council has been constituted in Delhi but its members are neither politicians nor does it function under control of the Government. They work in an arbitrary manner. After controlling such institutions also, a medical college should be set up at district level in the country so that children after obtaining good technical education may serve the people in the country and abroad.

Mid Day Meal is a good scheme. Through this scheme children get meal in school but at many places it has been found that Mid Day Meal Scheme is being misused. There are many schools where the teachers remain engaged in making arrangement for food throughout the day. They do not teach children. My suggestion is that instead of mid day meal scheme scholarship should be given to poor children so that they may obtain good education. There has been instances of child burning as has happened recently in a school in Tamil Nadu. At some places, quality food is not provided to children which leads to spread of disease.

The NDA Government has not done justice with Haryana. Their members are not present here. They visited our area and stated that the level of education will be improved. Umaji went to Haryana and made an announcement that a sports university will be set up there.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: She is not a Member of this House now.

[Translation]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH: George Saheb is not present here. He made an announcement that a Defence School will be set up and the people applauded him for this. I would like to say that if any Government commits something and if it is unable to fulfil that commitment then the new Government should fulfil the commitment. I request that the hon'ble Finance Minister should translate that announcement in reality in this financial year itself. It is the matter of university. This matter does not fall within the ambit of State Government, this matter relates to the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Such university should definitely be set up in Haryana. If any Government has committed mistake even then after correcting that mistake university should be set up.

Haryana touches Delhi from three directions. However it has only three universities. If another university is set up there it will reduce the rush for admission in Delhi. Grant should be provided to Haryana to set up university. We talk about development of villages. UPA Government has made a very good arrangement. The Government has spent money on Swajaldhara Scheme. The pervious government launched the scheme but the funds did not reach states. I would request hon'ble Finance Minister that the funds to be given to states under Pradhan Mantri Sadak Yojana should be provided to them so that roads could be repaired and maintained properly.

Just now a colleague was saying and even my suggestion is that the amount which the Union Government receives from a state by way of levying cess on diesel, that much amount should be sent to that state. If a state consumes more diesel and it does not get full share of cess then it is gross injustice against that state. A state where the people are of progressive nature, hardworking, pay income tax and cess, should get funds due to it to ensure that Central Government had made major contribution in the development of that state.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to the Union Government for giving package to the State Governments. I would like to say that Haryana touches Delhi from three sides. If he sends the money of road cess then it would reduce the load of population, electricity and water on Delhi. Similarly, it would result in the development of whole NCR area and the country would also be benefitted from that development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have mentioned about education but I forgot to mention about medical facilities. At present Government hospitals throughout the country are controlled by concerned State Governments. Centre should give grants to these hospitals. A private hospital in village does not have proper arrangement of doctors and medicines. The farmers and labourers in villages die due to lack of medical facilities. Poor people are not able to get medicines. Therefore I would like to request hon'ble Minister of Finance that wherever there is government hospital or government dispensary, Central aid should be provided to it and arrangement of doctors should also be made. For this, it would be better if free medical facility is provided there. No one can restrict the progress of a country which provides free medical facility and education to its people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to make one more submission to hon'ble Minister of Finance regarding water. There are serious water disputes among Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab and Haryana. Gross injustice has been done with us. Punjab does not release water for our state. I would like to say that all Governments which came to power in Punjab, stated that Punjab is a riparian State. If the people of Himachal Pradesh construct dam then neither Punjab nor Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi will get water. If dam water is diverted towards U.P. then we will be deprived of water. My submission to hon'ble Minister of Finance is that leaving aside other things arrangement should be made to harvest rain water or water coming from hills which otherwise goes waste. A Central tribunal should be constituted to solve the disputes of states regarding water and the issue of water should be the central subject and not state subject. That way bilateral disputes can be settled once for all. You are very well conversant with the State of Haryana, if water of the Satluj river is less in the SYL Canal then Ganga water can be released to Haryana. If the Union Government takes this decision of releasing Ganga water to Haryana then dispute among Haryana, Rajasthan and Punjab would be settled. It means that maximum funds should be spent on irrigation.

The day the barren land of the country will be utilised for agriculture purpose employment opportunities will be generated not only for lakhs but crores of unemployed youths of the country. No country can compete with the country where unemployment is weeded out. Irrigation should be brought under the Central Government until it comes under the Central Government until a Central Water Tribunal is formed, the State disputes will continue to increase. These disputes harm the country. If Punjab Government releases us water then the entire barren land can be used for cultivation.

A Central Water Tribunal should be set up to settle such disputes and the supremacy of States over water should be ended so that farmers of the country can get maximum water for increasing their yield. We draw water even from tubewells but canal water is cheaper. Today the prices of diesel and power have soared. The problem of water has hit the entire country; canal water will solve the problem. Today, there are 5 power grids in the country. My suggestion is that only one National Grid should be set up by doing away with all these 5 power grids. Similarly, such a system should be evolved for the distribution of canal water as the flood waters should be channelised to drought hit areas, and where water is not required it should be diverted elsewhere. Every year property to the tune of thousand-crores gets destroyed due to flood. I believe that the masses and the House would agree that if leaving aside all other activities expenditure is incurred on the development of irrigation with a view to increase the yield then no other party will be able to equal the U.P.A. Government in future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I hope that the hon. Finance Minister will accept my suggestions. I thank you, for providing me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri M.P. Veerendra Kumar.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: If Shri Veerendra Kumar may yield me for a minute, I would like to make a clarification.

You may recall that the hon. Member made a statement that we are inviting global tender for a design of a coin and we have floated a global tender for supply of blank coin. I was quite surprised when he made that statement.

[Shri P. Chidambaram]

Let me say, no tender has been called for design of the rupees ten coin. The design has been made by the National Institute of Design, Ahmadabad. This design has been approved and the rupees ten coin will be minted according to this design.

As far as the blank coins are concerned, again I am sorry, the hon. Member's information is completely wrong. Noida Mint has floated a tender for coin blanks. This is a tender for Indian manufacturers only, located in India. The value of the tender is only Rs. 7 crore to Rs. 8 crore. Three firms of manufacturers located in India have purchased the tender paper so far. I have the names but I do not wish to disclose the names. No global tender has been floated for supply of blank coin. So, I think the information is wrong and I thought it should be corrected at the earliest opportunity before newspapers publish this information and not the answer.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Veerendra Kumar, you have got only eight to ten minutes time to speak.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR (Calicut): I will not take much time of the House. I have only one or two points to make. I would only like to dwell upon the issue concerning the farmers, the peasants.

It is true that in this Budget large money is pumped into agriculture. It may be unprecedented but will such pumping of credit help the farmers? The other policies being pursued by the Government nullify whatever effect the Finance Minister wants to gain out of this credit policy. I would like to know if more credit is given how will the farmers pay it back. The farm prices are crashing down everywhere. I can quote what happened, out of my own experience because I come from that area, in Kerala. Banks have been giving more credit to the farmers but they could not pay it back. Take the case of pepper. In reply to a question in this House, if I remember the figure correctly, it has been stated that 14,700-15,000 tonne of pepper is imported from SAARC and non-SAARC countries and about 16,000-17,000 tonne of pepper is exported. There is a gap of 2000 tonne between the import and export. What is being done is, we are mixing the best quality pepper in the world being produced in Malabar with the worst quality pepper produced in Vietnam and then export it. How will it help the farmers? How can they pay back the loan out of whatever little they get?

That is why, suicides are taking place. That is because of the policy of the Government. You take palm

oil. The duty has been reduced. The entire coconut prices have come down. You take Thailand Agreement on fish. You know what is happening due to that.

There is one more thing. We are importing pepper from Sri Lanka. They are exporting more than what they produce. I pointed it out in this House once or twice but nothing has been done. So really this policy of import and the agreements which we have signed with other countries are ruining the prospects of the farmers. The prices are crashing down. In this respect, I want to ask can any agreement made by any bureaucrat be implemented without consulting Parliament? Can anybody go and sign an agreement which because a *fait accompli*. Whenever agricultural issues are raised in the House, what is the reply? The reply is that it is a State subject. Are the States consulted when such agreements are signed with any of the countries? Somebody told me that when Shrimati Gandhi was the Prime Minister once she went to some country. When an issue relating to signing of an agreement came up, she told that she has to go to her country for consultation. I do not know whether it is true or not. But somebody told me that. Does any consultation take place here? The moment some bureaucrat goes to some country, he signs an agreement. This is our experience for all these years. I do not want to quote the instances. You simply come here and say that it is a *fait accompli* as we have signed an agreement. Who had given you the authority? Do the bureaucrats know what is happening in this country?

I would seriously suggest that there must be constitutional amendment. People must behave responsibly. Before an agreement is signed, it must be brought before the House. The Government must take the consent of the House and then it should become operative. When somebody signs an agreement, the whole nation of 110 crore cannot be taken to ransom. Who makes a study as to what is happening in my State and other States? Nobody is making any study. That is one of my plea to the Finance Minister. He must consider this seriously and urge the Govt. to bring an amendment to the Constitution and see that such things do not happen.

As regards prices, there are dictates from the World Bank, WTO and such other agencies that we cannot give domestic subsidy to farmers. We must not subsidise the inputs. We cannot understand that. Are we on the level playing field? If all the countries of the world are on the same ground, then we can accept it. What is the

quantum of domestic subsidy in the United States of America? If I remember correctly, it is 375 billion dollars a year. The developed countries give a lot of subsidies but they are asking us not to give subsidy to our farmers. We are already marginalised. How will our farmers compete with these nations? Can we compete the farmers of the United States or Europe? Are we on the level playing field when we talk of globalisation? You cannot just ask them to fight those people who are armed so much. We cannot do that. So, this is the reality. Of course, I know Mr. Chidambaram will have a very persuasive argument about it. But I am only bringing before him a reality as I am coming from a rural area.

As regards inputs, you say that electricity cannot be subsidised. The cost of water must be realised. It is all right. I have before me a report by Sainath which appeared in *The Hindu* of 27th and 28th April, 2005. It is regarding how the deal was done regarding water. The questions are now being asked about how Maharashtra Water Regulatory Authority Bill was passed. I would only quote one or two points from report from Hindu. According to the Bill, the farmers could be forced to adopt drip or sprinkler irrigation in some regions. It further says that those who have more than two children have to pay one and a half times the new rates. If a poor man is having more than two children, he has to pay one and a half times more than those who do not have more than two children.

18.00 hrs.

What a wonderful argument it is! The Bill signals a massive hike in water charges. The new rates will reflect the full recovery of the cost of irrigation, management, administration, operation and maintenance.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There are three to four more Members to speak today. If the hon. Members of the House agrees, then we may extend the time of the House by half an hour.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Sir, what is happening now? How can the small farmers pay the entire cost? An Aurangabad based, very famous economist by name Shri H.N. Deshraya said that one acre will cost Rs. 8,000 more. There is no crop in this country which can hold this cost per acre. What is going to happen? In effect, all the marginalised farmers and those farmers who take entirely for the big agriculture as a livelihood will be driven out and the field will be prepared industrial

tycoons and Multinational Corporations. We are already talking of the contract farming. There is a suggestion by the WTO and the World Bank that land reforms must be done away with. There should be no land reforms. There is a suggestion like that. Of course, except in the two States Kerala and West Bengal, land reform is not implemented in other States. What is going to happen after contract farming is adopted? The Multinational Companies are going to take over the country. The entire farming community is going to be marginalised and farmers who had agriculture as their means of livelihood would be ruined.

Sir, in this connection I would like to point out about the Seed Bill which has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha. There is a Seed Bill of 1962. The provisions of that Bill are for controlling spurious seeds. I have gone through this present Bill. The provisions of the present Bill seeks to take away the right of the farmers to choose what seed he should cultivate. He cannot cultivate his seed; he cannot exchange his seed; he cannot sell his seed. He has to report about his entire stock to the Central Seed Committee which has one farmer representative. Finally, registration of seeds has been made mandatory. If any farmer does not cope with this regulation, then he would face imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 50,000/- Can our farmers comply registration? There are so many types of seeds and now our farmers would be required to get registration and inform the Seed Committee. Who are the other members of the Seed Committee? They are all bureaucrats from the five States.

Sir, our approach to subsidy, our policy on imports and signing of agreements every time with other countries and now bringing in this concept of registration of seed, where does all these take us to? It is meant only for the elimination of the rural sector.

A law, passed by the Government of Maharashtra, stipulates that individuals and corporations are same. Are they same? The hon. Finance Minister is a lawyer and he would know that there was a judgement delivered by the Division Bench of a High Court on the 20th of this month. Placchimar is a small place in Palakkad district in Kerala. Their demand was that they should get drinking water. The Coca Cola Company has a big plant in that area. The judgement that has been delivered says that an individual who want drinking water and a company who sells water have the same right. The Coca Cola company takes ground water to sell, but these people want water to drink. I would like to urge upon the

[Shri M.P. Veerendra Kumar]

Government, the Government can do it, to appeal against this judgement in the Supreme Court. The Panchayat of the area has filed an appeal but they alone cannot fight such a big Multinational Company.

Sir, finally, where is this country heading? We are surrendering our entire resources, all the means of livelihood of our peasants to the big operators. With this kind of a policy, can we save the rural sector? Can we save the farmers by injecting such a law on credit? With more credit, I am afraid, there will be more suicides. We must reappraise the whole policy on agriculture. But India is not United States of America and we cannot take the Western norms and judge India. The moment the peasantry is gone, India is also gone.

There is unrest in Andhra Pradesh; there is unrest in many other places. Is it a mere law and order problem? The problem is about the land, the farmers and seeds and nothing else. You go and analyse the situation.

Sir, recently a man committed suicide near my house by just binding some crackers on his Body which they use to catch fish, and it exploded. How long is terrorism from there? Slowly, the whole society is becoming criminal and you say that it is a law and order problem! With such an attitude, I do not think you can save the farming sector.

I urge upon the hon. Finance Minister to at least see that there is some more transparency and more concern about what is happening in the rural sector and unless we take a determined stand, I think peasantry and agriculture in India are gone.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Hon. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to extend my gratitude to you for providing me an opportunity to speak on the Finance Bill. Hon. Finance Minister is present here. It is a general perception among the masses that newly introduced budget is politically motivated. Today, we will have to think of ways to provide relief to the poor, farmer and labourers. Whichever government is in power think and act for their welfare. I have repeatedly mentioned that Uttar Pradesh is the biggest state of the country and the economic condition of the State is pathetic. So, we had demanded that the pending schemes involving total outlay of Rs. 18,230 crore in regard to Uttar Pradesh be cleared. If those schemes are sanctioned then the objectives for which we have been elected will be fulfilled.

Sir, Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi used to get elected from Uttar Pradesh. When he became the Prime Minister, while addressing a public meeting he had said that out of the funds which were provided by the Centre only 15 per cent were utilised on development works while rest of the 85 per cent are swindled by the mediating agencies. If such things are stated in a public meeting by the Prime Minister of a country then it shows that the situation is critical and condemnable. We will have to ponder over it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as per the spirit of Common Minimum Programme. Hon. Minister of Finance has introduced a budget with provisions for tax reforms. While on one hand he has provided relief both to women and senior citizens by enhancing the limit of taxable income from Rs. 50 thousand to Rs. 1.25-Rs. 1.50 lakh and have earned the good wishes of both the sections by taking this good step, on the other he has introduced a provision under which all those persons have to file income tax return whose total annual income from all sources exceeds Rs. on lakh. It seems that these provisions are tantamount to giving from one hand and taking away from other. Similarly the 0.1 per cent tax imposed against the withdrawal on a sum of Rs. ten thousand and above is to divert the attention while reality is different. These days people do not run saving account merely in one bank but in two-three banks. If this kind of tax is imposed then a person will not withdraw Rs. ten thousand in lump sum only from one bank but from two different banks: Generally when people go for withdrawals to some ATM Corner they give Rs. 10 or 20 to the guard as tip. So, it is my request that this tax should be rolled back.

Sir, hon. Finance Minister has talked of a dream budget, but it can deliver only if changed into reality when efforts are made to providing relief to the people. I will not talk about other states focus on the value Added Tax system in regard to Uttar Pradesh. Confusion has been prevailing among the masses in regard to VAT. Hon. Finance Minister discussed this issue even with our Chief Minister. Four percent tax has been levied on sweets, refined oil etc. and on the other hand even milkmen have not been spared. There are 70 per cent farmers in the country and generally all of them are also engaged in the production of milk. 12.5 per cent tax has been levied on them. I feel that it is consumed by the common man. I would like that it should be reduced so that the farmers do not bear its direct burden. Army personnels serving on the borders, those serving in the Defence and people from the canteens approached us

saying that heavy taxes have been levied on the canteens. The tax which has been increased on items of daily use should be rolled back. The budgetary allocation for education has been doubled in this year's budget. Complaints from several places regarding mid-day meal scheme have been received that children sometimes get and sometimes do not get the food. There is a need to pay attention. There is a need to double the allocation. Where its actual utilisation is taking place. One lakh eighty-eight thousand new Anganwadi Centres have been proposed to be set up and extra-provision has been made in the budget. Honorarium of all the workers of Anganwadi is pretty low. They repeatedly demand an increase in the honorarium, go on strike and request for absorption in Government job, demand wages at par with Government servant; their honorarium is very low. It is obvious that if they get low honorarium they will not be able to render good service to the children in right respect. They will not be able to continue teaching the poor children which they have been doing. They sell the food items like bread, panjirie etc. served under the mid-day meal scheme. There have been complaints of staff taking bribes. That is why the corruption should be weeded-out. I feel that funds should be provided only where that is utilised properly. Funds under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana have been increased from Rs. 2 crore to Rs. 2.5 crore but these days most of the Members have complained that the programme is not successful. An inquiry should be conducted to find out whether or not the benefits are actually accruing to the farmers. Similarly, there is a need to keep a vigil on all other schemes like National Rural Health Mission proposed to be launched in the next financial year. Through you, I would like to draw the attention of hon. Minister to the fact that the Primary Health Centres are lying closed in the villages. There are health centres, alongwith machines but no doctor wants to live in the village, they prefer living in urban areas. If doctors agree to live in rural areas we will be able to do something in regard to health of the poor; otherwise if he visits after a fortnight then it is of no use. This scheme should be revamped.

Sir, approximately Rs. 7,156 crore have been allocated in the budget for education for all campaign. Our objective is not confined to enabling a person to sign in the name of literacy and merely enabling 65 percent of the people in doing so will not make them literate. I feel that there has been no achievement in villages under the literacy campaign. I feel the budget allocated for these campaigns falls short of the requirement.

Sir, the budget for Indira Awas Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water mission, National Urban area

renovation has been increased and even the allocation is adequate. Improvement should be made in maintaining the quality of the said schemes. Only then our objective would be achieved. Even the people paying more than Rs. 50,000 for annual electricity bill have been asked to file a return. There are several marginal farmers whose annual electricity bill including that of tube well and house hold electricity bill comes round to the above said amount. It is also like a burden. Talking of currency notes, it is being said that Rs. 10/- coin shall soon be brought in circulation, where as the currency note of Rs. 1 is not even traceable in banks. There are all kinds of such professions in which currency notes in the denomination of Rs. 10/- is more in circulation and if such bunches are taken to the banks the cashier gets irritated regretting his inconvenience in counting the notes and asks for bigger denominations. The problem is that for a poor farmer these Rs. one, Rs. two, five or ten notes mean a lot, so these notes should be brought in circulation. Instructions should also be issued to banks to accept such currency notes of smaller denominations.

Several measures can be taken like increasing counters, deputing more staff by engaging extra employees.

I will conclude by making one more submission since Mr. Deputy Speaker is repeatedly ringing the bell. The commission of petrol pump owners and operators has not been increased in the last five years. The prices of petroleum products have soared but the commission has not been increased. If their commission is increased then the irregularities like black marketing, hoarding and under weighing etc. could be checked.

The prices of tractor have increased. It is directly associated with the farmers. So, its prices should be reduced. The prices of diesel keeps fluctuating from time to time, the price has increased. Diesel is also directly related with the farmer. There is a need to ponder over the said issues.

With these words, I would like to thank you for providing me an opportunity to speak.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are deliberating upon the Finance Bill for the year 2005-2006.

"Bharat ke arth Mantri Chidambaram,
Mehangai kam kame ka pura karo dharam,
N.D.A. valon ko bilkul nahin thi..*
Lekin aap garibon ki madad kame ka karo karam"

* Not recorded.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This word will not go on record.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: This year's budget is really very good one. You are definitely making efforts to alleviate poverty from this country. But we have to take certain steps to meet this objective. One is making provisions in the budget in accordance with the population of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the special component plan as demanded by me even last time since the percentage of poor people among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is comparatively much higher. As per census 2001 the population of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is 17 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. Out of the total budgetary allocation of every department, 27 per cent should be allocated for the welfare of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. If it is done I feel that we will be able to alleviate poverty from our country. For this purpose, I suggest that a five Year Plan with an outlay of Rs. five lakh crore should be evolved for the development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. If we formulate a plan of Rs. 5 lakh crore then housing facility can be provided to the homeless people belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, good progress can be made in their education, we can evolve several schemes to provide them employment and to ameliorate the condition of people living below poverty line. The rate of education and literacy is growing amongst people belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. This percentage has been increasing from the time since Babasaheb Ambedkar ji started his movement of creating awareness amongst Dalits, but their economic condition is such that not every student can attend school. Even if he goes to a school he does not get admission in a hostel, that is why I believe that number of residential schools and hostels should be increased. Every body does not get admission in student's hostel or residential school. More scholarships should be awarded to such people and it should be in accordance with inflation.

It is my suggestion that the Finance Minister should talk to the World Bank to convince it of the need to provide maximum possible financial assistance to the N.G.Os., or any industry being run by the people belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It can be of good use. There is a need to discuss this issue with the World Bank. Similarly, if we want to remove unemployment and make people self-reliant we should help the unemployed persons for self-employment. A new scheme should be formulated for facilitating loans to

unemployed persons. When they approach a bank for loan to the tune of Rs. 10-50 lakhs, the bank asks for sureties. People do not come forward as their sureties. They do not get loan as a result thereof. So, a new scheme should be formulated for this purpose.

We should think as to how we can provide maximum facilities to people living in slums. The Government has regularised jhuggies constructed upto the year 2000 for the development of slums. But people settle down in places where they get employment so it is not constitutional to fix such cut-off date. People residing in slums should be provided maximum assistance. I suggest that to uplift the poor above poverty line and for their development, assessment should be made of every one's property. There should be a ceiling as to how much property can be owned by an individual. Baba Saheb Ambedkar ji had acknowledged the element of economic equality alongwith social equality. If we have to acknowledge the element of economic equality we will have to put a ceiling on the ownership of private property. However, there is no such law that imposes such kind of restriction of the ownership of private property. If we want to bring equality there is a need to put a ceiling on the ownership of private property either by an individual or family. Steps should be taken in this direction. Chidambaramji is a capable Finance Minister and is entrusted with the responsibility of making the country prosperous besides ensuring that the prices of diesel and petrol do not soar high and inflation remains under check. There is also a need to check the circulation of black money. The economy of our country is being ruined due to it. We should think of measures to check the circulation of black money. It adversely affects the economy of a country. Economy of the country is strong where there is comparatively lesser flow of black money. With these words I support this Bill and hope that this Government will take steps to uplift the poor in the next four years.

[English]

*SHRI P. MOHAN (Madurai): Sir, I thank the Chair for giving me this opportunity to speak on the Finance Bill for the year 2005-06. This is the second consecutive Budget and Finance Bill presented before this august House by the UPA Government. I reiterate all that have been pointed out by our leader, Prof. Rupchand Pal about this Finance Bill. I am happy to note that certain features of this Bill are widely welcome and hence, I would like to congratulate the hon. Finance Minister and put forth my views both on behalf of my party and on my own behalf.

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

Sir, when it comes to religious people they will repose everything on Shiva saying that *sarvam shivamayam*. As far as this Central Government is concerned, whenever we approach any Department or any Ministry they pass the buck all on the Finance Ministry. They say that everything depends on the Finance Ministry. They point fingers at Finance Ministry saying that they wait for their clearance or concurrence. They say that they can fulfil our demands only when Finance Ministry gives a nod to their proposals. This is my experience during my both the tenures, now and in the past. It is a matter of pride that both the Ministers in the Finance Ministry hail from Tamil Nadu. It is heartening to note that both Shri Chidambaram and Shri Palaniamanickam are at the helm of affairs there. I would like to appreciate this Government for enhancing the allocation of funds to various departments in a prudent manner much better than their erstwhile NDA Government. Particularly, I would like to refer to the Ministry of HRD. During NDA's rule, the allocation was Rs. 5,000 crores. Now, it has been enhanced to Rs. 12,000 crores. It is appreciable that many such departments and ministries that really touch the poor are getting enhanced allocations. Even then, I have certain things to point out for necessary corrective measures.

When we come to credit facilities from the nationalised banks, it is far from encouraging. Our hon. Finance Minister has stated that the credit limit for Educational loans and agricultural loans have been enhanced from Rs. 5.00 lakhs to Rs. 7.00 lakhs. Whenever our Finance Minister visits Tamil Nadu he has been saying that agriculturists shall have liberal credit facilities. But to the contrary the bottlenecks are still there. Insisting on formalities and other sureties, the Bank men are dodging and depriving the farmers and self-employed persons of the much awaited credit facilities. Even today the situation has not eased. There is an urgent need to streamline the procedure involved in extending loans by the nationalised banks. I urge upon the Finance Ministry to impress upon the banks to be transparent and more open. They must issue periodical statements as regards to the loan extended. The details of the beneficiaries must be given clearly indicating the nature of loan, the performance of the loanees and their income. It should also be given clearly how much of money was given away as loan and details on the trade or industry must be given category-wise.

Considering the paucity of time, I would like to point out two lacunae that come to my mind. One is levying

tax on withdrawal of Rs. 10,000 from a bank. It goes without saying that only people who handle white money go to the bank and handle accounts. They are depositing and withdrawing money only from our nationalised banks not from the secretive Swiss banks. I urge upon the Union Finance Minister to give up this proposal once and for all. Income-tax ceiling has been enhanced. It is widely welcome. But still there is an apprehension that the withdrawal of standard deduction may not really benefit and it may not allow the intended benefit to accrue. Hence, I urge upon the Finance Ministry to look into this and see that the benefits go to the income-tax payers, especially the salaried class.

Now, I would like to point out to the programme generating facility centre constructed by Doordarshan in Madurai. Long back the construction has been completed, even the installation work is over but it is yet to be commissioned. The reason assigned is that the posts have not been sanctioned by the Finance Ministry to deploy manpower for operating that studio facility.

The construction is a fruition of ten years of effort. But, it is now lying unutilised. I & B Ministry people say that it has not been commissioned because staff have not been posted there and it awaits clearance from the Finance Ministry. Ten years are waiting and Rs. 10 crores of spending must not go waste. Hence, I once again urge upon the Finance Ministry to ensure that on-going projects are not shelved because of non-clearance at a later stage. Timely allocation and release of funds must be ensured.

Now, I come to the pathetic situation that is there in chilly cultivation areas including Sivaganga that comes under the Lok Sabha Constituency of the hon. Finance Minister. Hundreds and thousands of chilly growers are facing a grave situation now because of a sudden a steep fall in prices. The chilly that used to cost Rs. 20 per kilo costs a mere Rs. 2 per kg. now. This affects the farmers because their efforts to grow in plenty results in their misery. About 1.75 lakh acres of land in Tamil Nadu alone is utilised for chilly cultivation and those farmers are in tears now. There is no procurement from the Centre. Hence, I urge upon the Union Ministry to find a way out and announce a minimum support price. In Madurai market, the same chilly costs Rs. 30 per kilo. My colleague from Andhra Pradesh was mentioning that there is an effective marketing federation mechanism but still the chilly that was sold at Rs. 2,700 per quintal last year fetches only Rs. 1,200 per quintal this year. So, we

[Shri P. Mohan]

I learn that Andhra has also been seriously affected by the plentiful growth of chilly. There is the MSP mechanism for many agricultural produce and goods. I urge upon the Centre to include chilly also in that list.

I would like to point out that the language news units in the headquarters of Akashwani are sought to be transferred to the regional units. Citing the reason that posts are not being sanctioned, the news units in various Indian languages are moved away from the national capital. I urge upon the Union Finance Ministry to look into it and ensure that we are not deprived of news bulletins that will carry national and international news. We are used to morning 7.15 and evening 7.15 and mid-day news from Delhi. By shifting them to State Capitals, the very purpose of these traditional broadcast is defeated. I learnt that efforts are on to shift Tamil news unit from Delhi to Chennai for want of funds that are not being provided by the Finance Ministry. Hon. Chidambaram is the Finance Minister at the Centre and he hails from Tamil Nadu and I request him to ensure that Tamil broadcast continue from Delhi. All Indian languages must have their news broadcasts from the national capital.

Central schools are effectively functioning all over the country providing education at less cost. Hence, I urge upon the Union Government to ensure that all the district headquarters are provided with Central schools all over the country. The ban on recruitment should be lifted.

At this juncture, I would like to point out that there is a sudden insistence on first class in degree in the recruitment for clerical jobs in banks. Candidates hailing from rural areas and poor background may not have first class and may still successfully compete in the competitive examinations held for bank recruitments. Even IAS and IPS candidates are not expected to be first class graduates. Then, why banks must insist on this? I urge upon the Finance Ministry to render justice to job aspirants and prospective candidates from backward regions. It used to be stated that a mere pass in a degree from any recognised university was enough. Now, it is sought to be changed and it will create a disparity. Hence, the move must be given up immediately.

With these words, I conclude by extending support to the Finance Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow, that is the 29th of April, 2005, at 11 a.m.

18.30 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, April 29, 2005/Vaisakha 9, 1927 (Saka)

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