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(English Version)

Fourth Session
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)



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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, March 24, 2005/Chaitra 03, 1927 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

(MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Munshi Ram, Q. No. 301.

[Translation]

Functioning of T.V. Towers in Hilly States

*301. SHRI MUNSHI RAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government is contemplating to undertake the modernisation work of the T.V. towers in the hilly States in order to strengthen the telecast system there;

(b) if so, the details of the areas where T.V. towers are not fully functional;

(c) whether any scheme has been sanctioned to install new T.V. towers in such areas in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Schemes for replacement/upgradation of 9 existing TV transmitters in hilly States with modern transmitters are under implementation. Additional transmitters, including those in hilly States, are envisaged to be replaced by modern transmitters as

part of 10th Plan schemes, subject to availability of resources. Details are given in the Annexure enclosed.

(b) Out of total 344 TV transmitters in Hilly States, 13 transmitters (Nagaland-3, Arunachal Pradesh-5, Jammu and Kashmir-5) are presently reported to be not functional due to faults in equipment and thefts, etc. Three other transmitters (Tripura-2, Meghalaya-1) are partially functional due to non-availability of adequate staff.

(c) and (d) Whereas no scheme for establishment of new TV transmitters in hilly States has been sanctioned during 2003-04 and 2004-05, a Low Power Transmitter is under implementation at Ambassa (Tripura) as part of 9th Plan schemes and is expected to be completed during 2005.

(e) With the Launch of Ku-Band transmission service (free-to-air DTH) by Doordarshan, its bouquet, consisting of 33 TV and 12 Radio channels, can be received throughout the country, except the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, with the help of a small sized dish receive unit. Government is examining the relative merits of DTH and Terrestrial transmission for future expansion of coverage in the North-East.

Annexure

State	Project
Himachal Pradesh	HPT, Dharamshala
	LPT, Kullu
	HPT, Srinagar (DD1)
	HPT, Srinagar (DD News)
Jammu and Kashmir	HPT, Srinagar (Kashir Channel)
	LPT, Kargil
	LPT, Ukhru
Manipur	LPT, Pauri
Uttaranchal	LPT, Pithoragarh

[Translation]

SHRI MUNSHI RAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in reply to the question the hon. Minister has informed that modern transmitters are envisaged to be set up in the hilly areas subject to availability of resources. Uttaranchal our area is adjoining the China border. The telecast in its Chamoli, Rudraprayag, Paudi, Tihri, Uttarkashi areas is very poor. No channel can operate successfully in these areas. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has fixed any targets in regard there or whether any work is in progress for that purpose? Alongwith it, the hon. Minister has informed that 13 out of the 344 transmitters in the hilly areas are non-functioning. By when these would be rectified? Please elaborate the plan for the rectification and since when they have not been functioning.

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, he sought information in regard to particular areas. I would not be able to give that. I promise, through you, that I will make the information available to the hon. Member. Out of 344 transmitters, 13 are not functional. There are variety of reasons for this and they are being attended to. I can only say, they will be rectified as early as possible. All efforts are being made.

MR. SPEAKER: Do not ask for individual areas because it is not possible for the hon. Minister to reply.

[Translation]

SHRI MUNSHI RAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has not approved any scheme for setting up new transmitters in the hilly areas during the year 2004-05. My first question is what sort of scheme you are formulating for our area which is adjoining the China border.

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I would like to tell the hon. Member through you, that we have a new platform, that is, Doordarshan DTH platform, which is

free to air and unique. In hilly areas, it is difficult to cover through terrestrial network because for every major hill, there is shade. Therefore, in the areas, which he is suggesting for, we could think of getting the digital receivers distributed freely through the State Governments and other Departments, That is a more viable proposition. This is our view at the moment.

[Translation]

SHRI MUNSHI RAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Your question is over.

[English]

You have put your second supplementary.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question no. 316 is related to the tribal and hilly areas.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, I think, I also tag Question No. 316 of Shri Ramdas Athawale, which deals with similar matter of installation of T.V. transmitters in Adivasi and hilly areas.

[Translation]

Installation of T.V. Transmitters in Adivasis and Hilly Areas

*316. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of T.V. transmitters installed and operating, particularly in Adivasis and hilly areas in the country, as on date; State-wise;

(b) whether a number of projects pending for want of financial and technical clearance;

(c) if so, the details thereof, particularly in regard to Adivasis and hilly areas; State-wise;

(d) the time by which these pending projects are likely to be cleared; and

(e) the time by which the construction work is expected to commence?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Out of the 1400 T.V. transmitters in the country, 831 are allocated in Adivasi and hilly areas. State-wise break-up is given in the Annexure.

(b) No project in Adivasi and hilly areas is pending for want of financial and technical clearance. However, 14 transmitters are presently under implementation in Adivasi and hilly areas.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

Annexure

TV transmitters in Adivasi areas (TSP districts) and Hill areas

State	No. of Transmitters in TSP districts	No. of Transmitters in Hill areas	No. of Transmitters included in both Col. 2 and 3	No. of Transmitters in TSP and Hill areas
1	2	3	4	5
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	5			5
Andhra Pradesh	32			32
Arunachal Pradesh		49		49
Assam	22	2		24
Chhattisgarh	27			27
Daman and Diu	1			1
Goa		2		2
Gujarat	33			33
Himachal Pradesh	12	54	12	54
Jammu and Kashmir		131		131
Jharkhand	16			16
Karnataka	13	34	13	34
Kerala	19	31	19	31
Madhya Pradesh	34			34
Maharashtra	53	48	21	80

1	2	3	4	5
Manipur	6	8	6	8
Meghalaya		10		10
Mizoram		8		8
Nagaland		14		14
Orissa	61			61
Rajasthan	22			22
Sikkim	8	8	8	8
Tamil Nadu	27	29		56
Tripura	9	9	9	9
Uttar Pradesh	1			1
Uttaranchal		53		53
West Bengal	28	3	3	28
Total	429	493	91	831

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is true that work relating to the installation of transmitters in the tribal and hilly areas is going on rapidly. Despite that the work of setting up of transmitters at many places is yet to be cowried out. It is the demand of the people from all of the hilly areas that there is a need to set up a powerful transmitter in the hilly and tribal areas.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my constituency is entirely hilly area. Setting up of transmitter is being demanded over there as well, but so far it has not been set up. Therefore, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister by when a decision to set up a transmitter there would be taken by you?

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: As for the specific area he referred to, I would inform him through a letter.

You may kindly note from the Answer, out of 1,400 TV transmitters in the whole country, 831 are there in Adivasi and hilly areas. Therefore, more than 50 per cent of the transmitters are already serving in these areas. There is a difference between hilly areas and Adivasi areas because Adivasi areas also include many areas in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and so on and so forth. So, these areas are being catered to. At the risk of repeating my answer, may I say the DTH route, we think, is the ideal route.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, primitive tribals reside in my area. So through you, it is my request to the government that in my constituency there is a need to set up transmitter on a priority basis in the area belonging to the primitive tribals. So, through you, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he would consider making available

the transmitter facility to the primitive-tribe areas on a priority basis and whether he would urgently take steps in this regard?

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I agree with the hon. Member. The tribals and aboriginals need to be taken into account first, but in such areas, I believe, the State Governments should be able to distribute TV sets and digital receivers. I think, the various Departments of the Government of India and the State Governments should be urged to take up this work.

[Translation]

SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to have a specific information from the hon. Minister and would also like to bring to his notice that problems of the hilly and the desert areas are similar. So, the bordering desert areas are very much like the hilly areas. There is no difference between the desert and hilly areas. Both the hilly and desert areas are the border areas. Through you, I would like to bring it to the kind attention of the hon. Minister that in Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Barmer of Rajasthan which are adjoining areas to the border of Pakistan, mostly foreign channels are being telecast.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this question was raised during the last Lok Sabha also and at that time also an assurance was given by the government that high power transmitters would be installed in the bordering areas so as to insure that programmes telecast through the transmitters of the other countries, neighbouring countries may not be received in that area. But no progress has so far been made in this direction.

Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he proposes to set up high-power transmitter in the bordering areas of Pakistan such as Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Barmer etc.?

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: I agree with the hon. Member that there is a certain amount of similarity

between hilly areas and desert areas. Therefore, the penetration of TV in these kinds of areas is relatively low. Hence, we thought of a DTH platform. The DTH platform, even in these areas, is a wonderful solution because you get digital quality and you get a variety of private TV channels. Therefore, I would ask the hon. Speaker also to see if hon. MPs could get digital receivers distributed to various institutions through the MPLADS.

SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO: Mr. Speaker, Sir, a large number of Bengali-speaking people live in Baghmundi, Jhalla, and Baharampur in my district, especially in the hilly areas. They do not get the opportunity to watch Bengali programmes....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is in Purulia in West Bengal.

SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO: Ranchi is very near to that area. Therefore, only Hindi programmes are available for them on television. I have raised this issue several times in this House and the hon. Minister had informed me that Bengali regional programmes would be available through dish antenna or cable network. These equipment are very costly and cannot be purchased by the common man. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is considering upgradation of the Purulia LPT centre to HPT, to cover the hilly areas and also cover the Bengali-speaking areas.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: The hon. Member has referred to certain areas and you were also good enough to refer to Purulia. The Doordarshan DTH platform, as I said earlier, is a unique platform in the whole world. This is the only DTH platform in the world which is free-to-air. This is also conceived in the spirit of providing a blessing for linguistic minorities. We have Telugu people in Delhi and we have Punjabis in Hyderabad. If we have a digital receiver, all the channels could be watched. So, this is the only solution. Otherwise, if I were to cover all parts of India, I would need Rs. 5,000 crore. In these days of financial crunch, it is difficult proposition. That is the reason why we have opted for this route.

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission I would like to submit that almost all my state is hilly. In the plain and hilly areas particularly in the hilly areas. There are not full day programmes, whatever programmes are there they are not received clear. It is my request to the hon. Minister that the programmes of Kashmir telecast from the stations of Udhampur, Kathua, Doda and Pooch. Rajori are not properly in Jammu and Kathua and leave aside the transmission from other areas, the programmes telecast from Jammu do not reach Kathua and vice versa. I would like to know as to when are you going to link them?

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, in regard to Jammu and Kashmir, we are taking up a special package. I would try to get these problems addressed, as part of the special package.

[Translation]

SHRI CHHEWANG THUPSTAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my constituency is cent per cent hilly and the 97 per cent population over there belongs to the scheduled tribe category. Just now, the hon. Minister has said that the disadvantage of installing tower in the hilly areas is that their installation does not provide complete coverage. Through you, I would like to inform the hon. Minister that the personnel of the Doordarshan choose the easiest site for themselves. If we take into account the number of towers installed in my constituency, had the site selection been proper, there could have been cent per cent coverage. But this has not been done. There has been demands over there and it is also a bordering area. From propaganda point of view our television telecast is extremely necessary to counter the propaganda by Pakistani and Chinese side. I had also written in this regard, but I got the reply that the expansion programme has been suspended for the time being. The hon. Minister has said just now that the

newly introduced DTH should be utilised, but the fact is that the poor people cannot hire DTH. Therefore, I want to ask the hon. Minister whether he would review the work related to the installation of television towers in such sensitive areas and would take the trouble to get them installed in the Laddakh region too?

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: While I appreciate the question. I would request the hon. Member to understand the insuperable difficulty in covering all the hilly areas through terrestrial mode. I would ask all the State Governments to see that the poorer sections are helped in purchasing digital receivers.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Sir, there has been a lot of controversy about cultural invasion by foreign investments in DTH services. Now, Mr. Rupert Murdoch is in India. I think, yesterday, he had a meeting with the hon. Minister. May I know from the hon. Minister how the Indian viewers are going to be invaded or otherwise by these new services and how the existing free-to-air DTH services are going to be affected?

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, meeting media owners is a part of normal official work. While considering any request, laws and rules would be completely kept in view. The Doordarshan DTH platform is intended to moderate the demand in the market, of private DTH players.

I may take this Opportunity to inform you, and through you to the whole House, that in addition to 33 TV channels now, we are going to add up 17 more channels. So, there will be a free bouquet of 50 TV channels.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Prabhu Nath Singh. You were not here when your turn came. You raised your hand and then went away.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: I am sorry, Sir, Mr. hon. Speaker....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is the spirit. I appreciate it.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, though the question relates to the hilly areas, we have full faith in intelligence the hon. Minister. Besides hilly areas I would like to have discussion on the plain areas also. Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to know from the hon. Minister....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: It is entirely for the Minister. He is a very cooperative Minister. You may bring the area as nearer to the hilly areas as possible.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: No objection, Sir. Mr. Speaker, Sir, during the NDA Government, foundation stones were laid for installing TV transmitters at several places in the hilly areas and the plain areas. Keeping in view the difficulties of the rural areas the Government thought about installing TV transmitters at Darbhanga, Misrikh and some other places in Bihar. I remember that your predecessor Shri Ravi Shankar Prasadji wrote a letter regarding Misrikh to me. He mentioned in his letter No. 212/132/2003/B.D. that the Government had placed an order for supplying projection equipments and installing 30 metre high projection antena. He even inaugurated it but the programmes are not being telecast from there even now. I feel that there is need for its upgradation. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether he will take action in this regard and would also get them upgraded.

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: The Government is a continuous institution. The assurances given by my predecessors are binding on me. They will be honoured as far as possible.

MR. SPEAKER: No more supplementary from the plains. Only Members from hilly area will get the priority.

...(Interruptions)

DR. COL. (RETD.) DHANI RAM SHANDIL: I come from Himachal Pradesh and my constituency is almost fully hilly. The Government has done a good job. We are having transmitters, but most of the transmitters are low capacity transmitters. The area is full of orchards and apple farmers and vegetable farmers. We need good transmission. Although the Shimla Doordarshan was definitely upgraded, but it was not to the extent that it should have been. These feeder transmitters which are along the hill lines outside, particularly the Khara Pathar area and Rohru area, the inner-side of our constituency needs upgradation.

So, my question to the hon. Minister is this: Do you have a specific plan for upgrading these low power transmitters into high power transmitters so that farmers of orchids can see clear TV programmes?... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: He has said just now.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: In regard to the specific things which he has referred to, I will get them looked into. But if he is asking for total upgradation from LPT to HPT, I am afraid....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: He has answered it.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am afraid, it is a financially forbidding proposition. I cannot promise. If there is scope for marginal upgradation, we can look into that.

SHRI KHIREN RIJJU: I am agreeing to the statement given by the hon. Minister that definitely it is difficult to install towers and make other provisions in the hilly region. But it is a fact that whatever steps the Government has been taking, they are not, so far, successful. The statement shown here also proves that

in my State, Arunachal Pradesh, maximum transmitters etc. are not working. So, whatever steps the Government has taken, they are not successful. In my State they watch programmes from across the country. They watch the programmes of China though they do not understand their language.

My question is this: will the Government put some extra effort to take care of those transmission towers which are not working and provide more service in those areas?

MR. SPEAKER: Same question is being asked. I think this is becoming a discussion as same questions are being put.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, in all humility, I would like to tell the hon. Member that to say that the effort of Doordarshan is not successful is not correct. You may note from the answer that out of 344 TV transmitters, only 13 are suffering from some difficulty. Therefore, an overwhelming percentage of transmitters is working normally. Please get your impression corrected in this regard.

As for the special point, this will be looked into.

PROF CHANDER KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the Kinnaur areas, the programmes that are coming from the high velocity transmitters that are functioning from the border areas of China and Pakistan are very clear whereas the Himachal Pradesh programmes and some of the other programmes of Doordarshan are not so clear in those areas and the people are not getting the benefit out of it. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he would establish those high velocity transmitters in those areas where the people can have the information from their own areas. In Kangra district, the transmitter at Ashapuri is not functioning properly. Do you propose to improve the transmitter in that area? Thank you very much.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, as far as Kangra transmitter is concerned, the complaint will be immediately attended to. But at the risk of reiterating

the obvious, in all these hilly areas it has become very difficult; therefore, I would still recommend that digital receivers by DTH is one great solution.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav, you are not from hilly area. Therefore, let us move on to Q. No. 302.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question is also related to the hilly areas. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You shift to hilly areas.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have very small question to ask....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I said 'hilly areas' not 'Hindi areas'.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Very well, he will represent the plains so far as this question is concerned.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the bordering areas of Indo-China.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Same question has been put earlier.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are talking about upgradation of transmission in the hilly states situated on the Indo-China border. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether there is any plan to upgrade the LPT into HPT in the far flying rural hilly areas like Fulpaes situated along Indo-Nepal border.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: He has answered it. It will be the fifth time that he will be repeating.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, to the best of my knowledge, one LPT costs Rs. one crore while one HPT costs Rs. 10 crore and upgradation at that level is financially unwise. I would, therefore, urge the DTH route.

MR. SPEAKER: By public acclamation I have to allow Shri Salim.

...(Interruptions)

MD. SALIM: Sir, I have a very technical question to ask.

The concept of cable TV emerged to overcome this natural barrier in the way of receiving terrestrial signals. The questions that the hon. Members are putting from hilly areas and desert areas are because of the weak signals in those thinly populated areas. The DTH is our technological invention and the hon. Minister is marketing that. I do appreciate that.

Besides cost factors of broadcasting, the need is for 'narrow-casting' because that is why you have the district editions of newspapers and that is why you have FM radios. In the television also this 'narrow-casting' thing is needed. The DTH will provide satellite channel—whether it is free-to-air or paid channel, that is another matter. But the concern is that the content of the programme is not representing the needs and ethos of those hilly and desert areas and the remotely located areas. Even if you supply DTH there from MPs' funds or through State Government or at subsidised rates, the needs of the people are not going to be catered by the satellite channel that you are going to put.

MR. SPEAKER: You want better content.

MD. SALIM: How is the hon. Minister going to address this question so that our people receive the signals which they need?

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: I think, the hon. Member has put a very good question. It is true that Doordarshan DTH platform provides Only National Channels and there is increasing interest in the regional content which is broadly being described by him as 'narrow-casting'. I am looking at the whole aspect. I do not have an answer immediately. I will try and address it.

[Translation]

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my constituency Ratnagiri is a hilly area. Programmes of Delhi Doordarshan are not telecast in the entire Ratnagiri area...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: He will look into it.

[Translation]

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE: Sir, I, through you, would like to ask the hon. Minister as to whether he will make arrangement to telecast the programmes of Delhi Doordarshan in Ratnagiri also.

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I am not able to follow the problem he has referred to in Ratnagiri, but since he has mentioned it in the House, it will be attended to immediately.

MR. SPEAKER: Eleven hon. Members have put supplementaries. Let us go to Question No. 302.

Railway Safety Fund

*302. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the purpose of setting up of Railway Safety Fund;

(b) whether the objectives have been achieved;

(c) if so, details thereof and if not, reasons therefor; and

(d) the amount spent from the Fund during each of the last three years?

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

Statement

(a) Railway Safety Fund has been set up primarily to channelise the Railways' share of the diesel cess and petrol cess, received from the Central Road Fund, to be utilized exclusively for road related railway safety works such as construction of Road Over and Under Bridges, improvement to level crossings, including their manning etc.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Thrust has been given for inclusion of these safety related works as there is an assured inflow into the fund which is non-lapsable. Through this fund, 87 Road Over Bridges and Road Under Bridges have been constructed, 651 unmanned level crossings have been converted into manned level crossings and 1112 level crossings have been interlocked ever since its inception. Further, works relating to manning of 701 unmanned level crossings and about 900 works of interlocking of manned level crossing are in progress. Apart from this, 436 Road Over Bridges and Road Under Bridges are under construction.

(d) The amount spent from the fund in the last three years is as under:—

Year	Amount spent (Rs. in Crores)
2001-02	140.32
2002-03	164.07
2003-04	166.19

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister very cleverly has shown amount spent

from railway safety during the year 2001-2002. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Does Cleverness mean intelligence?

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Yes Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Then speak the word intelligence.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has not the allocated amount and the remained unspent amount. The Railways got Rs. 532.31 crore in the year 2001-2002, it spent only Rs. 140.32 crore and Rs. 392.3 crore remained unspent. It got Rs. 658.77 crore in the year 2002-2003, out of which it spent Rs. 164.8 crore and Rs. 494.69 crore remained unspent. Similarly, in the year 2003-2004....*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Figures have been given in the reply of the hon. Minister, why are you reading them out?

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister in his reply has mentioned only the amount spent but has not mentioned the unspent amount. Amount was allocated to the Railways for railway safety, manning unmanned crossings, installing devices to avert accidents and also to install signals. Does this unspent amount not show inaction on the part of the railways. The railways have kept huge amount unspent and accidents are taking place everywhere....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: He is asking why you have not spent it.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing else will be recorded.

...*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister, he is asking why you have not spent it.

...*(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Do not record anything else.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This habit should go. This habit has to be curbed.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the hon. Member has asked why we have not spent....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is most unfortunate. This is Question Hour. There is a method of putting questions and giving answers. I am trying to give all sides of the House opportunity to put supplementaries.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: What are you saying?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Is some fun going on in the House?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is House of the People. You have been elected to the Lok Sabha as such you have a lot of responsibilities. Have the voters sent us here for gossips?

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI UDAY SINGH: Sir, there are too many supplementaries. It is unfair to other people whose Questions are listed....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You are right, but why do you not discuss amongst yourselves? Even after allowing 11 supplementary questions, comments are being made.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Will you kindly take your seat? Please come and advise me how to do it!

*Not recorded.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the hon. Member has raised the issue that we have not shown the unspent amount in it. He has also asked about the amount spent from this Fund during the last year. I would like to mention that this Fund itself has come into existence from 01-04-2001 as a result of the initiative taken by the Railway Board. The Government also decided to allocate a portion of the Road Safety Fund for the Railway Safety Fund by collecting diesel and petro cess. Accordingly, this Fund was created in the Railways.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: This has been passed in the Parliament....(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, I am trying to answer the hon. Member's question.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Raghunathji, this is not correct.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Jha, you should give an opportunity to the hon. Minister to reply the question.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have told me that figures have been given in the reply. The Minister is saying that it has been passed in the Parliament and we have voted for it. He has also talked about imposing cess on diesel....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Indeed, it has been stated.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: If I find that the hon. Members are not appreciating what the country wants us to do, then I will go on saying this.

SHRI R. VELU: There is no hesitation by the Railway Ministry to spend any amount on this issue. It is not a question of the amount being left unspent, it is a question of sharing the cost of ROB/RUBs with the State Governments. The State Governments will have to necessarily send proposals. They have to give their consent to contribute 50 per cent to it; agree to give land free; and also agree to provide the approach road on either side. These are some of the issues involved in this case.

I would like to state that we are ready to spend the money. In fact, I will say that we had a closing balance of Rs. 392 crore to the end of 2001-02, which the hon. Member has also mentioned. However, this is not the full amount allotted from diesel cess to it. A part of this amount was brought forward, from out of the "Development Fund" contributed by the Railways. After spending as much as possible on the proposals given by the State Governments, we were having a closing balance of Rs. 392 crore in the year 2001-2002. In the same way, we had Rs. 494 crore as the closing balance in the year 2002-2003, Rs. 764 crore in the year 2003-2004, and so on. But we are not dealing with the closing balance since the question related to the amount spent from the fund during each of the last three years.

I would request the hon. Member to go back to his State, and request the State Government to send proposals with all the necessary formalities that I have just mentioned here.

Secondly, the allocation this year is Rs. 711 crore. This amount we have apportioned, namely, Rs. 300 crore for level crossing and Rs. 411 crore for the ROB. I would like to state here that we are not at all parking funds in our favour. Hence, I would request the hon. Member to appreciate the position. This is my request to him.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that 14 thousand accidents took place from

the year 1993-94 to 1997-98. I would like to say that Railway Board has misled the Parliament because in their report, only 3197 and 2187 accidents have been mentioned. I would like to know the name of the officer who has done this. I am not mentioning these figures on my own but I am mentioning these figures from the report of Auditor General. It is clearly written in the Audit report and they have misled the Parliament. In place of 14 thousand accidents, their department has shown around 5 thousand accidents only. I would like to ask as to what are the reasons for giving such misleading information.

[English]

Besides this, I would like to know in the B part, about the total number of accidents and deaths that have occurred at the unmanned level crossings during the last three years. What was the number of unmanned level crossings targeted for manning, and how many of them have been manned during the last three years? What are the reasons for not achieving the target set by the Ministry? I moved like you to tell as to what steps are being taken to achieve the set target? The minister may please give reply to it.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the first part of the question of the hon. Member relates to difference in the figures. I would like to tell the hon. Member that I will collect these figures, furnished to him, separately and if there is any discrepancy, then I will try to reconcile and give a proper answer.

The second point is about the unmanned gates.
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, please carry on. There is no need for you to respond to him.

SHRI R. VELU: As regards the unmanned gates, we have already been able to provide manning for 651 unmanned gates since the inception of the Railway Safety Fund.

Again, manning of 701 unmanned gates are sanctioned and in progress. Above all these things, 1,247 unmanned gates have been indentified for manning. There is a problem of funds. Manning a gate costs about Rs. 12 lakh. Again, depending upon the TVU (Train-Vehicle Unit), if there are more than 6,000 train vehicle units, such unmanned gates to be classified for manning and accordingly, we are taking action. Now, here also, I will appeal to the hon. Member, if the hon. Member thinks that he can also contribute his mite out of MPLADS funds, he is welcome. This is also a possibility and we are also very much serious about it.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Sir, railway safety is a very important issue. The Indian Railways and the Government of India are spending crore of rupees on RUBs, ROBs and level crossings. Through you, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Indian Railways proposes to place an action-taken report or an implementation report before the Parliament regarding what it has done in the previous year for the sake of railway safety.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, this question we will definitely examine. This is a very good suggestion....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: He will inform you.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Sir, I request your protection. It is not a suggestion. It is a specific question—whether the Indian Railways proposes to place an implementation report or an action-taken report before the Parliament. He should say 'yes' or 'no'. There is nothing to examine in this.

MR. SPEAKER: That is a very good suggestion; he may consider it.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, I say that it is a valid suggestion. I will consider it.

MR. SPEAKER: I have added something to it—"very good". Now, Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav.

[*Translation*]

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Prabhunath Singhji is interrupting me....(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: It is because he has got his supplementary already. He does not want others to put.

[*Translation*]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Sir, I am giving him "Salah" (a piece of advice)...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: It is not being recorded 'Salah' you give to him privately.

[*Translation*]

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the reply given by the hon'ble Minister, the unmanned crossing and the ROB and RUB have been mentioned. My question is related to these two things. The half part of my question is related to ROB and RUB and the other half is related to unmanned crossing.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Put your question immediately.

[*Translation*]

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: In case of ROB and RUB, I would like to know whether the hon'ble Minister or his department would give permission to construct ROB and RUB at the identified places, in case any State Government comes out with a proposal to spend half the amount for Rail Over Bridge and Rail under bridge there? The second part of my question is a peculiar one and related to my parliamentary constituency. While going from Sambhal to Moradabad, there is unmanned railway level crossing on the route, whenever a train passes, it stops before the level crossing. Then the driver or his companion gets down from the train, closes down the barrier and the train

passes and again the train stops and the driver or his companion gets down to lift the barrier again.

[English]

This process has been going on for the last many years. I had raised this issue in that House also but nothing whatsoever has yet been done. Will you please try to arrange for a part-time man only? It is happening there always.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the first part of the question I have already answered. Whenever a State Government comes with a proposal for meeting the fifty per cent cost and observing all other formalities at level crossings with TUVs more than one line we are ready to sanction and there is no hesitation on our part.

As regards the second part, there are some rail sections where one or two trains alone run there. Because of a paltry number of passenger trains—I mean to say that they are very few the trains stop before the gate and the guard comes out, closes the gate and again goes back and...

MR. SPEAKER: The entire procedure need not be narrated here. All of us have the experience.

SHRI R. VELU: I am once again appealing to the hon. Member that, if he is willing to have it manned, his contribution is welcome. His case will be examined.

...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Whatever you are speaking is not going on record. You are a very senior Member.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: From the statement of the hon. Minister, we come to know that Railway Safety Fund is being utilised for construction of ROB

and RUBs. In most of the railway stations, the senior citizens, as they are unable to climb and walk down the FOBs, try to cross over the tracks to catch the trains, resulting in accidental deaths. Since this is a safety-related aspect, does the Ministry have any proposal to provide escalator facility, just as in the airports, in important railway stations?

SHRI R. VELU: This Railway Safety Fund does not deal with such requirements. It is only meant for construction of ROB and manning of unmanned LCs, that is, level-crossings.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: This question is related to safety.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, through you, I have already answered that question.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not know why anybody wants to become a Railway Minister because they can never satisfy anybody.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: Sir, he has not replied to my question. Let him reply to my question.

SHRI R. VELU: The second part of his question is about amenities, or comes under amenities, whereas the current question deals with construction of FOBs. Therefore, that will have to be taken care of separately, but not under this Railway Safety Fund.

SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE: Will the hon. Minister be pleased to state that out of 436 ROB, as replied by the hon. Minister, how many are under construction in the State of West Bengal? This is part 'a' of my question. Part 'b' of my question is, whether the Railway authorities are considering any proposal from the Government of West Bengal to share ROB and RUB costs in the ratio of 2:1. Do you follow my question, Mr. Minister?

MR. SPEAKER: He is following what you are saying. Please put your question. Instead of suggesting 50:50 share, you are suggesting 2:1.

SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE: That is the suggestion from West Bengal Government.

SHRI R. VELU: Will you please repeat your question?

SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE: Out of 436 ROB and RUBs, how many are under construction in the State of West Bengal?

MR. SPEAKER: How can he give the answer? How can he be specific with regard to any State?

SHRI R. VELU: Normally, we do not deal state-wise. However, I can give you the details for West Bengal.

MR. SPEAKER: You send it to him separately.

SHRI R. VELU: I can send the reply to him.

So far as the second part of his question is concerned, as per the policy, the ratio is 50:50. If any proposal comes, we will examine it.

SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE: Have you received any proposal from the Government of West Bengal?

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: All right, you may send the reply afterwards.

SHRI MITRASEN YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister the number of such proposals from Uttar Pradesh under his consideration and the number of proposals sanctioned out of them so far.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question?

[Translation]

SHRI MITRASEN YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister the number of ROB and RUB proposals from Uttar Pradesh under his consideration and the number of proposals sanctioned so far.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The Question Hour has lost all relevance.

SHRI R. VELU: In case of Uttar Pradesh, 26 proposals have been sanctioned, and about 266 projects are pending consideration.

[Translation]

DR. RAJESH MISHRA: Sir, the amount spent or lying utilised since the establishment of Railway Safety Fund and the number of ROB and RUB constructed so far since then has been given in it. I would like to know whether the Government has any specific plan to conduct survey with regard to all the important districts and historical places in the country like Delhi which is the political capital of the country, Mumbai which is the economic capital, Kashi which is the religious and cultural capital of India so as to find out the locations where ROB and RUB are required to be constructed and whether the Government would make effort to construct them.

[English]

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, as I mentioned, these are all identified. Wherever there is more than one lakh Train-Vehicles Unit, those have already been identified, whether it is a commercial centre or a tourist centre or whatever it is, the Government have already taken steps to sanction them if the State Government has come forward. Take, for example, whatever the hon. Member has mentioned, if that has been prioritized and sent to us, we would necessarily consider and sanction.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri B. Mahtab. It is the seventh and the last supplementary.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: It is a very important question.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You will not get it.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir, it is a very important question....(Interruptions)

SHRI B. MAHTAB: This is a very genuine problem which has been posed in this Question. The Minister has already replied in his statement that 87 ROB's and RUB's have been completed....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: In forty-seven minutes we have done only two Questions!

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I will allow you in the next one. Everyone will have his turn.

SHRI B. MAHTAB: Around 436 ROB's and RUB's are in the process of construction....(Interruptions) If we calculate, around 50 per cent of the money that is going to be invested by the State Governments, it amounts to around Rs. 3,000 crore.

MR. SPEAKER: Please, put your question.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Are you angry, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER: I am not angry at all.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI B. MAHTAB: Rupees three thousand crore is there for the Railways which we are going to invest. But the main blame is against the respective State Governments that they are not providing their share and that is why a number of projects are not being completed in time. Further, as per the Standing Committee Report, there are 1,252 level crossings where ROB's and RUB's will be constructed. Taking it into consideration, you need around Rs. 15,000 crore to have ROB's and RUB's for having these 1,252 railway crossings, of which the Railways' share will be Rs. 7,500 crore. You pay cess relating to petrol and diesel

to the Road Safety Fund. Every year, invariably, you get Rs. 400 crore. Do you intend to or have you made any attempt to increase the amount which you get from Road Safety Fund, from Rs. 400 crore to Rs. 800-900 crore? If you have made any attempt, then what is that? Have you approached the Government or the Finance Ministry to exempt you from paying anything on petrol and diesel?... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Ask a pointed question, please.

SHRI B. MAHTAB: Lastly, Sir, do you intend to take it up as a single agency instead of depending for 50 per cent on the States? If you get this exemption, do you intend to take it up as a single agency so that in a time-bound manner, these ROB's and RUB's can be completed?

MR. SPEAKER: It should not be such a lengthy question.

SHRI R. VELU: It is a very valid question and suggestion. Sir, the point is whether we have approached the Government for increasing the share from the Road Safety Fund. In fact, the Standing Committee has made two suggestions. The first suggestion is about increased share of Rs. 900 crore instead of Rs. 700 crore being the allotment now. The second suggestion is also giving exemption to that we are paying about Rs. 300 crore every year as our contribution as diesel cess on Rs. 4,500 crore worth of diesel that we are buying from our friend Petroleum Minister here. So, we are now trying to put these two suggestions before the Government i.e. to the Plannings Commission and the Finance Ministry for their consideration.

The second thing is about the appointment of a single agency for execution. It is a valid suggestion. But then, money is a constraint and the policy also requires a change. Then, the problem of going to State Governments and asking for the 50 per cent, etc., etc., will be over. I think, these two suggestions are very welcome suggestions. We will examine them and take them up with the Government.

Strengthening of RPF

+

*303. SHRI UDAY SINGH:

SHRI RAJESH VERMA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railway Protection Force has been assigned more powers to deal with crimes in trains;

(b) if so, whether after delegating more powers to Railway Protection Force, the crime rate in trains has been reduced;

(c) if so, the facts thereof;

(d) whether Railway Protection Force has not been properly providing services in trains;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor;

(f) whether the Railway Protection Force has been equipped with latest equipment to prevent crime in trains;

(g) if so, the details thereof; and

(h) if not, the steps proposed to be taken to upkeep the technology used by the RPF?

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

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir. The RPF Act, 1957 and the Railways Act, 1989 have been amended to enable the Railways, through the RPF, to effectively supplement the efforts of the Governments in controlling crime on the Railways. The Railway Protection Force staff are being deployed to escort many trains and deployed in the passenger area to augment the efforts of the State Governments. RPF has also been empowered to deal with the minor offences affecting the train operations such as alarm chain pulling, roof travel, touting, ticket

less travel, unauthorized entry etc. (except Sabotage related offences under Sections 150 to 152) amending the Railways Act w.e.f. July 2004. The objective is to ensure that the State Police (Government Railway Police) get more man power and time to handle heinous offences such as Murder, Dacoity, Robbery etc. including Sabotage and Train Wrecking, under the provisions of Indian Penal Code, the Railways Act and other laws of the land.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The offences of Dacoity, Robbery, Theft and Theft of passengers' belongings etc. in trains and railway premises have reduced during the period July to December 2004 in comparison to the period January to June 2004. The other cognizable offences like Murder/Attempt to murder, Kidnapping and abduction have, however, marginally increased. The details are given below:—

Crime	January to June 2004	July to December 2004
Dacoity	82	50
Robbery	201	198
Theft of Passengers' belongings	6,066	5,542
Murder and attempt to murder	179	186
Kidnapping and Abduction	37	44
Total cognizable offences	10,431	10,643

(d) and (e) No, Sir. From July, 2004 Railway Protection Force is providing a daily average of 1,217 escort parties in the affected trains, in co-ordination with the State Governments, for which an average of 3,712 staff are deployed. 480 stations on the average are also given additional security by Railway Protection Force with deployment of 2,705 personnel daily. These

deployments are in addition to the Government Railway Police personnel deployed on trains and in the railway premises, in order to further strengthen the security. The offenders apprehended by RPF staff are forwarded to the concerned Government Railway Police with detailed report regarding the offence for registration of cases and further legal action. The six months period is too short to gauge the overall effect of Railway Protection Force providing additional services. Due to increased presence of uniformed personnel, more cases tend to get noticed, reported, reported and registered.

(f) to (h) The Railway Protection Force is being equipped with additional road vehicles numbering 48 Buses, 152 Jeeps and 119 Motor Cycles costing above Rs. 9 Crores. Communication equipments numbering 3142 of 5 Watt walkie-talkies and 123 numbers of 25 Watt VHF sets, costing above Rs. 4 Crores. In this connection, funds have been sanctioned and matter is under process. Besides, compact and effective weapons (5.56 mm INSAS Rifles numbering 1000 costing Rs. 3.02 crores) have been provided. For the current financial year 1,000 INSAS rifles and 500 carbines, totally costing 3.58 crores, are being procured.

Prior to 1st July, 2004, the Railway Protection Force personnel were imparted special training in the form of Re-orientation course w.e.f. 05-01-2004 to 26-04-2004 to make them aware of their additional responsibilities. In addition, the supervisory Railway Protection Force staff were trained alongwith other Commercial and Operating staff of the Railways in Customer Care through a professional agency.

SHRI UDAY SINGH: Thank you, Sir. I will try to assist the House by asking only one supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: You can put a question on this.

SHRI UDAY SINGH: The hon. Minister cannot see me because I am behind a *khamba*....(Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, it is very unfortunate that these running commentaries are being made when the House is now involved in a very

important part of the sitting, the Question Hour. Through these questions, people impose accountability on the Executive. This is becoming a matter of just somehow putting a question or not. Many Members would like the questions to be put. At least, give some respect to the Chair. Are you enhancing the prestige of this House by making such running commentaries? It is very painful for me to say all these things.

SHRI UDAY SINGH: Sir, the answer that I have received from the hon. Minister is extremely scary. It seems that we are moving towards a 'police railway'. We are talking of buying thousands and thousands of rifles and all kinds of things, almost seeming that only terrorists are going to travel by trains. There is a perceptible fear in the eyes of anybody today who is travelling by trains in India.

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question?

SHRI UDAY SINGH: The question is, is the Minister, is the Government going to take advantage of the technology available today? I will give you an example. The bogeys can be locked, in case there is no communication between the bogeys and the train driver in case of a crime being committed. Are they going to take advantage of the technologies available, or are they going only to depend on the rifles and the guns?

SHRI R. VELU: In the answer to the question, we have furnished the details of steps proposed to be taken to upgrade the technology used by RPF. It can be for using the modern technology to give more protection and security to the passengers on the trains and at the stations. The suggestion made on the use of the technology of locking up of bogeys, well, it is a welcome suggestion and we will look into it. But then, that does not deter us from going ahead with the modernisation of our RPF with all the facilities so that any eventuality can be dealt with.

MR. SPEAKER: Second supplementary.

SHRI UDAY SINGH: I pass that over, Sir. I am assisting you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Deeply appreciated.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJESH VERMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister of State for the Railways that offenses in railways have come down as it has been stated by him in his answer to para (A) and (B) of the question but in the end he has accepted that murder like offence have increased marginally. I would like to know from the hon. Minister of State for Railways as to what are the reasons for increase in heinous crimes like murder and kidnapping and what are the measures being taken by you to curb them?

[English]

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, as the hon. Member has rightly put it, the other offences that have come down are related to passengers. These are: murder, attempted murder, kidnap, etc., that are arising out of personal enmity. You also see from the figures that these kinds of things that are happening—the murders, kidnaps, etc.,—are not happening in the running trains, but they are happening more at the stations. It is because of personal enmity between the groups of people. So, you cannot relate it to this.

On the other hand, after amendments to the RPF Act of 1957 and the Railway Act of 1989, more powers have been given to the Railway Protection Force so that they can deal with about 26 minor offences themselves. This has helped and because of this it has resulted in the passengers, who have become victims, coming forward to report the crimes. That is why that provision is there. We have taken the suggestion of the hon. Member in all earnestness. In fact, this will strengthen the Government. Again, these are related to the State Police and IPC. We are having any number of coordination meetings with them to deal with it. That much I assure the hon. Member.

SHRIMATI M.S.K. BHAVANI RAJENTHIRAN: Hon. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know, through you, from the hon. Railway Minister whether the persons are selected in the Railway Protection Force (RPF) on compassionate ground. Morally also, this is a way by which we can strengthen the Railway Protection Force (RPF).

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, today, the Indian Railways is the most compassionate Railway in the sense that every year, we are recruiting 7,000 to 8,000 people on compassionate ground. The hon. Member's suggestion is welcome. I would like to give more details if she wants year-wise etc. We are recruiting people on a large scale in the Railway Protection Force (RPF).

[Translation]

SHRIMATI BHAVANA P. GAWALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the crimes in rail has been increasing. I think that the measures taken by the Minister to curb them are not sufficient. Today in Mumbai thousands of passengers including women travel in local trains of Mumbai. We often read in newspapers the incidents of throwing acids and tragic incidents like rape of a handicapped girl in local train. I would like to ask the hon. Minister categorically as to whether the Government are going to take any concrete step for protection of women.

[English]

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, in the Railway Protection Force (RPF), we have recruited 66,000 personnel. We have also an element of lady RPF personnel being recruited. Now, they are also being trained to give sufficient protection. We have also imparted training to them so that the lady RPF personnel are able to take care of the lady compartments.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, from the security point of view in railways several steps have been taken by the Government. I hope that the Government must have known that the Railway

Protection Force personnel have illegally occupied waiting halls in all railway stations between Buxer and Sitarampur under Danapur rail division. Even women have to face difficulty to go to toilets and other waiting rooms are also in the illegal possession—whether the Government would arrange accommodation facility for the personnel of the Railway Protection Force? Whether separate office will be arranged for them. Approximately the same situation exists on all stations and whether the Government will evacuate the occupied waiting rooms?

[English]

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, we have now provided, in the work programme, for separate facility for the RPF people. Those cases will definitely be looked into and proper arrangements will be made for vacating them.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as hon. Minister has said himself in his reply that the incidents of dacoity, robbery, theft, pilferage of passenger's belongings etc. taking place in trains and railway premises have come down during July, 2000 in comparison to the period from January to June, 2000 but the cases of murder, attempt to murder and abduction have been increased.

MR. SPEAKER: This is about to over.

SHRI RAJANARAYAN BUDHOLIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether any step is being taken by the Government to check the rise of these serious cases.

[English]

SHRI R. VELU: Hon. Member, through you, Sir, I have already answered the question. As I have already mentioned, heinous crimes are more on personal enmities and at the stations. We have also geared up the State Police to deal with these cases. I assure the hon. Member that this will get reduced in course of time.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Telecasting Rights to Prasar Bharati

*304. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN": Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prasar Bharati has the monopoly in respect of telecast in certain fields;

(b) if so, whether Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has urged upon the Government to do away with the said monopoly of Prasar Bharati;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) Terrestrial Television transmission in India is presently being done by only Prasar Bharati, whereas TV transmission through satellite is being carried out by both Prasar Bharati and the private broadcasters.

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 the 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]

Indo-Iran Gas Pipe Line Project

*305. SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU:

SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:

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

(a) the route chart of the proposed Indo-Iran gas pipe line;

(b) whether Iran has agreed to have a delivery point of the gas at the Indian border;

(c) if so, whether there is any proposal to connect it with the proposed national gas grid;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government has finalised the scheme for domestic and industrial supply from said pipe line; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The proposal for a gas pipeline from Iran to India through Pakistan is at initial stages of discussion. It is proposed to have two separate back-to-back agreements: between Iran and India for the delivery of gas by pipeline to our agreed point on the India-Pakistan border; and between Iran and Pakistan for transmission from Iran and transit through Pakistan. The details of the project including the pipeline route, deliver point, etc., are yet to be finalized.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir, in principle it is proposed to link supplies from Iran to the national network of pipelines, but the specifics are to be worked out.

(e) and (f) Marketing arrangements within India will be made after the details of supply to the India-Pakistan border have been finalized.

[Translation]

Setting up of Railway Stations

*306. SHRI TUKARAM GANPATRAO RENGE
PATIL:

SHRI V.K. THUMMAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the norms laid down for setting up as railway station;

(b) whether the new railways stations are not being set up despite fulfilling the prescribed norms; and

(c) if so, the constraints faced by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) to (c) There are no laid down norms for setting up of a new station. The new railway stations are, however, constructed as part of Projects or on existing lines on operational considerations and to meet the needs of population and growth centers taking into account operational, engineering and financial viability as well as availability of resources.

Oil and Gas Exploration Projects Abroad

*307. SHRI SITA RAM YADAV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the present policy for awarding contracts for oil and gas exploration projects in foreign countries;

(b) whether the Government is contemplating to change the policy;

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

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) To enhance the country's energy security, in keeping with the objectives of Energy Security as spelled out in the National Common Minimum Programme of the Government, National Oil Companies such as ONGC Videsh¹ Ltd. (OVL), Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC), Oil India Limited (OIL) and GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL), have been pursuing acquisition of equity oil and gas abroad, as well as overseas acquisition of exploration acreages and producing properties. These companies have

Participating Interests in oil and gas projects in Vietnam, Sudan, Russia, Iraq, Iran, Myanmar, Libya, Syria, Australia, Ivory Coast, Qatar and Egypt.

For extending guidance and advice to the Indian oil companies in their efforts to acquire equity oil abroad, Government have constituted an Advisory Committee on Oil Diplomacy for Energy Security comprising experts with specialized knowledge of the countries and regions with whom the oil companies are expected to interact.

(b) No, Sir.

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

Electrification of Tracks

*308. SHRIMATI ANURADHA CHOUDHARY:

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total length of track in kilometres electrified during the second year of the Tenth Five Year Plan;

(b) whether the progress of electrification work in terms of percentage has been slow during 2004-05;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the amount of cost over run on account of work not being completed in time?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) 504 Route kilometre were electrified against the target of 350 Route kilometre during the second year of the Tenth Five Year Plan i.e. 2003-04.

(b) No, Sir. The target for 2004-05 is 375 Route kilometre which is expected to be achieved.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Employment in Railways

*309. SHRI HEMLAL MURMU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a decline in the number of employees of the Indian Railways during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the said period, year-wise and group-wise;

(c) the reasons why the number of railway employees has declined despite considerable increase in the number of trains, frequency and other works involved;

(d) the Group-wise number of posts in various railway recruitment board in regard to which recommendations were given for appointment and the number of candidates appointed in pursuance thereof during the last three years; and

(e) the effective measures the Government has taken so far to increase the employment opportunities in the railways?

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

(b) Year-wise and Group-wise details are as under:—

As on	Group 'A'	Group 'B'	Group 'C'	Group 'D'	Total
31-03-2002	7664	6577	890004	606514	1510759
31-03-2003	7326	6295	869965	588264	1471850
31-03-2004	7921	6369	860077	567154	1441521

(c) Indian Railways' rightsizing activities are in accordance with the initiatives taken by the Government to rightsize the manpower in the Government of India. Further railways have been adopting modern technology in various facts of railway working e.g. abolition of steam traction, modern track structure and signalling system, improved operating practices, induction of high capacity rolling stock, computerization, etc. This leads to reduced requirement of manpower in certain

activities while needing manpower in newer areas and thus necessitating retraining, re-deployment and recruitment. Railways have also been using the benchmarking principles to develop and implement the best practices, which would help in rationalizing the workforce vis-a-vis activities.

(d) Year-wise and Group-wise number of candidates empanelled by Railway Recruitment Boards and the actual intake is as under:—

Year	Group 'C'	Group 'D'	Total	Actual Intake
2001-02	7457	Nil	7457	4615
2002-03	3993	78	4071	3817
2003-04	14137	2655	16792	3851

(e) Direct employment opportunities in the Railways are created by opening new lines/sections, opening of new Production Units and facilities for maintenance or rolling stock infrastructure. Jobs are, therefore, dependent on the operational and business opportunities, which are fully tapped by Indian Railways.

(e) the difference in the rates of these products sold in the foreign and the domestic market?

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

(b) and (c) The details of petroleum products exported by PSUs and private companies during April, 2004 to January, 2005 are as under:—

(Figures in Thousand Metric Tonnes)

Products	PSUs	Private Companies
1	2	3
Petrol	78	2286
Naphtha	2250	125
HSD	1004	4852
Lubes/LOBs	1	0
Fuel Oil	1405	0
Vacuum Gas Oil	54	43
ATF	906	1116

Export of Petroleum Products

*310. DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA:

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

(a) whether petroleum products are exported from the country;

(b) if so, the quantum of petroleum products exported during 2004-2005, product-wise;

(c) the share of public and private companies in the said export;

(d) the rates at which petrol and diesel sold by the public sector oil companies in foreign countries; and

1	2	3
SKO	0	11
Reformate	307	0
Bitumen	33	0
Paraffin Wax	9	0

(d) and (e) Public Sector Oil companies export petroleum products through a tendering process. The rates at which petrol and diesel are sold by Public Sector Undertakings in foreign countries vis-a-vis that being sold in domestic market are not comparable because:—

- (a) Sale by way of export is based on daily price prevailing in the international market.
- (b) Export to foreign countries is on FOB (free on board)/C and F (cost and freight) basis and is without payment of excise and other local levies whereas sale in domestic market is inclusive of excise/custom duties, sales tax, local levies and transportation.

[English]

Railway Projects

*311. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank has put some conditions on Railways to make changes in their accounting system before sanctioning of loan to Railways for their modernization projects;

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

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

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Use of Petrol Blended with Ethanol

*312. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has set up a task force to work out a road map towards facilitating the use of petrol blended with ethanol in vehicles;

(b) if so, whether the said Task Force has submitted its report;

(c) if so, the recommendations made by the Task Force;

(d) the steps taken by the Government to implement them; and

(e) if not, the time by which the said Task Force is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (e) The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has constituted an Inter-Ministerial Task Force in January 2005 under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary in the Ministry to look into all aspects of implementation of the ethanol-blended petrol programme.

The Task Force is required to meet as often as necessary and apprise the Government on the progress of the ethanol-blended petrol programme. Being of a continuous nature, the Task Force is not envisaged to submit any one-time report to Government.

Use of Un-Minable Coal by ONGC

*313. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:

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

(a) whether the ONGC proposes to use un-minable coal for liquid fuel and fuel gas through underground coal gasification technology.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether ONGC has identified the locations where un-minable coal is available in the country;

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

(e) the extent to which the un-minable coal gasification technology would be cheaper and meet energy needs of the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) have signed an Agreement of Collaboration (AOC) with the Skochinsky Institute of Mining-National Mining Research Centre (SIM-NMRC), Moscow on 25-11-2004 for Underground Coal Gasification (UCG).

The AOC envisages cooperation in the following areas:—

- Sharing technical know-how and technologies related to UCG.
- Development and application of expertise in UCG technologies.
- Establishing technical feasibility through field demonstrations for different geological, hydrological and environmental conditions.
- Establishing the commercial feasibility of the process through a pilot project.

(c) and (d) The AOC having been signed, the areas for undertaking UCG pilot projects would be firmed up in consultation with the SIM-NMRC.

(e) The cost of the gas is dependent on several factors like depth, thickness, quality, etc., of coal seams. The project is at the preliminary/starting stage and it would be premature to precisely indicate the price.

Safeguarding of National Carriers

*314. SHRI D. VITTAL RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National carriers will be hit by the decision to allow private airlines to operate on international air routes;

(b) if so, the loss likely to be incurred by the National carriers on the international routes as a result thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to strengthen the National carriers in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) On international routes the national carriers operate in a competitive environment with airlines of several foreign countries operating to/from India. While allowing the private airlines to operate on international routes, various safeguards have been incorporated in the guidelines to protect the interest of our national carriers. Due consideration is being given to the operational plans of Air India and Indian Airlines before allocation of traffic rights to other eligible Scheduled Carriers. Gulf routes have been kept reserved for Air India and Indian Airlines for a period of three years. On other routes, entitlements have been granted to Air India and Indian Airlines based on the requests received from them and only the balance entitlements left thereafter have been allocated to the private airlines. Moreover, traffic size on most of the routes on which private airlines have been permitted to commence operations, is quite high and has been registering constant growth. As per our assessment, with more flights on these routes, there would be significant shift of traffic from the indirect carriers to direct carriers. As such there would be ample commercial opportunity for all the airlines on these routes. Our national carriers are also expanding their fleet through aircraft taken on lease/acquisition to avail these opportunities. In view of the foregoing, it is unlikely that our national carriers will be impacted adversely due to the decision to permit private airlines to fly on international routes except Gulf countries.

*[Translation]***Adoption of Children**

*315. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether some incidents regarding adoption of children in an illegal manner have come to the notice of the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the corrective measures taken by the Government to check illegal adoptions?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) No such incident of illegal adoption has come to the notice of Government recently.

(c) Government of India has notified Guidelines for In-country Adoptions, 2004 on 22-6-2004 to streamline adoption procedure in the country with a view to checking illegal adoptions.

*[English]***Training to Pilots for CAT-III A System**

*317. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned 'Better flight slotting can minimize fog effect' appearing in the Times of India dated January 10, 2005;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether State owned Indian airlines have trained its pilot to operate flights using CAT-III A system;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to make it mandatory to train pilots to use CAT-III A system to get rid of fog;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the total loss suffered by IA and AI because of cancellation of flights due to fog during the current season?

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

(b) Government issues guidelines during every fog period for operations during Low Visibility Conditions, wherein amongst other matters, preference is given by Air Traffic Control to CAT-III A and CAT-II trained pilots to take off and land during Low Visibility conditions. Airlines request for flight slots to provide the best utilization of their trained pilots in order to make full use of CAT-III A Instrument Landing System (ILS) so as to minimize the adverse effect of fog and inconvenience to passengers. However, all the pilots of various airlines are not trained for CAT-III A ILS and hence have not been able to make full use of the system.

(c) and (d) As on March 21, 2005, 52 pilots of Indian Airlines and 56 pilots of Air India are trained and approved for utilization of CAT-III A system.

(e) and (f) Airlines have been impressed upon to step up training of their pilot in CAT-III A ILS operations. Moreover, training of pilots and their authorisation by DGCA for use of CAT-III A ILS is mandatory before using the system during fog.

(g) The actual loss suffered by Airlines on account of cancellation of flights due to fog is not mentioned in their financial statements.

*[Translation]***Norms for Telecasting TV Serials**

*318. SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the norms prescribed for telecasting serials on various Doordarshan Channels;

(b) whether the Government has effected any changes or proposes to effect changes in the prescribed norms;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the number of TV serials awaiting clearance for telecasting on various Doordarshan Channels at present; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a). Prasar Bharati has informed that the guidelines have been prescribed for the consideration, processing and approval of proposals from outside producers for telecast of TV serials under 'Sponsored Category' and 'Commissioned Category'. These guidelines are available on Doordarshan's website : www.ddindia.com.

(b) and (c) Prasar Bharati has informed that there is at present no proposal to make changes in the guidelines governing selection of proposals in the sponsored/commissioned/acquisition categories, respectively.

(d) and (e) Prasar Bharati has informed that the process of selection of serials under the sponsored, commissioned and acquisition categories is an ongoing activity of the different Doordarshan Kendras/channels, and is dependent upon the programme requirements, availability of time slots and funds of the concerned Kendra/channel. No time frame for completion of this process could be indicated.

[English]

Foreign Channels

*319. SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV:

SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO:

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

(a) the details of the foreign channels operating in the country with the sources of funding declared by each of them;

(b) the Foreign direct Investment (FDI) involved in each of these foreign channels;

(c) whether some foreign channels have violated the Government's norms;

(d) if so, the details thereof and action taken against them; and

(e) the reaction of the Government on the functioning of Foreign Channels?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The particulars of the companies, who have been permitted to uplink from India and have varying components of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in their paid up equity, are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) to (e) No, Sir. However, after the maximum allowed percentage of FDI in the paid up equity was brought down to 26% in March, 2003 the existing news and current affairs channels at that time were asked to conform to the guidelines by 25th March, 2004. This deadline has been further extended to 31st March, 2005.

Statement

Sl.No.	Name of the Companies	Percentage of FDI in the companies of the total paid up equity
1	2	3
1.	ATN International Ltd.	0.76%
2.	Broadcast Worldwide Ltd.	6.97%
3.	Coxswain Technologies Ltd.	10.15%
4.	Intellivision Ltd.	6.44%

1	2	3
5. Jain Studios Ltd.		22.088%
6. Jeevan Telecasting Corporation Ltd.		25.94%
7. Media Content and Communications Services (India) Pvt. Ltd.		26%
8. New Delhi Television Ltd.		3.04%
9. Sky (B) Bangla Pvt. Ltd.		0.5%
10. Sri Adhikari Brothers Television Network Ltd.		0.25%
11. Softline Broadcasting Pvt. Ltd.		24%
12. Tanu Healthcare Ltd.		1.66%
13. Television Eighteen India Ltd.		6.01%
14. TV Today Network Ltd.		6.20%
15. Zee Telefilms Ltd.		46.34%

Termination of STD/ISD/PCO Booths' Contract

*320. SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways has decided to terminate the contract of persons running ISD/STD/PCO booths at the railway stations and hand it over to companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for such move;

(c) whether the Government is aware that most of the persons running these booths are physically disabled and unemployed;

(d) if so, whether the Government proposes to reconsider the proposal keeping in view the human aspect of the problem; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) Some existing contracts of STD/

ISD/PCO booths are going to expire on 27-4-2005 after which these booths would be allotted to various categories of persons as per existing guidelines.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) Instructions have been issued on 11-3-2005 that the physically handicapped persons who are presently running STD/ISD/PCO booths at railway stations and whose contracts are expiring maybe allowed to continue and their contract maybe extended after expiry upto 27-4-2007 provided their working is satisfactory.

[English]

Investment in Public Sector Undertakings

3281. SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any representation from Kerala for more investment in Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in various sectors in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has noticed the fact that the Union Government investment in the PSUs in Kerala is meager; and

(d) If so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The proposal regarding investment in Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) in different sectors and in different states/locations are need-based, enterprise-specific and dependent on prevailing business environment. Such proposals are mooted by concerned CPSEs through their administrative ministries in consultation with Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance and decided on case-to-case basis.

(c) As per Public Sector Enterprises Survey (PE Survey) 2002-03, which is a public document and placed in parliament every year, there were 5 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) having their registered offices in the state of Kerala. In addition 61 other CPSEs also have their offices/plants in the state of Kerala. These 66 CPSEs have a Gross Block of Rs. 22677.71 crore in Kerala as on 31-3-2003.

(d) Does not arise in view of (a) to (c)

[Translation]

Panchayati Raj Training Centres

3282. SHRI RAGHUVeer SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal of Government of Rajasthan is pending before the Union Government for establishment of new Panchayati Raj training centres;

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

(c) the time by which the said proposal is likely to be cleared;

(d) the details of the Panchayati Raj training centres established in the country State/Union Territory-wise and location-wise; and

(e) the names of the States/Union Territories

where new training centres are proposed to be established in near future?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) There is no proposal of Government of Rajasthan pending with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for establishment of new Panchayati Raj training Centre. However, the Ministry of Rural Development have before them a proposal of Government of Rajasthan for setting up three new Extension Training Centres. The proposal is under their consideration and a decision on the proposal has not yet been taken.

(d) Ministry of Rural Development has informed that at present 88 Extension Training Centres in the country are imparting training to elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions as well as Rural Development functionaries at village/block level. The names of the States/UTs and the districts in which the Extension Training Centres are located is given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(e) In concert with the State Governments/UTs administrations, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj is working towards the implementation of the action points with reference to "Training" made at the seventh Round Table in Jaipur, a copy of which maybe seen at enclosed Statement-II.

Statement-I

Ministry of Rural Development (Training Section)

List of Extension Training Centres (ETCs).

Sl. No.	Name of the State/UT	District
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1. Srikalahasti 2. Warangal 3. Bapatla District-Guntur

1	2	3
		4. Samalkota District-East Godavari
		5. Rajendranagar District-Hyderabad
2. Arunachal Pradesh		1. Pasighat
3. Assam		1. Jorhat
		2. Joysagar
		3. Kahikuchi
		4. Hailakandi
4. Bihar		1. Gaya
		2. Saharsa
		3. Muzaffarpur
5. Chhattisgarh		1. Chandkuri District-Raipur
6. Gujarat		1. Junagarh
		2. Disa
		3. Navasari
7. Haryana		1. Nilokheri District-Karnal
8. Himachal Pradesh		1. Mashobra District-Shimla
9. Jammu and Kashmir		1. R.S. Pura, Jammu
		2. Budgam District-Srinagar
10. Jharkhand		1. Jasidih District-Santhal Pargana
		2. Hazaribagh
11. Karnataka		1. Gulbarga
		2. Sirsi
		3. Mysore
		4. Gowripet District-Kolar
		5. Mandya
12. Kerala		1. Kottarakara
		2. Mannuthy District-Thrissur
		3. Taliparamba District-Kannur

1	2	3
13. Madhya Pradesh	1. Ujjain	
	2. Bhopal	
	3. Multai	
	4. Jabalpur	
	5. Indore	
	6. Nowgaon	District-Chattarpur
	7. Gwalior	
14. Maharashtra	1. Parbhani	
	2. Jalna	
	3. Buldana	
	4. Kosbad Hill	District-Thane
	5. Gargoti	District-Kolhapur
	6. K. Bamda	District-Kolhapur
	7. Manjri Farm	District-Pune
	8. Amaravati	
15. Meghalaya	1. Nongsder	
16. Mizoram	1. Pukpui	
17. Nagaland	1. Tuensang	
	2. Phek	
18. Orissa	1. Bhubaneswar	
	2. Keonjhar	
	3. Bhawanipatna	District-Kalahandi
19. Punjab	1. Batala	
	2. Nabha	
20. Rajasthan	1. Dungarpur	
	2. Ajmer	
	3. Mandore	District-Jodhpur

1	2	3
21. Tamil Nadu	1. T. Kullupatty	District-Madurai
	2. S.V. Nagaram	District-Sambuvarayar
	3. Bhavani Sagar	District-Periya
	4. Pattukkottai	District-Thanjavar
	5. Krishnagiri	District-Dhrampuri
22. Uttaranchal	1. Rudrapur	District-Udhamsingh Nagar
	2. Hawalbagh	District-Almora
	3. Peoples College, Haldwani	Distt-Nainital
	4. Gurukul Kangri	District-Haridwar
	5. Pauri Garhwal	
23. Uttar Pradesh	1. Bakshi-ka-Talab	District-Lucknow
	2. Bakewar	District-Etawah
	3. Baraut	District-Baghat
	4. Bichpuri	District-Agra
	5. Chirgaon	District-Jhansi
	6. Dhorigat	District-Mau
	7. Bulandshahar	
	8. Faizabad	
	9. Kalakankar	District-Pratapgarh
	10. Mainpuri	
	11. Lakhaoti	District-Bulandshahar
	12. Chargaon	District-Gorakhpur
	13. Raibareilly	
	14. Ghazipur	
	15. Badaun	
	16. Afim-ki-kothi	District-Pratapgarh

1	2	3
24. West Bengal	1. Cooch Bihar	
	2. Burdwan	
	3. Digha	District-Midnapur
	4. Raiganj	
Total number of ETCs	88	

Statement-II

Seventh Round Table of Ministers in-charge of Panchayati Raj—Jaipur, 17-19 December, 2004

IT enabled e-Governance:

1. It is recognized that IT (Information Technology and Communication) *is a vital input of capacity* for Panchayats so that they can perform their constitutionally and legislatively mandated functions better.

2. IT ought to be primarily positioned as:—

- (i) a decision making support system for Panchayats themselves;
- (ii) a tool for transparency, disclosure of information to citizens social audit;
- (iii) a means for better and convergent delivery of services to citizens;
- (iv) a means for improving internal management and efficiency of Panchayats;
- (v) a means for Capacity building of representatives and officials of the Panchayats; and
- (vi) an e-Procurement medium.

In this endeavour, the Round Table specifically proposes the following initiatives.

Process Re-engineering:

3. All States shall undertake a time-bound exercise of process re-engineering in consonance with

the activity mapping already being undertaken by them for the functions transferred to the Panchayats, with a view to moving the processes of decision making, implementation, disclosure to the public, delivery of services and reporting and dissemination of information to Panchayat representatives to an IT enabled environment.

4. In this exercise regard shall be had to avoid duplication of hardware and software initiatives by different State government departments and agencies.

5. Considering the functional domain of Panchayats that potentially extends to 29 subject listed in the Eleventh Schedule, all e-Governance initiatives at the local level have to converge with the appropriate PRI as the nodal point.

Data Ownership:

6. Such re-engineered processes shall ensure that the ownership of the data collected at the Panchayat level is with that level in the first instance, as the system becomes sustainable when those who use the data feel that they own it.

7. While owning the data, the Panchayat could also operate, outsource or provide space to IT enabled multi service kiosk centers that provide IT enabled services to the people, including those that fall within the functions of the Panchayats.

8. The Community Service Centers being rolled out by the Ministry of Information Technology at the Centre maybe located in the Panchayat offices so that

panchayats services can also be delivered through these Common Services Centers (CSC).

Training:

9. There has to be a systematic approach on training of staff and Panchayati raj members through a cascading mode on use of IT.

10. The opportunities offered by the satellite connectivity provided through the ISRO, including EDUSAT, can be used for undertaking training.

11. While developing training material, regard shall be had to design user friendly approaches that can facilitate training of the illiterate or the neo-literate.

Software:

12. Development of common software application packages with provision for appropriate customization by states is preferred. In this connection, the National Informatics Centre (NIC), which being a government body present in all districts of the country and which has already done considerable software development for Panchayats, maybe considered as the primary software provider.

13. It is recommended that NIC strengthens themselves at all levels and provide dedicated staff through creating a Panchayat informatics division, with a time bound mandate to develop e-Governance solutions to all levels of Panchayats. This will include the strengthening of the District Informatics Office of the NIC to support the District Planning Committee and the Panchayats.

14. The National Panchayat Portal developed by the NIC for the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to become the information hub that links up Panchayats, the State Government and the Central Government for sharing of information, experiences and best practices. As a first step, all State governments may immediately link and port the content of their existing Panchayat Raj websites or portals to the National Panchayat Portal and all District, Intermediate and Village Panchayats

can be enabled and facilitated to link up with the portal. The content can be regularly updated by the respective stake holders.

15. A repository of software solutions already developed by several states shall be maintained by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj or an institution nominated by it, so that they can be used by other states.

16. Software development shall be primarily undertaken in open source software, with Indian language interphase, so as to reduce cost of replication and licencing.

Hardware:

17. States should consider specifying a framework for common standards for hardware and put in place a system for transparent procurement through competitive bidding.

18. Funds for acquisition of hardware could be dovetailed from various sources and could include:-

- (i) Infrastructure funds available in multilaterally funded projects;
- (ii) Own incomes of Panchayats;
- (iii) Funds recommended by the Finance Commission for the creation and maintenance of databases;
- (iv) Funds sourced from a fund to be created and managed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj;
- (v) MP and MLA Local Area Development funds; and
- (vi) Purchases based on systems of annuity based purchases.

19. Considering the present power situation in the country, while procuring hardware, special attention shall be paid to providing reliable and uninterrupted power supply to computer systems. Special emphasis shall be placed on renewable energy devices and systems that consume less energy.

Infrastructure and connectivity:

20. It is recommended that the NIC expands its communication network, NICNET, to link all Panchayats at all levels by using State Wide Area Network funds provided by the Department of Information Technology, Government of India.

21. State governments can approach ISRO for providing satellite based connectivity in all the states to enable connectivity of all Panchayats. The initial infrastructure cost could be considered to be met or supported by an infrastructure fund that could be operated by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj.

Operationalisation of the plan:

22. The initiative of empowering Panchayats with IT capacity shall be treated on par with creating national infrastructure such as power, telecom and roads.

23. Formulate a mission mode/empowered committee mode for IT enabled automation of panchayat institutions with NIC and other solution providers, keeping in view the national e-governance action plan of the Government of India.

Capacity Building and Training:

1. Training and communication ought to reach all PRI functionaries and elected representatives, namely:—

- (i) Gram Panchayat Members, Chairpersons and Office bearers;
- (ii) Intermediate Panchayat Members, Chairpersons and Office bearers;
- (iii) District Panchayat Members, Chairpersons and Office bearers;
- (iv) All officials concerned at National, State, District, Intermediate and Village level; and
- (v) Standing Committee members at all levels.

2. There should be special effort made towards sensitizing the media, political parties, representatives

in the legislatures, civil society organisations and citizens.

3. There must be special campaigns for mobilization of Gram Sabha members.

4. There must be special training for women, SC/ST representatives as well as first time entrants into the panchayat system within 3 months of their entry.

5. Training for PESA areas should be designed so as to have regard to the cultural traditions and special needs of tribal people.

6. Training and communication should not be viewed as a single one-time intervention but should be a continuous, ongoing process leading to enhanced sense of self esteem and confidence. Training should cover both the "before" and "after" election periods. Initial training and communication should reach all elected representatives within one year.

7. For those Panchayat members who need it, a functional literacy training course should be undertaken immediately after their elections.

8. The panchayats should be encouraged to have a sense of ownership of the training programmes and play a major role in designing content and mechanisms of training. To this end, there must be representation for Panchayat members in the governing boards of training institutions that cater to their needs.

9. Content of training should press on strategic and technical aspects and should be based on a Systematic Training Needs Analysis arrived at through multi-stakeholder consultative workshops, which would precede the design of training modules and materials.

10. There should be a minimum core curriculum that is common across the States adapting to suit local contexts. Core curriculum should include:-

- (i) Vision on Purna Swaraj through Gram Swaraj;
- (ii) Principles of secularism, equality and human rights emanating from the Constitution of India;

- (iii) Gender equity and social justice;
- (iv) Status of human development;
- (v) Poverty alleviation;
- (vi) Participatory planning, implementation and monitoring;
- (vii) Right to information and transparency;
- (viii) Social Audit; and
- (ix) Rules and regulations covering Panchayati raj.

11. Overall perspective of training must reinforce issues of social equity, gender sensitivity and justice among all participants in the process of governance through Panchayati raj, including all levels of the bureaucracy.

12. Thematic curriculum should include:—

- (i) Human Resource Management;
- (ii) Natural Resources Management;
- (iii) Disaster Management;
- (iv) Financial management, including own resource management and accounting; and
- (v) Sectoral approaches into providing basic human needs.

13. Training strategy should be inclusive, participative and interactive and a composite mix of various interventions:—

- (i) face-to-face participatory training;
- (ii) exposure visits;
- (iii) peer training/learning;
- (iv) satellite training;
- (v) radio/cassettes/films;
- (vi) traditional means of communication;
- (vii) newsletters, updates and digests of replies to Frequently Asked Questions; and

- (viii) resource centers and Help Desks for Panchayats.

14. Training content and processes should be relevant to the ground reality of elected representatives. It should continue to develop and evolve based on feedback and impact assessment. Training should become a two way process so that feedback can help in reforming the content and process of training, as also result in systemic changes in panchayat and government functioning.

15. States should move towards formation of training networks and collectives to share experiences, learn from each other, and access material from each other. States should also institutionalize collaboration with Community based organisations at the State, District, and Block level.

16. Training should inspire elected representatives to form federations or collectives and facilitate them to voice their demands for genuine devolution and development.

17. Trained members should be encouraged to become resource persons for further training of panchayat representatives. Peer to peer learning, both within and outside the state through regional or national tie ups should be encouraged and supported.

18. Training should include exposure to best practices through visits to other Panchayats.

19. All open universities may tie up with IGNOU and build linkages with the SIRDs and other like institutions engaged in training and capacity building.

20. Training programmes shall be designed especially for the secretarial and technical staff working with Panchayats through institutions such as IGNOU. Such training programmes should lead to formal certification on achieving prescribed standards of learning.

21. Education in democracy and the constitutional role of panchayats as institutions of local self-government should be made part of school curricula.

22. It shall be the endeavour of the central government to provide in as short a time as possible a panchayat capacity building fund through the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, which could include a certain percentage of central transfers specially earmarked for that purpose. Similarly, state governments should also create a Panchayat Capacity Building Fund for periodic training.

23. There should a national perspective plan on decentralized training and capacity building for all PRI functionaries with specific objectives timeframe and resources.

24. States can benefit by the use of pedagogy and training techniques with information accessible to all. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj could develop a repository of training programmes, including training resources and manuals developed by the Commonwealth. Development of master modules in training in issues of gender, poverty, mass communication etc. could also be developed.

25. Independent training impact assessment studies should be periodically undertaken to assess the outcomes of training and inform emerging needs for follow up.

26. States shall work towards upgradation of training centers, such as SIRDs, and extension training centers at the district, block level and below.

27. With respect to the training needs of Panchayat members from the Union Territories and States with Sixth Schedule areas, the Government of India would identify an SIRD or a group of institutions that could undertake the training.

Export of Arms/Ammunitions/Defence Equipments

3283. SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA:

SHRI Y.G. MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of arms/ammunitions and defence equipments exported during 2002-2003, 2003-2004,

2004-2005 and amount of foreign exchange earned therefrom, country-wise;

(b) whether any target has been fixed by the Government to increase the exports during 2005-2006;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps being taken/to be taken by the Government to achieve the target?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE): (a) During the year 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, the Ordnance Factory Board and Defence PSUs have exported some of their products like helicopters, helicopter and aircraft spares, spares of rifles and guns, clothing items, parachutes and accessories, aeronautical stores, communication equipments, night Vision devices, bollard pull tug, components and sub-systems etc., mainly to countries in Asia and Africa worth US \$ (Million) 45.22, 93.69 and 58.67 (upto February 2005).

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. A target of US \$ (Million) 100 has been fixed.

(d) The steps taken to promote exports include— participation in international defence exhibitions, organizing biennial international exhibitions namely DEFEXPO and AERO INDIA, distribution of Catalogues and CDs on Indian Defence Products through Indian Exbassies, mobilizing involvement of India's Missions abroad in procuring orders for export and pursuing trade enquiries and interaction with foreign delegates/visitors.

[English]

Benefits to Ex-PBOR

3284. SHRI T.K. HAMZA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ex-Personnel Below Officer Rank (ex-PBOR) re-employed in autonomous bodies after registering their names with Director General of

Resettlement (DGR) are eligible for all the benefits as that of the ex-PBOR re-employed in autonomous bodies through Security Agencies sponsored through DGR;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) 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) to (c) Those ex-Personnel Below Officer Rank (ex-PBOR) who are sponsored by Director General Resettlement (DGR) to autonomous bodies, on their employment get pay and allowances as are admissible under the rules of the respective autonomous body. The pay and allowances drawn by ex-PBOR through security agencies are in conformity to what is applicable to semi skilled labour notified through State Government Gazette notification as applicable.

[Translation]

Welfare Schemes for Orphan Children

3285. SHRI V.K. THUMMAR:

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:

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

(a) whether the government is implementing any scheme for the welfare of the orphan children in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the financial assistance allocated and released to the State Governments/Union Territory administrations and NGOs for implementation of the said scheme during each of the last three years and the current year, State/Union Territory-wise and NGO-wise;

(d) the details of utilization of financial assistance provided under the schemes by each State Government/ Union Territory administration and NGO during the said period;

(e) the details of cases of misutilisation of funds by State Government/Union Territory administrations and NGOs have been reported and the action taken thereon; and

(f) the measures taken by the Government for proper monitoring of funds utilisation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment through its autonomous authority-Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is implementing the Scheme of Assistance to Homes (Shishu Greh) for children to Promote In-country adoption. Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to non governmental organizations (NGOs) and Government Institutions for institutional care within the country for care and protection of infants and children upto 6 years of age who are either abandoned or orphaned/destitute and their rehabilitation through in-country adoption.

(c) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(f) State Governments/Union Territory Administration furnish progress as well as inspection reports on the utilization of grants by organizations implementing the projects under the scheme. Besides, the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) also monitors the proper utilization of the grant through a reporting system and direct physical inspection of the projects.

[English]

Production of Helicopters/Light Aircraft by HAL

3286. SHRI JUAL ORAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the different models of Helicopters/Light Aircraft produced by the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL);

(b) whether there is great demand of some of those Helicopters/Aircraft in the Latin American Countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the efforts made by the Government to tap the Latin American markets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BHOJOY HANDIQUE): (a) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) manufactures the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), Cheetah/Chetak/Lancer helicopters and Dornier 228 transport aircraft in light weight category. It also produces fighter aircraft of medium and heavy weight categories.

(b) HAL has identified South American countries as potential markets for the ALH.

(c) HAL has submitted techno-commercial proposals for supply of ALHs to various Latin American countries. The proposals are being followed up. Delegations from some Latin American countries expressed interest in the ALH at the Aero India 2005.

(d) Ministry of Defence and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) have been in regular contact with different countries to explore all marketing possibilities. Promotional material on ALH in the form of brochures and film in English and Spanish languages have been forwarded to Indian Missions in various Latin American countries by MEA for Distribution to decision makers.

[Translation]

Rakes on Priority Basis

3287. DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any complaint against Ratlam Railway Division regarding providing rakes on priority basis to Soya industries; and

(b) 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) Does not arise.

[English]

Unutilisation of Work-Force and Machinery

3288. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether outsourcing of parts to private companies have made ICF workers and machinery unutilised or idle;

(b) if so, whether there is any plan to fully utilise the existing work force and machinery; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Zonal Cultural Centers

3289. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number and names of Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) functioning in the country alongwith financial grants given to them during each of the last three years, State-wise, location-wise;

(b) whether the Grants provided to ZCCs commensurate with their performance;

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

(d) the steps taken/to be taken by the Government to improve the performance of ZCCs?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) There are Seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs), 1. North Zone Culture Centre (NZCC), Patiala, 2. North Central Zone Cultural Centre, (NCZCC), Allahabad, 3. North East Zone Cultural Centre (NEZCC), Dimapur, 4. West Zone Cultural Centre (WZCC), Udaipur, 5. South Zone Cultural Centre (SZCC), Thanjavur, 6. South Central Zone Cultural

Centre (SCZCC), Nagpur and 7. Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC), Kolkata. Ministry of Culture released following grants for cultural programmes to them during each of the last three years such as:—

2001-2002

NZCC, Patiala, Rs. 1.23 Crores
 NCZCC, Allahabad, Rs. 60.02 Lakhs
 NEZCC, Dimapur, Rs. 62.56 Lakhs
 WZCC, Udaipur, Rs. 74.78 Lakhs
 SZCC, Thanjavur, Rs. 35.55 Lakhs
 SCZCC, Nagpur, Rs. 55.18 Lakhs
 EZCC, Kolkata, Rs. 52.83 Lakhs

2002-2003

NZCC, Patiala, Rs. 2.17 Crores
 NCZCC, Allahabad, Rs. 66.28 Lakhs
 NEZCC, Dimapur, Rs. 5.54 Crores
 WZCC, Udaipur, Rs. 62.60 Lakhs
 SZCC, Thanjavur, Rs. 51.26 Lakhs
 SCZCC, Nagpur, Rs. 58.00 Lakhs
 EZCC, Kolkata, Rs. 1.41 Crores

2003-2004

NZCC, Patiala, Rs. 2.18 Crores
 NCZCC, Allahabad, Rs. 1.05 Crores
 NEZCC, Dimapur, Rs. 6.11 Crores
 WZCC, Udaipur, Rs. 92.41 Lakhs
 SZCC, Thanjavur, Rs. 1.08 Crores
 SCZCC, Nagpur, Rs. 77.75 Lakhs
 EZCC, Kolkata, Rs. 1.02 Crores

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The grants provided to Zonal Cultural Centres under the Schemes have helped to expand their activities in the field of art and culture of the respective zones.

(d) To maintain the existing level of the programmes and activities, it is proposed that the Corpus Fund of Rs. 5.00 crores per ZCC will be provided during the 10th Five Year Plan. Ministry of Culture has already contributed Rs. 2 crores to each of the ZCCs and remaining Rs. 3 crores is proposed to be given during the Annual Plan 2005-2006 to improve the performance of ZCCs.

[Translation]

Activities of Ambedkar and Maulana Azad Education Foundations

3290. DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state the detailed status report regarding implementation of the schemes and activities undertaken by the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation and Maulana Azad Education Foundation during 2004-05. separately, scheme-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): Details are in enclosed statement.

Statement

The activities and programmes pursued by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation and Maulana Azad Education Foundation during 2004-05 are as below

Dr. Ambedkar Foundation

- Setting up of Dr. Ambedkar National Public Library at Janpath
- Setting up of Dr. Ambedkar National Memorial at 26, Alipur Road
- Dr. Ambedkar National Award for Social Understanding and Upliftment of Weaker Sections
- Dr. Ambedkar International Award for Social Change

- Dr. Ambedkar Chairs in Universities/ Institutions for carrying out research on the thoughts and ideals of Baba Saheb
- Publication of the Collected Works of Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar into Hindi and other Indian Languages
- Dr. Ambedkar National Scholarship Scheme for meritorious students belonging to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes
- Organization of seminars, symposia, conferences, workshops, lectures, exhibitions and fairs on the life and mission of Dr. Ambedkar
- Celebration of Birth Anniversary and Maha Parinirwan Diwas of Dr. Ambedkar on 14th April and 6th December respectively every year.
- Publication of Samajik Nyay Sandesh, a monthly Magazine in Hindi
- Dr. Ambedkar Medical Scheme
- Dr. Ambedkar Samajik Samta Kendra Yojna
- Celebration of Birth Anniversaries of Great Saints

Maulana Azad Education Foundation

Sanctioning of funds to Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) all over the country for the following educational purposes:—

- (i) Financial assistance to establish and expand schools/residential schools/Colleges especially for girls belonging to educationally backward minorities.
 - (ii) Financial assistance for purchase of lab equipment and furniture etc. in the institutions belonging to educationally backward minorities.
 - (iii) Financial Assistance for setting-up/strengthen vocational/technical training centres for educationally backward minorities.
 - (iv) Financial assistance for construction of Girls Hostels for educationally backward minorities.
 - (v) Financial assistance for construction/ expansion of building and purchase of equipments for Professional/Technical Colleges.
 - (vi) Financial assistance for Remedial coaching for the students belonging to educationally backward minorities.
2. The Scheme of Maulana Azad National Scholarships for Meritorious Girls Students.
3. The Scheme of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad National Literacy Award.
4. In-service teachers training programme for teachers of the minority institutions to improve the educational standard.

STD/ISD/PCO Facilities at Stations

3291. SHRI ATIQ AHMAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has stopped providing/permitting STD/ISD/PCO facilities in Allahabad, Phulpur and other adjacent railway stations;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of STD/ISD/PCO booths functioning at present, particularly at Allahabad, Phulpur and the nearby stations, station-wise; and

(d) the fresh measures taken by the Government to provide the aforesaid facilities at said stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) The numebr of

STD/ISD/PCO booths functioning at present at Allahabad and other nearby stations are as under:—

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| (i) Allahabad | 10 booths |
| (ii) Prayag | 01 booth |
| (iii) Naini | 01 booth |

Allotment of booths at Phulpur and other nearby stations is in process.

COCO/JRO Retail Outlets

3292. SHRI SRICHAND KRIPLANI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Company Owned Company Operated (COCO) and Jubilee Retail Outlets (JRO) so far modernized, location-wise;

(b) whether the financial performance of some of these outlets has been declined; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government to improve the financial performance of these outlets?

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

[English]

Shifting of Platform

3293. SHRI SUBODH MOHITE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the development schemes being implemented at Nagpur railway station at present;

(b) whether the railways proposes to shift the narrow gauge platform from Nagpur railway station platform No. 1 to the South Central Eastern Railway Molibagh depot;

(c) If so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Two development works are being undertaken at Nagpur. (i) Remodelling of Yard for extension of Platform to 26 coach length at a cost of Rs. 10.92 crore and (ii) Widening of existing 2.44 meter wide foot over bridge and provision of reinforced cement concrete ramps and stair case at a cost of Rs. 1.22 crore.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Outsourcing of Various Items to Private Companies

3294. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether many items for production of coaches/bogies have been outsourced to private companies by Integrated coach factory;

(b) if so, whether integrated coach factory is not in a position to produce such items;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the items outsourced to the private companies?

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

(b) Some of the items outsourced were being made in Integral Coach Factory (ICF) at some stage or the other in the past while others are those where either the process or the design change has been adopted for improving quality and productivity.

(c) Outsourcing is done to bridge the gap between production capacity including that with incentive working vis-a-vis requirement for the production target.

(d) Some of the items outsourced include berths for the coaches, Fibreglass Reinforced Plastic (FRP) modular toilets, partition frames, cold rolled formed sole bars, cant rails and trough floor, bogie frames, control cubicle, brackets for mounting seats and berths, luggage racks etc.

[Translation]

Enhancement of Capacity of Surat

T.V. Transmitter

3295. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the capacity of the Surat TV transmitter was proposed to be enhanced;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the work in this regard is likely to be commenced and completed?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Prasar Bharati has informed that the power of the HPTs at Surat for DD-1 and DD-News was increased to 10 kW and 5 kW in April and December, 2004, respectively.

[English]

Weapons Recovered by Army

3296. SHRI SUBRATA BOSE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of weapons recovered/seized by the Army in North Eastern Region of the country during the last two years, till date and the mode adopted for their use/disposal;

(b) the steps taken to ensure proper control of these weapons and to check their misuse;

(c) whether any investigation has been conducted as to how such weapons are finding their way to these States; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The details of weapons recovered/seized in the North Eastern States by Army/

Assam Rifles troops during the last two years and till 15th March, 2005 are as follows:—

Year	No. of Weapons
2003	915
2004	712
2005 (Till 15th March, 2005)	260

The weapons recovered/seized by Army and Assam Rifles are produced before the police station on a seizure memorandum alongwith First Information Report. The seized weapons are retained in custody of the Assam Rifles or the Army designated armories till such time as they are required to be produced in the court as evidence. After completion of court proceedings, the seized weapons are deposited in Narangi Cantonment of Assam. Thereafter, such weapons are sent to Central Ordnance Depot, Jabalpur. While unserviceable weapons are destroyed, serviceable weapons are released to different units for use. Some non-service pattern weapons are also issued to service personnel on payment based on individual's application and procurement of weapon's licence.

The assessment by intelligence agencies reveals that the arms are illegally smuggled into the North Eastern Region from various sources including those located in some of the neighbouring countries based on which the Government has taken several steps to prevent flow of such arms into the region.

Procurement of Aircraft on Lease Basis

3297. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines board has approved dry re-leasing 12 wide bodied aircraft for its international operations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether an In-house Committee of Airlines has identified certain international routes; 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. The Board of Directors has accorded in-principle approval to the induction of twelve wide body aircraft on dry lease for a period of 5 years or 3 years extendable to five years.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The routes planned are to UK, USA, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong and Malayasia.

Purchase Preference Policy

3298. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPAPARAI: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to further extend the Purchase Preference Policy of Central Public Sector Undertakings which is due for expiry;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (c) The Government has extended the existing purchase preference policy till the end of the current financial year i.e. upto 31-3-2005. A Group of Ministers (GoM) has been constituted to look into the issues relating to further extension/continuance of the policy.

Investment in National Air Services

3299. MOHD. MUKEEM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received proposals from Virgin Airlines and some other Airlines for investment in national air services of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir. As per existing guidelines on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), no direct or indirect equity participation by foreign airlines in Air Transport Services (Domestic Airlines) is allowed.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Cadre Review in Ordnance Factories

3300. SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has issued orders as per the recommendations made by the Committee of Parliament on official language to review the cadre of the Hindi Translators/officers working in the subordinate offices of the Ministry of Defence; and

(b) if so, the time by which the said order is likely to be made effective in ordnance factories organisation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir. No such orders/instructions have been received from the Department of Official Language (Ministry of Home Affairs).

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

[English]

Visit of Italian Minister to India

3301. SHRI K.S. RAO:

SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister for Cultural Heritage and Activities of Government of Italy visited India recently;

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

(c) whether any MoU has been signed between the two countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) The Minister of Cultural Heritage and activities of Government of Italy visited India as part of the delegation accompanying the President of Italy. Wide ranging discussions to enhance cultural cooperation between India and Italy were held, including cooperation in the field of conservation and restoration, exchange of exhibitions, cultural troupes etc. An MoU was also signed on cooperation for the conservation of the Paintings of Ajanta-Ellora Caves.

Broadcasting of Welfare Programmes

3302. SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the government had got produced through DAVP some Radio Programmes for popularizing various welfare schemes among the targetted audiences;

(b) if so, whether these Radio programmes have been put on air; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(c) Does not arise.

Investment by IOC in Non-Oil Sector

3303. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Oil Corporation is planning any major forays in the Non-Oil Sectors in near future;

(b) if so, the sectors in which IOC is planning to invest alongwith reasons for such investments; and

(c) the time frame for commissioning of the Non-Oil Sector projects?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Indian Oil Corporation Limited do not have any plans of making any major foray in the non-oil sector in near future.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

[Translation]

Raigarh Railway Terminal Project

3304. SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the construction work on Raigarh (Chhattisgarh) Railway Terminal project has started;

(b) if so, the progress so far made on the project;

(c) if not, the reasons for delay in commencing the work;

(d) the time by which the said work is likely to be completed; and

(e) the amount sanctioned and released for Raigarh (Chhattisgarh) Railway Terminal?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There is no sanctioned work for Raigarh Terminal. However, there is a work for provision of pit line at Raigarh. The detailed plans and estimates of the work are under finalisation.

(d) Once the detailed estimates and plans of the pit line work at Raigarh are sanctioned, it will take

about 3 years to complete the work subject to availability of funds.

(e) The original anticipated cost of the pit line work at Raigarh is Rs. 1.20 crore. An outlay of Rs. 1.01 crore has been provided for the work during 2005-06.

[English]

Metering of LPG Cylinders

3305. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to put a meter on LPG cylinders to check the malpractice of under weight cylinders; 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) At present, there is no such proposal with the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs). However, to enhance customer satisfaction levels and to ensure proper weight of LPG cylinders delivered to consumers, distributors in selected markets have been advised by OMCs to provide a spring balance to enable the customer to verify the correctness of weight of LPG in the cylinder. OMCs have introduced this scheme in major markets of the country.

Cable Operators in Delhi

3306. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Cable Operators in R.K. Puram, New Delhi are not showing DD-Lok Sabha and DD-Rajya Sabha free-to-air channels despite subscribers' demand;

(b) if so, the action proposed to be taken against the Cable Operators; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that all Cable Operators in Delhi telecast these Channels?

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

[Translation]

Construction of Halt Station at Purshotampur

3307. SHRI KAILASH BAITHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has approved the construction of a halt station at Purshotampur in Narkatiyaganj-Raxaul railway section in Bihar;

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be constructed; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(b) and (c) Action to open the halt station will be taken only when the proposal is found justified and feasible.

[English]

Collection of Funds Through IPO

3308. KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to go for Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) in Indian Airlines and Air India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the concrete steps taken by the Government to ensure that the funds collected through IPOs would be spent only on purchases of new aircraft and meeting other capital expenses of these Airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to

(c) The issue of an Initial Public Offerings for Air India and Indian Airlines is at a preliminary stage of discussion.

Adoption of Tsunami Affected Children by Foreigners

3309. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been expressed willingness by some foreigners to adopt tsunami-hit children in Southern India;

(b) if so, whether despite guidelines, incidents of child abuse by foreigner parents have come to light;

(c) if so, the number of cases reported in this regard and the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(d) the details of guidelines laid down particularly in favour of foreigners for adopting Indian children?

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

(b) and (c) No, Sir.

(d) Revised Guidelines for Adoption of Indian Children which is available in the website of CARA i.e. www.adoptionindia.nic.in govern the procedure of adoption of Indian Children by foreigners.

Mobile Health Care Units

3310. SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the proposals received from Uttar Pradesh particularly from Pratapgarh District for sanction of Mobile Health Care Units during 2004-05;

(b) the reasons for delay in sanctions of these units;

(c) the time by which the said proposals are likely to be sanctioned; and

(d) the number of recommendations from Member of Parliament have received in this regard and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) No proposal has been received from the State Government of Uttar Pradesh for sanction of Mobile Health Care Units for the aged in Pratapgarh District.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) No recommendation from the Member has been received in this regard.

Grant-in-aid to NGOs

3311. SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government is providing grant-in-aid to the NGOs to run Education Centres, Computer Centres, Photography Studios, Printing and Composing Centres etc.;

(b) if so the details thereof and the funds provided during the last three years to each State for the said Centres; and

(c) the funds provided to each NGO during 2004-05 in Rajasthan and other States for construction of buildings with basic amenities and necessary furnitures/equipment to run the said development Centers, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The details are enclosed at Statement I.

(c) The details are enclosed at Statement II.

Sl. No.	Name of State/UT	Education Centres				Computer Centres				Photography Studios				Printing and Composing Centres			
		2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14				
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1292.62	1624.12	1438.80	85.10	15.97	9.53	0	0	0	0.82	1.86	1.86				
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	12.66	9.73	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
3.	Assam	42.05	62.50	72.74	4.82	3.94	3.58	0	0	0	1.64	0	1.64				
4.	Bihar	220.45	215.13	206.32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
5.	Chandigarh	2.09	2.01	2.64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
6.	Chhattisgarh	15.81	20.36	61.66	0	3.51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
7.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	1.53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
8.	Delhi	298.12	405.57	362.42	11.17	23.17	6.64	0	0	0	2.18	2.18	2.18				
9.	Goa	24.07	24.28	23.69	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
10.	Gujarat	63.66	71.07	49.70	2.41	3.18	3.54	0	0	0	0	0	0				
11.	Haryana	33.21	78.77	56.78	0	1.80	0	0	0	0	3.93	4.09	4.10				
12.	Himachal Pradesh	21.10	18.31	18.07	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
13.	Jammu and Kashmir	1.64	2.51	0.51	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.40	0	0				
14.	Jharkhand	5.27	14.86	14.44	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.05	0	0				

15. Karnataka	769.94	929.25	1044.19	30.03	1.88	10.75	0	0	0	1.83	3.26	0
16. Kerala	288.86	311.36	319.49	2.70	2.16	2.10	0	0	0	2.27	2.86	2.96
17. Madhya Pradesh	120.47	147.75	162.84	19.24	26.28	4.94	0	0	0	0	0	1.56
18. Maharashtra	211.78	299.38	326.30	20.31	28.12	25.93	0	0	0	15.43	22.98	17.08
19. Manipur	53.83	72.61	71.78	3.40	0.78	0	0.85	1.70	2.54	0	1.52	3.16
20. Meghalaya	60.10	49.60	70.06	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21. Mizoram	25.07	25.17	19.90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22. Nagaland	1.78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23. Orissa	254.80	404.84	508.95	64.10	9.01	7.93	0	0	0	13.51	3.90	2.18
24. Pondicherry	5.85	6.13	7.75	0	3.33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25. Punjab	72.26	83.61	95.37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26. Rajasthan	208.95	291.87	271.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27. Sikkim	1.93	5.67	0	0	0	0	2.71	0	0	0	0	0
28. Tamil Nadu	146.33	238.70	184.16	24.03	6.96	8.35	0	0	0	3.35	8.99	7.08
29. Tripura	13.56	42.28	28.69	0	1.13	1.13	0	0	0	0	0	0
30. Uttar Pradesh	918.03	740.46	706.51	20.98	5.68	3.12	0	0	0	4.38	4.39	4.36
31. Uttaranchal	39.27	75.87	54.92	2.94	1.81	1.01	0	0	0	1.65	0.40	4.08
32. West Bengal	351.88	374.17	341.40	7.14	9.67	7.07	0	0	0	12.67	11.81	10.95
Total	5578.97	6647.94	6521.08	308.37	148.38	95.62	3.56	1.70	2.54	68.11	68.24	63.20

Statement-II*Details of grant-in-aid released to the NGOs for construction of buildings during 2004-05*

(Rupees in lakh)

Sl.No.	Name of State/UT	Name of the Organisation	Name of the Project	Amount Released
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Development and Welfare Association of the Blind	Construction of new Building	4.50
2.	Andhra Pradesh	Sweekar Rehabilitation Institute for Handicapped	Construction of Building	4.50
3.	Chandigarh	Society for the Care of the Blind	Construction of Building	8.50
4.	Rajasthan	Saur Chetna Evam Urja Vigyan Shodh Sansthan	Construction of Hostel	4.50
5.	Rajasthan	Society for Welfare of Mentally Handicapped	Construction of School Building	4.50
6.	Rajasthan	Tapovan Manovikas Vidyalaya	Construction of Hostel	2.50
7.	Uttar Pradesh	Goonge Behron Ka Vidhayalaya	Construction of Hostel Building	4.50
8.	Uttar Pradesh	Prag Narain Mook Badhir Vidyalaya Samiti	Construction of Building	3.50
9.	West Bengal	Paripurnata Half Way Home	Construction of Building	5.00
			Total	42.00

*[Translation]***Electrification of Rail Lines in National Capital Region**

3312. MOHD. SHAHID: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to undertake electrification work of all the rail lines falling under the National Capital Region;

(b) if so, the details of the rail lines falling under the said region which have not so far been electrified;

(c) whether the sanction has been accorded to undertake electrification work of the rail line from

Meerut to Ghaziabad; and

(d) if not, the reasons alongwith the delay in electrification of the said route?

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

(b) Non-electrified rail lines under National Capital Region are as under:—

(i) Delhi-Rohtak

(ii) Ghaziabad-Meerut

(iii) Ghaziabad-Hapur

(iv) Delhi-Fewari

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Due to relative priority for electrification of other high density routes, there is at present no proposal to electrify unelectrified rail lines of National Capital Region.

[English]

Upgradation of 130 MM Gun

3313. SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to the Unstarred Question No. 328 on December 2, 2004, regarding Upgradation of 130 MM Guns and state:

(a) whether any financial irregularities has come to the notice of the Government in the contract for the upgrading of 130 mm Gun;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is considering to cancel the contract and recover the loss from M/s. Soltam, Israel;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether any steps are being taken for rectification of faulty upgradation of 130 mm gun done by M/s. Soltam, Israel;

(f) if so, the details thereof;

(g) whether the programme for upgradation of 130 mm gun has since been abandoned; and

(h) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The case regarding upgradation of 130 mm Guns has been entrusted to Central Bureau of Investigation for investigation into the alleged irregularities.

(c) and (d) No, Sir.

(e) and (f) There were minor technical problems and the same were rectified by the vendor at his own expense.

(g) No, Sir.

(h) Does not arise.

Regularisation of Casual Labours

3314. SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Casual Labours working in Railways at present, Zonal-wise;

(b) the criteria being adopted by the Railways for their regularisation; and

(c) the number of casual labours regularized during each of the last three years, Zonal-wise?

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

[Translation]

Objectives of Panchayati Raj

3315. SHRI THAWARCHAND GEHLOT: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank has considered that the objectives of the Panchayati Raj System in the country have not been achieved;

(b) whether the official figures relating to Kerala and Karnataka have been considered as unrealistic in the study conducted by the World Bank;

(c) if so, the points in respect of which the World Bank has given suggestions in the said study alongwith the details of action suggested; and

(d) the action taken or scheme formulated by the Government to implement the suggestions given by the World Bank?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The World Bank Report

has made certain recommendations for strengthening local governments including the recommendation for budgetary autonomy. It has been suggested that local governments should have the power to hire, fire and determine the compensation level for their employees. According to the World Bank Report it would otherwise be difficult for local governments to control their budgets and be held to a hard budget constraint. According to the World Bank these powers would eliminate the dual responsibility that confronts local government employees between accountability to the government unit for whom they work, and accountability to the level of government that determines their well being in the work place. Effective implementation of service delivery by rural local governments would seem to require accountability of their officers. The World Bank Report has emphasized that priority should be given to empower Gram Panchayats. This has been recommended because the Gram Panchayats are closest to the people and can best detect and respond to people's preferences and needs. The long term goal should be to endow them with sufficient autonomy and resources to respond to local needs. Gram Panchayats should be allowed to spend public resources according to their priorities, to recruit and fire their own staff, and to procure technical assistance, contractors and other services from the private, NGO or public sector as they see fit. Plans, budgets, funds and assets should be treated as theirs and higher level panchayats should refrain from intervening in their affairs.

(b) The observations made in the report in respect of Kerala and Karnataka are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) The main points about which World Bank has given suggestions in the Study are as under:—

- (i) State Govts. need to rethink the role for districts and Blocks
- (ii) Priority should be given to empowering the village Panchayats
- (iii) Strengthen local budgetary autonomy

- (iv) Improve the structure of the property tax
- (v) Improve collection of the property tax
- (vi) Improve collection of the user fees and charges
- (vii) Broaden the tax base
- (viii) Redesign transfers
- (ix) Strengthen State Finance Commission
- (x) Create an information system for local finances
- (xi) Improve accounts and accountability
- (xii) Improve auditing

The World Bank has suggested the following course of action:—

- I. Develop a fiscal decentralization plan that includes all of the necessary components, and is based on the objectives which the government has set.
- II. Begin investing in upgrading the capacity of the State Government to lead and monitor the reform program and in the capacity of the local governments to implement the reform.
- III. Fix the financial reporting system of local government.
- IV. Clarify expenditure assignments.
- V. Restructure the transfer system to realize equalization objectives, and to allow local governments more autonomy, when local government capacity has reached an adequate level.
- VI. Improve local government revenue mobilization opportunities.

(d) Government are fully aware of the issues pointed out in the World Bank Report. Necessary steps are being taken by the Government to strengthen the Panchayats for planning and implementation of

schemes for economic development and social justice and to become institutions of self-government. As a first step towards this, a Conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers in charge of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj on Poverty Alleviation and Rural Prosperity through Panchayati Raj was held at New Delhi on 29-30 June, 2004 jointly by the Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Panchayati Raj. The Conference decided to hold seven Round Table Conferences to chalk out a joint programme of action to secure implementation of Part IX of the Constitution. All the seven Round Tables have been held during July to December, 2004. A set of around 150 points for action were evolved during the Round Tables and adopted by consensus at the seventh Round Table in Jaipur. The Ministry has now initiated a process of visiting each of the States/UTs to review with the authorities concerned the progress in implementing the points for action contained in the compendium. It is expected that this will accelerate the pace of implementation of the provisions of Part IX, read with Article 243ZD, of the Constitution and bring about greater conformity, in both letter and spirit, to the Constitutional provisions of Panchayati Raj in all States/UTs concerned.

Statement

Observations made by the World Bank in the Report

The following observations have been made by the World Bank in the Report:—

- Inter-Governmental relations in the case of India are observed to be mostly hierarchal with the districts and blocks having no taxing powers and little expenditure autonomy. Both Karnataka and Kerala more or less function as spending agents for higher level governments. The gram Panchayats have some independent taxing power, and some discretion in expenditure decisions.
- The average Gram Panchayat in Karnataka has a population of 5000. The average Gram

Panchayat in Kerala has a population of 25,000.

- Kerala has Developed a decentralized structure in terms of grant design and the empowerment of the gram Panchayats. Karnataka follows a more cautious approach where the State Government still hold the balance of fiscal decision making power. Neither approach has achieved effective empowerment of local governments and neither appears to have substantially ratcheted up local government spending or revenue raising, although the Kerala model is more developed. While there are important differences between the two States in some aspects of the systemic weaknesses observed, there also are similar flaws.
- Both States have weak, outdated and poorly functioning financial managements systems. Perhaps the most fundamental causes of failure in Karnataka's experience has been its extremely limited devolution of meaningful authority and capacity to local decision makers, while Kerala's disappointments are largely traceable to the collapse of State finances in the years after the implementation of its decentralization program.
- The system of Intergovernmental transfers in the two States is quite different. In Karnataka, the total expenditure of rural local governments is equivalent to about 20 per cent of State expenditure, with 52% being spent at Zilla Panchayats (ZP), 44% at Taluk Panchayats (TP) and 4% at Gram Panchayats (GP) level. In Karnataka, the gram panchayats account for only a small fraction of rural local government spending and raise only a nominal amount in own source revenues. In contrast in Kerala 18% of the State Expenditure takes place at the local Government level with 22% at the ZP level, 18% at the TP level and 66% at the GP level.

- **A major constraint to true fiscal decentralization is the limited expenditure discretion that has been given to the local governments.** In Karnataka at the ZPs and TPs level there is very little discretion on both Plan and Non Plan funds with large percentages being tied up for a particular use, say salaries, input purchases, Centrally sponsored schemes etc. Relatively speaking, GPs, because they have their own sources of revenue have more discretion on spending. Thus the fiscal decentralization process in Karnataka ensures that the district and block panchayats are mere disbursing agents of the higher level governments.
- **in Karnataka, the local civil service is outside local control.** Hiring, firing and compensation determination rests with high level governments. In Kerala, there is some administrative autonomy although much progress remains to be made.

II. Problems with the Present System

- **Assignment of expenditure responsibility is not clear.** Unclear assignment of expenditures has led to duplication of efforts, some failure to assume leadership in the delivery of services, coordination problems and some uncertainty on the part of the local population as to where accountability lies.
- **Local Governments have little control on their budgets.** Both in Karnataka and Kerala, gram Panchayats fared somewhat better than the ZP and TP because they could raise revenue from their own sources.
- **The level of expenditure incurred at the GP level in per capita terms is as low as Rs. 68.5 in Karnataka and a little higher in Kerala (not indicated).** While expenditure assignment increases as panchayats are forced to take on agency functions on behalf of the State and Central Governments, their own revenue position is not very satisfactory.
- **Transfer system is complicated and inconsistent with stated policy objectives:** In Karnataka, untied grants allocated to gram panchayats are done so on the basis of equal amounts per GP. There is no evidence of equalization in the distribution of these grants, in fact even the poverty alleviation grants do not go more heavily to panchayats with a greater concentration of poor families.
- **In Kerala, Plan grants and the sponsored schemes together form about 35-40 percent of the State Plan.** The most notable feature of Kerala's fiscal decentralization is the large share of untied grants, about 82.3% in 1998-99, in the structure of transfers to Gram Panchayats. Both in percentage and per capita terms this represents a much larger share of untied funds than in Karnataka. As a matter of fact this is unique in India, further exceeding the untied transfers available to panchayats in any other State.
- **Revenue effort by Gram Panchayat is weak in both the States.** In neither State do the local governments raise as much as one percent of Gross State Domestic Product. Relatively few of the gram panchayats have opted to levy the highest property tax rate allowed by the State. A number of reasons have been suggested for weak revenue performance such as poor enforcement procedures, weak administration procedures i.e. maintenance of a complete tax roll, need for more productive bases to tax, taxpayers see little benefit in paying taxes to local Governments, no rewards/penalty system for improved revenue generation.
- **In Karnataka collection rates on property taxes are very low.** Given the admittedly large inflow of foreign money into Kerala and

the boom in constructions per capita property tax collections should have been much higher. Interestingly per capita property taxes and per capita own revenues are significantly and positively related to the variables representing accessibility to markets (say the road length per sq. km-area, proportion of metalled roads, public) perception of service delivery i.e. availability of water etc.

- **Accounting system in Karnataka continue to be outdated, in danger of collapse with annual audits falling in arrears.** Registers and books of accounts are unable to account for the increased and the diversified flow of funds. There is no uniformity in the accounting codes. GPs still rely on their old panchayat accounting rules and TPs and ZPs do not have designated accounting rules. No one knows the cash balance on a day to day basis. Budgeting has been reduced to a routine, devoid of analysis or advice for policy purposes. Similarly in Kerala with Panchayat funds having tripled and State Government grants having increased ninefold since 1996-97, old systems are under stress and new systems are yet to emerge. Various innovative tools and methods introduced during the people's plan campaign to make the panchayat accountable to the community have not yet been perfected. **There include social audits, the creation of beneficiary committees, right to information initiatives, citizen charters and an ombudsman.**

- **Lack of adequate information system on local finances.**

Upgradation of Tulsi Museum

3316. **SHRI CHANDRABHAN SINGH:** Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Madhya Pradesh has submitted any proposal to the Union Government

for the development and upgradation of Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma Rajya Swatantrata Sangrahalaya;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total expenditure involved on the project and percentage of share to be borne by the Union Government in this regard;

(d) whether there is a proposal to upgrade Tulsi Museum in Satnam district and Devi Ahilya Archaeological Museum in Maheshwar under the regional and local museum promotional scheme of the Union Government; and

(e) if so, the time by which the proposal is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) The total estimated cost of the proposal as submitted by the State Government is Rs. 102.00 lakhs. A total amount of Rs. 50.00 lakhs has been approved by the Govt. of India for the purposes of Construction of gallery, publication, Purchase of Equipment, Documentation and Museum Library. The balance amount will be met by the organisation.

(d) and (e) The Tulsi Museum, Satna district, has been sanctioned a total amount of Rs. 10.00 lakhs for the purposes of construction of new gallery and display works. The proposal of Devi Ahilya Archaeological Museum in Maheshwar was placed before the Expert Committee meeting held on 25-11-2004. The Expert Committee did not recommend the proposal.

Military Training to Youths

3317. **SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU:**

SHRI A.K. MOORTHY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any action plan to impart military training to the youths;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to make this programme mandatory at national level; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

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

[English]

Changes in Personnel Laws of Parsis Community

3318. SHRI SARVEY SATHYANARAYANA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any suggestions from the National Commission for Minorities to bring about changes in the personnel laws of the Parsis community;

(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, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Classical Language Status of Kannada

3319. SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to give the status of Classical Language to Kannada; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) A Committee of Linguistic Experts has been constituted to examine the claims of any Indian Language for Classical Status. This Committee will advise the government in the matter.

Fast Food Restaurants at Petrol Pumps

3320. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has allowed private sector Fast Food companies to set up Fast Food restaurants at petrol pump complexes;

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

(c) the details of the response from Fast Food Companies to the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) The Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have their own norms to allow setting up fast food restaurants at their petrol pumps complexes. These norms, inter alia, include return on investments, customer services, brand image etc. OMCs have so far tied up with companies like Dominos Pizza, Cafe' Coffee Day, Nirulas Corner House, Baskin Robbins, etc.

Construction of Aerobridges at Kolkata Airport

3321. SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the current infrastructures at the Kolkata Airport need to be upgraded to handle the recent spurt in traffic;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has decided to construct more aerobridges at the Kolkata Airport;

(d) if so, the details alongwith the funds allocated and released for the project; and

(e) the time by which the said project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Airports Authority of India (AAI) is in constant

endeavour to upgrade the airport depending upon the requirements of airlines/traffic. It is proposed to have the construction of a new departure building in the international terminal complex, to cater to 500 passengers during peak hours. A consultant has been appointed for designing the new international departure building. Construction of additional parking bays, resurfacing and extension of the secondary runway have also been planned. The construction of 2 additional in-contact parking bays and 2 additional remote parking bays is in progress and is estimated to be completed by October, 2005.

(c) to (e) AAI has proposed to provide two additional aerobridges alongwith connecting corridor in the domestic terminal building at an estimated cost of Rs. 700 lacs and one additional aerobridge in the international terminal building at an estimated cost of Rs. 350 lacs. An amount of Rs. One lac has been provided in the RE for 2004-05 for the above mentioned works and an amount of Rs. 10 lacs and Rs. 5 lacs respectively have been allocated for the BE 2005-06. The estimated time for completion is about 12 months after the award of the work.

Setting up of Centre of Information Technology for Railways

3322. SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government for setting up of a centre of Information Technology for railways at the International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Indian Railways have no proposal under consideration to set up a Centre of Information Technology for railways in

the premises of International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad.

The proposal had been under consideration in the year 2002-2003. However, it was then decided by the Ministry of Railways not to set up such a centre in International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Security Arrangements for VIPs in Trains

3323. SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the effective arrangements made for the security of VIP passengers in the important trains, particularly in Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express trains;

(b) whether the Government proposes to tighten security arrangements in trains and enhance the current security arrangement keeping in view the occurrence of criminal and terrorist incidents in the country; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The maintenance of Law and order and protection of VIPs is the constitutional responsibility of the State/Union Territories Governments, "policing" being a State subject. However, in order to supplement the efforts of the State Government in controlling crime, the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957 and the Railways Act, 1989 have been amended and the Railway Protection Force is being deployed on trains and Railway premises to assist the State Governments. Now all the important trains are being escorted by the Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Police. Railway Protection Force provides an average of 1217 train escort parties and the Government Railway Police provides an average of 2102 train escort parties to provide the passengers including VIPs safe and secure journey. Out of this, 12 escort parties are provided on Rajdhani Expresses

and 17 escort parties are provided on the Shatabdi Expresses per day by Railway Protection Force and the Government Railway Police. All Rajdhani and Shatabdi Expresses are not provided escorts. Escort parties are deployed as per the crime trends and trains affected.

(b) and (c) The crime trends are periodically reviewed and analysed in the co-ordination meetings held between the Government Railway Police and Railway Protection Force officials as well as higher level co-ordination meetings between the Railways and the State Governments. Arrangements are modified and deployment adjusted in co-ordination between the State Governments and the Railways. Close co-ordination is maintained with the intelligence agencies and the State Governments so that co-ordinated measures are adopted depending on the threat perceptions and intelligence inputs. Actionable intelligence is shared by the intelligence agencies with the Railways. However, in order to effectively assist the state Governments in controlling crime, the vacancies in the Railway Protection Force are being filled up and additional road vehicles and communication equipments have been provided.

[English]

Implementation of Conditional Access System in Chennai

3324. SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Conditional Access System (CAS) has been implemented in some metropolitan cities including Chennai;

(b) if so, whether any measures are being taken to introduce the same in other parts of the country as well;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The Conditional Access System (CAS) is currently under implementation in Chennai City only.

(b) to (d) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has furnished its recommendations dated 01-10-2004 on the issues relating to Broadcasting and distribution of TV Channels which, inter-alia, deals with issues of addressability (CAS), pricing and promotion of competition in the distribution of TV Channels. These recommendations are currently under consideration in consultation with States/UTs and other stakeholders. Further the issue of implementation of CAS in Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata is currently pending for adjudication before Delhi High Court.

MoU between Gail and SAIL

3325. SHRI GURJEET SINGH RANA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gas Authority of India Limited has signed any MoU with Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) for supply of Natural gas to steel plants; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. GAIL (India) Limited has signed Heads of Agreement (HOA) with SAIL on 10-2-2005 for the supply of 3.563 Million Standard Cubic Meters Per Day (MMSCMD) of natural gas, subject to availability of gas.

[Translation]

Shifting of Nainpur Railway Hospital

3326. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the railway board has decided to relocate the hospital located in Nainpur in South-Eastern Railway to some other place;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the office staff of the said hospital have also been shifted from there; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. No such decision has been taken.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Modernisation of Bharat Brakes and Valves Ltd.

3327. SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the current status of Bharat Brakes and Valves Ltd. alongwith the details of profit/loss position for the last three years;

(b) whether the Government propose to modernize the Bharat Brakes and Valves Ltd.;

(c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the funds allocated/proposed to be allocated by the Government for the purpose; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) The operation of Bharat Brakes and Valves Ltd. has been closed since 31-3-2003 and all the employees have been separated through Voluntary Retirement Scheme. The Official Liquidator has taken over the company on 31-7-2003. The net losses suffered by the company in three years

before being taken over by Official Liquidator are as under:—

Year	Net Loss (Rs. in lacs)
2000-01	929.04
2001-02	696.40
2002-03 (un-audited)	1417.58

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Installation of CCTV and Cameras at Stations

3328. SHRI PRADEEP GANDHI:

SHRIMATI NEETA PATERIYA:

SHRI THAWARCHAND GEHILOT:

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme to install close circuit T.V. and cameras at main stations to control crime; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith name of stations selected therefor and the estimated expenditure to be incurred thereon?

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

(b) The Railway-wise position about Close circuit Television and cameras to be installed over Zonal Railways stations is as under:—

Railways/Stations	Total Expenditure Rs. in lakhs
1	2
North Western Railway	Rs. 10.33/-
Jaipur-Jodhpur	
Ajmer and Bikaner	

1	2
Western Railway	Rs. 123.77/-
Church Gate, Mumbai, Bandra, Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Ratlam, Indore, Bhavnagar, Botad and Verawal	
Southern Railway	Rs. 11.07/-
Chennai	
South Western Railway	Rs. 28.56/-
Bangalore	
South East Central Railway	Rs. 10.00/-
Bilaspur	
Northeast Frontier Railway	Rs. 17.19/-
Guwahati and Dimapur	
North East Railway	Rs. 22.58/-
Gorakhpur Lucknow	
North Central Railway	Rs. 56.18/-
Agra, Jhansi, Gwalior and Sitholi	

[English]

NGOs managed by SC/ST and Physically Handicapped Persons

3329. SHRI PARSURAM MAJHI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the names of NGOs receiving grants/funds from the Ministry, being managed/run by SC/ST and Physically handicapped persons separately;

(b) whether any request from SC/ST Association for grant/Assistance under discretionary power is lying pending with the Ministry; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) The Government of India releases grants/funds to the NGOs for the welfare of SCs/STs and Physically Handicapped persons. No separate record of NGOs being managed/run by SC/ST and Physically Handicapped persons is maintained.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Compensation by Railways

3330. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of cases during 2004-05 in which Consumer Courts have directed the Railways to refund money to passengers;

(b) the total compensation given by the Railways during the said period; and

(c) the remedial steps being taken by the Railways for timely payment of refund money to the passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) During 2004-05 (upto February, 2005), in 74 cases Consumer Courts have directed the Railways to pay refund to the passengers.

(b) During the above period, the amount of compensation paid by the Railways was Rs. 2,64,041/-.

(c) The remedial steps taken/being taken by the Railways are:—

(i) Constant monitoring of passenger refund cases at senior officers' level at Zonal Railways.

(ii) Separate cells at Zonal and Divisional Headquarters have been set up to follow up the Consumer Court Cases effectively.

(iii) Refund Rules have been liberalized.

Construction of Abohar Fazilka Rail Line

3331. SHRI ZORA SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress so far made in construction of Abohar-Fazilka rail line project;

(b) the expenditure incurred on the project, till date; and

(c) the time by which work on the project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Final location survey has been completed. Soil investigation for major bridges completed. Land acquisition is under process and an amount of Rs. 6.20 crore has been deposited with the State Government of Punjab for acquisition of land.

(b) An expenditure of about Rs. 6.47 crore (provisional) has been incurred on the project upto end of Feb. '05.

(c) The target date for completion of this project has not yet been fixed.

[Translation]

Installation of HPT in Rajasthan

3332. SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been persistent demands from various organisations to install more HPTs in Rajasthan adjoining international border areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati has informed that requests for installation of HPTs at Bikaner, Anupgarh and Nathdwara in Rajasthan have

been received from various quarters during last two years.

(c) An HPT is under installation at Bikaner. There is no scheme to set up any other HPT in Rajasthan.

With the launch of free-to-air DTH service by Doordarshan with, its bouquet of 33 TV and 12 Radio channels which can be received throughout the country, including Rajasthan, with the help of a small sized dish receive unit. Programme of further expansion of terrestrial network has been discontinued.

[English]

Financial Assistance for Ambedkar National Foundation

3333. SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to refer to reply given to Unstarred Question No. 3190 dated August 19, 2004 regarding financial assistance for Ambedkar Bhavan Complex at Ahmedabad and state:

(a) whether proposal for construction of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar National Foundation at Ahmedabad has been processed and financial assistance requested for the proposal has been released;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons for delay; and

(d) the time by which the said proposal is likely to be processed and financial assistance to be released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) to (d) The proposal from state government for construction of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar National Foundation at Ahmedabad was examined and funds could not be released because the project is not covered under the schemes of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation.

*[Translation]***Expenditure incurred on Clubs**

3334. SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the clubs for the family members of the higher officers of the armed forces are run on the Government expenditure;

(b) if so, the expenditure incurred on these clubs during each of the last three years; and

(c) the provisions being made by the Government so that the jawans of the armed forces could also avail the similar facilities?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No clubs for the family members of the higher officers of the armed forces are being run on Government expenditure. Institutes for use of the Officers are being managed on no-profit no-loss basis by contributions from the members.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Personnel Below Officer Rank are eligible to avail the facilities in the Institutes meant for these ranks.

*[English]***Affected Areas Due to Tsunami Waves**

3335. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Archaeological Survey of India has made any discoveries on the areas affected from Tsunami waves recently;

(b) if so, the details and the number and names of Monuments/Museums of historical importance got damaged due to Tsunami, State-wise, location-wise; and

(c) the steps taken/to be taken by the Government for repairing/renovation of these monuments and museums?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir. Three bas-reliefs were exposed by the Tsunami waves at Mamallapuram coast (Chennai). These depict (i) the figure of tiger and a deity in a niche flanked by demi-gods, (ii) bas-relief figure of an elephant and a horse with a circular niche at the top and (iii) figure of a *kirtimukha* (lion face). The bas-reliefs are carved over a bed rock and stylistically they belong to Pallava period.

(b) and (c) There was no damage to any of the protected monuments/museums of the Archaeological Survey of India due to Tsunami waves. However, the compound wall and fencing of two monuments in Tamil Nadu was partly damaged for which repairs have already been taken up. The names and location of these monuments are as under:—

1. Shore Temple at Mamallapuram, Distt. Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu.
2. Tiger Caves at Mamallapuram, Distt. Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu.

*[Translation]***Funds to Prasar Bharati**

3336. YOGI ADITYA NATH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the amount spent by the Government to Prasar Bharati during each of the last three years;

(b) whether the Government is not allocating adequate funds to Prasar Bharati; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) The details of Grants/ Loans provided by the Government, revenue generated viz., Internal Extra Budgetary Resources (IEBR) and

expenditure incurred by Prasar Bharati, during the last three years, are given below:—

(Rupees in crore)

Year	Grant/ Loan	IEBR*	Total	Expenditure
2001-02	1,113.81	711.90	1,825.71	1,629.27
2002-03	1,238.39	686.06	1,924.45	1,766.93
2003-04	1,131.19	671.27	1,802.46	1,663.77
Total	3,483.39	2,069.23	5,552.62	5,059.97

*IEBR: Internal Extra Budgetary Resources.

Efforts are made to provide funds to the maximum extent possible. In addition, Prasar Bharati has recourse to revenues earned through its commercial operations.

Expenditure Incurred on Petro-Tech-2005

3337. SHRI SURAJ SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the expenditure incurred by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) on organising Petro-Tech-2005 in January, 2005;

(b) whether any case of financial irregularities organising in Petro-Tech-2005 have come to the notice of the Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the remedial action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) the 6th International Petroleum Conference and Exhibition, "PETROTECH-2005", was organized during 15-19 January, 2005 by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) under the sponsorship of various public and private sector companies.

The estimated expenditure in organizing the event was Rs. 8.15 crore, and the estimated revenue is Rs. 10.40 crore. ONGC incurred an expenditure of Rs. 58.80 lakh towards the participation fee for the Company's delegates for attending the Conference and Rs. 54.14 lakh for the Exhibition.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

[English]

New DTH Policy

3338. SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated a 'New DTH Policy' for promoting greater investment;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, time limit by which the new policy would be formulated?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) In March, 2001, the Government notified guidelines for seeking Direct to Home (DTH) license by private parties to set up and operate DTH service. The guidelines permit an Indian entity to have foreign equity holding, including FII/NRI/OCB upto 49%, with a 20% cap on FDI. The Ministry is not envisaging the formulation of a new policy.

South East Railway Terminal at Shalimar

3339. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work of the South East Railways Terminal at Shalimar has been completed; and

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

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

(b) Two 24-coach platforms have been constructed. Temporary bus/taxi stand and car parking area have been provided. Land acquisition for providing separate access roads from Andul Road flyover to the existing Shalimar terminal is in progress. The work is being progressed as per availability of resources. No target date of completion of the work has yet been fixed.

[Translation]

**Maltreatment with Labourers by Railway Police,
Coolies and Touts**

3340. SHRI BHUBNESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA:
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the maltreatment on a massive scale suffered by labourers from Bihar and Eastern States at Stations of Delhi and Punjab at the hands of Railway Police, Coolies and Touts in the shape of harassment without reason, snatching away of money, extorting money for providing them berths, thrashing them on refusing to part with their money;

(b) if so, the total number of such cases reported during each of the last three years, till date and the action taken thereon;

(c) the measures taken/to be taken by the Government to prevent recurrence of such incidents;

(d) whether the Railways has constituted any task force to check such incidents; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. No such incidents of harassment and maltreatment on a massive scale at Railway Stations of Delhi and Punjab were reported.

However, on 18-8-2003, an incident of snatching of money and belongings from 13 bonafide passengers by train escort party of Government Railway Police

(GRP)/Pathankot in a reserved compartment of Train No. 3074 Himgiri Express between Mukeria and Uchabassi over Pathankot—Jalandhar section of Northern Railway was reported. In this connection a case vide FIR No. 99/2003 dated 18-8-2003 U/S 382/34 IPC was registered at Government Railway Police Station/Jalandhar against the Train Escort Party.

(c) The following preventive measures are taken to prevent such incidents:—

1. Regular coordination meetings are being held with the Government Railway Police at various levels whenever any lapse in duties leading to harassment to passengers in reported and corrective measures are discussed and implemented.

2. Regular and surprise checks are made at Railway Stations and in trains by the supervisors of the Government Railway Police and the Railways.

3. Any complaint of harassment to passengers as and when received, is taken up with the Government Railway Police authorities if Government Railway Police staff is alleged to be at fault.

4. To prevent seat cornering, rakes are brought in locked condition from the washing lines to the platforms.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

[English]

**Strategies of Air India to Compete with
International Airlines**

3341. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Air India has drawn up strategies to compete with international airlines;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Employees' Union have accepted the strategies of the Management; and

(d) if not, the manner in which Air India proposes to tackle the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) In order to meet the growing competition in the aviation sector, Air India has taken various measures which include: (i) Flat Beds in First and Slumberettes in Executive class have been installed in all B747-400 aircraft; (ii) PTVs are available on some of the dry leased aircraft in all classes; (iii) Refurbishment of the interiors of A310-300 and B747-400 aircraft—replacement of seats, carpets and curtains, upgradation of galleys and toilets, upgradation of in-flight entertainment system etc.; (iv) Upgraded Amenity Kits for First and Executive class passengers; (v) Wider choice of duty free sales on board; (vi) Implementation of E-ticketing system on India/USA/India and India/UK/India routes; (vii) Inter Airline through Check-In with other airlines over the network facilitates passenger check-in from origin to destination; (viii) Upgradation of Maharajah Lounge at Mumbai; (ix) Quality of meals served on board is closely monitored and improvement effected.

Air India has already inducted 18 aircraft on lease and has finalized arrangement for induction of 12 more aircraft on lease to meet its capacity expansion requirements pending purchase of aircraft.

In addition to above, Air India Board has also approved a fleet acquisition plan which envisages the acquisition of 18 X B737-800 aircraft for its new airline subsidiary, Air India Express and 50 aircraft for Air India. A Project Report for the induction of 18 B737-800W aircraft for Air India Express has been submitted to the Government.

(c) and (d) Every effort is being made by the Management to take the employees into confidence regarding various measure being taken to enable Air India to tide over the situation created in the wake of competition from international airlines.

[Translation]

Construction of New Hajipur-Vaishali-Sugauli Rail Line

3342. SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA:

SHRI SITA RAM SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the land acquisition work for construction of new Hajipur-Vaishali-Sugauli rail line under East-Central railway zone has commenced;

(b) if so, the time by which land acquisition work is likely to be completed;

(c) the expenditure to be incurred on this work; and

(d) the time schedule for completion of this rail line project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Final Location Survey for the work has been completed. Land acquisition proceedings for Vaishali Yard and 6 kms. length from Hajipur end are in progress. Work would commence once land is made available by the State Government.

(c) The anticipated cost of the project is Rs. 325 crore. An outlay of Rs. 1 crore is proposed for the project during 2005-06.

(d) No target date for completion of the work has yet been fixed.

Funds to VO's/NGOs

3343. DR. RAJESH MISHRA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal to sanction grants to the VOs/NGOs of various States on the basis of State-wise allocation of funds is under consideration of the Union Government; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Does not arise.

Devangana Aerodrome

3344. SHRI SHYAMA CHARAN GUPT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to reply given to Unstarred Question No. 246 dated December 2, 2004 regarding 'Incomplete Devangana Aerodrome' and state:

(a) whether the construction work of Devangana Aerodrome has been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the time by which the construction work of the aerodrome is likely to be completed?

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

(b) to (d) Airports Authority of India (AAI), is not implementing any project for construction of Devangana Aerodrome. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has allowed a private institution to construct an airstrip, allied facilities and approach road on the land provided by State Government to the said institution on 10 year's lease under certain terms and conditions. The construction work is under progress.

[English]

Joint Ventures with Russian Companies

3345. SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) proposes to set up Joint venture with various Russian companies for manufacturing Light Combat Helicopters; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

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.

Construction of ROB

3346. SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had granted extension to carry out excavation and underground concreting for the Road Over Bridge to be constructed on the Defence land at Kandivilli;

(b) if so, whether the construction of Road Over Bridge has been completed;

(c) if not, the reasons for delay; and

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

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir. However, the Ministry of Defence had sanctioned the transfer of Defence Land measuring 14860.30 sq.m. at Central Ordnance Depot, Malad, to the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai for construction of a Road Over Bridge (ROB) at Kandivilli (East).

(b) to (d) The construction work is being done by State Government. As reported, the work is in progress.

Maintenance of Museums

3347. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the name of museums conserved by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in the country, location-wise and State-wise;

(b) the amount spent and released on maintenance of each museum during each of the last three years and proposed for 2005-06, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government is aware that the maintenance being provided by ASI in these museums is not satisfactory; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The list of the site museums maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is placed at enclosed Statement-I.

(b) The amount spent and allotted is placed at enclosed Statement-II.

(c) and (d) The Archaeological Site museums are maintained properly within the resources available with the Archaeological Survey of India.

Statement-I

Sl. No.	State	Location	Name of Museum
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	District Guntur	1. Amaravati
		District Chittoor	2. Chandragiri
		District Medak	3. Kondapur
		District Guntur	4. Nagarjunakonda
2.	Assam	District Golpara	5. Surya Pahar
3.	Bihar	District Bhagalpur	6. Vikramshila
		District Gaya	7. Bodhgaya
		District Nalanda	8. Nalanda
		District Vaishali	9. Vaishali
4.	Delhi	Delhi	10. Archaeological Museum, Red Fort, Delhi
		Delhi	11. Indian War Memorial Museum, Red Fort, Delhi
		Delhi	12. Purana Qila Museum, Purana Qila, New Delhi
		Delhi	13. Swatantrata Sangram Sangrahalaya, Red Fort, Delhi
			14. Salimgarh Museum
5.	Gujarat	Taluka Dholka, Distt. Ahmedabad	15. Lothal

1	2	3	4
6.	Goa	North Goa	16. Velha Goa Museum, Goa
7.	Haryana	District Kurukshetra, Thaneswar	17. Sheikh Chilli's Tomb
8.	Himachal Pradesh	District Kangra	18. Kangra Fort
9.	Karnataka	District Bagalkot, Aihole Halebidu	19. Aihole
		District Hospet	23. Hampi (Kamalapur)
		Srirangapattnam, Daria Daulta Bagh	24. Tipu Sultan Palace
10.	Kerala	District Kochi, Ernakulam	25. Mattanchery Palace
11.	Madhya Pradesh	District Raisen	26. Sanchi
		District Ashok Nagar, Chanderi	27. Singhpur Palace
		District Gwalior	28. Gwalior
		District Chhatarpur, Khajuraho	29. Khajuraho
12.	Orissa	District Puri	30. Konark
		District Jajpur	31. Ratnagiri
13.	Punjab	District Ropar	32. Ropar
14.	Rajasthan	District Hanumangarh	33. Kalibangan
15.	Tamil Nadu	District Chennai	34. Fort St. George
16.	Uttar Pradesh	District Varanasi	35. Sarnath Museum
		District Lucknow	36. Residency Museum, Lucknow
		District Agra	37. Taj Mahal Complex
17.	Uttaranchal	District Almora, Jageshwar	38. Jageshwar
18.	West Bengal	District Murshidabad	39. Hazarduari Palace, Museum
		District Kooch Bihar	40. Kooch Bihar Palace
		District Purba, Medinipur	41. Tamluk

Statement-II

Sl.No.	Name of the State	Name of the Museum	Fund Allocation			Expenditure Incurred		
			2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1. Amaravati	9.80	12.80	17.00	7.76	12.69	14.00
		2. Kondapur						
		3. Chandragiri	1.50	7.00	12.00	1.50	7.00	12.00
		4. Nagarjunakonda	13.50	19.50	20.00	13.38	19.49	20.00
2.	Assam	5. Surya Pahar	Opened	In-Nov. 2004.	4.00	—	—	3.65
3.	Bihar	6. Bodhgaya	5.90	11.00	10.00	5.90	10.76	4.10
		7. Nalanda	17.88	14.00	13.00	17.85	14.00	10.05
		8. Vaishali	9.60	11.00	10.00	9.52	10.61	8.50
		9. Vikramshila	6.60	9.00	8.00	6.60	9.00	9.00
4.	Delhi	10. Archaeological Museum, Red Fort, Delhi	2.00	2.75	7.00	1.81	1.48	0.24
		11. Indian War Memorial Museum, Red Fort, Delhi	4.45	3.00	6.00	4.32	2.34	3.00
		12. Purana Qila Museum, Purana Qila, New Delhi	2.00	25.00	4.00	1.94	20.61	3.50
		13. Swatantrata Sangram Sangrahalaya, Red Fort, Delhi	6.00	10.00	11.00	6.00	8.22	3.60
		14. Salimgarh Museum, Red Fort, Delhi	4.50	3.00	5.00	3.59	2.71	2.42
5.	Gujarat	15. Lothal	1.65	7.00	8.00	1.63	6.43	6.32
6.	Goa	16. Velha Goa	8.60	11.70	10.00	8.59	11.70	8.13
7.	Himachal Pradesh	17. Kangra Fort	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	.85	1.00

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8. Haryana	18. Sheikh Chilli's Tomb		1.00	3.00	4.00	1.00	2.30	3.18
9. Karnataka	19. Aihole		12.25	19.60	20.00	12.21	19.60	19.42
	20. Badami							
	21. Bijapur		19.44	10.46	9.10	18.23	10.46	6.92
	22. Halebidu		4.80	10.00	10.00	4.80	9.98	9.70
	23. Kamalapur (Hampi)		13.60	13.60	13.00	13.60	13.60	11.00
	24. Tipu Sultan		2.85	8.00	7.00	2.85	8.00	6.40
10. Kerala	25. Mattancherry Palace		3.00	8.00	9.20	3.00	7.99	9.00
11. Madhya Pradesh	26. Sanchi		2.90	12.10	10.00	2.86	12.00	5.90
	27. Chanderi		4.00	10.85	8.00	4.00	10.84	7.16
	28. Gwalior		10.75	22.12	16.00	10.03	21.98	11.53
	29. Khajuraho		9.20	9.50	10.00	9.08	9.31	5.43
12. Orissa	30. Konark		4.60	9.90	10.00	3.10	9.85	8.96
	31. Ratnagiri		2.60	6.40	7.00	2.60	6.40	6.15
13. Punjab	32. Ropar		4.85	5.85	6.00	4.85	5.85	5.31
14. Rajasthan	33. Kalibangan		3.50	6.50	8.00	3.28	6.50	7.75
15. Tamil Nadu	34. Fort St. George, Chennai		6.00	12.75	18.00	6.00	12.75	10.95
16. Uttar Pradesh	35. Sarnath		25.58	28.00	14.00	25.58	28.00	14.00
	36. Residency Museum, Lucknow		3.00	15.29	6.00	3.00	15.19	6.00
	37. Taj Mahal Complex		3.50	4.00	8.00	3.20	3.73	2.30
17. Uttaranchal	38. Jageshwar		Opened in Sept. 2003	4.00	4.00	Opened in Sept. 2003	4.00	3.22
18. West Bengal	39. Hazarduari Palace		18.30	18.00	18.00	15.46	18.00	15.02
	40. Kooch Bihar		7.00	12.00	12.00	6.20	12.00	9.21
	41. Tamluk		10.00	8.00	8.00	10.00	6.56	6.93

Proposed budget for 2005-06 in Rs. 950.00 lakhs to be distributed to Museums as per necessities and improvement/upgradation.

*[Translation]***Funds for New Railway Lines**

3348. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a short decline in the allocation of funds for the construction of new railway lines during the current plan period;

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

(c) the steps being contemplated by the Government to ensure adequate allocation of funds for the aforesaid purpose?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

*[English]***Railway Projects**

3349. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD:

SHRI MUNAWAR HASSAN:

SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:

SHRI RAJENDER KUMAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of railway projects announced during each of the last three years;

(b) the number of projects completed and lying pending, State-wise, Particularly in Gujarat;

(c) the present status of pending projects;

(d) the main reasons for their pendency;

(e) the amount allocated for these projects; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) A total of 9, 13 and 39 projects have been included in the years 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04 respectively.

(b) A statement is attached.

(c) to (f) All the 240 projects excluding five projects which are awaiting requisite clearances, are in various stages of progress. The five pending projects are under various stages of approval. A total of Rs. 3803.37 crore has been allocated for these projects of new lines, gauge conversion, doubling, railway electrification and metropolitan transport projects for 2004-05. These projects are likely to be completed in coming years as per the availability of resources.

Statement

A total of 88 projects have been completed. The pending projects in railway parlance are the projects which have been included in the budget with the proviso that the work would be taken up after obtaining requisite clearances. At present there are 5 such pending projects. As per budget 2004-05, there are 240 projects in progress which include the pending projects also. The Statewise details are given below:—

Sl. No	State	No. of Works	Completed	Balance in Progress including pending projects
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	27	7	20
2.	Assam and North East States	12	2	10

1	2	3	4	5
3.	Bihar	47	15	32
4.	Chhattisgarh	10	5	5
5.	Delhi	4	0	4
6.	Gujarat	14	5	9
7.	Haryana	7	0	7
8.	Himachal Pradesh	3	0	3
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	3	1	2
10.	Jharkhand	11	3	8
11.	Karnataka	22	4	18
12.	Kerala	14	2	12
13.	Madhya Pradesh	10	1	9
14.	Maharashtra	27	8	19
15.	Orissa	25	6	19
16.	Punjab	7	1	6
17.	Rajasthan	15	4	11
18.	Tamil Nadu	25	6	19
19.	Uttar Pradesh	47	14	33
20.	Uttaranchal	3	1	2
21.	West Bengal	45	15	30

Note:—The projects falling in more than one state have been shown in each state.

Opening of Gas Agencies

3350. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:

MOHD. MUKEEM:

SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO:

SHRI KAILASH BAITHA:

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH:

SHRI RAJENDER KUMAR:

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

(a) the norms laid down by the Government to allot gas agency and selection of location;

(b) the number of Gas Agencies opened in each State and Union Territory during each of the last three years till date, company-wise and location-wise;

(c) whether the government has fixed any target to open gas agencies during the remaining period to Tenth Five Year Plan;

(d) if so, the details thereof, State/Union Territory-wise; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to achieve the targets?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) set up LPG distributorships in keeping with their commercial considerations. The criteria and the procedure for selection of LPG distributorships are Published by OMCs from time to time in various Newspapers at the time of advertisement/selection.

(b) The number of LPG distributorships opened by OMCs during the last three years and April, 2004-February, 2005 in country is given in enclosed statement.

The state-wise details of LPG distributorships are available with Director (Marketing) of the oil company concerned.

(c) to (e) Government have given freedom to OMCs to set up LPG distributorships in accordance with their commercial considerations. The commissioning of LPG distributorships depends upon various factors such as identification of viable locations, release of advertisements, conducting interviews and the ability of the candidate to secure land for godown, showroom etc. In view of these factors, any specific target for commissioning of LPG distributorships during the Tenth-Five Year Plan has not been fixed. However, Government have advised OMCs to draw up Marketing Plans for covering semi-urban and rural areas.

Statement

Details of LPG distributorships set up by OMCs in country during the Period April, 2001-February, 2005

Name of Oil Company	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	April, 2004 to February, 2005
1	2	3	4	5
IOCL	462	240	234	252

1	2	3	4	5
HPCL	213	76	95	137
BPCL	313	105	94	135
IBP	29	10	9	15
Total	1,017	431	432	539

Construction of Nahur Railway Station

3351. SHRIMATI KALPANA RAMESH NARHIRE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Construction work of Nahur Railway Station, halt Station of Central Railway, Mumbai has been completed;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the present status of the project;

(d) the steps taken by the Government for early completion of the project; and

(e) the time by which the Railway Station is likely to start functioning?

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

(b) Railway has deposited Rs. 40 lakhs to the State Government for acquisition of 942.60 square meter of land required for construction in October 2003. Land has not been handed over to Railways. This is holding up the progress of other works.

(c) The earthwork in formation, construction of retaining wall, minor bridges and linking of new diversion has been completed.

(d) The diversion is proposed to be commissioned in second week of April 2005. The construction of platform, Foot Over Bridge and other connected works to be taken up after commissioning of diversion, are scheduled for completion by March 2006.

(e) March 2006.

Promotion of Satriya Dance and Music

3352. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that Satriya Dance and Music Form of Assam is on the verge of extinction; and

(b) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to promote and propagate the Satriya Dance and Music?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Sattriya Dance and Music form of Assam is not on the verge of extinction. Sangeet Natak Akademi under the Ministry of Culture has launched a special project of Support to Sattriya Dance and Allied Traditions since 2002 which provides for (i) annual festival of Sattriya in Assam (ii) Training programme of Sattriya dance and music under eminent gurus (iii) funding of select Sattras in Assam (iv) Sponsoring of Sattriya artistes outside Assam and (v) support for research, documentation and publication etc.

Shortage of Helicopters

3353. SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is shortage of helicopters in the army which can fly at very high altitudes and lowest temperature;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the time by which these helicopters are likely to be procured and provided to Army?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Though Army is not deficient of helicopters for reconnaissance and observation role in high altitude area, these helicopters are old and inadequate for the present operational requirements. There is a plan for replacement of these helicopters

by the end of the 12th Plan. For the light utility role, the Advanced Light Helicopters, manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, are gradually being inducted into the army.

Over-Crowded Railway Stations

3354. SHRI HARIKEWÁL PRASAD:

SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has identified the over-crowded railway stations in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to ease the congestion at stations so as to avoid incidents of stampede and inconvenience to the passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) A few stations which are required to handle additional traffic during festivities, melas and rallies tend to get overcrowded. These stations are mostly stations serving important towns and pilgrim centres.

(c) Expansion/Upgradation/Modernization of railway stations and development of new terminals is a continuous process and the same is undertaken from time to time in accordance with category of stations, traffic growth, inter-se priorities and availability of funds.

Development of Modern Weapons/Weapon Systems

3355. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that there has been inordinate delay in developing modern weapons and weapon systems in DRDO;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken to speed-up the process of developing modern weapons and weapon systems in the D.R.D.O.?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) DRDO is engaged in indigenous development of high technology weapon system and platforms. Sometimes there are delays in their timely completion due to following reasons:—

- Technological complexities.
- Technological embargo/sanctions and various control regimes.
- Non-availability of infrastructure within the country.
- Extended and long lasting user trials.
- Change and enhancement of user requirements mid stream.

(c) Government has taken following major steps to speedup the process of developing modern weapon system and weapon in the DRDO:—

- Ensuring timely review and monitoring for financial and technical progress through multi-tier review mechanisms.
- Encouraging joint funding by Services to ensure their commitment towards earliest completion.
- Adopting technology evaluation and assessment prior to taking up fresh projects.
- Promoting synergy and better coordination among user Services, DRDO and production agencies through cluster meetings.
- Adopting 'concurrent engineering' and 'joint venture' approach for development and production.

[English]

Supply of Gas to Power Projects in Gujarat

3356. SHRI BHARATSINH MADHAVSINH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total requirement of gas for various power projects in Gujarat;

(b) the quantum of gas being supplied at present by the Union Government; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to increase the gas supply for power projects in the State of Gujarat as per the requirement?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Total gas allocation to power projects in Gujarat is 8.24 Million Standard Cubic Meter Per Day (MMSCMD) which includes 4.31 MMSCMD on a firm basis and 3.93 on a fall-back basis. As against this allocation, the available supply of subsidized gas is at present no more than 3.92 MMSCMD.

(c) In order to meet the demand of natural gas, various efforts are being made to increase the supply of natural gas. These efforts include import of natural gas in the form of LNG or through transnational pipelines and increasing in domestic availability of natural gas from NELP sources.

Already, these efforts have resulted in the power sector in Gujarat getting RLNG supplies from the Dahej terminal. GAIL have contracted to supply around 0.80 MMSCMD of RLNG to the power sector in Gujarat.

Catering Charges in Ticket Fare

3357. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the name of the trains in which catering charges are included in the ticket fare and the percentage of catering charges in the fare;

(b) the modus operandi followed for selection of items of the menu; and

(c) the annual percentage increase in the fare and the food charges respectively during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Catering charges are included in the ticket fare of all Rajdhani/Shatabdi Trains as per the following unit catering charges notified for actual services rendered between each pair of station for both up and down direction separately:—

Service	AC2/3T/CC (Rs.)	1st/Exec. Class (Rs.)
Morning tea/ Welcome drink/Light refreshment	13.75	The apportionment charges for AC First and Executive class will be $1\frac{1}{2}$ times that of revised charges for AC2/3T/CC Classes.
Breakfast	41.25	
Lunch	82.50	
Hi-tea/Evening tea	41.25	
Dinner	82.50	

The above unit catering charges were notified last in the year 1999 which was calculated considering the cost of raw material of each menu, escalation in prices, fuel and direct and indirect staff cost. The menu of Rajdhani/Shatabdi trains was suggested by a Committee comprising of officers of Senior Administrative Grade level from Zonal Railways which was approved by Board after concurrence of Railway Board Finance.

(c) Since there is no increase in the unit price of each services mentioned, there is no annual percentage in the fare/food charges for the past three years.

[Translation]

Cancellation of Flights

3358. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of times when the flights of Alliance Air on Delhi-Jaipur-Jodhpur route were cancelled and number of times when schedule of the said flight was changed during the last four months;

(b) the reasons for cancellation of the flights and change in the flight schedule; and

(c) the persons responsible therefor and the action being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) There were 4 cancellations and 46 delays to CD-7471 and 2 cancellations and 12 delays to CD-7472 during the period November 2004 till February 2005. The schedule of these flights was changed on 28th January, 2005 as under:-

CD7471 Delhi-Jaipur-Jodhpur-Udaipur-Delhi

CD7472 Mumbai-Udaipur-Jodhpur-Jaipur-Mumbai.

From 17th to 28th February 2005, the frequency of CD7471 was reduced from daily to 4 times a week. Effective 3rd March, 2005 the previous pattern of operation was restored and these flights are now operating daily as under:-

CD7471 Delhi-Jaipur-Jodhpur-Udaipur-Mumbai.

CD7472 Mumbai-Udaipur-Jodhpur-Jaipur-Delhi.

(b) and (c) Delays to these services and changes in schedule were due to the following reasons:

- Shortage of aircraft due to Tsunami operation in December.
- Shortage of Crew.
- Shortage of aircraft due to positioning of 2 B-737 aircraft at Kolkata one each on 16th and 18th February, 2005.

— Engineering and consequential.

As is seen from the above, the delay and cancellations are attributable to causes beyond the control of the airline and hence, no responsibility can be fixed on individuals.

[English]

Setting up of Naphtha and Gas Cracker Complex by ONGC

3359. SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVARAJ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Oil and Natural Gas Commission has decided to set up a Naphtha and Gas Cracker Complex near Mangalore at an investment of Rs. 4500 crore;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the work is likely to be started and the likely time frame for its commissioning?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) In addition to concentrating on its areas of core competence, the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) are exploring various options for diversification of their activities by forward and backward integration including a Naphtha Gas Cracker Complex. In this context, ONGC have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Karnataka for setting up a Special Economic Zone at Mangalore, to facilitate the development of the required infrastructure for ONGC's value addition projects, for which the required feasibility studies are at a preliminary stage.

Closure of DFP and Song and Drama Division

3360. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to close down the Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) and Song and Drama Division;

(b) if so, the reason therefor;

(c) whether the Government will downsize any other media unit; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) The Committee of Secretaries in its meeting held on 28th April, 2004 considered the various aspects of implementation of Expenditure Reforms Commission's recommendations in respect of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and, inter alia, proposed that the Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) and Song and Drama Division be closed down and the Photo Division, Publications Division and Films Division shall be downsized substantially. The matter is proposed to be discussed again before the Committee of Secretaries after completion of detailed review of the various issues and options. A final decision in the matter has not yet been taken.

Funds for Upgradation and Modernisation of Non-Metro Airports

3361. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) number of Non-metro airports upgraded and modernised during the last three years;

(b) whether special funds have been provided by the Government for upgradation and modernisation of non-metro airports in the country so as to improve the travel related infrastructures; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) A total of 26 non-metro airports have been upgraded by

development works relating to terminal building, runway, apron and technical block and 44 non-metro airports have been modernized by completing CNS/ATM projects during the last three years.

(b) and (c) The upgradation and modernization of non-metro airports are generally funded through the internal resources of Airports Authority of India (AAI) excepting in North-East and inaccessible area where funds are provided by the Government.

Smoking and Drinking in Trains

3362. SHRIMATI BHAVANA P. GAWALI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the passengers are smoking and drinking wines openly in trains, particularly in AC Coaches;

(b) if so, the number of such cases reported during the last one year; till date; and

(c) the measures taken by the Railways to curb such activities in trains and to educate the passengers against smoking/drinking?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Some passengers indulging in smoking/drinking in the trains cannot be ruled out but no separate figures are maintained.

(c) Travelling public are educated of the punitive measures for smoking/drinking by way of wide publicity through various media including notices inside the coaches.

Guidelines for Low Cost Airlines Companies

3363. SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any guidelines and entry norms for commencing air operations by No Frill Airlines companies/low cost airlines companies.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of Private low cost airline operations given licences to start air operations;

(d) the details of air-sectors where the private airlines have been permitted to start their operations;

(e) whether low cost private airlines have been mandated to operate compulsory air service in remote and hilly areas particularly North-East and other backward regions; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There are no separate guidelines for No Frill airlines companies/low cost airline companies.

(c) Airlines offer concessional fares on commercial judgements.

(d) to (f) Government has laid down Route Dispersal Guidelines (RDG) 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. As per Route Dispersal Guidelines all the operators are required to deploy in Category II (i.e. routes to/from/in North Eastern Region, Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep) at least 10% of the capacity deployed by them on routes in Category I (i.e. trunk routes) and of the capacity thus required to be deployed on Category II routes, at least 10% would be deployed on services or segments thereof operated exclusively within the North-Eastern region, Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep. The operator is also required to deploy in Category III, (i.e. non-trunk routes) at least 50% of the capacity deployed on routes in Category I.

The airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of the Route Dispersal Guidelines laid down by the Government.

Parcel Booking Centres

3364. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any decision to close down Parcel Booking Service Counters at the Railway Stations;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of such centres closed down during 2004-05, State-wise;

(d) the loss of revenue suffered as a result of such closure;

(e) the number of Porters becoming unemployed as a result thereof;

(f) whether the Government has made any arrangements for the rehabilitation/redeployment of these Porters; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (g) Parcel booking service centres have not been closed by Railways. However, in the larger public interest and for the convenience and safety of travelling 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 restriction does not apply to Ordinary Passenger 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 and carriage of parcels. Luggage has,

however, been exempted from the purview of rationalisation. Therefore, the question of resultant unemployment of porter does not arise.

[Translation]

Supply of PNG in Residential Areas

3365. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA:

SHRI JAI PRAKASH (MOHANLAL GANJ):

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

(a) the criteria fixed for the Indraprastha Gas Limited for supply of piped natural gas to the residential colonies particularly of the Central Government colonies in Delhi;

(b) whether the company has received any representations from Gole Market and Laxmi Bai Nagar Resident Welfare Association to make arrangements for supply of piped natural gas in their colonies;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the time by which these colonies are likely to get piped supply of cooking gas; and

(e) the other areas where IGL proposes to supply PNG during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) provides Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connections to the Central Government colonies in the NCT of Delhi on the basis of techno-economic feasibility and clearance from the Central Public Works Department (CPWD).

(b) to (d) IGL have received a representation from the Residents' Welfare Association of the Central Government Employees, DIZ area, Sector-II, Gole Market. The advice of CPWD on the proposal, along with the initial advance, is awaited from CPWD. IGL are likely to take around 9 to 10 months to complete

the job after receiving the formal confirmation from CPWD. As regards the representation from Laxmi Bai Nagar Residents' Welfare Association, IGL have reported that they do not appear to have received such a representation.

(e) During the current financial year 2004-2005, Piped Natural Gas supply has been provided in CPWD areas such as Andrews Ganj Extension and R.K. Puram (Sectors 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7). Besides, PNG supply has been provided to the private colonies of Mayur Vihar Phase-1, Patparganj, Rohini (Sector 9, 13 and 14), Som Vihar and pockets of Vasant Kunj etc. Work in respect of PNG connections is under progress in Asiad Village, Kali Bari Marg/Baba Kharag Singh Marg, besides certain remaining pockets of Vasant Kunj.

Training to Teachers

3366. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 provides that only the teachers having training in the syllabus prepared by the Indian Rehabilitation Council are eligible to teach the disabled children;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government is formulated any scheme to provide training to such teachers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the time by which this scheme is likely to be implemented?

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]

Automation of Petrol Pumps

3367. SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of total petrol pumps in the country, State-wise;

(b) the number of petrol pumps automated so far;

(c) whether there is any plan to introduce automation in all petrol pumps; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) As on 1-1-2005, the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) had 25,283 retail outlets (petrol pumps) in the country. The State-wise position is given in the enclosed statement.

(b) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Number of retail outlets of public sector oil marketing companies in the country as on the 1st January, 2005

Sl.No.	States/Union Territories	Number of Retail Outlets
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2,200
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	40
3.	Assam	395
4.	Bihar	1,005
5.	Chhattisgarh	335
6.	Gujarat	1,427
7.	Goa	78

1	2	3
8.	Haryana	1,093
9.	Himachal Pradesh	187
10.	Jammu and Kashmir	230
11.	Jharkhand	493
12.	Karnataka	1,478
13.	Kerala	1,153
14.	Madhya Pradesh	1,161
15.	Maharashtra	2,331
16.	Manipur	38
17.	Meghalaya	76
18.	Mizoram	14
19.	Nagaland	37
20.	Orissa	552
21.	Punjab	1,767
22.	Rajasthan	1,667
23.	Sikkim	18
24.	Tamil Nadu	2,160
25.	Tripura	35
26.	Uttaranchal	281
27.	Uttar Pradesh	3,169
28.	West Bengal	1,351
29.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	5
30.	Chandigarh	44
31.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	7
32.	Daman and Diu	11
33.	Delhi	377
34.	Pondicherry	68
Grand Total		25,283

*[Translation]***Flying Clubs**

3368. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the break-up of the Government owned flying clubs and those owned by private parties in the country;

(b) the set procedure to become the member of these clubs;

(c) whether veracity of the antecedents of the candidates applying for membership is certified; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) There are 39 flying training institutes in the country. Of these, 27 institutes are covered under the subvention scheme of Government of India and 11 are owned by private parties. Besides, there is Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi, an autonomous body under the control of Ministry of Civil Aviation, imparting flying training.

(b) In order to be a member of any flying clubs, a candidate is required to fill up the requisite form provided by flying clubs.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The antecedents of members are got checked up by the concerned flying club/institute from the local police authorities before they are allowed to start flying training.

*[English]***Cancellation of Pink City Express**

3369. SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Pink City Express running between Delhi and Jaipur via Rewari-Ringas was cancelled temporarily in December, 1996;

(b) if so, reasons therefor;

(c) whether the said train has since been restored;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government proposes to restore the said train at its earlier timing; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Pink City Express has been cancelled from 25-11-1996 due to poor patronage.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) 2015/2016 New Delhi-Ajmer Shatabdi Express and 2413/2414 Delhi-Jaipur Express on Broad Gauge route and 9943/9944 Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Chittaurgarh Express on Metre Gauge route are taking care of the passengers of the erstwhile Pink City Express.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Neither operationally feasible nor commercially justified.

Increase in Retirement Age

3370. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:

SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the estimate cost to be borne by an Airline in imparting training a Commander;

(b) whether Indian Airlines and Air India are considering to increase the retirement age;

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

(d) the number of existing fleet and pilots as on date with both Airlines and the number of pilots required to handle the existing fleet, Airline-wise;

(e) whether international standards of flying are strictly followed by these airlines; and

(f) if not, the steps taken by the Government to follow such standards?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The estimated cost involved in imparting the total training to a Commander in Air India is approximately Rs. 90 lakhs. As regards Indian Airlines, the in-house cost of training of a pilot from induction to the level of Commander as per current requirements and standards is Rs. 67 lakhs.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The total number of aircraft in Air India's fleet at present is 36. The total number of pilots are 503 as against the standard force requirement of 640.

Indian Airlines including Alliance Air has a fleet of 61 aircraft. The number of Pilots required for handling the fleet works out to 631 and the number of Pilots available at present is 568.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Appointment on Compassionate Grounds

3371. SHRI RAJENDER KUMAR:

SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:

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

(a) whether the provision of five per cent quota reserved for appointment on compassionate grounds in the All India Radio, Prasar Bharati has been done away with;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if not, the number of the persons appointed in group 'C' and 'D' categories under the said quota since 2003 till date?

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

(b) Does not arise

(c) Three persons in group 'C' have been appointed on compassionate ground in All India Radio and Prasar Bharati since 2003. The information in respect of persons, appointed in group 'D' is being collected from AIR stations since it is not maintained centrally in a compiled form.

[English]

Purchase of Stationery

3372. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply given to USQ No. 3699 dated December 23, 2004 regarding purchase of stationery and state:

(a) whether the information has since been collected;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay 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) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Since this involves collection of voluminous data, it will take more time to fulfil the Assurance.

Unauthorised Constructions on Defence Land

3373. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any unauthorized constructions on defence land in Kanpur Cantonment areas has come to the notice of the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to remove the unauthorised constructions?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir. 12 unauthorized constructions on Defence land in Kanpur Cantonment have been noticed. These are in the nature of additional habitable rooms and halls etc.

(b) Details are enclosed in statement.

(c) Action under the provisions of the Cantonments Act, 1924 and Public Premises (eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971 has been taken by the Cantonment Board and the Defence Estates Officer towards their removal.

Statement

Details of cases of unauthorised construction in Kanpur Cantonment

Sl. No.	GLR Survey No./House No.	Name of Defaulter	Class of Land	Nature of Unauthorised Construction	Purpose (Residential/ Commercial)	Date Since Existing	Notice U/S 184/ 185/256 Issued
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1,	B.No. 112	Peer Bux	B-3	PUCCA—one basement one hall and stair case	Residential	22-4-2004	Yes
2.	G.No. 4/36 MP	Vijai Kumar	B-3	PUCCA—three rooms, one kitchen, one latrine	Residential	22-4-2004	Yes

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
				and bathroom and one lounge			
3.	B.No. 112 Cantt	Taufiq	B-3	Pucca—one hall with stair case covered with slab	Residential	22-4-2004	Yes
4.	B.No. 112 Cantt	Shah Alam	B-3	Pucca—three rooms, one latrine and bathroom one kitchen, passage, staircase and balcony	Residential	24-4-2004	Yes
5.	H.No. 76 MP	Kalekhan	B-3	Pucca—four rooms and one passage	Residential	18-6-2004	Yes
6.	H.No. 475 MP	Umesi Tiwari	B-3	Pucca—two rooms	Residential	18-6-2004	Yes
7.	H.No. 489 MP	Raja Ram	B-3	Pucca—one half covered with RCC slab	Residential	18-6-2004	Yes
8.	H.No. 368 HG	Mohd. Ishaqe	B-3	Pucca—seven rooms and one hall, one kitchen, one bathroom, one WC, one passage, one verandah	Residential	25-6-2004	Yes
9.	H.No. C/18 KM	Jumman Ali	B-3	Pucca—six rooms one kitchen, one store, one WC and bathroom, one staircase	Residential	25-6-2004	Yes
10.	F/26 Part Khapra Mohal	Ram Niwas Rastogi	B-3	Pucca—two rooms, one kitchen, two latrine and three bathrooms, one store	Residential	9-7-2004	Yes
11.	H. No. G-I PKM	Bansi Manohar Kapoor	B-3	Pucca—four rooms, verandah, chajja, passage	Residential	9-7-2004	Yes
12.	Sy.No. 520 Part	General Secretary INDW Federation	B-3	Pucca—three halls, three rooms, one store room, one toilet, one passage	Residential	10-3-2004	Yes

Anomalies in Pay Structure

3374. SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any representation to rectify the anomalies in pay structure in Prasar Bharati; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Prasar Bharati has informed that many representations are received from time to time from Staff Associations and individuals on the issue of upgradation/removing anomalies in the pay scale/pay structure of various categories of employees and they are examined as per rules. The details are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Details Regarding Representations Received from Various Staff Associations for Upgradation of Their Pay Scales

Sl. No.	Name of Post	Existing Pay Scale	Demanded Pay Scale
1	2	3	4
1.	Announcer Grade IV	Rs. 5000-8000/-	Rs. 6500-10500/-
2.	L.D.C.	Rs. 3050-4590/-	Rs. 3250-4900/-
3.	U.D.C.	Rs. 4000-6000/-	Rs. 4500-7000/-
4.	Head Clerk/Asstt.	Rs. 5000-8000/-	Rs. 6500-10500/-
5.	Administrative Officer	Rs. 6500-10500/-	Rs. 7500-12000/-
6.	Steno Grade-III	Rs. 4000-6000/-	Rs. 5000-8000/-
7.	Steno Grade-II	Rs. 5000-8000/-	Rs. 6500-10500/-
8.	Steno Grade-I	Rs. 5500-9000/-	Rs. 7450-11500/-
9.	Sr. P.A.	Rs. 6500-10500/-	Rs. 8000-13500/-
10.	Reporter (Monitoring)/PPS	Rs. 6500-10500/-	Rs. 10000-15200/-
11.	Hindi Officer	Rs. 6500-10500/-	Rs. 7500-12000/-
12.	Hindi Translator	Rs. 5000-8000/-	Rs. 6500-10500/-
13.	Peon	Rs. 2550-3200/-	Rs. 4000-6000/-
14.	Farash	Rs. 2550-3200/-	Rs. 4000-6000/-
15.	Safaiwala	Rs. 2550-3200/-	Rs. 4000-6000/-
16.	Farash-cum-Safaiwala	Rs. 2550-3200/-	Rs. 4000-6000/-
17.	Head Safaiwala	Rs. 2610-3540/-	Rs. 4300-6500/-

1	2	3	4
18.	Mali	Rs. 2550-3200/-	Rs. 4000-6000/-
19.	Head Security Guard	Rs. 3050-4590/-	Rs. 5000-8000/-
20.	Security Guard	Rs. 2550-3200/-	Rs. 4000-6000/-
21.	Studio Guard	Rs. 2610-3540/-	Rs. 4300-6500/-
22.	Studio Attendant	Rs. 2650-4000/-	Rs. 4500-7000/-
23.	Daftry	Rs. 2610-3540/-	Rs. 4300-6500/-
24.	Library Attendant	Rs. 2650-4000/-	Rs. 4500-7000/-
25.	Hostel Attendant	Rs. 2650-4000/-	Rs. 4500-7000/-
26.	Record Sorter	Rs. 2610-3540/-	Rs. 4300-6500/-
27.	Sr. Gestetnor Operator	Rs. 3050-4590/-	Rs. 5000-8000/-
28.	Jr. Gestetnor Operator	Rs. 2610-3540/-	Rs. 4300-6500/-

*[Translation]***Contract of Jubilee Retail Outlets**

3375. DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA:

SHRI PRADEEP GANDHI:

SHRI RAMSWAROOP KOLI:

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

(a) whether any complaints has been received by the Government regarding irregularities being committed in regard to appointment of labour contractor as well as operation, sales etc. of 'Jubilee Retail Outlets' operated by the Government oil companies in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh during the last three years;

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

(c) the action taken by the Government against the persons found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) No complaints

with regard to the Jubilee Retail Outlets of the public sector oil marketing companies in the State of Chhattisgarh were received during the last three years, i.e. 2001-02 to 2003-04. However, two complaints regarding the appointment of job contractors at two Jubilee Retail Outlets of Indian Oil Corporation Limited in the State of Madhya Pradesh were received during the period.

(c) After investigation, both complaints were found to be unsubstantiated.

Enhancement of Fee

3376. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any proposal from the Censor Board of India for increasing the fee chargeable for issuing its certificates in respect of feature films, advertising films, etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) recommended 150% increase in the certification fee structure. The Government, however, is yet to take a final decision in the matter.

Return Journey Booking Offices

3377. SHRI TUKARAM GANPATRAO RENGE PATIL:

SHRI ILYAS AZMI:

SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the stations and City Booking Offices in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh where return journey tickets through computerised booking facilities are available, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government proposes to provide the return journey tickets through computerised booking facilities at the other places in these States;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) State-wise list of Railway Stations and City Booking Offices where the facility for return journey reservation is available as on 18-03-2005 is given in enclosed Statement-I.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Return journey reservation from any station to any station in any train can be done from any Computerised Railway Reservation Centre. Provision of Computerised Reservation Facilities is an on-going process. These facilities are sanctioned at number of new locations every year depending upon the availability of funds. State-wise list of locations of City Booking Offices where the Government propose to extend return journey reservation facility is given in enclosed Statement-II.

(d) Does not arise.

Statement-I

List of Railway Stations and City Booking Offices in the State of Maharashtra where facility of return Journey reservation is available as on 18-3-2005

Sl. No.	Location
1	2
1.	Harisons CT SPL
2.	Mahavir
3.	Minakshi CT SPL
4.	INS Hamla
5.	Pandharpur
6.	Seoni
7.	Shegaon
8.	Washim
9.	Hingloi Deccan
10.	Tumsar Road
11.	Nainpur
12.	Mulund (Mumbai)
13.	Mumbai CST
14.	Thane
15.	Santhra Market (Nagpur)
16.	Nasik
17.	Jalgaon
18.	Shankar Seth (Pune)
19.	Parvel (Mumbai)
20.	Chembur
21.	Maharashtra Assembly
22.	Byculla
23.	Baramati
24.	Sewagram

1	2
25.	Bhandra Road Rly. Stn.
26.	Bandra Terminus
27.	Nandurbar
28.	Dadar
29.	Anandpur Trust
30.	Chiplun
31.	Kalyan
32.	Pune
33.	Nagpur
34.	Bhusaval
35.	Raviwar Peth (Pune)
36.	Deolali
37.	Dhule
38.	Balharshah
39.	Mumbai Central
40.	Virar (Mumbai)
41.	Ratnagiri
42.	Kudal
43.	Navy Nagar, Colaba
44.	Kurudwadi
45.	Balaghat
46.	Shirdi
47.	ZTS (Bhusaval)
48.	Yavatmal
49.	Latur
50.	INS Shivaji Lonavala
51.	Badnera
52.	Malkapur
53.	Neral
54.	Belapur

1	2
55.	Daund
56.	Hinganghat
57.	Osmanabad
58.	Karjat
59.	Ghoradongri
60.	Alibagh
61.	Parli Vaijnath
62.	Lokmanya Tilak Terminal
63.	Solapur
64.	Belapur CBO
65.	Amravati
66.	Manmad
67.	Sangli
68.	Miraj
69.	Kolhapur
70.	Lonavala
71.	Deccan Gymkhana (Pune)
72.	Nasik CBO
73.	Pune Cantonment
74.	Ajni
75.	Wardha
76.	Ahmadnagar
77.	Ghatkopar (Mumbai)
78.	Chinchwad
79.	Vashi
80.	Ambarnath
81.	Chandrapur
82.	Dombivli (Mumbai)
83.	Mandla Fort
84.	Satara

1	2
85.	Karad
86.	Thivim
87.	Akola
88.	Khadki
89.	Bhandup
90.	Nanded
91.	Jalna
92.	Aurangabad
93.	Parbhani
94.	Itwari (Nagpur)
95.	Gondia
96.	Churchgate (Mumbai)
97.	Borivili (Mumbai)
98.	Andheri (Mumbai)
99.	Sahar Airport Mumbai
100.	Bhayandar (Mumbai)
101.	Vasai Road (Mumbai)
102.	Malad (Mumbai)
103.	Palghar
104.	Chalisgaon
105.	Khopoli
106.	Ulhasnagar
107.	Vartak Nagar, Thane
108.	Achalpur
109.	Dahanu Road
110.	Mankhurd
111.	Wadsa
112.	Boisar
113.	Roha
114.	Bhiwandi
115.	Tata Mem. Hosp. Mumbai

List of Railway Stations and City Booking Offices in the State of Uttar Pradesh where facility for return Journey reservation is available as on 18-3-2005

Sl. No.	Location
1	2
1.	Khorasan Road
2.	Garhmukteshwar
3.	Una
4.	Shikohabad
5.	Unchahar
6.	Janghai
7.	Banarastown
8.	Alamnagar
9.	Vindhyanchal
10.	Belthra Road
11.	Bhadohi
12.	Gorakhpur
13.	Badshahnagar
14.	Bahraich
15.	Ballia
16.	Allahabad Stn. 2nd Entry
17.	Meerut City
18.	Roorkee Rly. Station
19.	Hapur
20.	Sultanpur
21.	Shahjahanpur
22.	Pratapgarh
23.	Manduadih
24.	Allahabad City
25.	Nautanwa

1	2
26.	Allahabad
27.	Faizabad
28.	Agra Cantt.
29.	Orai
30.	Renukoot
31.	Gomti Nagar
32.	Kasganj
33.	Lakhimpur Kheri
34.	Balrampur
35.	Laksar
36.	Hardoi
37.	Lucknow Vidhan Sabha
38.	Jaunpur
39.	Meerut Cantt.
40.	Shamli
41.	Fatehpur
42.	Najibabad
43.	IIT/Kanpur
44.	Gobindpuri
45.	Unnao
46.	Akbarpur
47.	Ayodhya
48.	Bijnor
49.	Amroha
50.	Bulandshahar
51.	Nihalgarh
52.	Aligarh Muslim Univ.
53.	Hathras Killah
54.	Khalilabad
55.	CCM O/Gorakhpur

1	2
56.	Kanpur Anwarganj
57.	Naugarh
58.	Chandausi Rly. Stn.
59.	Tundla
60.	Barabanki
61.	Etawah
62.	Babina
63.	Lalitpur
64.	Chitrakut
65.	Firozabad
66.	Mau
67.	Gonda
68.	Deoriasadar
69.	Basti
70.	Rawatpur
71.	Izzat Nagar
72.	Lucknow City
73.	Varanasi City
74.	Idgah
75.	Manikpur
76.	Chopan
77.	Kanpur
78.	Muzzafar Nagar
79.	Amethi
80.	Sarnath
81.	Daliganj Rly. Stn.
82.	Anandnagar
83.	Pilkhua
84.	Azamgarh
85.	Farrukhabad

1	2
86.	Pilibhit
87.	Sitapur
88.	Ghazipur City
89.	Lucknow
90.	Noida
91.	Varanasi
92.	Ghaziabad
93.	Aligarh
94.	Rae Bareilly
95.	Moradabad
96.	Bareilly
97.	Kanpur Stn. 2nd Entry
98.	Prayag
99.	Saharanpur
100.	Deoband
101.	DLW Varanasi
102.	RDSO (Lucknow)
103.	Modinagar
104.	Lucknow Stn. 2nd Entry
105.	Roorkee University
106.	Mirzapur
107.	Chandausi ZTC
108.	Naini
109.	Rampur
110.	Jhansi
111.	Mathura Jn.
112.	Raja-ki-Mandi
113.	Banda
114.	Agra Fort
115.	Mughalsarai
116.	Chunar Junction

1	2
117.	Vrindavan Stn.
118.	Khurja Jn.
119.	Shahganj
120.	Padrauna
121.	Budaun
122.	Kannauj
123.	Mathura Cantt.
124.	Fatehgarh
125.	Dildarnagar
126.	Mahoba
127.	Anpara
128.	Muradnagar
129.	Fatehpur Sikri
130.	Gorakhpur Cantt.
131.	Aishbagh Rly. Station

Statment-II

List of Railway Stations and City Booking Offices in the State of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh where Facility for Return Journey Reservation is Proposed as on 18-03-2005

Maharashtra

Sl.No.	Location
1	2
1.	Buldhana
2.	Amalner
3.	Shahabad
4.	Kopergaon
5.	Bid
6.	Gadchiroli

Uttar Pradesh*[English]*

Sl.No.	Location
1.	Salempur Railway Station
2.	Sitapur City
3.	Roberts Ganj Rly. Station
4.	Suraimanpur
5.	Yusufpur
6.	Noida II ND Location
7.	Lucknow University (SAT)
8.	Banaras Hindu University
9.	Shaktinagar
10.	Seohara
11.	Manaknagar
12.	Hazratganj
13.	Allahabad University
14.	Phaphund
15.	Panki
16.	Mainpuri
17.	Etah
18.	Dadri
19.	Gyanpur Road
20.	Golagokarannath
21.	Domingarh
22.	Mankapur
23.	Ambedkar Nagar
24.	Auraiya
25.	Chandauli
26.	Kaushambi
27.	Maharajganj
28.	Manjhanpur

Reduction of Workers in ICF

3378. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to reduce the number of workers in Integral Coach Factories; and

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

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

(b) Does not arise.

Railway Reforms Committee

3379. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPAPARAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways has any proposal to set up a New Railway Reforms Committee;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Aids/Appliances to Physically Handicapped Persons

3380. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government is providing financial assistance and appliances on an extensive scale to the physically handicapped persons in different States;

(b) if so, the details regarding the procedure followed to grant financial help/appliances in favour of States to ensure that the aid reaches the disabled persons in the rural and backward areas of the country including Madhya Pradesh; and

(c) the number of persons likely to be covered under the scheme and the criteria for selection of such persons?

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

(b) Grant in aid is provided to eligible implementing agencies as per provisions of the Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP), details of which are available on Ministry's website www.socialjustice.nic.in. It is the endeavor of the Ministry to provide aids and appliances to eligible disabled persons in rural and backward areas of the country including Madhya Pradesh. During 2004-05 three implementing agencies of Madhya Pradesh have been given grants of Rs. 23.00 lakhs.

(c) About 2,70,000 Persons with Disabilities are likely to be covered under the scheme during 2004-05. The implementing agencies identify eligible disabled persons as per eligibility criteria indicated in para 5-6 of ADIP Scheme.

Establishment of Book Banks for SC

3381. SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of book banks established during 2004-05 by NGOs under the Central schemes for welfare of Scheduled Castes by NGOs in Rajasthan and other States with the help of grants provided by the Union Government, State-wise;

(b) the total number of book banks running by the NGOs as on date in Rajasthan and other States, State-wise;

(c) whether the Union Government had provided grants to NGOs for construction of buildings for book banks adequate furniture alongwith basis amenities during the last three years;

(d) if so, the details thereof, NGO-wise;

(e) whether the Government proposes to relax some conditions to boost the welfare activities through NGOs in Rajasthan and other States; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) The Government is not providing grants to NGOs to establish book banks for Scheduled Castes.

(b) to (f) Do not arise.

Excess Viewing of Television by Children

3382. SHRI D. VITTAL RAO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that excess viewing of television by children is leading them to diseases such as obesity, behavioural dysfunction, epilepsy and general fatigue as reported in the Hindu dated January 26, 2005;

(b) if so, the steps taken/to be taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether the quality of language used in the TV programmes is not good; and

(d) if so, the steps taken/to be taken by the Government to improve the quality of language in TV programmes?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) Television viewing habits of children are best regulated through parental guidance and control. However, programmes and advertisements of all TV channels transmitted/re-transmitted through the cable network are required to adhere to the Programme and Advertising Code prescribed under the Cable

Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and rules framed thereunder.

The Programme Code, inter alia, provides that care should be taken to ensure that programmes meant for children do not contain any bad language or explicit scenes of violence; programmes unsuitable for children must not be carried in the cable service.

Having regard to the concerns expressed in various quarters about the adverse impact of certain kind of broadcasting content, a workshop was organised on 16-02-2005 on content issues on television channels, attended by stakeholders, media heads, educationists, NGOs, cable operators associations, representatives of women's and consumer organisations etc. The recommendations of the workshop are under examination of the Government.

Protection of Heritage Buildings in Delhi

3383. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has set up a Committee of Experts to suggest suitable measures for protection of heritage buildings in Delhi;

(b) if so, whether the Committee has submitted its report to the Governments;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the names of the buildings and monuments/museums proposed to be protected?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir. The Archaeological Survey of India is concerned only with the protection and preservation of monuments declared as of national importance under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Recommendations of Sarkaria Commission on Panchayati Raj

3384. SHRI THAWARCHAND GEHLOT: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has accepted the recommendations of Sarkaria Commission on Panchayati Raj Institutions;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to appoint a new commission for strengthening Panchayati Raj systems;

(d) if so, by when and the objectives thereof; and

(e) the details of the action/decisions taken by the Government in the direction of providing funds directly to Gram Panchayats for rural development?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Ministry of Panchayati Raj is concerned with only Recommendation No. 177 of Sarkaria Commission by which it is recommended that institutions like Zilla Parishads and elected municipal corporation need to be significantly strengthened both financially and functionally. Regular elections and sessions of these institutions is a must and means for ensuring the same in all the States uniformly should be evolved by the Union Government in consultation with National Economic and Development Council. For this purpose, a legislation, analogous to Article 172 and 174 of the Constitution, should be undertaken as suggested at para 21.2.09.

Subsequent to the submission of the Sarkaria Commission Report, the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Acts have been passed which confer Constitutional status on Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Municipalities. Provision has been made for setting up State Finance Commissions to review the financial position of these bodies and to make

recommendations to the State Governments for devolution of resources. These path breaking Constitutional provisions would give a new direction and thrust to decentralized planning.

(c) and (d) Government have no proposal to appoint a new Commission for strengthening the Panchayati Raj system. However, after the Ministry of Panchayati Raj was set up, a Conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers in charge of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj on "Poverty Alleviation and Rural Prosperity through Panchayati Raj" was organised at New Delhi on 29-30 June, 2004, jointly by the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. The Conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister. Issues relating to effective implementation of Part IX and IX A of the Constitution on Panchayati Raj were tabled as agenda for discussions by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. These issues included effective devolution of functions, finances, functionaries, planning, Gram Sabhas, women, reservation for SCs/STs, special problems of SCs/STs, elections, audit, parallel bodies, capacity building and training, and state of the Panchayat Report and jurisprudence. The Conference decided to hold seven Round Table Conferences to formulate a draft action plan towards achieving the objective of strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions to enable them to emerge as institutions of self-government for the planning and implementation of programmes of economic development and social justice as envisioned in the Constitution. Between July-December, 2004 Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened seven Round Table Meetings with the State Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj and evolved by consensus a set of around 150 points for action which have been put together in a compendium that was adopted unanimously at the conclusion of the last Round Table in Jaipur. The Ministry has now initiated a process of visiting each of the State/UT to review with the authorities concerned the progress in implementing the points for action

contained in the compendium. It is expected that this will accelerate the pace of implementation of the provisions of Part IX read with Article 243ZD of the Constitution and bring about greater conformity in both letter and spirit, to the Constitutional provisions of Panchayati Raj in all States/UTs concerned.

(e) The National Common Minimum Programme provides for funds to be channeled to Panchayati Raj Institutions without diversion or delay subject to strict monitoring. Accordingly, all Ministries operating Centrally Sponsored Schemes have been asked to review their schemes in the light of Article 243G read with XI Schedule.

[English]

Computerisation of Railway Parcel Management System

3385. SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY:

SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways has initiated computerization of railway parcel management system;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of parcel booking locations proposed to be covered during 2005-2006 under computerization of railway parcel management system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Computerized parcel management system is under development by Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) for being tested on New Delhi—Howrah sector. The 18 locations proposed to be covered during the trial period are Delhi, New Delhi, Ghaziabad, Aligarh, Etawah, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Mughalsarai, Gaya, Kodama, Patna, Gomoh, Dhanbad, Asansol, Bardhaman, Howrah and Sealdah.

[Translation]

Training Facility for Apprentice Students

3386. SHRI SITA RAM YADAV: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received a suggestion from the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) to make the training facility mandatory for apprentice students in the aircraft repair organisations and aviation companies; and

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

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

(b) Does not arise.

Serials on Indian Classical Literature

3387. SHRIMATI ANURADHA CHOUDHARY:

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

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

(a) whether the Government had contemplated to get serials produced in Indian languages on Indian classics and the works of eminent writers as reported in 'Hindustan' dated February 22, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the amount sanctioned by the Government for this purpose;

(d) whether the said plan is being given up; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Prasar Bharati has informed that the Prasar Bharati Board has approved the production of programmes during 2005-06 in

different genres based on Indian Classics in all the 22 languages recognized by the Sahitya Academy. The process of selecting the producer/classics is currently under way. The outlay approved by the Planning Commission for this purpose was Rs. 60 crores for 2004-05 of which Rs. 18 crores has been released. The balance would be met by Prasar Bharati out of its Revenue Plan Budget in 2005-06.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

[English]

Merger of IBP with IOC

3388. SHRI SARVEY SATYANARAYANA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to merge IBP Company Limited with Indian Oil Corporation (IOC);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) have proposed the merger of their subsidiary company, IBP Co. Limited, with themselves. This proposal is being processed in view of the almost identical business of the two companies, and in the expectation that the merger of the two companies would result in consolidation of the business of the marketing of petroleum products and thus strengthen the position of the merged entity, in the market by enabling it to harness and optimize the synergies of the two companies.

(c) The proposal is under consideration of Government. It is not possible to indicate any time-frame by which a final decision will be taken by Government in the matter.

[Translation]

Fraud in Concessional Tickets

3389. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of persons given concession in train tickets on the basis of disability certificate or concession certificate during each of the last three years and the current year and the total expenditure incurred by the railways on this count;

(b) the method adopted by the railways to ascertain the genuineness of their certificates;

(c) whether the Government is aware that fraud is being committed in regard to concessional tickets meant for patients suffering from various diseases like cancer, heart ailment, disability, etc.;

(d) if so, the number of such cases reported during the last one year, till date, particularly in Delhi; and

(e) the action taken/to be taken by the railways thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Details of such concessions are not maintained.

(b) Before granting concession, the contents of the certificate surrendered are checked with the original certificate.

(c) to (e) Some cases of misuse of concession come to notice from time to time where fraudulent certificates have been produced. In such cases, action is taken against the concerned persons including the authority issuing such fraudulent concession certificates.

Reduction in Rail Fare for Off-Season Period

3390. SHRI PRADEEP GANDHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to bring any scheme regarding reduction in the rail fare during off-season period;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the percentage increase in the number of passengers likely to be achieved through this scheme?

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

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

[English]

Oil from Turkmenistan

3391. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:

SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:

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

(a) whether India has approached Turkmenistan seeking to include them as another supply source from West;

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

(c) whether earlier India had turned down Asian Development Bank's offer to participate in Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan pipeline project;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether Ministry of Petroleum has initiated steps for holding conversations with these countries; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) India had not responded to the proposal of Asian Development Bank for participation in Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan pipeline project mainly owing to security concerns and the geo-political situation prevailing at the time.

(e) and (f) Recently, a high level Afghanistan delegation visited India. The issue of bilateral cooperation

in the hydrocarbon sector was discussed with the Afghanistan side. Afghanistan also expressed keenness in India's participation in the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) gas pipeline project. The ADB have invited India to send observers to the forthcoming 8th meeting of the Steering Committee in Islamabad in April, 2005. India will be represented.

[Translation]

Defects In T-90 Tanks

3392. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:

SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some defects have been found in the Russian T-90 Tanks;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to remove these defects;

(c) whether the indigenous Arjun Tank has failed to come upto the Army's standards despite best of efforts; and

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

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) T-90 tanks, like any other major equipment when inducted had few teething problems which have been addressed, in consultation with the manufacturer and their design bureau. Besides, EME personnel are being specially trained on repairs and maintenance aspects.

(c) and (d) MBT Arjun fully meets with Army's requirements. The operational aspects of induction will be assessed through Accelerated user cum reliability test for placement of orders for further quantity.

Crash of Aircraft

3393. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR:

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN:

SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether MIG-21 and HPT-32 trainer aircraft crashed recently;

(b) if so, whether the Government has enquired into the matter;

(c) if so, the outcome thereof;

(d) the loss of life and properties suffered as a result thereof;

(e) whether it is a fact that on a specific height the HPT-32 trainer aircraft failed to maintain its RPM;

(f) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard;

(g) the amount of compensation paid to the deceased family/affected civilians;

(h) whether the Government is considering to induct new generation flight simulators to train young pilots to avoid such crashes;

(i) if not, the reasons for not providing new generation flight simulators; and

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

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

(b) and (c) The Courts of Inquiry have been ordered to ascertain the causes of these accidents, which are yet to be completed.

(d) The pilots sustained fatal injuries in both these accidents. Besides, this, in the MIG-21 aircraft accident, which took place on 8th March, 2005 one civilian sustained fatal injuries while six civilians were injured. There was no loss to civilian property.

(e) and (f) The Court of Inquiry into the HPT-32 accident is in progress. The exact cause would be

known on receipt of the Inquiry report. The corrective steps would be taken accordingly.

(g) An Ex-Gratia interim relief of Rs. 1,00,000/- to the Next of Kin of deceased civilian and Rs. 20,000/- to each injured civilians have been paid. Compensation to the Next of Kin of the deceased pilots is being processed as per the existing rules.

(h) to (j) Simulators help in enhancing skill levels and in practicing emergencies and procedures in a safe environment. Simulators for some aircraft are already in service. Induction of simulators in the Indian Air Force is a continuous process.

[Translation]

Use of CNG and LPG in Vehicles

3394. SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ministry of Petroleum is implementing any scheme to get rid of pollution caused by petrol, diesel and oil used in transport vehicles;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Ministry is in a position to make CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) and LPG (Liquified Petroleum Gas) available as per the requirement;

(d) if so, the details of the demand of CNG and LPG alongwith the quantum being supplied, State-wise;

(e) the details of the availability and storage capacity of CNG and LPG in the country; and

(f) the details of the CNG and LPG filling stations set up in Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Government had announced an Auto Fuel Policy in October 2003 which seeks to control vehicular pollution through changes in

vehicular technology and fuel quality. The oil companies have been instructed to introduce Bharat Stage II/Euro III equivalent fuel in the country in terms of the road map provided in the Auto Fuel Policy.

(c) to (e) The introduction of CNG for automotive purposes all over India is dependent on creation of adequate pipeline infrastructure and sourcing of the required gas supplies. With the progressive expansion of the gas transmission and distribution infrastructure and diversification of gas supplies, it is expected that CNG projects would progressively come up in other cities.

LPG produced through indigenous sources is inadequate to meet the demand and therefore LPG is being imported. As per provisions of the LPG (Regulation of use in motor vehicles) order 2001, only imported or import—substituted LPG can be used as fuel for vehicles.

(f) IOCL have added Auto LPG Dispensing Station (ALDS) at two of their existing Retail outlets in Jaipur city. No CNG station has been set up in Rajasthan as yet.

[English]

Modernisation of Bharat Bhari Udyog Nigam Ltd.

3395. SHRI SUBRATA BOSE:

SHRI HITEN BARMAN:

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

(a) the current status of Bharat Bhari Udyog Nigam Ltd.;

(b) the details of profit/loss position for the last three years;

(c) whether the Government has any plan for modernising the Bharat Bhari Udyog Nigam Ltd.;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the funds allocated/proposed to be allocated for the modernization of the said company?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Bharat Bhari Udyog Nigam Ltd. (BBUNL), Kolkata is a holding company comprising the following subsidiaries:—

- Burn Standard Co. Ltd. (BSCL), Kolkata
- Braithwaite and Co. Ltd. (BCL), Kolkata
- Bharat Wagons and Engineering Company Ltd. (BWEL), Patna; and
- Braithwaite, Burn and Jessop Construction Co. Ltd. (BBJ), Kolkata.

But for BBJ, which is a construction company, all other companies, which are mainly engaged in manufacture of Railway Rolling Stock, are sick and have been referred to Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR).

(b) Net Profit/(Loss) before TAX and dividend for BBUNL Group of companies during the last three years are as under:—

(Rupees in crore)

Year	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Profit/(Loss)	(249.80)	(224.11)	(253.27)

(c) to (e) Government have taken an in principle decision to explore the possibility of revival including modernization of the four operating units of BBUNL referred to in reply to part (a) above after obtaining advice and recommendations of the Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE). BRPSE has already recommended the restructuring of BBJ which involves conversion of Rs. 13.88 crore loan into equity conversion of Rs. 10 crore loan into zero rate debentures and waiver of Rs. 30.73 crore relating to interest/penal interest.

Purchase of Stationery

3396. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 432 dated December 02, 2004 regarding purchasing of stationery and state:

(a) whether the information has since been collected;

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

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

(d) the time by which the information is likely to be collected and instruction issued to purchase stationery and other items as per DOPT and T OM dated July, 14, 1981?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Since this involves collection of voluminous data, it will take more time to fulfil the Assurance.

[Translation]

Outstanding Dues for Use of Defence Aircrafts

3397. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether huge amounts are outstanding against the former Cabinet Ministers including former Prime Ministers for use of defence aircrafts for unofficial journeys;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for recovery of outstanding dues from them?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The amount outstanding

against the former Prime Ministers for using Defence aircraft for unofficial journeys, is as under:—

Name	Amount (Rs.)
Shri Chandrasekhar	5,91,31,476/-
Late Shri PV Narasimha Rao	5,72,13,700/-
Shri HD Deve Gowda	54,61,497/-
Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee	8,74,808/-

No Cabinet Minister is entitled to use the Indian Air Force aircraft for unofficial Journeys.

(c) The Government has filed suits in the year 2000-2001, in the High Court of Delhi, for effecting recovery of the amounts from Shri Chandrasekhar, Late Shri PV Narasimha Rao and Shri HD Deve Gowda, former Prime Ministers as well as the political parties they represent. The matter is sub-judice. The political parties concerned have also been reminded for the recovery of the outstanding amount.

[English]

Cable Operators

3398. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether only one cable operator is being allowed to function in a specific area for showing the programmes of TV Channels in that area;

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

(c) if not, how many cable operators can function in one specific area; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to regulate the monopoly of cable operators in their respective areas?

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

S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) Under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 there is no restriction on the number of cable operators in a specific area.

Private Participation in Railway Projects

3399. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Rakesh Mohan Committee in its interim report recommended for financial participation of State Governments/Private Sector Organisations in implementation of specific projects;

(b) if so, whether Railways has taken any steps for private participation in implementation of its projects; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) and (c) Ministry of Railways have already commissioned rail connectivity to Mundra port with private investment and Surendranagar-Pipavav Gauge Conversion with public-private participation. Gandhidham-Palanpur Gauge Conversion project and Hassan-Mangalore Gauge Conversion project are being implemented through investments from private sector and other agencies.

Gas Cracker Unit in Kerala

3400. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether GAIL plans to set up a Gas Cracker unit in Kerala;

(b) if so, details alongwith the cost of the project; and

(c) the time by which the said unit is likely to be completed and start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL) intends to set up a grass root petrochemical complex in Kerala. The proposal is at an initial stage. Details have not been finalized.

[Translation]

New Railway Halt Station

3401. SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new railway halt station is proposed to be established at Mohammadpur Bal between Motipur and Mahbal stations on the Central Railways;

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be established; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There is a proposal regarding opening of a halt station between Motipur and Mahwal stations on East Central Railway.

(b) and (c) Action to open the halt station will be taken only when the proposal is found justified and feasible.

DD Programmes in Banda and Chitrakoot

3402. SHRI SHYAMA CHARAN GUPTA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the reception of the programmes of Doordarshan is hazy in Banda and Chitrakoot;

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

(c) the time by which the Government proposes to install a high capacity transmitter to improve the reception of Doordarshan programmes in Banda and Chitrakoot?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir. According to the information provided by Prasar Bharati, the reception of Doordarshan programmes in these towns is technically satisfactory.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No new TV transmitters are contemplated since the signals of Doordarshan's free to air DTH service 'DD Direct+' with its bouquet of 33 TV and 12 radio channels can be received throughout the country with the help of a small sized dish receive unit.

ISO Certificate to Trains

3403. SHRI ATIQ AHAMAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain trains have been awarded commendation certificates by the International Standard Organisation (ISO) for excellent services;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the fresh measures taken by the Government for achieving ISO certification for more trains by improving services, particularly in all Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express trains?

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

(b) A statement is attached.

(c) Efforts are continuously made to enhance the quality of services irrespective of the fact whether ISO quality certification is achieved or not.

Statement**ISO Certificate to Trains**

Zone wise list of International Standards Organization (ISO) certified trains is as under:—

Sl. No.	Railway	Name of the trains having ISO certificate
1.	Central Railway	2123/24 Deccan Queen Express 2051/52 Jan Shatabdi Express 2137/38 Punjab Mail
2.	Northern Railway	2003/04 New Delhi-Lucknow Shatabdi Express 2403/04 Delhi-Jammu Tawi Superfast Express 2055/56 Dehradun-New Delhi Jan Shatabdi Express 2057/58 Chandigarh-New Delhi Jan Shatabdi Express 4229/30 Lucknow-New Delhi-Lucknow Mail
3.	North Central Railway	2417/18 Prayag Raj Express 2179/80 Taj Express 1523/24 Jhansi (JHS)-Banda Passenger
4.	West Central Railway	2155/56 Bhopal-Nizamuddin Express 1265/66 Rewanchal Express

[English]

Conversion of INS Vikrant into Museum

3404. SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to convert INS Vikrant into museum;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the INS Vikrant is likely to be converted into museum?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Government of Maharashtra and the Ministry of Defence have in principle decided to convert ex-Indian Naval Ship Vikrant into a maritime museum.

(b) Government of Maharashtra has committed an investment of Rs. 25 crore for infrastructure works to convert Vikrant into a museum. The Ministry of Defence has also committed itself for additional financial support.

(c) No definite time frame can be given at this stage.

National Academy for Children

3405. Shri S.K. Kharventhan: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government for setting up of a National Academy to exclusively harness the potential of children in the fields of art, music, etc.; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Dose not arise.

News Channel of DD

3406. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to launch a separate news channel of Doordarshan;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Doordarshan already started a 24 hours 'DD News' Channel w.e.f. 3rd November, 2003 to provide free-to-air round the clock news, in both the terrestrial and satellite modes.

[Translation]

Telecasting of Environment Awareness Programmes

3407. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the details of programmes regarding environment awareness being telecast on different channels at present;

(b) whether there is any proposal to increase the number of such programmes;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Prasar Bharati has informed that the following programmes are currently being telecast on the National Network of DD-I:—

- Bhoomi;
- Jeevanjal;

— Terra Quiz;

— Turning Point; and

— Khel Khel Mein Badlo Duniya.

(b) No, sir,

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Prasar Bharati has informed that it is telecasting a considerable number of environmental programmes on different regional kendras as well. Financial constraints come in the way of increasing these programmes.

[English]

Recommendations of Working Group

3408. SHRI SUBODH MOHITE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to take action on the recommendations made by working group on Petroleum and Natural Gas submitted two years back;

(b) if so, the details thereof, particularly recommendation made for incorporation in Tenth Five Year Plan;

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon; and

(d) the measures taken to attain self-sufficiency in oil sector?

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

(b) to (d) The Working Group constituted by the Government studied various aspects of the petroleum and natural gas sector in the context of liberalisation of the sector as well as its increasing exposure to international oil markets. It made a number of recommendations which include strengthening of oil security through accelerated exploration programmes, acquisition of equity oil abroad, development of alternative sources of fuels, creation of strategic reserves

of oil/products and product quality improvement for environmental protection. Accordingly, the following action plans have been approved and action initiated in these areas by the government during the Tenth Five Year Plan, which will also reduce country's oil import dependence:—

- (i) Acceleration of exploration efforts especially in deep offshore and frontier areas.
- (ii) Launching of Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) and Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) programmes.
- (iii) Enhancing efforts for securing equity oil and gas abroad.
- (iv) Creation of strategic storage facilities for crude oil.
- (v) Development of alternative fuels including Coal Bed Methane, Motor Spirit-Ethanol Blend and Gas Hydrates. In addition, the government is also implementing Bio-Diesel programme.
- (vi) Implementation of Product Quality Improvement Projects by Oil PSUs for meeting prescribed environmental standards.

Investment by ONGC Abroad

3409. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to empower ONGC Videsh Ltd., (OVL) to make investment upto Rs. 300 crore in oil and gas properties abroad without going to the Cabinet for approval; and

(b) if so, to what extent increasing the limit would help the OVL to compete with China on foreign investment on Oil Cooperation?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Government have approved enhanced delegation of powers to the ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) Board. The Board has been

authorised to take decisions on projects involving investment upto US \$ 75 Million or Rs. 300 Crore, whichever is less.

(b) The enhanced delegation of powers may not have any direct correlation with OVL competing with Chinese companies or any other company, as the degree of success in acquiring exploration and production projects mainly depends on the competitive terms offered by companies to the host Governments and decisions of the host Governments. In case of farm-in/farm-out proposals involving transactions between companies, it would depend on the deals between the companies which are usually subject to approvals of the host Government and preemption rights available to other partners in such projects.

OVL are already working with Chinese companies in Sudan and the Ivory Coast. Looking to the vast possibilities of forging alliances with Chinese oil companies in seeking acreages in third countries and bilateral cooperation in other areas of the hydrocarbon sector, the national oil companies of India and China keep in touch with each other on a case-to-case basis. Although no agreement has been signed between India and China in the area of cooperation in hydrocarbons, a joint Task Force of the Ministries of External Affairs and Petroleum and Natural Gas has been established to examine the prospects for Sino-Indian cooperation in the hydrocarbons sector.

Free School Education to Disabled Children

3410. SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether free school education is provided to the children with disabilities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Ministry has made any efforts to provide free education for the physically challenged students in the Colleges and Universities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHI JEGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 provides for access to free education to children with disabilities in Government and Government aided educational institutions. Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), 10.77 lakh children had been enrolled in elementary schools. Under the Scheme for the Integrated Education of the Disabled Children (IEDC), about 2 lakhs disabled children were integrated under the scheme. The Government under the Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme supports 465 special schools in providing free education to 60,000 children with disabilities.

(c) No, Sir. However limited scholarship is provided to those who take up technical studies at college level.

(d) Does not arise.

Training to Railway Crew by KRC

3411. SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVRAJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Konkan Railway Corporation does not have the facility for jawans/constabulary on board, unlike other zonal railways;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the KRC is providing martial arts training and combat skills to its crew on board to check crimes on running trains;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether other zonal railways emulate KRC and deploy its RPF personnel to ground duties at stations and yards; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The total sanctioned strength of Railway Police Force is 98 nos. out of which 67 nos. are Jawans/Constabulary staff who are deployed on trains as and when required. In view of the presence of adequate number of Karate trained staff, this practice has been working satisfactorily.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. A total strength of 170 nos. Passenger Assistants and Junior Passenger Assistants all have undergone martial art training and have successfully passed yellow belt grading. In addition to this out of 187 nos. Station Masters/Assistant Station Masters, 147 nos. have also successfully passed yellow belt grading.

(e) and (f) No such proposal is under consideration of the Ministry.

Withdrawal of Bumper Super Saver Scheme

3412. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian airlines has decided to withdraw the bumper Super Saver Scheme;

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

(c) the total number of tickets sold under the said scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The validity period of promotional fares is invariably dictated and determined with reference to market conditions. The Bumper Super Saver Scheme was introduced as a promotional scheme during the lean period and is being withdrawn after 31st March, 2005.

(c) Since the scheme is still continuing, this does not arise.

Ezhimala Naval Academy

3413. SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ezhimala Naval Academy in Kerala has been commissioned;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the facilities being provided therein;

(c) if not, the reasons for delay; and

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

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Reasons for delay include the remoteness of project site, its hilly terrain and the heavy monsoons which hamper construction activities.

(d) The commissioning of the Depot Ship of the Academy, INS Zamorin has been scheduled on 6th April 2005, with the first course commencing in August, 2005.

Selling of Banned Items by Vendors

3414. SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDLIKRAO GAWALI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that vendors are openly selling Pan, Gutka, Cigarette, Liquor and other intoxicants at stations and in trains despite ban on selling of these items;

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

(c) the number of such cases reported during last two years, till date and the action taken/to be taken against those vendors;

(d) whether many street children are also selling such items openly in sleeper and AC classes of Trains; and

(e) if so, the precautionary measures taken by the Railways to prevent such street children from entering into trains and selling the intoxicants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. Sale of all such items is strictly prohibited at stations and in trains.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No such cases have been reported. Unauthorized vending/hawking is an offence under the provisions of Section 144 of the Railways Act 1989. To eradicate the nuisance of unauthorized vending/hawking causing inconvenience to the passengers, regular drives are being conducted against them in coordination with Commercial Staff and Government Railway Police.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. However, regular and surprise checks are conducted to prevent street children from entering into the train bogies.

Supply of Ultra Low Sulphur Petrol

3415. SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of major cities/metros in which Ultra Low Sulphur Petrol (ULSP) and Ultra Low Sulphur Diesel (ULSD) and other clean fuels are being supplied in the country;

(b) the estimated demand-supply for these fuels, as on December, 2004, State-wise;

(c) whether it is proposed to augment the refining capacity and production of ULSP/ULSD by all the oil PSUs so as to meet the growing demand for these fuels; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) At present, MS and HSD with 0.05% sulphur (max.) are being supplied to 13 selected cities viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Agra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Sholapur, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Bangalore and Surat.

(b) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Promotion of Coastal Folk Arts

3416. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any programme for the preservation and promotions of Coastal Folk Arts;

(b) if so, whether any Non-Governmental Organisation has submitted any proposal for the promotion of Coastal Folk Arts;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) The Zonal Cultural Centres have necessary programmes for the preservation and promotion of folk arts in general which includes coastal folk arts forms.

(b) No such proposal has been received in the Ministry.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Setting up of New Schools of Drama and Training

3417. MOHD. MUKEEM: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to set up new Schools of Drama and Training in various parts of the country including Uttar Pradesh;

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

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

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Allocation of Kerosene

3418. SHRI AJIT JOGI:

SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY:

SHRIMATI ANURADHA CHOUDHARY:

KUNWAR JITIN PRASADA:

SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

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

(a) the norms prescribed for allocation of kerosene under PDS and open market;

(b) the quantity of kerosene released to each State and Union Territory during each of the last three years, till date;

(c) whether some State Governments have requested to increase their kerosene quotas under PDS and open market; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Central Government allocates Kerosene (SKO) to the States and Union Territories (UTs) for distribution under the Public Distribution System (PDS). In terms of the policy in place since 2001-02, SKO allocations to States/UTs have been reduced after taking into account the number of new LPG connections released in the States/UTs. The States/UTs were advised to rationalize the distribution of their kerosene quotas by excluding ration card holders having LPG connections with single/double cylinders, and distributing the quantity thus saved to needy people. The State/UT-wise details of allocations during the last three years are at enclosed statement. In addition to PDS Kerosene, Oil companies market free sale kerosene on commercial considerations.

(c) This Ministry has received representations from various State Governments/UTs for the enhancement of their SKO quotas under PDS.

(d) An additional allocation of 1,50,502 Metric Tonnes (MTs) of PDS SKO during 2004-05 has been made to various States/UTs to meet their urgent requirements. The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) have been commissioned to undertake the first-ever study of kerosene demand in the country. Further action will be taken after the NCAER report has been received and studied.

Statement*State/UT-wise PDS SKO allocation during 2002-03 to 2004-2005*

State/UT	Allocation (in MTs)		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
1	2	3	4
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	6000	5907	6750
Andhra Pradesh	549592	523022	524940
Arunachal Pradesh	9793	9447	10424
Assam	265524	258128	262007
Bihar	646618	637221	648208
Chandigarh	14089	13229	16651
Chhattisgarh	147977	145042	143354
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	3003	2853	2782
Daman and Diu	2273	2194	2118
Delhi	188854	178756	168484
Goa	21999	20469	19601
Gujarat	783293	760542	743953
Haryana	155928	146857	145656
Himachal Pradesh	56509	53134	50537
Jammu and Kashmir	88850	81626	78702
Jharkhand	216766	213399	211175
Karnataka	500625	480157	461478
Kerala	236758	224243	221755
Lakshadweep	874	874	795
Madhya Pradesh	497726	487397	488609
Maharashtra	1384353	1300780	1276876
Manipur	20857	20233	19907
Meghalaya	20847	20597	20690
Mizoram	6748	6457	6217
Nagaland	13432	13140	13412
Orissa	317443	318947	315755
Pondicherry	13307	12856	12568

1	2	3	4
Punjab	272143	250329	237192
Rajasthan	417204	406152	398913
Sikkim	6403	5881	5854
Tamil Nadu	582712	562283	566711
Tripura	31545	30621	30832
Uttar Pradesh	1261121	1232633	1263173
Uttaranchal	98454	98459	89849
West Bengal	778784	763727	756383
Total	9618404	9287590	9222309

Allocation includes ad-hoc/additional allocations.

[English]

Fake Pass Racket

3419. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the loss suffered by the Railways on account of fake pass racket during each of the last three years;

(b) whether the Railway Protection Force has busted a fake pass racket recently;

(c) if so, the facts thereof and the number of persons apprehended by the Railway Protection Force;

(d) whether any enquiry has been conducted by the Government in this regard to find out any link with the railway employees;

(e) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(f) the action taken by the Government thereon?

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

Leakage of Question Papers

3420. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that in December 2004, the question papers of Railway Recruitment Board were leaked in Rohania, district Varanasi of Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

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

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the action taken against the persons found guilty?

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

(b) The Question paper for written examination of Railway Recruitment Board, Mumbai scheduled on 5-12-2004 had been leaked in Rohania, district Varanasi of Uttar Pradesh.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) An FIR No. 267/04 u/s 384/419/420 IPC dated 3-12-04 has been lodged in P.S. Rohania,

district-Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) by Local Police in this regard. Further investigations are being conducted by U.P. Police in the matter and Railway Vigilance is in touch with them. Appropriate action will be taken against Railwaymen who are found to be involved in this question paper leakage.

Work on ROB's

3421. SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the construction work on most of the ROB's which were declared in the previous year's budget has not been started so far; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to start the construction work on those ROB's?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Railways construct Road Over/Under bridges in lieu of existing busy level crossings on cost sharing basis if the traffic density at the level crossing is one lakh or more TVUs (TVU—A unit obtained by multiplying the number of trains with the number of road vehicles passing over the level crossing in 24 hours); otherwise on deposit terms. Proposal in both cases have to be sponsored by the State Government duly fulfilling the pre-requisites as per rules. Railway construct bridge proper (across the tracks) and work on approaches is executed by the State Government concerned. After sanction of Road Over Bridge the work cannot be started immediately as the General Arrangement Drawings have to be prepared, Geo-technical Investigations have to be conducted, detailed designs and detailed estimates have to be prepared. Thereafter, the work is tendered for construction and awarded as per rules. For the construction of Road over bridge land acquisition, removal of encroachments, shifting of utilities and diversion of road is also involved. This takes time. However, all out efforts are made to complete Railway's portion of work simultaneously with the work of approaches done by State Government.

Rehabilitation of Disabled and Old Persons

3422. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of schemes pertaining to the rehabilitation of disabled persons and old age persons and the agencies through which these schemes are being implemented;

(b) whether the agencies implemented the said schemes have provided the desired result;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the extent to which these schemes have been successful;

(d) whether there is also any proposal to appointment National Consumer Co-operative Federation of India Ltd. (NCCF) as NGO to implement those schemes; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): (a) to (c) Information is given in the enclosed statement.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Statement

The Government has been implementing a number of schemes for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and old age persons. These schemes are regularly evaluated for their effectiveness through independent agencies. Corrective measures are taken if any deficiency is identified on evaluation of the schemes.

For rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, the following schemes are under implementation:—

- (a) Six National Institutes set up in each major area of disability work, towards manpower development through long-term and short-term training programmes, provide rehabilitation services, undertake functional research etc.

- (b) The District Disability Rehabilitation Centers (DDRCs) provide assessment of need of assistive devices, provision/fitment/follow up/repair of assistive devices, therapeutical services, etc. These Centers provide supportive and complementary services to promote education, vocational training and employment for persons with disabilities.
- (c) Schemes are also under implementation for providing support to non-Government organizations running special schools and imparting vocational training to persons with disabilities.
- (d) Under the ADIP scheme, Aids and Appliances are distributed through implementing agencies like voluntary organizations, National Institutes under the Ministry, ALIMCO, Zila Panchayats, DRADAs, etc.

For rehabilitation of old age persons, the following schemes are under implementation:—

- (a) Integrated Programme for Older Persons for establishing and maintaining old age homes, day care centers, mobile medicare units and to provide non-institutional services through NGOs.
- (b) Scheme of Assistance to Panchayati Raj Institutions/voluntary organizations/self Help Groups for construction of old age homes/multi service centers for older persons under which one time grant for construction of old age homes/multi service centers is given.

Details of the schemes are available on the website viz www.socialjustice.nic.in.

Restructure of Airspace

3423. SHRI D. VITTAL RAO:

SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government is likely to lose about Rs. 190 crore due to the opening

up of a shorter and more economical routes by China in the coming years;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/to be taken to restructure its airspace and straighten out some of the most circuitous air routes of the world?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Chinese airspace maybe opened in future. However, the exact impact on revenue cannot be determined as of now.

(b) China has recently opened three air routes through its airspace providing a shorter route between Hong King/South East Asian airports and the airports in Europe. Some international airlines have started using these routes for their flights between Europe and Hong Kong.

(c) All possible efforts are being made by retaining the traffic of international overflights and loss of revenue by providing the most direct and shortest possible routes through the Indian airspace any by continuously pursuing for the release of reserved airspace for flexible use.

[Translation]

Appointment of RTSAs/RTAs

3424. SHRI TUKARAM GANPATRAO RENGE PATIL:

SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the norms laid down for the appointment of Rail Travellers' Service Agents (RTSAs) and Railway Tourist Agents (RTAs);

(b) the details of RTSAs/RTAs whose appointments have been cancelled for not complying with the norms set in this regard;

(c) whether the Government has received complaints regarding partiality is being done in the process of appointment of such agents;

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

(e) the corrective measures taken/to be taken to curb such practice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Rail Travellers' Service Agents (RTSAs) and Rail Tourist Agents (RTAs) are appointed as per provisions of Authorisation of Rail Travellers' Service' Agents (RTSAs) Rules, 1985 and Rail Tourist Agents (RTAs) Rules, 1980 respectively.

(b) RTSAs are appointed after following norms laid down in the relevant rules.

(c) and (d) A case was filed in Hon'ble High Court, Ahmedabad by two persons who did not get selected as RTSAs alleging unfair selection of RTSAs at Rajkot, Bhaktinagar and Surendra Nagar. In pursuance of orders of Hon'ble Court, selected RTSAs at these three stations are not functioning at present. The matter is subjudice.

(e) The selection committee appointed for selection of RTSAs follow the prescribed procedure laid down in the rules.

Funds for Development of Infrastructure

3425. SHRI SITA RAM YADAV: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Airports in the country which are under the jurisdiction of Airports Authority of India and how many out of them are not operational;

(b) whether the Government has received any suggestion from the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) to provide separate funds to the Airports Authority of India to develop infrastructures at the Airports; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) 97 airports and 29 civil enclaves at Defence airfields

belong to Airports Authority of India (AAI). Of these, 34 airports and 8 civil enclaves are non-operational.

(b) and (c) The Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) had submitted a pre-budget memorandum which inter-alia stressed the need for devoting adequate attention to the Civil Aviation in the budget for the year 2005-06. There was however no specific suggestion for providing separate funds to AAI.

[English]

Right to Publish

3426. SHRI SARVEY SATYANARAYANA: Will the MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any request from the Indian Language Newspapers Association for enactment of a law on 'Right to Publish':

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Employees-Aircraft Ratio

3427. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the average number of employees of Indian Airlines and Air India for maintenance and flying of aircraft is higher than the other airlines of the world including private airlines operating in the country;

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

(c) the steps taken by the Government to streamline the procedures in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) The

approximate number of Engineering employees per aircraft in Indian Airlines is 75 whereas in Air India this works out to 71.25. The ratio of employees engaged for maintenance and flying of aircraft in Indian Airlines and Air India compares favourably with the Industry average. While most of the airlines all over the world undertake maintenance jobs to a limited extent only and outsource Major Maintenance, Engine Overhaul and Component Overhaul jobs to a third party, in Air India and Indian Airlines, these activities are done completely in-house.

Indo-US Co-Operation in Oil Sector

3428. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is planning to attract US Oil Industry for co-operation/investment in the Indian oil and gas sector;

(b) if so, the steps initiated by the Government in this regard; and

(c) the extent to which the success has been achieved in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Government seeks and welcomes investment and co-operation in oil and gas sector from abroad including oil companies of the United States.

(b) To this end, the conditions governing the current fifth round of the New Exploration Licencing Policy (NELP) represents a considerable advance in attracting foreign investment. Specifically with regard to attracting potential U.S. based investment, Minister (P and NG) led a delegation for a road show in Houston, USA on the 31st January and 1st February, 2005.

(c) The response has been encouraging but the concrete results will be known only after bids close on 31 May, 2005.

Reinvestment of Profit in Exploration

3429. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether public sector oil companies are not pouring a large portion of their money into the basic business;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the percentage of profits reinvested in the exploration of oil reserves by these public sector oil companies during each of the last three years;

(d) whether spending on exploration is declining gradually;

(e) If so, the reasons therefor; and

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

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

Aircraft Hits Tractor at Goa Airport

3430. SHRI SUBRATA BOSE:

SHRI HITEN BARMAN:

SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that an Indian Aircraft hit tractor at Goa-Airport and flew without the mandatory inspection;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government against those who are responsible for the incident?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b)

Indian Airlines A-300 aircraft VT-EHC while operating flight IC-598 from Goa to Mumbai on 06-11-2004 was involved in a ground incident. After taxi clearance was given, the aircraft started rolling. The nose wheel tyre of the aircraft came in contact with the tow bar of the ground power unit (GPU) and rear wheel of the tractor, which had not cleared the area at that point of time. The Aircraft was immediately stopped and the inspection of its nose wheel area was carried out by the Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (AME) of Indian Airlines. No physical damage was observed. Subsequently, the aircraft was released for flight.

(c) The concerned AME has been warned to be more careful in future for failure of adhering to the standard departure guide-lines leading to this incident.

[Translation]

Akashvani Kendra in Tribal Districts

3431. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up Akashvani Kendras particularly in tribal districts in the States, particularly, in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, whether any survey has been conducted or proposed to be conducted in this regard;

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

(d) the time by which the work thereon is likely to be commenced; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir. During 10th Five Year Plan, Radio Stations are proposed to be set-up in the tribal districts of the country. Of these, two radio stations are proposed at Amravati and Shirdi in Maharashtra.

(b) to (d) Site for Radio Station at Amravati has already been acquired and site for Shirdi has been identified. Matter is being pursued with State Government authorities for allotment of the site at Shirdi. State-wise details of new Radio Stations proposed during 10th Plan in tribal districts is given in the enclosed statement. These schemes are expected to be ready during 10th Plan, subject to approval and availability of resources.

(e) Does not arise.

Statement

New Radio Stations proposed during 10th Plan in tribal districts are as follows

1. Srikakulam (Andhra Pradesh)
2. Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh)
3. Dumka (Jharkhand)
4. Gumla (Jharkhand)
5. Sringeri (Karnataka)
6. Amravathi (Maharashtra)
7. Shirdi (Maharashtra)
8. Rairangpur (Orissa)
9. Parlakimidi (Orissa)
10. Rayagada (Orissa)
11. Dungarpur (Rajasthan)
12. Lakhimpur Kheri (UP)
13. Purulia (West Bengal)
14. Darjeeling (West Bengal)
15. Maldah (West Bengal)
16. Bardhvan (West Bengal)
17. Tamluk (West Bengal)
18. Balurghat (West Bengal)
19. Dantewara (Chhattisgarh)
20. Baikunthpur (Chhattisgarh)
21. Jashpurnagar (Chhattisgarh)
22. Daporijo (Arunachal Pradesh)

23. Anini (Arunachal Pradesh)
24. Bomdila (Arunachal Pradesh)
25. Changlang (Arunachal Pradesh)
26. Khonsa (Arunachal Pradesh)
27. Karim Ganj (Assam)
28. Golpara (Assam)
29. Ukhrul (Manipur)
30. Tarnenglong (Manipur)
31. Dawki (Meghalaya)
32. Champhai (Mizoram)
33. Kolasib/Sarchip (Mizoram)
34. Tuipang (Mizoram)
35. Wokha (Nagaland)
36. Phek (Nagaland)
37. Zunheboto (Nagaland)
38. Udaipur (Tripura)
39. Nutan Bazar (Tripura)
40. Dharmanagar (Tripura)
41. Longtherai (Tripura)

[English]

Allotment of Petrol Pumps

3432. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:
 SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:
 SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI:
 SHRI RAJENDER KUMAR:
 KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH:

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

- (a) the present policy and norms prescribed for allotment of petrol pumps;
- (b) the existing marketing policy of various oil companies for allotment of petrol pumps;
- (c) whether oil companies are allotting petrol pumps in pursuance of their marketing plans;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the details of private sector oil companies which have been provided licenses for opening of petrol pumps?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Based on certain broad parameters advised by the Government to the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs), the latter have framed their guidelines for the selection of retail outlet dealerships (petrol pumps), LPG distributorships and SKO-LDO dealership, for viable locations in the country, and have been making selections and allotments in terms of these guidelines. These guidelines provide for a detailed procedure to be followed by the OMCs in making selection and allotment of dealers/distributors. The procedure includes selection of dealers/distributors by the selection committee of the OMC concerned on the basis of evaluation of the suitability of the candidates vis-a-vis certain laid down parameters and weightages. A brief note being widely disseminated in this regard by the Ministry is placed in the enclosed statement.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The companies are following the prescribed procedure for making allotments, in respect of the locations included in their respective marketing plans as well as at the viable locations included in the marketing plans approved by the Government earlier.

(e) Government have granted marketing rights for transportation fuels to three companies in the private sector, namely, M/s. Reliance Industries Limited, M/s. Essar Oil Limited and M/s. Shell India Marketing Pvt. Limited.

Statement

Procedure for Selection of Dealers/Distributors of Petroleum Products by the Oil Companies

1. Government have advised the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) on the broad parameters for the allotment of ROs/distributorships/dealerships relating to such issues as

reservations for weaker sections of the society, multiple dealership norms, etc., and also asked the OMCs to evolve transparent and objective criteria for selection. The oil marketing companies viz., Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPC) and IBP Co. Limited (IBP), have formulated their own guidelines for allotment of dealerships/distributorships. The OMCs also have freedom to select locations for dealerships/distributorships on commercial consideration. Therefore, Government no longer has any role beyond prescribing broad parameters in the process of selection of dealers/distributors and subsequent allotments to them, and in the matter of the selection of locations.

2. A gist of some important provisions of the selection guidelines adopted by the OMCs is given under:

2.1 50% reservation of dealerships/distributorships is provided in the guidelines of the OMCs for specific categories of persons, as under:

(i) Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes	—	25%
(ii) Defence Category	—	8%
(iii) Physically Handicapped	—	5%
(iv) Freedom Fighters	—	2%
(v) Outstanding sports persons	—	2%
(vi) Para-military/Police/ Government personnel	—	8%

Out of the above, 1/3rd of dealerships/distributorship in each category are reserved for women belonging to that category.

2.2 Oil companies advertise the locations in prominent newspapers, inviting applications for the award of dealerships/distributorships at

those locations. Adequate time is provided for aspirants to collect application forms and submit completed applications to the OMC. These advertisements contain various details for information of the applicants. An application processing fee (non-refundable) of Rs. 1,000/- is charged from applicants other than those belonging to SC/ST category. In respect of SC/ST applicants, the application processing fee is Rs. 500/-.

2.3 After scrutiny of the applications received, the OMCs call the applicants for interview by a selection committee comprising three officers of the company of the appropriate rank. Specific evaluation criteria and weightage thereof have been prescribed based on which the selection committee assess the suitability of the candidates in respect of their capability to provide land/infrastructure/facilities/finance, capability to generate business, their personality, educational qualifications/general level of intelligence, age, experience and business ability/acumen. It is recommended that applicants fully familiarize themselves with the criteria for selection, in consultation with the OMC Manager in charge of their territory.

2.4 The selection committee prepares a panel of three candidates in order of merit and this panel is finalized immediately on completion of interview for a particular dealership/distributorship. Letter of Intent (LoI) is issued to the No. 1 candidate in the merit panel after conducting necessary field investigation and based on report thereof.

2.5 Only one dealership is to be allowed to a family unit consisting of the individual concerned, his/her spouse and unmarried son/daughters.

2.6 The guidelines also provide for grievance redressal system, in accordance with which any complaint/grievance with regard to

selection is investigated and remedial action taken. Any complaint, received by the Government is also got investigated based on the contents in the complaint and remedial action taken.

Congestion at Mumbai and Delhi Airports

3433. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Mumbai and Delhi Airports have become highly congested to handle the existing air traffic;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to remove the congestion at these Airports to ensure smooth traffic;

(c) whether the Government is also planning to provide separate facilities for helicopters and smaller aircrafts at these airports to reduce this congestion; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Due to increase in passenger traffic as well as aircraft movements congestions do occur. To overcome this problem Airports Authority of India constantly endeavours to upgrade the airside and terminal of airports depending upon the requirements of airlines/traffic. There are plans to provide two rapid exit taxi tracks, parallel taxi track to secondary runway, more parking bays, modification of domestic and international terminal and specific parking facilities for smaller aircrafts at Mumbai Airport. At Delhi Airport, there are plans for parallel runway and taxi tracks, Rapid Exits, domestic bays, international bays, phased reconstruction of domestic terminal 1-B and parking bays for smaller aircraft.

Gauge Conversion

3434. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the gauge conversion works suspended on account of non-payment of their share

in the project by respective State Government, State-wise;

(b) the details of the progress of gauge conversion work of Bijapur-Gadag in Karnataka, which is being funded by State Government of Karnataka;

(c) if so, whether despite release of Rs. 30 crores by Karnataka for Bijapur-Gadag conversion still the work is not restarted; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and by when the work in this line is restarted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No gauge conversion project has been suspended on account of non-payment of share in the project by respective State Governments. However, the progress of projects depend upon the availability of the funds and accordingly, the projects are being progressed.

(b) On Solapur-Gadag gauge conversion project, Solapur-Hotgi-Bijapur has already been completed. The conversion of Bijapur-Basawana Bagewadi is targeted for completion during 2004-05. The work is also in progress in the balance section as per the availability of resources.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Construction of Airbase

3435. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to construct airbase at Falaudi town in Jodhpur, Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the area of land required for it;

(c) whether land has been acquired for the purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) and (c) An area of 4266 acres of land has been acquired for this purpose.

(d) The acquired land is located between Villages Kundal and Benkti, in District Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

[English]

Heritage Site Status to Golden Temple

3436. SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVRAJ: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the UNESCO has granted heritage site status to the Holy Shrine of Golden Temple at Amritsar;

(b) if so, whether the Government had consulted the Sikh religious groups both within India and abroad on this issue, in accordance with the pre-conditions laid down by UNESCO for granting such recognition;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Not yet, Sir. Archaeological Survey of India has submitted a proposal to the World Heritage Committee for inscription of world heritage status on Shri Harimandir Sahib.

(b) and (c) The nomination dossier for Shri Harimandir Sahib (Golden Temple) was prepared in consultation with the SGPC, Sikh historians, professional and religious heads.

(d) Question does not arise.

New Railway Station at Cochin

3437. SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received proposals from the State Government of Kerala for setting up of a Railway Station near the International Airport at Cochin; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Proposals have been received regarding setting up of a new Railway Station near the International Airport of Cochin at Nedumbassery. The same have been examined and not found operationally feasible and commercially justified.

[Translation]

Airbus A-320 on Raipur Route

3438. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to introduce Airbus A-320 in place of Boeing 737 plane in Raipur-Delhi-Raipur and Raipur-Mumbai-Raipur sectors in view of increase in passengers traffic;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Indian Airlines is already operating a daily A-320 flight on the sector Mumbai-Raipur-Bhubaneshwar-Mumbai and thrice a week A-320 flight on Delhi-Raipur-Nagpur-Delhi sector. Boeing 737 flight is being operated only on Delhi-Raipur-Delhi sector for 4 days per week.

[English]

Committee of Ministers on Dalit Affairs

3439. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY:

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

(a) whether the Government has constituted a Committee of Ministers on Dalit Affairs;

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

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

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to encourage all State Governments to implement existing schemes and fulfill promises made with respect to the welfare and empowerment of Dalits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHI JEGADEESAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The Committee was constituted on 24th February, 2005.

(b) A statement showing objectives and composition of Committee of Ministers on Dalit Affairs is given at enclosed statement

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Statement

1. Objectives of the Committee:

The Committee will over-see in a consolidated manner the effective pooling together and implementation of different programmes/schemes under various Ministries/Departments that relate to the welfare and development of Dalits. It will identify the gaps in the existing schemes and help develop new programmes for eliminating the gaps.

2. Composition of the Committee:

1. Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of Defence;
2. Shri Arjun Singh, Minister of Human Resource Development;
3. Shri Sharad Pawar, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution;
4. Shri Shivraj V. Patil, Minister of Home Affairs;
5. Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, Minister of Chemical and Fertilizers and Minister of Steel;

6. Shri Mahavir Prasad, Minister of Small Scale Industries and Minister of Agro and Rural Industries;
7. Shri H.R. Bhardwaj, Minister of Law and Justice;
8. Shri Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, Minister of Rural Development;
9. Shri Priyaranjan Dasmunshi, Minister of Water Resources;
10. Smt. Meira Kumar, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment;
11. Shri K. Chandra Sekhar Rao, Minister of Labour and Employment;
12. Shri Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission; and
13. Shri Suresh Pachouri, Minister of State in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

Flights from Bangalore to Middle East Countries

3440. SHRI M. SHIVANNA:

SHRI A. VENKATESH NAIK:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to increase the number of flights from Bangalore to Middle East Countries keeping in view the increase in demand for the same;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Air India is connecting Bangalore to Dubai on thrice weekly basis and Indian Airlines is operating from Bangalore to Sharjah and Muscat. Bangalore is also connected to destinations in Gulf through Gulf Air's twice weekly

flights. Entitlements are available for our carriers to operate more flights to destinations in Gulf. However, actual operations and choice of sectors are matters of their commercial judgement.

Losses Due to Non Revision of Siding Charges

3441. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the South Eastern Railway has incurred a loss of approximately Rs. 32.86 crore due to non-revision of siding charges in respect of electric locomotives used for placement/removal of wagons in colliery sidings;

(b) if so, the details of amounts recovered by railways from each of the collieries so far;

(c) the rate of All India Engine Hour Cost applicable for electric locos used for placement/removal of wagons and the charges claimed by SE Railway; and

(d) the action taken by the Railways to recover the remaining amount from the collieries?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The rate of All India Engine Hour Cost applicable for electric locos is Rs. 6,500/-. The charges claimed by the railways are based on trip timings, Engine Hour cost and type of engine used in the siding.

(d) Does not arise.

Unlocking Cross Holdings

3442. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether issue of unlocking cross holdings among the three public sector oil companies namely ONGC, Indian Oil and GAIL has been approved by the Government;

(b) if so, whether Group of Ministers who were asked to make recommendations on this issue has submitted its Report;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which these recommendations are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The proposal has not been referred to any Group of Ministers.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Pending Rail Projects

3443. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways has decided to clear all pending projects within next five years as reported in the Hindu dated the February 14, 2005;

(b) if so, the details of the projects which have been accorded the administrative sanction and are awaiting funds for a long, State-wise;

(c) the funds required for execution of these projects; and

(d) the manner in which the Government propose to meet the expenditure involved in these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) As per Budget, there are 240 ongoing works having throwforward of more than Rs. 46,000 crore under the Planhead New Lines, Gauge Conversion, Doubling, Railway Electrification and Metropolitan Transport Projects. These projects, excluding 5 projects which are at various stages of approval, are progressing as per the availability of funds. A number of non-budgetary initiatives have been taken to generate additional resources through Public/Private partnership, State Government sharing, funds from Ministry of Defence,

additional budgetary support for National Projects and through National Rail Vikas Yojana. Apart from this, Remote Area Rail Sampark Yojana has been announced which envisages investment of about Rs. 20,000 crore in 5 years. With these initiatives, all the ongoing projects are likely to be completed in a period of 5 years. Funds for the Yojana are however, yet to be tied up. Once the funds are tied up, with these initiatives, all the ongoing projects are likely to be completed in a period of about 5 years. Statewise details of ongoing projects are given in enclosed statement.

Statement

The pending projects in railway parlance are the projects which have been included in the budget with the proviso that the work would be taken up after obtaining requisite clearances. At present there are five such pending projects. As per Budget 2004-05, there are 240 ongoing projects which are at various stages of progress as per availability of funds on year to year basis. These include the pending projects also. The Statewise details are given below:—

Sl. No	State	No. of Works	Completed	Balance in Progress including pending projects
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	27	7	20
2.	Assam and North Eastern States	12	2	10
3.	Bihar	47	15	32
4.	Chhattisgarh	10	5	5
5.	Delhi	4	0	4
6.	Gujarat	14	5	9
7.	Haryana	7	0	7
8.	Himachal Pradesh	3	0	3
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	3	1	2
10.	Jharkhand	11	3	8
11.	Karnataka	22	4	18
12.	Kerala	14	2	12
13.	Madhya Pradesh	10	1	9
14.	Maharashtra	27	8	19
15.	Orissa	25	6	19
16.	Punjab	7	1	6
17.	Rajasthan	15	4	11

1	2	3	4	5
18.	Tamil Nadu	25	6	19
19.	Uttar Pradesh	47	14	33
20.	Uttaranchal	3	1	2
21.	West Bengal	45	15	30

Note:—The projects falling in more than one state have been shown in each state.

Beautification of Airports

3444. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any initiatives towards beautification of airports of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the airports which have been beautified so far; and

(d) the time by which all the airports in the country are likely to be beautified?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Beautification and improvement of passenger amenities at airports is a continuous process and is taken up depending upon availability of land etc. Airports Authority of India (AAI) has identified 24 airports for beautification works such as canopies on airside and cityside of terminal building, toilets, toilet fixtures, lighting, air circulation, passenger amenities etc. In addition, development of green belts have been taken up alongwith horticulture work on airside and cityside of terminal building including car park area and approach roads.

(c) The airports which have been identified for beautification work are Delhi, Mumbai, Goa, Hyderabad, Bhubaneshwar, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Jammu, Trivandrum, Calicut, Guwahati, Agartala, Coimbatore, Amritsar, Varanasi, Lucknow, Jaipur, Udaipur, Ranchi, Chennai, Kolkata, Patna, Pune and Aurangabad.

(d) Several works have been completed at various airports. Remaining works are likely to be completed during 2005-06.

Use of Over-aged Coaches and Engines

3445. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA:

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways is holding large number of over-aged coaches and Engines endangering the safety of railway passengers;

(b) if so, the reasons for not weeding out the over-aged coaches and Engines; and

(c) the remedial measures taken by the railways in this regard?

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

The number of overaged coaches is very small. For example on 31-3-2004 there were 298 overaged Broad Gauge (BG) coaches out of 31879 coaches of passenger carrying designs. Even these overaged coaches are actually not being used for carrying passengers. Instead these are being used as camp coaches, staff vans and for other departmental needs.

As on 1-4-2004, about 12.51% of overaged Broad Gauge Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) coaches were working on Indian Railways. These have not been liquidated due to delay in availability of AC/DC EMU

on account of teething problems in the electrical equipments supplied by Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL). These are however being nursed through special repairs to run them safely during temporary extension of their life.

Population of overaged locomotive is also small. Locomotives are condemned on age cum condition basis. All locomotives in service irrespective of age, are kept in good fettle to ensure safety of train operation.

Bonded Trucking

3446. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Container Corporation of India has launched bonded trucking for air cargo;

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal to launch similar services from other cities; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) There is a proposal to launch similar services from cities other than Delhi also.

(c) Container Corporation of India is arranging with Customs authorities at various Airports and Inland Container Depots (ICDs) for permission for such bonded trucking movement of air cargo.

[Translation]

Scrap Depots in Uttar Pradesh

3447. SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up scrap depots in the country particularly in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the locations selected for the purpose; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) No, Sir. There is no proposal to set up a new scrap depot. In Uttar Pradesh, the available scrap depots are sufficient to cater to the need of concerned railways.

[English]

Exploration Projects Abroad

3448. SHRI JUAL ORAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of oil and gas development, production and exploration projects undertaken by the Government in the overseas countries during the last one year;

(b) the details of the oil companies presently working on these projects;

(c) the amount of investment involved in those projects project-wise; and

(d) the details of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) During 2004-2005, ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) have acquired Participating Interests in overseas E and P projects in Sudan, Australia, Ivory Coast and Qatar. Also during this period, a consortium of OVL and IPR, as well as consortium of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) and Oil India Limited (OIL), have been awarded one exploration block each in Egypt and Libya respectively. The details are given in the enclosed statement.

(d) Requisite agreements, except in the case of Block-6 in Egypt, have been entered into by the Indian companies with the respective parties.

Statement

Participating Interests acquired by/blocks awarded to Indian oil companies in foreign countries during 2004-05

Name of the Project and Country	Participating Interest with details of other partners	Planned Investment by OVL (US \$)
Block 5A Sudan	OVL-24.125% Petronas-68.875% (Operator) Sudapet-7%	Approx US \$ 269 Million.
Block 5B Sudan	OVL-23.5% Petronas-41% (Operator) Sudapet-11% Lundin-24.5%	Approx US \$ 26 Million
Block WA-306P, Australia	OVL-55% Antrim Energy Inc.-32.5% with Operatorship Magellan-12.5%	Approx US \$ 7.2 Million
Block CI-112, Ivory Coast	OVL-23.5% OIL-11.5% Vanco-30% with Operatorship, Sinopec-30% Petroci-5%	Approx US \$ 21.83 Million
Najwat Najem Oil Structure, Offshore, Qatar	OVL-100% (Operator)	Approx US \$ 15.5 Million (Minimum Commitment)
Block-6-North Ramadan, Egypt	OVL-70% IPR-30% (OVL and IPR will jointly develop the block with IPR taking the lead during exploration phase.)	Approx US \$ 14 Million (Minimum Commitment)
Block-86 Libya	IOC-50% OIL-50%	US \$ 17 Million Minimum committed amount of exploration expenditure

*[Translation]***Dis-continuation of Train Services**

3449. SHRIMATI ANURADHA CHOUDHARY:

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

SHRI MOHD. TAHIR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to dis-continue the services of loss-making trains as reported in the Rashtriya Sahara dated February 28, 2005;

(b) if so, the details of routes identified for such loss-making trains alongwith name of those trains;

(c) the reasons for such losses;

(d) whether the Government is also proposes to make evaluation in this regard;

(e) if so, the time needed for such evaluation and their implementation; and

(f) the details of train services dis-continued during 2004-05 and the losses suffered by them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) An analysis of passenger traffic on Indian Railways has shown that there are several routes or sections on which there is considerable demand whereas on the other hand there are several trains that suffer from lack of patronage due to inconvenient timings or running of many trains at close intervals. It is, therefore, proposed to review such trains with low patronage and deploy resources where there is greater need. This is a continuous and ongoing process.

(f) 9501/9502 Rajkot-Bhuj Anand Express and 2081/2082 Ahmedabad-Gandhidham Jan Shatabdi Express were withdrawn during 2004-05 due to poor patronization. Trainwise computation of losses is not maintained by the Railways.

Demand and Supply of LPG

3450. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU:

SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA:

SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:

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

(a) the details of the demand and supply of commercial, domestic and low income groups LPG cylinders alongwith subsidy rates thereof during each of the last three years, category-wise;

(b) the total sale and marketing of 5 kg. LPG cylinders during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government is aware that the domestic LPG cylinders are being used for commercial purposes in the country;

(d) if so, the number of such cases registered by the Government against distributors and consumers during each of the last three years, State-wise; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to check misuse of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial purposes?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The sale of LPG by Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in different categories, i.e. domestic and commercial category, is given enclosed Statement-I. The estimated subsidy on 14.2 kg. domestic LPG cylinder was Rs. 115.63, Rs. 67.75 and Rs. 45.17 during the years 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04 respectively. Further, during the year 2002-03 and 2003-04, in addition to the aforesaid Government subsidy, the OMCs suffered under recoveries of about Rs. 62.27/cylinder and Rs. 89.54/cylinder respectively.

(c) to (e) The details of cases of established diversion of domestic LPG cylinders by the distributors

of OMCs in different States during the last three years is given at enclosed Statement-II. OMCs have taken the following measures to forestall the diversion of domestic cylinders to unauthorized purposes:-

- (i) Field officers have been advised to intensify surprise checks and inspections on LPG distributors/commercial establishments.
- (ii) Supplies to LPG distributors are regulated in line with the customer population and per-capita consumption of that market based on last year's sale for the same month.

- (iii) State Government authorities are requested to render assistance in curbing misuse of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial purposes.
- (iv) Press advertisement are released regarding misuse of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial purposes.
- (v) Action against erring distributors is taken in line with the Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG).

Statement-I

Sale of LPG by OMCs under Different Categories During the Last Three Years

(Figures in TMT)

Year	Domestic Sale		Commercial Sale	
	14.2 kg. cylinders	5.kg. cylinders	Non-domestic cylinders	Bulk*
2001-02	7,122	0	107	81
2002-03	7,736	1	142	263
2003-04	8,771	4	105	199

*excludes Auto LPG.

Statement-II

State-wise Details of Cases of Diversion of Domestic LPG Cylinders During the Last Three Years

State	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	—	—	1
Haryana	—	—	1
Himachal Pradesh	—	1	—
Karnataka	2	1	—
Kerala	2	—	—

	1	2	3	4
Maharashtra		9	—	2
Rajasthan		4	—	—
Tamil Nadu		9	4	5
Uttar Pradesh		4	1	—
Delhi		2	—	1
West Bengal		—	—	1
Total		32	7	11

During the period April-December, 2004, OMCs have detected 268 cases of diversion in the country.

Sale of Scrap

3451. SHRI THAWARCHAND GEHLOT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the amount earned by railways from the sale of scrap during each of the last three years Zone-wise;

(b) the procedure adopted by the railways for sale of scrap;

(c) whether any irregularity has come to the notice of the Government about the sale of scraps;

(d) if so, the number of complaints received during the said period; and

(e) the action taken by the railway thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The amount earned by railway (zone-wise) from the sale of scrap during the last three years are given below:-

(Value in crore of Rupee)

Railways	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05 (upto Feb. 05)
1	2	3	4
Central	192.95	96.13	60.97
Eastern	118.23	129.70	98.02
Northern	170.51	168.24	93.26
North Eastern	44.28	30.74	19.16
Northeast Frontier	15.92	35.37	10.86
Southern	103.25	116.22	97.04
South Central	104.53	124.08	74.75
South Eastern	192.00	86.77	64.14
Western	83.85	84.83	49.65
North Western	40.11	68.22	26.99

1	2	3	4
East Coast	*	42.16	19.60
North Central	*	91.10	92.03
East Central	*	40.25	38.71
South East Central	*	47.32	29.95
South Western	*	21.10	11.82
West Central	*	82.96	54.40
All Production Units	45.23	49.31	32.63
Total :	1110.86	1314.50	873.88

*Note: New Railways-started disposing of scrap after 1-4-2003.

(b) The sale of scrap is arranged through Public Auction/Advertised Tender. The schedule dates for scrap disposal are given vide publicity in the newspapers. Any prospective bidder can participate.

(c) to (e) Railways conduct preventive checks and also investigate complaints received in the area of scrap sale. Irregularities noticed are dealt appropriately and persons found responsible are taken up suitably under the extant rules including action under Railway Servants (Discipline and Appeals) Rules, 1968. As per information available, 21 complaints were received during the period.

[English]

Laying of Gas Pipelines by GAIL

3452. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gas Authority of India (GAIL) has proposed to lay pipelines for supply of gas by investing about Rs. 4500 crore;

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

(c) the manner in which the money is proposed to be collected for such huge investment?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) GAIL (India) Limited propose to spend Rs. 3124 crore as plan Capital Expenditure for the year 2005-06 towards gas pipeline projects. These projects include the Dahej-Uran Pipeline, Jagdishpur-Haldia pipeline, Vijaipur-Kota pipeline, Dadri-Panipat pipeline, Thulendi-Phulpur Pipeline, etc.

(c) The project expenditure would be met by GAIL out of its internal resources and external borrowings.

[Translation]

Members of Railways Users' Consultative Committee

3453. SHRI AJIT JOGI:

SHRI GANESH SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that Railways Ministry had asked the Hon'ble Members to forward names of the representatives for nomination as Members of Railway Users' consultative committee;

(b) if so, the reasons for not nominating the Members whose names have been forwarded so far;

(c) whether the Government are of the view that the demand of nominating more than one Member against a Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency is inappropriate;

(d) if so, whether the Government propose to increase the number of the Members to be nominated in DRUCC/ZRUCC; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

provisions of Railway Users' Consultative Committee, representation is given to one nominee of each Hon'ble Member of Parliament/Lok Sabha on each of the Divisional Railway Users' Consultative Committee (DRUCC) serving his/her constituency. Similarly Hon'ble Member of Parliament/Rajya Sabha can nominate one nominee on each of the DRUCC serving the District selected by him/her under Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS). Accordingly Hon'ble Members of Parliament have been requested to advise the name(s) of the nominees (in the prescribed proforma) for nomination on the respective DRUCC(s).

(b) The names of representatives of Hon'ble MPs for nomination on DRUCCs received in prescribed proforma have since been communicated to Zonal Railways concerned for nomination.

(c) to (e) Hon'ble Members of Parliament of Lok Sabha can nominate one nominee each on DRUCCs, if his/her constituency is served by more than one Division. Nomination of more than one nominee is not proposed for the present, as it would result in nominating a large number of persons on these Committees.

Passing of Secret Information by Army Personnel

3454. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the army personnel involved in leaking out secrets to Pakistan have been put to scrutiny;

(b) if so, the number of army personnel arrested in connection with their involvement in passing confidential information of Army during the last three years and in the current year; and

(c) the action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The number of Army personnel arrested in connection with their involvement

in passing confidential information during the last three years and the current year is as under:—

Year	Number
2002	21
2003	04
2004	Nil
2005 (till 18th March)	Nil

(c) Action taken against those arrested is as under:—

Action taken	Number
Dismissed from service	11
Punishment awarded	01
Disciplinary action initiated	10
Cases in civil court	03

[English]

Conservation of Warangal Fort

3455. SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Oil Corporation had accepted the proposal of State Government of Andhra Pradesh for conservation and preservation of famous historical monument the Warangal Fort in Andhra Pradesh;

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

(c) whether work on the project has been commenced; and

(d) if so, the current status of its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Indian Oil Foundation has accepted a proposal for conservation

and development of Warangal Fort. However, details of the project are not yet finalised.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Question does not arise.

Improvement in Freight Charges

3456. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been an overall increase in earnings in the first nine months of this financial year by the railways;

(b) if so, whether the Railways had budgeted Rs. 2,470 crore more than what it had earned in the first nine months of last year;

(c) whether during April-December 2004 railways had loaded 31 million tonnes of cargo more than in the same period of last year and was set to exceed the targets for the year;

(d) if so, the extent to which the railways freight charges have been improved; and

(e) the efforts being made to improve it during 2005-06?

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

(b) Railways have earned Rs. 33900 crore in the first nine months of the current financial year which is Rs. 1089 crore more than the target fixed for the period and Rs. 2597 crore more than the earnings of the corresponding period of the previous year.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The freight loading target for 2004-05 has been revised to 600 million tonnes from 580 million tonnes and the target of freight earnings has been revised to Rs. 30450 crore from Rs. 28745 crore, anticipating an increase of Rs. 1705 crore over the budgeted target.

(e) Improved freight loading and earnings during 2005-06 shall be achieved by further improvement in the through put of the traffic through increased productivity and efficiency.

Letter of Intent for DTH Service

3457. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

SHRI SURENDRA PRAKASH GOYAL:

SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state refer to reply given to Unstarred Question No. 233 dated December 2, 2004 regarding LOI to Space TV Ltd. for DTH and state:

(a) whether DTH application of Space TV Ltd. have been processed and letter of intent issued;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether delay in processing DTH applications result into revenue loss to applicants;

(d) if so, the estimated loss on delay per month; and

(e) the steps taken so far by the Government for prompt disposal of such applications, which are as per DTH guidelines?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The application of M/s. Space TV Ltd. is currently under examination, in consultation with the Departments of Economic Affairs and Company Affairs.

(c) and (d) The Government have no such information.

(e) The Letter of Intent is issued after satisfying that the applicants meet all conditions prescribed under DTH guidelines.

12.00 hrs.

[Translation]

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1870/2005]

[English]

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Sir, I beg to lay on the table:—

- (1) A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1871/2005]

- (2) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Asiatic Society, 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 Asiatic Society, Kolkata, for the year 2003-2004.

- (3) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (2) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1872/2005]

- (4) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Children's Film

Society, India, Mumbai, for the year 2003-2004, alongwith Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Children's Film Society, India, Mumbai, for the year 2003-2004.

- (5) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (4) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1873/2005]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the statement (Hindi and English versions) on Quarterly Review of the trends in receipts and expenditure in relation to the budget during the third quarter of the financial year 2004-2005, under sub-section (1) of section 7 of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1874/2005]

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1875/2005]

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 1876/2005]

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed

Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1877/2005]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Sir, I beg to lay on the table:—

- (1) A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1878/2005]

- (2) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619 A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Bharat Yantra Nigam Limited and its subsidiaries, Kolkata, for the year 2003-2004.

- (ii) Annual Report of the Bharat Yantra Nigam Limited and its subsidiaries, Kolkata, for the year 2003-2004, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

- (3) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (2) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1879/2005]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Civil Aviation for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1880/2005]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Sir, I beg to lay on the table:—

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Centre for Railway Information Systems, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Centre for Railway Information Systems, New Delhi, 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 1881/2005]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Sir, on behalf of Shri S.S. Palanimanickam, I beg to lay on the Table:—

- (1) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (3) of section 21 of the Coinage Act, 1906:—
 - (i) The Coinage (Standard Weight and Remedy of Commemorative Coins) of the Hundred Rupees (containing Silver 50%, Copper 40%, Nickel 5% and Zinc 5%) and Two Rupees (containing Copper 75% and Nickel 25%) coined on "150 Years of Railways in India" (Amendment) Rules, 2004 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 763 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 24th November, 2004.
 - (ii) The Coinage (Standard Weight and Remedy of Commemorative Coins) of the Hundred Rupees (containing Silver 50%, Copper 40%, Nickel 5% and Zinc 5%),

Ten Rupees (containing Copper 75% and Nickel 25%) and One Rupee Ferritic Stainless Steel (containing Iron 82% and Chromium 18%) coined in honour of "VEER DURGADASS" (Amendment) Rules, 2004 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 764 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 24th November, 2004.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 1882/2005]

- (2) A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Parliament, Secretariats of the President and Vice-President for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1883/2005]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JEGADEESAN): Sir, I beg to lay on the table:—

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute for the Physically Handicapped, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute for the Physically Handicapped, New Delhi, 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 1884/2005]

- (3) A copy of the Forty-first Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities for the period from July, 2002 to June 2003 under article 350 B (2) of the Constitution.

- (4) A copy of the Explanatory Note (Hindi and English versions) of the Report mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1885/2005]

- (5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Commission for Backward Classes, New Delhi, for the years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

For 2001-2002: [Placed in Library.
See No. LT. 1886/2005]

For 2002-2003: [Placed in Library.
See No. LT 1887/2005]

- (ii) A copy of the Memorandum of Action (Hindi and English versions) on the advices tendered by the National Commission for Backward Classes, New Delhi, for the years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

- (6) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (5) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1888/2005]

12.02 hrs.

MESSAGE FROM RAJYA SABHA

[English]

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report the following message received from the Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha:-

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 127 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha at its sitting held on the 23rd March, 2005, agreed without any amendment to the Patents (Amendment) Bill, 2005, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 22nd March, 2005."

12.02½ hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC UNDERTAKINGS

Third Report

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): I beg to present the Third Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Public Undertakings on Power Grid Corporation of India Limited—Extra Expenditure in Construction of Kishenpur-Moga Transmission System—Additional expenditure of Rs. 433.81 crore.

12.02¾ hrs.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, LAW AND JUSTICE

Fourth Report

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Fourth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice on the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council Bill, 2004.

12.03 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

The Status of implementation of recommendations contained in the Fourth Report of Standing Committee on Finance

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, you may lay it on the Table.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): Sir, I lay the statement

on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Finance in pursuance of Direction 73A of the directions by the hon. Speaker, Lok Sabha.

*The Standing Committee on Finance examined the Demand for Grants of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation for the year 2004-05 and presented their Fourth Report to Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on 20th August, 2004. The Report contained eight recommendations. These recommendations of the said Committee relate to:—

- (i) provisioning of funds only for those schemes/projects which have either been kicked off or likely to be taken up during that particular year;
- (ii) introducing a separate head in the Demands for Grants of the Ministry for Information Technology;
- (iii) setting up of National Statistical Commission through a Bill rather than through an administrative order;
- (iv) amendment of Collection of Statistics Act which will bestow more powers on the Ministry with regard to Collection of Statistics;
- (v) implementation of Tier-1 of the Scheme 'Modernisation of Statistical System in India' expeditiously;
- (vi) identification of various factors which cause delays in execution of projects and tackling the same in an effective manner on priority;
- (vii) revision of allocation under Major Works for construction of Central Training Facility (CTF) at RE stage so as to minimise the gap between RE and actuals; and
- (viii) realistic assessment of advantages and disadvantages of schemes before planning the Plan Schemes and budgetary allocation.

All the recommendations of the Committee have been considered in the Ministry and action has already been initiated. The two new schemes, viz., Tier-1 of India Statistical Strengthening Project and Fifth Economic Census for which funds were provided during the current year 2004-05 have been operationalised during the year. Separate budget head for IT has been introduced in the Demands for Grants for 2005-06. Draft amendments to Collection of Statistics Act are being finalised in consultation with Ministry of Law. The budget allocation under 'Major Works' for construction of Central Training Facility was assessed realistically and revised from Rs. 8.86 crore in BE 2004-05 to Rs. 25 lakh in RE 2004-05.

The Action Taken Notes (ATNs) of the Ministry were forwarded to the Standing Committee on Finance in October, 2004. In its Eighth Report, the Committee has accepted the ATNs on all the recommendations except ATNs related to setting up of National Statistical Commission and implementation of the Plan Scheme 'Modernisation of Statistical System in India'. In order to expedite the setting up of the National Commission on Statistics, the Ministry has proposed to set up the Commission initially through an administrative order. Thereafter, the Commission itself could develop a suitable legislation for establishing a Commission on statutory basis. Based on the above, a draft Cabinet Note has been prepared and the process of consultations with the concerned Ministries prior to its finalisation is under way. The Plan Scheme 'Modernisation of Statistical System in India', which has been re-named as 'India Statistical Strengthening Project' has been operationalised with five components in Tier-1. The ATNs on the above two points have also been forwarded to the Standing Committee on Finance.

12.04 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF
URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Situation arising out of inordinate delay in
merging Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO)
with Steel Authority of India Ltd. and steps taken
by the Government in regard thereto**

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, we shall take up Item No. 16—Calling Attention.

Shri Basu Deb Acharia.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Steel to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereof:-

"Situation arising out of inordinate delay in merging Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO) with Steel Authority of India Limited and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto."

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members Shri Basudeb Acharia and Gurudas Dasgupta, have drawn attention to the situation arising out of inordinate delay in merging Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO) with Steel Authority of India Ltd. and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto. I would like to present the following statement before the House.

The Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO), a wholly owned subsidiary of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) was incorporated in 1918. After a series of mergers in 1952, IISCO became a vertically integrated steel company with its steel making unit at Bumpur, captive iron ore mines at Gua and Chiria, coal mines at Chasnalla, Jitpur and Ramnagore, a captive foundry and pipe making plant at Kulti and a marketing

set up. The Government of India took over the management of the Company in 1972, followed by taking over of IISCO shares in 1976. In 1978-79, the shares of IISCO were transferred to SAIL and IISCO became a wholly owned subsidiary of SAIL.

IISCO has continued to make losses over the years due to technological obsolescence, ageing of plant and equipment, outmoded technology, lack of necessary capital inputs etc. Although several proposals were drawn up for modernisation of IISCO, none of the scheme could be taken up for implementation for want of funds.

With the amendment of the Sick Industrial Companies Act (SICA), IISCO was referred to Board for Industrial and Financial Restructuring (BIFR) in June 1994 and was declared a sick industrial company in August, 1994. Several schemes for revival of IISCO were envisaged but none could fructify.

Government of India (GOI) in February 2000, approved a Financial and Business Restructuring package for SAIL which, inter-alia, envisaged write-off of loans and advances of SAIL/Gol to IISCO for Rs. 1946.17 crores as on April 1, 1999. As a part of the restructuring plan of SAIL, the Gol approved conversion of IISCO into a Joint Venture (JV) with SAIL holding minority shareholding. However, the efforts could not fructify.

Government of India approved in June, 2002 a proposal for revival of IISCO. Based on this, IISCO/SAIL prepared a rehabilitation package for IISCO which was submitted to the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI). Operating Agency (OA) of BIFR, which in turn submitted the package to the BIFR. BIFR sanctioned a rehabilitation scheme for IISCO on 20-11-2003 which is under implementation.

Due to obsolete technology, ageing of plant and equipment, lack of necessary capital investments etc. IISCO has made losses over the years. However, the company has started making profit since 2003-04 (Rs. 27 crores) and has also reported a provisional profit

of about Rs. 125 crores in the first nine months of 2004-05. It may be mentioned here that IISCO has an accumulated loss of Rs. 955 crores as on 31st March, 2004 and negative net worth of Rs. 620 crores.

As a result of the implementation of the restructuring package coupled with improved market conditions, SAIL registered its highest ever net profit (after tax) at Rs. 2,512 crores in the year 2003-04. During the first nine months of 2004-05, SAIL has recorded its highest ever net profit (after tax) of Rs. 4,139 crores.

In order to further improve the performance of IISCO it is necessary to upgrade the technological health of the plant. The present financial position of IISCO does not permit it. Merger option would provide an opportunity for technological upgradation of IISCO. On merger, IISCO's available raw material resources can be optimally utilised by the both IISCO and SAIL. With SAIL's financial and managerial capabilities and availability of potentials with IISCO like mines/collieries, large infrastructural facilities and good work culture, there would be greater synergy for capacity expansion and technological upgradation of the plant. Hence, with the proposed merger both SAIL and IISCO will be benefited.

Government of West Bengal has also agreed to extend to SAIL, relief and concessions given on IISCO even after merger. The benefit of concessions which were committed by West Bengal Government in BIFR approved revival package of IISCO amounts to Rs. 315.24 crores approximately.

The matter has been examined in detail and it is proposed to merge IISCO with SAIL. SAIL Board and IISCO Board have given in-principle approval for merger of IISCO with SAIL. At present, this proposal is under active consideration of the Government.

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, the Indian Iron and Steel Company is the premier steel manufacturing unit of our country....*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: You should thank first for accepting your demand.

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: For that I will say later.

MR. SPEAKER: You will get that from the Chair.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Perhaps, this is the first steel making industry in our country. When this industry was closed, it was taken over by the Government of India. Subsequently, it was nationalised in 1978 and the shares of IISCO were transferred to SAIL.

But after IISCO became the subsidiary of the Steel Authority of India, no substantial investment was made for the revival of IISCO, for the renewal of over-aged and worn-out machinery. In spite of that, IISCO has earned profit in the year 2003-04, which was Rs. 27 crore. This year, as stated by the Minister of Steel, during 2004-05, it is expected that IISCO would earn a profit of about Rs. 127 crore.

BIFR has given a final verdict and the Government of India has also agreed to the package approved by BIFR. That was done more than a year ago. In the month of June, the Minister of Steel, Shri Ram Vilas Paswanji visited Burnpur. He visited almost all the steel plants after becoming the Minister of Steel. In his visit at the Burnpur, he announced that the Government would actively consider the merger of IISCO with Steel Authority of India. It is the demand of all the workers and the people of West Bengal that IISCO should be merged with Steel Authority of India.

MR. SPEAKER: He has agreed.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: But Sir, it should urgently be done. The steel market is booming now. SAIL has earned a profit of more than 2,500 crore this year.

MR. SPEAKER: Therefore, ask the question relating to its implementation.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I am coming to the question.

Sir, Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Company Limited, Bhadravati was also one of the subsidiaries of Steel Authority of India Limited. It was merged long back in the year 1996 when the United Front Government was there at the Centre. That Government had taken the decision of its merger with IISCO.

So, my question is that when, in principle, the Ministry of Steel has agreed for merger of IISCO with SAIL, why is it being delayed. There should be some timeframe fixed. Unless this merger is finalized and approved by the Cabinet, this will not be materialized.

MR. SPEAKER: A statement has already been made on the floor of the House and I believe, the Cabinet has to do it.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: What he has stated is that 'the proposal is under active consideration of the Government.' I have received a letter of 14th March, in reply to my letter, wherein he has stated that 'it is under active consideration of the Government.' He met the Chief Minister of West Bengal on 30th September, most probably. I was also there in the meeting with that Chief Minister, and so far as I remember, there also, he had announced that the Government had taken a decision for merger of IISCO with Steel Authority of India. But why is it being delayed?

Another problem is that...

MR. SPEAKER: I think, 'active consideration' means it will be implemented soon.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, Rs. 965 crore is the accumulated loss in addition to the loans and liabilities. In case of Bhadravati Steel Plant, when the merger was materialized, it was done on a clean slate. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether in this case also, IISCO's merger with SAIL be done on a clean slate.

There is one more point. Indian Iron and Steel Company is not only ideally located but it has its own captive coal mines and it has its own coal washeries.

The best quality coal is produced in IISCO's washery at Chesnala. It has a captive iron ore mine in Chiriyā. The best quality iron ore is available at Chiriyā mines. But the Jharkhand Government refused to renew the agreement that was there since long.

MR. SPEAKER: I am sure, they would look into all these things.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether—it is a major mineral—the State Government has any power or authority to say that they would not allow the iron ore or coal to move from one State to another. This will not only affect IISCO, but it will also affect the entire steel industry. So, I would like to know whether the Government of India would take it up with the Jharkhand Government so that there may not be any difficulties in regard to renewal of the agreement which is there in the Chiriyā Iron Ore Mines.

I would urge upon the Government—not only in the interest of the workers, but also in the interest of the people of West Bengal and also the economy of South Bengal which depends on IISCO because 15,000 workers are working there, in addition to about 3,000 contract workers who are mostly from my constituency—not only to actively consider this, but also to take immediate decision in regard to the merger of IISCO with SAIL.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (Panskura): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I do not doubt and I should not doubt the intention of the Minister. The Minister says that it is under active consideration. Kindly bear with me. The question of revival of IISCO was discussed in this House and in the other House also for the last 10 years and one after the other, the Ministers had made a statement that it would be done. Never did they say that it would not be done. Even the partners were chosen in order to put funds for revival. Unfortunately

it has not been done, as a result, the losses incurred by IISCO have been heavily mounting from year to year.

The statement that the hon. Minister has made has many lacunae. I should not say that they are serious, but it has lacunae because the basic question is about merger. The Government has not yet decided this question because decision to merge involves some questions: what is going to happen to the Government's money? Has the Ministry of Finance concurred? It does not depend on the Ministry of Steel only; there is a Steel Development Fund from which he could get money, but it depends on the decision of the Ministry of Finance. Honourable Minister, had you talked in this regard with the Finance Minister? Hon. Mr. Finance Minister, have you agreed to this proposal. Without getting the approval from the Ministry of Finance, if he makes a statement in the House that it would be done and it is under active consideration, etc., it would appear to me—I do not say Unrealistic—as an uncertainty. So, if uncertainty continues, IISCO will not be revived. This is my first question to him.

The second one is, what about the bank loan? There is a large volume of bank loan. Will the Ministry of Steel approach the banks and the Ministry to get concessions for one time settlement as the banks generally do, in the case of other companies? Has it been done?

Thirdly, has SAIL made a plan for investment? Only the Board has agreed. That is not enough. How much of money they are going to put in, what is the revival package and has the revival package been technically evaluated by the Ministry of Steel in collaboration with SAIL. Without these modalities, the biased statement of the Minister may appear to be a promise far away from performance.

My fourth question is, the Minister is reviving Burnpur, What about Kulti? Kulti was an integrated part of ISCO. The Ministry has disbanded Kulti and stopped production there. Even the employees quarters do not

have any water or electricity. They have left Kulti in lurch, only alluring Burnpur, that at the cost of Kulti, Burnpur will be revived. Hon. Minister's statement does not contain a single sentence about the future, workers and revamping of Kulti.

Lastly, I must say that the Government of West Bengal has done its job. It has agreed to give the concession. What about the Government of India? It has got the prior approval of the Government of West Bengal. Instead of giving your assurance, you are putting the cart before the horse because the nodal agency is not the Government of West Bengal but the Government of India. Therefore, Sir, I would like to request the hon. Minister to Honour his statement to every letter and word that he has uttered and he has to assure the House what is the time frame within which these lacunae will be sought to be solved, particularly the most difficult hurdle of getting the approval of the Finance Ministry. How long will it take to evaluate technically the revival programme? What SAIL is going to do with regard to the money? What is the total money involved?

MR. SPEAKER: You have said all that earlier also.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: We have always been given the assurances by the successive governments. My senior colleague, at present the Minister of Heavy Industry, is not here. He held a meeting with the trade unions. He made a plan. You, Sir, were also there. But it was not done. Therefore, we would like to say.

[Translation]

Though many speeches are being made, but what about the performance? Kindly inform the house, the statement that you have made will be taken with a pinch of salt. Otherwise...

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Shailendra Kumar, you may just put the question. Please do not make a speech. You have not given the notice in time.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Mr. Speaker, Sir, questions were asked by hon. Members, Shri Basu Deb Acharia and Shri Gurudas Dasgupta about inordinate delay in the proposed merger of Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO) with Steel Authority of India Limited. As the matter is under consideration of the Union Government for long, I would like to know from Minister the reasons for such an inordinate delay. Another question which I want to ask whether the Government are formulating a plan to provide employment to the labour force which is on the verge of starvation?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the case of IISCO is hanging fire for a long time. Our Government was constituted in May, 2004 and the first step I took after assuming charge was to visit all the steel plants of the country to gain first hand information of their working and to ascertain their difficulties. I visited Burnpur also and I found that they have the required raw materials and mines too, but unfortunately they do not have funds. SAIL is making a lot of profit since the present Government took over and I had stated at that time that the merger of IISCO with SAIL is acceptable to Government in the interest of the workers, the State and the Country.

Deliberations were going on since June that it should be handed over to private sector. Further course of action was being deliberated upon. Since I was concerned, I went to West Bengal on 31st August and had a meeting with the Chief Minister of that State. Shri Basu Deb Acharia and our other colleagues, Chairman of SAIL and its officers were also present in the meeting. The talks concluded in 15 minutes and I do not think such a brief talk was ever held between a Union Minister and a Chief Minister. I asked him about his opinion in this regard and he told me that he was clearly in favour of a merger. When I asked whether the State Government was thinking of making

that proposal with some conditions, the Chief Minister answered in the affirmative. I asked him to close that chapter as the Central Government was willing to take some positive action. Only then, I alongwith the Chief Minister declared before the media that in principle, we were in favour of merger and action would be taken in this regard. After that, after the month of June I gave orders to the boards of IISCO and SAIL because you know it very well that these kinds of formalities are required to be completed.

Sir, I directed them to get the merger proposal approved from their Boards. I had gone to Burnpur in June. The meeting was held with the Chief Minister on 31st August and the Board of ISCO gave its consent for merger in its Board meeting on 27th September and the Board of SAIL approved the proposal in its meeting of 28th September. The proposal of merger was referred to the Ministry in October. Then we had to take care of the interests of the employees with regard to the proper agency, which would pay their dues. We did not want to complicate the matter. I had personally thought about the pros and cons of sending the matter to the Ministry of Finance. At last, we decided to send it to the Cabinet with our recommendation. You know it very well that approval, comments or opinion of various concerned Ministries are sought prior to sending the proposal to Cabinet. So, we have sent that proposal to various Ministries to obtain their comments on it. I think that the concerned Ministries will give their comments very soon. We are in constant touch with these Ministries and we can give our comments in Cabinet if the need arises. We shall not wait for it for a long time and the proposal will be sent for the approval of the Cabinet after completing all the necessary processes very soon.

You know it very well that it will take time even after that. After getting Cabinet's approval, it will be sent to SAIL for getting approval of its Board. Then, it will be sent to the Department of Company Affairs for approval. After that a meeting of share holders of all the three companies will be held. Then approval of the

Department of Company Affairs will be taken. After completion of the above mentioned process, the matter will be sent to BIFR and only then the process of final merger of the companies will be completed.

Sir, I think, the process of Cabinet's approval will be completed within three months not in ten years. The remaining process will take six month's time and the entire process of merger with SAIL will be over by the end of this year. I have set a target of two months to complete this process but, It is a matter for which a time limit has to be announced in the House. So, I ask for the permission of the House for giving us a time limit of three months, which is 30 days more and I make a declaration about it.

As far as issue of the captive mines, Chiria is concerned, it is true that we had rejected it even after holding talks with the people and it should have been renewed after rejection. It should not have been rejected. But it was rejected, though we had discussed the issue with them. We moved even Court also. As regards the loss, I think there will be a profit of Rs. 350 crore this year. Rest of the things will be sorted out and finally there will be a saving of Rs. one thousand crores. We shall not have to go to anybody to ask for Rs. one thousand rupees. The Steel Authority of India is capable enough to meet this demand. We do have money. So, we shall not have to ask for money from anybody. And money will not be a hurdle in the way of its progress.

Secondly, you have talked of Kulti. The Kulti factory is running in the red. It was bearing a loss of Rs. 50 crore every year. It had already been closed down before I became a member of Parliament. Hardly some of its employees...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Whatever has happened, is all due to me. You should thank me for this. You had gone leaving the factory in the state of loss-making. It was I who had processed it...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Only the Minister's reply will go on record.

...*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Please tell us about Kulati.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Just a minute.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Allow him to speak.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: I am just telling you about Kulati only. As per my report Kulati was incurring an annual loss of Rs. 50 crores. The company closed down on 1-4-2003. Out of the total number of employees service of only 31 employees have been retained and the remaining 2681 employees were given retirement under the V.R.S. This is the factual position. I have repeatedly stated in this House that there is no dearth of leaders and policies in this country. What is lacking, is good intention. You will find in this matter that the policy and the intentions of the Government both are good. No Government could have proceeded in the matter so swiftly in such a short time as we did. Mr. Speaker, it is your State also. The whole process will be completed within the next three month's time....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Kindly tell about investment plan.

MR. SPEAKER: How will everything be taken in calling attention motion.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You are a very popular Minister today.

...*(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

[Translation]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: You have not done anything about other subsidiaries.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Mr. Paswan, in principle it will remain closed.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Presently I am unable to say anything about the enterprise which has been closed and it has been closed down for ever after giving V.R.S. But as far as SAIL is concerned, SAIL is in profit, IISCO is also gaining profit. We have also infrastructure and raw materials. We want to ensure you that by utilising these resources money will not be a hindrance....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. No more clarifications please.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: You have said that there has been inordinate delay. There is no delay in it. You should rather thank for it.

[English]

MD. SALIM (Calcutta-North East): As far as iron ore is concerned, Iron ore is a raw material of national importance....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: He has said that and he has replied to that point. This is a different subject.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MD. SALIM (Calcutta-North East): It is a matter of Union Government. Hon'ble Minister is present in the House. Jharkhand, Orissa, Goa and Chhattisgarh where Mafia iron ore is under operation, iron ore is being sent abroad, where there is demand of steel in the country itself and iron ore is needed in our country also for steel factories....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: This is not the way. Without my permission, certain things have been said and Mr. Minister, you are volunteering to reply without my permission.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Whatever he said, he was outright true. There was a big scam going on in sale of iron ore and it is still continuing. We know that IISCO's iron ore is sold at reduced prices. Iron ore has been sold to different companies at different prices. The sale of iron ore has not been governed by any policy or transparency in it. We have constituted a Committee for that and that Committee....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: No more clarifications. Then the whole purpose is frustrated. This is not the way to deal with Calling Attention. He has given an assurance and I am sure that he will fulfil it.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: I have said that the Committee should bring about transparency and uniformity in this work so that both the company and general public get benefited.

12.22 hrs.

MOTION RE: TENTH REPORT OF THE BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

[English]

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly): I beg to move:

"That this House do agree with the Tenth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 23rd March, 2005."

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That this House do agree with the Tenth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 23rd March, 2005."

The motion was adopted.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Raj Babbar may speak now.

Shri Raj Babbar, are you occupying your seat?

SHRI RAJ BABBAR (Agra): Yes, I am occupying my seat.

[Translation]

Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on a very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, recently the Nature's fury wreaked so much havoc in Uttar Pradesh and its adjoining States that the farmers have been rendered to a moribund state. Due to hailstorm and torrential rains, atleast 15-16 districts of Uttar Pradesh, have been affected. The crops of the farmers in these districts have been destroyed. Fatehpur Sikri and Achnara are situated in my Agra constituency. Out of 23 villages in Fatehpur Sikri, 11 villages have been completely destroyed....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Do not interrupt the hon. Member. This is very unfortunate. He is raising such an important issue.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJ BABBAR: Sir, in this regard, I would like to point out that the tradition has it not there has been a scarcity of water since the times of Akbar particularly in Fatehpur Sikri in Agra. Only the farmer living there knows as to how he reaps the crops and protects them. Only one crop is produced in that area

in a year. The compensation being given there is according to a very old law. Under this law two thousand five hundred rupees per hectare is paid in the event of disaster. I think even, the money spent on sowing, weeding and irrigation on one hectare land in a year is more. An amount of rupees two thousand five hundred for irrigated land and one thousand rupees for unirrigated land has been stated to be given. The compensation fixed by the Union Government has been converted from acres to Hectare. It has been revised in the year 1975. Today, the farmers of my constituency are on the verge of death and nobody knows as to what is going to be the condition of their family tomorrow. In the matter of giving compensation, it is shameful to say that a cheque of rupees ten is being given to the farmers of my constituency. For getting the payment of cheque of Rupees ten, he has to open a saving account with atleast rupees five hundred.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I appeal to the House that not only the Government but leaders and Members of Parliament of all the political parties should also go there and carry out on the spot inspection. A parliamentary committee should go there and decide the amount of compensation that can be paid to them. They are not being paid compensation amount inspite of the fact that they pay insurance premium automatically while they take loans for seeds, sowing and harvesting of crops from the Public Sector Banks. I wrote to the hon'ble Prime Minister, the Ministry of Rural Development and the Minister of Agriculture. In its response, the Prime Minister assured to take note of the matter. The letter was dispatched on March, 15 but not a single paisa is being provided there. The farmers are dying. The State Government is trying to provide loose ration. Will the farmer go on accepting alms? If the situation continues, one or the other member from his family might go in for prostitution or somewhere else in near future.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Let us not hope so.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJ BABBAR: There will again be a sting operation in future but none of the channels understands what turn the situation is going to take there. None can imagine the plight their families are going to suffer. You do not need any Shakti Kapoor or Aman Varma there. Humanitarian assistance is required there. Only those channels are required which can highlight their plight.

Sir. I would like to request the House and the Government through you that those farmers should be provided an amount of at least rupees two and a half lakhs as compensation. The union Government should rethink that tsunami is not the only disaster, the surviving farmers are also facing disastrous situation who are going to face impending death tomorrow.

I would like to further submit that the compensation of Rs. 2500 and 1000 is being paid only to those farmers who own upto two hectares of land and no compensation is being paid to the farmers with more than 2 hectares of land. A farmer living in Fatehpur Sikri and Achda village ekes out his living with much difficulty who sowed one crop and he earlier used to break stones but now that work has also been stopped due to the supreme court orders.
...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Raj Babbar, you have very effectively put forward your case. Please conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJ BABBAR: The farmer has become a pauper....*(Interruptions)*

I am thankful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia): Sir, my notice was also on the same issue.

MR. SPEAKER: You are associating regarding your matter.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: it is very unfortunate.

[Translation]

SHRI SRICHAND KRIPLANI (Chittorgarh): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would associate myself with him.
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: O.K. You do it. You are rising time and gain to say only one thing.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPIPARAI (Sivakasi): In my Virudhunagar district, Continuing Education Programme has been implemented since 2002. The HRD Minister has allotted a grant of Rs. 90,60,000 as the first year installment. The second year installment of Rs. 1,15,00,000 has not yet been allotted even after the District Coordinator submitted the Utilisation Certificate for the second year to the HRD Ministry. There are around 360 employees working in this programme. For the past one-and-a-half years, they are working without their salary. It is adversely affecting the Continuing Education Programme and also thousands of people and moral of those who are getting the benefit from this programme, are also affected.

So, I humbly request the HRD Minister to immediately release this grant and make this programme viable in my district.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards my Constituency Patna where the previous Government got the foundation stone of the AIIMS laid by the Vice President without allocating any funds. I would like to thank the Present Government that they have allocated funds but work has not started in this regard so far which is a matter of great discomfort to the people. A large number of

people come to AIIMS, Delhi from Bihar for treatment. They have to face a lot of difficulties. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you might also be aware because people come here for treatment in large number from your state also. The people are put to great inconvenience in staying and getting treatment here. One does not know how much funds have been allocated for building of AIIMS there. I would like to urge that the work should be got started forthwith and it should be completed within the time frame fixed in this regard so that the people of Bihar do not have to travel to Delhi and Mumbai for treatment....(*Interruptions*)

All facilities should be made available there.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: I try to accommodate as many Members as possible.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Repetition does not help.

SHRI KHAGEN DAS (Tripura-West): Sir, I thank you very much for giving me an opportunity.

More than five decades after Independence, the plight of the tribal people has actually worsened. The tribal people of the country, numbering more than eight crores, are poorest of the poor.

The rule of the successive Governments at the Centre has led to their land being snatched away, their access to forests obstructed, villages were displaced to make way for developmental and industrial projects.

The tribal areas are the most backward, deprived of the fruits of development. A major section of the tribal people is comprised of the landless rural poor and the most cheap labour.

The tribal people and *adivasis* have close and natural bonds with the forest and its produce. But the Forest Act and its successive versions treat them as encroachers and interlopers in the forest instead of being an integral part of it. The draconian circular of the Central Government issued in May, 2002 must be

withdrawn and eviction of tribals from forest land must be stopped.

The land being tilled and used as house sites by millions of tribals all over the country must be recorded in their names. For ensuring this, suitable amendments must be made in the Forest Conservation Act of 1980.

The Tribal people are faced with the threat of losing their identity as their languages and cultures are endangered. Positive aspects of tribal culture, particularly their collective and egalitarian ethos should be protected and encouraged.

SHRI R. PRABHU (Nilgiris): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I associate myself with that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI (Bhagalpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the youngmen who had got jobs of Trackman, Grade-D in P.W.I. in the Railways and had gone to Assam to join their jobs, on March 11th were beaten up by the activists of the All Assam Students Union who entered various stations and hotels in the Tinsukhia divisions searching those students to beat them....(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: That happened sometime back.

[*Translation*]

*

SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, those boys have returned just the day before yesterday. The boys were beaten up there and their appointment letters were torn. They were told that they would not allow the boys from Bihar and Jharkhand to do jobs in Assam. Over 70 boys have fled to Bihar from there. Not only this the Railway employees from the Bihar posted in Assam have also returned. They have written to the Minister of Railways in this regard and after having met him sought their transfers to some other place. Here, we have Members of Parliament from Assam.

[Shri Sushil Kumar Modi]

Through you I would like to submit that the Congress Government is in power there. There was furious reaction earlier when the Bihari boys were subjected to the same kind of assaults. You are aware of the entire episode. I know that the people of U.L.F.A. and those inspired by it are behind this incident. This is causing unnecessary tension between Bihar and Assam. Since the Minister of Railways also hails from Bihar, it is his duty to ensure that the Bihari boys should be saved from such attacks in Assam and help them join their jobs. If necessary, they should be transferred some where else to enable them to do their jobs. This should also be ensured that such attacks on Bihari boys do not recur in future.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had also given a representation to the hon'ble Minister in the Budget Session in this context but no action has been taken thereon so far....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)*...

MR. SPEAKER: I am sure the hon. Minister has taken note of it.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded except the statement of Shri Arun Sethi.

...(*Interruptions*)*

SHRI ARJUN SETHI (Bhadrak): Mr. Speaker, Sir, you will be surprised to know that no revision of royalty on minerals has been done for the last 9 to 10 years. The Sarkaria Commission had recommended that revision of royalty on minerals should be done after every two years. Similarly, the Inter-State Council also recommended that revision of royalty on minerals should be done every three years. But it is a matter

of regret that this has not been done for the last 9 to 10 years.

Sir, the State of Orissa earns 60 per cent of its revenue from minerals. As a result of non-revision of royalty on minerals other than coal, the State Government is losing very much. So, I urge upon the Government of India that they should issue a direction to get this revision done at the earliest so that not only the State of Orissa, but also other States which are having minerals do not lose any further.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Dushyant Singh. We should learn from this young Member. Today, being World TB Day, he has brought before us a great responsibility and he has put this matter before this House. I compliment him and we should learn from him.

SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH (Jhalawar): Thank you Sir. Today, being World TB Day, the successive Governments have tried to eradicate and have started campaigns such as Revised National TB Control Programme. At this stage, 4.8 per cent of the 10 people affected can be cured by DOTS, which is a directly observed treatment for short process. Every TB patient, coming next to 15 people can affect 15 other people and cause the disease to go further. At this stage, I must also mention that India has a large number of people affected by AIDS. As AIDS virus is susceptible to infect TB and can break-down the human immune system, it infects TB in a person quite easily.

Sir, the Government has brought a new Patent's Bill, which will increase the cost of life saving drugs, especially, the cost of drugs for AIDS patients. The AIDS patients can directly infect the TB patients, so it has a prolonged effect on both the parties.

At this stage, I must say that we must come together, the entire House must come together, on a common platform and pledge to remove all the viruses, such as, AIDS virus and remove TB from our country and assist the common man so that the common man can get medicines and drugs at a cheaper rate.

Sir, with the new Patent Bill, the price of life saving drugs has become costlier and it has affected the TB patients who in a way are directly affected by AIDS.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Rajnarayan Budholia to associate with this.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No statements please. Your name is being recorded.

Shri P.C. Thomas.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: What is this happening? Please take your seat.

Shri Thomas, you have already spoken once on this. But because of the sensitivity of the matter, I have allowed you. Please be brief.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): Thank you Sir. Tomorrow is 'Good Friday'. It is a very important day as far as Christians are concerned. I find that some of the Departments in the Government of India have compelled their employees to work on this day also. For example, the Customs and Excise Department, just to complete the target before 31st of March, has given a direction that all should come and work on these days, including Friday.

There is also an anomaly, which is found in Kendriya Vidyalayas. For evaluation, the teachers have been called, especially in Bangalore region where teachers have been called to evaluate.

MR. SPEAKER: Do we not take too many holidays in this country?

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Sir, it is a holiday and a special day. Internationally, it is a holiday and in India also it is a holiday.

So, considering the nature of the day and considering the importance of the day as far as Christians are concerned, I urge upon the Government

to give directions immediately, because it happens to be tomorrow, so that at least, the Christians maybe allowed to be given off on this day. I would submit that the leader of the House may reply to this. It is a very important subject which is concerning the next day, that is, tomorrow and the House is also going to be over today. If an immediate direction can be given, it will help the employees, particularly the Christian employees in the country.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH (Udhampur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, by your permission I would like to submit that my constituency of Udhampur-Katwa-Doda is presently facing acute water-shortage. I would like to inform you that although 400 water schemes have been formulated but more than 300 of them are lying closed.

Sir, we spend every year thousands of rupees on drinking water but the ladies our villages have lost their hairs as they are forced to fetch water on their heads. Therefore, it is my request that special attention maybe given in this regard. I want your personal interference in this matter.

[English]

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SINGH (Bikramganj): Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

[Translation]

Sir, Kala-a-zar has spread in the Bhojpur district of Bihar and 15 lives have been lost over there during the last three days. This has been shown on "Aaj Tak" channel as well. The people of Bihar are not able to complain to anyone as there is no popular Government there and as stated by Shri Ramkripal Yadavjee, there is an urgent need for an AIIMS like hospital in Bihar. The condition prevailing over there is such that the house of the Members of Parliament belonging to Bihar have turned into hospitals. Due to the lack of medical facility and popular Government, the conditions over there have become terrible. Now-a-days when we discuss about diseases such as HIV and hepatitis-B, it is very unfortunate that people are dying of kala-a-zar.

[English]

DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME (Birbhum): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a very important issue of urgent public importance regarding the health and safety situation of thousands of workers engaged in mining and crushing units of black stones and granites in various parts of the country.

On the one hand, the loss of lives and the number of people with bodily damages are on the rise due to rising incidence of accidents in the mines and crushing units due to poor safety measures both in the mines and crushing units. On the other side, due to crushing of granites and black stones and in many other similar minerals, various dust and silicon particles are produced, which causes environmental pollution and health problems to the workers and neighbouring dwellers. Usually, it causes various chronic respiratory diseases including tuberculosis, chronic asthmatic bronchitis, pneumoconiosis and silicosis. All these are very dangerous types of respiratory diseases.

The Government should take appropriate measures to control and ensure mine safety and also take environmental pollution control measures so that these problems can be tackled with great importance.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav. You are a senior Member. Your matter is not a matter of national importance.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhanjharpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, about 25-30 lakh people from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar reside in Delhi. The skill and shining in Delhi depends on these people. I had also written a letter to the Hon. Home Minister on this subject. Sir, there was a wooden kiosk at the Baba Khadak Singh Marg near the Khadi Silk Emporium where a man named Chandeshwar used to have his shop of Paan-bidi since the year 1972. The officials of the New Delhi Municipal Corporation have cruelly displaced him yesterday on the 23rd of March without any prior notice

served on him. His shop has been dismantled and destroyed. As a result, the shop keeper has become unemployed and is earning to eke out a living with his family facing starvation. I would like to go through the order related with him.

MR. SPEAKER: No-no. There is no need to go through it.

...(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, I call the last speaker, Shri Gaurishanker Chaturbhuj Bisen. Nothing is recorded.

[Translation]

SHRI GAURISHANKER CHATURBHUJ BISEN (Balaghat): Through you, I would like to bring it to the notice of the Government that Madhya Pradesh is facing a severe famine....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: This is too much. Please sit down. Nothing will be recorded except Shri Gaurishanker Chaturbhuj Bisen's statement.

...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI GAURISHANKER CHATURBHUJ BISEN: 56 tehsils of the 21 districts of the state are drought affected.

13.00 hrs.

The Government of India have made available only Rs. 36.30 crores....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Only the statement of the Hon. Member, whom I called, will be recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot hear more than one Member.

*Not recorded.

[Translation]

SHRI GAURISHANKER CHATURBHUI BISEN: The State Government had asked for Rs. 724 crores and 7.64 lakh metric tonnes of food-grains. Four tehsils in my Parliamentary Constituency are drought affected. So far works of only Rs. 2 crores have been done there. The Government of India should immediately provide at least Rs. 200 crores and food-grains as per requirement to save the state from drought. If it is not provided, the conditions would become worse. People are fleeing now from there because they are not getting jobs. There is a huge crisis of drinking water there. I would like to request the Government of India to immediately provide Madhya Pradesh Rs. 200 crores under the item 58 and food-grains as per requirement.

MR. SPEAKER: You all are requested to be brief. If you give such long speeches how other Members will get opportunity to speak.

SHRI GAURISHANKER CHATURBHUI BISEN: We had asked for Rs. 724 crores, but only Rs. 36 crores have been provided. The people are fleeing from that area. Out of the eight tehsils in my parliamentary constituency four are drought-affected and due to the lack of funds works have come to a halt under each of the said schemes and people are on the verge of starvation.

13.01 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Matters under Rule 377 will be treated as laid on the Table of the House.

- (i) **Need to upgrade and declare Joda-Badbil-Chalbas-Tata Nagar road in Jharkhand as a National Highway**

[Translation]

SHRI BAGUN SUMBRUI (Singhbhum): Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are hundreds of mines of iron ore

in Singhbhum division of Jharkhand and Keonjhar district of Orissa from which iron ore ferrous is being exported to the foreign countries. Thousands of vehicles laden with iron ore daily move to Haldia from Badbil-Joda area of Keonjhar district in Orissa via Singhbhum Division. 50 tonnes to 100 tonnes of iron ore ferrous is loaded in these vehicles which is over and above their capacity. The road passing through Joda-Badbil-Boda-Jamada-Novamundi-Hatgamaria-Chalbas-Tata Nagar is ordinary one. Due to movement of these heavy vehicles this road has been converted into potholes. Consequently it has been very difficult for the general public to drive their vehicles on this road. Earlier Ranchi-Chalbas-Jaitgarh-Keonjhar road was declared as national highway. Chalbas to Hatgamaria stretch of the said road has totally damaged due to movement of the heavy vehicles. The Government is earning foreign exchange from the export of iron ore. The movement of the general public on this road has become very distressing.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my submission is that a high level team of the Government of India should conduct a survey of the area and Joda-Badbil, Badjamda, Novamundi, Jagannath Puri-Hatgamaria, Chalbas, Hata, Tata Nagar road be constructed at the earliest possible as per norms of the national highway and the entire road should be declared as a National Highway.

- (ii) **Need to provide financial assistance to the Government of Karnataka for providing relief to the people affected by drought in the State**

[English]

SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI (Gulberga): In the State of Karnataka nearly 800 villages were under the drought. A central drought study team visited the State in the month of December, 2004 and total 797 villages came under spell of drought in the year of 2004. The highest number of drought prone 199 villages are in Channagiri Taluk and is followed by 156 villages in Davangere Taluk, 146 in Honnali, 134 in Jagalur, 77 in Harihar and 74 in Harapanhalli Taluk.

*Treated as Laid on the Table.

[Shri Iqbal Ahmed Saradgi]

The district administration had a proposal of Rs. 64.58 crore and 61.732 metric tonnes of foodgrains for taking up drought relief in these villages. The Central team visited these districts to assess drought-hit situation, Hadgil Maruthi in Gulbarga Taluk, Gobbur, Gobbur tand, Chowdapur, Chowdapur tands, Chinamgera and other surrounding villages in Afzalpur Taluk. A memorandum was submitted to the Central team seeking immediate release of 28,000 tonnes of foodgrains under drought relief programme. In spite of the visit of Central team and their recommendation the State Government has so far not received the grants in full nor sufficient foodgrains to meet the drought situation in the State.

I request the Government of India to provide financial assistance and foodgrains so that the State Government can provide drinking water, employment, fodder, medicines, nutrition and healthcare to the people in the rural areas of the State.

(iii) Need to Increase promotional avenues of Inspectors in the Department of Posts

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID (Pariyakulam): In Postal Department, the Inspectors are eligible for promotion as Postal Superintendents (Group B). In the sixties and seventies, the Inspectors were promoted to Superintendents Grade after 10 years of service. In the eighties, the period increased to 18-20 years while other cadres had the benefit of five cadre reviews. This cadre, with a strength of 4214, responsible for implementing Government policies, is not being paid adequate attention. There was only one cadre review implemented in the year 1983. Since, late eighties, the promotional avenues continue to be deteriorated and presently the span has increased to 24 years. The Government has accepted the recommendation of second cadre review committee constituted in 1986 and the Presidential orders upgrading 245 posts from Inspector cadre to Superintendent (Group B) were also conveyed. Government may kindly consider the matter sympathetically.

(iv) Need to take remedial measures to protect the disappearing tigers from Reserve Forests

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL (Kopergaon): The attention of the Government is drawn towards the news item under the heading 'Fix responsibility for tigers disappearance' published in the daily Tribune dated 4th March, 2005. Government should take remedial action to protect the tiger and its habitat and preventing further disappearance in the Sariska (Rajasthan). I also want to know whether any such disappearance been reported from other part of the country and whether any enquiry is being conducted for disappearance of tigers from Sariska? A number of tigers are moving freely in rural Maharashtra. The authorities and Forest Department are fully aware of this. The matter should be investigated. There are number of casualties including children and cattle causing concern.

I request the Union Government to look into the matter.

(v) Need to open a Sainik School in Madhogarh tehsil of Jalaun Parliamentary Constituency, U.P.

[Translation]

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA (Jalaun): Mr. Speaker, Sir, thousands of people of my constituency Jalaun-Garutha, U.P. are serving in the military and other forces. Their families reside in their native place, resultantly, their children are not getting quality education.

Therefore, I demand the Union Government to open a new Sainik School in Madhogarh tehsil of my constituency so that the children of the serving Jawans could get quality education.

(vi) Need to recognise the Castes declared as O.B.C. by the Government of Rajasthan

SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI (Jodhpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, various states of the country have notified

lists of Other Backward Classes. These lists have been notified on the basis of the report of the Commission for other Backward Classes. Sir, the rules of Rajasthan Commission for Other Backward Classes and National Commission for Other Backward Classes are same. After taking evidence of all witnesses, Rajasthan Commission for Other Backward Classes has included the names of the castes in the list of Other Backward Classes. But, the Commission constituted by the Union Government is not accepting those reports. In this way, State Governments have declared some castes as Other Backward Classes, but the Union Government have not recognised them.

I, through you, would like to submit that the Union Government should recognise the castes declared as O.B.C. by the Government of Rajasthan.

(vii) Need to expedite completion of Surat Airport in Gujarat

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA (Surat): Mr. Speaker, Sir, keeping in view the urgent need of an airport in the industrial city Surat in Gujarat, the Government granted permission for commercial utilisation of Surat Airport and an amount of Rs. 55 crore was also sanctioned for doing this work. The Government of Gujarat having signed the contract with the Union Government assigned the work to the Airport Authority. But, the pace of work is very tardy resulting which the work to be done for introducing air service on this airport will not complete within the prescribed time i.e. upto September, 2005. Keeping in view the importance of airport, there is need to expedite the construction of terminal and 120 metre runway for its successful commercial utilization.

I, through the House, request the Union Government that it should make efforts for scheduled completion of Surat Airport so that its commercial utilization takes place as early as possible.

(viii) Need to set up a Railway Scrap Disposal Unit at Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Bareilly railway assumes importance from

the view point of Railways. Besides, the divisional headquarter office of Eastern Railway there is also a railway coach and crane factory of Eastern railway in Bareilly but due to lack of works, above factory is not functioning. There was also proposal to construct coach factory in past owing to abundance of railway resources here. It is learnt that the Ministry of Railway is setting up scrap disposal units at some places of the country. Bareilly is the most appropriate place for that purpose. Around 250 wagons and coaches can be converted into scrap at present. I request the honourable Minister of Railways that Bareilly should be identified for this purpose.

(ix) Need to establish an airport in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu

[English]

SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN (Nagercoil): Confluence of Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea at Kanyakumari is a major tourist attraction. Vivekananda Memorial and 133 feet Thiruvalluvar Statue put up on two rocks in the sea adjoining the Cape Comarin have added to the importance of the International Tourist Centre. Pilgrims from several parts of the country come for a holy dip there. Koodankulam Atomic Power Project, Liquid Propulsion System Centre, INS-Kattabomman the naval unit, Indian Rare Earths are some of the vital installations around Kanyakumari. But, Kanyakumari does not have an airport of its own and even the nearest one, Trivandrum Air Port is 5 hours away by road which has heavily traffic. Hence, I urge upon the Central Government to establish an Airport exclusively for Kanyakumari the southern tip town of the country which is an important town historically and archaeologically from tourist perspective.

(x) Need to set up a Medical College at Hamirpur, U.P. with Central assistance

[Translation]

SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA (Hamirpur, U.P.): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Hamirpur and Mahoba districts

[Shri Rajnarayan Budholia]

(Janpad) under Chitrakoot commissioner (Mandal) of Uttar Pradesh is backward in every field and there is lack of health related facilities in these districts. The poor people of that area has to cover very long distance for treatment of serious ailments. Sometimes people die due to lack of treatment and financial constraints. The people have been demanding constantly for long time to set up a medical college for better health facilities in Hamirpur and Mahoba districts (Janpad). There is no medical college in Chitrakoot commissioner (Mandal) at present.

Therefore, I urge upon the Central Government that in the public interest a medical college should be set up as soon as possible in Hamirpur with Central assistance for the benefit of poor and backward people so that the people could get benefit of medical facility.

(xi) Need to ensure industrial development in Gaya Parliamentary Constituency, Bihar with a view to generate employment opportunities

SHRI RAJESH KUMAR MANJHI (Gaya): Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no industry at all in my constituency, Gaya, Bihar. There were two old mills, NTC cotton mill and Guraru Sagar Mill, they were also lying closed. Unemployment has been increasing at an alarming rate due to severe drought in this area. Thousands of people are migrating to metropolitan cities. Due to this balance of urban-rural areas has been disturbed.

Unemployed youths are adopting the path of extremists on account of not getting the jobs resulting increase extremist activities to a large scale. The extremists are misleading the unemployed people. If new industries are set up in the district then unemployed people could come in the mainstream of the nation by quitting the path of extremism. So there is necessity to set up new industries there by declaring Ganga as no industry district.

I urge upon the Government through this House that Gaya should be declared as no industry district.

(xii) Need to fill up the vacant posts of 'Gangman' in Kharagpur Division of South Eastern Railway

[English]

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (Midnapore): The recruitments for the post of Gangmen in Kharagpur Division under South Eastern Railway are pending over the years. In this Division more than 58 thousand candidates had applied for the aforesaid post. Out of that 9596 candidates had appeared for the test and 2253 candidates were considered as qualified. But since that panel was cancelled, a prayer was made before the CAT (Central Administrative Tribunal), Calcutta Bench for justice. The Hon'ble Court passed a judgement in this regards on 11-04-2001 asking the Railway Authority to take necessary steps to fill up the vacancies. But since it was delayed, Hon'ble Justice of CAT again passed the order dated 7-1-2005 directing the Railway Authority to implement the order in full within six months from the very date of issuance of order. Presently, the number of vacancy have gone up from initial stage of notification.

I urge upon the Railway Ministry to fill all the posts expeditiously and save the painful life of the candidates in this division without further delay.

(xiii) Need to start the proposed bus service linking Amritsar-Lahore-Nankana Sahib on the auspicious day of Baishakhi on 13th April, 2005

SHRIMATI PARAMJIT KAUR GULSHAN (Bhatinda): The external Affairs Ministers of India and Pakistan agreed to start a 'special day' Bus service between Amritsar-Lahore-Nankana Sahib. It is a welcome decision as long pending wish of the people have been fulfilled. Nankana Sahib is a birth place of first Sikh Guru and is sacred for Sikh community. I would request the Government to start this bus service from the

auspicious day of Baisakhi on 13th April, 2005. The frequency of the bus service may also be increased and Visa restrictions made easy so that the maximum people could avail the opportunity to fulfill their long cherished dreams.

(xiv) Need for constructing a Youth Hostel and Sports Stadium in Chidambaram Parliamentary Constituency, Tamil Nadu

SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY (Chidambaram): I wrote to the then Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, on 13th September, 2001 for sanction of Youth Hostel and Sports Stadium in my constituency, Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu. The then Minister in her D.O. No: 3-6/2000-YH/YS.II dated 27th November, 2001 informed me that she examined my request and agreed to construct the hostel building after identifying a suitable place, a piece of developed land measuring 1.5 to 2.00 acres in my constituency, Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu.

As I was hanging on for a longtime inspite of many reminders I wrote to the present Hon'ble Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports on 14th July, 2004 referring to all the correspondences made between the then Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports regarding construction of Youth Hostel and Sports Stadium at Mangalore which is in my constituency, Chidambaram, in Tamil Nadu. But the Hon'ble Minister informed me in his letters No. 3-2/2002-YH/YS.II dated 28th September, 2004 that the land remains undeveloped and in 13-1/2004-SP.I dated 30th September, 2004 letter he wrote that it has been completed at Mangalore in Karnataka for Rs. 90 lakhs.

I again raised the same matter in the Lok Sabha on 3-12-2004 under Rule 377. The reply is still awaited from the Hon'ble Minister. I therefore, request the Hon'ble Minister to let me know the efforts taken by his Ministry regarding construction of Youth Hostel and Sports Stadium at Mangalore which is in my constituency, Chidambaram, in Tamil Nadu, not in Karnataka which is a different one.

(xv) Need to ensure that Government employees working in Excise and Customs Department are not compulsorily made to work on 'Good Friday' which is a holiday internationally

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): It is wrong to compel Christians to work on Good Friday, which is a holiday internationally. It is the day of crucification of Jesus Christ. The Department of Excise and Customs has asked its personnel to work on Friday the 25th March (Good Friday) for fulfilling some targets.

I request, the Government to urgently direct that such compulsion to work on Good Friday maybe avoided.

13.02

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Natural calamities in the Country—contd.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: May I announce what we have agreed. First, it will be the reply of the hon. Minister upto 1330 hours—probably he will take that much time. We may have a lunch on recess from 1330 hours to 1400 hours. Then, Private Members' Business will come. I seek the kind cooperation of all the hon. Members please. Now, the hon. Minister.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): Sir, our's is a vast country. The Himalaya is here and there is a long coastal lines. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi): In the Business papers distributed to the hon. MPs today morning, we have got a notice that further discussions under Rule 193 on Natural Calamities and Electoral Reforms would be taken up....*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: No.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: We got the notice.

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? Where is that?

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Notice is there.

MR. SPEAKER: It is on the Business. I will call you later.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Sir, How can you do....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: 'How can you do' means what?

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: It is printed. It is in the printed Business papers that we have received in the morning. It is mentioned there that it has been shifted to 24th March.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you not want to listen to the hon. Minister's reply?

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: No, Sir, we would like to listen. But we would like to participate.

MR. SPEAKER: It is the most important debate for which I have found time. This is today's business.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: It is in the papers we got, it is printed as Part I. We would like to participate.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ILYAS AZMI (Shahabad): I have not been given a single chance to speak during zero hour since new Lok Sabha constituted. It is not mis-printing.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: It is very unfortunate. I can only say this. Even the senior Members can label allegations, whatever they like.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: It is not an allegation.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: I have not said to you.

SHRI ILYAS AZMI: I am not making allegation. I can only reminding you.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Yesterday there was a very good debate on a important issue. Our's is a vast country. There is Himalaya here....(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Instead of Zero Hour, it has become a torture hour. Yes, it is a torture hour, the way most of the hon. Members of this House are behaving. You are openly defying the decision of the BAC. Please sit down.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: I have given you time...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: I have ruled you out. Only 15 matters were to be taken and they were of extreme serious urgency. It has become a matter of free-for-all. When we are trying to regulate and allow as many Members as possible, all sorts of allegations are thrown from any and every side. Everybody wants to be heard first. Sorry, you have to get rid of somebody then.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, I was telling that our's of a vast country. There is Himalaya here and a very long coastal line exist here.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister is replying on an important issue but still the running commentary is going on.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Due to big rivers in our country, natural calamities take place every year and we are compelled to face it. This year we were affected by Tsunami and heavy snow-fall in Jammu and Kashmir.

13.06 hrs.

[SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV *in the Chair*]

People had to suffer from miseries due to these calamities. In such a situation everyone stands united to face the difficulties and people help those persons who are in trouble. Everyone including the personnel of Defence Forces and Civil authorities come forward and work day and night without taking a break to help the people in distress. Similarly, Government officials also work day and night and come to their help. Our Government firmly believe that the leaders of ruling group including the head of the Government as well as people from many other sections come forward at that time to help the calamity affected persons. It makes relief work easier and the affected people are assured that the whole country including the Government and the opposition is standing by them. They get a lot of help in such a situation.

I think that the real power of our country is reflected in our concept of life. During the calamities like the snow-fall of Kashmir, the tsunami, the floods and the earthquakes the people had such feelings. This House expresses its deep respect for those people and I wish to express my gratitude for the feelings expressed by all the Members of this House.

The House discussed the issue of floods and cyclone and held lengthy discussion on the tsunami although the discussion on earthquake was not elaborate. The discussion on snow-fall in Kashmir was also elaborate during which the hon. Members gave many constructive suggestions and it will be difficult for the Government to express its view in detail at this juncture. But, I want to assure the House that the Government have noted down all the constructive suggestions and we have already adopted many of those suggestions. The Government will look into the matter of unimplemented suggestions and it will implement those suggestions as far as possible.

I would like to express the views of the Government about some specific suggestions made in

the House as far as it is necessary. The first suggestions made by the Members was about the zoning of the country from the point of view of earthquake. Cyclone, flood and scarcity of water. That kind of zoning has been made in our country but the Members have suggested for micro zoning and it is essential so the Government will certainly take steps in that direction.

Flood in rivers was the second issue which was raised during the discussion. Brahmaputra is one such river which is frequently in flood. The flood in Bihar is caused by the rivers originating from Nepal and they cause a heavy loss of lives and properties including the loss of animals. It was suggested that dams should be constructed on these rivers. I would like to tell that after independence our leaders paid attention to this vital issue and the projects like Bhakhara Nangal and ayakwari were completed. Big dams were constructed in Orissa also as a result of their zeal and motivation. We shall never do anything to slow down that pace. Although it needs a lot of money and it is difficult to mobilize funds, but the government will certainly try to arrange funds for that purpose.

The third suggestion was made about linking of rivers so that excess waters from the rivers can be channelized towards the water deficient areas. This concept was formulated by many previous Governments but it is my humble submission that this concept was evolved during the regime of Shrimati Indira Gandhi. That concept is liked by all our countrymen and people will be happy if the rivers are interlinked and the water of the rivers originating from the Himalayas reach their farms and homes.

I have stated in this house and also mentioned in the Supreme Court with reference to a case that we will not leave this programme, plan and project. We have paucity of funds and other problems also and we have to look from that viewpoint as to how we can resolve them. For this task, there is a need for help from all the quarters. It appears to me that this task

[Shri Shivraj V. Patil]

will move forward as per the quantum of the assistance received.

Another thing brought to the notice is that foodgrains and drinking water should reach the place where drought has occurred and the people there should get some employment. Very humbly, I would like to say that our effort is to establish food banks at those places where drought occurs. We would try to store foodgrains there so that after the occurrence of drought there will be no urgency for transporting foodgrains from outside. Irrespective of the fact. Whether the drought occurs there or not, the foodgrains should be available there.

We are making such type of arrangement and it is under our consideration. We hope that we would succeed in this regard....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Sir, there should be an arrangement of fodder for animals.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: You have rightly pointed out that there should be an arrangement of fodder for animals. Whenever and wherever the drought occurs, the fodder is transported by train....(*Interruptions*) There is also other mode of fodder transportation.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajanji, Bihar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the flood water should be managed.(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: It has been mentioned in the very beginning, you were not attentive.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Your suggestion is alright and we would take it into consideration. The first of the suggestions given by the people with regard to the tsunami is that after the occurrence of disaster, the dead bodies were removed and the arrangement of food and shelter was made for the victims who survived, however there is a need to do much more than that. The second suggestion was to construct temporary dwelling units. I would like to point out here that we have taken steps to construct dwelling units

and this work would be completed. Where the tsunami affected area is under the Central Government, we carry out the task there on behalf of Central Government and if the area is under the State Government, we allocate funds, provide goods and give our ideas and plans to those states for this task and we work on their behalf. We hope to construct temporary sets of dwelling units at the tsunami affected places before the onset of rainy season.

Another suggestion was to have permanent dwelling units. The earthquake victims have been provided permanent dwelling units in the states, similarly, the victims of tsunami should be given the permanent units. Although we are very sorry that it is impossible to bring back the lives which have been lost. We have formulated a plan and apprised the State Government that if some village has been devastated because of tsunami, we can rehabilitate it. Be it the earthquake hit places like Latur or Gujarat, we have tried to rehabilitate the villages by making a town planning on the basis of new scientific methods. The effort should be to make earthquake resistant houses there so that the people living in those houses will not have to face any problem in the event of disaster. This is our concept and such plans are being formulated and we would implement them.

It has been pointed out here that children, women and old people, they undergo a lot of suffering in the wake of such disasters and therefore, specific attention should be paid towards them. Our leader Shrimati Sonia Gandhi has given a thought to it and pointed it out. Other people have also pondered over it and given such information to the officers that there should be an arrangement of studies and lodging for the children so that the children do not feel the need to go back to their affected places.

It has been stated here that the hospital, school.(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: About adopting those children who have been orphaned....(*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister is not yielding. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Sir, those children who have been orphaned....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is not correct.

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Hospitals, Schools, Roads, Airports, Seaports should also be constructed. About this, a decision has been taken and the Government has constituted a Committee in the Planning Commission. In the Committee....(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJ BABBAR (Agra): I agree with the hon'ble Minister but I would like to say that the same things are being repeated....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not allowed you. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. I am not allowing you.

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I would respond to everything but first let me speak. If there is a question of hailstorm, it would definitely be looked into. We would definitely look into this matter and also the matter mentioned by Shri Rahul Gandhi with the help of State Government, all the Members of Parliament. ... (Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record except the speech of hon. Minister. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was talking about the hospital, school, jetties and airport. This is a huge task and requires large amount of funds

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil): Sir, I had given a suggestion about constructing a sea wall....(Interruption)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I will reply to his question after I finish my initial statement. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan, you are the seniormost Member and you are behaving like this.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: Sir, I have a suggestion to make there must be constructed a sea wall. There must be a comprehensive programme. There must be a package for constructing a sea wall along the coastal area....(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I will reply to his question after I finish my initial statement....

[Translation]

I was saying that a Committee has been formed in the Planning Commission. It will consist of officials from various departments who will sit together and undertake this work. The work of constructing jetties will be entrusted to the Ministry of Shipping whereas the work of construction of airports to the Ministry of

*Not recorded.

[Shri Shivraj V. Patil]

Civil Aviation and that of construction of schools to the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The members of the Committee shall decide the future plan of action. All this is not for a year or two rather there will be a programme for about 50 to 100 years.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, a suggestion has been given for building out a wall into the sea but, Sir, I would like to tell you that it's not like constructing the walls of a house. The walls of the sea are of different kinds. There is no need to construct such a wall everywhere. This maybe constructed in line with the wall constructed on a part of the Marine Drive in Mumbai. This wall has been constructed with the objective that the water doesn't reach the ground or the houses. Such arrangements maybe made wherever necessary. This is a time-taking task. Pondering over this, we shall do whatever we can. There is a mention of farmers land....(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (Sriperumbudur): I have given a suggestion about plantation of mangroves.(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: We shall certainly do it also. Let me conclude my speech first. After that I will answer all your questions. If I forget what I want to speak now, it would be very difficult for me to recall it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was saying that a special plan has been formulated with regard to the farmers' land. We shall provide the farmers proper kind of manure, pesticides and irrigation facility and this will increase the fertility of the soil and will be very useful for that. Sufficient funds have been earmarked for this item. As per our planning, about 200-300 crore rupees have been earmarked for this work. It is unfortunate that the fishermen live by sea shore. The Tsunami

tragedy ruined them completely and they are left with nothing. Due to this tragedy. They had to face a lot of problems. Keeping their problems in mind, the Government have decided to pay them the entire amount equal to the cost of a wooden catamaran as compensation.

Secondly, it has been decided that if they are ready to spend upto Rs. one and half lacs on a motor boat, the Government as well as banks would provide financial assistance to them. If some other person is ready to provide any kind of assistance, we have also arranged for that.

Thirdly, if the estimate exceeds Rs. five lacs, then the boat maker has to provide assistance and the Government also would provide the same. Arrangements have also been made to provide them nets. The Government are paying special attention towards it. I would like to tell that the hon. President has also asked us to construct there the cold storages too so that the sea-fish could be stored there and later on brought to the market for sale. We have been informed of this also and we are going to do it all there. Due to shortage of time here, it is not possible for me to mention all the things we are going to do there. I am not an expert and therefore can't tell you everything. But we have asked the experts to collectively come forward to help the affected people, to the best of their capacity at the earliest, keeping in mind the kind of objection expressed in this regard. All these things are under consideration and a huge amount is being provided for these all. In the statements I have made here all the things have been mentioned as to how much funds are being allocated to each of the states, how the people are going to receive the assistance and how much funds are being allocated to a particular item etc. I can't repeat that all due to shortage of time. But we shall try to solve all the problems of our fishermen.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it has been said here that the people should be provided employment. I would like to tell that the Government have decided to implement

the 'Food for Work Scheme' in these areas on a larger scale now. The Government have also decided to take steps to provide employment to the people there according to our policy of giving the employment guarantee. Though some members have appreciated the steps taken by us to provide them assistance, yet they have asked us not to create such a situation that they become fully dependent on us. And also we should try to create such a situation that they become entirely self-dependent. Therefore, the banks have been instructed to provide assistance to them in such a way that they can start their business. We are going to create such situation there.

An issue of disaster early warning came up for discussion here. A news-item also appeared in the papers in this regard and it was discussed in the House too. Yesterday, our Hon. Minister of Science and Technology, Shri Kapil Sibbal delivered a very nice speech here and told us how the steps were being taken by the Government. I want to inform that they have given the responsibility to ocean development department and we are taking steps to raise a system of early disaster warning in Indian ocean. We will also provide assistance to other State Government and other countries as much as possible. They can join us if they so desire. But in case of pacific ocean it is different matter. But in that also if co-operation in information technology is required, we can give that also.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to inform that in 1980, when I was working with Smt. Indira Gandhi, a satellite was launched at that time. at that time, the people used to complain that you have spent Rs. 1000 crores on launching a toy like satellite in the space. We don't have any need of it. We require drinking water. After that, for two years, the Government had to tell us that this satellite was not like a toy rather it was a dance with the help of which we could provide information about any forth coming natural calamities. It can work for ductless telephone, television and can also provide lot of other information. We have this type of system. Since then we have launched a number of

satellites and each of them has capability to perform four type of functions.

Sir, firstly it helps in broadcasting the T.V. programmes, secondly, in telephone operations, thirdly it conducts survey and fourthly it gives all kind of help in early warning. Assistance in condition of floods and cyclones is also taken from this satellite. But, unfortunately, no prior information about earthquakes can be provided by it. Till date no such technology has been developed which could pre-warn people about earthquakes. Therefore, satellite could not help us in providing prior information about Tsunami while it can help us a lot in case of other disasters.

[English]

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: Without interrupting the Minister, I wish to put a very simple question. During the time of Tsunami disaster, we were very much confused. The Science and Technology Minister was giving one version, and the Home Minister was giving another version. The people were put to difficulties.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I will reply to your question.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: Their statements were quite contradictory. Such a thing should not happen during the time of national disaster, but that is exactly what happened when Tsunami disaster happened.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I will reply to your question afterwards.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: You please hear me. People living in the coastal areas were misinformed by the Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister is not yielding, please take your seat.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: People were running away from the seacoast. The Science Minister had given one different version, the Home Minister had given another different version, and the people in the

[Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan]

coastal areas were in utter confusion. I had to vacate thousands of people because of this misinformation. Such a thing should not happen.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Save me from this disaster.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: I am sorry, I had to run away with people because of this wrong information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan, this is not fair. Please take your seat.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: We were put to difficulties because of this wrong information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: The Science Minister had given one information, and the Home Minister had given another information. People were running away, and we, MPs, had to run away with people. I had a bitter experience. I had to run away because of this wrong information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How can you behave like this? This is not fair, please take your seat.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: I had to run away with people. I had a bitter experience.

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, in this connection, I would like to say that man is very vigilant but he is not that much wise to predict what is taking place under the earth or in the deep sea. Maybe he can easily tell what is happening in the sky, but it becomes very difficult to predict what is taking place under the sea. I think that howsoever knowledge and the power man has attained but he hasn't yet been able to understand whatever goes on in this world and under the earth and he even now has not attained that much power.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, if we have made any mistake, then we don't have any hesitation in telling you about

it in the House. We are ready to take the responsibility also. We are also ready to fight and to give a befitting reply to that fight. But whatever we have done, we have done it with good will and not with any ill-will. If the work done by us with goodwill has caused any harm or pain to anyone or any mistake has taken place, then we don't intend to escape the responsibility, I take the responsibility for that.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to say that an Hon. member has given a very good suggestion that there should be decentralized disaster management. Simultaneously, he has also asked for enactment of a legislation and for constitution of a disaster management authority. He has also suggested that there should be our own troop and para-military force to manage the disaster. It has been suggested here that there should be a proper plan, use of modern technology, inclusion of new ideas, formation of new policy, along with that besides protecting the environment and natural heritage. In this regard, our leader has asked us to do a lot and we are going to do that. Besides a mention in the President's Address, we have already announced that we are going to introduce the Disaster Management Act. We have formulated the Act and the same has undergone a discussion in the Cabinet. We had said that we would introduce the Act in the current session not in this part but definitely in the next part of the Session. A group of Ministers has been constituted to see whether there is a scope of making any amendments in it. They will soon take steps in this regard. They have given some suggestions. Keeping in mind these suggestions, efforts shall be made to make amendments in the Act, if necessary. But we do not want to delay the formulation of the Disaster Management Authority since the formation of the Act may take a long time of the reason being that the Act would pass through different channels like Standing Committee etc. It may even take six months to one year's time and the Disaster Management Authority will not come into being till that period. Therefore, to avoid such a situation, we have decided to form the Disaster Management Authority by taking a decision in the

Cabinet, through an administrative order. The Disaster Management Authority is divided into different parts which will act in the same manner. It has an executive Committee as well as an advisory Committee. The Executive Committee will consist of Government officials. In the Authority, there will be experts to assist in the field of policy making as well as technology. The involvement of such experts in the authority is very essential. The advisory Committee will consist of experts from within the country and abroad. We can call them to seek their assistance in some other fields, whenever necessary.

We have taken note of the information given by Shri Manvendraji. There is a mention of it in the President's Address. Also, we have taken a decision in this regard in the Cabinet and a Bill has come into being which we are going to introduce in the House.

Sir, very humbly I would like to state that when there is a discussion over the National Disaster Authority, it is assumed that all the relief measures are taken at central level. But it is not fair to think so. Such is not our effort and we cannot even do it. India is a vast country having population over 100 crores and it is not possible to take all these measures at one level only. And I know it. So, in the Disaster Management Act itself, we have stressed upon formation of such authority at state as well as district level also. So far as the Union Government is concerned, we shall do whatever we can do our level. The State Governments may perhaps not be able to enact any law against what we have done but they are capable enough to enact a law favouring them. And the State Governments have been given rights to do so. Thus, we are trying to do this work by decentralisation, not by centralisation. The objectives behind formation of such authority as well as expert Committee are very important. What we have done till date, was a reactive work. We have thought of taking initiatives after the disaster has taken place. Though we have tried to be capable enough to face the aftermaths of a disaster before it takes place, yet we

have not done so completely and in a well planned manner. This Act enables us to take necessary steps at earth quake as well as flood prone areas to provide relief there in case they occur. It also enables us to take steps in advance where there is a possibility of occurring a cyclone. Fortunately, Tsunami tragedy may not take place in the coming 500-1000 years but the earthquakes, Floods and drought occur frequently. We want to be fully prepared to face all these natural calamities as well as made disasters. We have considered it in all aspects. In the Act, it has been stated that the Government as well as the department would formulate a full-fledged plan. The department would then refer the plan to the authority and act upon that after the authority has cleared it. In this way, there is a complete mention in the Act itself as to how we are going to set the things right through technology development at the time of natural calamities. We have also suggested in the Act some measures to mobilise the funds for that purpose.

At present, there are two relief funds namely the National Calamity Relief Fund and the National Contingency Relief Fund. The funds shall be provided from these two funds. We are providing them funds as per the recommendations of the earlier 10th and 11th Finance Commission. I have come to know that now the 12th Finance Commission has suggested to provide more funds to them. It's very good. But whenever the need for more funds emerges, the Government provide it after taking a decision in the Cabinet in this regard.

It was asked as to how much funds is going to be required for the Tsunami relief measures. I told that as per my guess nearly 10 to 12 thousand crore rupees would be required. As of now, we have provided funds to the State Government and the Union Territory administration. The funds so provided is nearly 3500 crore rupees. We are questioned again and again as to why we have provided funds of Rs. 3500 only while we have announced that nearly 12 thousand crore rupees are likely to be required for the Tsunami relief measures.

[Shri Shivraj V. Patil]

This money is not needed to be given at once. It will be released as and when needed. We assure that the work will not come to halt due to funds. Funds whatever funds are required, the govt. is impowered, the people of the country have strength, I assure that no work come to halt due to funds, we will definitely provide the funds. I mean to say that if rupees ten thousand crore are required to be spent in three years then it is not necessary to immediately hand over all the amount to the people. Necessary funds will certainly be made available and relief measures will be implemented. This in the strategy. Those who are actually doing the work are not at all complaining about funds, nor do they have any complaints regarding paddy or arrangements. In this way we are trying to work in this direction.

In brief, I wish to convey that though we are facing a disaster but we will find a way out and will make the conditions better than today, for which we will use technology, new ideas, our new administrative system and even new legislation. We shall evolve new ethos in our country and we all together will try our best to do this work with team spirit.

At the end I would like to say that with these works that have to be done all the people are.
...(Interruptions)

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD (Yavatmal): An earthquake had rocked latur, rehabilitation work still has not been completed. That is in your constituency.
...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister is not yielding please take your seat....(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD: Those people who were affected by the earthquake have not been rehabilitated....(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, I wish to submit that he does not know that complete arrangements have been made there. It is a question of state, so I don't intend to answer it. Other members have kept dignity of the discussion maintained, they haven't said anything from political point of view I don't intend to Power it, if my friends discuss something with me. I will answer to that, but would like to say....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Minister, one minute please.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: I want to make a clarification....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know your clarification.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I will conclude with in a munute....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now the time is over.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: We want a clarification....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble member, I am not allowing you.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I will conclude with in a minute and then answer to his question....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Minister, as per the feelings of the hon'ble members, and last clarification they wanted was about the view adopted by government with regard to making a unit of rain waters, underground water and river water.

This is your question. I have allowed.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please sit down. You will not get another chance.

...(!nterruptions)

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Mumbai South Central):
My question is different....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat Rawaleji.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: First, I will answer your question.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, please take your seats.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is a question from all of you.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Rawaleji, let the Hon'ble Minister complete his answer.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Let me complete. Then, I will tell you....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record except the reply of the hon. Minister.

...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, you have asked a very good question. I will convey you the scientific answer I have got. You are saying that subsoil water is reducing, what are you going to do about it? I had discussed it with some scientists. I said that we get information's about constructing the ponds and we do construct them. You understand what will happen if

*Not recorded.

there is no rain and no water available. These days underground water in large quantum is being pumped out. I tell you about my own village. When I was a child there was only one "bawari" out of which water was taken. Now there are 400-500 "bawaris" in my village, power pump motors are installed on them to take out water. Previously water levels in that single "bawari" never went down more than 2-3 feet though people used to take water from it whole day. But now a day they pump out water with motors thus the subsoil water level is reducing fast. When I asked them what they will do about it, they replied that holes will have to be drilled. In the earth through which water will have to be poured inside the earth. I asked them, "do we have to drill bore wells for that? He said I am not talking about bore well I am talking of drilling holes. He said if you plant trees it will be a bore like planting. When its roots go deep in earth, rain water goes down through roots end that is called subsoil water. They suggested that there is only one way to check the decreasing ground water and under ground water level and that is to plant the trees. This is the Government's answer, I don't have any other answer. Thank You.
...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJ BABBAR: There has been a hailstorm also. About that you had said that you will give answer.
...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: This is the duty of the Government of that area. He will take up the matter with them about things that can be done there on our part....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Mr. Rawale. Please ask your clarification.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record except what Mr. Rawale says.

(Interruptions)*...

*Not recorded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Raj Babbarji, please take your seat.

Rawaleji, please ask only one clarification.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Sir, through you, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether he has announced that they are going to take assistance from the experts in India or abroad. And if it is so, I think they are neglecting the experts of India. There is a scientist in Coimbatore. He is expert in predicting on the rays of sun. He had already predicted about the recently occurred earthquakes in Mumbai, Indonesia and Japan. He has launched a website also. He has also been honoured by the Government of China. Whether the government propose to pay any attention towards that personality....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, please take your seat Rawaleji.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Mr. Shailendra Kumar.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know whether the Government would consider it?....*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. Hon. Minister would answer only once.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I had given a written suggestion to the Hon. Minister yesterday. The Government and the opposition have very seriously expressed their concern over the natural calamities. They all have put-forth their points in this regard in detail. The houses in rural areas suddenly

catch fire when the hot waves blow. As Shri Babbar just before has told that at some places in rainy season, hail stones fall and at times natural calamities occur, but there is M.P.'s Fund for the relief measures in those situations....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please be brief, do not go in detail. Take your seat.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Whether we can provide them assistance from the M.P.'s Fund in case incidents of hail-stones or fire take place. You are requested to please make such provision....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJ BABBAR: Sir, as my fellow member has told and you too agreed with him, there has been falling of hail-stones in Agra on a large scale. I am repeatedly making a mention of that area because the crop grows there after the farmers have worked very hard. The farmers live in a miserable condition. Only the farmers with two and a half hectare of land are getting rupees two thousand five hundred as compensation. The farmers with more land than that have been given no compensation. The present situation is that all the banks are working under the control of the Central Government....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. Shri A. Krishnaswamy.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJ BABBAR: I would like to know whether their loans would be waived-off?....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: This matter belongs to Uttar Pradesh. You should pay attention towards it....*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why do you stand-up to speak again and again without permission?

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Shailendra Kumar, please take your seat. Nothing will go on record except Shri A. Krishnaswamy's clarification.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJ BABBAR: I am not making complaint rather putting a demand only....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Raj Babbarji, please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJ BABBAR: The farmers are getting only a cheque worth rupees ten only even after working hard for a year. He has to open an account with the bank with rupees five hundred so as to deposit that cheque....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Raj Babbarji, please take your seat. Your speech is not going on record.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record except what Shri A. Krishnaswamy says. You should start your point.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why are you wasting the time? Raj Babbarji, your speech is not going on record.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, you know very well that Tamil Nadu was worst affected.(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are setting a new practice. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is not fair Mr. Raj Babbar.

[Translation]

Please take your seat. Your speech is not going on record.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: Sir, Tamil Nadu is worst affected by the Tsunami. Ten out of 40 Members participated in the Tsunami discussion. Each and every Member has spoken about the corruption in Tamil Nadu while distributing the Tsunami fund. But, in reply to the discussion, the hon. Minister says that there is no complaint regarding distribution of money. I want clarification on this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One by one. Only one clarification.

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH (Udhampur): Mr. Chairman Sir, yesterday, I had asked whether the Government propose to formulate any Act? I would like to know as to what the Government are doing in this regard?....(Interruptions)

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah): Hon. Chairman, Sir, the Government provide compensation and assistance to the victims of natural calamity wherever it takes place. It is very good. I belong to Bihar. Every year, North Bihar face floods due to the rivers flowing from Nepal. There is water logging in about 10 lac hectare land. The rivers cause erosion. Every year, the rivers originating from Nepal play a havoc there and ruin the area. Through you, I would like to urge upon the Union Government to have discussion with the Royal Government of Nepal in this regard and come out with some permanent solution to this problem. Until and unless some permanent solution to this problem is found out, we should be compensated against our loss. This loss amounts to nearly one thousand crore rupees every year. I mean to say that you should

[Shri Raghunath Jha]

carry out the work of providing assistance there....(*Interruptions*)

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it was announced that some package would be given to that area, but the same has not been given so far. We people are just on the verge of ruin....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You people please keep in mind the time allotted to you.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government should give clarification in the regard.

SHRI TUKARAM GANPATRAO RENGE PATIL (Parbhani): Hon. Chairman, Sir, the Hon. Minister has given a very good reply. I would like to ask a question. Hailstorm at large took place in various states of the country, including Maharashtra. The Hon. Minister has told nothing as to what type of assistance the Union Government have provided to the farmers who have become the victims of this hailstorm. I would like the hon. Minister to tell something about it....(*Interruptions*)

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA (Khajuraho): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the farmers deposit their money under the crop insurance scheme. But the assistance is provided at Tehsil level taking it as a unit in case of hailstorm. But if some of the villages in Tehsil are affected, they are not provided with any relief. I mean to say that unit of assistance should be fixed keeping in view the amount of loss of crops in the fields. Only then the farmers can get the required assistance under the schemes, otherwise they are being looted in the name of crop insurance....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not called you.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. Nothing will go on record except what Shri Swain says.

(*Interruptions*)*...

*Not recorded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have called Shri Swain.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Sir, It is very surprising that most of the questions are being put by the Ruling Party Members. It is very surprising. If they are so much interested in putting questions to their own Government, I feel that they should come and sit here with us. I request them to come here! Sitting on that side of the House, they are putting questions!...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Swain, why are you indulging in cross-talks?

...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Mr. Chairman, Sir, every member has the right to speak whether he belongs to this side or that side.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ram Kripalji, what are you doing?

...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ram Kripal Yadav, please take your seat.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Sir, I represent the principal Opposition Party. You should have actually called me first to put the question.

Yesterday, a very eloquent speech was made by the hon. Minister of Science and Technology. I did put a question to him, asking whether the Government is going to make a provision for the mandatory certification from the structural engineer, while constructing a high-rise building. His answer was that we have the technology, but we want a political will. So, I am asking this Minister whether he has the political will to do it....(*Interruptions*)

Mr. Chairman, Sir, how is he speaking?

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions)*...

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Sir, it is very much insulting....*

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Swainji, you are not going to understand. Please keep in mind the importance of time.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record except what Shri Swain says.

(Interruptions)*...

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing adverse will go on the proceedings of the House.

...(Interruptions)

14.00 hrs.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Do you have the political will to have mandatory structural engineer certification?

Secondly, are you going for the strict implementation of the Coastal Regulatory Zone Act? As per that Act, within 500 meters of the high tide zone, no commercial activity or construction is to be taken up.

My last question is, ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are allowed to ask only one clarification.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: I am not asking individual question, I am asking on behalf of the principal Opposition Party.

A question was raised by hon. Member, Shri Suresh Prabhu. Are you going to form a Voluntary Corps to deal with emergency?

These are my three questions. Hon. Minister may kindly reply to them.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR (Nalanda): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hope honourable Home Minister may remind himself and moreover with reference to his answer. He deliberated upon drought also. There is a drought like condition in some parts of Bihar. And 6 persons died of hunger in Nalanda. We had told their names also over here in the house. In this context hon'ble Home Minister had said that he would make the House acquainted with the fact after collecting the first hand information from there. After that one day Hon'ble Agriculture Minister was present in the House. At that time also we had raised the question when the number of those dying with hunger raised to 12. But it is my distressing that no action has been taken in this regard. No precautionary measures have been taken to avoid such incidents in future. In the meantime there were elections so the attention of the people had diverted. But now, today it is being discussed. Therefore, I would request that proper attention should be given there and necessary action be taken....(Interruptions)

CHOUDHARY BIJENDRA SINGH (Aligarh): Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a provision of clarification after the Minister's reply. The proceedings of the House go according to rules and regulations....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: In special circumstances, the opportunity has been given. There are precedents to it.

CHOUDHARY BIJENDRA SINGH: The subject is very important. Farmers have suffered a great loss. It is not a question whether the subject related to Rajya Sabha or is under the purview of Government of India. But I wish to say that the farmers have suffered a lot. Hailstorm has ruined. Then their cattle have died. Whatever old adage maybe in Uttar Pradesh that hailstorm is natural calamity but such calamity is definitely a natural calamity. Therefore, we would like to request the honourable Minister that through it was

[Choudhary Bijendra Singh]

a hailstorm but the farmers should be given money as a relief measure. The same thing happened in Aligarh also...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, NDA Government had provided Rs. 50 crores to the drought condition...*(Interruptions)*. After the UPA Government came in power we have got Rs. 500 crores. We had demanded Rs. 1700 crores. Still Rs. 1200 crores more should be given for Maharashtra. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANANT GUDHE (Amravati): Mr. Speaker, Sir, crops have been ruined in Vidarbha also due to drought. There is no drinking water there. Honourable Minister has not answered to it...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is not a debate. It is the last clarification.

[English]

Nothing, except the clarification of Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan, will go on record.

(Interruptions)...*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your Party Member has already spoken.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: The Tsunami disaster is most unprecedented. There was no warning. To my knowledge, there was no warning about its occurrence, throughout the world. It appears, thousands of people have lost their lives. I was at the midst of it at that time. What actually happened was, some announcements were made by the Home Ministry as well as the Ministry of Science and Technology. The Home Ministry pre-empted that it may occur again. Its re-occurrence may be there. The Science and Technology Ministry gave an impression that it will not occur.

Sir, with such contradictory announcements by two Ministries, I had to run away from that place along with the people there. There was an announcement from the Home Ministry stating that Tsunami might recur again. This announcement was immediately contradicted by the Ministry of Science and Technology and Department of Ocean Development saying that there was no chance of Tsunami recurring. I had to run away with my car from that place because of this announcement...*(Interruptions)* My point is that such contradicting announcements should not be made by the Ministries of the Central Government and instead, the Government should take proper measures to ensure that poor people are not put to hardships by confusing statements....*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI ANANT GUDHE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, NDA Government had introduced "Sawajal dhara" scheme.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please sit down, I have invited Shri Rupchand Murmu only, to speak.

SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU (Jhargram): Sir, honourable Minister has very nicely given detailed answer to the discussions held on disastrous TSUNAMI. But I have to ask a question from honourable Minister that America had prior information regarding TSUNAMI but it did not pass on that information to any other country. What is our Government's reaction thereto.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, honourable Minister had told in his answer that the foodgrains will be stored in the draught affected areas. Honourable member Shri Nitish Kumar told about Nalanda similarly there are 19 districts in Bihar which are completely drought hit. Government has supplied foodgrains in the flood affected areas but in draught hit regions Government has not provided any type relief to farmers. I want to know about the Provisions Government propose to make for such victims of Bihar State.

[English]

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Sir, the hon. Home Minister has very articulately explained in his reply the various points and also has given us a lot of information. But during his reply we could not clearly get to know about the formation of the Disaster Management Authority and also about an Act on disaster management. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, in how many months time is he proposing to finally get an Act in this regard? Relief measures in the event of any calamity are implemented by the concerned State Governments. So, will the Government consider having an Act ensuring a uniform relief code to be followed taking into consideration the various agro-climatic Zones in the country?

SHRI R. PRABHU (Nilgiris): Sir, a PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court complaining that the relief meant for the Tsunami victims has not reached them properly. I would like to know from the Government whether the directions given by the Supreme Court are being followed by them or not. What actions the Government is taking to implement the directions of the Supreme Court in this regard?

DR. K.S. MANOJ (Alleppey): Sir, the attitude of the Government towards protection of coastal areas is not satisfactory. Tsunami is an occasional phenomenon. In my place, sea erosion is a regular feature. Every year, thousands of people become homeless and it has an impact on the State Government. Sea erosion should also be considered as a natural calamity. Very often, we are not getting assistance from the Centre as it is not considered as a calamity. When CRZ is implemented, the geographical feature and the peculiarity of Kerala should also be considered.

[Translation]

SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' (Almora): I would like to draw the attention of hon'ble Minister towards only one fact. Yesterday, I had stated in my speech that there has been heavy rainfall this year in Almora. People think that the water level will rise very

high during summer season. Bihar has also faced floods and rivers originating from Nepal too brings lot of water to our country. There has been heavy snowfall and snow has accumulated there. Hence, the Government should appoint a Group of Experts to take some measures in this regard.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let there be no more clarifications as it is already 2.12 p.m. and there is further business before the House to be taken up.

...(Interruptions)

DR. SUJAN CHAKRABORTHY (Jadavpur): Sir, I want a specific clarification from the hon. Minister. Government is definitely considering the question of coastal zone management. Many other issues have been talked about. But I do not want to go into them. Coastal area management is an important issue and obviously, Government is trying to consider it. In that sense, I want to know whether the Government is planning to have a national mangrove afforestation programme which is also very important. This is my specific question to the hon. Minister.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack): Sir, I would have appreciated if Mr. Kapil Sibal, the Minister for Ocean Development would have been here. My question is regarding the Ministry of Ocean Development and also Science and Technology. Though the Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal agency dealing with the subject, this question is directed to the Minister for Ocean Development.

A report has come up from a scientist named, Shri Ramanathan, from Thiruvananthapuram about whom I mentioned yesterday. I also mentioned the Institute which has come out with that report.

My specific question is whether a study is being made in this regard or not. Do you contemplate to make a study in this regard? Drilling is being made in the ocean bed to bring out gas and oil. That also affects the core area of the earth. At times, it also

[Shri B. Mahtab]

leads to different types of earthquakes. It is also the shifting of the Indian Ocean plate that is having an effect on the Indian Ocean RIM countries. I want to know whether any study is being made by the Government by taking advantage of the report which has come out of the Institute of Trivandrum. I would like to seek a clarification from the Minister on this point.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, hon. Members are very learned because, while asking questions, they have also made suggestions. All the suggestions which have come in the shape of questions are also important. Hence, I would like to thank them.

One question was asked as to whether mandatory certificate would be made compulsory or not. We have already taken steps in this regard and we have prepared our policy and rules and we are sending those policies and rules to the State Governments. They are expected to give those policies and rules to the municipalities and corporations and see that the mandatory provisions are followed. So, this work cannot be done from the Ministry of Home Affairs or the Government. It has to be done from other parts. We have already taken steps in this regard.

As far as using CRZ is concerned, at the time of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, this CRZ was started and at that time, many people objected to it. They did not realize the importance of CRZ. I was one of the Ministers who was bombarded with letters that CRZ should not be there. But we are trying our best to see that CRZ is implemented. You are very right when you said that if CRZ was really implemented, so many lives would not have been lost.

Now that this tragedy has happened, this will be realised by all concerned and we will certainly like to see that the CRZ is implemented.

An hon. Member has asked a question about the voluntary organisations. We have a civil defence activity going on in the country. It is only yesterday we had

the Thirteenth Conference of the forces which are part of the civil defence in the country. The Fire Brigade, the Home Guards, and others are also there. They would certainly be of help and would contribute in dealing with these things. We have rules and regulations and we have our policy. We would like to do it at a larger scale. The funds that are given to them are very limited. They find it difficult to manage with these funds. Yesterday, while speaking to them in conference I said that they are doing a very important job and we would like to help them with bigger amounts of money

[Translation]

I was answering to a question raised by Shri Raj Babbar about hailstorms. Hailstorm is a natural calamity and we will do whatever we can in this regard. Here I would like to tell you that whenever there is discussion in the House we presume that we have to do everything on behalf of the Government of India only. We are working for Tsunami also. What are we doing in Andhra Pradesh, Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu and Kerala? We asked them as to how much loss did they incur and how much money did they need. We also asked as to what can they would do with that, and we will help them as much as possible. There is even a question of giving full payment for construction of houses. Whatever natural calamity befalls, the job of handling it and working on it is the duty of the State. But we can't say that it is duty of state Government. Government and we don't have anything to do with it. We, state Government and people all are one. Constitution has given some rights to the state Government and some of the rights are given to Union Government. I would like to submit to State Government and the UPA Government that after getting information from there about the amount and type of loss incurred and the way it has to be compensated, we will help as much as possible. Sitting here in this house I can't tell that you have asked this much of amount and I am giving it to you then and there. Its Financial implications also need to be examined. If the

Government advises anything we will act accordingly. The Government there is not inefficient, it must have done something more or less. I respect you the representatives of people but I am not in a condition to say anything immediately.

The issue of coastal line is a very important one and there are varied opinions about it. Our coast line is approximately 6000 Kms. It is a difficult thing to manage. But these days all over the world it is being discussed as to what measures can be taken to protect coast line. Some people said that you can work on natural system of like mangrove, etc. It is also said that it can be done by constructing walls. When the issue of constructing a wall arises, people think that it is like the construction of common house hold wall. If you have seen marine drive, you can remember the type of wall that is constructed to safeguard from sea water. It has to be contemplated. It has been told that the big organizations of the world like World Bank etc. are evincing interest in it. For this huge fund will be needed and that also for a long time. it is being considered in our country and also in other countries. Keeping it in mind we won't leave any stone unturned. Confidently but it cannot be said confidently that it will be done immediately in one or two years.

Here if was said that I have not said anything about the act.

[English]

I have spoken about that. In fact, the Bill is ready and that has been considered by the Cabinet. But the Cabinet has referred it to a Group of Ministers. The Groups of Ministers are looking into the Bill to see as to how it can be refined further. This Bill is likely to be introduced in the next part of this Session. We are ready with it. We have given an assurance and that assurance is given to the hon. Members by the President of India in his first speech delivered to you. So, we have no escape. We shall have to bring it. We are ready with it. We will bring it. But, we are not waiting for the thing that until that Bill is passed,

nothing will be done. This is the kind of stand that we are taking. What we are saying is that we will be introducing the Bill and whatever has been mentioned in the Bill, will be done through the Administrative Orders also. We took this matter to the Cabinet and the Cabinet has approved it. Now, there shall be a National Disaster Management Authority.

There shall be a State Disaster Management Authority and a District Disaster Management Committee. The National Disaster Management Authority and the State Disaster Management Authority will be helped by the Executive Committees—one at the national level and the other, at the State level. They shall also be helped by a Committee of Experts and advisors. The advisors will also be there.

Now, one of the points raised here was that what we have provided in the law, the same thing we are going to do through the Administrative Orders also. We are not saying that. But, after the law is passed by you and if you are suggesting that something else has to be done, the law will have the upper hand and we will modify our Administrative Orders. Everything will be done according to law. But, whatever has been suggested in the law is going to be done through the Administrative Orders also because this was the time when the attention of the people—thinking people specially, the experts, and those who can visualise as to what can happen in future and as to how to face the challenges of future—could be drawn. Now, they have been suggesting it. We are accepting their ideas. There will be new policies, new rules, new acts, and new arrangements. Now, we have about eight battalions of para-military forces getting trained. We have already established the National Disaster Management Institute and this Institute is preparing modules to be used for training purposes and that kind of training will be imparted to others also. So, all the steps which you have suggested—and very rightly suggested—we have already taken. We will only be happy to do if anything more is to be done.

[Shri Shivraj V. Patil]

14.23 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Now, as far as MPLAD Fund is concerned, the suggestion you have given is a very valid one. But let me tell you, from the Home Ministry, we do not take action. In this matter, generally, the hon. Speaker is also involved. When I was the Speaker, I was not allowing anybody to interfere in it. I do not know whether the present hon. Speaker will allow me to interfere in it. But, what you have said is a part of the record and if you think that it is necessary for me to convey to him also, I will do that. But it is mainly for him and whatever he will suggest, will be acceptable.

Sir, I am sorry that some inconvenience was caused to my colleague. But, let me tell you, when the earthquake took place in Latur, every day we were receiving some rumours or some information that again the earthquake is going to take place. For the first few days, we were very alert and we felt very sorry also that something was going to happen again. Later on, we found that those were the rumours only. Whenever such a disaster takes place, there are people who say that this is going to happen or that is going to happen and all those things. Sometimes, you know, with an anxiety to see that the people are alerted, something is done. Nobody has done it with wrong intentions. This was done when it came to the notice of the officers concerned. Here, 'the officers concerned' means, the officers from the Home Ministry, officers from the Scientific Ministry. Then, they had some consultations also. Though we had doubts in our minds yet some of us thought that let us err on the safe side. That was done. If any inconvenience is caused to my colleague and my friend, I am sorry about it. But we could not have helped that matter.

As far as the funds used by some States are concerned, let me tell you that this is a natural disaster. The attitude of the Government of India is not to find fault with anybody and criticise anybody. If anything

has to be done in a proper manner, we expect that that could be done in a proper manner. If it is not done in a proper manner, those who are doing it in a wrong manner would be responsible. But we do not want to start this kind of help and relief with an intention to malign somebody. So, we would rather be very careful, whether from Delhi or from Chennai. We get nothing out of criticism. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Member, please sit down. It is not to be recorded

(Interruptions)...*

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Again, there was a question about some other country. Let us, please, not create a situation in which we will be blaming each other. The entire world and all the people in the country felt for those who suffered in this calamity. So, it is not correct for us to say that they had some information and they did not purposely give this information. That kind of apportioning blame on anybody or unnecessarily criticising each other is to be better avoided. I think I have made it clear....*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It is not to be recorded.

(Interruptions)...*

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I cannot respond to what they have said. They have to respond to it. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: What the hon. Minister can do, he has said about it.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I do not want to criticise in the same language the people who are there. I would only say that if they have done it, it is better that it should not have been done.

As far as Shri Nitish Kumar's question is concerned, here again whenever we consider any problem on any issue, if we are speaking in Parliament, we think that everything has to be done by Parliament. If they are speaking in the Assembly, they think that

*Not recorded.

everything has to be done in the Assembly. But, here, we shall have to share the responsibility. What we are going to do with respect to the availability of food has been explained by the Agriculture Minister while replying to the debate in the House. He is saying that we are going to give funds to the State Governments to procure foodgrains and keep those foodgrains in their States only so that it does not become necessary to transport foodgrains from one State to the other State covering thousands of kilometres and increasing the value and the price of the foodgrains also. More over, I think it would be a good thing if we accept the idea of having the Food Banks. That means, wherever it is necessary, the foodgrains should be available. If there are any areas which are affected by drought every now and then, there the Food Bank should be established so that the foodgrains are available.

As far as the individual cases are concerned, I will contact Shri Nitish Kumar and give some information. I will try to respond to them. I really have no memory of it....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: This is regarding the starvation deaths. I mentioned about it in the last Session. You had responded to it. It has been said that there were starvation deaths.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: If a statement was made that starvation deaths had taken place, we are very sorry. It should not have taken place. But we should get some information as to where the starvation deaths had taken place. If possible, the name and all those things should be available so that we could do somethings.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: All the information was shared in the House itself. Even names were given.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I do not remember, I am sorry, if I do not remember it. But if it is there, I will see to it.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia): I want to know about the National Mangrove Programme.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: This National Mangrove Programme comes under the Ministry of Science and Technology, and that Ministry will take care of it.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MOHAN RAWLE: Scientists are not promoted.

[*English*]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: About the scientists, you give me the names, I will try to find out the information.

14.31 hrs.

MOTION RE: SEVENTH REPORT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS
AND RESOLUTIONS

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House will now take up Item No. 21.

Shri Nihal Chand.

[*Translation*]

SHRI NIHAL CHAND (Sriganga Nagar): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I beg to move: "That this House do agree with the Seventh Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 23rd March, 2005."

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The question is:

"That this House do agree with the Seventh Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 23rd March, 2005."

The motion was adopted.

14.32 hrs.

PRIVATE MEMBER'S RESOLUTION

Relief measures for workers in Agrarian Sector—*contd.*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House will now take up Item No. 22.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN (Tirupati): Sir, there are 12 crore farmers in India and most of them are in problems today. Yesterday, one of the Left leaders said "To protect Secularism, we need to think of caste" and it has become more important in this country. So, a very strange statement has come.

Keeping that thing in mind, I would like to say a little about the farmers. Today, there are 12 crore farmers in India. Out of that, 70 per cent of them are belonging to the backward Classes, Shceduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. About eight crore farmers, who are belonging to the poorer sections, particularly, Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, are living in India. The Government is giving a subsidy package of Rs. 16000 crore on fertilizers. This subsidy on fertilizers are given through fertilizer factories, but 70 per cent of the farmets i.e. 8 crore farmers are not getting it. I feel sad about it. Seventy per cent of the farmers are doing dry land and tenancy cultivation, and they are not able to take even hundred grams of urea, NPK and anything. Whatever subsidy we are giving to the farmers, this Rs. 16000 crore subsidy is not reaching them. I think the time has come for us to evolve some kind of a formula by which the subsidy, which we want to give to the farmers, should reach to the poorest of the poor among the farmers.

The next issue is in regard to seeds. The variety of seeds, which we are getting today, is not able to give good yield. The farmer community in India is able to produce only two-and-a-half metric tonnes of paddy in an acre of land. Other countries like China, they are able to produce seven-and-a-half tonnes of paddy.

Here, the basic problem is good variety of seeds. We have so many Agricultural Research Institutes. They are doing so much research, but they are not able to give good quality of seeds to farmers in time, and they are not able to get good agricultural produce. I think we may have to evolve a policy on seeds. The time is more important and the variety of good seeds is also a more important thing.

Coming to the breed, this also helps the farmers. We have to give them good animals, which are going to help them, namely, buffaloes, cows, goats, pigs, etc. They are very important for them, and they will supplement the income of the farmers. We have to give them good animals in time. We can produce a good variety of animals through Artificial Insemination Programme (AIP).

This should be brought in using our latest technologies and we should see that the farmer gets a variety of animals so that he is able to supplement his income. If a farmer is getting Rs. 5,000 from his agricultural field, he can get another Rs. 5,000 by this way. In this method, the small and marginal farmers can earn more income.

Coming to the tractors, I would like to submit that the tractors available in the country today are very less. In a country of six lakh villages, in each village there are only one or two tractors, If we can give some subsidy for manufacturing of tractors, it will help the farmers. Today, a tractor costs about Rs. Three lakh and so, only rich farmers are having them. If we give subsidy to tractors, then a tractor will come for about Rs. One lakh. In every village, with the help of the banks and governmental support, if we can make the tractor available for Rs. One lakh, it will help the farmers. Then, if we can give one tractor to a farmer belonging to the Scheduled Caste and a farmer belong to a Backward Class in a village, this will increase the prestige of that particular caste in that village. This is very important. While formulating the policies, the Government should see that the tractors go to these sections of the people, particularly the Backward

Classes, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes because none of them are having tractors today. If we want to improve the rural economy, these are the sections which we have to keep in mind.

These days, whatever subsidy is given, it is only going to rich farmers. There are many types of farmers in the country today. There is a group called 'Sunday farmers'. They live in cities, they sit in air-conditioned rooms and earn lot of money. On a Sunday, they go to their farm houses that are situated just out side the city. Whatever money they earn, they show that they earn that money through agrifulture and get a lot of income tax benefit. This is the thing which we have to immediately stop in this country.

Sir, I want to define who is a farmer. A farmer is not a person who is sitting in an air-conditioned room in a city like Bangalore or in a city like Delhi, sitting in his farm house and claiming income tax benefit. Whatever tax benefit is given to the farmers, it goes to these people only. This is not correct. We have to have a definite and concrete plan to stop this. The Government is giving Rs. 30,000 crore in the form of various subsidies to the farmers. We must see that this amount goes to the real farmers who are tilling the land and who are involved in farming, not to the so-called farmers sitting in air-conditioned rooms. We have to change this policy.

The farmers are facing lot of problems in getting veterinary medicines. There is price control for the drugs which we take, but for veterinary medicines there is no price control. Then, veterinary medicines are costlier than our medicines. So, we have to bring in some sort of price control for veterinary medicines.

Then, due to the high cost of pesticides, the farmers are suffering very much and particularly in Andhra Pradesh where cotton is cultivated in Guntur and Krishna districts and also in many other coastal districts, these pesticides are very costly, because the tax imposed on them is very high. The Government should reduce the tax on these pesticides and see that

they are available to the farmers at a reasonable price.

I would like to say a few words about rural credit that is available to the farmers. Whatever credit the banks are giving, it is all going to the doorsteps of the corporate sector. The Government should ensure that the rural credit reaches the real farmers who actually want money through Gramin Banks and other rural banks. For the corporate sector, the Government is giving loan at eight to nine per cent rate of interest, but for the farmers, it is being given at 12 or 13 per cent rate of interest. The farmers in the villages should get loans at a reasonable rate of interest through the rural banks.

They must see that the policy is changed. They are, all the time, thinking about the corporate sector and not the farmers. If they can think of helping the farmers, it will go a long way and improve the rural economy of this country.

Sir, the tobacco farmers in Andhra Pradesh are facing lot of hardship. The Government has brought in a policy where in they have increased the excise duty on this. The farmers of Guntur in Andhra Pradesh are producing beautiful variety of Virginia Tobacco and about one-and-a half lakh families are involved in this.

What they have done in their budget is going to harm the farmers. They will have to reduce the excise duty a little bit on tobacco and see that the farmers should get some relief out of it.

Sir, earlier also I mentioned some points, in addition to that I have made these submissions and I conclude now.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia): Thank you Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir. I thank, Shri P.K. Vasudevan Nair for moving this Private Members' Resolution on the relief measures for workers and farmers in the agrarian sector.

The problem of agricultural workers and farmers is that overwhelming majority of our Indian population depends on the agriculture, but the farmers are facing

[Shri Hannan Mollah]

many problems. As my colleague has just said that the farmers are facing different types of problems, like in regard to cultivation, in regard to seeds, in regard to marketing, in regard to price of the agricultural produce, in regard to natural calamities and also in regard to compensation. On all these aspects, our farmers are facing different types of troubles.

To strengthen our economy, we have to give utmost importance to strengthen this farm sector from various angles. What we have seen during the last few years and what we have observed is that farmers of our country, because of different types of problems, are committing suicide. It is a very alarming situation. Earlier, the old dictum was that the farmers were born in debt, live in debt and they die in debt. But now, we know that the situation has improved. They are getting institutional finances for their cultivation. But still, the role of the private money lenders is not yet eliminated.

We know, during the last few years, that even the nationalised banks have failed to provide adequate amount of money to the farmers. It has been reduced to the lowest, I think, in the last few decades. But now, it is good that the UPA Government has decided to raise the bank finance to the agriculturists and it has been raised up to 30 per cent. It is increasing now.

Now, we have to concentrate on that. Sometimes the Government takes a policy decision, but at the implementation stage it is not completely implemented. So, we have to monitor this. The Government should monitor that all the nationalised banks and other banks and cooperatives lend to the farming community adequately. That should be ensured. The farmers were forced to commit suicide because of shortage of finance and indebtedness.

After getting the loan, if they do not get adequate price for their produce, then the actual problem starts. We read in newspapers that most of the farmers recently committed suicide because of indebtedness. We have to see as to how we can bring the farmers

out from this indebtedness. That is a serious question. The Government will have to give adequate importance to free the peasantry and farmers from this indebtedness. That is the area on which we have to give stress.

Next, I come to marketing. If they produce less, they are indebted, they cannot repay their loan and they are suffering. If they produce more, then also they are in trouble. The peasants are in difficulty. If they produce less, they are in trouble. If they produce more, then they will not get proper price for their produce. In Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and many other parts—I got a lot of letters, representations and telephone calls from the farmers—that the farmers are not getting adequate price. Take, for example, mustard oil. Somebody from Haryana telephoned me today morning and said that the farmers of Haryana are not getting proper price for mustard. Similar is the case with regard to other crops.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Similar problem exists in Punjab also.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: I have already said that in the northern India—Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and a part of U.P.—the farmers are not getting proper price for their produce. The Government should intervene in this matter. That is the main point. The price that they get is much below their cost of production. So, they should get the minimum price by which they can realise their cost of production. That should be ensured.

Secondly, the Government should intervene and purchase their produce. That is another area. I request the Government to intervene in the market so that the farmers, who are not getting proper price for their produce, can get proper price for their produce.

Another aspect is natural calamity. In the last three or four years, the farmers are suffering because of natural calamities. There was a massive hailstorm in Rajasthan. I had visited some of the places last week. I went there. They said that in 13 districts of

Rajasthan, massive crops were damaged due to hailstorm. There was hailstorm in Punjab, Haryana and a part of Uttar Pradesh recently. The farmers' organisations and other organisations are sending this information. In all these States, there was a massive hailstorm which destroyed their ready crops, mustard, wheat, rabi crops and also kharif crops. That is another area on which the Government should immediately look into so that the farmers can get adequate compensation. The rate of compensation is also not adequate. That is also much below their cost of production. The Government should give adequate compensation to them.

So, this should be ensured that Immediate and adequate compensation is given. I got information that yesterday and day before yesterday there were massive hailstorms in Nadia District and in some other parts of West Bengal and crops were damaged severely. many houses destroyed and some people were killed. So, in this season it will go on. This is a summer season and there will be this type of hailstorms. This type of calamities will create problems for the crops. Some contingency plan should be there so that the farmers can be assisted when such damage occurs. This is one area of concern.

On the other side, alongwith the farmers and peasants, there is the problem of agricultural workers. You know they are one of the two pillars. If the agricultural workers do not work, then a large area of land will not be cultivated because all the farmers do not farm their lands on their own. The small, marginal and even the middle peasants, farmers work in their own land. The poor peasants work whole time in their land. But the middle class peasants participate in any part of the operation, even if they do not participate fully. They hire some agricultural workers. But the rich and the big farmers do not participate in the production process. They entirely depend on the agricultural workers. There are 15 crores of agricultural labourers in our country. They have a major role in increasing our production. But unfortunately we have not paid adequate attention to the problem of the agricultural

workers in our country. As you know, Sir, we have no proper minimum wages. Wherever the minimum wages are there, they are not implemented properly. Although it is written in paper, on the ground the agricultural workers do not get that amount which the different State Governments have fixed. Different State Governments have different standards and different minimum wages. There is no uniform wage. The Government should ensure that those agricultural workers who, by their labour and toils, are helping our agriculture to grow, should not be deprived of their minimum wages.

We are demanding this for a long time. There is not only the wage problem of agricultural workers, but also there are several other problems. They do not get adequate wage. They do not get adequate work. Now, because of the mechanisation of agriculture, as you know, the agricultural labourers are losing their jobs very fast. They are not getting even 100 days of work in a whole year. We had made some survey in some parts of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan. We found that in some places the agricultural labourers are getting work only for 50-60 days in a whole year, in 365 days. How can these people who are the pillars of our agricultural growth survive? So, this is a very serious problem, and because of that we are demanding for long to ensure their proper wage and adequate number of days of work.

The UPA Government has decided to give at least 100 days of work. We welcome this move, but the Bill has only been introduced. There are a number of questions on the Bill. When that Bill is discussed, I hope they will be raised. Definitely, the Government will have to expedite the measures to pass the Bill. At the same time, there are a number of lacunae. It will be implemented only in 150 districts out of 600 districts. The rest of the districts will not be touched. Infrastructure is going to be created. Then, we will spend money on the implementing Authority.

But, if we have another set of officials from top to bottom, a huge amount of money will be spent in

[Shri Hannan Mollah]

the infrastructure. Actually, it will not reach the agricultural labourer. When a Bill comes we will discuss it and see that these are the lacunae. We request the Government to expedite the process, to bring it to the Parliament, to discuss it, to change the Bill wherever it is not according to the interests of the agricultural workers and pass it. That is one aspect of the Bill for the agricultural workers. We are demanding that there should be a comprehensive Central legislation for agricultural workers. I work amongst the agricultural workers' union, and I have been raising the demands of the agricultural workers. Even during her time, Mrs. Gandhi formed a Committee. A Commission was also set up for the rural workers. That Commission recommended that there should be a comprehensive legislation for the agricultural labourers. Their works, wages, retirement, medical benefits, their children's education and their houses, all these aspects were covered. A comprehensive agricultural workers' Bill should be brought. For the last 25 years, I have been here, and I have seen 10 Labour Ministers. I have discussed this matter with them. Every Government promised that there should be an Agricultural Labourers Act. Nobody denied it, but nobody acted on it.

During the days of Mrs. Gandhi, the process was initiated, and everybody agrees that there should be a comprehensive Act for the agricultural labourers. You have an Act to protect the animals, you have an Act to protect plants, but you have no Act to protect 15 crore agricultural workers. What is this? In the last 55 years of the existence of Parliament, we have failed to give a legal protection to the poorest of the poor; not only economically but also socially. They are in the unorganised sector. Sixty per cent of them belong to SC, ST, OBC and minority communities. In all aspects, they are oppressed. In all walks of life, they are pressurised. They are poor and uneducated. They do not get food, jobs and education. They have no houses to live in. Even if you go to a village belonging to upper-caste people you see, they have tube-wells. But if you cross that village, and go to a poor agricultural

workers village, you will see there is no tube-well. Roads are there in the village where the upper-caste people live, But the roads end where the village of poor agricultural labourers starts. Even the light posts are not there.

I have visited all over the country where agricultural workers live. All the benefits end at the gate where the village of agricultural labourers starts. This is most unfortunate thing. We are demanding that a comprehensive Bill should be there. If we can protect animals, trees, why can we not protect 15 crore unfortunate agricultural labourers who are the pillars of our agriculture; who toil and help us to grow food and other agricultural produces? My demand is that a Central Act for the agricultural labourers must be brought in this Parliament. A massive work has been done by the National Labour Commission and by a Committee headed by Gurudas Dasgupts. There are so many other Committees. They have recommended that such an Act is necessary. I will request the Government that it should not wait. Even in the National Common Minimum Programme this has been assured that its Government would bring in an Act for the agricultural labourers.

I demand that such a comprehensive Bill for the protection of the agricultural labourers should be brought and passed in this year itself so that we may protect and help the agricultural labourers. If farmers and peasants are strengthened, our agriculture can flourish. I request the Government that the difficulties of the farmers should be looked into.

15.00 hrs.

At the same time, we have to look into the problems of our agricultural workers. For providing better treatment to that section, we should bring in a comprehensive Central agricultural labour law.

The UPA Government has mentioned all these things in the Common Minimum Programme. Now, it is a question of implementation. I would request the Government that it should implement these programmes

so that our rural economy and agrarian economy get strengthened. If our rural economy and agrarian economy get strengthened, our country would also get strengthened.

With these words, I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Members, the time allotted for this Resolution is over but I have a long list of hon. Members to speak on this very Resolution. If this House agrees, the time for discussion on this Resolution might be extended by one more hour.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI GURJEET SINGH RANA (Jalandhar): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, thank you giving me a chance to speak on this subject, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity today to speak on the farmers and agricultural labourers. Today, the population of India is over one hundred crores. Out of this figure, 12 crores are farmers and 34 crores are labourers, out of 34 crores labourers, 24 crores are those people who work on the farms. Today, the issue of concern is that if we have to think about 24 crores people, there is a need to make the 12 crores farmers financially strong. The farmer is reeling under the burden of loan and the most important thing is that the cost of input in farming has increased. In case of crops, the cost of diesel, insecticides, fertilizers etc. has gone up. Due to which I think that the farming, today, is not so viable. Today, the farmer is worried about his own condition as he has to compete with the rest of world as far as production of the foodgrains, Vegetables and fruits are concerned which would be imported from there. Due to this fact, we need to think about the agriculture of the farmer today. How would he be able to make both ends meet and pay the wages to those agricultural labourers on time who work for him? For this, I think that there is a need for reach and development. Our

agricultural institutes and agricultural universities should invent such seeds which may compete with seeds of the world in terms of quality. The produce of the farmer should increase in terms of quality, only then the farmer can look after his family and the labourers too.

I would like to give example of Punjab and say that if we talk of the farmer of Punjab, he is just like a labourer because the average land of the farmer is two acres. In this situation, how can he look after his family with two acres? This is a matter of concern. I would like to welcome the move of diversification which the UPA Government has suggested. The diversification, we are talking about, was mentioned by Captain Amrinder Singh in 1986, when he was the Minister of Agriculture for Punjab and when he became Chief Minister in 2002, he worked on diversification with zeal and zest. I think that the policy of diversification which the Union Government has adopted can prove beneficial for the farmer and agriculture. The foremost thing is that in Punjab, a lot of effort has been made with regard to diversification in the last two and a half years. Today the need is to have value of crop. For this, the funds should be provided. It is very, easy to talk about diversification, however, its implementation is quite a difficult task. I think that if the Government thinks about the labourer and farmer, it should first make Punjab a Pilot State for implementation. If it succeeds in the state, it may be implemented in the whole of India.

So far as the farmers are concerned, 24 crore labourers work in the farms and 10 crore people are working in our industry. If we talk about the industrial wages and the wages and facilities given to the labourers working on the farms, there is a lot of difference. This gap can only be bridged when the farmer would be prosperous and the labourers receive handsome wages well on time. For this the crop diversification, industrialization of agro industry should be in cluster formation so that the industry is set up in the villages with some people working in the industry and the farmers produce such type of crops which may

[Shri Gurjeet Singh Rana]

be marketable and processable. Today, there is a need to focus on it.

In the budget, a grant of Rupees 100 crores has been given to the world class scientific university, It is a step in the right direction. But, at the same time, we have to look at 70 per cent of the population. Agricultural University should be given the grant so that research and development takes place and the farmers can be benefitted by the facilities to be provided through competitions and thus they will come out of their disappointment. These facilities can be extended to the agricultural labourers too. This can happen only when the Punjab Agricultural University, which worked towards the Green Revolution, is given the grant in a liberal way. So far as agricultural labourers are concerned, they mostly live in the villages. If we compare them with the industrial workers of the city or the common urbanite, there are no hospitals in the villages and if they exist, the doctors are unwilling to go there. I think that if two per cent cess can be levied on the foodgrains for rural development fund, two per cent on the vegetable market, two and a half per cent on the wholesalers, then I would like to say that one per cent cess should also be levied in the whole of India for the health insurance of the labourers. It would be in a divided form. Those labourers working in the farms will not be concerned about their health as they can pay their medical bills through health insurance. I would like to request that this should be done.

So far as education is concerned, the children of those people living in the villages, whether they are labourers or farmers, study in the common schools of the villages. If we look at the condition of the schools of the villages of Punjab, Bihar or any other village of India, the situation is very distressing. There are a number of schools where one teacher is teaching two hundred students. The focus should be towards the concept that the children of those 70 per cent people living in the villages should receive right education so that they can appear in the competition and become

officers, engineers and so on. What is happening today in that the son of a labourer is becoming the labourer himself because he is not getting the study facilities. There is no facility for education. The State Government is helpless and facing fund crunch. I am of the view that the Central Government must think in this regard so that they can be provided basic education.

As regards the ordinary worker vis-a-vis industrial worker, I would like to say that it can be possible only when the U.P.A. Government adopts the policy of diversification, industrialization and promote agro-based industry.

An amount of Rs. 630 crores has been provided for the Horticulture Mission. It is good but in my view, the amount of Rs. 630 crores is insufficient. This amount needs to be increased. Through this Horticulture Mission we can compete in the world market if we produce the good variety of horticulture and vegetables. It would be very beneficial.

In the end, I would however submit that there is a serious problem of housing for the landless people even though they may be living in villages. Today, population is increasing. It has, therefore, become very difficult for four married couples to share a single room. A scheme was chalked out during the regime of the Congress Government. The N.D.A. and all the subsequent Governments have worked on the scheme. All people belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the backward classes have been allotted plots under this scheme. I would like to raise my point. You would all agree with me that colonies for the people belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the backward classes have been carved out of the Common land out side the villages. On the one hand we talk of equality as all have equal rights in our society. But we have carved out a separate colony out side the village. We call it colony in Punjab. I understand that it was right to an extent but today it requires to be rectified.

I would like to share the thinking of our chief Minister Captain Amrinder Singhji. He is of the view

that a cluster i.e. consolidation of common land of 4-5 villages should be converted into a separate village for the landless people irrespective of their castes whether they belong to the Scheduled Castes or the Brahmin Community.

15.21 hrs.

[SHRI ARJUN SETHI *in the Chair*]

In the past, all people lived together. That village should also be evolved on that pattern. Every kind of facility—water, road, school, hospital, dharamshala lands for religious institutions like Gurudwara, Mandir, Mosque and the land for play grounds for children, should be provided in the village so as to create a new atmosphere of equality and fraternity. I think that segregation would harm India as it is taking place in most of the villages. There should be an endeavour to make the atmosphere of villages all inclusive. In our society a sense of fraternity among farmer and labourer is as important as their economic condition.

I am thankful to you for giving me time to speak.

SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL (Tonk): Mr. Chairman Sir, the resolution which is being discussed is a very important one. There could be far reaching implications of this resolution. While my friend who has moved this resolution has termed it as important, yet he could not bring it out of the status quo. I like to quote it:—

"Taking into account the unprecedented crisis in agrarian sector, which has resulted in debt trap, unemployment and poverty of the farmers and agricultural workers and mass suicide by them, this House urges upon the Government to take adequate relief measures for the rehabilitation of the families of those who have committed suicide and also to take effective debt relief measures alongwith measures to refinance the agrarian sector so that it again gets revitalized as the most important economic sector in the country."

Farmers are not going to be benefitted if their loans are waived off once. The farmer will again

relapse into the debt trap. Rescuing them for the time being from the vicious circle of debt is not helpful as he will again be trapped into that. A very challenging situation has emerged in the country. I would like to remind you of a saying which was as follows: 'uttam kheti, Adham chakri, Madhyam kam Vyapar' meaning thereby that the profession of agriculture is the best, service is the worst and the profession of business and self employment is mediocre. This saying was widely believed in this country. India was called the sparrow of gold in view of its prosperity, material wealth and intellectual property.

It is now all history, gone are the days when India was flooded with milk and 'ghee'. Now the posterity will read about it and laugh it away because it was so in the old times. Previously there was the saying 'uttam kheti, adham chakri, madhyam kam vyapar' and now the contrary to it is true. Now the Government job is the best as bureaucracy has gained importance in the country. The profession business and self-employment is mediocre and the agricultural profession has become the worst of all professions. This situation which has emerged is the most challenging one. The farmer who works day in and day out in his fields and produces foodgrains for the country is in a miserable condition. The incidents of suicides by the farmers are a warning for the decaying agricultural and economic system and we must take it seriously.

Mr. Chairman Sir, have you ever heard of any industrialist, capitalist and landlord or any rich person committing suicide? These people take loans worth billions of rupees from our banks and financial institutions and raise their industrial empire and lead a very luxurious and consumerist life. Later on they lead a life full of opulence. They do not have any type of dearth. Have you seen any person belonging to this class committing suicide due to economical sufferings? I would like to say that these people take loan and themselves declare they industry either insolvent or sick. The whole machinery has been working under their influence as a result thereof they are leading a luxvious

[Shri Kailash Meghwal]

life. Eighty per cent farmers own only two acre land, what will be their condition? I would like to say that before British rule our country used to be known as 'golden bird' as there was prosperity allaround. Only forty per cent population were engaged in agriculture sector at that time. Our country was invaded by foreigners, and many invaders returned after destroying our institutions the name of materialism. They went away with our wit and wisdom. But when British came in our country, industrial revolution had already started in Britain. Due to industrial revolution they wanted a market for consumption and they had got India, the best market and that market was in their possession. They spoiled all of those things in which we used to excel. They ruined art and culture and forced several of the people engaged in handicrafts and other fine arts to adopt agriculture as a means of livelihood. They destroyed our reservoir of knowledge and forced the people engaged in teaching-reading towards agriculture sector.

They destroyed small scale industry here and forced the people engaged in that profession towards agriculture. They also forced the people engaged in handicrafts sector towards agriculture and when Englishmen moved away in 1947 gradually eighty five per cent population of this country had been shifted into agriculture sector at that time and the Englishmen never promoted eighty five per cent of population engaged in agriculture sector towards good farming. The Britishers knew that this country is a farmer's country. The farmers are self respecting people and they will awaken and when awarness would bring prosperity to them, a situation that could create trouble for them. Therefore, farmers were kept poor, ignorant and uneducated. One honourable Member was to telling about the slogan that farmer is born, live and die in debt. It is the legacy of Britishers. Fortunately, the policies we adopted after independence favoured industrial development. The Palnning Commission was constituted here for industrial development.

The planned growth of the country was the main aim of Planning Commission. But no one paid attention towards farmers. The industrial houses were emerged and they totally destroyed our rural economy. I would like to say that due to textile industrialists, textile industry started manufacturing in factories and weavers and koli engaged in handloom sector became jobless. No atlernate arrangement was made for them. Shoes factories opened and Bata Shoes started business and as a result thereof cobbler who were engaged in the leather work were rendered jobless but no alternative arrangement was made for them also. Likewise the blacksmith and Suthari used to supplement the need of village people and their work was also affected. The 'pattal' and 'dona' makers also met the same fate. Honourable chairman, Sir, I would like to say that our rural handicrafts and small scale industries were attacked and as a result of it these handicrafts and cottage industry started to ruin. A lot of attention was paid on industrialisation after independence what we got from industrialisation. As a result of industrialisation our sixty five per cent population which was dependent on agriculture even after 55-56 years of independence and we have been able to exclude only thirty per cent population from agriculture sector. Our industrial policies are responsible for today's prevailing situations. There is important resolution and challenging situation but now status quo cannot improve the situation.

Today we criticise the Macaulay's system. In school days, I used to listen that Macaulay worked out a education system to make clerks in the country. His projective was to produce such clerks who moved work towards the stablity of the British rule in the country by being there mental slaves and sycophants. Today we are also following the same education system and that's why educated people's mind, sentiment and opinion are never inclined towards agriculture sector, villages and animal husbandry. This is the only fault otherwise we have a plenty of resources. Outs is the world's best terrain and no where in the world have such nature and physical resources which are present here. You will not get Himalaya anywhere. You will not

get water of Ganga and Yamuna anywhere which do not produce insects. This type of permanent climate, botanical assets and fruits, flowers are not available anywhere.

It is said again and again that loan will be given to farmers at low interest by the banks. I would also like to ask you that how banking management evolved? The Capitalists evolved this system and it helped them in making progress. We are hoping from this system that it will work for the welfare of our farmers. These petty loans which you are providing would not pave the way for the batterment of the farmers. This system will never be beneficial to the farmers because its aim is to safeguard the interests of the capitalists and the multinational companies. The rich countries of the world want to capture the economy of this country and it can only be possible when these capitalists become slave. The capitalists are falling victim of it as all of them are being absorbed by the multinational companies. The children of the leaders and influential families are getting job in the multinational companies. They say that they will get a salary of Rs. five lakh per month there.

What they are getting there. They are getting a huge package there. The common man of this country is heading towards this culture. It is a big conspiracy being hatched by the multinational companies in our country. No easy method will work to avert this conspiracy. Now, you will have to take a total U turn, which means that right from the Planning Commission to the lowest level you will have to adopt such a system the pivot of which would be the farmer of the country. If we want to make our country prosper, progressive and a powerful country and also want to protect and save it from the clutches of multinational companies or foreign powers and their economic system, we shall have to take a total U turn.

What is the outcome of your policies. The Foreign currency in the form of dollars is being brought by the multinational companies in the country alongwith them. Handsome salaries in dollars attract our people. They

are getting their salary in dollars. Dollar is also bringing evils like disco dance, which means attack on the culture. After disco dance drugs and drinks are also entering in culture of our country. Web of drugs and wine is spreading everywhere. From top to bottom, visit all the places see everywhere what is the condition now? After drinks, drugs are coming. Dollar is the genesis of all these evils. After drinks and drugs the last 'D' means destruction. The new culture of multinational companies is destroying our cultural heritage, knowledge and intellect. The country is heading towards economic slavery. This situation is being created here.

My submission is that the term 'now total U turn is prevailing' should be kept in the record of the Lok Sabha. Change the names of all the universities, colleges, secondary schools and the primary schools functioning in the country and these institutions should be named as Agriculture University, Agriculture college, Agriculture Secondary School, Agriculture Primary School, Veterinary University, Veterinary College, Veterinary Secondary School and Veterinary Primary School. When there will be such a feeling, the children of the country will get education in the Agriculture school or Agriculture University of veterinary school and would serve the country. This is the religion and prosperity of our country. That is why, today there is a need to change the policies of the Government. If it is not done, it would mean we have not only become slaves in administrative terms but also will be dependent on others, given the manner economically, the MNC's are talking about liberalisation and globalisation.

Sometimes, I wonder when we compare our country with America, a country with its territory five times that of our country while the population is one fourth of ours. And even then only four per cent of their population is growing grains and it is exporting them to other countries also. We sometimes compare our country with Russia having land area 6 times of India's while its population is less than one fourth of ours. Such comparisons are meaningless. As I said,

[Shri Kailash Meghwal]

now things are in wrong directions. Bureaucracy and not any specialist is dominating in Government department. No specialists are appointed in Planning Commission, Agriculture Commission etc. Shri Sish Ram Ola cannot be appointed there. Only an IAS will be appointed there. I am sorry, we are friends but I have symbolically called you a farmer. The present IAS system is just aiming at maintaining the slavery system of the Britishers. Once the IAS pass the exams on the basis of a little bit of their intelligence, memory and intellect, it is taken for granted that they can solve each and every problem. In Central Secretariat an IAS's appointed in every sector. In State Governments also there are IAS's in every sector. These days some capitalists and rich landlords have set up educational institutions for making IAS's and the students from these schools become IAS's and they become steersmen of the country.

Sometimes I wonder that the Secretary of Atomic Energy is an IAS; what do you about atomic energy? You have passed IAS exam securing marks in science. Similarly secretary in agricultural sector also is an IAS. I am sorry to say that IAS's are not being screened in this country. A person specialised in his field is not appointed in that field. But as I said the root cause of all these problems is mismanagement. Agriculture Commission has been constituted but persons there do not know how to work. A member in Planning Commission is also an IAS. He gives suggestions. These days agricultural credit commission etc. have become useless. The entire system has become useless.

If we wish to take this country ahead, we will have to come back to agriculture. Still the suicide cases in agriculture sector are very few and the challenges we face are still very few in number, but the present system is not competent and relevant enough to solve the challenges. This problem today may seem to be insignificant and in small number but soon in near future, it will increase both in number and dimensions.

Even now, half of the population of country cannot manage to have two squares of meals. Even the farmers do not get enough food to satiate their appetite. Despite all this call ourselves the citizens of independent India but even today crores of people sleep on footpaths, live there and die there itself. We have not as yet been able to arrange any shelter for them. Is this a democracy? Is this our sensitivity? I wish to humbly submit here that we have to make our country prosperous keeping agriculture as base and get due recognition of the wisdom of our country acknowledged all over the world.

Some people say that twenty first century of India. If we want to materialise this concept, we will again have to make India the centre of wisdom and a country with abundance and milk and milk products. Presently, with minor changes, like waving off of loans, poverty is not going to recede. To change the condition we have to take a U-turn and decide to have agriculture as a pivot of development. Thank you very much for giving me time to speak.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Mr Chairman, Sir, this proposal has come exactly at right time to draw the attention of Government and house to the greatest problem of the Indian society. I thank honourable Member to have brought this topic for discussion compelling the House and the Government to take positive steps. It is distressing to note that in India where the 62 per cent of country's work force is engaged in agriculture, annual agricultural production is steadily declining for the last three years. If we conduct a survey of last two three years we will find that the population is increasing at the rate of 1-1½ per to 2 per cent while the progress in agriculture is declining at an equivalent rate, it is a bad omen. The growth rate of the country is 7 to 8 per cent but our target is to achieve 8 to 10 per cent in the last year of 10th Five Year Plan. If we are able to maintain this growth rate for next 10 years then with the good wishes of honourable President certainly we will be great economic power by the end of 2020.

An institution of Britain has made an assessment that India will be the third super power of the world with in next 3 to four years. We may emerge as third, fourth or fifth super power but still in terms of human quality India stands at 143 number among 175 countries of the world. Some SAARC and African countries are poorer than India. But no one can compete India in poverty, illness and illiteracy. That is why I think that the so called analysts and well wishers of our country would like to make the progress of the country realised by putting forth the progress of few people and pushing back the majority of population of our country. We can find a similar concept with reference to internal condition of our country. Those States which we find leading in development particularly, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala have the another side of their developmental coin. When we make analysis of the development of these States and look into their internal condition, we find that the maximum number of suicides committed by farmers are in these very states i.e. 2250. Andhra Pradesh is a State which was given the chance to have a long leap in high-tech bu our policy makers and it was said that Andhra Pradesh is progressing in 17 sector by leaps and bounds and Banglore is biggest exporter of India is this sector. But if we give a look at ground level then we find that upto 2200, 850, 85 and 1200 farmers committed suicides because of their poverty, helplessness and pitiable condition. Why it is so in these States? It is not happening in other States. With your own experience you can realise that farmer suicide cases are common in those very States where naxalite menace is also increasing. The old helpless farmer commits suicides due to the burden of debts. Consequently his son revolts, takes sheler in jungles to struggle and fight for his rights with the help of arms and ammunition. Then we call it problem of naxalites. Can we stop it with suppression? This level of thinking is due to non acceptance of the country's problems sincerely and in right perspective. I feel happy at Agriculture Minister's statement that as a result of his special initiative efforts professional and commercial banks have agreed to give loans to farmers at a rate

of 2 per cent than the prevailing rates. Why they were not agreeing to it till date and why did it take them such long time to prepare for it? Why only professional banks will do it? The facilities of branches of professional banks are not available in rural areas of country. 14 years back since the advent of economic liberalisation and adaptation of automation and computerisation policy in banks private and public sector banks have stopped opening fresh branches in villages. Indian farmer is directly in contact with cooperative society banks. Mini CAPART banks and NABARD banks. They are related with regional rural banks also. These banks extend loans to the farmers at rates double than those at which they get loans from NABARD and CAPART. Government sector banks easily give loans at the rate of 7 per cent for purchase of car or construction of house in a big city. But regional rural banks and cooperative banks which are directly related to farmer still give loans to farmers at 11-12 per cent. It is very unfortunate. How to come out of it.

Honourable Finance Minister in his Budget Speech said that we will make concrete efforts to invest in agriculture sector. He said that poor farmers of India will be extended loans amounting to Rs. 1 lakh 8 thousand crore through banks. I humbly submit the Government that making farmers debt ridden is not a way to improve their condition. With the crops that they grow they cannot pay the monthly instalment of loan. The need of the hour is to give up this type of concept and make such efforts so as to give him profitable rates of their produce. By providing the farmer the funds that they need to invest in agriculture at cheaper interest rates, we can improve their condition. The Government of India should change their views so as to make progress in agriculture sector as well as for the progress of farmers. This proposal has come forward for discussion to effect such change in their outlook. I support it and request the Government to reconsider the debt policy so that the organisations related to farmers may come out of their debt trap.

With these words I conclude my speech.

[English]

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack): Sir, it is my pleasure to participate in this Resolution which deals with relief measures for workers in the agrarian sector. We all know that an unprecedented crisis in agrarian sector has affected us for quite a long time, more than a quarter century ago. We have been discussing this subject to that extent in different Lok Sabhas for the last 25 years. Shri Vasudevan Nair who is the Mover of this Resolution is the right person, who has experience to his credit regarding providing social security to the agricultural labourers and agricultural workers.

There is a distinction between agrarian sector and the unorganised agriculture workers. When we discuss about the agriculture sector, we have to deal with both these aspects. In the Resolution, Shri Vasudevan Nair has very rightly mentioned about the debt trap, about the farmer's suicide and also about the problems of agriculture workers. And there is a direction to the Government. What type of support should be provided from the State as relief to the agriculture sector both for the landholders and also for the workers who toil in the field? What type of effective debt relief is required to rejuvenate our rural masses, rural sector? The framers of the Constitution have made provisions for protecting the peasantry under article 43 of the Constitution, which assures a 'living wage' to all workers including agriculture, and working conditions that facilitate a 'decent living'.

Hon. speaker from the BJP who preceded Shri Mohan Singh had very rightly mentioned that 56 years ago or 55 years ago when the Constitution was framed, the rural life was very different. A drastic change has taken place. People who were engaged as artisans, people who were engaged in different fields supporting rural economy, have been divested of their traditional skills. Now the skill or the input is being provided to the masses, by producing machine, or industries.

Earlier, Indian agrarian society was self-sufficient, in the sense that whatever was being produced, was

being produced by the masses. Now, the trend is totally the reverse. Now, mass production is being done by a single industrial house for the masses in a large quantity. This is the difference which has totally divested the rural areas, the agrarian economy from income. That is the main reason why unemployment has risen to a great extent.

When we have that clause enshrined in the constitution, to provide 'living wage' and to provide 'decent life style,' I think, the onus lies with the Government to make suitable amendments and bring out a suitable law to that effect.

The State should particularly try and develop cottage industries in the rural areas, which will provide alternative employment other than farming. According to the Census of 2001, there are about 10.70 crore agricultural labourers and 12.70 crore medium and large farmers.

In view of the long pending need of social security cover to the agricultural workers, the NDA Government, in the year 2001, had launched Krishi Shramik Samajik Suraksha Yojana. That was with effect from 1st July, 2001 through the Life Insurance Corporation. In the first stage, the scheme was implemented in 50 selected districts and covered around 10 lakh agricultural workers amounting to 20,000 workers in each district over a period of three years. A worker was required to pay Rs. 1 per day or Rs. 365 per year, and Rs. 2 per day or Rs. 730 per year were to be paid by the Government for the beneficiary. This was the scheme for three years. We would like to be apprised by the Government how far they have extended that scheme. Is it only confined to those 50 selected districts? Do they still have that scheme or they have abandoned it? Do they intend to expand that scheme for other most backward districts?

It is stated in a report that 1,00,074 agricultural workers were covered under the scheme by 31st October, 2002. It provided old-age pension to those who were more than 60 years of age; it provided a

personal accident insurance; and it also provided medical insurance.

Sir, there was another scheme called Janashree Bima Yojana, which was launched with effect from 10th August, 2000. This provided an insurance cover of around Rs. 20,000 in case of natural death; Rs. 50,000 in case of death or permanent total disability; and Rs. 25,000 in case of permanent disability due to accident. The age group was confined to 18 to 60 years. The BPL families were also included in that scheme. That scheme was extended to the age group of 25 or more. How far have the Government extended this scheme?

To pursue their common interests, the workers in the agrarian sector cannot organise themselves due to certain constraints. We all know it. Invariably, throughout the country, the agricultural labourers belong to the depressed class. They cannot organise themselves to pursue their common interests. Another major hindrance is that the service they provide is very casual in nature of employment. Ignorance plays a greater role in that. Illiteracy and small and scattered size of establishment also add upto this problem. Out of 36.9 crore workers in the unorganised sector, around 23.7 crore are employed in agriculture sector, 1.7 crore in construction sector, 4.1 crore in manufacturing activities, 3.7 crore each in trade and transport, and in communication and services. This is as per the list, which is there in the Census. So, a majority of them are the agricultural labourers. I think it is high time that the Government should come out with the Bill, which was contemplated in 2004 by Shri Sahib Singh Verma when he was the Minister of Labour, immediately to strengthen the hands of not only the States but also the labour force of our country.

A large number of workers in the unorganised sector are home-based workers. Many of them are engaged in *bidi* making, *agarbatti* making, tailoring, and *zari* and embroidery work. Of course, the Government has constituted some welfare funds for *bidi* workers. But it is not upto the mark. The working and living conditions of the unorganised workers still remain very pathetic.

Today, I find that the social security scheme for the unorganised sector is in the backburner. What is the reason for it? If funds crunch is the main reason, why can't the UPA Government, which always speaks loud in favour of the '*aam admi*', not provide funds for this cause? In this scheme, in 2003-04, a sum of Rs. 13.30 crore was provided. And very peculiarly, in the next year, that is in 2004-05, it came down to Rs. 13 crore. I expect that the Minister would let us know as to how much money is being provided for in the year 2005-06.

Sir, it is high time that the rights of the unorganised rural workforce, especially the agricultural workers, are legalised. They have been legalised in two States—Kerala and Tripura. They have enacted laws in this respect. In Kerala, it was, I think, done in 1974 and in Tripura in 1986. Of course, there maybe a legal problem in having a national law. If the Central Government comes out with a scheme or a Bill, we have to take the consent of the different States. If that is the reason, at least, you come out with what scheme you have, what type of provision you want to make in the law and find out which are the States that are falling back.

At the same time, I would like to mention here that farmers are committing suicide in different parts of the country. The major problem is that it is committed by big farmers. The farmers who have only one seasonal crop a year are not committing it. It is the farmers who have gone in for cash crops, who have taken high amounts of loan from banks are forced to commit suicide.

Another aspect, the humanitarian aspect is also there. That is, the agricultural produce is not being marketed at the appropriate rate. That kills the incentive and discourages him to such an extent that he not only ends his life, but the whole family also indulges in suicide. The banks are unable to provide adequate amount to rejuvenate him to go in for farming again. This is creating another type of a problem.

[Shri B. Mahtab]

That is why, the debt trap which a farmer falls into, should be looked into, and a composite scheme should also be made for the farmers as also for the agricultural labourers.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ram Kripal Yadav, have you changed your seat?

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: I am on my own seat.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Alright, express your views.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to express my views on very important topic. I would also like to thank Shri P.K. Vasudevan Nair who through the Private Members Bill has given an opportunity to discuss on providing relief to the agricultural labourers. Some hon. Members have given their important suggestions. I would also like to put forth some suggestions before you and would like to tell you about the condition of the workers in agriculture sector today.

Sir, it is said that India is an agriculture dominated country and 70-75 per cent of our population is dependent on agriculture. Even after 57-58 years of Independence there is no change in the condition of farmers. Everything depends on the farmers. If the condition of farmers is good, the agricultural labourers will get more wages and their condition will also improve. With the progress of the country we are attaining good position in many places and our position is very good in the world. But it is a matter of regret that we did not pay such attention towards agriculture as we paid towards other areas. Had we paid attention towards agricultural fields, the condition of small and medium farmers and the agriculture labourers would have been improved definitely.

Sir, whichever Government came into power, it talked about agriculture and agricultural labourers but they did not pay desired attention towards them. Look at the condition of the villages today. Today, there are

some villages where you cannot go. You cannot go there by any vehicle or even not go on foot. The condition of the villages is pitiable today.

16.00 hrs.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is lack of water, schools, roads and electricity. The image of farmers is changing. The farmers working in the fields....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please resume your seat for a while.

Hon. Members, the time allotted for this Resolution is over. We have a number of Members to speak on this Resolution. If the House agrees, the time for this discussion maybe extended by another one hour?

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh): In that case, the House will sit upto 8.00 o'clock because after this we have to take up the Private Members' Bill for which two and a half hours are allotted. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: We can resume the discussion on the Bill and then continue in the next Session.

... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have extended the time for this particular Resolution and not the time of the House.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is very important Resolution, on which discussion is going on. Many an hon'ble Members would like to speak on it. I would therefore request that the time for discussion should be extended by one hour more.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: As per the arrangement, the House has to sit upto 7.30 p.m. No decision has been taken to extend the sitting of the House beyond 7.30 p.m.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SURESH PACHAURI): Discussion on this Resolution will continue upto 5.00 o'clock and thereafter the House will take up Private Members' Bill.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: It is all right then.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was telling that the condition of farmer's is very poor. No proper attention has been paid to their plight so far.

Sir, there are organisations of all kinds of people but farmers have none. There are the organisations of politicians, employees and shopkeepers but there are no organisations of agricultural labourers and neither the farmers are organised. All have taken advantage of their being unorganised. Just now one of my colleagues was speaking that the number of unorganised farmers is almost over 10 crores. I would like to draw your attention to those unorganised farmers. No body has bothered to take care of these farmers. They work hard at a large scale throughout the day whether it is the scorching heat of the sun, rain or winter. They work hard day in and day out. They are compelled to do so due to their poverty. If they do not work in their fields, they will not be able to make both ends meet of their families. Even now there are a number of such farmers and labourers who crave for making both ends meet.

Sir, gradually, the number of farmers is decreasing. The farmers with 10 acres of land has been reduced to a landless labourer due to division of land holdings owing to the growing population whether he is a big, marginal or small farmer. Despite working hard for the whole day he is not able to provide his children with food, clothes, education, health and accommodation. We have got the right under our

constitution that the Government will provide the facility of drinking water, health, education and residential accommodation to the people of the country but the provision of these basic amenities has still not been made in the villages and the Government have not paid any attention towards making them available.

Sir, the condition of the unorganised farmers and the landless labourers however is pitiable throughout the entire country but through you I would like to draw the attention of the Minister towards Bihar where 30 lakh landless labourers are migrating annually from the state. As the state of affairs is not good in Bihar and there are floods in some areas and drought in the others, it would be very difficult for the labourers to earn their livelihood if they do not migrate to the other States in search of work.

We will have to consider how the landless labourers migrate to Punjab, Haryana, Kashmir and Assam as well as other areas and work there for earning their livelihood. The scientific age is coming and they are saying that they would use tractors and other implements. Earlier ten labourers used to do the work in the fields and now the same quantum of work is being done only by one labourer. The population is increasing we are not taking any measures to contain that. We do not forbid you to use tractors. If the country makes progress, farmers will also do so but those hands are being rendered jobless with the use of tractors. Earlier people used to plough. I do not suggest that you do not work through tractors. But such a way should be found out so as to provide them with employment thereby reducing unemployment in this scientific age. It has been discussed in it. If the unemployment continues to rise at the same rate, the farmers, landless labourers will surely be forced to commit suicides.

Sir, the main reason for fading away farmer's attraction from agriculture is the rising trend in the prices at present. The prices of diesel and other agricultural inputs like seeds and fertilizers are rising rapidly but they are not getting returns thereon. They

[Shril Ram Kripal Yadav]

are not getting remunerative prices for their produce. They somehow borrow money from the banks and the private money lenders and invest in their fields but they do not get reasonable prices for their agricultural produce when they take it to the market for sale after reaping their harvest. They have become debt ridden. Now the Banks and the private money lenders will not waive off the interests on loans. In such a situation they will be compelled to commit suicide. Evolve some kind of mechanism so as to enable you to make available loans to the farmers and the landless labourers. You should extend loans to them at lower rates of interests. You will have to make such an arrangement.

Sir, I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon'ble Minister of Finance who has tried to focus on agricultural sector and farmers. You have increased the investment in agriculture. The present UPA Government have allocated 38% of total budget for agricultural sector. Though, I think it is adequate, however you try to raise it to 50%. You approach the Banks for loans then you will realise yourself how much trouble the people have to face. There is rampant corruption in Banks. You cannot get anything done in Banks without giving bribes. Sir, you yourself must be realising this as you have been the people's representative for a long time. You have to go to the people. You have observed their problems. One has to give Rs. 500/- as bribe for getting the loan of Rs. 1000/-. Even then you will not get the loan. Chappals will be broken by running after the manager. But you will not get the loans without paying 5 to 10% commission. Therefore, you will have to rectify this system. You have laid down so many formalities. A poor farmer or a landless labourer will not get the loan as he will not be able to complete all these formalities. You should therefore simplify the procedure for getting loans easily so that farmers can earn their livelihood and make investments in agriculture. This type of arrangement will have to be made. It should be your topmost priority while

making your policies that a certain amount of funds will mandatorily be allocated to the farmers. The country will not prosper unless agricultural fields and granaries proper.

Sir, a number of people talk about multinational companies. We have many a companies. A large number of companies come here and affect our employment. You are entering into agreement with Multi-National Companies that some items will be imported from abroad. Policies are being made here. Fruits, applies, rice and sugar are being imported from abroad. You have opened the flood gates to imports. If you do not control it, your produce will remain there unsold. You will import it because it is available at cheaper rate. Our farmers are not getting success in that competition and our produce remains there unsold and foreign goods are being consumed. Today, India has become a market. Consumption is not taking place in hundred million population of the country. The farmers and labourers of the Indian villages are competent enough to produce so much quantity of foodgrains that we can export it to the other countries.

Plenty of land remains unirrigated, we should make arrangement for its irrigation. It is our bad luck that natural disaster occur at many a places. This topic was being discussed in the House, yesterday. Sometimes hailstorm takes place, sometimes flood and sometime drought, we will have to fight all these calamities. But we will have to make our land irrigated. There are some canals which have not been desilted for hundred years. These canals have been damaged at several places and even some have been piled up with silt. These should be repaired and desilted. The Government should make proper arrangement for irrigation and provide sufficient number of tube-wells for the purpose. If you do not provide tube-well, from where the farmer will bring the water for irrigation.

The Government should control the prices of manure and seed. If the Government do not pay attention to this aspect, the farmers will not prosper ...*(Interruptions)*. I will speak for five minutes more. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Only two minutes.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: It is unfortunate that whenever I speak the time is fixed. Under this rule a Member speak as long as he desires but you have fixed time for us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are many speakers who want to express their views on this topic.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: I was saying that the Government will have to make special arrangement for prosperity of the farmers. Health services should be provided to the unorganised labourers about which we are discussing in particular. Today, the farmers do not have money for their medical treatment. The Government should make arrangement for free treatment of farmers in the hospitals. The doctors do not visit the villages. Even a single doctor does not go to the village, they all do practice in the city. The Government should ensure that the medical facility for the farmers will be available in the village itself.

In villages children are not given education. The children whose father or forefathers used to be labourers are labourers even today. How will it be possible to bring about change in this system and how will you be able to even speak of social justice? If the children of poor and labour classes won't get education, then whether the children of only some particular classes will keep on progressing by getting education. They won't get justice like this. Therefore, make proper arrangements for giving them free education and also open more and more schools for them. You will have to make such a arrangement.

The labourers die accidental deaths. Labourers from Bihar are going out of the State. They go to Punjab and Assam. Please provide them with life insurance cover. You have made such an arrangement. But please make arrangement so as to bring all or the maximum number of unorganised workers under insurance cover.

I was requesting you that pension scheme should be implemented. Presently there is such a situation

that the farmers and workers do not want to work in farms any more as they find that a petty 'panwala' or a 'tea staller' is more happy than them as they are earning more than them with less labour and effort. He feels that it is better to sell pan or tea than farming. If this tendency keeps on prevailing then farm workers will divert and there won't be anyone to work on farms and on threshing place. When there won't be any crops in our country, what will we eat then, 70 to 75 per cent of country's population is dependent on farms and farm produce. It is posing a strong threat before us and therefore we will have to create interest and attraction for farming and farming country among the people. Otherwise the country won't be able to progress. Only the development of science and technology and launching in the space will not do. A large part of our population lives in villages and we have not been able to make proper arrangement of drinking water further even after so many years. The UPA Government has made efforts and they are running missions like Rajiv Gandhi drinking water for this purpose. We feel ashamed of the fact that even today in villages ladies have to go in the open fields to defecate during the odd hours. We too feel ashamed of observing it. Hence, it is a very important to focus on the progress of farming, farmers and farming labourers to develop and make our country a progressive one. Otherwise, our country cannot make progress. A very large part of our country's population resides in village and dependent on farming. We have to provide work and employment guarantee to the hands that are getting jobless. I feel that only then our country would progress. Without taking care of farmland, the farmers, the farm workers and the children and making suitable arrangement for their health and potable water, our country cannot make progress. With these words, I thank you very much for giving me a chance to speak on such an important issue.

SHRI AVTAR SINGH BHADANA (Faridabad): Farmers are the backbone of country and India is a agriculture dominated country. Nearly 70 per cent of our

[Shri Avtar Singh Bhadana]

population lives in villages and depends on agriculture. The condition of the farmers has gone from bad to worse during last 12 years. Farmer is at the verge of starvation. He is not only suffering on account of epidemic, hailstorms and drought etc. but also the neglecting policies of the Government. He is debt ridden. Irrational administrative policies allow a trader or an industrialist to roam around proudly even though he is under debt worth crores of rupees. At most he is declared bankrupt. He manages to get another loan easily by opening a new firm under the different name. On the other hand if a farmer is under debt of thousands or lacs of rupees he is insulted. Bank officials go to his house for the recovery of the same and acquire even his tractors and utensils. Farmers should be relieved of adopting this double standard policy. He should get soft loans and be relieved of the interests. In case of damage to the crops due to the natural calamities like drought, floods, hailstorms etc. interest should be waved off and loans should not be recovered from them and their crops should be insured. Presently, in many States including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana rains and hailstorms have damaged the farmer's crops. These farmers should be given financial assistance as well as compensation for their losses. I appeal the House to grant agriculture the status of industry so that the future of 70 per cent of India's population dependent on agriculture is protected. "The important tool of agriculture, the tractor and its spare parts should be exempted from excise duty and sales tax so that every farmer can purchase tractor. The Government's policy for farmers should be flexible enough so that the agricultural farmers can be linked directly with the main stream of development. In our country it is very tough for a farmer to get a loan of Rs. one lakh and for that they have to take several rounds of the banks for months together.

The farmers get loan after facing lot of difficulties. Government's loan policy should have uniformity and there should be liberal policy for the poor. Loans running into thousand crores of rupees is outstanding

against industrialists, but they are not touched at all. In Meerut, and Faridabad, I have seen farmers are locked up for loans for merely two thousand or five thousand rupees. Government should formulate policies so as to safeguard the farmers. Farmer totally depends on his crops. For important occasions like marriage of daughter he has to wait for good harvesting or for payment of sugarcane crop etc. Only at few places farmers get three crops in a year, but normally at other places they depend on two crops only. How farmers will mobilise money to pay the loan amount every month. When farmer's crops are destroyed, how would he pay the loan under such circumstances. I would like to tell the House and you also that they are elected in the name of farmers. So attention should be paid with respect to frame a policy in favour of farmer's interest. But it is sad to say that no policy is chalked out to improve the farmer's condition. If no such policy is framed then this country will become weak. We have here in the House, the Members of Parliament who lead farmers, and belong to farmer's family. If farmers suffers, the country will not survive. The policy makers should try to prepare policy in the interest of farmers. The UPA Government made a good policy but I would like to say that the farmers have been ignored whichever Government has been in power. The farmers do not get loan or fertilizers at right time. You see that big industrialists get loan of thousands of crores of rupees on a telephone call overnight, but when a farmer applies for a loan of Rs. One lakh or two lakh for his crops then he had to march from pillar to post. He had to approach managers even then they do not get loan unless they pay bribe to banking personnel, they do not get loan money. Such a policy should be framed so that the farmers could get compensation in case of crops failure and their loan should also be waived off. A person cannot frame the policy for farmers who does not understand the pain and sufferings of farmers. When a son of a farmer frames the policy then only farmers of this country will survive. I would like that all hon. Members of the House may frame the policy rise above party lines and in favour of farmers so that farmers could survive.

I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak on this issue here.

SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' (Almora): Mr. Chairman, Sir, important discussion is going on the resolution presented by Shri P.K. Vasudevan Nair. Several speakers have spoken about problems of different parts of the country. The problems of farmers of coastal areas are different from those of the farmers of plain areas like Punjab, Haryana. The discussion of Himalaya region has taken place yesterday without discussing thoroughly on these problems. Now this debate was held here regarding natural calamity. I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards hilly region of Himalaya. The problems of farmers are different there. Agriculture land is very small there. They are mostly engaged in terrace of farming. The farmers do not have more than one acre agriculture land there. Secondly, farmers face a lot of problems, as a result of it their migration is on the rise. The farmers do not get remunerative price of agriculture produce there. There are so many reason behind it and I will tell it later on. There are no industry, enterprise, employment or factory except agriculture. They are totally dependant on agriculture. In addition to it, they make their livelihood only on some fruits-flowers, vegetables and animal Husbandry.

I would like to cite the example of Uttaranchal of this country which I know better. There are nine hilly districts and three plain districts in the newly formed state Uttaranchal. There is around sixty five per cent forest land in hilly districts. The Wild Life Protection Act was formed in 1980 here. The Wild Life Protection Act, 1972 is already in force. Under this act poaching of animals is crime. The villages of hilly region are engaged in farming. The villagers are surrounded by forests. They do farming in such forests. They are having small pieces of land. After enactment of the Wild Life Protection Act the population of animals particularly pigs has increased in those forests. Flocks of pigs destroy the crops.

16.28 hrs.

(Dr. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY *in the Chair*)

Therefore, the people are giving up farming and migrating from there due to this. How to prevent is a very burning issue. Pigs during night and monkey during days destroy their crops. The number of monkeys is also increasing according because there is no barricade between forest and villages. The pigs are violent also. The farmer cannot prevent the flock of pigs. He remains just a mute spectator when pigs eat up his crops.

Moreover, the matter of hailstorm has also been raised. Hilly areas are not unaffected with hailstorm. The crops are destroyed due to hailstorm in the months of March and April. If horticulture takes place then fruits and flowers are also destroyed. In the recent past, in Uttaranchal region crops have been seven days damaged due to hailstorm during this week. Thirdly, cultivation or farming is not profitable there. If farmers produce vegetables fruits in small quantity then where should they take them for their sale because no road is available there to reach the market. The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana has been introduced. The honourable Minister is sitting here. He has made progress with regard to this programme, but our problem is still continuing. The Wild Life Protection Act does not permit to construct road in forest to reach the village. The farmer travel ten to twenty kilometres on foot as labour since the farmer has to spend some money to get to sell his produce, he does not get anything from the sale. In addition to, the land slide and cloud burst have become a common phenomena there for a decade. Earlier these adverse circumstances did not exist earlier.

Old aged people say that the whole issue is related to the change of climate and as a result of it the frequent incidents of cloud bursts and land slides are taking place and as a result of it soil and rocks are deposit in fields. The farmers have also suffered due to this and crops got destroyed. One of the problems of the farmers of such area is that they cannot use tractor there. They can use only the ploughs and equipment being used since ancient time

[Shri Bachi Singh Rawat 'Bachda']

as they have to do farming on such small pieces of land. They do not get wood for making plough etc. You cannot cut green plants under the Forest Conservation Act. But no plough and tool can be made without cutting green plants. Therefore farmers and peasants are faced with such crisis there. Sometimes farmers are engaged for short duration in horticulture. So farmers earn by doing different types of work. As far as livestock is concerned, the programme of their breed improvement has not been implemented as per requirement. I would like to draw the attention of the honourable Minister that a programme of Embryo Transfer Technology has launched. I had approved during my tenure and it needs to be expedite further so that the present breed could be improved and quantity of milk to be given by them may also be increased.

Now question arises as to how farmers maybe helped. What is solution of the damage of the crops of the farmers caused by wild pigs and monkeys. Option is that slaughter of poaching of Nilgai was banned earlier and in view of farming, Nilgai was excluded from category of conserved animals. Similarly, the pig-species may also be deleted from the list because their population has increased too much. At least, the farmer can be saved from the natural losses and the monkeys can be chased out during day time. Some good programmes had been launched in the agricultural sector during the previous government and this fact is accepted by the UPA partners as well. Our former Agriculture Minister, Shri Ajit Singhji is also present here. The government have to take forward the good programmes like the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. They are certainly taking them forward and they should do the same.

The crop insurance scheme was the first concept to address the issues relating to the farmers. If there are loopholes somewhere in that Scheme, they should be properly rectified. Crop insurance cover has already been provided to almost three crore farmers in a record

time. Financial assistance of nearly go thousand crores of rupees had been provided, a very good process is going on and the hon. Minister is getting it completed. Some relate in the interest rate maybe given. The instalment should be fixed monthly or quarterly so as to suit the farmers according to the harvesting season. Secondly, crop insurance and Kisan Credit Card are the two schemes which are appreciated. But we are facing problems with regard to crop insurance as the cultivation of fruits or the floriculture, which are liable to be destroyed by hailstorm are not incorporated in it. Besides, cultivation of geranium maybe introduced in the hilly regions through the Ministry of Science and Technology. It cannot be destroyed either by monkeys or pigs. I do not think that there will be any future amendment in the Forest Conservation Act. We should think upon as to how we can take it forward because its duration is going to meet its end. Similarly, horticulture technology mission had been launched and a sum of Rs. 80 crores had been provided to Uttaranchal only. But its term is also ending during this financial year itself. I would like to urge upon the Hon. Minister that good results are being received from it and we were discussing about taking ahead the organic farming. Further, there is provision for food processing. Food processing units can be set up at smaller locations so as to get rid of the problem of road transportation. Otherwise, it is difficult to get remunerative price. Such type of value addition can provide remunerative price to the farmers and can make his cultivation successful.

Besides, keeping in view the interest of the farmer, the obstacles being felt in the construction of roads due to the Forest Conservation Act should be taken seriously because this whole hilly region is adjoining to the border, particularly Uttaranchal which is at the border of Nepal and has become all the more sensitive as several Maoist incidents have taken place over there and a training camp having also been detected. Taking this approach in view, if amendments are required to be made in the Forest Conservation Act, then it should certainly be made. The 'Pradhan

Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana' is an ambitious scheme, which is really needed. The commodities grown by the farmer should reach the market on time. The programme of PURA i.e. provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas is now gaining momentum. It was the concept of our Hon. President and the former Prime Minister Hon. Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji which was meant for curbing the exodus from and unemployment in the rural areas by providing all the facilities to the people in their villages itself. In this regard, it is my demand that the government should pay proper attention towards it.

Export zones have been created for export of agricultural products through the APEDA and as of now certain products such as basmati, flowers, lichi are being exported abroad. More items need to be added to that so that farmers could get its benefit. I have some concern with regard to the seeds, as we have passed recently the patent Act in both the Houses in respect of seeds and now agro-chemical, food and pharmaceuticals—all the three sectors have been included in the product patent. Moreover, now a seeds bill is also being introduced and even for the seeds being produced traditionally by our farmers a huge difficulty is going to arise for them. The government will have to seriously consider as to what sort of way out be evolved for that. Usually, we say that India is an agricultural dominated country. This is not a matter concerning with one or two farmers, but it can pose a serious threat to the crores of farmers dependent on agriculture.

The programme of agro-diversification or diversification of agricultural production had been launched by the previous government. This programme is being run with the World Bank aid, but its duration is going to meet its end and its desired outcome thereof are not emerging because even now that much training and awareness is not available to the people. Whenever we take up training or the work on horticulture technology mission or run the agriculture diversification schemes, we should ensure that such schemes are launched till the peasants are properly

trained and should be continued as a refresher course in all such areas. These programmes should conform to the products of the specific area. Shri Ram Kripal Yadavji had just now mentioned about the science and technology. But science and technology does not mean the manufacturing of aeroplane only. Rather, science has to play a role in the agricultural sector as well. The slogan of 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan and Jai Vigyan' given by our former Prime Minister Shri Vajpayee had this spirit. Similarly, now we have before us a golden triangle—the three targets. Through that science we have to develop not only in the defence sector but also in the agricultural sector. Just now you have talked about food security. The science and technology policy formulated in the year 2003 had mainly stressed upon food security in the country and it had been widely mentioned in its preamble. I do not want to go in its depth. Our research should also be extended in that area so the companies and the cultivators of this country could get the innovative researches in the seed sector patented. With these words, I demand that you will provide liberal assistance for the losses incurred due to the hailstorm particularly in the Almora, Pithoragadh, Champawat and Bageshwar districts. Much loss has occurred in that whole region. Hon. Minister is liberal. He would certainly give attention towards it and would provide relief. I hope that such policies would be formulated in the country, which would save the farmers from being compelled to commit suicide.

With these words, I conclude.

[English]

SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI (Bapatla): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to take part in the discussion on the Resolution that was moved by Shri Vasudevan Nair on the unprecedented crisis in agrarian sector which has resulted in debt trap, unemployment and poverty of the farmers.

Sir, this very fact that this has been debated for so many hours and for so many days on the floor of this House and the very fact that so many speakers

[Shrimati D. Purandeswari]

have risen and gone beyond political and party lines to discuss this subject only reiterates and re-emphasises the importance of this subject and I am very happy to be a part of such an important debate here.

We are all very well aware that last year the agrarian sector had recorded a very meagre and marginal growth of 1.1 per cent and to attain a GDP growth of eight per cent and to talk of poverty alleviation with such a marginal and meagre growth seems a very distant dream.

We are all very well aware that ours is an agrarian economy and 70 per cent of our people live in the rural areas and are still dependent on agriculture. There are many reasons that affect the lives of the farmers and so much has been spoken in detail. So, I would not want to go into everything in detail here. But there are still some grey areas that I would want to touch and bring to the notice of the Minister here.

In the first place, talking about water resources, we are all very well aware of the fact that our farmers are still slaves to the monsoon mandate and we know that the monsoons have left on a very dismal note. We have faced a deficit rainfall of about 13 per cent. When it comes to sharing of the river water, we have so much of inter-State water disputes in our country. For example, let us take the case of Andhra Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh we have the Krishna river water dispute. The water of river Krishna has been shared by three States, namely Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. We have had the Bachawat Tribunal which has divided the water between three States. However, the Bachawat Tribunal is yet to sit again since 2002 and till date they have not sat across the table and they have not reshuffled the water ratio as yet. For every State, the requirements and the needs of the State are changing and there is every necessity that tribunals like this to get together periodically, at regular intervals and to again re-rationalise the sharing of river waters.

Then, there should also be some kind of restriction on the indiscriminate and unscientific digging of bore-wells because sinking of each bore-well is very expensive and costs every farmer somewhere around Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 25,000 and not every bore-well is a success because of which he is incurring a lot of expenses on this. This is also one of the reasons why he is caught in the debt trap or the debt cycle again.

Turning now to the spurious seeds, insecticides and fertilisers, they are still doing the rounds in the market and our Seed Act is yet to come to the House for consideration and passing. So, I think some action should be taken very fast on that.

Sir, in spite of talking so much about spurious seeds, the Government here is now going to revive the MoU or re-sign the MoU with Monsanto. It had earlier signed the MoU with them with regard to Bt cotton and we all know very well that Bt cotton has not been a success. The universities of Canada have been saying that Bt cotton is bull-worm resistant, but the ground reality has turned out to be very different. They have been subject to a lot of diseases and they have not been a success. Even our agricultural researchers agree that there is still a lot more study to be done on Bt cotton. Despite all this, we are again trying to re-introduce it in other States, knowing fairly well that in States like Andhra Pradesh it has not done very well. I think we need to review this all over again as to whether we want to re-sign it. We all know that Mahico is the company which is marketing the Bt cotton seeds in India. I think we need to review that again.

Sir, now I turn to marketing. Here the minimum Support Price plays a very important part and the Government, time and again, has been failing to give the farmers the Minimum Support Price. There should be re-emphasis on this. There are certain crops and not all the crops that have the Minimum Support Price. There are certain crops that do have the Minimum Support Price and there are certain crops that do not have the Minimum Support Price, like the cash crops.

When it comes to the cash crops, they should have a minimum guarantee price wherein certain amount of money is allocated to the bodies wherein they can enter when there is a sharp fall in the prices and they could support the farmers in the prices of the cash crops.

Next is the Market Intervention Scheme, which is another area, where I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister. As per the rules of the Market Intervention Scheme, they say that if the acreage under cultivation is ten per cent more or if the price has dropped by ten per cent, it is only then that the Central Government bodies would come into the market and buy the product, thereby supporting the farmers. But, here, when we turn to the ground reality, there could be some areas wherein the acreage maybe just marginally more than what it was last year, but the production can be high. Like, for example, this year what happened in Andhra Pradesh is exactly that. The acreage that came under chilly cultivation was marginally high, but the production was very high. Because of this over production, we had a sharp fall in the price of chilly. Today, the scenario in Andhra Pradesh is that chilly farmers are throwing their produce on the land and they are burning them. It is not very easy for a farmer to just throw his produce on the roads and burn them. Unless he is very hurt, he would not be doing it because we all know very well that it is his blood and toil that has gone into the production of this. I think, these are the grey areas that need to be concentrated on.

Next is the crop insurance scheme. There has been a lot of talk about the crop insurance and still, I do not know, why we have not brought the crop insurance down to the village level. I think, the village should be taken as a unit and it is there that the insurance should be done. Now, it exists on the Mandal level and when we talk of a Mandal, there are almost about 29 to 30 villages that exist in a Mandal. It is not necessary that one crop should do well in all the 29 to 30 villages. There maybe some villages wherein

some crop could do well and some crops do not do well. Then, there is no point saying that I am not going to give you the crop insurance since it has done well in the other villages. So, I think, the village, as a unit, should be taken into consideration and again the crop insurance should be reshuffled and reconsidered.

This crisis in the agrarian sector is not only having its effect on the farming community alone but it is also having effect on the dairy sector. If we go back to the old days, usually people considered themselves rich not taking into consideration the monetary assets that they had, but they always thought or considered themselves rich as they had lots of cattle and even lots of children. I think, today in the 21st Century, we are poor in both the ways. Either we have one or two children or the farmers in the villages do not have cattle properly. The reason being because they are not able to buy them and because they are not having any returns for their farm produce also.

Above all, there is also illegal trafficking of cattle foetus which is happening, especially in Andhra Pradesh. The bulls of Ongole are very famous internationally also. The foetus of these bulls are marketed to Brazil and Africa, especially. This is resulting in a very sharp decline in our cattle numbers here and it is increasing in the other country. The pride which was ours till today is becoming the pride of some other country. This is another area which the Government needs to definitely concentrate on and necessarily consider.

Sir, I am very aware of the time constraint that I have and even before you ring the bell, I would like to conclude and thank you once again for having given me this wonderful opportunity.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Sir, I basically do not agree with the contention as hon. Member Shri Mohan Singh and other said that it is only because of the lack of rural credit that the farmer is committing suicide. I do not agree with this.

Sir, I was a member of the Fact Finding Mission that was sent by our Party to Andhra Pradesh to go

[Shri Kharabela Swain]

into the details of the causes for the farmers committing suicide.

We met around 25 families whose earning members had committed suicide and asked the reason as to why their earning member had committed suicide. None of them said to us that they were lacking credit. The credit was available to them....*(Interruptions)* The credit was not available from the nationalised banks or from the co-operative banks but they had got the credit from outside, from the moneylenders at a very high rate of interest of about two to three per cent per month....*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Swain, you have already spoken on this subject.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: No, I have not spoken.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did you speak on this Resolution?

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: When did I speak?

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is on record. Actually you had spoken for 17 minutes on this subject earlier.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: I do not remember it. Sir, if you say that, then I will sit down....*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri Shailendra Kumar.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi): Sir, I do not think that he has spoken on this subject.
...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: You may speak on this for 2-3 minutes if you desire to do so. But you have spoken. As per practice in uretic will you not speak again if you have already done so.

[English]

If you want to speak for two to three minutes, you can speak.

SHRI.KHARABELA SWAIN: Sir, I will complete it in two minutes. I do not remember that I had spoken on this subject earlier. I beg your apology if I had spoken already.

They all said that they had got their credit. They utilised it for digging the bore well but the bore well did not function. That was the major cause for the failure of their crops. So, even if they had got credit from the banks, still they would have failed in their crop. This was one of the major reasons.

I will tell you the second thing. Take the example of cotton farmers. The rate of cotton has come down from Rs. 2700 per quintal to Rs. 1800 per quintal. Fifty per cent of their cotton which were taken to the godown of CCI had been rejected. So, I appeal to the hon. Minister to look into this matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kindly conclude now.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: I will speak only one last sentence.

Take the example of weavers also. Actually they are not farmers. Some of the weavers had committed suicide because their designs were copied by the big industries and they produced the sarees at a much cheaper cost. With the result, absolutely there was no work for the weavers. So, Sir, I will just appeal to the hon. Minister that their traditional designs should be patented so that the big industries would not be able to copy it and produce it at a much cheaper rate and also the traditional weavers will have the work.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak on Vasudevan Nair's Resolution on relief measures to workers in the agrarian sector.

It is a fact that the House is discussing a quite burning topic related to farmers. It is also a fact that the farmer is the backbone of country's growth in the agrarian sector. At present, 62 per cent of farmers have no other occupation than farming. The farmers have boosted the pride of the country. They have worked hard to take the country on the path of development. I remember that we were not self reliant in terms of foodgrains long ago.

We had to import foodgrains. As the country's population went on increasing, it has had its worst impact on farmers. Even today, the farmers do not get remunerative prices for their produce—be it foodgrains or vegetables or horticulture. The farmers work hard day and night in the field, still they don't get remunerative prices for their produce. They have to take loans helplessly. They don't get remunerative prices for their produce and always suffer losses in farming. We generally find them to have been exploited by a number of brokers and middlemen whenever they take loans from banks, money-lenders, co-operative banks or regional rural banks. After taking loans, their financial condition becomes so miserable that they cannot even repay the amount of loans by selling their entire produce. Hence, they are caught in the vicious circle of unemployment and poverty and this goes on like this. Discussions have taken place in the House on this issue on several occasions. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw your attention to the state of Andhra Pradesh where nearly six hundred to six hundred fifty farmers committed suicide because of not being able to repay the amount of loans they had taken. The Government should adopt such families and provide loans to them to rehabilitate them and provide them loans so as to improve their financial condition in the real sense of the term. The farmer works hard in his field caring least the onslaughts of summer, winter, heat, cold and natural calamities. It affects most adversely those small marginal field workers who live hand to mouth and work in the fields on daily wages basis.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to remind you that hailstorms had destroyed the crops of the farmers in Poorvanchal as well as Bundelkhand regions of Uttar Pradesh a few days ago during the current month itself. Our hon. Members have raised issues relating to the problems of those affected people every now and then—be it zero hour, matters under rule 377 or discussions on natural calamity. Today I would like to request the Government to pay special attention to Uttar Pradesh. The farmers always are caught in the grip of floods, hailstorms, heavy rain and severe drought and are thus ruined. They are pained so deeply that they don't go to their fields again and flee to cities from villages. They work hard in the cities and earn bread for their families with great hardships.

We always talk of 'Kisan Bima'. We find that the crops of the farmers get destroyed during natural calamities. They don't get remunerative prices for their produce. It deteriorates his financial condition and they find it very difficult to earn bread for their families. I remember, the Government of Uttar Pradesh have made a provision of Rs. one lac to a farmer if he dies due to any natural calamity. Through the House, I would like to extend my thanks and convey my appreciation to the state government. I also remember the time when hon. Mulayam Singh Yadavji, in his regime, had written-off the entire amount of Rs. ten thousand taken as loan by the farmers who were not in a position to repay this amount due to their miserable financial condition. The state government had to fight with the Union Government in a way at that time to do so. Today, I would like to ask the Union Government to write-off the loans taken by such farmers in the states who are compelled to commit suicide because of not being able to repay the amount of loan. The Government should enhance employment opportunities for them by rehabilitating them keeping in view their miserable financial condition.

17.00 hrs.

The farmers don't get subsidy, manure and seeds. They are also not getting electricity and diesel.
...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shailendra Kumarji, please complete your speech if you could conclude it within half a minute. otherwise we have to take up another topic for discussion.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am going to conclude my speech within a minute. The farmers are unable to cultivate for want of electricity and diesel in time. Just now, a young Member of Parliament had taken up the issue related to non-payment of prices to the farmers growing sugarcane, in the House. In whatever condition Uttar Pradesh might have been, our sugarcane growers have not been given the payment of their produce even today. But the state government have made payment to them to some extent. We have been asking the Union Government from time to time for providing financial assistance to the farmers....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shailendra Kumarji, a time slot of two hours thirty minutes was fixed for discussion on this topic, which is now over. If you want to speak further, you can speak next time fixed for this. You will continue your speech.

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we will take up Item No. 26 Shri Chandrakant Kahire—not present.

17.01 hrs.

SPECIAL COURTS FOR WOMEN BILL*, 2005

SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI (Bapatla): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for constitution of special courts for women and for matters connected therewith.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for constitution of special courts for women and for matters connected therewith."

The motion was adopted.

SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI: I introduce the Bill.

17.01½ hrs.

YOUTH WELFARE BILL*, 2005

[*English*]

SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH (Karol Bagh): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for a comprehensive policy for the development of the youth in the country.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for a comprehensive policy for the development of the youth in the country."

The motion was adopted.

SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH: I introduce the Bill.

17.02 hrs.

SAFAI KARAMCHARIS INSURANCE SCHEME BILL*, 2005

[*English*]

SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH (Karol Bagh): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for comprehensive and compulsory insurance of Safai Karamcharis against any mishap connected with their work to give them economic protection, safeguard their interests and for matters connected therewith.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for comprehensive and compulsory insurance of Safai Karamcharis against any mishap connected with their work to give them economic protection, safeguard their interests and for matters connected therewith."

*Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2 dated 24-3-2005.

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The motion was adopted.

SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH: I introduce the Bill.

17.03 ½ hrs.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE
(AMENDMENT) BILL*, 2005

(Amendment of sections 8)

[English]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1951."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: I introduce the Bill.

17.04 hrs.

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE (PREVENTION,
CONTROL AND REHABILITATION OF
VICTIMS) BILL*, 2005

[English]

SHRI AJIT SINGH (Baghpat): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the creation of a National Commission for Inter-Community Peace and Justice to tackle communal strife in the country and to ensure lasting peace in the country and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill provide for the creation of a National Commission for Inter-Community Peace and Justice to tackle communal strife in the country and to ensure lasting peace in the country and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto."

The motion was adopted.

*Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2 dated 24-3-2005.

The motion was adopted.

SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH: I introduce the Bill.

17.02½ hrs.

INDIAN PENAL CODE (AMENDMENT)
BILL*, 2005

(Amendment of sections 304, etc.)

[English]

SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH (Karol Bagh): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Penal Code, 1860."

The motion was adopted.

SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH: I introduce the Bill.

17.03 hrs.

HIGH COURT OF TRIPURA BILL*, 2005

[English]

SHRI KHAGEN DAS (Tripura-West): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the establishment of a High Court for the State of Tripura.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the establishment of a High Court for the State of Tripura."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI KHAGEN DAS: I introduce** the Bill.

*Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2 dated 24-3-2005.

**Introduced with the Recommendation of the President.

SHRI AJIT SINGH: I introduce the Bill.

17.05 hrs.

COMPULSORY VOTING BILL, 2004—*contd.*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, the House will take up item No. 34—further consideration of the Compulsory Voting Bill.

Shri B. Mahtab to continue his speech.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack): Sir, I am going to conclude my speech.

The other day, I was mentioning about the first-past-the-post system, which we have adopted in our country. During the last fifty-six years of our independence, in the first two decades from 1947 to 1967, it has been found that one single party getting 37 per cent of the votes ruled over this country whereas 63 per cent of votes were against that political party. At no point of time did the parties which got 63 per cent votes say that they were against the single party which got 37 per cent votes, as it happened very recently in one State of our country. One can imagine how the founding fathers of our Constitution would have reacted if such a situation had occurred in the 1950s or 1960s, when they were alive and were Members of different Houses in either the States or in Parliament. This is a point which should be deliberated upon.

In spite of universal adult franchise, the voter turnout even today seldom crosses 60 per cent. Bogus voters are still there; rigging is still there; and re-polls are unable to wholly eliminate them. Horse-trading is also still there. Strictly speaking, elected candidates, in a sense, cannot be called people's representatives. If people elect independent candidates of their choice, they cannot form a government. Basically, party candidates can only form a government. This actually puts the electoral system through a difficult phase.

Stalemates after elections also continue, contrary to the cynicism that is prevalent in some sections of our society. A majority of the population of our country wants to vote. For an adult Indian to vote, the requirement is that his or her name should be in the voters' list. It should be a name, featured in the electoral rolls correctly. This, one would assume, is a routine matter; but that is not so. What happened last year, in 2004? There were glaring examples in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and even in Orissa. During the last general elections, there were reports in different newspapers and in different media that there were large-scale deletions of voters' names from the rolls. In Andhra Pradesh, the quantum of deletion was 19.9 per cent in Prakasam district; and 11.2 per cent in Srikakulam district. In short, lakhs of Indians were forcibly disenfranchised.

The game of cricket is being played today. It has again started. In Gujarat, the names of two of our eminent cricket heroes Parthiv Patel of Ahmedabad and Irfan Pathan of Baroda were not there in the voters' list.

They did not cast their votes. One of our leading editors of Orissa found her name was not there in the voters' list. The name of a retired Director-General of Police was also not there in the voters' list. These are all eminent persons. Thousands and thousands of names were deleted. They were not approached by anyone saying that you have registered yourself here or you have registered yourself at some other place. But thousands and lakhs of names were deleted from the voter's list, which is the basis on which our voting depends. The Election Commission has conveniently shifted the blame to the administrative set up, to the political parties, and to the politicians that it is their job to ensure that their voters' and their supporters' names should have been there in the list. But this is not a credible justification. In any case, the responsibility for the electoral rolls rests with the Election Commission and not with the State or the Central Government.

What is surprising is that the incompetence and ineptitude of the Election Commission has not attracted

more indignation. The onus of ensuring free and fair election rests with the Election Commission. That is why, it has been conferred with exceptional powers. How do they use those exceptional powers? Unfortunately, in the guise of preserving the independence of the Election Commission, we have ended up with creating an unaccountable set up.

My hon. friend, Shri Bachi Singh Rawat, has also moved another amendment and in that amendment I find that it is more justifiable. In that amendment, he has mentioned that a person who fails to cast his vote shall be disqualified from contesting any election for a period of, at least, six years from the date of his conviction. This is a rider which he has given in the Bill. To a certain extent, a person who is provided with a right, he also should be responsible about his duties. This amendment comes along with that line.

The adult franchise has provided the right to vote to around 55 crore or more people of our country. But how many of them are actually exercising their votes? There are a number of reasons about which I had explained in my earlier speech, the previous day. But today I want to confine myself that there are certain democratic countries in the world where the onus lies with the voter that he will come and register himself to exercise his power. That is how the list is prepared. If he is unable or if he does not want to cast his vote, then he is disenfranchised. He has to give a good reason as to why he is unable to cast his vote. Then, his name is removed from the register. If he does not cast his vote, a period of six months or one year is given where he is unable to get any Government service or he is unable to get any employment in that country. There the duty towards that country comes to the forefront. I think, that is more required.

We have adult franchise. When we got independence, at that time, we had fought against a colonial rule and people's upsurge was there to bring in the whole society into the political fold. That was also in the minds of the founding fathers of our Constitution. But, at the same time, a sense of

responsibility, the duty towards this country also has not developed to that extent.

But, at the same time, I would say that while educating the people about their responsibility to exercise their franchise, an attempt also should be made in the scheduled areas where development has not taken place to that level. There, an incentive has to be given; but in other places a disincentive also should be made a provision.

These are my concluding remarks. With these words, I support the amendment which has been brought by the Mover of this Bill. But, at the same time, our country, I think, is so large, so vast and so varied that we need some more time to have a compulsory voting system in this country to make it effective. Thank you. With these words, I conclude.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I value the spirit with which this Bill to provide for mandatory voting, compulsory voting has been moved. But given the present circumstances, I find myself unable to agree with the provisions of this Bill. I agree that though we have done enough in improving our electoral system during the last two decades, yet much has to be done. Electoral reforms is a continuing process and we have to, whenever the situation warrants, whenever we gain a new experience from the working of the existing provisions, bring about the necessary changes in the electoral law. It is also because in a changing, moving and dynamic society as ours, no law can be static and we must always be prepared to learn lessons from our experience and take steps—legislative or otherwise—to remove the lacunae, to overcome the difficulties and have a law which is, in effect, a working law on any subject whatever.

Having said that, I feel that the suggestion to make voting mandatory for the people would, in the present circumstances, run counter to the democratic principles as such. In a true democratic society, in a true democratic polity, I think, it has to be left to the individual whom does he want to vote for or whether

[Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal]

he wants to vote at all or not. And whether he wants to vote at all or not is as important as, we say he should have, the freedom to vote without fear and without any pressure whatever.

17.19 hrs.

[SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV *in the Chair*]

If there were to be a law forcing an individual to mandatorily go to the polling station and cast his vote despite the fact that he does not like any of the candidates therein, I think, that would be a mockery of law itself. There maybe cases and there are a large number of instances where people do not prefer to vote for any of the candidates. Do you, in that circumstance, in that event, want to force it upon him that irrespective of his own feeling, irrespective of his own idea or notion or opinion about the candidate, he must still vote for somebody? Would that be democratic?

If we were to go into the reasons why there is low percentage of voting in our elections, I think the obvious conclusion that one would come to is that it is not because there is no provision for compulsory voting.

Sir, you may look at the figures of voting percentage anywhere in the world. I suppose, India would be faring better than others. If we were to have a segment-wise or class-wise analysis of the voting patterns, I think, the people who are less educated, who are illiterate are more conscious of exercising their right to vote than the educated ones. Why is it so? The people at the lower strata of the society consider this to be an important occasion when they have the right to assert themselves. Otherwise there is nothing worth democracy for them. We have been wanting always to usher in a true participatory democracy, but we are nowhere near it. People in the higher strata of the society have some sort of apathy towards the entire system as such. Call it indifference or call it cynicism, the net result is that they do not wish to go for voting.

As I said, the feeling about the politicians as a class is not only confined to India; it is worldwide. It is for us to do something about it. I do not deny that. But when we come to this question whether we just make a law here to make voting compulsory for them, I think the time is not ripe today and the time for this can never be ripe except in only one circumstance, in one set of circumstances or environment, and that is the suggestion that I would like to make.

Before we make voting compulsory, I would like to say that there are certain other things that we have to provide for. We have to make it conducive for the people to vote. What happens today? People want to exercise their right to vote, but they cannot. When I talk of the people in the lower strata of society—unfortunately, they are not well off—I find that they want to vote, but the circumstances are such that they are stopped from voting, they are not permitted to vote or the conditions are such that they cannot dare to go out to vote. What we have to do, what we have to ensure is that all those who are willing to vote, who want to participate in the voting process should be able to do it without hindrance or without fear.

Coming back to this important point, which is the subject matter of today's Bill moved by Shri Rawat, of compulsory voting, I would like to say that if you want to provide for compulsory voting, there has to be a condition precedent to that. Make it mandatory to provide in the ballot paper or in the voting machine that say, if there are ten candidates, there should also be eleventh entry 'none of the above', that is, negative vote. If you provide for that, then, I suppose, there will not be anything wrong with providing for compulsory voting also because then, maybe, people would come out in large numbers to vote to exercise their right to vote, to express their opinion. If they do not like any of the top ten or any of the candidates, they may have the option 'none of the above' to vote for.

We are following first-past-the-post system. I am wanting to be brief in this matter. I am not talking of the merits or the demerits of the list system because

then the things could be different. If we are retaining first-past-the-post system—and I am in favour of retaining the same for very valid reasons—with that system in vogue, you can make the voting compulsory only if you provide for a negative vote.

I mean to say, if the voter coming to the polling station does not wish to vote for any of the contesting candidates and if majority votes are polled in favour of 'none of the above', then the election should be declared as void. Furthermore, none of the candidates who had contested that election should be allowed to participate in the subsequent election. This method can be experimented if you are prepared to do it.

If the election is held again, as it ought to, with any number of candidates in the field, and if the same situation is repeated, then none of them should be elected. This measure may bring about some salutary effect on our political system. But if you were to include compulsory voting and expect every ordinary citizen to go and vote, then it would not serve the purpose. It would rather go against the very principles of democracy.

Sir, having said this, all that I would like to further say is that we always talk about improving the system. This is the spirit and feeling with which Shri Bachi Singh Rawat brought about this amendment. There is a need to cleanse our electoral system; to cleanse our politics; and to make the system such that we can really boast of a thriving and vibrant democracy. This should be done besides the rules that we need to amend.

We really need to inculcate the spirit of democratic temper amongst the people. If the basic democratic temper were missing, then all these amendments here and there would be only at the periphery. This is our experience in this field. We have made many fundamental changes in our laws. We have improved Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, but still where are we! We have amended the Anti-Defection Law enshrined in the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, but still people find ways to—as I said

last time—not circumvent, but to circumnavigate it. They go around it, and we cannot do anything about it. It is because you cannot force somebody not to resign. If somebody wishes to resign, then you cannot hold him back. This is the tool that can be used to destabilise Governments. Therefore, we basically need democratic temper.

Nevertheless, having expressed my views on this issue, I would certainly like to compliment and thank Shri Bachi Singh Rawat for bringing about this Bill, and giving us an opportunity to express our views thereon.

[Translation]

SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL (Tonk): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the bill introduced by the Hon. Bachi Singh Rawat raises a very important issue.

It has been the subject of political science for a very long time and has been debatable issue since long. In politics, where we are serving such discussions would take place, such type of questions will be raised and their solution will be found. Taking into account our democracy today and the adult franchise, this bill seeks to make a provision to make it compulsory for the voters to exercise their voting right. Therefore, I would like to speak a little bit on the background of voting and the voter.

In different parts of the world, the term 'governance' be it synonym with the State or the king came into being. It might have evolved from the tribe. There used to be the head of the tribe, whose orders were followed by the other people of the tribe and a system was in place. Gradually it developed in the form of city republic and a voting system standard at several places which exists even today. The voting right was not always provided to the people so easily. Here monarchy prevailed and the State was formed on the basis of the power of money and muscle power and it was necessary for the people to follow the orders and diktats of the rulers. In the beginning in the most of the places only male voters used to be allowed to vote. Even among them, there used to be the voters of a

[Shri Kailash Meghwal]

particular section. Gradually, the aristocracy emerged in which only some rich people could vote. Then the process of voting moved ahead and the city republics came into being where the people used to vote enmasse to run the administration of their city. They used to discuss and this was assumed to have the form of governance with an obedience. Every voter used to take part in the voting as a citizen. And after the progress of the city republics, big States with huge population came into existence and the voting pattern gradually underwent a change.

We got freedom in the year 1947. Before 1947, the authority was vested in the king of England and we would have to remain committed to the orders proclaimed by the king of England and its Parliament. We got freedom at the midnight and from the slaves and subjects we became the citizens of a free country in which we are able to choose our own ruler. On the whole, the voter does not like sovereignty. Politics is an issue which has ample scopes for discussion. In the democratic system today sovereignty is given importance. The voter himself is a sovereign and a sovereign dedicates himself to others from the view point of his sovereignty. We have evolved this system and every voter's effort should be directed towards changing the government. And from this system voting process has come into being.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, just now my friend was saying that the Government is run on the basis of merely 37 per cent voting. Some representatives win on the basis of 15 or 20 per cent voting or by the support of alert voters. However, no one has received cent percent representation today. We have developed this party system and this party system is also related with this problem.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, a poet has rightly said "Bura Jo Dekhan Main Chala Bura na Miliya Koi, Jo Dil Khoza Aapno, Mujh se bura na koi". I would like to say to all the hon. Members that is the political parties

do not woo and bring the voters to polling station to cast their vote and do not adopt democratic measures or use tactics to fetch them to the polling stations our democracy would not be able to stand and there would be no relation with this sovereignty if we do not recognise the people who have contributed towards establishing the democracy, which has been stated to be the largest democracy in the world. We all have contributed to democracy. Today, the vote is secured on distributing the liquor, on caste affiliation and money power. Is our present democracy a healthy democracy? Whatever we say today for the sake of making speech or speak anything in praise of each other at the party level, where we are standing today is not the result of a healthy democracy. I would like to bring about the amendment to make voting compulsory for the people in order to get the fruits of a healthy democracy. Unless a valid representative receives at least 51 per cent votes of valid voters, he should not be considered as a true representative. This discussion would go on. Therefore, the first thing we should do is to awaken the voter and tell him that he is a voter and this is his status. A voter forgets his status after casting his vote once in five years. The sovereign becomes subordinate for five years. After five years when he again gets a chance to vote he again stands high. Gradually with the passage of time the voter in the country is getting apathetic dissatisfied with the present political system. Where did we appease the voter, has the democracy been able to serve him? The democracy has turned into mobocracy in the country.

I wish to submit that if a voter is aware of his sovereignty then he is also aware of the fact that this House his, public buses and trains etc. also belong to him. He is well aware that all this is public property. But whenever any agitation or demonstration takes place he comes forward to damage this public property. Though the incidents of sabotage during demonstrations, agitations and political rallies etc. reflect the political awareness of the voter on one hand, it also shows his ignorance not to understand that he is damaging

his own property by doing so. Is this because of deterioration is our political system? If it is so we need to ponder over it. Is there any commitment prevailing today?

I congratulate Shri Bachi Singh Rawat in this regard that once the compulsory voting is introduced the voter will feel that he is the one who makes the Government. He will have devotion commitment towards the Government. Voter feels proud even though there maybe many shortcomings. Only now I said that voter faces many hurdles for casting his vote. If we make voting compulsory then there will be double benefit. First, the methods used to impress the voter will be restricted and second the way money is being used in the politics, will also be restricted and the voter will be committed towards Government as that he is the government maker. Certainly this feeling will be created in his mind. The net result of making the voter aware about voting and making voting compulsory will be good for the future of country's democratic system. I request the members of all parties to think about it. If it is made compulsory. Then we will be able to find solution to overcome the deterioration that have griped our democracy and only then we will be able to give the democratic system right direction. With these words, I conclude.

[English]

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to give my opinion on the Bill. I thank my friend Shri Rawat for bringing this Bill which has given us all an opportunity to discuss this matter.

I agree with the understanding, the feelings with which Shri Rawat brought forward this Bill, but I have disagreement with the content of the Bill. Shri Rawat's intention is that a maximum number of voters should vote, but the method he suggests for that is coercion.

Freedom is the basis of democracy. Without freedom, what is democracy? To achieve that freedom, we cannot force the people to behave in a particular

manner. Use of force is the end of democracy, the end of freedom. To protect democracy, we cannot use a method which, in the long run, will kill democracy.

Here, I have a difference of opinion with my friend. So, the problem is there. It is a fact of life that in our country a large number of voters are not voting and the percentage of voting is decreasing year by year. This is a matter of great concern. It is definitely a matter of concern for all the political parties and all those who have faith in democratic system and all those who want this democratic and secular system get strengthening. But why is it happening? That is the question. Some colleagues have mentioned certain reasons. I agree with many of their suggestions.

One is the question of casting of vote or participating in voting. Voting requires consciousness. Voter should be conscious that he should vote, why he should vote and if he does not vote, what will happen to the country. This consciousness is necessary for a voter. As Shri Bansal was saying, many poor people of our country are more conscious as they go out and vote. But educated and rich people sometimes do not vote. We all know as to why education or literacy is necessary in the society. But, only education does not make a human being to understand everything. Hence, only imparting education will not help. One should know how to exercise one's democratic rights. As already mentioned, people should be aware of not only their rights but also their duties. As I have the right to vote, I have the duty also to vote. If we do not vote, if well-meaning people do not go out and vote, then all those who want to misuse would become majority and then, definitely democracy would become the victim. Here, I want to say that we have to raise the consciousness of the people. People should be made aware of their rights and duties, and that they should go out for voting.

Secondly, voters should have faith in the system and their representatives. That is the second important aspect. Now, people are not going out for voting because a section of the people are losing faith in

[Shri Hannan Mollah]

their representatives. Why is this happening? It is happening because the people find that their representatives are not living up to their expectations or coming up to the mark or they are not fulfilling the aspirations of the people. There are so many other reasons. People know as to what is actually happening. Most of the people's representatives have no mission. Their only intention is to grab power and not to use it for the national interests but to use it for their personal interests. When the representatives have no mission, they become corrupt, go into the market as a commodity, and sell themselves to earn more. They forget the people. In view of this, people are losing their faith in their representatives. If we can restore the faith of the people, then, people will come to know and say, yes, my representative is fighting for the aspirations of the people, is building the country, and is participating in building the nation. So, this would give them inspiration.

So, one of the things that our friend mentioned is that slowly this mission is increasingly missing. They are indulging in horse-trading. This is one of the very serious lacunae in our system which is developing.

If the politics becomes the method of opening somebody else's own fortune, then fortune-seekers only will come more and more. That is another area that we have to be careful of.

We have to restore the faith of the people in the people's representatives. People's representatives also should have minimum standards, minimum honesty, minimum patriotism, minimum national responsibility, and love for the country and for the people. Therefore, one should have that mission. That is the second area that we have to think of.

We have to establish the credibility in the system. People think that we are losing our credibility. When we have '*Aya Rams and Gaya Rams*', when people's representatives are being sold like animals in the market, then people think as to whom should they vote.

One gets elected in the name of one political symbol and when he gets more money, he goes to another party. We find, representatives of the people being in one party in the morning and then shifting to another party by evening. This type of opportunism and salability of the representatives of people should be stopped. These loopholes are destroying our credibility. We have to establish our credibility before the people. We have to show to the people that we are not like that, we are a different type of people. That also is necessary. Those who are in politics, should have a mission. It is not like a job. Political activists need some preparation....(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time for this Bill is over and still there are 8 members to speak on the subject. If the House agree we can extend the time for this Bill by one hour.

SEVERAL HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes Sir. Please extend the time.

[*English*]

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: So, it is the duty of those people who are in politics, to establish their credibility in the eyes of the public. That is another attempt that we should make to encourage people to vote.

Another concern is, why the people are not going for casting their votes. People belonging to poorer sections are normally not allowed to vote. That is another reason why the percentage of voting is not going up. These people are not allowed to vote. There is rigging, booth-capturing, attacks by hooligans and criminals. All these things are there. It is because of these elements that people belonging to poorer sections, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and backward classes are not allowed to cast their vote. This is also one of the reasons why the number of voting is not increasing. We have to keep this aspect also in mind and consider it.

There is a migration of poor people in large numbers. Thousands of people from Bihar are going outside Bihar as agricultural labour and so on. During elections, they are not in a position to come back to cast their votes. That is the problem with the migrated people. Their names are not available in the electoral rolls in the place where they are living. How can we ensure their voting? Those people are absent at the time of voting. They cannot vote at the places where they live. That is also one of the reasons why the number of votes are reduced. Another thing is that a large number of people do not find their names in the voters' list. Their names are deleted. When people go for voting, they do not find their names in the voters' list. That way, many genuine people cannot vote because their names are not there. So, proper voters' list is necessary. People cannot exercise their voting rights without that. That is another area of concern.

There are many other reasons which are mentioned by my friends. These are the reasons by which the percentage of voting is coming down. We have to give some avenues, we have to bring some changes. How can we do that? We can think of the steps that we can take.

As I have said, education is a must for raising consciousness among the people. We have to ensure that they get some education to read and to understand the programmes of the various political parties. We can then select all the things that are necessary.

Another area is information. What type of information should reach the voters? We know there are many difficulties. We have talked about electoral reforms, State funding of elections and so on. Voters should get all the information on the basis of which they can make up their mind. Therefore, proper dissemination of information to the voters is another important thing. We have to see that free and fair elections are conducted. That type of atmosphere is necessary where there are no obstructions and poor people vote in a particular way they like. We know about the role of hooligans and criminals in elections.

We have to ensure that voting is done in a free and fair manner and voters should not be harassed. That is also another area of concern.

If I think about it or you think about it, that alone is not enough. We all have to put together our understanding and thinking as to how the system can be improved. If one section follows the mission and another section follows the path of crime, then both the things cannot go together. We all know about criminalisation of politics. Criminals are joining in large numbers. This is an area of concern. We know, earlier, criminals were used by politicians. Now criminals have become conscious. They have started questioning why they should be used by politicians. These criminals have refused to be used by politicians. They themselves are becoming politicians. In these circumstances, how will the people have faith in the system? It is because of that that the people are losing faith in the system. We have to think about this jointly.

We see that different people are using the system differently. We have to find some way as to how we can achieve this goal. Protection of those voters should be ensured. Those voters who are away, should be allowed proper methods. An atmosphere should be created where they are given opportunity to cast their votes from their places of residence. These are certain methods which we all should ponder over. Parliament should think about it jointly and unanimously. We have to reach an understanding in a non-partisan way. Different parties may have different perceptions. We should have consensus where all the political parties should work in a particular manner which will be agreed to by all.

That is necessary. Without that, just by law, nothing will happen.

On the electoral reforms, there are so many Committees, including, the Dinesh Goswami Committee and the Indrajit Gupta Committee. These reports are just lying in the office and there is no use of them. So, we have to think in this regard.

[Shri Hannar. Mollah]

There is no dearth of suggestions. We do have suggestions, but we need to have the will. If we have the will and we want that the political parties would come together, reach certain consensus and make certain rules, and then follow those rules, definitely people would have more and more confidence on us. Then, the number of voters using their franchise would also increase.

Sir, in West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura and to some extent in Tamil Nadu, the voters turnout percentage is very high, but in the Northern India, voters turnout percentage is very less. Why does it happen, we have to ponder over it. It is varying in different States of the country.

Sir, in our State of West Bengal, there is an intense competition among the people, among the political parties on political issues. There is not a single day in West Bengal when there is no political issue being discussed among the parties, among the general public. Congress party would say something, CPI (M) Party would say something and the Trinamool Party would also say something. All the issues are being discussed among every everyone of us there. It is a part of everyone's life. There, politics is not only during the voting days, which are for 10 days to 15 days. In West Bengal, politics is a matter of general discussion for the people all around. Similar is the position in Kerala, Tripura and some other States. People there are conscious. It is because of intense competition among them over politics, political issues. According to their belief and faith, they vote. That is our experience.

If that intense political debate, discussion and consciousness are there among the general people in the whole country, I think, every voter would go and cast his vote. So, I think, it is all the more necessary. But we find that all this is absent at many places, in many States of the country.

Finally, Sir, I would say that we, all the political parties, should have consensus on issues like this. On

the electoral reforms, we should be determined to have a consensus. We should have proper revision of the electoral system. We would have to agree on certain things, evolve a consensus and then act in the same manner. If that happens, definitely our system would be strengthened, faith of the people would be restored, and the people would feel that their representatives would behave in a particular manner, in their interest, in the national interest. If that happens, people's consciousness, faith and confidence on the political parties, on using their voting franchise would grow. Otherwise, you all know, how and why we are losing ground.

Everything is possible. But the main question is whether we have the political will, whether we would, all together put all our efforts unitedly and unanimously in trying to implementing certain standards and methods in a uniform way all over the country. All this is very much necessary. If we think seriously in this respect, we would improve the situation all over the country.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPA (Trichur): Sir, I thank Shri Bachi Singh Rawat for having introduced such a Bill so that we get an opportunity to discuss this serious question of voting, as to how the right of voting should be exercised.

I may not agree with the provisions of the Bill, but I also agree with the good spirit in which Shri Bachi Singh Rawat has brought this Bill to this House for consideration.

Now, this is inextricably linked with the question of electoral reforms.

18.00 hrs.

It is not an issue, that can be taken up separately.

Just before me, the comrade who spoke here was explaining the aspects connected with electoral reforms and their importance. Now, it is not that people are not voting because they do not want to do so. There are many reasons that stand in the way of their

exercising their vote. One of the reasons maybe the use of money and muscle power in our elections. They play a big role, especially in the Northern part of the country. It is not that I am saying that the South is very virtuous. But, comparatively it is like this. It may have historical reasons. But, when a voter has to face such money and muscle power, he finds it extremely difficult to exercise his right. Maybe, he is a poor man employed with some landlord or employed in a company. The *malik* of the company or the landlord takes a position that he should vote to this or that party; otherwise he may lose his job or he maybe beaten up. In this type of a situation, that man has to decide either way. If he is a little politically conscious, then he would decide to abstain from voting. It happens because, if he casts his vote, he will either lose his job or maybe beaten up. In such a situation, the best possibility is that he would not exercise his vote.

There are other reasons also. It maybe that a person wants to exercise his vote but as he is working far away from the place where he is registered as a voter, he does not. Now, take the case of Kerala where the percentage of voting is comparatively very high. Even in Kerala, there are lakhs of people who work outside India, especially in the West-Asian and the Gulf countries. I think that there is a thinking in the Government that they should be given the right of voting. They do have a voting right but cannot exercise it because they are far away. Probably, they will not be able to fly back to India, cast their vote and go back. Only a few rich people can do it; others cannot. So, knowing fully well that they have a desire to vote, they have a certain political understanding as to whom they should vote and all that, their desire to cast it becomes a mere wish. This happens to millions of people in Kerala. It is a reality. Even then the vote percentage is very high. What does it mean? Probably, every single person, who is valid—I mean physically in a good shape and who can vote—votes. They all cast their votes.

Then come the activities of the political parties. there, they only try to make people conscious of their

right. That plays a very important role. As was told about West Bengal, the people discuss politics, they discuss socio-economic issues on a day-to-day basis. In Kerala, you will see that every single person reads a newspaper—probably more than a newspaper. It is not that he is subscribing it. But, there is this tradition in the districts of Malabar region, where *bidi* workers roll the *bidis*.

They will keep one person who do not have to roll beedies; in a factory, where there maybe probably 50-60 persons, who will be rolling beedies, one person would not roll beedies, his only job is to read out all the newspapers for which they subscribe. He will read out all the political pamphlets; even good novels, he would read out; he would read out other books also. Others work and they hear what he is reading. They develop that capacity to work and hear. They pay for the reader for their pay.

As a candidate if you go and talk to them, you will always be put in dock because you would not probably be as aware of the things as they are. Normally, they will not spare their votes like that. They will cast their votes and cast them very consciously. It is not so easy to stop them with your muscle or money power because they have that power of togetherness. That strength is there and they will cast their votes. In that situation, the only thing is that if a candidate can convince that you represent the right politics and you are the right candidate, then you are assured of their votes. That type of awareness is there among those voters and that is a very important thing.

It is not something that you create in a day; it is a process through which these beedi workers reach that stage. The trade unions play a role in it; the political parties play a role in it. Those people will say what their representatives should do in Parliament because they know what a representative can do in Parliament for their benefit. They will say that you should introduce such a Bill in Parliament or you should fight for such and such things so that their rights and privileges are assured.

[Shri C.K. Chandrappan]

Are we bringing in that type of development or consciousness among the people? It is the question which all of us should ask ourselves. If people are conscious to that level, then there is no need to compel them. They know that it is their right and they also know that the right of franchise is an instrument with which they can change the whole system. It is with that consciousness that they will vote. They will then vote in great numbers.

In Kerala probably, we need not run after the voters, asking them to vote for you. The only thing is that you should convince them that you are the right candidate and your programmes are the better ones than that of others and that they should vote for you. But here in the North, the difference is that probably a majority is not voting. It is a very unfortunate situation. Even after nearly 60 years of Independence, a majority of the people is not voting. It is a reflection of our politics and even of our democracy. So, the question is to strengthen democracy. Strengthening of democracy means that people at all levels—even the most downtrodden and poor—should be able to see that they have the right to vote and that is the instrument by which they could change the society.

If that consciousness is there among them, they will surely vote. Even if you have provisions like if anybody does not vote, he will be put behind bars or he would be fined—the wish or intention is good so that they will vote—but that will not help. On the contrary, what we should do is to create awareness among the people about the importance of the right to vote, which should be developed.

Then the situation will change. The situation will drastically change. This is again a question of electoral reform because it is not that we have to detach the voting right from everything and then discuss. It is a question of how electioneering is conducted, who will put the bill, the question of State funding of the election, the question of propaganda through the Media

owned by the Government. All these are to be taken as a package and then we should discuss how the electoral system could be improved as demanded by our democratic system.

Our democracy or for that matter any democracy wants that its citizens should exercise their voting right. That is the elementary thing. But when it is not done, let us not think that it is the fault of the people. It is not. Probably it is our fault. If the political parties are working among the people at the grassroot level, not only at the time of elections, throughout the year, every day, every month and every year, take up their problems, in relation to their lives, and try to solve them, then they will understand that politics has something that is helping them. Otherwise, they will think that this fellow wants to become a Member of Parliament and wants to enjoy the fruits of Membership, let him enjoy. They think that it is his business and not theirs. To make them understand that it is their business, we will have to take such measures by which they may feel that it is the Government of the people. That feeling can be generated only by the actions of the Government.

In Kerala, Land Reforms have been introduced not for the sake of introducing land reforms. The basic structure of the society has been changed. Every landless person, a hutment dweller, who never might have imagined that he would become the owner of a few cent of the land—after all the land decides the status of a person in the society—every landless was given 10 cents of land.

Then came another project. Even before all these new projects of housing came, in Kerala we had introduced a scheme to provide one lakh houses for the poor people. And as a result of this they realised that voting was something by which they can get the land. Voting means that one can fulfil his dream of a small hut, which probably one's grandfather or father could never materialise. They can get all these things through voting.

Voting also means literacy in Kerala. According to the UN Standards, Kerala is a State which has hundred per cent literacy. It is not that the State Government have done a miracle so that the people have become literate. The whole society was moved Government took the initiative but the entire society was brought into play. The society was told to teach somebody who is not literate and people did it. The result is, Kerala became 100 per cent literate. To an ordinary voter what does voting mean? It means literacy to him, a dwelling for him or land for him. He will then vote and nobody will have to be put behind the bar or made to pay fine. It means many more things.

Before land reforms, in Kerala if a person without land had to marry his son or daughter he had to go to the landlord with his *angvastra* around his waist, and had to beg, 'may I get my son or daughter married'.

If he says, "Yes", then only you can do the marriage, if he says, "No", then the marriage will not take place. That was landlordism. Today, it is not there but its bitter memories are still there among the people. If your son marries, he would have to take his wife with her ornaments and parade her in front of the landlord—we call it *padipura*—at the entrance. If he thinks that the girl is beautiful, then she will have to sleep in his chamber and her husband will have to go back alone. That was landlordism. So, the self-respect of the individuals, his personality and his right to live as a man has been achieved by casting his vote in favour of a social change. It is immaterial whether the people are in favour of the Left or not. The people understood that this is an instrument by which they can radically change their society. After understanding that, they came out to vote.

Then, the other side also became active. The forces which wanted to stop this process of social change also mobilized their people for casting votes in their favour. In this way, 100 per cent people will participate in the elections without coercion, without compulsion and without any fine. If we want to create

such a situation, then the political parties should have that commitment to approach people with whatever means they have. This should be your approach when you are in politics. Then, the people will play their role of casting their vote. They would change the society the way they like. They may go Leftwards and they may go Rightwards. That is a different matter. If the Left is powerful and strong enough to influence the thinking of the people and take them forward, then that State will go Leftwards. If the Right is strong and powerful, then they would go Rightwards. But the point is that every citizen whether he is Left or Right in his thinking, if he is conscious of his rights and if he thinks that he can change the society by exercising his right to vote, then he will vote. That awareness, that sense of purpose and that kind of devotion has to be shown by the political parties. It is a very big responsibility of the political parties.

I think by introducing this Bill, Mr. Rawat gave us a chance to have our thoughts shared with others. I congratulate him for moving this Bill. It is a very good occasion for this House to discuss all these things.

[Translation]

DR RAJESH MISHRA (Varanasi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me a chance to speak. The proposal brought by hon. Member Shri Bachi Singh Rawat has been debatable issue since independence. This question is raised after every election that so and so candidate has been elected despite such a less percentage of total votes casted in his favour and similarly those parties have been able to form the Government that have got minority votes.

Sir, it has been subject of discussion ever since the constitution came into force in India and will remain a topic of discussion in near future.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, what should be the method of initiative within the society so as to ensure maximum polling during the election. It is an important subject during elections. During the days of struggle of independence; the very few people participated in

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votings we achieved some targets in this regard after independence. If we look at present day percentage of voting we find that in those times it was only half of what it is today. Our country has witnessed National Movement and the struggle of independence. If we ponder over the situation prevailing in other countries of the world at that time, we found that several countries in the world do not have democracy, but it is there in our country. What is the percentage of polling in the other countries? There is democracy in Nepal, Pakistan, European countries, England, America and Switzerland. There is different form of democracy in these countries. Our constitution has features of constitutions of several countries viz England, America, Switzerland and Canada. Considering the problems of our country the architects of our constitution have formulated it. At that time it was presumed that cent percent people will be literate in Indian democracy. But in present day conditions we find that in India the percentage of voting is high in those parts of the country where we find the highest literacy class of society. I won't take the name of a particular region or Kerala but today it was being discussed in the House that in Northern India the percentage of voting is less and in South India it is higher. It is a fact that in West Bengal percentage of voting has been highest in the past few years. In North India literate community is large. He seriously discusses the role of Government, opposition and politician. He criticizes as well as supports the Government. All the 365 days of the year he discusses these positive and negative points. But the intellectual class of society celebrates a holiday on the day of election. If we pay attention towards all these minute things and if the Government make provision for compulsory voting, it is felt that voting sentiments have been checked. In other words it is said that human rights are checked somewhere. You cannot compel for voting, we should think over those aspects as to why the people do not want to cast votes in the constituencies, districts and state.

If they cast votes, their percentage is very low. It has been under discussion for the last few years that there should be one more column in the ballot paper or voting machine indicating that they do not want to cast their votes to the said candidates. We think that if such an amendment is made, then there would be some constituencies from where no candidate would get elected and the seat will remain vacant. Then, what will happen in such situation? If we make the voting compulsory, then we will have to change the basic structure of our Constitution. Thereafter, it will be too early to predict anything. Today, we feel that there is need to pay more attention towards the lacuna whatever either exist in the political parties, political leaders or in the public representatives. They all are confined to one body which conducts elections that is the Election Commission. Discussion should be held as to what reforms the Election Commission can make in this regard. We should not point out the shortcomings in the particular candidate that such and such candidate did not discharge his duties honestly, therefore, the turnout remained low in his constituency. This is not the thing, there are other circumstances also. You should also pay attention towards them. The educated class would like to caste their votes on the names of the leaders of their respective political parties, on the basis of the manifesto of the political parties and also on the intention thereof. When the common voter see that parties are organised on caste basis, he feels that he stands nowhere in the system, consequently, he would not like to cast his vote. Because every person is not gripped with such type of mentality. When we talk of communalism, the political parties are being organised on the basis of communalism. every person would not involve his sentiments with the party and he will also not go to cast his vote. When an idea will strike in the mind of the voter that nature, ideology and intention of the leaders of such and such political party is political, then only he can repose his faith in the candidates of such party. If such concept comes to his mind, he will definitely receive a lease of encouragement towards voting. Today, there is also lack

of confidence among the people, either towards the political parties, the candidates or the entire system which makes him indifferent towards voting. That is why, the turnout percentage is declining.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, if the Election Commission does not check the political parties, their role enshrined in the Constitution will distort. The Election Commission should think about the nature of the political parties. The language used by leader of a political party or its candidate during elections can be observed as to whether it comply with the rules and regulation of the Election Commission or not. However, we can say that the Election Commission has made many reforms in the electoral process. The Election Commission conducts a test in every election and their positive results have also been seen during the last years. If the Election Commission exercise its powers conferred by the Constitution then such type of check can be put.

Today, discussion takes place that the political parties should not give ticket to the criminals. I would like to say in this regard that the debate has not been concluded on the definition of a criminal. What is its definition? I think that during the last 10-15 years, the debate remained confined to the issue that political parties should not give tickets to the criminals. The criminals should not have right to contest election. If all the political parties have a will power and do not give tickets to the criminals then they cannot enter into the Parliament and the legislative assemblies. What is the definition of the criminal? Only the public can define it but not the other. Public can certify as to who the criminal is and who not. The qualifications and disqualifications of a candidate are defined in the election rules. It is clearly mentioned therein that a person convicted by Judiciary cannot contest election. But, majority of them are under-trials they do not fall in the category of the convicts because their case is not decided yet. There are a lot of criminals against whom no one dare to lodge an FIR. Under which law you will put these things. When the Election Commission convene all party meeting to have a discussion on this

issue, all the parties get united. Even the people also discuss on this issue. In the present age of coalition Governments every party knows the value of a single seat and the political party or its leader think that if they give ticket to such and such person who can win the seat, irrespective of the degree of his crime because he does not crime under the purview of conviction, then need of winnable candidate becomes the priority of that party. That's why political party gives ticket and we feel that if public put a check on these contestants and political party get aware that public would cast in favour of criminals then automatically entry of criminal in the House would be banned and political parties will stop giving ticket to these people.

We have seen during last elections and before that elections that the names of many people are figure in the voter list but they do not have Voter Identity Card. The people went to polling booth but they did not carry any other alternative identification. It was month of May and June, the votes goes to polling booth and after objection he goes back to home again to bring identity card and he does not come. He does not have any interest. Today the most important thing is that we will back to arouse interest and it can be done by performing our duty honestly. There is no alternative to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now you conclude please.

DR. RAJESH MISHRA: Yes, Sir.

When any political party and public representative will sincerely try to build a nation, perform his duty honestly then a spirit will arouse in public that they should vote. Everybody knows that voting is his right but contestant and political party decide their emotions can they cast their vote in emotion—otherwise voter does cast his vote. Sometimes people also discuss that what is the benefit of voting. They say, what we will get if any Government is formal? The development of such sentiment and negative approach among the people is a very serious issue. The seriousness of this issue can not be ended by enacting any law. For this

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purpose we, the public representatives, all political parties and Election Commission shall have to decide in coordination as to what we can do the best so that we may improve our accountability towards people fulfilling their ambitions.

If we prove ourselves to their ambitions the public will trust on us and when their confidence will get boost, they will be attracted towards our party, our policies, principles as well as leadership of party, and public will automatically would like to go to cast their votes. This issue is certainly very important in today's context and it was also important yesterday and will remain important in coming years also. This problem can be solved with a positive discussion.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me an opportunity to take part in the debate on Compulsory Voting Bill, 2004 introduced by Shri Bachi Singh Rawat.

India is a democratic country and democratic system is in operation here. We can set an example before the world particularly in terms of elections. Elections, whether held for the highest institution of the country or for the state legislative assemblies, power is transferred in a most democratic and peaceful manner. Today all the honourable members of treasury benches as well as of opposition have put forth their views with regard to making voting compulsory and had discussions. The matter of the most concern is, as the honourable members said, whenever the elections are held the percentage of voting remain very low. It is said that the turnout of voter is very low. The candidate of such and such party has won with very thin margin. In the past we used to cast votes through ballot papers but presently we vote by voting machines. Sometimes we have to face very troublesome situation. The number of total candidates whether they are from national level parties or state level or other independent candidates, increases to such an extent that ballot papers become too lengthy and voting becomes difficult

even by voting machines. In this case double machines are needed. It also causes difficulty in voting. Hence we need to give attention to the need of keeping the number of candidates low.

Secondly voting should be compulsory as it is proposed in the Bill moved by Shri Bachi Singh Rawat. All of us, to whichever party we belong, need to collectively think over the measures so as to increase the interest of the voters in voting. We need to consider the matter at every level whether it is gram panchayat elections or the elections of the highest Panchayat of nation. As we know often the situation of revoting arises due to death of a candidate or some other reason. Voting again and again also creates disinterest among people for voting. It also needs attention and it is very important to make people awaken in this regard. In a democratic system where we elect our representative we must do it with insight and intelligence.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, an awareness should be created among the voters that their representatives will have to be elected. I would like to point out that when the voting takes place, all-the offices in the district are closed, to and for movement is restricted and barriers are placed. Then the situation arises that if some voter goes at polling booth on bicycle or by any other mode of transport, he is stopped. This also leads to the voter's indifference towards voting. If a family comprising the wife and children is going to polling station to cast their vote in their car, they are stopped forcible. And this is also one of the reasons for voter's indifference towards voting that they are restricted for no reasons.

Sir, the voting is like a national festival and it should be held in the same way. In this regard, the people have to understand that they are going to elect the future of their country as well as that of the development of their district. This perception should be inculcated in the mind of the common masses. Sometimes, you must have seen that where the development work has not taken place, the voter of that

constituency boycotts the voting and does not cast his vote. They brandish the boards that if there is no development, there will be no vote. The Election officers, employees, leaders, and the area representative of political parties approach them and make all out efforts to convince them, however, they don't pay any heed and boycott the election completely. This is also one of the reasons for lessor turnout of voters.

Sir, the daily wage-earners, who work daily and earn to make their both ends meet come across a lot of problems due to holiday on account of elections. They think as to why they should vote or what purpose voting will serve. When we go to villages and tell the people about the date of election and ask them to necessarily cast their vote, the daily wage-earners make a mockery of it by saying that the elections do take place almost everyday. They argue that if they go to cast their vote and don't earn then what would they eat? This is the sort of language the villagers speak during elections. This has also led to the decline in voting turnover. Taking all these factors into account, the need of the hour is that all the political parties sit together and seriously consider these problems so that some solution maybe arrived at.

Sir, the location of polling booth at far away places in another important reason. We see that at some places the polling booths are placed at a distance of two or three kilometers while at other the way of polling booth is very circuitous and somewhere else some rivers and streans fall in the way of polling booth or the way is quite a long one. Therefore, the people are unable to vote or become indifferent to voting. Here all the hon'ble Members are sitting. Everybody's constituency must be having primary schools, community centres and Panchayat Bhawan. Election commission has a rule that the polling booth should be made at the permanent structures. Therefore, if the polling station made in the permanent structure near the population, the voting percentage can increase. This has to be taken seriously.

Sir, I want that there should be mobile polling booths also. There should be mobile polling units in which Election officer, other employees and the Force are deployed and they remain at one place or village for a few hours and the people come there to cast their vote. We have seen that many people fail to reach the polling centres to cast their vote. If a mobile voting unit is arranged, the people who don't go can cast their vote through the mobile voting unit and the voting machine can be deposited in the strong room after the voting. This can also lead to increase in voting percentage.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon'ble member has talked about the voter identity card. Today, speaking from the biggest panchayat of the country, I would like to say that I have not received my photo identity card till today. I have been filigg my nomination paper with the help of certified copy of voter's list. The photo identity cards, that have been prepared, have many discrepancies. Some photographs, which have been taken, are beyond recognition. Some male photograph is bearing the name of a female and vice-versa. If there is at all the name and photograph of a male his name is not correctly spelt. In addition to this, such discrepancies have also come to the notice that many record-keepers and the employees of Tehsil, who were entrusted with the task of distributing the photo identity cards after getting them ready, did not deliver them and rather threw the whole lot of identity cards into some well.

The identity cards were thrown into the well so that they will not have to deliver them to people. We have to consider this thing seriously to make every voter's identity card indispensable because it has its own importance. The election identity card is like the identity card in a way and it should assume such importance as to become indispensable and necessary in case of need for country's citizenship or issuing any certificate of some kind anywhere. Therefore, it should be necessary and compulsory for every voter to get his identity card prepared.

[Shri Shailendra Kumar]

Sir, there have been complaints of tampering with voter list and these are true. Only just a while ago it was being discussed that voters lists should be the same from Gram Panchayat Level to Lok Sabha elections. In villages it is a common practice to delete the voter who are not voting in our favour and the voter of those who are voting in favour are included. ...*(Interruption)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the House agrees, we can increase the time of discussions on the Bill by one hour since its allocated time is over.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Sir kindly extend the time of the Bill.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, our voters lists are a bogus one and it needs to be studied and assessed sincerely to find out those who have tampered with it and action should be taken against them. India is a democratic country. Every citizen enjoys enfranchise. If somebody indulges in such malpractices then action must be taken against the person. Today Gram Panchayat elections are being held and elections will be held in UP also. You will see that percentage of voting there is 99%, 100% or 95%. But at the time of Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections only 30, 40, 45% votes are cast. What are the reason for that needs to be seriously pondered upon.

For voters, separate arrangements at difference booths should be made because after many long queues are seen there. I have seen that poor people do not even know how votes cast by them are going to be helpful. They are not that much aware. They just stand in queues and vote. But the people of high class family, their ladies and other members do not like to stand in queue in scorching heat of sun. So they go back and do not come again to cast votes. This is also another reason for meager no. of votes. Violence and booth capturing have been complained here and it also needs to be taken seriously.

Sir, through you I would like to suggest the Government that there should be age ceiling for candidates. Secondly, minimum qualification should be fixed for them and thirdly many honourable members have talked about criminalisation in election process that also needs to be pondered over. It is very dangerous and a matter of concern for democracy in future.

Sir, the compulsory voting Bills are presented by Shri Bachi Singh Rawat, should be discussed upon seriously by leaders of all the parties and thus find out a proper way to elect the peoples representatives.

Sir, I conclude with these words.

SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA (Samastipur): Mr. Chairman Sir, I thank the honourable Members. Shri Bachi Singh Rawat for the important task of bringing this Bill in the House and we have got the chance to discuss it. I do not agree with the proposal but the points that are going to be discussed on the basis of this Bill will certainly be important. All the issues related to the Bill need to be considered upon. The Bill is meant for initiating electoral reforms. I think that before implementing compulsory voting various points related to it should be considered since it is not something that can be reformed by making laws only. For that we need to create a proper environment. Serious considerations overcoming various emotions are needed. During the course of discussion on this bill in the highest Panchayat of the country, I wish to draw the attention of the House that a pressure is being felt in making it compulsory, the feeling is as if we are compelled to sign a bond. It will be most improper to impose such things on people.

But it is also necessary that there should be maximum polling. What could be the measures for that certainly need to be discussed. The hon. Members who spoke before me have seriously debated upon these points. I am also of the view that by increasing awareness by organising awareness campaigns and informing the masses about the importance of voting and running the awareness campaigns to the most

backward level of society. We can achieve the goal. When we go for campaigning and asking for votes of people therein a strong need to direct the unexposed voters and deprived classes who have recently been given the liberty to vote in Bihar and other backward states. I would like to draw attention to the States like Bihar where 70% of people of State worked under the way of landlords and feudal lords. They either worked on their land or in area under their power completely as slaves to their diktats, like a "Barahil" to them. "Barahil" word was used for those 70% of people who were engaged in service of these landlords. These landlords continued to rule Bihar in a most autocratic manner for 40-45 years, after independence. If in a village 10 houses were of those landlords and 200 houses were of deprived classes then the lower caste people or people with small land holdings hand to decide their vote according to the will of those 10 feudal lords. Those 10 families people used to say that votes of these 200 families are their own. E.g. if there are 1000 votes and 750 or 800 out of them are of deprived classes. But, they used to say that those were their votes i.e. they have to cast their votes in favour of whomever they used to dictate. They had a method to which I would like to draw your attention. Some of our hon'ble Members have raised the issue that at some places voters are not allowed to exercise their franchise and not the incidents of booth capturing have also taken place.

Our hon'ble Members should know the ground reality of Bihar. I would like to inform you that this pattern of voting continued for the last 45 years. Ten houses in a village decided the voting trend and it was the compulsion of 200 houses to cast their votes as dictated. This was the voting pattern. The percentage of voting was not much, it was not much earlier also but there has been a movement during the last 15 years in Bihar. It was stated earlier that there was peace in Bihar and now it a disturbed State. How did the disturbance take place there. There were attempts to preempt the battle of social change. The people who were in favour of status quo did not want it to change.

Even 15 years ago, 85% people either did not go to the polling booths or they could not cast their votes for whom they wanted out of fear unleashed by the remaining 15% of the population. They had to cast their votes in favour of the candidates sponsored by them. But it would not be an exaggeration to say that the 15% have started either to avoid casting votes or they have been compelled to follow the direction of the 85% due to their fear ever since awakening has dawned upon the people and the oppressed people have started raising their voice. The percentage of vote has, however, increased. The people who had been oppressed for centuries turned up for voting. It was said that there was disturbance and attempts are made in a variety of ways in obstructing the polling process. I would like to submit in the House but the sense of dignity comes in way. There is some legal taboo also; still I would like to say that whether it was out of fear of authorities of the Election Commission of India, I would not say their nod rather it might have been their fear that the officers and the machinery deployed by them decided the voting pattern and its direction and the voters began to be directed on gun point to vote for a particular side. I am referring to the last ten years. It is being said on gun point that either cast your vote on this election symbol or make your exit from the polling booth. The polling percentage declined also because of this. The graph of voting in Bihar shot up for a while and later on it started declining as the security agencies or the military which were deployed there were directed to favour a particular side and out of their fear the poor voters started turning up in lesser numbers to cast their votes. I do not think that this trend will be reversed by bringing in the compulsory voting system. This change will be brought about by awareness. The directions of development and awareness are quite relative. Just now one of our hon'ble Members has stated that banners are put up to the effect 'no work, no vote'. With the coming of awareness, the demands for development would increase where development has not taken place. It is also a democratic way. It is also freedom. Why should

[Shri Alok Kumar Mehta]

we curb this freedom. I would like to point out that whenever such issues come up the people from the BJP speak in the vein of Hitler. It is not understandable. There should be no compulsory voting at the gun point. Such acts will not enable democracy to become sound. We should convince them to exercise their franchise. Wherever there is lack of development, development works should be undertaken. We are required to learn from the Bihar experience....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The debate is touching the party lines. You might have heard other Members. This discussion is not on party lines. The whole of the House is thinking over it.

SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA: Sir, I am not saying these things having been inspired by the party line but I would, however, say that you are trying to limit the popular choice in the parliamentary democracy through prescribing educational qualifications like graduation, or post graduation for the candidates as our colleague has proposed.

19.00 hrs.

It is not essential for a person to be matriculate or graduate if he is social, political worker and capable of raising the problems of people and fighting for them effectively. Prescribing this type of criteria is not justified at all. I think it tantamount to inhibiting the people's freedom. Give them space to develop. Increasing somebody's physical stature by over-stretching would be an excess. I think the institution like the Election Commission of India should come forward to raise the voting percentage. All know about what happened in Bihar in the name of exercising strictness on the occasion of elections only.

I would like to share with you a brief experience which is not motivated by any party lines. I am a Member of Parliament. My vehicle was parked at some place at the time of election. The officers who had been deployed there got my vehicle seized in their

presence. I asked the D.M. and the S.P. to explain why my vehicle was seized. They replied that the seizure was ordered by the officers who were there on observer duty. I had asked for the seizure list and a copy of the F.I.R. which I have not received as yet. My driver was also put in jail. Can it be the only method of election reforms? I do not approve of it. It could be an attempt to unleash terror aimed at affecting the election. There should be a campaign for spreading awareness among the people for electoral reforms. It should not be that the Election Commission get up and become active in the last month of the five years term. For this seminars should be organised at various places. People should be made aware at every village and locality. A fearless atmosphere should be created. Efforts should be made to extend development to every person and every nook and corner of the country. Then electoral reforms will also follow in that order. The voting percentage will also go up. An atmosphere of development will be created and a ray of hope for healthy democracy will also appear. The direction of development and awareness are relative. In this year's election in Bihar, a large number of votes could not be polled due to non-availability of photo identity cards. The documents which were to be produced in place of photo identity cards were not accepted by the officials and the voters were made to flee from the polling booths. There are large number of polling booths meant for the weaker sections situated in the areas dominated by the predominant castes. It requires to be changed. These polling booths are required to be set up in their respective areas so that people can feel a sense of freedom. Reforms can be brought about through these measures. Bachi Singh Rawatji, voting percentage can also be raised through these measures and ideal situation can be brought about. If you force people to vote, it will not lead to healthy democracy.

With all these words I thank you. I would also like to thank Shri Bachi Singhji Rawat that I got an opportunity to express my views through him.

[English]

DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA (Inner Manipur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to participate in the debate on the consideration of the Compulsory Voting Bill moved by our hon. friend, Shri Bachi Singh Rawat. When he introduced this Bill on that particular day, my mind goes back to the days I was going for my electioneering.

To be very frank, I joined the electoral politics only in 2002 after a long stint of my teaching career. That too, I was in that process only for 13 days before the election. It was very interesting that people who wished to vote enormously in my favour did change their mind just two or three days before the election. Perhaps, all of us are aware how this has happened.

When we analyse all these things, I really appreciate the ideas put forth by Mr. Rawat while introducing this Bill. I think he has expressed everybody's wish that all should exercise their franchise. In a country like India, being the largest democracy in the world, unfortunately this did not happen so far. Sir poor turnout for voting must be one of the reasons which perhaps made him think to introduce such a Bill. But I am afraid that in this country where we have a lot of freedom enshrined in the Constitution, compulsory voting means use of some sort of compulsion or force. I am afraid that this may bring some negative results. Perhaps, for this, we have to wait for sometime. For that, we are trying to analyse how to improve, rather increase the voting percentage.

We have just heard our hon. friend from Kerala. He had put his points so nicely that once the voters realise that their needs are met or made to be met by the process of voting, by the democratic system, perhaps all will come out for voting. Anyway, it depends on many things. Let us look at two occasions, namely the time of legislative and parliamentary elections and the time of elections to the local bodies. In the elections to the local bodies, the turnout of voting is very high. Why? It is because, perhaps, in that particular election their immediate needs are met because the area is

small and the voters know their candidates very well. They take every initiative to go for voting and elect their right candidate.

So, there comes the quality of the candidate. Why I said quality of candidate is because it all depends upon the candidates. There are many candidates for whom the people do not want to vote, but we cannot stop them from contesting the election by the system that we are following now. So, that way when we go for compulsory voting, I am not taking a stand that I object to this. I would put it in this way that we have to take sometime to educate the voters. Let the voters know that this is their primary right and that all of them should go for voting. For that, we are very much optimistic that with the system of education that we are now putting forward, every voter in a democratic country like India should be well educated. When I say well educated, I do not mean that a voter should be a Ph.D., like me, or he should be a lawyer like our friend Mr. Kapil Sibal. What I mean by education is that they should be able to express their views on all social issues, including political issues. They should be able to understand what opinion others express on particular issues so that they themselves can exercise their own minds and come out and join the system of democracy. That will be very fine.

In this connection, perhaps, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan by which we are now trying to make compulsory and free education upto the age of 14, might help to a certain extent. In the primary education, as you know everybody in this country is now talking of a three-language formula. It is very fine. In my place, we have our local vernacular, Hindi and English.

Sir, I am very sorry that I cannot speak fluent Hindi even though I can understand when my friends speak Hindi. Though Hindi is not compulsory, even then English is a good *lingua franca* now. We can understand each other in that language. Once at the primary level a particular student starts a proper spelling of their local vernacular, and some amount of arithmetic to do his day to day calculation and some

[Dr. Thokchom Meinya]

sort of behaviour about the system of the country, then perhaps he should be able to participate freely and frankly in the election process. Here, I will use the word 'ignorance'. The voters are very ignorant, particularly in my area, maybe because my area is a hill area. Manipur is 90 per cent hill area, and only 10 per cent is plain. Like that, many other States have hill areas. Therefore we come across a peculiar situation. For example, villages are at very far distance from the polling stations. They are just linked with a small road. Sometimes, some goondas or some monoyed-men will stand on the way, and say 'you do not go for voting, somebody will vote on your behalf, on behalf of the entire village'. There are instances, when some of the hon. Members, maybe in the Parliament, even in the State Legislature, could win their election before they actually filed their nomination papers. You know some forces are there, which force them to contest election and make them win without any fight. These are certain things which are prevailing in the present system. So, for that, we require cent percent literacy, which is a little away at the moment. My friend Shri Rawat is not present in the House. I would request him that let us wait for sometime to make compulsory voting because this may give negative results.

Sir, there are many other things, I would like to point out. While educating the voters, we have to inculcate our democratic temperament. One should realise that ours is a country that has taken the administration from the hands of the monarchs and kings, and now we are running a Government by the people. So, we have to work together. We have to inculcate this democratic temperament, as we did in the case of scientific development.

State funding of elections is one issue which I would like to raise while taking advantage of this opportunity. State funding can be done in the elections. The candidates have nothing to spend in the elections. They just put forward their bio datas, their activities in

social life and all sorts of things, and the voters can decide to elect or select their representatives. Perhaps that is a very good thing. Money plays a very big role in our election process. In the beginning, I told my election was so short. Just two days before the whole scenario changed. I come from a teaching profession. I was not having enough money to fight elections, but even then, somehow, by God's grace, I could win. It was terrible. So money creates a problem. That is exactly happening in the elections. I represent the Parliamentary Constituency under which there are as many as 32 Assembly segments. Our population is less. Therefore, the number of seats in the Assembly are in proportionately high. Wo there a man having money can purchase votes. That is the real problem. Once we go in for State funding so that the candidates and the political parties do not spend money in the elections, maybe that will be a very good thing.

With these words, I once again appreciate the feelings, rather the motive, with which our friend Shri Rawat has moved the Bill. I wish we should give it sometime. Then perhaps things will come up slowly and it will be very right.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Thank you, Sir.

I think, it is a very well-intentioned Bill. Probably, the intention of Shri Bachi Singh Rawat, who has piloted this Bill, was that it is always the candidate who gets a minority vote who wins. Suppose a total of 50 per cent people have voted and 50 per cent of that 50 per cent have voted in favour of a candidate. The candidate who has got only 25 per cent of the total votes wins the election. Probably, this was the reason that has driven him to pilot such a Bill.

Actually, it is not the poor who do not come to vote; it is the educated, who have a cynical view against democracy and politicians as a whole, who actually do not come to vote. For the intellectuals and elite class people of this country, politics is a cesspool. That is their feeling.

As a Member of Parliament, I have contested many elections. I find that for the poor people the election day has become a national holiday. They have probably gradually understood that it is the elections which have empowered them. They have realised that that is the power they have.

During the last Jammu and Kashmir elections, I remember a *panwala* was asked why he voted in the elections and whether he did not have any fear for his life since the terrorists had threatened people not to vote. He said, he initially thought he would not go to vote. He was sandwiched between the terrorists on the one side and the security forces on the other. He felt powerless. But, all on a sudden, on election day, he felt, he had some power and that was his power to vote, which he must exercise. So, it is the poor in this country, who come out in more and more numbers to vote but it is the cynical educated people who do not come out to vote.

The Bill that has come up seeks to make voting compulsory. Maybe, we could make it compulsory, but I do not think in most of the countries in the world it is compulsory. In the American Presidential elections also, hardly more than 40 per cent people cast their votes. In the UK and in most of the western countries, where educated people are more in number, never 70 per cent cast their votes. We find in India that mostly people come out to vote in good numbers; and sometimes even to the extent of 80 per cent. So, I do not think, making it compulsory is going to help much. On the other hand, it might create problems.

If somebody is sick or away, how could he vote? If he does not vote, could we punish him for that? If somebody is prevented from voting, what would happen? We could say that we would provide security. Can we provide security to each and every person? A threat need not be simply physical. It could be psychological also. If a person says, 'Do not go to vote. I would not tell you what I would do if you vote today

but tomorrow I can take action against you', you could feel threatened.

There could also arise a situation where a person can't cast his vote. During the days of Khalistan movement and ULFA movement, we had seen such situations. At that time, when I was a civil servant, I had gone to Assam on election duty because the Government officials in Assam did not agree to perform election duty. We had seen in those days that hardly ten to fifteen per cent voters came out to vote.

In that case, can we punish somebody because he could not vote? So, I think, this might not be a real solution. We should just improve the consciousness to vote gradually. This would increase the percentage of voter turnout in elections.

Another point was raised by the hon. Member who spoke just before me from the other side about State funding. Would State funding solve the problem? It is all right to say that the State would give some money to everybody but I would simply cite one example. Almost each and every candidate spends some money for booth management. It is done just one or two days before elections and it is not accounted for anywhere. If somebody tries to bribe the voters, how are you going to find it out? Even if you have State funding, the same maladies would recur. So, I do not think, State funding is a solution to this.

In the whole gamut of electoral reforms, I would raise certain points which could be discussed and thought of. The first point relates to the provision of national identity cards. It could be a multi-purpose national identity card issued to every citizen so that it would prevent infiltrators from coming to India and grabbing all the economic opportunities here. India has become a milking cow for everybody from Bangladesh and Pakistan. From Pakistan, many people came to watch the cricket matches. Out of them, 34 people are absconding. It is not known where they have gone. Why is it that when Pakistanis come here, they vanish

[Shri Kharabela Swain]

in India? Why is it that when Indians go to Pakistan, they come back? It should be seen that there should be a national identity card so that no outsider is allowed to get any benefit that he is not entitled to.

Another point which could be debated is whether the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers should be elected or appointed by the President and Governors. They should be elected in the Houses, as we are electing the Speaker, so that the question of Governors' intervention and the functioning or the impropriety of the Governors would not arise. So, this could be debated. I do not say that it should be decided but it could be debated.

Another point which could be debated is whether the tenure of the Lok Sabha and of the Vidhan Sabhas should be fixed, just like that of the American Congress. If you elect the Prime Minister and the Chief Ministers in the Houses, you would have to fix the tenure of the Houses and they could not be dissolved before that.

One more question is whether we should have a Presidential form of Government. Should the President be directly elected by the People? This should also be debated. Even after 58 years of Independence, we could debate whether we need a change in the system of government. Let us debate it. If we agree, we could bring in a change in the Constitution.

Should persons convicted by Courts be debarred from contesting elections even though they go on appeal? All the time they say that it is a judicial process, it is in the Court, and he has gone on appeal, even though the person has been convicted by the lower Court and sentenced to jail for three years or five years. So, still he is able to contest elections. Therefore, this point should also be debated.

My contention is that this is a very well-intentioned Bill but it might not be practicable to implement it. So, it just goes to prove that India is a shining example of democracy. I wish that the proposals I made should

be debated. This should be debated so that gradually and gradually, like in England and in United Kingdom, India could become a symbol of democracy, a symbol of bright democracy and exemplary democracy.

SHRI GIRIDHAR GAMANG (Koraput): Mr. Chairman Sir, I appreciate the spirit of the Bill moved by my dear colleague, Shri Bachi Singh Rawat.

I will start with the hon. President's speech delivered to the hon. Members on the occasion of conferment of Outstanding Parliamentary Awards for the year 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002. I quote:

"What amazes the world perhaps is the sagacity and maturity of the Indian voters who have always tried to exercise their mandate conscientiously and enthusiastically proving once again that as envisaged in our Constitution, the people are sovereign and the power flows from them."

He has given two words. One is developmental politics and another is political politics. These two words definitely give us a serious thought of the development which we had experienced after a number of elections in the country.

We have got three Government in the country. One is the Central Government, second is the State Government and the third one is the local self-government. So, all the three Governments always will have elections and elections starting from panchayat to Parliament. Therefore, people instead of voting after five years maybe voting in less than five years or even less than that, or sometimes even lesser than that period. It is because we have reached a stage where there is no recall of the elected bodies at the lower panchayat level.

Elections are must in a democracy because the Government will have to be formed by the people, for the people and of the people. You cannot avoid the elections. But frequent elections at all levels definitely create disgustment in the minds of the people. Therefore,

we have to see how to curtail the frequent elections, and it is a matter of discussion for the future.

We had a number of Governments. The voters voted in different elections. But why the percentage of voting is changing? At different elections we had different patterns of voting with different percentages of voting.

I would like to mention here that during the elections, the five 'VIP's' play a major role. These five VIPs decide who will vote, what will be the percentage, ect. They are: very intelligent person, very intellectual person, very influential person, very illiterate person and very innocent person. However, the very important persons' also participate in the voting. But whose voting is more and whose voting a less will have to be surveyed to know the pattern of voting. The important

point is whether the frequent elections can be avoided or not.

It is a debatable question. But we are not able to come to that point as of now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member Shri Girdhar Gamang, you will continue your speech next time because you are on your legs.

I thank all the hon. Members.

The House stands adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. on Monday, 18th April, 2005.

19.30 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, April 18, 2005/Chaitra 28, 1927 (Saka).*

*Subsequently 18th April, 2005 was declared as Holiday on account of Ram Navami and the House met on 19th of April, 2005.

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