

proportionate target. However, some of the individual Ports like, Cochin, J.L. Nehru and Kandla, achieved the targeted traffic during this period. The details of cargo traffic handled by Major Ports during April-December, 1998 are as under:—

Port	Proportionate Target (‘000 Tonnes)	Achievement (‘000 Tonnes)	% Variation
Calcutta	7123	6202	-12.93
Haldia	15360	14454	-5.90
Paradip	9965	9704	-2.62
Visakhapatnam	27071	26893	-0.66
Madras	27367	26204	-4.25
Tuticorin	7654	7474	-2.35
Cochin	9137	9210	+0.80
New Mangalore	11173	10617	-4.98
Mormugao	13132	12025	-8.43
Bombay	25305	23252	-8.11
J.L. Nehru	7440	8547	+14.88
Kandla	29345	29699	+1.21
Total	190072	184281	-3.05

(c) The shortfall in achieving the targeted traffic by Major Ports during April-December, 1998 was mainly on account of the slow down of economy and resultant dip in exports particularly of Iron ore and general cargo followed by lower throughput of petroleum crude and products.

Foreign Equity In Road and Port Projects

1007. SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT :
SHRI TARIQ ANWAR :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to allow hundred per cent of direct foreign investment in road and port projects; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) :
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Central Government in January 1999 has approved a policy for permitting foreign equity participation upto 100% on the automatic basis both for road and port projects provided the total foreign equity in any such project does not exceed Rs. 1,500 crore.

[Translation]

Malnutrition In Children

1008. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :
DR. CHINTA MOHAN :
SHRIMATI MINATI SEN :
DR. SUGUNA KUMARI CHELLAMELLA :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn towards the news-item captioned "Indians 64 per cent children underweight, says report" appearing in the *Pioneer* dated January 18, 1999;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) the assessment made by the Government in this regard;

(d) the reasons for the children being underweight and malnourished in the country; and

(e) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to take care of the underweight and malnourished children?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As per the "Indian Nutrition Profile" based on studies conducted in 187 districts from 18 States/ Union Territories, 49.2 per cent of children under five years were found to be underweight during 1995-96;

(d) The reasons for prevalence of malnutrition include poor feeding practices, inequitable food intake, seasonal variations in food supply, frequent episodes of illness (especially diarrhoea), low level of female literacy and socio-economic deprivation.

(e) The Government is seized of the problem of malnutrition and a number of direct and indirect interventions through different sectors are being undertaken to address the problem of malnutrition. The National Nutrition Policy was adopted in 1993 to provide inter-sectoral and sustainable action in agriculture, health and education for reducing malnutrition. Integrated Child Development Services, Balwadi Nutrition Programme and Mid-day meal programmes are being implemented. Micro-nutrient deficiencies of iron, iodine and Vitamin A are being prevented through iodization of salt and supply of ferrous sulphate and folic acid tablets and vitamin A solution. Other initiatives of the Government which contribute to improving nutritional status include Poverty Alleviation Programme, Public Distribution System for essential foodgrains Urban Basic Services and Awareness Generation on nutrition and health.

Illegal use of Domestic LPG Cylinders

1009. SHRI AMAN KUMAR NAGRA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the LPG cylinders for domestic use are still being commercially used in restaurants as a result of which the I.O.C. has been incurring losses to the tune of lakhs of rupees each year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any proposal is under consideration of the Government to check the said misuse or to conduct and independent inquiry into the matter from time to time;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENT AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) : (a) IOC have detected 7 cases diversion of domestic product during 1997-98 and 11 cases during April-December, 1998-99.

(b) The price differential between domestic and non domestic product has been found to be the main reason for such diversion.

(c) to (e) Oil Industry has an established system of checking diversion of domestic cylinders to commercial purpose through the field officers by conducting inspection and raids at distributors as well as at commercial premises. Suitable action is taken against the distributors who are found to be indulging in various malpractices as per the revised LPG Marketing Discipline Guidelines.

Measures to Check Defection

1010. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA :
DR. ASHOK PATEL :

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce any legislation to check the rising trend of defection from the political parties in order to avoid elections at the short intervals;

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

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

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI) : (a) to (c) Government would consider about bringing a legislation for giving effect to such measures for strengthening Anti-defection Laws on which consensus emerges amongst political parties. It is not possible to indicate any time-frame for taking a decision in this respect.

Creation of New Post of an Additional Postman

1011. SHRI HARIBHAI CHAUDHARY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the rules for creating a new post of an additional postman in any sub-post office;