

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposed work of land acquisition costing of Rs. 12.69 Cr. from Mukkoia to Kanjiramkulam for Thiruvananthapuram-Neyyattinkara combined bypass under Phase-II is not included in the Annual Plan 2002-03. At present Ministry's priority is to improve the riding quality of National Highways network in the State of Kerala. Land acquisition for the said portion of the bypass has low priority and would be taken up in future depending upon the availability of funds and inter se priority of works. The proposal has been returned to Government of Kerala unapproved.

Adoption of Linux

4642. PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESWARLU:
SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have advised all Central Government offices and institutions to adopt the Linux software;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) the extent to which the Government are likely to save money by adopting Linux; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Advantages of using Linux software including cost savings resulting thereby are evaluated on a project-by-project basis.

12.00 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have earlier announced that the current year's interest on both the *kharif* crop loan and agricultural term loans will be deferred and the loans proper will be rescheduled into term loans; to be recovered over the next 5 years in the case of small and

marginal farmers, and 3 years in the case of other farmers. In addition, interest, for one year, on both these types of loans, amounting to Rs. 6040 crores, having been deferred, was to be spread out over several years as a liability.

2. In order to further mitigate the hardship of our farmers in these States, I have now, decided to waive completely, the first year's deferred liability of interest on Kharif loans, as a one time measure. Such of our citizens as having availed of this facility shall be entitled to obtain an endorsement of this waiver directly from their loaning Bank. Appropriate guidelines in this regard will be issued by the R.B.I.

3. As for Agricultural Input Subsidy, my Government had already announced a grant of this to small and marginal farmers, amounting to over Rs. 1490 crores. In view, however, of the severity of the drought, I have decided that this Agricultural Input Subsidy will now be extended further, to cover all other farmers too, for both the sown and unsown areas, upto a ceiling of 2 hectares, as a one time measure and in relaxation of existing guidelines. On the basis of assessment to be made by the Ministry of Agriculture, in consultation with the Finance Ministry, all the 14 affected States will receive additional amounts, based on actual land holding and cultivation patterns. These States will therefore, now receive in excess of a further Rs. 555 crores, for combating drought, to be met from either the Calamity Relief Fund or the NCCF.

4. For cattle, further additional amount of Rs. 25 crores will now be provided to the Department of Animal Husbandry, for support to such 'gaushalas' as tend to more than 1000 heads of cattle. Releases may be permitted directly to NGOs running such 'gaushalas'. A Committee comprising of officers from the Department of Animal Husbandry, Ministry of Finance and the PMO will authorise such releases, in tandem with like and simultaneous disbursements from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

5. I wish to add that the Government has already earlier approved additional assistance for cattle in which a further sum of Rs. 70 crores for cattle care has already been allotted to Rajasthan. I had also sanctioned free transportation of cattle-grade feed and fodder to State Governments; the period of such free transportation of water and fodders will continue until the end of June, 2003.

6. On the foodgrains front, the Government has already sanctioned an allotment of 38.75 lakh Metric

Tonnes of rice and wheat, costing over Rs. 4000 crores; free of cost to the 14 drought-affected States of which 19.50 lakh Metric Tonnes for current drought. This tonnage is for three months only, that is, up to January, 2003. More foodgrains will thereafter be made available to needy States. It is desirable that there be systematic monitoring, however, of the actual utilisation of this foodgrain in generation of relief employment. Of course, States are free to seek additional allocations following utilisation of the allotted foodgrains. It is in this context that PDS functioning must be improved.

7. I recognize that acute water shortage exists, particularly in the drought effected areas of Rajasthan. I have, therefore, instructed the Ministry of Railways to run additional water tanker trains to, in part, mitigate this critical deficiency. The Ministry of Water Resources will immediately appoint a task force to assist the effected States in this regard. I am also instructing the Ministry of Petroleum to examine the possibility of deep drilling rigs being employed for sinking deep tube wells.

8. We will meet the challenge of this drought unitedly and shall ensure that the difficulties of our citizens are mitigated.

[Also placed in Library, See no. LT. 6732/2002]

12.05 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): Sir, on behalf of Maj. Gen. (Retd.) B.C. Khanduri, I beg to lay on the Table:

- (1) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under section 10 of the National Highways Act, 1956:—

- (i) S.O. 1195(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 14th November, 2002 regarding authorising the District Revenue Officer Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu to perform the function of the competent authority in respect of land acquisition on National Highway No. 7A (Palayam Kottai-Thoodhakudi Section).

- (ii) S.O. 1196(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 14th November, 2002 regarding authorising the District Revenue Officer Thoothakudi, Tamil Nadu to perform the function of the competent authority in respect of land acquisition on National Highway No. 7A (Palayam Kottai-Thoodhakudi Section) in Tamil Nadu.

- (iii) S.O. 1222(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 22nd November, 2002 regarding acquisition of land for four-laning of National Highway No. 5 (Vijayawada-Visakhapatnam section) in East Godavari District in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

- (iv) S.O. 1241(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 29th November, 2002 regarding acquisition of land for widening of National Highway No. 60 (Balasore to Laxmannath section) in Balasore District in the State of Orissa.

- (v) S.O. 1242(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 29th November, 2002 regarding acquisition of land for widening of National Highway No. 60 (Laxmannath to Kharagpur section) in Paschim Medinipur District in the State of West Bengal.

- (vi) S.O. 1259(E) published in Gazette of India dated the 2nd December, 2002 regarding acquisition land for widening of National Highway No. 60 (Balasore to Laxmannath section) in Balasore District in the State of Orissa.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 6662/2002]

- (2) A copy of the Central Motor Vehicles (Fifth Amendment) Rules, 2002 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 788(E) in Gazette of India dated the 2nd December, 2002 under sub-section (4) of section 212 of the Motor Vehicle Act, 1988, together with an explanatory memorandum.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT C563/2002]

- (3) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute for Training of Highway Engineers, Noida, for the year 2001-2002 alongwith Audited Accounts.