

the External Affairs Minister Shri Vajpayee's visit to Peking;

(b) if so, furnish details thereof;

(c) reaction of Government;

(d) whether similar references for clarification have been made from the countries during 1978; and

(e) if so, furnish details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU):

(a) to (e) The Ministry of External Affairs has discussed with representatives of the U.S.S.R. Embassy and publicity media the tenor and content of reporting on India. These discussions by their very nature, are confidential, and as such it would be undesirable to reveal the contents on the floor of the House. It may be added that such conversations have also taken place in 1978.

12.00 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

DETAILED DEMANDS FOR GRANTS OF MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS FOR 1979-80

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJ-PAYEE): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of External Affairs for 1979-80. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-4080/79].

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EMPLOYEES STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION NEW DELHI FOR 1977-78 AND FINANCIAL ESTIMATES AND PERFORMANCES BUDGET OF EMPLOYEES STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION NEW DELHI FOR 1979-80.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI LARANG SAI): On behalf of Dr. Ram Kirpal Sinha I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under section 36 of the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948:—

(1) Annual Report of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation, New Delhi, for the year 1977-78. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-4081/79].

(2) Financial Estimates and performance Budget of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation, New Delhi, for the year 1979-80. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-4082/79].

NOTIFICATIONS UNDER CUSTOMS ACT, 1962.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATISH AGARWAL): On behalf of Shri Zulfikarullah, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under section 159 of the Customs Act, 1962.

(1) Notification No. 66-Customs published in Gazette of India dated the 15th March, 1979 together with an explanatory memorandum regarding exemption to Polyvinyl chloride resins (PVC Resin) from the whole of the basic customs duty.

(2) Notification No. 67 Customs published in Gazette of India dated the 15th March, 1979 together with an explanatory memorandum regarding exemption to plain aluminium foil when imported solely for strip packing of drugs and medicines from the whole of the additional

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duty of customs. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-4082/79].

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): What is the item-number?

MR. SPEAKER: I have permitted him. It is not in the list. Now Calling Attention.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Anyway, discussion will not be there.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: We must be told. (Interruptions) Is it a private arrangement between the Chair and the Minister?

PROF. P. G. MAVALANKAR (Gandhinagar): There should be some intimation to the House. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Now Calling Attention. Mr. Vasant Sathe.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATISH AGARWAL): I may be permitted to reply to the objection raised by the hon. Members. (Interruptions) Please hear me. Whenever there is a notification involving a revenue sacrifice of more than Rs. 1 crore, we generally lay it down on the Table of the House the same day. It does not matter for me. I could have laid it down on the 16th; but because this has been issued to-day, and because the revenue sacrifice is more than Rs. 1 crore, I am laying it down. (Interruptions)

SHRI SAUGATA ROY (Barrackpore): It is not in the list. It is for the Chair to inform the House that such laying is going to take place.

MR. SPEAKER: You are right. We will see that an additional list is published. Now Mr. Vasant Sathe. Calling Attention.

12.04 hrs.

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CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED AVALANCHES IN LAHAUL VALLEY

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Akola): I call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The reported avalanches in Lahaul Valley (Himachal Pradesh) killing many persons and the rescue and relief measures undertaken by the Government."

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): Sir, According to the information obtained from the Government of Himachal Pradesh, sustained rain, snowfall, squalls and sleet all over Himachal Pradesh, have been persisting for more than two weeks, but during the last few days, Lahaul-Spiti district, Pangi valley of Chamba district and Kinnaur district have suffered seriously under the onslaughts of these adverse weather conditions. All communications have been dislocated and from the reports that have trickled in, 230 persons perished on account of avalanches. So far 95 bodies have been recovered and 28 persons have been rescued. Detailed investigation about the loss of life and property is still going on.

The State Government have pressed into service 3 IAF helicopters and rushing cooked food, blankets, doctors and medicines. Teams of officers have also been detailed for rescue and relief works. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police is rendering all possible assistance to the State Government. The State Government is providing all assistance by way of free supply of cooked food, medicines, blankets from its own resources. The Gover-