

lopment had recommended that considering the nature of the activities and population, growth rate, the two cities of Bangalore and Hyderabad should be included.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : There are States which have been trying their best to develop some small and medium towns around the mega cities and for this purpose, a large amount of money is necessary. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government have considered the aspect of financial assistance to those State Governments which are endeavouring to develop the small and medium towns around the mega cities to reduce the pressure and load on the mega cities themselves?

SHRIMATI SHIELA KAUL : In this connection, I would like to remind that a number of times we had taken up this subject of small and medium towns to release the pressure on the bigger cities. That of course would need a separate question because now we are dealing with the national cities of India.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Allahabad is an important city, where Kumbha-mela is held after every twelve years. Every year lakhs of people go to take bath in the rivers there. But the city lacks cleanliness. A plant is being set up to clean the Ganges. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you, whether the city will be declared a mega-city and central aid would be provided to it?

SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL : Sir, as I have said that we are discussing here about these cities which are called national cities having a population of more than 40 lakhs. This is the criteria of these cities. Allahabad does not have this much of population and I wish it should not increase to that level test, it would become a very polluted city.

Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976

[English]

*302. **SHRI CHITTA BASU :** Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to amend the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976 to involve the private sector in the housing activities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTRY OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI P. K. THUNGAN) :

(a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) to (c) Government is considering various proposals to amend the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976 in order to remove the existing anomalies in the Act, to make it more workable and to enable more land being developed for housing. In order to formulate necessary amendments, consultations have been held with the State Governments as follows :—

1. Conference of Chief Ministers held in June, 1990.
2. Conference of Housing Ministers in October, 1990.
3. Conference of Chief Ministers held in March, 1992.
4. Consultation with State Governments/Union Territories from time to time.
5. Consultation with Chief Secretaries of the States which initially resolved to have the Central Urban Land Ceiling Act. Meeting was held in August, 1992.

Final view has yet to be taken in this matter.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : The Government have, as I am reported, identified certain constraints against a massive programme for housing. Those constraints are. Urban Land Ceiling Act, stamp duty registration, rent control, taxes on vacant land, on big premises and land acquisition, etc. May I know from the hon. Minister the nature of these constraints and what remedial measures the Government has taken to remove these constraints and take up a massive housing programme to solve this problem?

MR. SPEAKER : Your main question relates to the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act. Now you are going to housing. That is a different thing.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: The question is clear.

MR. SPEAKER: Let us not argue. Let us be very strict on this point. Housing is different from urban ceiling.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: You may go through the question. Housing is very much there. It says, "whether the Government propose to amend the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976 to involve the private sector in the housing activities". It is very much relevant. Some people say and the Government have also identified certain constraints and I have mentioned them. I want to know what steps the Government proposes to take to remove those constraints so that there can be a large scale massive housing programme for workers.

MR. SPEAKER: Please understand that the constraints about housing which are not coming out of the Urban Land Ceiling Act will not be covered under this question. If the Minister can reply, he can do so.

SHRI P. K. THUNGAN: Sir, you are right. This question is confined to the Urban Land Ceiling Act or its Amendment because it reads:—I would like to refer once again—"Whether the Government propose to amend the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976 to involve the private sector in the housing activities?" That means, by amending the Act to involve more builders in the housing activities.

So far as the Amendment is concerned there is a proposal for amending this Act. As the hon. Member is aware, this Act was enacted in the year 1976. After that, there were comments and statements from certain quarters. Many experts and builders felt that it was doing more harm than good for the builders. Therefore, the Government had gone into the details since 1991. This Ministry had submitted a Cabinet note on 9th January, 1992. Since then, discussions are going on. After that, it was discussed in the Chief Ministers' Conference on 7th March, 1992. After that, it came back to the Cabinet again and a note was submitted on 1st June, 1992. Then the Chief Secretaries' Conference was held. After that, again

we had prepared a note on 14th September, 1992. This was considered in great detail by the Cabinet and then the Cabinet constituted a Group of Ministers. The hon. (Group of Ministers met on 22nd February, 1993 and some more information were sought for. Those information were about weighing of pros and cons of the proposed Amendment and the schemes prepared by some States like Maharashtra. Those had been gone into and the State Governments had been consulted. The hon. Member will be happy to know that the note of the Group of Ministers is ready. We are at it and very soon, a meeting will be held. We will try to bring this Amendment.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: As a matter of fact, the Land Ceiling Act has not been enforced or implemented particularly in the big cities. What are the exact proposals for amending this Act? Do they propose to abolish the Act or do they want to make it stronger so that land will be available for the housing purpose?

SHRI P. K. THUNGAN: Sir, I cannot say at the moment the exact recommendations or the decisions. The proposition is: whether it should be scrapped or amended by amending various sections in a manner that it will serve better. These are the consultations and studies which are going on in great detail.

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL): Sir, actually I just want to tell the hon. Members that the implementation of this Act has not been upto the satisfaction of everybody. Out of 3,96,520 applications filed in relation to surplus land, 2,29,535 applications had been finalised. Only 2,18,160 hectares of land was declared surplus and only 13,637 hectares was taken over by the Government. Hence the Urban Land Ceiling Act has not made available surplus land for development.

SHRI UDHAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD: Sir, the hon. Minister has given very elaborate reply. Even then I would like to ask one more question. Many consultations have taken place during 1990 and 1992. The hon. Minister has said that Maharashtra is also one of the States where this Act is really very important.

So, I would like to know what transpired between the Chief Ministers Conference and after that.

SHRI P. K. THUNGON: Sir, as I have already stated, this matter was discussed in the Conference of Chief Ministers on 7-3-1992. There it was felt that the whole thing has to be gone into detail. Therefore, a meeting of the respective Chief Secretaries of the States, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary at the Centre, was to be held. Accordingly, that meeting of the Chief Secretaries took place on 29-8-1992 as per the decision of the Chief Ministers Conference.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the figures that have been given to us show very clearly that this Act has not really been acted upon so far. Some land was declared surplus but a very small part of it has been actually acquired and a very very small part of it has actually been developed for the purpose for which it was meant, namely, housing. In the meantime, certain things have taken place. A land mafia has grown up around this entire operations. And what is worse is that agriculturally productive land has remained fallow all these years because of the notice and the legal proceedings and because it has not been developed. It has already taken a long time for the Government to amend the Act and to remove all the lacunae and the defects that they found therein. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether in the meantime they will, in the interest of agricultural production, at least allow that agricultural land which they have acquired, to be productive.

SHRI P. K. THUNGON: Sir, so far as this question is concerned, it is about the Urban Land Ceiling Act... (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: It is little off the mark.

SHRI SAYED SHAHABUDDIN: No, Sir, a land acquired has been within the municipal area. The agricultural land has been counted as urban land. That is under the Act and that is where the question of its remaining fallow has arisen. They took over agricultural land, did not utilise it and did not allow it to be utilised for agricultural purposes.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Anna Joshi.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: Sir, the Government has said that they intend to remove the anomalies in this Act as early as possible and for that, consultations are going on. The last consultation took place in August, 1992. One year has already passed. I would like to know how much more time they are going to take to bring the solid proposals here for removing these anomalies from this Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Can you indicate the time frame?

SHRI P. K. THUNGON: Sir, it is a fact that it took about six months after the last meeting of the group of Ministers took place. The reasons for delay is that the urban land ceiling itself is a State subject. Until and unless we consult the respective States and also the respective Ministries concerned, we cannot do it. This took time and only yesterday our officers have again taken a meeting with the Ministry of Law. So, this has been continuously very actively taken up by this Ministry, but the nature of work is such that it has to be done in consultation with the State Governments and other Ministries. Therefore, it has taken a little more time.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: They have already consulted the Chief Ministers and other Ministers..... (Interruptions).

[Translation]

Project for slum Dwellers

303. **SHRI RAM LAKHAN SINGH YADAV:** Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether some foreign countries are ready to provide financial assistance to undertake projects for the people living in slums ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether the Union Government have received proposals from the States regarding these projects during the last year ; and

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