

sent of Saudi Arabia in order to interact with Saudi officials, and similar delegations from other countries. The Delegation observes the arrangements for the pilgrims and submits an independent report to Government on its return. The Goodwill Delegation for Hajj 1996 consisted of 14 members and was led by the Ambassador of India in Riyadh. The members of the delegation are provided air passage, hotel accommodation, local transport and daily allowance as admissible.

Child Malnutrition

473 SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state

(a) whether the Government are aware that child malnutrition is highest in India

(b) if so, the details and reasons therefor

(c) the proportion of the malnutrition of child in India aged below five years on percentage basis comparing the same with other developing countries particularly in Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Ceylon and Pakistan; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to reduce and ultimately eliminate cases of malnutrition in the country?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government is aware that the child malnutrition is still quite high in India but not the highest. There has, however, been a significant decline in moderate and severe malnutrition among children during the last two decades.

(b) The severe (Grade III) malnutrition has declined from 15% to 8.7% and moderate (Grade II) malnutrition from 47.5% to 43.8% during the period 1975 to 1990. Further, using mean ± 2 SD (Standard Deviation) NCHS (National Centre for Health Statistics) standard as the cut-off level, the percentage of underweight (weight/age) children has declined from 68.6% in 1988-90 to 53.4% in 1992-93.

Malnutrition is an outcome of complex and inter-related set of factors. The major determinants of malnutrition are low purchasing power leading to poor dietary intakes, ignorance due to low literacy particularly among females leading to poor feeding practices, poor personal hygiene and unhealthy environments leading to high prevalence of childhood infections like diarrhoea, gastroenteritis which aggravate the already malnourished state of child by interfering with nutrients absorption and their retention.

(c) According to the UNICEF publication 'The Progress of Nations, 1996', the percentage of children below five years suffering from malnutrition in India and other developing countries is as under:

India	53%
Nepal	49%
Bhutan	38%
Bangladesh	67%
Ceylon (Sri Lanka)	38%
Pakistan	40%

(d) The Government is seized of the problem and has been implementing a number of nutrition and nutrition related interventions through its different sectors with a view to ensure that the people, particularly the children and women do not suffer from malnutrition. The notable interventions include the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Nutrition Education Activities, Child Survival and Safe Motherhood (CSSM) Programme etc. The adoption of the National Nutrition Policy in 1993 and implementation of the multi-sectoral strategy utilising the framework of the National Plan of Action on Nutrition, 1995 is another major step in this direction.

Hindi and Urdu Universities

474 SHRI GOPALKRISHNA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state

(a) whether the Government propose to set up Hindi and Urdu universities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which these universities are likely to start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. H. RAM SAIKIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main objectives of Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya would be the promotion and development of Hindi language and literature, through teaching and research, with a view to enabling Hindi to achieve greater functional efficiency and recognition as a major international language. It is proposed to be set up at Wardha. The Maulana Azad National Urdu University is proposed to be set up at Hyderabad mainly to promote and develop Urdu language and to impart vocational and technical education in Urdu medium through conventional teaching and distance education system.

(c) Two Bills to establish and incorporate these Universities have already been introduced in the Rajya Sabha on August 24, 1995.

[Translation]

Safety Equipments in Coal Mines of Bihar

475. SHRI RADHAMOHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether safety equipments are installed in all coal mines of Bihar to help the workers at the time of any accident;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of coal mines where safety equipments have not been installed, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) and (b). Safety equipment such as main mechanical ventilator, winders in shafts fitted with protective devices, flame proof/intrinsically safe electricals etc., as required under the Coal Mines Regulations, 1957 have been installed in all the working coal mines of Coal India Limited (CIL) in Bihar.

(c) Does not arise.

Permanent Membership of UN Security Council

476 PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India had made efforts at different levels to get a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

(b) if so, the details thereof and the outcome therefrom; and

(c) the future role of India in regard to the expansion of UN Security Council's permanent membership being a major non-aligned country?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b). India had expressed her willingness to serve as a permanent member of the UN Security Council in the 49th Session of UN General Assembly in 1994. This was reiterated in the 50th Session of UN General Assembly in 1995. Sustained efforts to promote India's candidature have been made bilaterally and in multilateral meetings. These efforts continue. However, there is

as yet no consensus at the UN on the expansion of the Security Council.

(c) The Non-Aligned Movement Summit held at Cartagena, Colombia in October 1995 adopted a declaration that the Non-Aligned countries should work towards increasing the representation of developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean in the Security Council. India has also adopted this approach in the discussions in the Open Ended Working Group of the UN General Assembly on the "Question of Equitable Representation on and increase in the Membership of Security Council".

Pending Irrigation Schemes

477. SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR :
SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT :
SHRI VEERENDRA KUMAR SINGH :
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of irrigation projects/schemes in the country are pending with the Union Government for clearance;

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

(c) the steps taken by Government to expedite clearance of these pending irrigation projects/schemes; and

(d) the time by which these are likely to be cleared particularly in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) and (b). A *Statement* giving State-wise details of new Major and Medium Irrigation Projects pending clearance is enclosed.

(c) The Central Water Commission is holding quarterly review meetings with State Government Officials for early clearance of projects. It has also set up Field Units at different places in the country for assisting the States in expeditious appraisal of the projects.

(d) Though there is prescribed limit for appraisal of the projects, the clearance is delayed due to the delay by the State Governments in complying with the observations of various Central Appraising Agencies.