

in touch with the State Governments and constantly monitor and review the situation. As and when necessary, suitable assistance is provided to the State Government. State Government is, however, being addressed to indicate the specific steps taken by them in this regard.

Loans to Victims of Disturbances after Assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi

406 SHRI SOBHANA DRESWARA RAO VADDI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have directed the Reserve Bank of India to issue instructions to the Commercial Banks to provide loan assistance at concessional rate of interest to the identified victims of the disturbances following the assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi to re-start their economic activity

(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DAL BIR SINGH) : (a) No Sir. As per the practice being presently followed, in the event of riots/disturbances, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on receipt of reports/request from the concerned State Government in this behalf and after taking into account the nature and magnitude of the disturbances, advises banks to extend rehabilitation assistance to the affected persons on the lines of guidelines applicable in respect of persons affected by natural calamities.

(b) Does not arise,

(c) The existing practice followed by RBI cover such situations adequately. Hence no need was felt by the Government to issue fresh instructions in this regard.

Candidates killed in Punjab

407. PROF. K. V. THOMAS : Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state the number of candidates and their bodyguards killed after the announcement to conduct the poll in Punjab ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM) : According to the information available as on 16-7-91, 23 contesting candidates and 21 body guards of the candidates have been killed since the announcement of poll in Punjab.

Declaration of Roads in Kerala as National Highways

408. SHRI V. S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to declare any of the existing roads in Kerala as National Highways;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government of Kerala has suggested any plan in this regard; and

(d) if so, the action taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Declaration of new National Highways would be considered only after the formulation of the 8th Five Year Plan.

(b) Does not arise at present.

(c) and (d) In the 8th Five Year Plan, the State Government of Kerala has requested for the inclusion of four State Roads in the National Highway grid. Action on these proposals is possible only after finalisation of the 8th Plan.

Glut in Rubber Market in Cochin

409. SHRI V. S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government are aware of a glut in the Rubber market in Cochin due to change in the credit policy of the Reserve Bank of India; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to solve the crisis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) There is no glut in the Rubber market in Cochin. As on 5th July, 1991, the prices were ruling at Rs. 2,115 for RMA-4 grade and Rs. 1,980 for lot rubber per quintal. There is no price fall as compared to the price that prevailed before the announcement of change in the credit policy of the Reserve Bank of India.

Acquisition of Ballistic Missiles by Pakistan

410. SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY :
SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD :
SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the acquisition of an unspecified number of M-11 Chinese ballistic missiles by Pakistan recently has posed threat to India's security;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to meet any kind of challenge from Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government closely monitor all developments impinging on national security and take appropriate measures to ensure full defence preparedness.

Assistance of Private Sector in Public Transport System

411. SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY :
SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to encourage the private sector