

progress. The progress of earth work on main canal in the first 19 km reach is almost complete.

2. Financial Progress

Years	Outlays (Rs. in crore)	Expenditure (Rs. in crore)
1993-94	161.24	426.73 (Cumulative up to March, 1994)
1994-95	153.31	126.33
1995-96	129.11	96.78

STATEMENT-II

As per Narmada Water Dispute Tribunal Award, the allocation of Narmada Water among the party States is as under :-

Madhya Pradesh	18.25 Million Acre Feet
Gujarat	9.00 Million Acre Feet
Rajasthan	0.50 Million Acre Feet
Maharashtra	0.25 Million Acre Feet
Total	28.00 Million Acre Feet

The validity period of the Award is upto 2024 A.D. (45 years after Gazette Notification in 1979).

Urban Land Ceiling Act, 1976

*73 SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :-

(a) whether any suggestion for amending the Urban Land Ceiling Act, 1976 are pending with the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) the time by which these are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The thrust of the suggestions from various States, organisations and the National Commission on Urbanisation relates to streamlining and simplification of procedures with a focus on guided development and added availability of land for shelter provision for the weaker sections.

(c) It would be difficult to give a definite time frame because as per the Constitutional requirements, after the approval by the Government,

the Legislatures of at least two States where the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976 is applicable have to concur and pass resolution under Article 252(2) of the Constitution to enable the introduction of the bill on the floor of Parliament

[English]

Relations Among SAARC Countries

*74. SHRI SUDHIR GIRI Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

(a) the steps proposed to be taken to strengthen the relations among the SAARC countries; and

(b) the measures proposed to be taken by the Government to promote SAPTA into South Asian Free Trade Area (SAPTA)?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b) The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has emerged as the primary vehicle for facilitating mutually rewarding interaction among SAARC Member States on a wide range of issues of common interest to member countries in the economic, technical and social areas. India currently holds chairmanship of SAARC and is committed to playing an active role in advancing the areas of cooperation among Member States. Under India's chairmanship, SAARC Member States have already adopted the decision to strive to attain a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) preferably by the year 2000 but before the year 2005. The first meeting of SAARC Ministers of Commerce and the first SAARC Trade Fair were also held in New Delhi. A wide ranging programme of observing the 10th Anniversary of SAARC has been agreed upon by Member States at the last council of Ministers meeting in New Delhi. Meetings of the Standing Committee of Foreign Secretaries and of the Committee of Economic Cooperation of Commerce Secretaries, which advanced cooperation, have also been held. These Committees and the Council of Ministers are meeting again later in the year. It will be India's endeavour to enlarge the canvas of cooperation in these meetings as well as through other initiatives, some of which have been discussed with the Secretary General of SAARC, who visited India in June 95 as a guest of the Government of India and called on Prime Minister, Minister of External Affairs and Finance Minister, apart from senior officials. India attaches the highest importance to realising the full potential of SAARC in enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation within the region.

2. The agreement on the SAARC Preferential Trade Arrangement (SAFTA) became operational with effect from December 7, 1995. The first round of tariff reductions covering 226 products has already

taken place and the second round is now in progress. India will work actively with other Member States towards widening and deepening of tariff reductions and giving attention to non-tariff barriers, in the context of the goal of SAFTA at the turn of the century.

Standard of education in Kendriya and Navodaya Vidyalayas

*75 SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of any complaints regarding deteriorating standard of education in Central and Navodaya Vidyalayas, and

(b) if so, the nature of complaints and the steps taken/to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMALI) (a) and (b) Occasional complaints have been received regarding the level of academic performance. Continuous efforts are on to improve the quality of education in Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti through better supervision of academic activities, streamlining of recruitment procedure of teachers, establishment of Zonal Training Institutes for systematic in-service training of teachers and Principals and encouragement of co-curricular activities.

Drop-out rate of Girl Students

*76. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the drop-out rate of girl students in the primary as well as in upper primary stages are higher than those of boys; and

(b) if so, the corrective steps taken/being taken to arrest this trend?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMALI) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The National Policy on Education, 1986 lays special emphasis on the removal of gender disparities in education. According to the Policy, the removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to and retention in elementary education will receive overriding priority.

All States have exempted girls from payment of tuition fees upto Class-VIII. Other measures for promotion of girls' education include provision of scholarships, free text-books, uniforms, attendance incentives, separate girls' schools, construction of

toilets for girls and appointment of women teachers in primary schools. Under the centrally sponsored scheme of Non-Formal Education, Central assistance provided for girls' centres is 90% as compared to 60% for co-education centres. The proportion of girls' centres has been increased from 25% to 40% in the Eighth Plan.

The introduction of Mid-day meal Scheme in 1995-96 is also expected to have a positive effect on enrolment and retention of girls in primary schools.

Internationally assisted projects for Universalisation of elementary education have specific components for promotion of girls' education.

The efforts made in this direction have resulted in narrowing of the gender gap in drop-out rates in Class I-V.

[Translation]

Shortage of Coal in Delhi

*77. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state

(a) whether there is acute shortage of coal in Delhi;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to meet the shortage.

(c) the annual demand of coal for domestic and industrial use in Delhi; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Union Government for supply of coal to meet the demand of Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) (a) to (d) The total quantity of coal supplied to industrial and other consumers, excluding power plants in Delhi during the year 1995-96 was 5.22 lakh tonnes as against a supply of 1.68 lakh tonnes in 1994-95. Availability having, thus, increased substantially, it is expected that any shortages would have eased.

The requirements of coal for various customers are assessed industry/sector-wise for the whole country and are not assessed Statewise. This assessment is made by joint consultation among the various Ministries and the Planning Commission. The demand for the industrial and other consuming sectors for the country as a whole was assessed at 44.20 Million Tonnes in 1995-96 and the supplies made were 41.21 Million Tonnes. There is a gap between demand and supply and the Government is endeavouring to increase production of coal in order to meet the demands of all consumers including those in Delhi.