

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI P.K. THUNGON) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. This has been done to implement a new scheme for the urban poor of Class II towns in the country.

(c) The salient features of the scheme are

(i) Effective achievement of social sector goals, (ii) community empowerment, (iii) convergence through sustainable support system, (iv) improvement of hygiene and sanitation and (v) environmental improvement.

(d) About 10 million urban poor are proposed to be covered under the new Scheme by the end of the year 2000.

(e) A provision of Rs. 100 crores has been earmarked for the scheme for the current financial year as Central share for allocation to State Governments/ U.Ts.

Supply of F-16 Aircrafts to Pakistan

6681. SHRI CHETAN P.S. CHAUHAN :

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :

SHRI M.V.V.S. MURTHY :

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the recent reports regarding US proposal to supply F-16 Fighter aircrafts to Pakistan;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Government are aware of reports that the US Administration intends to seek flexibility from the US Congress on the Pressler Amendment. The US Administration is expected to present proposals to Congress in this regard, which could include the transfer of F-16 aircraft and other military equipment to Pakistan or return of the money already paid by Pakistan.

(b) and (c). Government have conveyed to the US Government that, although the Pressler Amendment was a bilateral issue between the US and Pakistan, the transfer of sophisticated and high performance weapons systems to Pakistan, including F-16 aircraft which are capable of delivering nuclear weapons, would adversely affect India's security. Government remain committed to take all steps necessary to ensure defence preparedness based on its assessment of the threats posed to India's national security.

Visit of US Under Secretary of State

6682. SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH :

SHRI SUDHIR SAWANT :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a delegation led by US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs have visited India recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the subjects discussed by the delegation with Indian counterparts and the outcome thereof;

(d) whether any agreements have been reached between the two countries during the visit; and

(e) if so, the salient features thereof, agreement-wise?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr. Peter Tarnoff led a delegation of senior officials from the State Department to India for foreign policy consultations from April 3-4, 1995. The Indian side was led by Foreign Secretary. The talks were part of an on-going process of expanding and deepening relations between India and the US, initiated by Prime Minister and President Clinton when they decided in May 1994 to forge a new partnership between the two countries.

(c) Discussions covered regional integration, including the European security architecture. APEC, ASEAN, SAARC and the Indian Ocean Rim, multilateral issues such as UN reform and Security Council expansion, peacekeeping, UNGA issues and the NPT Review Conference, and regional issues such as the Middle East Peace Process, the Gulf, Central Asia, Afghanistan, East Asia, South East Asia and South Asia. It was agreed that such policy consultations would be a regular part of Indo-US interactions in the future.

(d) No agreements were signed between the two countries during the visit.

(e) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Vacant DDA Flats

6683. SHRI N.J. RATHVA : Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the number of DDA flats lying vacant due to lack of basic amenities;

(b) the types and locations of these flats and since when the same are lying vacant;

(c) the extent of financial losses suffered by DDA so far as a result thereof; and

(d) the time by which the Government propose to provide the basic amenities in those flats?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI P.K. THUNGON) : (a) to (d). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

[English]

Rice Milling Regulation Act

6684. SHRI PARAS RAM BHARDWAJ :
SHRI J. CHOKKA RAO :

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to repeal the Rice Millers Marketing Regulation Act, 1958;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the facilities to be extended as a consequence thereof, alongwith the training centres to be opened State-wise;

(c) whether the Government have also decided to rescind the jaggery control order; and

(d) if so, the effect thereof on the distillation of illicit liquor particularly in Andhra Pradesh where liquor is prohibited?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARUN GOGOI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) If and when the Rice Milling Industry (Regulation) Act, 1958 is repealed, anybody in the country would be free to carry out rice milling operations.

(c) Yes, Sir. The Gur Control Order has been rescinded w.e.f. 21.3.1995.

(d) No such study has been undertaken.

Water Supply to Ramagundam Thermal Power Project

6685. SHRI J. CHOKKA RAO : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether adequate water supply is not available to Ramagundam Super Thermal Power Station in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether water is being supplied from Sriramsagar Project in Andhra Pradesh to the above Project temporarily;

(d) if so, whether ryots are affected on account of diversion of water supply; and

(e) the steps Government propose to take to ensure adequate water supply to Ramagundam Super Thermal Power Station?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL) : (a) Adequate water is being supplied to Ramagundam Super Thermal Power Station (RSTPS) in Andhra Pradesh.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Water is supplied to the Power project from Pochampad Canal of Sriramsagar Project on a permanent basis.

(d) Provision has been made for supply of water to ryots.

(e) Government of Andhra Pradesh is ensuring adequate water supply to RSTPS on a permanent basis.

[Translation]

Life Span of Merchant Ships

6686. SHRI TEJ NARAYAN SINGH :
SHRIMATI DIPIKA H. TOPIWALA :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have rejected the request made by ship owners for giving relaxation in time for procurement of ships;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to reconsider the request made by ship owners;

(d) if so, the time by which decision is likely to be taken in this regard; and

(e) the average life span of the Indian merchant ships compared to that of foreign countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) to (d). No, Sir. The Government has granted relaxation in age norms for acquisition of various types of second hand vessels by way of import in order to give further boost of shipping industry in the light of economic reforms and liberalisation process.

(e) The average age profile of Indian ships is 12.7 years as compared to the world average age of 17 years.

[English]

Hindustan Copper Limited

6687. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA VARMA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) suffered heavy losses during 1993-94;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Union Government to convert HCL into a commercially viable unit?