

and does not require any licence from the Government.

(c) and (d). Do not arise.

Housing Finance Companies

3647. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Housing Finance Companies are facing a major resource crunch:

(b) if so, whether they are seeking a flexible interest rate system to keep pace with the demands of the monetary system: and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) Non-availability of adequate resources is a major constraint faced by the housing finance companies.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Housing Finance institutions are reported to be seeking a variable rate mortgage system and this has been raised in their discussions with National Housing Bank.

Satellite IRS-IB

3648. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the second indigenously built remote sensing Satellite IRS-IB has been declared operational;

(b) if so, whether this has marked the country's expertise in Satellite Technology; and

(c) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI MARGARTE ALVA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) IRS-IB launched on August 29, 1991 is the second in the series of India Remote Sensing Satellites launched for providing operational remote sensing services in various application areas of natural resource management in the country. IRS-IB, like its predecessor IRS-IA is state-of-the-art three axis stabilised satellite, designed and developed indigenously with a technology comparable to the contemporary international satellites. The excellent performance of the satellite on board subsystems and the high quality of the imageries received from IRS-IB cameras mark the country's expertise achieved in this high technology. The continued, successful, in-orbit operation of IRS-IB much beyond its operational life of three years with all of its onboard systems functioning satisfactorily, proves India's capabilities in building and managing complex satellites of international standards.

Utilisation of Funds for Poverty Alleviation Programmes.

3649. SHRI J. CHOKKA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a sizeable amount sanctioned by the Government for the poverty alleviation programmes has been siphoned off without utilising the funds for the schemes; and

(b) if so, estimate of such funds and the remedial steps proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT