

My question can be formulated in this manner. In which sector of industrial production, the growth has declined drastically; and is there any sector in which it has improved, or is even more than that of last year? That is part (a) of my question.

Part (b) of my question is that in the current year, has it happened that because of the fall in the growth rate related to previous financial year, the companies' profits have also declined, or have they grown faster than the growth rate?

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Chatterjee, everything is available in the Economic Survey which was tabled yesterday. That is why, I do not intend to allow anymore question on this.

SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH: Sir, I think, this is a very interesting question because the hon. Member's question relates to this year and not to the last year.

I would like to clarify that this year, the growth rate that the Central Statistical Organization has estimated—which is there in the Economic Survey—is the first estimate which, last year, at this time of the year, was estimated at around 6.2 per cent. So, actually, there is nothing which says that when we come to the final estimates, the estimates will not again change for the better i.e. it may go up. That is number one.

Secondly, as far as the present situation is concerned, I would like to submit for the Member's consideration that the manufacturing sector, as per the data that we have for this year, which is the specific question, upto around October-November, is doing as well as last year. It is the same rate of growth. I mean to say that all this *tamasha* that there is deacceleration is, in fact, wrong.

But it is the electricity sector where the growth rate is lower and that is because, as is well known, we have faced problems. Even distinguished economics like Dr. Manmohan Singh has also said that during the last five years we have not been able to invest as much in power as we should have. But in the Ninth Plan, we are trying to correct it.

So, it is not that the manufacturing sector's growth has gone down over the last year. The manufacturing sector's growth rate this year is as much as it was last year.

The capital goods sector is better. There are some marginal revisions. But I would submit to the hon. Members that let us wait for the balanced final statistics because there is always seasonality in sectors. So, let us wait for that until we arrive at a final decision.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH: In relation to companies' profits, we do not have the data right now. This data normally is brought out by the Reserve Bank Sample Survey and the Central Statistical Organization looks at it after the end of the year because of the balance sheets ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please read that Survey and make an effective contribution during the debate on the Budget.

[Translation]

LPG Connections

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*63. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA':
SHRI RAJKESHAR SINGH:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria followed for providing LPG connections in hilly districts of the country, especially in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) whether the Government propose to allot LPG connections in hilly districts of Uttar Pradesh on preferential basis as there has been increasing use of firewood there;

(c) if so, the number of connections provided in hilly districts of Uttar Pradesh during each of the last three years;

(d) whether the Government have also decided to cut 50% LPG connections to these areas from August, 1996;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the remedial measures taken to remove resentment among these people?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU):
(a) to (f) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Government advised the Public Sector Oil Companies to release LPG connections to the applicants in hilly areas located at an altitude of 2000 ft. and above all over the country including the State of Uttar Pradesh, on demand from 1.4.1996.

(b) The Government has accorded priority in the release of LPG connections to the hilly areas for the preservation of the forests. Accordingly, the hilly districts of Uttar Pradesh are getting preference in release of LPG connections.

(c) The number of LPG connections released in hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh during the last three years is given below.

YEAR	ENROLMENT (Lakhs)
1993-94	0.41
1994-95	0.61
1995-96	0.90
1996-97 (April-Dec., 96)	0.49

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise in view of (d).

(f) With the higher availability of LPG in the country after commissioning of the LPG import facilities at Kandla and Mangalore higher enrolment for LPG connections is planned now. The people in the hilly areas will also get LPG connections in accordance with the policy of Government.

[Translation]

SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA': Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question of cooking gas has assumed a greater importance in present day conditions in hilly areas. Before I ask my supplementary questions, I would like to place two facts before the House. On 12th December, The Supreme Court delivered a judgement which applies to the entire hilly areas. This decision has come in the civil petition No. 202/1995, Shri T.N. Godda Busman Vs. Union Bank of India and other under the Forest conservation Act. The entire Himalayan belt right from Arunachal Pradesh to Jammu-Kashmir is covered under this judgement. The judgement has imposed a blanket ban on felling of trees. So far, only 8-9 per cent people in the hilly areas have cooking gas connections. As a result, the people depend on forests for fuel wood. We too are in favour of conserving the forest, but we have no other alternative fuel except cooking gas because biogas and solar energy is not successful in the hilly region. In view of the Supreme Court judgement regarding ban on felling trees, there is no option left but to issue 100 per cent cooking gas connections in hilly areas. In this connections, the hon. Minister has laid down a norm under which the hilly areas above 2,000 feet will be given gas connections and not other below that height. The Himalayan belt runs in three parallel ranges—first are the hill and then the valley and thereafter hills again. What I want to say is that since the Supreme Court has imposed the ban on felling of trees in the entire hilly region, this norm of 2,000 feet height should be removed. Under this norm not all the hilly areas are getting the benefits. Therefore, will the Government consider removing this criterion?

[English]

SHRI T.R. BAALU: From 1992 onwards the Government has decided to see that the gas connections are given on priority to hilly areas, preserve forest and hilly areas. We have almost wiped out the waiting list. But the hon. Member wants to have connections in the plain areas also. We have already provided connections to areas situated at 2,000 feet height and above and there will be no waiting list.

[Translation]

SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA': My second supplementary is also linked with it. There has been a demand since 1993 to open new distribution centers and new gas agencies. At present there are 57 agencies in our region which is a monopoly of Kumaon Mandal Vikas

Nigam. The result is that gas is not being properly supplied to the existing gas connection holders which leads to acute shortage of gas during the months of December, January and February. Fuel wood is not available and the people are going to jails for violation of the forest conservation Act. Proper cooking gas supply cannot be ensured unless new distribution points, new agencies and new gas depots are not opened. I want that besides removing the criterion of height of 2,000 feet, the proposal pending with the Ministry since 1993 regrading new distribution points and agencies should be expedited. We are prepared to follow the directive of the Supreme Court under compulsion. Due to ban on felling of trees, we are cremating the dead with tyres. Since, it is the question of our life and death, the Government should consider my suggestion sympathetically.

[English]

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Public sector oil companies distributors have been permitted to put up their extension counters up to 15 kms. radius of a particular dealership area of an agency. As far as North-Eastern States are concerned, up to 50 kms. radius the companies have been permitted to put up extension counters. There would not be any problem. If there is any specific complaint, we are definitely here to look into it.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJKESHAR SINGH: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that at present, only the places having a population of 20,000 or more are eligible for L.P. Gas connections. If so, whether it is also a fact that there are no gas agencies in Jaunpur, Madiahun, Jamalpur, Kerakat, Machhlishahar and Badlapur towns of Uttar Pradesh as a result of which the people of these towns have been totally deprived of gas connections? Therefore, I want to know from the hon. Minister the time by which gas agencies will be opened there so that the people of these areas are given cooking gas connections?

[English]

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, the question pertains to hilly areas. However, for the rural areas...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: The question pertains to hilly areas. Why are you raising your hand?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: However, for the rural areas which are within a radius of fifteen kilometres from the towns and which have got a population of more than ten thousand, it could be served there also.

[Translation]

SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member who asked the question earlier has said that it is difficult to meet the fuel requirements of the people of hilly areas unless cooking gas agencies are set up there and gas connections are given to the people. We know

to the order given by the Supreme Court. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what kind of fuel would the people belonging to hilly areas of Arunachal, Meghalaya, Himachal and Kashmir use till LPG connections are given in these areas? Will the hon. Minister consider giving LPG connections to the people of hilly areas of Himachal, Kashmir, Garhwal, Sikkim, Meghalaya, etc. in order to save the trees from felling?

MR. SPEAKER: Where is the question, Mr. Sultanpuri, you have merely given a suggestion.

[English]

I think it is a suggestion. You note it down.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: We are very happy to announce that the thrust area is the hilly areas and North-Eastern border. As instructed by the hon. Prime Minister we are giving a lot of thrust to the services as far as the hilly areas and North-Eastern areas concerned. Next year, as instructed by the hon. Prime Minister, we are going to give forty lakh new connections to entire India. By the way, during the Ninth Plan, for the rural areas alone we are going to give fifty lakh connections.

[Translation]

SHRI P. NAMGYAL: Mr. Speaker Sir, My friends Shri Rawat and Shri Sultanpuri have raised an important issue. Due to the direction of the Supreme Court, there is a ban on tree felling. But I am talking of those areas where there are no forests. I thank the hon. Minister for removing the restriction in the hilly areas located at a height of 2,000 feet and above. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the number of gas agencies in vast areas like Ladakh would be increased? Secondly, an LPG Bottling Plan project is waiting clearance for the last many areas and no work has started thereon? Will the hon. Minister start work on that project without further delay?

[English]

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, the suggestion is valid. We will take up the matter for consideration ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I agree with Smt. Chikhalia that gas is used by women. I will give a chance to her.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving an opportunity to a woman to speak on this ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have given the change to put a question and not for speaking.

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVERAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA: I want to tell the hon. Minister that this issue is not linked with only hilly areas or any special area. There is so much shortage of cooking gas throughout the country that even the quota given to M.Ps. is not enough. I would request that gas quota for M.Ps. should be increased. Secondly,

in the absence of cooking gas, it is the women who have to stand in the queues for hours to get kerosene, yet they do not get kerosene even after wasting hours. It is the women who undergo this trauma. Since fuel wood is not available, will the Government consider some concrete steps to issue LPG connections to all?

[English]

SHRI A.C. JOS : Sir, the quota for telephone connection should also be increased ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is not relevant.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: This practice of giving gas and telephone connections to MPs should be discontinued. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Now, let us listen to the Minister.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: This quota should be discontinued. This is a matter of insult. Quota of gas and telephone connections should be discontinued. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI BHAWNABEN DEVERAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA: Will the Government consider giving some quota for the Kashmiri refugees? ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: It creates a lot of problems. This quota should be discontinued. Quota of telephones and gas should be discontinued. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, Please do not answer the question on quota. You can answer the other part.

(Interruptions)

SHRI T.R. BAALU: She has asked only about quota ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRIMATI BHAWNABEN DEVERAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA: In the Government making any efforts to provide gas connections to the Kashmiri refugees without any conditions?

KUMARI UMA BHARATI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, you make an announcement from the Chair to discontinue quota. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: The suggestion of the lady member would be looked into.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI BHAWNABEN DEVERAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA: Sir, answer to my question about refugees has not come. ...*(Interruptions)*

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Please allow me to say a few words.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please listen to me.

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: This quota has made our lives miserable. You do some thing good about it...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Give me a chance to say something about it. Mr. Nitish Kumar.

(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Since this question of quota regarding the telephone and gas connections to the Member of Parliament has come up now, I would like to respond to this. I have been receiving a lot of opinions on this issue from the hon. Member themselves. There are two opinions on this issue. But I think the majority of the Members of Parliament are against this quota system. I have decided to direct the Government to discontinue the quota of telephone and gas connections to the Members of parliament from the 1st of April.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: The PRIME MINISTER is here. He should respond to this. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I am fully convinced about this.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: There shall be no quota hereafter.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: Please excuse me. I would like to say something. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: There is no excuse. I think I have taken a very correct decision and I stand by it.

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: We are earning a bad name.

(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: Sir, this is not a unanimous decision. We should get an opportunity to say something about this. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: There is no question of a unanimous decision here. I am not allowing any debate on this. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: Sir, the consensus of the House should be taken on this issue. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This is my decision and it cannot be challenged. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: This is not proper. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No. You have no right to demand that.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: We are not demanding anything. You have to listen to us. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No. The Supreme Court ruling is very clear on this.

(*Interruptions*,

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: There are 285 new Members here in this House. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I congratulate you for taking such a decision. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: This is wrong. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I am not allowing any debate on this now. Prof. Mehta please.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: Sir, it is necessary that there should be a debate on this. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Sarpotdar, we have gone to the next question. We are not on that subject any more. We are on Question Hour. We have gone to the next Question also.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: There should be a debate on this issue. ...(*Interruptions*) There should be a debate on this. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Why should there be a debate on this? ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: There are 285 new MPs in this House. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Acharia, please leave the matter there itself.

[Translation]

SHRI S.P. JAISWAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the decision which you have taken to discontinue the quota of gas and telephone is a good decision indeed. In my view, this quota should have been discontinued much earlier. Please also please stop the allocation of Rs. one crore from M.Ps. quota. ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: It is very good.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: We have gone to the next question.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: Sir, this is a wrong thing.

Shortage of Power

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*64. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA:
SHRI CHUN CHUN PRASAD YADAV:

will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether serious crisis of power has arisen in the National Capital Territory of Delhi and other States recently;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to maintain the proper balance between the demand and supply of power in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) During the period November, 1996 to January, 1997, there were some grid disturbances in the Northern Grid which affected the power supply to Delhi and other States in the Northern Region.

In the period April, 1996 to January, 1997, there was an energy and peaking shortage of 2.5% and 7% respectively in the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The energy and peaking shortage for the corresponding period in the country was 11% and 17% respectively. The State-wise position is given in Annexure-I and II. enclosed.

(b) The reasons for the power shortage, inter-alia, are as under:

- (i) Growing gap between demand and supply of power;
- (ii) Decline in Hydel power generation; and
- (iii) Disruption in gas supply on the HBJ Pipeline which

was partially shut-down from 1.1.1997 to 23.1.1997 thereby affecting power generation by Gas based power plants.

(c) The measures being taken to maintain balance between demand and supply include the following:

- (i) Increase in generation from existing plants by improvement of Plant Load Factor (PLF);
- (ii) Capacity addition;
- (iii) Renovation and modernisation of existing plants;
- (iv) Demand side management measures;
- (v) Reduction of Transmission and Distribution losses; and
- (vi) Inter-State/Inter-regional transfer of power.

Annexure-I

Statewise Actual Power Supply position in the country
During the Period April '96 to January '97.

(All figures in MU net)

Region/ State/system	April '96-January '97			%
	Requi- rement	Availa- bility	Shor- tage	
1	2	3	4	5
NORTHERN REGION:				
Chandigarh	755	754	1	0.1
Delhi	11,980	11,684	296	2.5
Haryana	11,745	11,189	556	4.7
Himachal Pradesh	1,931	1,911	20	1.0
Jammu & Kashmir	3,918	3,207	711	18.1
Punjab	18,635	18,299	336	1.8
Rajasthan	16,135	15,154	981	6.1
Uttar Pradesh	34,155	29,605	4,550	13.3
N.R.	99,254	91,792	7,462	7.5
WESTERN REGION:				
Gujarat	31,460	28,922	2,538	8.1
Madhya Pradesh	26,460	23,705	2,755	10.4
Maharashtra	49,430	46,847	2,583	5.2
Goa	1,062	1,062	0	0.0
W.R.	108,412	100,548	7,864	7.3
SOUTHERN REGION:				
Andhra Pradesh	32,900	25,571	7,329	22.3
Karnataka	20,230	14,944	5,286	26.1
Kerala	9,445	7,256	2,169	23.2