Kashmir Issue

1731. SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a)   whether Pakistan again raised the Kashmir issue at recent UN General Assembly Session;

(b)   if so, in what terms; and

(c)   the details of India's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) The Prime Minister of Pakistan, in his address to the 53rd Session of UN General Assembly on September 23, 1998 made customary detailed references to the Kashmir issue. He alleged "occupation" of Kashmir by Indian troops and denial of the "right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir" and called upon the UN to take "appropriate initiatives" to implement Security Council resolutions on Kashmir and to ease tensions and build confidence. Pakistan also made references to Kashmir in its statements under various agenda items in UN Genereal Assembly and the Committees. We categorically reject Pakistan's baseless and unfounded allegations.

In his address to the UN General Assembly on September 24, 1998, the Prime Minister pointed out that India has had to cope with terrorism, aided and abetted by a neighbouring country, for nearly two decades, and that we have borne this with patience, but none should doubt the strength of our resolve to crush this challenge. Prime Minister drew attention to the fact that terrorism is a threat that affects all of us equally and can only be defeated by organised international action.

Growth Rate of Food Processing Industries

1732. SHRI NADENDLA BHASKARA RAO: Will the PRIME MINSTER be pleased to state:

(a)   the annual growth target set for food processing industry in the country during the current year;

(b)   whether food processing sector is on the priority list of domestic lending institutions;

(c)   if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d)   the steps being taken by the Government to boost the growth rate of food processing industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) No specific growth targets have been fixed.

(b) and (c) Food processing Sector, as such, is not on the priority list of domestic lending institutions. However, agriculture and small scale industries sectors being on priority lending list, the food processing sector does get some coverage.

(d)   For the growth, development and promotion of processed food industry, the Ministry provides financial assistance in the form of soft loan or grants-in-aid for setting up of/expansion of food processing units, Research &

Development, Human Resource Development, quality control and other promotional activities under its plan schemes.

Besides, the Government has been taking various policy measures including delicensing of most of the processed food industries and providing fiscal reliefs in excise and customs duties for the processed food sector.

New Telecom Policy

1733. SHRI MADAN PATIL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a)   whether the Government have any proposal for a new telecom policy to provide a state of the art nation-wise telecommunications network, speed up rural telephone services and to meet the new challenge of convergence of telecom sector; and

(b)   if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Government of India has already constituted a Group on Telecommunications under the Chairmanship of Dy. Chairman, Planning Commission with members from various Ministries/ Departments in this connection.

Air Time Cost for Film Based Programmes

1734. SHRI FRANCISCO SARDINHA: Will the MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a)   whether Doordarshan have hiked the air time cost for the popular film based programmes;

(b)   if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(c)   whether the producers have reacted to this decision; and

(d)   if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MUKHTAR NAQVI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

New Post Offices in Orissa

1735. SHRI BHARTRAHARI MAHTAB: Will the MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a)   the number of new post offices, branch/sub-post offices proposed to be opened in Orissa particularly in Cuttack region during 1998-99, district-wise; and

(b)   the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for the improvement of postal services including modernisation of mail services in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Ten (10) Extra-departmental Branch Post Offices and 2

(two) Departmental Sub Post Offices are proposed to be opened in Orissa Circle subject to availability of resources. The Division/District-wise targets have been shown in attached. Statement

(b)   Following steps have been taken/proposed to be taken for the improvement/modernisation of postal/mail services in the State:-

(i)   Multipurpose Counter Machines have been installed in 30 modernised post offices during the current year, 50 new Machines have been supplied.

(ii)   SB Lan facility has been provided in twelve (12) Post Offices. SBCO has been supplied Computers at eighteen (18) Post Offices.

(iii)   V-SAT Centres are operating at Bhubaneswar, Sambalpur and Berhampur with ESMO at 24 Post Offices. The proposals to have more ESMO Centres are being examined.

(iv)   Computerised registration sorting has been started at Bhubaneswar RMS. Computerised Registration is proposed to be extended at Cuttack RMS.

(v)   City sorting offices at Bhubaneswar and Jharsuguda have been modernised. More Railway mail service Offices have been proposed to be modernised. Bhubaneswar Transit Mail Office is also included in computerisation programme.

Statement

Target for opening of Post Offices for the year 1998-99 divisions/districts covered for Orissa Circle.

SI. No.	Name of the Division	Districts Covered	Target Allotted for DSOs.		Target Allotted for EDBOs.	
			Normal	Tribal	Normal	Tribal
1.	Bhubaneswar	Khurda	1	–	–	–
2.	Sundargarh	Sundargarh	–	1	–	–
3.	Balasore	Balasore	–	–	1	–
4.	Puri	Puri, Nayagarh and Khurda	–	–	1	–
5.	Cuttack South	Cuttack and Jagathsinghpur	–	–	1	–
6.	Cuttack North	Cuttack & Jajpur	–	–	1	–
7.	Bhadrak	Bhadrak	–	–	1	–
8.	Berhampur	Ganjam & Gajapati	–	–	1	–
9.	Mayurbhanj	Mayurbhanj	–	–	–	1
10.	Keonjhar	Keonjhar	–	–	–	1
11.	Kalahandi	Kalahandi & Nuapara	–	–	–	1
12.	Koraput	Korapur, Malkangiri, Rayagada and Nawarangpur	–	–	–	1
	Total		01	01	06	04