

5. In recent months, discussions on the subject have been convened with various Union and Staff Associations. While several views and opinions on the proposed restructuring and in regard to the complex issues involved have been expressed, a broad unanimity is seen in respect of the need to rationally reorganise and strengthen the DOT, including the option of following the corporatisation route. These (and related matters) call for detailed study and evaluation which has been duly initiated.

Fast Track Power Projects

*174. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have decided to provide counter guarantee in respect of all the fast track power projects and expedite the approval of such projects;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress made so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (c): The Government of India had in 1994 identified 8 projects for extending its counter-guarantee. Out of these, counter-guarantee has already been issued to the Jegurupadu Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) (216 MW) of M/s. GVK Industries in Andhra Pradesh and Dabhol CCGT (Phase-I) (740 MW) of M/s. Enion Power Company in Maharashtra. M/s. Specturm Power Generation Ltd. withdrew their request for counter-guarantee for the Godavari CCGT (208 MW) in Andhra Pradesh. In the case of the Ib Valley Thermal Power Project (Unit 3 & 4) of M/s. AES Ib Valley Power Corporation in Orissa, Government of India's counter-guarantee had been accorded to the project. Subsequently, the State Government re-negotiated the project parameters with M/s. AES Ib Valley Power Corporation and they were allocated Units 5 and 6 (now renamed as Unit A & B) of the Ib Valley Thermal Power Project. Fresh techno-economic clearance of Central Electricity Authority (CEA) is necessary for this project on account of the revised project parameters.

The Government have now approved extension of counter-guarantee in the case of the Visakhapatnam Thermal Power Project (1040 MW) of M/s. Hinduja National Power Company Limited (HNPC') in Andhra Pradesh, Bhadravati Thermal Power Project (1092 MW) of M/s. Central India Power Company (CIPCO) in Maharashtra and 250 MW single unit lignite based Neyveli Thermal Power Project of M/s. ST-CMS Electric Company in Tamil Nadu, through a revised procedure. It has *inter-alia* been decided that counter guarantee will be given

only for the event of termination and will be limited to the outstanding foreign debt only.

[*Translation*]

Foreign Investment In Print Media

*175. SHRI JANARDAN PRASAD MISRA :
SHRI MANIBHAI RAMJIBHAI CHAUDHARI :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to allow the foreign investment in print media in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government will take steps to prevent foreign investment in the print media; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Government continues to be guided by the Cabinet Decision of 1955 which *inter-alia* prohibits publication of foreign owned newspapers/periodicals and of Indian editions of foreign newspapers/periodicals dealing mainly with news and current affairs. The policy has not been changed or rescinded so far.

(d) Does not arise.

[*English*]

Trade of Wild Birds

*176. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH :
SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a total ban has been in effect on the trapping and trade of Indian exotic/wild birds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the traditional bird trappers are being harassed in the name of Wild Life Conservation Act;

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to provide alternative employment opportunities to these bird-trappers;

(e) whether according to the WWF Traffic India's latest survey on the live birds in Northern India, illegal trade in wild bird flourishes in almost all cities, towns and villages.

(f) if so, the details thereof;

(g) the details of action taken against the offenders; and

(h) the preventive measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 prohibits trapping of wild birds for commercial trade. This prohibition was imposed in October, 1991, following an amendment to the said Act. However trade in captive bred birds from legally held stocks prior to ban can be permitted, including trade in exotic birds.

(c) and (d); No, Sir. Some of the traditional bird trappers and traders are now dealing in exotic birds. Export of certain exotic birds has also been allowed, on the recommendation of the Indian Board for Wildlife (IBWL).

(e) to (g); Yes, Sir. But this also includes trade in exotic birds, which is not prohibited. The illegal birds trade centres are being regularly raided by the State authorities and action taken under the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

(h) The steps taken by the Government to prevent the illegal trade in birds are as follows :

- (i) Hunting of wild animals, which includes trapping of birds covered under Schedules I to IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been banned by law.
- (ii) This Ministry has set up a National Coordination Committee consisting of representatives of all major enforcement organisations such as : Customs, Revenue intelligence, CBI, Police, BSF, ITBP, RPF and foreign Post Office, Traffic-India and Wildlife authorities to enable effective inter-departmental cooperation and coordination to deal with the problem of illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products.

(iii) Training programmes on enforcement and implementation of wildlife and other related laws and international conventions have been organised for various enforcement agencies.

(iv) Raids are carried out by the wildlife authorities, in cooperation with other enforcement agencies, whenever information of illegal trading in wildlife is received.

(v) India is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) under which international trade in endangered species and their parts and derivatives is strictly regulated.

(vi) Rewards are given to informers for gathering intelligence regarding illegal trade and smuggling of wildlife products.

(vii) Regional and Sub-regional offices of Wildlife Preservation have been set-up mainly at the major export centres of the country to prevent illegal trade and smuggling of wildlife products.

National Conference of Educationists

*177. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether a three day national conference of educationists was held in the capital on November 10-12, 1997, under the aegis of the National Council for Teacher Education;

(b) whether the conference among other suggestions recommended making the elementary school learning joyful;

(c) if so, other suggestions and observations made in the conference for promotion and universalisation of elementary education; and

(d) the steps taken by the Union Government on the recommendations made in the Conference?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) A National Conference of Principals of District Institutes of Education & Training (DIETs) was organised by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) at New Delhi on November 10-12, 1997.

(b) and (c): Most of the suggestions relate to the need for orientation of teachers and teacher educators