

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MUKHTAR NAQVI) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, Government have initiated steps to formulate new Broadcasting Law to regulate the foreign satellite channels including their programme content and bring them within the ambit of Indian laws.

#### **Bargi Dam**

2804. SHRI RAMANAND SINGH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the time schedule fixed for the completion of the proposed canal on the right bank of the Bargi dam; and

(b) the amount allocated for the purpose during the current financial year and proposed to be allocated for the Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) The proposed canal on the right bank of Bargi Dam is part of Bargi Diversion Project which is targeted to be completed by March, 2014.

(b) An amount of Rs. 6.81 Crores has been allocated to Bargi Diversion Project during IX Plan of which Rs. 1.20 Crores has been kept in the State Budget for 1998-99.

[English]

#### **Issue of Passport**

2805. SHRI P. SANKARAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce a scheme to issue passport on premium;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme and the expected revenue therefrom;

(c) whether the Passport offices have been geared-up to meet such an eventuality on commercialisation of the issue of passport; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE):

(a) Government has not announced any decision on a scheme to issue passport on a premium. The fee payable

on application for each category of travel documents is specified in Schedule IV of the Passport Rules 1980 as amended from time to time.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

#### **Annual Growth of FPI**

2806. SHRI K.P. MOHAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by the Government to maintain a 25 per cent annual growth of food processing industries in the country;

(b) whether the Government are also considering to set up an infrastructure fund for the food processing industries; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) While no specific growth target have been fixed, 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.

(b) and (c) Action has been initiated to explore the possibilities for setting up of a Processed Food Sector Development Fund in collaboration with Financial Institutions. However, since only preliminary measures have been taken so far, the details have not been worked out.

#### **Share of Technology**

2807. SHRI S.S. OWAISI :  
SHRI PRASAD BABURAO TANPURE :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have offered to share its experience in space technology and its application with developed or developing countries through a programme called "share";

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the countries with whom such sharing is going on at present;

(d) the area in which this sharing of experience has been agreed upon;

(e) the number of persons given training in IIRS and NRSA and space application centres during the last three years, country-wise; and

(f) the future plans chalked out by the Government under this programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUDHARA RAJE) :

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) With a view to further the co-operation with developing countries and enabling them to undertake development activities in their countries, the Government has initiated a programme known as SHARES (Sharing of Experience in Space), under which some of India's experience in Space Applications is shared with the developing countries. Under the SHARES programme, personnel from developing countries are provided training with financial support. The training programmes are conducted in Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehra Dun, National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA), Hyderabad and Space Applications Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad.

While SHARES programme is open for personnel from all developing countries, in the three years, a total of 11 candidates have been trained; three from Sudan, two from Nigeria and one each from Iran, Syria, Russia, Kazakhstan, Nepal and Myanmar.

(f) Apart from continuation of the SHARES programme, it is planned to offer Fellowship, under the SHARES programme, to some of the students in the Asia Pacific countries who are selected to undertake educational courses conducted by United Nations Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia Pacific (CSSTE-AP), which has been set up in India.

[*Translation*]

#### **Indo-China Relations**

2808. SHRI MOHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Joint Working Group was constituted after the visit of Chinese Prime Minister to India in 1996 to resolve the disputes between India and China;

(b) if so, whether the meeting of the Joint Working Group was held this year; and

(c) the outcome of the meeting of Joint Working Group?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) No, Sir. The Joint Working Group on the Boundary Question (JWG) was set up following the visit of the then Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi to China in December 1988 to seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable resolution of the boundary question.

(b) No, Sir. The JWG has met ten times so far, the last meeting being held in New Delhi on August 4-5, 1997.

(c) The question does not arise.

#### **Condition of Farmers**

2809. SHRI JANARDAN PRASAD MISRA :  
SHRI M.R. CHAUHAN :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government propose to set up a Commission to look into the economic condition of the farmers in order to bring improvement in their condition; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAI.) : (a) and (b) It has been decided to set up a High Powered Commission to look into the real financial condition of farmers, and to recommend ways to improve their financial condition. The terms of Reference and Constitution of the Commission are under finalization.

[*English*]

#### **New Foreign Policy**

2810. SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state: