

(c) and (d) Major reasons for delay and steps taken thereof are:—

- (i) Shortage of Labour Courts in States/Union Territories.
- (ii) Filling up of vacancies of the post of Presiding Officer takes time.
- (iii) Procedural impediments such as absence of affected parties at the time of hearing, adjournments sought by parties to file documents etc.
- (iv) Expeditious steps are taken to fill up posts of Presiding Officers in Central Government Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Courts after observing all necessary formalities.
- (v) Presiding Officers are also impressed upon about the need to reduce pendency of Industrial Disputes Cases in their Central Government Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Courts.

[Translation]

Supply of Liquefied Natural Gas

3754. SHRI NARENDRA BUDANIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have formulated any long term policy for liquefied natural gas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) If not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the role of interested private companies in the liquefied natural gas sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (d) The import of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is on the OGL and, therefore, LNG can be imported, regassified and marketed by any party whether in the private sector or public sector. There are several private initiatives with regard to import of LNG and approval of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board has also been given in cases where foreign equity is involved.

[English]

List of VDIS leaked to Under-World

3755. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the list of Voluntary Disclosure of Income Scheme was leaked to the under-world, which used it for extortion; and
- (b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to identify and punish the officials held responsible?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Private Cars for Security Duties of VVIPs

3756. SHRI SATNAM SINGH KAINTH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have engaged private cars for security duties of VVIPs;
- (b) if so, whether it is a violation of Motor Vehicle Act and also the Insurance Act; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to remedy the situation and hiring of commercial cars for the security duty of VVIPs?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) No, Sir. No private cars are used in the security of VVIPs.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

Procurement of Rice

3757. SHRI RAGHVENDRA SINGH: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rice procured from rice millers under the levey scheme during the last three years have become substandard;

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

(c) the loss suffered to the Government as a result thereof;

(d) the steps taken by the Government against the guilty officials;

(e) whether substandard rice is lying at port at present; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. Some small quantities of rice have become substandard in the last three years.

(b) and (c) The stocks of rice procured under levy remain in storage in FCI often for a considerable period. During storage, shredding and shedding of rice bran takes place, due to which the rice stocks contain lose bran. Stocks containing more than 0.5% lose bran is categorised as Category 'D'. Such stocks are not issued for PDS and other welfare schemes till these are upgraded, to reduce bran percentage to less than 0.5% by sieving/cleaning.

A statement showing quantity of rice which became substandard during the last three years is attached. This includes both levy rice and custom milled rice.

(d) whenever any report of any officer/official violating the standing instructions regarding procurement of levy rice, strictly in accordance with the Govt. of India specifications, comes to notice, the matter is investigated and necessary disciplinary action is taken against those found guilty for such lapse.

(e) and (f) Since no import of rice has been done/handled by FCI during the last three years, no stock of sub-standard imported rice is lying at the ports.

Statement

Quantity of Rice which became substandard in the last three years

(in MTs)

Year	Qty. of rice	Category
March, 1996	366949	'D'
March, 1997	440216	'D'
March, 1998	466206	'D'

T.B. Disease

3758. SHRI C.D. GAMIT:
SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN:
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA:
SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR:
SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY:
SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV:
DR. RAVI MALLU:
SHRI DINSHAW PATEL:
SHRI T. GOVINDAN:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Five lakh succumb to TB every year" appeared in the 'Hindustan Times' dated November 7, 1998;

(b) whether India has the world's highest incidence of Tuberculosis with almost 2 million new cases every year;

(c) if so, the details of these cases detected in each State during each of the last three years;

(d) whether the World Health Organisation report published in March has criticised the Indian Government for delaying TB control plans;

(e) if so, the main reasons for not taking immediate action in controlling the Tuberculosis which has once again assumed alarming situation;

(f) if so, whether the Government had received a loan of US\$142 million from the World Bank for TB control programmes;

(g) if so, whether the World Bank loan was cleared in February, 1997 and no action plan has been prepared by the Government to utilise this loan;

(h) if so, the reasons therefor;

(i) the time by which this action plan is likely to be prepared; and

(j) the further steps taken to eradicate these diseases from the rural as well as metropolitan cities of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI): (a) Yes, Sir.