

(a) whether the Government is having any proposal to introduce direct bus service between Calcutta and Dhaka;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the said service is likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Official level talks in this regard were held in New Delhi on February 16 and 17, 1997. The details of the proposed service are in the process of being worked out.

Fishermen in Pak Jails

2165. SHRI GORDHANBHAI JADAVBHAI JAVIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian origin fishermen captured by Pakistan coastguard and police and jailed during the last three years; and

(b) the number of fishermen who have returned to India through dialogue and other measures?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) 343 Indian fishermen were detained by the concerned Pakistani authorities since March 1996. During the same period, Pakistan has released 439 Indian fishermen. These included Indian fishermen detained by the Pakistani authorities prior to March 1996.

Decontrolled Fertilizers

2166. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to lift its control on fixing maximum retails prices (MRP) for decontrolled fertilizers; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent future increase in costs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) A proposal for not indicating the Maximum Retail Prices of decontrolled Phosphatic & Potassic fertilisers for 1999-2000 is under examination. The proposal also includes continuance of the concession (subsidy) to the manufactures/importers to enable sale of these fertilizers to farmers at reasonable price. The increase in costs of production or import is dependent on a number of factors like international prices of inputs and products which may be beyond the control of the Government.

Employment Policy

2167. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:
SHRI ARVIND KAMBLE:
SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI:
SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the alarming unemployment situation in the country;

(b) if so, the details of contribution of Public Undertakings of Union Government and State Governments in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to increase employment generation in organised and unorganised sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) As per the estimate available from the comprehensive quinquennial surveys on employment and unemployment conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), the overall employment in the country, during the period 1987-88 to 1993-94, grew at the rate of 2.43% per annum. The unemployment rate during the same period declined from 2.62% to 1.90%.

(b) The following table gives the detail of the employment in the Public Sector by different branches—

Table : Employment in Public Sector (Lakhs)

	1994	1995	1996	1997
1. Central Govt.	33.92	33.95	33.66	32.95
2. State Govt.	73.37	73.55	74.14	74.85
3. Quasi Govt.	65.14	65.20	64.58	65.36
4. Local Bodies	22.02	21.97	21.92	22.44
Total	194.45	194.96	194.29	195.59

Source: Economic Survey, 1998-99.

(c) to (e) The Ninth Plan envisages a reduction in the unemployment rate from an average unemployment rate of 1.87% in the Eighth Plan to an average unemployment rate of 1.66% in the Ninth Plan.

The approach to the Ninth Plan would be to generate productive employment in the growth process itself by concentrating on sectors, subsectors and technologies which are more labour intensive, in regions characterised by higher rates of unemployment and under employment.

Medical Certificates from CGHS

2168. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government employees are facing acute problems for getting their medical leave sanctioned because it has been made mandatory for them to procure their medical certificates from CGHS dispensaries only;

(b) whether the Government propose to allow its employees to avail medical leave and produce medical certificate from any medical attendant in places where CGHS dispensaries are not available; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) to (c) As Gazetted Government servants are already required to produce medical certificates only from Authorised Medical Attendants (including CGHS doctors), the orders requiring production of Medical Certificates from CGHS doctors, which have been issued on the basis of Fifth Central Pay Commission's recommendation are applicable only to those non-gazetted government servants who (i) are CGHS beneficiaries, and (ii) are also residing, at the time of illness, in the area covered by CGHS, The non-gazetted employees who do not fulfil these conditions continue to have the option of producing Medical Certificates from Registered Medical Practitioners. Relaxation of the orders is considered on merits in cases where the concerned Government servants are not in a position to produce Medical Certificates from CGHS doctors. However, some representations for withdrawal/ amendment of the said Orders have been received and the issue has also been taken up for discussions by the Staff Side, and the Government has an open mind on the subject, if any hardship is established.

Poverty Line

2169. SHRI KISHAN SINGH SANGWAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the date of last survey to determine poverty line;

(b) whether the Government have received representation to review the same;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to ensure that it depicts a true picture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Poverty line are not determined through surveys. The actual cost of obtaining the basket of goods and services which is considered to be the minimum for healthy and active life were determined from the National Sample Survey data on consumer expenditure of 28th round (1973-74). These poverty lines are updated for changes in prices through state-specific consumer price index of agricultural labourers in rural areas and state-specific consumer price index of industrial workers in urban areas.

(b) Yes, Sir, several States have represented for review of their States poverty line.