

2. The NDC endorsed the recommendations of the NDC Committee on Power and urged the Union, State and UT Governments to implement these recommendations on priority.
3. It was suggested by the NDC that, while revising the administered prices of essential commodities, a balance needs to be struck between the interests of farmers and consumers, particularly the poorer sections of society, and the macro-economic imperatives of fiscal stabilisation and control of inflation.
4. The NDC decided to constitute two sub-Committees under the Chairmanship of Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, with members from the Central Ministries and States, to go into (a) the criteria for allocation of funds under major rural poverty alleviation schemes and (b) the transfer of Centrally Sponsored Schemes and the modalities involved therein.

During the discussions which took place on the 19th February, 1999, various State Governments also raised issues relating, inter alia to their finances. In this regard, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has implemented the revised ways and means advances to States from 1.3.1999, as against the earlier decision of doing so with effect from 1.4.1999, as part of short-term measures. In order to address the medium term fiscal problems of the States, the Union Finance Minister will hold a meeting with the Chief Ministers.

On the question of subsidy on foodgrains, the Government took a decision in December, 1997 that PDS issue prices would be 50 per cent of the economic cost for below-poverty line families and 90 per cent of the economic cost for above-poverty line families. Subsidy on education is gradually being confined to basic education. An attempt is being made to make higher education available on self-financing basis. As regards electricity, the Union and State Governments have initiated steps to implement the recommendations of the NDC Committee on Power.

[Translation]

Misutilisation of Funds under MPLADS

*314. SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR . Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the local district officers are misutilising funds under the MPLADS in several Parliamentary constituencies of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the government propose to implement any action plan to check misuse of said funds and to ensure proper utilisation of the funds for development work; and

(d) if so, by when and the manner in which the Government propose to implement the said action plan?

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) and (b) Some complaints from MPs about misutilisation of funds under MPLADS by District Collectors have been received. In such cases the matter is taken up with the concerned Collectors/State Governments and necessary instructions are issued.

(c) and (d) The guidelines on MPLAD Scheme contain the scheme concept, provision for implementation and monitoring, procedure for execution of works, release of funds, alongwith illustrative list of works which can be taken up under MPLADS and those which cannot be taken up under MPLADS. There may not be any misutilisation if the guidelines are strictly followed.

[English]

Kashmir Issue

*315. SHRI RAMKRISHNA BABA PATIL :

SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Pakistan Prime Minister has threatened to suspend talks with India if the Kashmir issue is not resolved within a specific time frame;
- (b) if so, the time frame specified by Pak premier; and
- (c) the reaction of the Indian Governments thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) No, Sir. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has not given any indication of Pakistan desiring a suspension of the composite dialogue process, of which the first round was held between October 15 and November 13, 1998. The two sides are in touch through diplomatic channels regarding the second round which will be held shortly.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Review of Special Employment Scheme

*316. SHRI D.S. AHIRE :

SHRI VITHAL TUPE :