

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(English Version)

Thirteenth Session
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)



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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, March 13, 2008/Phalgun 23, 1929 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[English]

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, I have given notice for suspension of Question Hour...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I will take up the issues after the Question Hour. Please allow me to regulate the proceedings. I do not minimize the importance of any subject, a notice of which has been given by any Member. I have to find out time. Let me find out the time. Let me see what the subjects are. Why should I not allow? This is your House, but not during the Question Hour. That is my earnest appeal to you.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Mr. Speaker Sir, on 8 March the office of the Member of the Parliament Jayaprada was attacked...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Why do you act like this?

...(Interruptions)

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV (Sambhal): ...(Interruptions) need your protection.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, you were there and you know very well as to what I have said.

[Translation]

I will certainly look into it. I will give opportunity to all.

[English]

I have come to know about it for the first time today, only some 10 minutes before. I want to make it clear that if any hon. Member of the House is not being treated properly, or if anything has been done which requires intervention, I will take the strictest action. I promise this

to Members of all sides. It will never happen. I will not allow my Members either to be interfered with, or insulted, or in any way be interfered with in the discharge of their duties.

Shri Dhindsa, I will allow you after the Question Hour.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Sir, I was assured that I would be given the first chance to speak during the Zero Hour.

MR. SPEAKER: How can every hon. Member be the first person to speak during the Zero Hour?

[Translation]

What is there in first and second?

[English]

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, we have been trying to raise this issue for the last four days...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the chair had assured him.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not know whether I had assured him for number one.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Q. No. 201—Shri N.N. Krishnadas.

Thank you for your co-operation.

11.02 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Permission to Airlines to Fly Abroad

*201. ⁺ SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS:
SHRI ABDULLAKUTTY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the new private airlines which have started their services from Indian domestic and international airports to Middle-East and European destinations in the last two years and during the current year;

(b) whether the Government has received more requests from private airline companies for introducing their service operations from the Indian domestic and international airports to Middle-East and European destinations;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the response of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) As per the present policy of the Government, the Private Scheduled carriers having a fleet of 20 aircraft and 5 years experience of operations in domestic sector are permitted to operate on international routes. Two of the private scheduled airlines viz. M/s Jet Airways and M/s JetLite fulfill the eligibility criteria. At present, M/s Jet Airways is providing direct connectivity to two European destinations viz. United Kingdom and Belgium and four Middle-East countries viz. Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain, as under:

Year	Name of the country	Route	No. of services per week	
2005-06	UK (London)	Mumbai-London-Mumbai	7	
		Delhi-London-Delhi	7	
2006-07	UK (London)	Mumbai-London-Mumbai	7	
		Amritsar-London-Amritsar	3	
2007-08	UK (London)	Ahmedabad-London-Ahmedabad*	3	
		Belgium	Mumbai-Brussels	7
		Delhi-Brussels	7	
	Kuwait	Chennai-Brussels	7	
		Delhi-Kuwait-Delhi	7	
		Kochi-Kuwait-Kochi	7	
	Oman	Kochi-Muscat-Kochi	7	
		Calicut-Muscat-Calicut	7	
	Qatar	Calicut-Doha-Calicut	7	
		Mumbai-Doha-Mumbai	7	
	Bahrain	Mumbai-Bahrain-Mumbai	7	
		Kochi-Bahrain-Kochi	7	

*M/s Jet Airways have withdrawn Ahmedabad-London flights effective January, 2008.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The Government has received requests from M/s Jetlite and M/s deccan Aviation Limited for their proposed operations to/from European/Middle East

destinations. As per the existing eligibility criteria, M/s Deccan Aviation Limited will become eligible for international operations w.e.f. 26th August, 2008. Further, grant of traffic rights to the scheduled carriers is an on-going process as per the requests received from them

depending upon various factors viz. meeting the eligibility criteria, availability of traffic rights, traffic demand, enhancing connectivity etc.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS: Sir, the traffic demand particularly to the Middle-East is increasing every year. The Government have now allowed certain private airlines to operate from Indian destinations to some Middle-East destinations also to some European destinations. I would like to know from the hon. Minister if by way of starting this competition with our Air India flights he intends to bring about a cost rationalization in fares to give benefit to those people who are traveling to Middle East in search of jobs. Air India is now proposing to start a Budget Airline, like Air India Express, to help the poor people who are traveling to the Middle-East. I would like to know if the Government has asked the private operators also to bring about a rationalization of costs in their fares for flights to Middle East or not.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Broadly speaking, air fares are not regulated by the Government any more, whether it is in the domestic or in the international sector. However, as a conscious effort by the public sector carrier, Air India, a low cost subsidiary as Air India Express has been started a couple of years ago primarily with the objective to offer low cost travel especially for travelers from Kerala to the Gulf Region as also travellers from our country and even for tourist travellers who want to go to the nearby region. So, it is not a regulation by the Government but the Airlines are free to charge whatever they like and I am sure, they would be conscious of it because it is no more an era of monopolies. Every airline competes with several other airlines and that competition itself has led to better services and better fares to passengers and more connectivity. So, I think it is an endeavour in that direction and the Government supports any airlines which likes to have low cost travel.

MR.SPEAKER: Shri Krishnadas, please restrict yourself to the main Question now.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS: Yes, Sir. The Government of Kerala has made a request to the Union Government to start an airline company to operate between Kerala and Middle East. But unfortunately, the Union Government has denied that request. May I know, through you Sir, from the hon. Minister the reason for it? Being a Government company, some relaxation may be given to such an initiative taken by a particular State Government to help the people. What is the reason to deny such a

request to a Government Company in giving some relaxation in the existing norms? Will he reconsider that case?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Government Company is of a State and there is a Government Company of the Centre also. There is no question about it. On one side, you seek protection for Air India and on the other side, you do not want to support that protection. You cannot have it both ways. It is a rule. The norm is that any domestic carrier should have five years of experience in the domestic side with a minimum of 20 aircraft and fly overseas. I would be happy if the Government of Kerala first starts an airline to operate within Kerala at least and give connectivity between Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram.

MR. SPEAKER: And Kochi and Kolkata at least.

SHRI ABDULLAKUTTY: I would like to convey the gratitude of Gulf Malayalees who belong to the Malabar area of Kerala to the hon. Minister of Civil Aviation for starting international flight, Air Arabia, from Kozhikode. My question to the hon. Minister is whether Oman Airlines and Emirates have expressed their interest in operating their flight from Kozhikode. If so, what is the decision of the Government in that regard?

MR. SPEAKER: It is good that you are espousing their causes.

SHRI ABDULLAKUTTY: The 'b' part of my supplementary is...

MR. SPEAKER: No 'b' part.

SHRI ABDULLAKUTTY: Sir, it is a serious issue.

MR. SPEAKER: It may be a serious issue but I cannot break the rules. I am sorry. Please take your seat. I request you to take your seat. You have put your question.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, as far as flights from Calicut to Gulf countries are concerned, it has been an international airport for sometime and flights from Calicut to Gulf countries were primarily being operated by Air India, Indian Airlines and Air India Express. But a large section of not only MPs but also representatives from Kerala, specially Calicut, requested that it should be open to other international carriers also. Keeping this request in mind, we have already allowed traffic rights to international airlines like Air Arabia and also other Airlines

will, in due course, be allowed. As the hon. Speaker has said not to speak about any particular Airlines, I shall refrain myself from giving you an answer on which Airlines are being permitted to operate in future.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the foreign nationals are employed in the private airlines and the greenfield airports; whether any scrutiny is done before employing them and the level of security regime in place. When the employment is taking place, does it match the rigour of the American and Western security protocol?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: It does not arise out of this Question. However, I would just like to inform the hon. Member that any foreign national working at Airports, Airlines across the country is subjected to a clearance from the Home Ministry. Only after a clearance is received from them, can a person be employed or allowed to work within the Airport or an Airlines.

SHRIMATI ARCHANA NAYAK: The Private Airlines in India very often cancel their flights at the last moment resulting in untold misery to the passengers. In view of the above, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government have any mechanism to ensure that the Private Airlines operate their flights as per the schedule and the international standards in their flight operations.

MR. SPEAKER: It is so vague. I do not know about that.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Again, it has got nothing to do with this Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Only, the common thing is Airlines.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: That is about the efficiency of the private sector.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: It is not a question of efficiency or anything. She is referring to the fact whether the Airlines operate flights as per the schedule. Well, I am sure, if they do cancel for reasons which are beyond their control, one can understand it. If it is done for any other reason, I am sure, the DGCA is competent enough to take action and also in a way to ensure that passengers are not inconvenienced.

[Translation]

State-of-the-art Facilities at Non-Metro Airports

*202. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:
DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the airports of non-metro cities are being equipped with the state-of-the-art facilities;

(b) if so, the names of the said airports alongwith the amount spent for the said purpose during the last two years;

(c) the number of such modernisation projects not completed on time by the contractors; and

(d) the details of the action taken so far by the Government against the said contractors alongwith the outcome thereof?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir. Airports Authority of India (AAI) has undertaken a project for modernisation. of 35 non-metro airports with state of art facilities, including Communication and Navigational facilities.

(b) Details are enclosed as Annexure I and Annexure II.

(c) Terminal Building Projects at Jaipur, Udaipur, Srinagar, Vizag and Agatti have been delayed.

(d) Following actions are taken in respect of projects delayed by the Contractors:

- (i) Tenders for capital works are not being issued to the contract agencies responsible for delay in projects.
- (ii) Strict enforcement of contract clause towards Liquidated Damages/Compensation/Recession/Termination of contracts.
- (iii) Clause for bonus/incentives for early completion of contracts is being incorporated in future tenders.
- (iv) Work being taken up at the Risk & Cost of Contractor.

Annexure I*Details of Aerodrome Works Taken up at Metro Airports*

(Rs. in crores)

Sl.No.	Modernization of 35 Non Metro Airports	Expenditure incurred during last 2 years
1	2	3
Andhra Pradesh		
1.	Vizag C/o new integrated TB	34.93
Gujarat		
2.	Ahmedabad C/o New International Terminal Building Pavement Works-	21.43 11.34
3.	Surat C/o New Terminal Building Pavement Works-	20.1 30.00
Jammu & Kashmir		
4.	Srinagar Expansion and modification of terminal building complex.	Planning Stage.
Jharkhand		
5.	Ranchi Construction of New Terminal Building Pavement Works—Apron	Planning Stage. 1.92
Karnataka		
6.	Mangalore Construction of New terminal Building i/c apron Pavement Works	18.75 10.07
Kerala		
7.	Trivandrum Construction of New International Terminal Complex across the runway on Chackai side Pavement Works—Apron	65.5 10.00

1	2	3
Madhya Pradesh		
8.	Bhopal	
	Construction of new Integrated Terminal Building	Planning stage.
	Pavement Works—Apron & Runway	Tender Stage
9.	Indore	
	Construction of New Integrated Terminal Building	Planning Stage.
	Pavement Works—Apron & Runway	Work recently awarded
10.	Khajuraho	
	Construction of new integrated terminal building	4.16
	Pavement Works—Apron	11.68
Maharashtra		
11.	Aurangabad	
	C/o new integrated Terminal building	14.19
	Pavement Works-	6.90
12.	Nagpur	
	Exp. & mod. of Terminal Bldg. for international operations	31.25
13.	Pune	
	Expansion and modification of Terminal Building for International operations.	
	Pavement Works-	21.43
Orissa		
14.	Bhubaneswar	
	Construction Terminal Building and associated works	Planning Stage.
	Pavement Works—Apron	11.62
Punjab		
15.	Amritsar	
	Modular Expansion of Terminal Building (Ph-II)	31.1
	Pavement Works—Apron & Runway	14.50
Rajasthan		
16.	Jaipur	
	Construction of new international terminal complex	14.42
	Pavement works—Apron	11.00

1	2	3
17.	Udaipur	
	Construction of new terminal building complex	43.93
	Pavement Works—Apron	3.84
	Tamil Nadu	
18.	Madurai	
	Construction of new integrated terminal building	3.55
19.	Trichy	
	C/o New Terminal Bldg.	33.00
	Pavement Works—Apron	30.28
	Uttar Pradesh	
20.	Agra	
	Modification of existing Terminal Building	Planning Stage.
21.	Lucknow	
	Construction of New International Terminal Building	8.34
	Pavement Works-	9.64
22.	Varanasi	
	Construction of new international terminal building i/c aerobridges	15.00
	Pavement Works—Apron	9.64
	Uttaranchal	
23.	Dehradun	
	Construction of New Terminal Building	
	Pavement work—Runway, Apron	42.50
	Union Territory	
24.	Agatti	
	Construction of New Terminal Building	1.85
25.	Chandigarh	
	Construction of New Terminal Building	2.00
	Pavement Works—Apron	11.96

Annexure II**List of Major CNS projects completed in non-metro airports in last 2 years**

- Installation & Commissioning of VCS (Voice Communication System) at Varanasi, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Trivandrum—Cost incurred 8 crores.
- Installation & commissioning of Aerodrome Visual Simulator at CATC Allahabad for training purpose—Cost incurred 7.66 crores.
- Procurement of 8 nos. ILS (Instrument Landing System)—Cost incurred 8.73 crores.
- Procurement of 40 DME (Distance Measuring Equipment)—Cost incurred 20.96 crores.
- Procurement of 31 Nos. DVTR (Digital Voice Tape Recorders)—Cost incurred 3.43 crores.
- Procurement of 11 Nos. D-ATIS (Digital Automatic Terminal Information System) for terminal and metrological information—Cost incurred 1.9 crores.
- Installation and commissioning of Surveillance CCTV system at Jaipur, Lucknow, Leh, Coimbatore, Pune and Vadodra—Cost incurred 1.81 crores
- Installation of EPABX system at 33 airports—Cost incurred 1.49 crores.
- Procurement of test equipments for 11 airports for testing the health of CNS equipments—1.94 crores.
- Installation & commissioning of DSCN (Dedicated Satellite Communication network at 80 airports including non-metro airports—Cost incurred 19.09 crores.

[Translation]

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government have decided to provide state-of-the art facilities at nearly 35 airports located in non-metro cities of the country. However, from the reply it is clear that there are many such airports wherein work has not been completed despite the expiry of Scheduled date of its completion. In reply to the question, it has also been stated that the projects in respect of five airports—Jaipur, Udaipur, Srinagar, Vizag and Agatli have been delayed. I come from Surat where the project has been delayed

despite the presence of terminal building and night landing equipment and sufficient time limit at disposal. I would like to know whether it is so due to lack of funds or the contractor is not working properly. What is the reason that our airport has not been modernized with the state-of-the art facilities within the scheduled period.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I had gone to Surat with Kashiram Rana ji, he was very much pleased. The airport has been commissioned there. The work that was not going to be done, has also been done. At that time, he had said that it was good because at least work had been started...*(Interruptions)*. Air service have been introduced and the runway also has become operational. At that time there was problem with the contractor. You are also aware that we had some dispute with the contractor.

[English]

The flights are operating. There is no other issue. As far as completion of the terminal building is concerned, it is an ongoing process. As of today, all flights are operating and the passengers are not facing any inconvenience.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: What about the other Airports?

MR. SPEAKER: You have another opportunity to put the second supplementary.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: He asked me about Surat. About the other Airports, I would submit that it is an ongoing process. There is no work which is being stopped or stalled or delayed on account of want of money.

MR. SPEAKER: Only one second supplementary is allowed.

[Translation]

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister in his reply has stated that there are several contractors who have not done their work properly or have not complete the work in time. So, strict action is going to be taken by the Government against them. I would like to know the number of such contractors against whom strict action has been taken. Alongwith this, I would also like to know as to what incentive has been given to those contractors who have completed their work before time.

MR. SPEAKER: How can the hon'ble Minister give this detail?

[*English*]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Well, I can collate this data if the hon. Member wants. But to give a list of each contractor and each Airport, whether he is being penalized or rewarded, I will need some time to collate the information.

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot give it now. It is enough. You need a lot of time. Now, I think Laluji is losing importance. More interest is being shown in airways than in railways.

Dr. Dharendra Agarwal—Not present.

[*Translation*]

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Sir, the hon'ble Minister had announced in the House that 500 greenfields will be set up in the country. I would like to know the progress in this regard. I would also like to know whether the Government propose to set-up Greenfield in Allahabad as the land is also available and airport is also there.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, the hon'ble Member should be pleased that due to his efforts, Allahabad has been connected to Delhi by air services after so many years. Besides, as far the construction of the airports about which the hon'ble Minister is mentioning is concerned, I have said that the Government will make efforts in this direction so that more and more airports can be constructed. There are many such airports already in the country which are required to be made operational again and I had said that it is not the responsibility of the Central Government to construct each and every airport. There are many airport under the State Governments and if they take up this work on their own or develop it under a joint venture then the number of airports which are presently 100 in the country may increase upto 400-500. It is the need of the hour because everybody wants that his area should be connected with airline services. If we could not do it despite the presence of facilities then initiative has to be taken in this direction and it will be better if the state governments also co-operate in this respect.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Sir, airports were constructed at Raksaul along Indo-Nepal border and at Hathua, Lalu ji's village in Gopalganj, Bihar during the second world war. There is more than 500 acres of land that the people are encroaching upon and are constructing huts there. These airports are very important from the

strategic and transportation point of view as this area of north Bihar has very poor connectivity. So, I would like to know whether the Government propose to restore these airports.

MR. SPEAKER: Your question is not related to the main question.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, I do not have any information regarding these airports and their ownership. Probably, they may be under the control of the Ministry of Defence or the State Government. If they are under the air-force then it will not be proper to make comments in this regard...(*Interruptions*) I have said it earlier also that there are many such airports in the country which should be put to use whether it is the State Government or the Air-force, whosoever have the ownership of these airports, should take steps to commission these airports. The Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India is ready to extend all kinds of assistance like licensing etc. in this regard.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: The question is about the facilities provided in non-metro airports. We are going much beyond the scope of the question. Q.No. 203 Shri Raghuraj Singh Shakya—Not present.

Shri Basu Deb Acharia

**Employment to Disabled Persons
In Private Sector**

*203. † SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA:
SHRI RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to bring in a legislation to make it mandatory for private sector companies to keep certain percentage of the vacancies reserved for the disabled persons; and

(b) if so, the details of action taken/to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

(a) and (b) No, Sir. Section 41 of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 provides that the Government will provide incentives to employers in private sector to ensure that atleast 5% of their work force is composed of persons with disabilities. In pursuance of this provision, the Government has sanctioned a scheme to provide incentives to employers in the private sector to promote employment of persons with disabilities. The benefit of the scheme is for persons with monthly wages up to Rs. 25,000/-. The Scheme envisages payment of employer's contribution to Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) and Employees' State Insurance (ESI) for the first three years.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act was passed in 1995. It says that Government will provide incentives to the employers in the private sector to ensure that five per cent of their total work force is that of handicapped persons. Subsequently, the Government of India announced a policy to provide incentive to the employers for employing handicapped persons and this benefit is for persons with monthly wages upto Rs. 25,000. This incentive is for payment of employers' contribution to Employees Provident Fund and Employees State Insurance for the first three years.

MR. SPEAKER: That is the answer. What is your question?

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: May I know from the Minister as to how many private sector employers are following this policy and filling up 5 per cent of the posts with handicapped persons?

MR. SPEAKER: Your question is about bringing in a new law.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: No, already there is a law. Under the existing law they have to provide 5 per cent employment to handicapped persons. But that is not being followed by the employers in the private sector.

MR. SPEAKER: That is not the question.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: So, may I know from the Minister whether the Government will bring a suitable legislation to make it compulsory for the employers in the private sector so that the existing provision of 5 per cent employment is ensured for handicapped persons?

MR. SPEAKER: The first word of the reply is 'no'. You are asking it again.

[Translation]

Say no in reply to the question.

[English]

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: It is a 'no' and may I just elaborate that under this scheme that we have brought to give incentives to the employers, we are going to provide their share of EPF and ESI. That is the incentive and that is going to be implemented from 1st of April. So, the scheme is new. In the past, there was nothing. Now this incentive has been made in accordance with Section 41 of the PWD Act.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, may I know from the Minister whether it is mandatory for the employers of private sector to employ 5 per cent or it is voluntary? I would also like to know whether this incentive is being provided from 1st April, 2008 in order to encourage private sector employers to provide employment to handicapped persons.

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: Sir, I will read out the Section. It says:

"The appropriate Governments and the local authorities shall, within the limits of their economic capacity and development, provide incentive to employers both in public and private sector to ensure that at least 5 per cent of their work force is composed of persons with disabilities."

Now we have this incentive and because it is such a substantial amount which is being paid to the employers, we are very hopeful that in future this target of 5 per cent should be realized.

[Translation]

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when we talk about the disabled persons, we go for categorization among them. But, the number of mentally retarded children has been the largest. Is there any special mention proposed under this incentive to provide plots or jobs to them for their rehabilitation?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I will not allow this. This has nothing to do with the main question.

[Translation]

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: I would like to know whether the incentives which they provide have been mentioned for the disabled children or not?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Have you specially mentioned mentally disabled children?

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: It is for the disabled and as we have clarified in our answer and I have also said now, it is the Government instead of the employers giving the EPF and ESI. We are going to give 16.23 per cent and that is going to be the Government's contribution.

So far as the disabled children are concerned, I think, he was asking about disabled children, the Ministry is running a number of schemes. If he would ask another question, I would be very happy to answer it.

DR. K.S. MANOJ: Sir, even though the PW Act ensures five per cent reservation for the physically disabled persons, the private sector is not employing the disabled persons. Sir, how can the private sector give reservation when the Government sector and the Government PSUs are not employing the disabled persons?

MR. SPEAKER: This relates to private sector.

DR. K.S. MANOJ: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Then! Restrict yourself to that.

DR. K.S. MANOJ: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any incentives are given to the private sector and whether the Ministry would make it applicable to the public sector also to promote more employment opportunities to the disabled persons.

MR. SPEAKER: Not permitted. But if the hon. Minister wants to answer, she can answer, otherwise, I will not compel her to answer.

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: Sir, in Government services and public sector, there is a provision for three per cent reservation and in the last three years, these are being met and in fact, it is more than three per cent.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hope that you will not disallow my supplementary question.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I know you will put a relevant question.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Of course, it is a relevant question. It is related to this issue. Recently, a prestigious High Court of this country, delivering its decision, has passed an order to the effect that no disabled person can apply at any cost seeking a job in judiciary or in any office related to judiciary on the ground of reservation in jobs provided to them. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether the judiciary is above the law which is enacted by the Government of India and passed by this Parliament and in what capacity the High Court is passing such an order. If it is so, whether the Government of India while declaring such an order null and void, propose to bring a separate law for providing reservation in judiciary to the handicapped persons.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Not yet a private sector, but if the hon. Minister wants to answer, she can do that.

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: I would require a separate notice for this.

MR. SPEAKER: But you do not want to touch the High Court.

[Translation]

*SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Thank you Sir, in many foreign countries it is mandatory to reserve certain percentage of vacancies in the private sector companies for the disabled persons. But in our country it has not been made mandatory so far. In fact private companies are not at all providing job opportunities to the disabled persons.

Therefore, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether she would come forward to take any action in this regard to take up with the private companies.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: What do you want to know?

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Reservation!

MR. SPEAKER: Do you want reservation in disabled category?

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: No, Sir, reservation for disabled persons in private sector.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there any reservation among disabled persons?

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: Yes, there is three per cent reservation for disabled persons in Government Services. None in private sector.

*English translation of the Speech originally delivered in Kannada.

MR. SPEAKER: Probably, he wants caste reservation!

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: Maybe, he wants!

MR. SPEAKER: Some other reservation! I think, you better call him to your office.

[Translation]

Production of Natural Gas

*204. SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:
DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether several public sector oil companies are engaged in the production of natural gas;

(b) if so, the names of those public sector oil companies and the quantum of natural gas produced per annum by each of company during the last five years;

(c) the average cost of production of natural gas by each company during the above said period;

(d) the total quantity of import of crude oil and natural gases and the average expenditure incurred yearly, country wise; and

(e) the increase in the cost of production of each company from March 2004 to December 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) and (e) Yes, sir, Public sector oil companies, viz., Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) and Oil India Limited (OIL) are engaged in natural gas production in the country. The quantum of natural gas production and average operating cost of production during last five years (2002-07) are as under.

	Company	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
ONGC	Gas production Billion Cubic Metres (BCM)	24.244	23.584	22.970	22.574	22.442
	Operating Cost of Production (Rs. per thousand cubic metre)	964	879	1092	1149	1410
OIL	Gas Production (BCM)	1.743	1.887	2.010	2.272	2.28
	Operating Cost of Production (Rs. per thousand cubic metre)	768	816	932	993	951

Operating cost of natural gas production has increased by Rs. 318 per thousand cubic metres and Rs. 19 per thousand cubic metres for ONGC and OIL respectively during last three years. The increase in operating cost of natural gas production for ONGC in 2006-07 was mainly due to replacement, revamping/ refurbishment of pipelines, well platforms, rigs etc, and

additional cost incurred as one time contribution towards manpower expenditure including contribution for post retirement benefit scheme, insurance premium, provision for post retirement medical benefits, etc.

(d) Total quantity of import of crude oil and total value in last five years is as under:

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Crude oil imported (million metric tonnes)	81.99	90.43	95.86	99.41	111.50
Total value (Rs. crores)	76195	83528	117003	171702	219029

The country-wise details of crude oil import are as enclosed at Annexure.

Total quantity of import of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) by Petronet LNG Ltd., Hazira LNG Pvt. Ltd, and GAIL (India) Ltd. during last five years is as under:

(Figures are in million tonnes)

2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
NIL	0.247	2.50	5.06	6.87

The above imports were mainly from Qatar, Egypt, Algeria, Malaysia and Oman.

Annexure

Country-wise Crude Oil Imports

		Qty. in MMT				
Region	Country	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Middle East Region	Iran	7.42	8.62	9.61	11.42	14.70
	Iraq	4.17	3.88	8.33	11.23	13.45
	Kuwait	9.21	10.08	11.36	10.50	11.38
	Neutral Zone	2.63	3.23	2.13	2.28	1.63
	Oman	0.42	0.24	0.14	0.34	
	Qatar	0.21	0.71	1.19	0.46	1.73
	Saudi Arabia	18.82	23.55	23.93	25.29	24.63
	UAE	9.00	8.43	6.43	8.02	8.76
	Yemen	3.17	1.97	3.51	3.56	4.54
	Sub Total	55.04	61.51	66.62	73.08	80.82

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other Region	Algeria				0.26	0.65
	Angola		2.38	2.44	1.65	2.61
	Australia					
	Azərbayjan				0.22	0.71
	Brazil	2.80	0.85	0.29	0.29	0.42
	Brunei		0.54	0.81	0.48	0.63
	Cameroon	0.11		0.35	0.19	
	Egypt	3.07	3.62	2.12	1.93	1.93
	Equador			0.15	0.29	
	Equatorial Guiana	0.14	0.42	1.66	0.57	0.41
	Equatorial Kenya					0.29
	Gabon	0.45	0.64	0.28	0.41	0.14
	Ivory Coast					0.15
	Libya	1.07	1.72	1.47	0.91	0.13
	Malaysia	2.71	3.41	3.43	3.46	4.73
	Mexico	2.28	2.50	2.28	1.44	1.95
	Nigeria	11.58	11.07	13.10	13.54	13.07
	Russia	0.29	0.14	0.16		0.40
	Sudan		0.81	0.33	0.25	0.16
	Venezuela	1.74	0.83		0.29	2.32
	Sub Total	26.95	28.92	29.25	26.33	30.69
	Total Crude Oil Quantity	81.99	90.43	95.86	99.41	111.50
	Total Value (Rs. Crore)	76195	83528	117003	171702	219029

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question was that what was the quantum of natural gas produced per annum by each company during the last five years and what was the average cost of production of natural gas by each company during the said period.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reply given to my question is irrelevant. The Minister is replying:

[English]

"The operating cost of natural gas production has increased by Rs. 318 per thousand cubic metres and Rs. 19 per thousand cubic metres for ONGC and OIL respectively during last three years."

[Translation]

I had asked as to what was the actual cost of production of natural gas from the crude oil. Mr. Minister is giving the operating cost in his reply.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister can give the operating cost only.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know as to what was the actual cost of production. The Minister is telling us the operating and cost including all expenditure incurred on pipelines, well platforms, rigs, manpower etc.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know from the Minister the actual cost involved in the process of producing natural gas from crude oil.

MR. SPEAKER: When you ask about the cost of production, the Minister will reply about the operating cost only.

SHRI DINSHA PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have given the operational cost, recoup cost and also the statutory royalty. The operational cost of ONGC is Rs. 1410. The operational cost of Oil India is Rs. 951. The recoup cost of ONGC is Rs. 1814 and of that Oil India is Rs. 621.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister have given you the complete figures.

SHRI DINSHA PATEL: The cost of statutory royalty in ONGC is Rs. 266, while it is Rs. 140 in Oil India. The net production cost of ONGC is Rs. 3490, whereas it is Rs. 1720 in respect of Oil India. When drilling is carried out oil water, gas come out altogether. Sometimes, water and gas come out, sometimes, oil and gas come out. There is also different taxation in different states. After that there is offshore and onshore drilling. With the advent of new technology NRP, the drilling is carried out also in shallow and deep waters around the coast. Today, various laws are being formulated for nodals and insurance. All these things are added to it. All the costs are included in the investment. Gas is not produced from the crude oil. Natural gas fumes out of the crude, so its production cost has been shown.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: It is more than you wanted.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, what is the price fixation policy for gas? I would like to know from the Minister as to what is the policy of the Government to ensure profit to the production company.

SHRI DINSHA PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the price of gas is decided in open market. Its price is not fixed just like that. I would like to tell the hon'ble Member, who has tabled the question about the price fixation policy that the allocation is made according to price. The fixation of price is governed by regulations with the open market and adding the cost of transportation to the States.

[English]

DR. CHINTA MOHAN: Sir, we are importing gas from the Middle East, on the other side private companies want to export gas. What is the policy of the Government on the export of gas to other countries?

[Translation]

SHRI DINSHA PATEL: Sir, we try to meet the shortage of gas from outside because the demand is more than the production in the country. On account of more demand, we have to import it from other countries to meet the requirement. For this, we are introducing new amendment to the law. We are trying for domestic production and giving emphasis on exploration activities. We are taking measures to implement the Natural Gas Hydrate Programme (NGHP) for the exploitation of Non-conventional gases like coal bed methane and the hydrate resources with the feasibility of their commercial uses. We are making efforts to meet the requirement by importing gas in the form of LNG and through international gas pipelines. We have no plan or proposal to export gas.

SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask a specific question. The question was asked about the cost of production of natural gas by public sector companies. What is this cost in private sector and public sector respectively? I would like to know whether any arrangement for maintaining comparative figures has been made and whether any system has been developed to get it linked with the market.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have comparative figures?

SHRI DINSHA PATEL: Sir, the information sought by the hon'ble Member is not available with me at this time. I will send him the figures later.

[English]

SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH: Sir, ONGC and GAIL have started long before off-shore drilling in the Bengal basin. ONGC also started on-shore drilling in Govindpur and Haripur villages of the Bhagwanpur-II Block in Purba Medinipur district. I do not know about the result. We have been told that there is a huge reserve in the Bengal basin. I think, to my mind, the Government is not giving much emphasis for exploration of gases in the Bengal basin both off-shore and on-shore. What is the result of drilling in the Bengal basin? What is the result of on-shore drilling in West Bengal?

MR. SPEAKER: Have you got any information?

[Translation]

SHRI DINSHA PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble Member has raised the issue of GAIL. The work of drilling is being carried out by ONGC and Oil India but in the North Eastern States this work is being undertaken by Oil India alone. There are about 500 operational wells of Oil India in the North-East State of Assam. ONGC is working all over the country. ONGC...*(Interruptions)*.

[English]

SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH: Sir, my question is different...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Your supplementary does not arise out of this Question and therefore, he is having a problem. He will give you the information later on.

[Translation]

Mr. Minister may give information about Bhagwannagar to the hon'ble Member.

SHRI DINSHA PATEL: I will send you the information.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, does the Minister have the current average refinery cost at present? What is the production cost by public sector refinery? Will the Minister include in the Petroleum Act the sources of gas available in petroleum extracted from waste oil of biomass so that we could get natural gas etc...*(Interruptions)*.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Not allowed. Now Q. No. 205. Shri Balashowry Vallabhaneni.

Scholarship for Minorities

*205. ⁺ SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI:
SHRI MILIND DEORA:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has cleared a proposal to give 25 lakh scholarships in the next five years for minorities;

(b) if so, the salient features of the scheme;

(c) the total expenditure likely to be incurred on the entire scheme and the share of contribution from Centre and States; and

(d) the other modalities finalised in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (d) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of pre-matric scholarships has been approved for eligible students of class I to X belonging to the minority communities. It is proposed to award 25 lakh scholarships during the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Thirty per cent of the scholarships are earmarked for girl students.

The scheme would be implemented through State Governments/Union Territory Administrations with funding being shared between the Centre and States in the ratio of 75:25; 100% financial assistance will be provided to Union Territories. Students with not less than 50% marks in the previous final examination, whose parents'/guardian's annual income, from all sources, does not exceed Rs. 1.00 lakh are eligible for award of scholarship.

A tentative provision of Rs. 1400 crores has been made for the scheme in the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

The scheme will be implemented with effect from 01/04/2008.

SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Sir, I welcome this measure of granting 25 lakh scholarships to the minority communities during the Eleventh Plan. This is one of the biggest efforts of the UPA Government to improve the condition of the minorities.

MR. SPEAKER: Please put your question.

SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Sir, it is stated in his reply that only 30 per cent of the scholarships are earmarked for girl students. Girl students are equal to boy students in all respects. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will earmark 50 per cent of these scholarships to girl students.

MR. SPEAKER: Should it be equal?

SHRI A.R. ANTULAY: Sir, I am afraid, I have not followed what the hon. Member has asked.

MR. SPEAKER: He says, you should provide equal scholarships to girl students as well as to boy students.

SHRI A.R. ANTULAY: Sir, thirty per cent reservation is there for girl students.

MR. SPEAKER: Out of the scholars, is there any discrimination between boys and girls?

SHRI A.R. ANTULAY: Thirty per cent reservation for girls is earmarked.

MR. SPEAKER: He wants it to be 50 per cent.

SHRI A.R. ANTULAY: It is not possible at the moment. It is a suggestion for action.

MR. SPEAKER: He would consider it. Now, ask your second Supplementary.

SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Would the hon. Minister inform the august House the detailed action taken by him, so far, on the various recommendations of the Sachar Committee? Similarly, Prime Minister's New 15-Point Programme for the welfare of minorities was announced in June, 2006. So, all these schemes and steps are directed towards improving the welfare of minorities. I would also like to know whether any steps have been taken to implement the Prime Minister's New 15-Point Programme. I want to know all these details.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not pertaining to the main Question. For this, you will have to give a notice for a separate Question. The main Question is with regard to only scholarship.

SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Sir, I wanted to know about the recommendations of the Sachar Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: It is right or wrong, you have to accept my decision.

Mr. Milind Deora – Not present.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Sir, the population of minority communities including Muslims, Christians, Sikhs etc. in our country is about 17-18 crore. It is proposed to provide scholarships to 25 lakh students in the 11th Five Year Plan. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government propose to increase the income limit from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2 lakh. Government will provide scholarships to those students who obtain 50 per cent marks. There is a need to include those students as well who get 35 per cent marks. I would like to know as to what step hon. Minister is likely to take in this regard?

[English]

SHRI A.R. ANTULAY: Sir, it is a suggestion for action.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, you are right.

[Translation]

YOGI ADITYA NATH: Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government want to divide the society on the basis of minorities and majorities, in the larger interest of the country. I would also like to know whether the Government propose to provide scholarships to economically and socially backward sections of society. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Are you dividing the country?

SHRI A.R. ANTULAY: Sir, I may be pardoned and excused for saying that the hon. Member has put a question, whose ideology and public policy unfortunately—let me be very frank – is unconcerned and uncaring of the good of the country. It is hon. Member's and his party's duty to preserve unity and integrity of our great nation rather it is their thinking which if pursued shall divide the country. On the other hand, the UPA Government under the leadership of Shrimati Sonia Gandhi and Dr. Manmohan Singhji, has tried to assimilate every section of the population; and they do not want any section — on any ground, whether it is caste, creed or religion — to be deprived of equality. Every underprivileged person has to be covered by the fruits of freedom and thus, every person must have the sense of belonging to this country because that alone shall strengthen the country. Suppose, everybody in sections of population feels that he or she is ignored or deliberately

neglected or treated under bias and discriminated then this country has no future at all.

MR. SPEAKER: Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I am calling Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav and not Mr. Ram Kripal Yadav.

[Translation]

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: Sir, in reply to the question it has been stated that the provision of scholarship has been made for the students from class I to X however, the condition is that the student should have obtained minimum 50 percent marks in previous class and the annual income of his/her parents is less than Rs. one lakh. That means scholarship will be given to all the students who will join class one. Since there is no class before class one so every child is entitled to that scholarship. That is the first thing. I would like to know the class-wise amount of scholarship that will be given per month to the student from class I to class X.

SHRI A. R. ANTULAY: Sir, I would certainly like to submit one thing that there is no previous exam for class one and every child cannot attend nursery class and we do not consider that examination an examination as such. However, those who are well to do and rich send their children to nursery school. But many poor children remain deprived of nursery schooling. So the hon. Member has rightly said that there is no question of marks for class one and also there is no question of 50 percent mark. The income criteria of Rs. 1 lakh have been fixed. The scheme has been introduced recently. So, I feel that the hon. Member should praise the U.P.A. Government and should not criticize it... (*Interruptions*)

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: I would not like to criticize it, however, I would like to know the amount to be given to children as scholarship. I have all the praise for you whatever you are saying.

[English]

SHRI A.R. ANTULAY: Thank you very much. It is praise for the Government and not for me.

[Translation]

There will be no difference in the amount of scholarship whether it is for IV class or X class. However, whatever will be required in this regard will be done and nobody can stop this process. For example the word used in the provision is tentative if they go for higher education, more amount can also be given. However, they will not be deprived of education.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir, the hon. Minister has not clarified anywhere in the reply the types of schools whose students will be entitled to get scholarship. Children get education in Government, non Government schools and Madarsas etc. I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the children who will get scholarship and whether only those students who have scored 50 percent in previous exam will get scholarship. It has been generally observed that poor children are not properly reared so the mental standard of the children who study in Madarsas or other primary schools is comparatively less. So, I would like to know whether the Government propose to reduce 50 percent mark criterion which is mandatory for getting scholarship.

MR. SPEAKER: The Government will look into it.

SHRI A.R. ANTULAY: Sir, Yes, gave correct reply to the second part.

[English]

That is a suggestion for action however regarding the first part I would like to submit that scholarship will be provided to all the students who study in all Government or private schools, including residential government institutes and eligible private institutes selected and notified by States and UT Administrations.

[Translation]

SHRI SACHIN PILOT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am happy that many promises are made and policies are formulated for minorities however, I am pleased to see that the present Government have earmarked Rs. 1400 crore for the education to minorities and I feel that it is a commendable step for the education of minority communities. The hon. Minister has himself stated in the reply that 75 percent will be funded by the Central Government and the rest 25 percent by the State Government. However, I do not have any hesitation in saying that there are some states in the country who hate the very word minority and since it is your direction so I would not mention the names of Gujarat and Chhattisgarh. However, through you I would like to know whether such Governments will contribute.... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You need not stand up.

... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Why are you standing you please sit down.

... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will see to that. Do not be so touchy. Listen to the Minister. Do not be so touchy. We have respect for all the State Governments.

SHRI SACHIN PILOT: One-fourth contribution has to come from the State Governments. My question to the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, is whether the Government and the Minister will take action against those State Governments which do not contribute one-fourth of their part. What steps will be taken against those Government.

[Translation]

What steps will be taken against these Governments?

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: There is no question of taking action. The only thing that can be done is getting the money.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: There is no need to become touchy.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I have said that. One should not become so touchy.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Wait for the reply. There are Governments of different parties in different States. How can you not allow the questions which are permissible? If they are not permissible, you know that I am very strict about it.

[Translation]

SHRI A.R. ANTULAY: The State Governments which have agreed to give 25 percent are Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Now you are pleased.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI A.R. ANTULAY: That means we do not boast rather we say the truth. So, you should extend your thanks to the Governments like Haryana Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Manipur, Tamil Nadu, Uttrakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

[English]

Development of Tourism and Hospitality Education

*206. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:
SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to take various initiatives to boost tourism and the hospitality education in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of tourist inflow growth registered in the country during 2005-06 and 2006-07; and

(d) the details of forex earned and employment generated by tourism industry during the said period State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The Ministry of Tourism has taken a number of initiatives to boost tourism and hospitality education. In addition to twenty six functional Institutes of Hotel Management (IHMs) and four IHMs sanctioned earlier and presently under construction, the Ministry has sanctioned eight more IHMs in the State sector during the current financial year. Besides, four Food Craft Institutes (FCIs) have also been sanctioned for skill level training. The head quarters of the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) is at Gwalior and another centre had been sanctioned at NOIDA, (UP) in the year 2006-07. Central assistance has also been extended for the up-gradation and strengthening of the existing IHMs/FCIs with a view to increasing their students' intake.

(c) and (d) The foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in India in the years 2005, 2006 and 2007 were 3.92 million, 4.45 million and about 5 million respectively. The growth in FTAs in 2006 over 2005 and in 2007 over 2006 was 13.5% and 12.4% respectively. The state-wise figures of foreign exchange earnings and employment generated

*Not recorded.

from tourism are not complied. However, the foreign exchange earnings from tourism (estimated) for the country as a whole was US \$ 8.93 billion and US \$ 11.96 billion for the years 2006 and 2007 respectively. The estimated employment figures for these years were 50.3 million and 53.7 million.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister for India's unanimous election as the Chairman of the Executive Council of the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

MR. SPEAKER: Good.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industry, and by the year 2020, it is estimated that there would be 1.6 billion tourists worldwide and the earnings from tourism sector are worth US \$ 2.6 trillion, creating a job after every 2.5 seconds. This sector accounts for 11 per cent of the world's GDP and 9 per cent of the global employment; 12 per cent of the global exports and 12 per cent of the global investments. I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the share of India in this global scenario. Are we in a position to catch the world tourists, those who will come to India? The Government is doing this "Incredible India" mega event. I would like to know whether this mega event will help to attract more tourists to this country.

Sir, I would just like to draw the attention of the Minister, through you, to the fact that out of a total estimated requirement of 2,40,000 hotel rooms, the current availability is just 90,000, leaving an additional requirement of 1,50,000 hotel rooms in order to attract the tourists. We do not have the required hotel rooms available in the country. The growth in FTAs is also declining. In 2005-06, the growth was 13.5 per cent, whereas in 2006-07, it has come down to 12.4 per cent. Why is the growth rate coming down? It is declining. What is the Ministry doing to increase the number of foreign tourists to India?

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: I would like to inform the hon. Member that the figures of inbound tourists are not decreasing. I have the figures from 2003 when we had about two million inbound tourists. It has kept on increasing till 31st of December, 2007 when we recorded about five million tourists. I know that our share in the

world market is not as good as we all would like it to be. But it is also a truth that tourism only in recent years has got the profile and is being considered an economic factor which it was not in the early years of our Independence. So, even though last year we were at only 0.55 per cent of the world tourism figures, it has been registering a steady growth.

As the hon. Member has rightly said, we have figures right from 2003 when we contributed to the national exchequer 4.4 billion US dollars. I would like to inform the House that by 2007 our contribution of foreign exchange to the national exchequer was 11.956, almost 12 billion, US dollars. The hon. Member was quite right in saying that we are short of rooms. We are looking at 2010 Commonwealth Games. We need 150,000 more rooms - 100,000 in the budget category and 50,000 in the star category. We have taken several initiatives to augment the room supply, besides writing to the State Governments to make land banks, to have open transparent auctions, to decide on some equity sharing formula, so that we get some rooms. I am glad to inform the House that the State Governments have come forward positively. We still are not anywhere near the target but Haryana has promised up to 10,000 rooms and so have different States.

We undertook the initiative of bread-and-breakfast. I must congratulate the Delhi Government for making it into a non-commercial exercise which has given it a boost. We have written to other States also to do the same. Besides this, as the hon. Member stated in his question originally, all this augmentation of rooms would necessarily create much greater employment. Here is one point where we can score over the world. Worldwide figures of direct and indirect employment through tourism is 8.1 per cent. I am happy to inform the House that in India last year it was 8.9 per cent direct and indirect fallout of employment.

We are going to need 2,03,000 trained people to man these additional rooms. We have 26 institutes of hotel management run by the Government, four in private sector. We are opening more. We have opened new hotel management institutes in Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Kerala and in other parts of the country where we can train our people to man these rooms. So, several initiatives are being taken.

Our campaign of Incredible India, let me assure the House, has only brought in dividends. Our tourism is increasing. Worldwide people are talking of Incredible India for various reasons and definitely for tourism.

MR. SPEAKER: Is any more information needed?

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: I will ask my second Supplementary. The Minister has rightly said that tourism is creating maximum employment. For employment, good training is required in which we are very much handicapped. The country does not have the training facilities to match the requirement. The Indira Gandhi National Open University awards B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees in hospitality management education to the graduates and postgraduates of the Government-run institutions of hotel management. Will the Minister take the pain of interacting with IGNOU to ensure that they award BBA and MBA degrees in place of B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees keeping in view the predominant element of management in these courses? This hospitality training education is the basic necessity for the tourism sector.

MR. SPEAKER: I think tourism also needs brevity.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, we are in touch with the Indira Gandhi National Open University. They run these courses. Of the tally which I talked of annually getting almost 18,000 trained people into the pool of hospitality, some come from that sector also.

12.00 hrs.

Some comes from that sector also. We are having the National Council of Hotels Management and Catering Technology. Sir, 175 institutions are running in the private sector, which have some kind of an affiliation with us. We have extensive programme for Guides training. We have started recently a new scheme of 'earn while you learn'. This is primarily for university students from 18 to 25 years so that they can have five to six days a month at least for guiding and earn up to Rs. 1,000 a day which would help finance their study.

MR. SPEAKER: There is hardly time left. Shri Nand Kumar Sai.

[Translation]

SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to bring it to the notice of the hon. Minister that there is no institution for Tourism Education and Hospitality in the backward state like Chhattisgarh where there is immense potential in tourism. The students who want to go in for tourism and hospitality education have to go to other states. So I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any proposal too set up such an institution in Chhattisgarh...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please give time even for giving reply.

[English]

Hon. Minister may give a very brief reply.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, I would like to say that an Institute of Hotel Management has been sanctioned in the year 2006 to be set up in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. The Union Govt. would provide Rs. 10 crore for that institution.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Cost of Carrying a Rail Passenger

*207. DR. VALLABHABHAI KATHIRIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the cost of carrying a passenger in the Railways as against the cost of rail fare realized from a passenger on an average in each class;

(b) whether the number of coaches in the mail and express trains is proposed to be increased to improve the cost of carrying a passenger; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and also the other measures proposed to make up the cost?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) The average cost of carrying a passenger vis-a-vis revenue realized for different classes (latest available) is given below:

	Cost per Passenger	Fare realized per Passenger (Rs.)	Profit/Loss (in ± %age)
Air conditioned 1st class	Rs. 1752	Rs. 1456	(-) 17
Air conditioned 2-tier	Rs. 873	Rs. 861	(-) 1
Air conditioned 3-tier	Rs. 501	Rs. 581	(+) 16
Air conditioned chair car	Rs. 248	Rs. 341	(+) 38
1st class	Rs. 233	Rs. 214	(-) 8
Sleeper class	Rs. 342	Rs. 208	(-) 39
Second class (Mail/Express)	Rs. 104	Rs. 87	(-) 16
Second class (Ordinary)	Rs. 32	Rs. 17	(-) 47

(b) and (c) Over the years, Railways have been increasing the number of coaches in well patronized trains in order to carry more passengers. During 2005-06, 2006-07 & 2007-08 (upto December, 07) the number of additional coaches attached to different trains were 544, 745 and 876 respectively. The incremental volume of traffic carried per train is aimed at the reduction in unit cost, that is the cost per passenger. The other measures taken to reduce the cost of operation are introduction of coaches of improved design and enhanced capacity, reduction in energy consumption, removal of slacks in time-table, amalgamation of rake links, reduction in lie-overs of rakes at terminals and improvement in maintenance practices.

Supply of LNG from Iran

*208. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Iran has proposed a fresh formula to break the logjam over the pricing issue of a 25 year old contract to supply five million tonnes of LNG per annum;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the deal is pending as the Iranian firm, National Iranian Oil Company has sought a higher price;

(d) if so, whether the National Iranian Oil Company has agreed to the formula suggested by the Iranian Government; and

(e) the time by which the new formula will come into existence?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (e) Oil sector PSUs, viz., GAIL (India) Limited, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), have signed contracts with National Iranian Gas Export Company (NIGEC) on June 13, 2005 for import of 5 MMTPA LNG, which is scheduled to commence from 2009. Simultaneously, the parties also signed a side-letter to the LNG Sale Purchase Agreement (SPA), as per which NIGEC had to obtain the approval of their parent company, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), for the SPA to become effective. NIGEC has informed that NIOC's Board has not given its approval till now. Government is pursuing the matter with Iranian authorities for expediting the implementation of the deal. No fresh formula has been formally proposed by Iran in this regard.

Pre and Post Matric Scholarship for Minority Girls

*209. SHRIMATI MINATI SEN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of girl students of minority communities benefited from the pre-matric and post-matric scholarship scheme in 2007-08 in each State;

(b) whether the Government is planning to increase the quota of scholarship meant for the girls; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (c) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of post-matric scholarship for students belonging to the minority communities for higher education from class XI up to Ph. D., and technical and vocational courses of Industrial Training Institutes/Industrial Training Centers (affiliated with NCVT) of class XI and XII level, has been launched this year. It is proposed to award 15.00 lakh scholarships during the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Thirty percent of scholarships are earmarked for girl students.

State Governments/UT Administrations were requested to advertise the scheme inviting applications from eligible students for award of scholarship. The last date for receipt of applications from students was 29.02.2008. State Governments/UT Administrations will be in a position to scrutinize, compile the applications received, and send the proposals for sanction and release of funds during this month only.

A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of pre-matric scholarships for eligible students of class I to X belonging to the minority communities, has been approved. It is proposed to award 25 lakh scholarships during the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Thirty per cent of the scholarships are earmarked for girl students. The scheme will be implemented with effect from 01.04.2008.

Hike In Prices of Petrol/Diesel

*210. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:
PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has raised the prices of petrol, diesel and other petroleum products, in order to offset the impact of rising crude prices in the international market;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent to which the hike in crude prices has been off set thereby;

(d) the extent to which the losses of the oil companies are likely to be compensated by such hike; and

(e) the measures taken/to be taken by the Government to avoid hike in the prices of petroleum products?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (d) The prices of petrol and diesel were increased on 15.02.08 by Rs. 2 per litre and Rs. 1 per litre respectively, although the movement in international oil prices warranted a much higher increase. Despite steep increase in the international oil prices, the prices of domestic LPG and PDS Kerosene have not been increased since November 04 and March 02 respectively. Due to this, the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are incurring under-recoveries on domestic sale of sensitive petroleum products namely petrol, diesel, domestic LPG and PDS kerosene. The impact of the price increase on petrol and diesel effective 15.02.08 on the under-recoveries of the OMCs for 2007-08 would be around Rs. 810 crores.

(e) As passing on the entire impact of the steep increase in the oil prices to the consumers would have resulted in hardship to the common man and vulnerable sections of the society, the retail selling prices of these sensitive petroleum products have not been increased in tandem with the international oil prices. The Government has taken certain measures to ensure that the burden was shared by all the stakeholders, namely:

Government	—	Issue of Oil Bonds;
Oil companies	—	Sharing of the burden by Upstream Companies and OMCs; and
Consumers	—	Minimal Price Increase

Accordingly, the Government has issued Oil Bonds and Upstream Oil Companies have contributed by offering discount on crude oil and petroleum products, to partially compensate the under-recoveries of OMCs as per the details given below:

	Rs. in Crores	
Year	Oil Bonds issued by Government	Contribution by Upstream Oil Companies
2005-06	11,500	14,000
2006-07	24,121	20,507
Apr-Dec 07	11,257*	15,873#
Total	46,878	50,380

*For Apr-Sep 07

#Apr-Dec 07 (Provisional)

In addition to the above, to reduce the burden on the consumer, Central Taxes on sensitive petroleum products have been consciously rationalized. The Central Government levies no taxes customs or excise on PDS kerosene and domestic LPG. The customs duty on petrol and diesel has been reduced from 10% to 7.5% effective 14.6.2006 and the ad-valorem component of excise duty on unbranded petrol and diesel has been abolished from 1.3.2008. Considering its widespread use for cooking purposes, LPG (domestic) has been placed under the declared goods category, thereby limiting State Governments levy of sales tax to 4%.

The Government is closely monitoring the international oil prices and will continue to protect the interests of consumers.

Multiple Airports for Big Cities

*211. DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has undertaken any survey to provide multiple airports for big cities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the air traffic projections for the ensuing decade and the steps being contemplated to meet the demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The traffic forecast suggests that between the years 2006-07 to 2016-17, aircraft movements would go up from 1075640 to 4557810, passenger traffic from 963.70 to 5823.83 lakhs and cargo from 1549.24 to 3972.66 MT.

Measures have been initiated to deal with the anticipated expansion of air traffic in the country by augmenting, infrastructure at all the existing airports. Inter alia, this includes increasing the capacity of terminal buildings, constructing more parking stands for aircrafts, providing of longer runways, construction of additional runways wherever feasible etc.

In addition, the airports at Delhi and Mumbai have been restructured and are being developed and

modernized through Public Private Partnerships (PPP). A greenfield airport at Cochin under PPP is already under operation. Modern greenfield airports at Hyderabad and Bangalore are getting operational very shortly. In principle approvals have been given for new greenfield airports at Mopa (Goa), Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra) and Kannur (Kerala). Several State Governments have plans to promote many airport projects in their respective States.

Special attention is being paid to development of new greenfield airports and upgradation of existing airports in the North-Eastern States with substantial financial assistance from the Central Government.

Heavy Prices of Drugs

*212. SHRI PRABODH PANDA:
SHRI KIREN RIJJU:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the pharmaceutical companies are giving huge margins to the wholesalers and the chemists and the poor consumers are the sufferers as they have to pay heavy prices;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to fix a limit on the profit margin for the wholesale and the retail pharmaceutical dealers respectively;

(d) if so, the facts in this regard and the time by which the said proposal is likely to be implemented; and

(e) the extent to which the cost of the medicines is likely to be decreased in percentage terms in the wake of the implementation of the said proposal?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (e) The 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95) and the formulations based thereon are under price control and their prices are fixed/revised by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) in accordance with the provisions of the DPCO, 95. Under Para 19 of the DPCO, 95, 16% margin to retailer is allowed in respect of Scheduled formulations.

Prices of non-Scheduled formulations are fixed by the manufacturers themselves keeping in view the various factors like cost of production, marketing/selling expenses, R&D expenses, trade commission, market competition, product innovation, product quality etc. The Government takes corrective measure where the public interest is found to be adversely affected.

It has been noticed by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) that some companies provide high trade margins to the wholesalers and retailers in respect of branded-generics and generic-generic medicines of certain non-Scheduled formulations. However, this segment forms a small portion of total pharma market in the country.

It is proposed to streamline the system of trade margins through the Draft National Pharmaceutical Policy, 2006, which proposes to cap the trade margins. Based on the reduction in the trade margins, there is a likelihood of the prices coming down in the case of generic medicines.

This Policy was submitted before the Cabinet for its approval. The Cabinet considered the Policy in its meeting held on 11.1.2007. It was decided that the matter may, in the first instance, be considered by a Group of Ministers (GOM). GOM has since been constituted and has held three meetings so far on 10.4.2007, 12.9.2007 and 30.1.2008. GOM is yet to make its recommendations to the Cabinet.

Take Over of Foreign Steel Companies by SAIL

*213. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) is considering to take over some steel companies of some foreign countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of the companies and the countries in which SAIL has planned acquisitions; and

(d) the details of the new projects of SAIL in this regard alongwith the amount likely to be spent thereon?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Losses due to Delay in Landings/Take Off

*214. SHRI P.C. THOMAS:
SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of fuel, time and money that is currently being wasted annually as a result of delayed landings/take off in the airports in the country;

(b) the details of such delays in landings/take off during the past six months;

(c) whether any step has been taken to eliminate or reduce the wastage;

(d) if so, the details in this regard; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) information are being collected.

(c) to (e) Yes, Sir. The following measures have been taken:

1. New high speed exit taxi-ways at Delhi and Mumbai airports have been constructed and more are being constructed. A parallel taxi-track has been constructed at Delhi airport by which runway occupancy time has been reduced considerably.
2. A third runway is being constructed at Delhi Airport to accommodate more arrivals and departures at Delhi Airport.
3. Simultaneous use of both runways at Delhi and Mumbai airport has started during the traffic congestion period.
4. Airports Authority of India (AAI) has taken up up-gradation of 35 non-metro airports to enable it to handle increased air traffic at those airports.
5. Improved ATC procedures have been framed.
6. Ban on general aviation aircraft during peak periods at Delhi and Mumbai Airport has been imposed.

7. Advanced Surface Movement Guidance and Control System (ASMGCS) alongwith Surface Movement Radar has been installed and in operation at Delhi Airport.
8. Advance Surface Movement Guidance and Control System (ASMGCS) is being planned for Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata airport.
9. Air Traffic Flow Management System is being worked out.
10. Kolkata ILS is upgraded to CAT II ILS.
11. New Integrated Automation System for Chennai and Kolkata is being planned.
12. At the time of slot allocation schedule, arrival and departure time are spread in such a manner that bunching should not take place resulting in delays.
13. The slot allocation at Mumbai and Delhi airports is done in accordance with available runway/terminal building capacity.

Guidelines for the Tatkal Scheme

*215. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH:
SHRI SUBRATA BOSE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has revised the guidelines for the Tatkal Scheme for reservations;

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

(c) the steps taken to ensure that the seats are made available to genuine passengers travelling in emergency?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) The Tatkal reservation system has been reviewed from time to time and the following modification has been made in this scheme recently:—

With a view to improve Tatkal utilization in those trains in which the utilization of Tatkal accommodation is less than 50% in sleeper class on an average for the whole financial year and to save the inconvenience to general wait listed passengers to go to reservation counter again to book berths under Tatkal scheme, instructions

have been issued to Zonal Railways that wait listed passengers of such trains should be given an opportunity to opt for booking under Tatkal Quota (upto 50% of total Tatkal quota) at the time of buying their waitlist ticket itself. The reservation under this scheme will be confirmed only 5 days in advance excluding the day of the journey. This scheme has been introduced on an experimental basis for a period of six months.

(c) The scheme is not likely to affect the normal availability of Tatkal berths as the occupation level of Tatkal quota in trains covered under the scheme is below 50% and only 50% of Tatkal quota has been earmarked for waitlist passengers.

High Speed Passenger Corridor

*216. MS. INGRID MCLEOD:
SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPIPARAI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways had decided to implement the High Speed Passenger Corridor Project;

(b) if so, the present status of the project;

(c) the names of the State Governments who have shown interest in such high speed networks;

(d) whether the preliminary reports regarding the technical feasibility and commercial viability have been obtained; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Railways thereon?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Ministry of Railways had decided only to conduct pre-feasibility studies for construction of high speed passenger corridors, one each in the Northern, Western, Southern and Eastern regions of the country. The selected corridors are as below:

- (i) Delhi-Chandigarh-Amritsar
- (ii) Pune-Mumbai-Ahmedabad
- (iii) Hyderabad-Dornakal-Vijaywada-Chennai
- (iv) Howrah-Haldia
- (v) Chennai-Bangalore-Coimbatore-Ernakulam

(c) State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Kerala, Kamataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and West Bengal have expressed their interest in high speed trains and have agreed in principle to participate in any pre-feasibility studies.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. Global Tenders for engaging the Consultant for conducting pre-feasibility studies are under process. A decision shall be taken only after these studies are completed and evaluated.

[*Translation*]

Court Cases on Encroachment on Railway Land

*217. SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:
SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases relating to encroachment/ unauthorised occupation on railway land pending in courts, zone-wise;

(b) the steps taken by the Railways for speedy disposal of the cases pending in the courts; and

(c) the success achieved by the Railways as result of the steps taken?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Encroachments on railway land is required to be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971 (PPE Act) and Railways Act, 1989. The zone-wise number of cases relating to encroachments on Railway land pending in courts as on 31.12.2007 are as given below.

Railway Zones	Cases Pending in the Court of Estate Officers	Cases Pending With Other Courts	Total Cases Pending
Central	230	151	381
Eastern	2	30	32
East Central	4	96	100
East Coast	1357	421	1778
Northern	6896	612	7508
North Central	1940	206	2144
North Eastern	897	528	1425
Northeast Frontier	0	21	21
North Western	137	231	368
Southern	7139	1928	8067
South Central	2202	129	2331
South Eastern	1663	65	1728
Southeast Central	284	93	377
South Western	640	221	991
Western	3069	312	3381
West Central	220	99	319
Total	26680	5143	30951

(b) Court cases are disposed by the well-laid down legal procedures. Steps taken by the Railways for speedy disposal of the court cases include regular monitoring of the pendency of cases with the Estate Officers, proper and timely submission/presentation of the case materials in the courts and regular follow up action to file appeals in time wherever necessary.

(c) During the last five years ending 31.03.2007, Railways have got physical possession of land in approximately 27626 number of cases which were under litigation.

[English]

Airport Customer Fees from Passengers

*218. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and other Airport companies are charging Airport customer fees from passengers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it has come to the notice of the Government that some Airports in the country are charging exorbitant customers fees and there is no uniformity in the fees;

(d) if so, the reasons for such difference;

(e) whether the Government proposes to regulate this activity; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) A Passenger Service Fee (PSF) is levied at the uniform rate of Rs. 200/- exclusive of taxes etc. on all embarking passengers, at all Indian airports, in terms of Rule 88 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937.

(e) and (f) Determination of PSF is to be placed under the regulatory ambit of proposed Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA).

Setting up of Cargo Airports

*219. DR. M. JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently decided to allow new cargo airports within 150 kms. radius of the existing airports;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the places where cargo centres for perishable items are proposed to be setup?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No general policy decision has been taken in this regard.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) State of the Art Centres for Perishable Cargo have been established at Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Trivandrum, Bangalore and Amritsar airports. At Kolkata airport, such a Centre is under construction. New Centres are proposed to be set-up at Goa, Bagdogra and Patna airports in near future.

The walk-in-type cold storage facilities have been established at Guwahati, Lucknow, Coimbatore, Agartala, Ahmedabad, Pune, Cochin, Calicut and Jaipur airports.

Indo-China Rail Co-Operation

*220. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR:
SHRI B. MAHTAB:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and China have signed a pact for co-operation in the rail sector;

(b) if so, the salient features of the agreement;

(c) the areas identified for co-operation between the two countries;

(d) the extent to which the Indian Railways is likely to be benefited from the experience of China in terms of network expansion, speed raising, modernization and technical upgradation; and

(e) the time for which the MoU is valid?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Ministries of Railways of the two countries on 14.01.2008.

The MoU will facilitate development of rail-related programmes of mutual interest, consultancies, training and technical assistance. It would enable exchange of information on policies, laws & regulations and exchange programme for experts and trainees.

(c) The areas identified for co-operation under the MoU include Signalling and Telecommunication technologies, Electric Traction Supply system, Heavy Haul operations, Rolling Stock and Cooperation in Research & Development in the Railway Sector.

(d) Chinese Railways have achieved good progress in network expansion, speed raising, modernization and technology upgradation. Indian Railways would benefit in these areas by the co-operation.

(e) The MoU will be valid for a period of 3 years from the date of its signature.

Manufacturing of Civilian Aircraft

1909. SHRI K.S. RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the status of utilization of engineers and technologists and available infrastructure in developing cost effective, high quality designs for civilian aircraft;

(b) the steps taken to manufacture modern aircraft to meet the requirements of domestic airlines;

(c) whether the Government proposes to take new initiatives including private sector participation to promote and encourage the available potential for designing and manufacturing of passenger jets; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Main agencies for design and manufacture of aircraft are Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) and National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) at Bangalore. These agencies employ engineers and technologists for the design and manufacture of civil aircraft.

(b) Both HAL and NAL are approved as design organizations, competent to undertake projects of aircraft manufacture. However, at present there is no project to design and manufacture aircraft for domestic airline operations.

(c) and (d) Aircraft designed and manufacture is open to private sector as well as public sector.

NAL has designed a twin engine 14 seater turbo-prop aircraft, which is presently under development. HAL has also developed 12 seater Dhruv helicopter, which can be used for public transportation. Presently, there is no private sector manufacturer engaged in regular production of passenger aircraft, including jet aircraft.

Monthly Pension or Ex-Gratia to Widows and Handicapped

1910. SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any monthly pension or yearly ex-gratia is at present being paid to widows, divorced women and handicapped persons;

(b) if so, the details thereof, category-wise;

(c) whether there is any special dispensation/consideration for BPL, SC, OBC of the above categories;

(d) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to increase the amount presently being disbursed as pension/aid to above categories; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) No Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Allotment of LPG Distributorship in Maharashtra

1911. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENG PATIL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any initiative to allot LPG distributorship in Parbhani and Jalna districts of Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details thereof for the last three years;

(c) whether the Government proposes to allot more distributorship during the current financial year; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that Parbhani and Jalna districts of Maharashtra are presently being catered by 11 and 8 LPG distributorships.

OMCs have further reported that during the last three years, they have commissioned/set up 3 Nos. and 1 No. of LPG distributorships in Parbhani and Jalna districts of Maharashtra respectively.

(c) and (d) OMCs have reported that they have advertised for 3 new LPG distributorships in Jalna district of Maharashtra in September 2007.

[English]

OPD Treatment Facility for Retired Employees of IOC

1912. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the retired employees of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) are provided OPD treatment facility without any expenditure limit in the Government Hospitals/Empanelled Hospitals/Nursing Homes in Delhi;

(b) if so, the list of such Government Hospitals/Empanelled Hospitals/Nursing Homes in Delhi where they can avail this facility;

(c) the procedure in detail to be adopted by retired employees for getting OPD treatment; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the alternate arrangement made for them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) IOC has reported that employees of the Corporation may settle down after retirement at any place of their choice in the country. Accordingly, the corporation has framed a Post-Retirement Medical Attendance Scheme to provide them medical attendance on uniform basis irrespective of their place of residence. The scheme is contributory and voluntary in nature. Besides hospitalization facility, the scheme also provides

for reimbursement of expenses on OPD/Domiciliary treatment obtained from any Authorized Medical Attendant (AMA) or Government Hospital or any Hospital/Nursing Home, subject to the laid down annual limits depending on the grade held by the employee at the time of retirement.

(c) and (d) A retired employee of IOC can put up his claim for reimbursement of OPD/Domiciliary treatment expenses once in 6 months on the basis of self-certification within the laid down annual entitlement. In case the retired employee or any dependent eligible family member is suffering from chronic ailment, he/she has the option to claim reimbursement against vouchers upto the combined annual ceilings for OPD/Domiciliary and Hospitalization treatments. In case of costly investigations, reimbursements are also made from the combined ceilings. The annual ceilings for OPD/Domiciliary and Hospitalization treatments are reviewed and revised from time to time by the corporation.

Revenue Targets in Railways

1913. SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have fallen short of revenue targets so far during the year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any steps have been taken by the Railways in meeting the budgetary targets by the end of this fiscal;

(d) if so, the details alongwith the targets fixed for the next year; and

(e) if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The total earnings upto January, 2008 have shown a drop of less than 1% over the Budget Proportion for the period. However, the total earnings have registered an impressive growth of around 12.3% over the last year.

(c) The following steps have been taken by the Railways to increase the passenger earnings in meeting the budgetary targets:

1. Developing additional seating capacity in trains by introducing additional trains.
2. Enhancing the load of more patronized trains to the maximum to meet the demand.
3. Attaching additional coaches in trains to clear waiting list.
4. Improving utilization of coaching stock so as to ward off the shortage of coaches. In addition to above several Freight incentive scheme have been launched to increase rail borne goods traffic.

(d) The revenue target for the next year 2008-09 is Rs. 81801.00 crore.

(e) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Revival of Closed Fertilizer Units

1914. SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of the closed Talcher plant in Orissa operated by Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd;

(b) whether the Government is formulating any scheme to revive the plant;

(c) if so, whether the Government has received any proposal in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to hand over the said plant to the private sector; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (f) Pursuant to Government decision for closure of the various units of Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd. (FCIL) in 2002, the Talcher Unit of FCIL has been closed. However, pursuant to the decision of the Government on 12.4.2007 inter-alia to examine the possibility of reviving the various units of

FCIL subject to the confirmed availability of gas, various options for reviving the FCIL including the Talcher unit are being examined. Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Limited (RCF), a fertilizer Public Sector Undertaking under the Administrative control of Department of Fertilizers has shown interest in the revival of Talcher unit and has got a Techno-Economic Feasibility Report (TFER) prepared in this regard, which is under examination. Presently, there is no proposal to hand over the unit to the private sector.

Renovation of Toilets

1915. SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHALE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have chalked out any scheme for renovations of toilets at the main railway stations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds earmarked for this purpose during 2007-08; and

(d) the time by when the said work is likely to be started/completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Renovation of toilets is an ongoing process and is carried out as and when required. At important stations the existing toilets are also being renovated under Pay & Use scheme on "Renovate, Operate and Transfer" basis.

(c) There is no earmarking of fund for renovation of toilets at stations. Expenditure on this item is incurred from the funds allocated under Planhead Passenger Amenities.

(d) No time frame has been stipulated as renovation is a continuous process. However, toilets under Pay & Use scheme is likely to be completed at the earliest.

[English]

Control of Pollution at Oil Fields and Installation

1916. SHRI M.K. SUBBA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether team of Pollution Control Board of Assam has issued a host of directions to the ONGC and Oil

India Ltd. after their recent visit to various oil fields of ONGC at Lakwa and Geletia, for control of pollution at the oil fields and installations;

(b) if so, the observation made and directions issued by the Assam PCB team; and

(c) the steps taken for inventorisation of oil sludge lying in the oil fields and installations, and the cost involved in these operations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

The observations made and directions issued by Assam Pollution Control Board (APCB) team are as under:

1. Complete inventorisation of oil sludge in various pits need to be done.
2. Recovery of oil from pits to be carried out.
3. Display boards to be installed at the waste pit site and fencing of pit to be done.
4. Bioremediation to be completed/done once again where it is not completely successful.
5. Medical camps for villagers to be organized by Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) every six months.
6. Acoustic enclosures to be provided in DG sets, compressors for noise reduction to permissible limits, wherever noise is higher than the limits.
7. Used oil disposal to be carried out through registered recycler.

(c) Inventorisation of oil sludge is done on a regular basis alongwith other operations carried out by National Oil Companies (NOCs). Cost incurred in inventorisation is included in operational cost of NOCs as it is being done in-house.

Monetary Incentives for Inter-Caste Marriages

1917. SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government proposes to enhance the Monetary Incentive of Rs. 50,000 to encourage Inter-Caste marriages;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is aware in case of inter-caste marriages, the couple is isolated by their relatives and ostracized by society; and

(d) if so, the steps that are being proposed to protect them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) The Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment had addressed the Chief Ministers to consider increase in the incentive amount for inter-caste marriages to Rs. 50,000/-

(c) and (d) Inter-caste marriages are an effective instrument of combating the evil practice of castesim. In specific cases of vulnerability of such a couple, based on the complaint, it is for the concerned State Government/ Union Territory Administration to take legal action.

[Translation]

Gauge Conversion in Rajasthan

1918. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL:
PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the sanctioned, on going projects, and proposals relating to gauge conversion, electrification, doubling and laying of new railway lines in Rajasthan, zone-wise, division-wise;

(b) whether the works amounting to more than Rs. 49 lakhs approved by the State Government of Rajasthan;

(c) if so, the details of the amount spent so far on the said work, zone-wise; and

(d) the steps taken by the Railways to expedite the said work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) The Details of ongoing and new projects proposed in Railway Budget 2008-09 in Rajasthan, Railway Zone-wise are given as under:

(Amount Rs. in crore)

S.No.	Plan Head	Name of the Project and Railway Zone	Kms	Anticipated Cost	Anticipated Exp., upto Mar. 08	Outlay proposed in Budget 2008-09
1.	New Line	Ajmer-Pushkar, NWR	31.4	88.4	46.05	19
2.	New Line	Dausa-Gangapur City, NWR	92.67	332.72	37.06	14
3.	New Line	Ramganjmandi-Bhopal, WCR	262	726.05	97.45	30
4.	Gauge Conversion	Ajmer-Phulera-Ringus-Rewari, NWR	294.97	716.64	395.01	150
5.	Gauge Conversion	Bhildi-Samdari, NWR	223	337.44	236.86	90
6.	Gauge Conversion	Phulera-Jodhpur-Pipar Road-Bilara, NWR	41.14	42	41.50	0.5
7.	Gauge Conversion	Rewari-Sadulpur-Hissar, NWR	281	333.04	240	70
8.	Gauge Conversion	Sadulpur-Bikaner & Ratangarh-Degana, NWR	394.35	681.69	50	250
9.	Gauge Conversion	Sriganganagar-Sarupsar Canal Loop, NWR	116	168.80	9.68	50
10.	Gauge Conversion	Phulera-Marwar-Ahmedabad, Ahmedabad Yard remodeling Sabarmati-Khodiyar, WR	654.5	477.97	472.97	5
11.	Doubling	Alwar-Harsauli, NWR	34.86	90.79	5.2	40
12.	Doubling	Dausa-Bandikui, NWR	29.04	81	5.5	30
13.	Doubling	Jaipur-Dausa, NWR	61.28	148.38	12.91	75
14.	Doubling	Jaipur-Phulera, NWR	54.75	94.91	43.12	40
15.	Gauge Conversion	Ahmedabad-Himmatnagar-Udaipur, WR	299.2	742.88	-	0.01
16.	Gauge Conversion	Jaipur-Ringus-Churu & Sikar-Loharu, NWR	320.04	602.45	-	0.01
17.	Gauge Conversion	Suratpura-Hanumangarh-Sriganganagar, NWR	240.95	402.57	-	0.01
18.	Railway Electrification	Bina-Kota, WCR	203	168.49	18.85	33.84
19.	Doubling	Harsoli-Rewari, NWR	39.35	99.4	0.01	20

Surveys in Rajasthan appearing in Budget 2008-09

Sl.No.	Name of the Survey	Plan Head	Kms
1	2	3	4
1.	Dholpur-Sirmuttra	Gauge Conversion	144
2.	Gwalior-Shivpur Kalan GC & extension upto Kota	Gauge Conversion and New Line	200
3.	Mavi-Marwar	Gauge Conversion	265

1	2	3	4
4.	Himmatnagar-Khedbrahma with extension upto Abu Road	Gauge Conversion & New Line	120
5.	Anupgarh-Khajuwala-Ramgarh-Jaisalmer	New Line	485
6.	Anupgarh-Kolayat via Khajuwala	New Line	175
7.	Pushkar-Merta Road	New Line	40
8.	Jhunjhunu-Pilani	New Line	20
9.	Rail Link to Tonk-Devi	New Line	172
10.	Ajmer-Kota	New Line	210
11.	Rattlam-Banswara	New Line	176
12.	Ujjain-Jhalawar/Ramganjmandi	New Line	190
13.	Delhi-Ahmedabad	Doubling	934
14.	Mavali-Bari Sadari	Gauge Conversion	82
15.	Amarpura (Jorasi)-Tathwari-Singhana-Chirawa	New Line	70
16.	Rewari-Bhiwadi	New Line	27

No fund for any of the aforesaid projects have been received from the Government of Rajasthan. Necessary funds as per availability are being provided to expedite completion of projects.

Note: NWR-North Western Railway, WR-Western Railway, WCR-West Central Railway.

[English]

Import of Fertilizers

1919. SHRI HITEN BARMAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the import of fertilizers is likely to increase to meet its requirements in the country;

(b) if so, the name of the fertilizers and its quantity proposed to be imported during 2008-09 along with their quantum;

(c) the additional subsidy that would be needed on account of their imports;

(d) whether a large number of applications are pending before the Government for setting up of new fertilizers projects; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the time by which these are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) The assessment regarding requirement of fertilizers is made for each season i.e Kharif and Rabi, separately depending upon the demand assessed by various State Governments based on area under crop, weather conditions etc. The quantum of imports are decided on the basis of available stocks at the start of the season, anticipated indigenous production etc.

Import of Urea is canalized through State Trading agencies like STC, MMTC and IPL and the quantities are determined by Government. Adequate import of urea is being planned for the ensuing Kharif season.

In respect of decontrolled fertilizers like Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP) Mono Ammonium Phosphate (MAP) and import Muriate of Potash (MOP) the quantities being imported are decided by the various fertilizer companies dealing in imported decontrolled fertilizers based on their

assessment of demand and indigenous production. There are no imports of decontrolled fertilizers on Government account. For 2008-09 Department of Fertilizers has estimated subsidy requirement of Rs. 60,649.36 crore including subsidy on imported fertilizers.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Double Stack Container on Kandla-Bhatinda Rail Line

1920. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have any proposal under consideration for providing facility of Double Stack container on the Kandla-Bhatinda Rail Line;

(b) if so, whether any proposal has been prepared by Railway authorities to provide such double stack facility in any part of India; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Railways have cleared the running of Double Stack Container trains on Jaipur-Pipavav and on Jaipur-Mundra port routes and such trains have run on these routes.

Extension of Railway Line from Bellatore to Durgapur

1921. SHRI SUNIL KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have extend the 18 km. railway line from Bellatore to Durgapur i.e. Bankura Damodar river railway connection;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Railways have any proposal to introduce train from Durgapur to Howrah; and

(e) the time by when the said train is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) No proposal for constructing a new rail line from Bellatore to Durgapur is under consideration at present. Construction of a new line from Bowaichandi to Khana has been sanctioned as part of the ongoing Bankura Damodar River (BDR) railway line gauge conversion project. Completion of Bowaichandi-Khana rail line will establish a suitable rail connection between BDR line and Howrah-Asansol line.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Commission given to the Petrol Pump Dealer

1922. SHRI TUKARAM GANGADHAR GADAKH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rate of commission given to the petrol pump dealers are very low;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether due to low commission there is a trend among dealers to adulterate petrol and diesel; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) The dealers commission on petrol and diesel is reviewed from time to time by the Committee of Directors (Marketing) of Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) after taking into consideration the various components like expenses incurred by the dealers, future requirement i.e. return on investment, operating cost of the outlet etc. and approved by the Government. The rate of dealers commission was enhanced from Rs. 894/- per KL to Rs. 1024/- per KL for petrol and from Rs. 529/- per KL to Rs. 600/- per KL for diesel effective from 15-16.5.2007 (midnight) and is not considered low.

(c) and (d) Does not arise. However, the possibility of adulteration of petrol/diesel by some unscrupulous element cannot be ruled out due to huge price difference between petrol/diesel and various adulterants available in the market and the easy miscibility of these products with petrol/diesel.

OMCs undertake regular and surprise inspections of Retail outlets and also take action under Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG) and Dealership Agreements against those indulging in adulteration and malpractices. MDG provide for termination of dealership in the first instance itself for serious malpractices like adulteration, tampering of seals, and unauthorized fittings/gears in dispensing units.

In order to check adulteration, the Government has taken a number of additional initiatives viz., Automation of Retail Outlets, Third party certification of Retail Outlets, Monitoring of movement of tank trucks through Global Positioning System (GPS), use of Marker in kerosene, Revision of MDG etc.

[Translation]

Price of ATF

1923. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR:
SHRIMATI RUPATAI D. PATIL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the domestic airlines have to pay much higher price for ATF fuel in comparison with the international airlines;

(b) if so, the details of the amount being paid by the domestic and international airlines for ATF fuel; and

(c) the reasons for the said difference therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Details of the amount being paid by the domestic and international airline per kilolitre at four metro cities in India are as follows:—

Station	For Domestic Operation Rs. /Kilolitre	For International Operation Equivalent Rs./KL
Delhi	44716.49	34962.00
Mumbai	46233.36	34682.00
Kolkata	50611.35	36455.60
Chennai	48548.81	34259.60

(c) ATF prices of domestic operation also include custom duty at 10%, excise duty at 8% and sales tax ranging between 20-30% as fixed by various states in the country.

Family Pension Cases

1924. SHRI TUFANI SAROJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are aware that an unmarried daughter of a deceased Government employee whose age is more than 25 years is entitled to get family pension;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of cases lying pending so far in the Ministry of Railways;

(d) the reasons for pendency of such cases; and

(e) the time by which these cases are likely to be decided?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In terms of instructions contained in Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare's Office Memorandum dated 6.9.2007 family pension is admissible to unmarried dependent daughters of deceased Government employees beyond 25 years of age.

(c) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

[English]

Limitations on Duty Hour of Pilots

1925. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of the Government that the pilots of the airlines decline to fly the Aircrafts citing their duty hour limitations as reported in the Asian Age dated December 26, 2007;

(b) if so, the facts and the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government so that the passengers may not suffer on this account?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Information is being collected.

Digitisation of Stone Inscription

1926. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any plan to digitize all stone inscriptions found across the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to convert the rich collection of inscriptions; and stumpages into digital format in order to preserve them for the benefit of future generation?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The Epigraphy Branch, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has formulated plans to digize nearly 74,000 estampages (impressions of inscriptions on paper) from its collection. The proces of digitization involves scanning of transcripts, indexing of the scanned copies and preparation of a database.

Operation of Air Services by the Private Companies

1927. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has allowed certain private companies to operate air services;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of the companies alongwith the names of places connected and the dates from which they have been allowed to commence these flights;

(d) whether the Government has reviewed the performance of the companies; and

(e) if so, the details regarding the agreement as well as the guidelines that have been issued to be followed by these private companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There are 08 private companies, which have been issued Scheduled Operators Permit in the Passenger category.

(c) M/s. Jet Airways was permitted to commence their flights on 13.02.1995 and they operate 44 (domestic) and 15 international stations, M/s. Jetlite was permitted to commence their flights on 19.07.2007 and operate on 26 (domestic) and 02 international stations. M/s. Air Deccan was permitted to commence their flights on 26.08.2003 and they operate at 63 domestic stations, M/s. Kingfisher Airlines was permitted to commence their flights on 04.05.2005 and they operate to 41 domestic stations, M/s. Spicejet was permitted to commence their flights on 17.05.2005 and they operate to 18 domestic stations, M/s. Go Air was permitted to commence their flights on 24.11.2006 and operate to 11 domestic stations, M/s. Paramount Airways was permitted to commence their operation on 14.10.2005 and they operate at 08 domestic stations and M/s. Indigo was permitted to commence their flights on 03.08.2006 and they operate at 17 domestic stations.

(d) and (e) The performance of the airline is reviewed by carrying out surveillance checks, spots checks and by conducting Airline Audit from time to time. After these checks and audits, the Airline is being asked to submit the action taken report on the deficiencies observed during these checks/audits.

[Translation]

Development of Rail Network in Punjab

1928. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals received from Punjab Government for development of rail network in the State during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Railways thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Record of each and every demand received is not maintained. However, based on demands, 10 surveys for new rail line were

approved in the last three years. Out of which, 7 surveys have been completed and three surveys are in progress. Chandigarh-Baddi new rail link has been included in the Budget 2007-08.

The details of new rail lines surveys completed/in progress in Punjab are as under:—

Sl.No.	Surveys completed
1.	Anandpur Sahib via Garh Shankar
2.	Chandigarh-Baddi
3.	Qadian to Beas
4.	Rama Mandi-Maur Mandi via Talwandi Sahib
5.	Yamuna Nagar to Patiala
6.	Pathankot-Joginder Nagar
7.	Jakhal-Bhatinda
	Surveys In progress
1.	Khemkaran-Firozpur
2.	Una-Hoshiarpur
3.	Firozpur-Patti

[English]

Procurement of Iron Ore

1929. SHRI JUAL ORAM: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantum of Iron Ore procured from Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Karnataka and Jharkhand for export purposes during each of the last three years;

(b) the main channelising agency dealing with procurement and export;

(c) whether there is any involvement of private sector; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) Most of the quantity of iron ore in India is procured and exported from Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Karnataka and Jharkhand. The details

of total quantity of iron ore procured and exported are as under:-

Year	Quantity (Million Tonnes)
2004-05	78.14
2005-06	89.27
2006-07 (Provisional)	93.79

Source:-Goa Mineral Ore Exporters Association (GMOEA), Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL), National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), MMTC Limited and Private Exporters.

(b) As per the current Foreign Trade Policy, export of iron ore with iron content upto 64% is freely exportable. Export of iron ore with iron content more than 64% is canalized through the designated State Trading Enterprise, namely, the MMTC Ltd.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Iron ore is also being exported by private mine owners. Goa Mineral Ore Exporters' Association and private mine owners are exporting iron ore with iron content upto 64% directly. Governments is also issuing licences to private mine owners for direct export of iron ore with iron content above 64%. The details of iron ore exported by private sector during the last three years are as under:-

Year	Quantity
2004-05	61.90
2005-06	76.18
2006-07 (provisional)	84.95

Source: Goa Mineral Ore Exporters Association (GMOEA), Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL), MMTC Limited and Private Exporters.

Stoppage of Garib Rath at Cheergannur

1930. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is brought to the notice of the Government that no stoppage is assigned for Kochuvelli-Kurla-Garib Rath at Cheergannur Railway Station which is the nearest Railway Station to Sabarimala; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. There is no stoppage of Kochuvelli-Lokmanya Tilak (T) Garib Rath Express at Chengannur Railway Station.

(b) Stoppage of 2201/2202 Kochuvelli-Lokmanya Tilka (T) Garib Rath Express at Chengannur has not been found feasible at present.

Deemed University Status to NCHMCT

1931. SHRI NAKUL DAS RAI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the application of the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT) seeking Deemed University status was rejected by the UGC in 2005;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government proposes to seek a reconsideration of the matter;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government further proposes to rename all the Government run Institutes of Hotel Management as National Institutes of Hotel Management as has been done in the case of Regional Engineering Colleges which have been converted into National Institutes of Technology by the Central Government;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) The UGC, while appreciating the infrastructure of the National Council for Hotel Management & Catering Technology, did not recommend its application for conferment of Deemed to be University status on the ground, amongst others, that it is a confederation of 24 institutions located in 23 States in the country.

(c) to (g) There are no such proposals and hence do not arise.

Rehabilitation of Retrenched Employees of KIOCL

1932. SHRI M. SHIVANNA:
SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVRAJ:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the date on which Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd. (KIOCL) in Karnataka was closed;

(b) the measures taken by the Government for the rehabilitation of the retrenched employees;

(c) whether some of the employees of the said company have not been rehabilitated so far;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL) has not been closed down. However, the mining operations of Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL) at Kudremukh in Karnataka have been stopped with effect from 1.1.2006 in accordance with the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

(b) to (e) The Company has not done any retrenchment of the employees at Kudremukh so far. Redeployment has been done to the extent possible from the Kudremukh location to the Company's manufacturing units at Mangalore and Corporate office at Bangalore. Certain manpower is also earmarked for winding up operations; i.e. dismantling of equipment etc. as ordered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

Rail Link between Begumpet to Shamshabad Airport

1933. DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Delhi Metro Rail Corporation have prepared the detailed Project Report pertaining to the rail link from the existing Begumpet Airport to the Shamshabad Airport;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the present status of the above project; and

(d) the time by which the said project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. As per the Detailed Project Report (DPR), prepared by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) the estimated Project Completed Cost of the airport rail link, at June 2007 prices, is Rs. 5203 crore. The Viability Gap Fund (VGF) required for the project is about 36% of the completed project cost.

Touts Arrested by Railway Police

1934. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of touts that have been arrested by the Railway Police from stations during the last three years; and

(b) the steps taken by the Railways to curb the menace of touts operating at various Railway Stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The number of touts arrested by the Railway Protection Force under the provision of Section 143 of the Railways Act, 1989 during the last three years i.e. 2005, 2006 and 2007 is as under:—

Year	Number of persons Arrested
2005	1215
2006	1015
2007	1061

(b) Regular checks are being carried out by Railway Protection Force in association with the Government Railway Police; Railway's Vigilance & Commercial Departments and the Local Police to combat the menace of touts in and around the reservation offices/Railway Stations. Frequent drives are being conducted to apprehend the touts and unauthorized agents involved in unauthorized procurement of reserved tickets/transfer of reserved tickets.

In addition, surveillance is also maintained on the activities of the touts at major reservation offices. Regular campaigns are launched through newspapers, public

address system at Railway Stations and other media, educating the public and dissuading them from purchasing tickets from unauthorized persons/agencies. Arrangements in reservation offices are also augmented to enable the passengers to purchase the tickets easily and to ensure better availability of train reservations during holidays/peak demand periods when additional trains are also run and the number of coaches of existing trains are augmented.

Express Train between Barbil-Mumbai and Barbil-Vishakhapatnam

1935. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have a proposal to introduce one Express Train between Barbil and Mumbai and another between Barbil and Vishakhapatnam;

(b) if so, the steps taken to implement the above proposals; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. At present, there is no such proposal.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Due to operational and resource constraints.

Upgradation of Badarpur Division

1936. SHRI LALIT MOHAN SUKLABAIIDYA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have any proposal to upgrade Badarpur Sub-Divisional Headquarter to Divisional Headquarter;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is considering to meet the above demand of the local people in this area;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the time by when this work is likely to be implemented; and

(f) the number of Railway Sub-divisions upgraded to Divisional status?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No such demand is under consideration of the Government.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

(f) There are no Sub-divisions on the Indian Railway System.

15-Point Programme for Minorities

1937. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently conducted a survey to evaluate the performance of the State Governments on the implementation of the 15-point Programme for Minorities initiated by the Prime Minister; and

(b) if so, the outcome thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The details of performance of different States/UTs vis-a-vis targets fixed for 2007-08 for schemes, considered amenable to earmarking and included in the Prime Minister's New 15-Point Programme, as reported by the Ministries/Departments concerned, are given in the statement enclosed.

Statement

State/UT-wise Percentage of Achievement vis-a-vis Targets/Outlays Earmarked for Minorities for 2007-08 upto 31st December, 2007 for Schemes considered Amenable to Earmarking Under the Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities (As per the Reports Available with the Ministry of Minority Affairs)

State/UT	Physical										Financial		
	ICDS	SJSRY (micro ent.)	SJSRY (skill Training)	SGSY	IAY	SSA Pry. School	SSA: UPS	SSA: Addl. Class	SSA: Teacher	SSA: New PS	SSA: New UPS	SSA: KGBV	ITI NEW
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Andhra Pradesh	100	26.53	16.07	24.27	14.66								NA
Arunachal Pradesh	100							34.86	58.29			100	52.49
Assam	100	70.90	45.58	100	33.06								100
Bihar	100			16.78	18.34				100	100	100	84.90	NA
Chhattisgarh	82.33	100	100	4.49	1.77							100	NA
Delhi		9.54	8.47					100					NA
Goa	57.77			36.90	47.45			67.38					NA
Gujarat	100	84.60	59.29	28.18	5.06							100	NA
Haryana	100	100.00	100	36.18	21.01		100	100	100		50.00	100	NA
Himachal Pradesh		100	100	19.73	5.82			100					NA
Jharkhand	100			62.13	34.87	57.08	73.97		59.17		100	100	NA
Karnataka	100	34.88	57.88	69.35		89.58		27.50			100	100	NA

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Kerala	100	77.17	100	96.57	23.85			24.33					NA
Madhya Pradesh	NA	100	100	10.62	4.86	100	59.18	100.00					NA
Maharashtra		71.44	100	24.42	15.68	12.44	100	84.59			100	100	NA
Manipur	100											100	100
Orissa	63.19	7.51	18.67	8.08	5.28	100	58.82	100.00		74.35	58.33	100	NA
Puducherry		100	100	17.89	1.45								NA
Rajasthan		17.34	5.18	28.35	8.25			79.00	53.30	78.57	35.00	100	NA
Sikkim		100	100			100							11.3
Tamil Nadu	100	67.62	48.77	50.91	17.91	25.00			100		100		NA
Tripura	100	100	100	34.56								100	NA
Uttar Pradesh	100	46.11	78.62	39.90	27.01	100.00	50.38	100.00		63.48	45.10	35.39	NA
Uttarakhand	62.71	100.00		17.09	28.30	53.12	4.76	100	57.08	62.50	88.09	57.41	NA
West Bengal	55.96	91.41	42.70	27.29	23.24			8.27	86.00			58.82	NA
Jammu and Kashmir					13.45	100			68.00		68.00	24.39	43.47
Lakshadweep	100												NA
Meghalaya	100	100										100	NA
Mizoram	100			41.73								100	NA
Nagaland	100	100	100										NA
Punjab	100			9.02	11.49							100	NA

NA-Not applicable, ICDS-Integrated Child Development Services, SJSRY-Swam Jayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana, SGSY-Swamjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, IAY-Indira Awas Yojana, SSA-Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan, KGBV-Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalya Scheme

[Translation]

Road Over-Bridge in Maharashtra

1938. SHRI SURESH WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the construction work of Road over-bridge near Nagpur-Bootibori in Maharashtra is going on for the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons for delay; and

(d) the time by which the said Road over-bridge is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The General Arrangement Drawing for the work of Road Over Bridge (ROB) was approved by Railway on 13th June 2003. The entire work along with the Railway portion thereof is being executed by National Highway Authority of India (NHAI). There is no delay on

account of Railways as all the detailed drawings have been approved by 25th Oct. 2007, only launching scheme of girders is pending as the same is still awaited from NHA. Completion depends upon NHA. At present approaches work has been completed upto 60% and sub-structure work of bridge proper is also in progress.

[*English*]

Railway Line in Andhra Pradesh

1939. SHRI G. NIZAMUDDIN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of Railway line between Jaggaiahpet and Mellacheruvu in Andhra Region of South Central Railway;

(b) the amount sanctioned for this project during 2008-09; and

(c) the time by when the said railway line is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) The work of Jaggayapet-Mallacheruvu (19.1 km) new broad gauge rail line has already been included in Budget 2006-07 at an anticipated cost of Rs. 66 crore. Land acquisition has been taken up. An outlay of Rs. 29.6 crore has been proposed for the project in Budget 2008-09. The project is likely to be completed during 2008-09.

Policy for Development of Airport Infrastructure

1940. SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI:
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:
SHRI ANIRUDH PRASAD *ALIAS* SADHU
YADAV:
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to bring a new policy for easy development of airport infrastructure in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Policy of Airport Infrastructure forms part of the draft National Civil Aviation Policy which is under consideration of a Group of Ministers.

[*Translation*]

Lack of Safety Rules Abroad Naval Ships

1941. SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:
SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the safety related rules are being overlooked while carrying out work abroad naval ships regarding gas and petroleum products;

(b) if so, whether the Government have conducted any enquiry in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken against the guilty officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (d) No, Sir. Safety-related rules are not overlooked. For BPCL's Kochi Refinery's Crude Oil Receipt Facilities Project, Offshore Pipe lay and construction barges were used while carrying out the installation of sub-sea piping and Single point Mooring buoy. Approvals are obtained from Ministry of Defence and Director General (DG), Shipping for engaging foreign vessels in such projects. Merchant Naval ships i.e. oil tankers & supply vessels are operated under the purview of the rules and procedures of DG, Shipping—the regulator for marine vessels & shipping operations in India. Prior approvals are also obtained from Ministry of Home Affairs for engaging foreign nationals for the offshore jobs. In addition, job safety and security procedures are verified and supervised by the Surveyor, Third Party Inspection agency and the Project Management Consultant in addition to the owner.

[*English*]

Financial Assistance to North Eastern States

1942. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the annual disbursement made out of the total budgetary allocation to the North Eastern States showing the actual disbursement and utilization made, State-wise, since 1999;

(b) the fund diverted to the Non Lapsable Central Pool for North Eastern States and the amount surrendered to Finance Ministry during the said period;

(c) whether Assam was deprived from the per capita allocation according to SC population in the State;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and action contemplated to fill the gap;

(e) whether some schemes submitted by NGOs in Assam are yet to be sanctioned;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the time by which these are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) The details of Fund released to North Eastern States and Sikkim and Funds transferred to Non-Lapsable Central Pool for North Eastern States (NLCPR) are as under:—

(Rupees in crores)

Year	Funds released	Amount transferred to NLCPR
1999-2000	47.65	25.00
2000-01	40.00	26.55
2001-02	28.50	35.20
2002-03	23.92	31.71
2003-04	30.85	23.71
2004-05	49.35	10.17
2005-06	37.00	23.47
2006-07	69.53	2.18

(c) No Sir. The schemes of the Ministry are demand driven.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) to (g) Proposals received from time to time from Non-Governmental Organisations through the State Governments are scrutinized and considered and it is a continuous process.

[Translation]

Reservation in Private Sector

1943. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE:
DR. M. JAGANNATH:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has recently written to organizations/Associations of Indian Industry asking them to publish the data relating to SCs/STs recruits employed by them in their Annual Report by the end of March, 2007;

(b) If so, the response of the Indian corporate;

(c) the number of companies that have responded and complied with the direction of the Government; and

(d) the various steps that have been taken by the Government prompting the Indian Industry to take affirmative action for providing reservation to SCs/STs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (d) A Coordination Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister to carry forward the dialogue with industry on affirmative action in private sector. Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, who is the Member/Convener of the Committee, held discussions with representatives of Apex Industry Associations. Subsequently, the Committee held discussions with representatives of Apex Industry Chambers/Associations under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. The discussions primarily centered around the measures by industry for enhancing skill development and development and increasing employability.

Incorporating data on recruitment of SCs/STs in the Annual Reports of companies was also considered during the discussions. The Industry Chambers have agreed to report the data on SC/ST employment in the Annual Report of companies on a voluntary basis.

Financial Assistance to the Paper Industries

1944. SHRI GANESH SINGH: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is importing paper in bulk despite presence of indigenous paper industries in the country;

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

(c) whether the Government has given directions to the paper industries in the country to install new technology for enhancing their production;

(d) if so, whether the Government has extended any financial assistance to the paper industries particularly to Hindustan Newsprint Limited (HNL);

(e) if so, the details thereof, industry-wise particularly HNL;

(f) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(g) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to provide financial assistance to HNL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRY, MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) and (b) Paper and paper products are on Open General Licence (OGL). Imports of Newsprint during the last five years are as follows:—

Financial year	Quantity of Import (Tonnes)	
	Newsprint	Paper Board & Manufacturers
2003-04	738598	315034
2004-05	677930	295549
2005-06	691260	426141
2006-07	794220	469208
2007-08 (upto Sept 07)	424467	357400

There is a gap between demand and indigenous supply of Newsprint. High quality papers including packaging paper are imported to meet specific needs of some segments of user industry.

(c) to (f) Government has approved expansion cum diversification project of HNL with a capital outlay of Rs. 718.8 crore which involves capacity enhancement to 2,70,000 MT from the present capacity of 1,00,000 MT with swing facility to produce writing paper. Funding of this project is to be arranged by HNL and no budgetary support has been sought from Government of India.

Government has approved revival of Nagaland Pulp & Paper Company Limited with cash infusion of Rs. 552.44 crore through Government equity of Rs. 261.26 crore out of which Rs. 10 crore will be contributed by HPC and term loan of Rs. 252.99 crore to be availed from commercial banks/financial institutions by NPPC with Government of India guarantee and 5% non-cumulative redeemable preference shares of Rs. 38.19 crore.

(g) HNL is a profit making mini-ratna category Central Public Sector Enterprise and is not entitled to budgetary support.

[English]

Ban on Sponge Iron Plants in Orissa

1945. SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that with the large increase in demand of steel in the world, there has been a huge increase in the sponge iron industry in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a large number of these industries are operating without the mandatory pollution control equipment and even when the equipment is installed, it is not being used to save on electricity;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the various State like Orissa have banned new sponge iron plants but the old ones keep expanding their capacity;

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

(g) the steps being taken by the Government to check such industries which are polluting entire villages such as Kendrikala in district Sundergarh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) Steel demand in the country is on the rise due to general economic growth particularly with faster growth in infrastructure sector. The steel consumption during April-January 2007-08 (provisional) has increased by 12.6%, as compared to the corresponding period of 2006-07. Sponge iron is an intermediate product of steel, called Direct Reduced Iron (DRI), which is ultimately converted to steel after melting it Electric Arc Furnace or Induction Furnace. Therefore, alongwith the growth of steel production, there is also a corresponding increase in sponge iron production.

(b) The production of sponge iron during the 5 years period from 2002-03 to 2006-07 is produced below:

(In 000 tonnes)

Year	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Production	7858	9877	12357	14825	18345

(Source: Joint Plant Committee)

(c) and (d) The pollution control mechanism is monitored by the Central/State Pollution Control Boards and the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests as per the power conferred under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and rules made thereof, and are enforceable. Since it is part of monitoring and activities of concerned Governments, Ministry of Steel is not aware of any such lapse.

(e) and (f) Sponge iron or Direct Reduced Iron is one of the steel making technologies and as such there is no inherent defect in the technology regarding control of pollution. So there is no need for any ban on iron and steel units adopting the DRI technology for iron and steel production.

(g) This is part of effective regulation and enforcement mechanism by the concerned State Government, which also applies equally to all other industrial units. As explained, there is no need to put a check on the production of sponge iron, but to ensure monitoring and implementation of pollution control measures in all such industries including the sponge iron units. However, the concern of Hon'ble Member is being conveyed to the Government of Orissa.

[Translation]

Blocks Awarded under NELP Policy

1946. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some non-deserving companies have obtained oil and gas drilling blocks under NELP and some companies are taking alibi of shortage of rigs in order to cover up their failure and exerting pressure on the Government in regard to pricing and marketing rights; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) A few E&P companies have approached Government seeking a drilling moratorium for a period of about three years for deepwater areas in view of global shortage of deepwater rigs. No final decision has been taken by the Government on this issue.

Upgradation System of Berth

1947. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether even after introduction of upgradation system by the Ministry, the seats are not provided and waitlisted tickets are not confirmed even when the seats are available in the trains; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Upgradation of Passengers from lower class to higher class free of charge is subject to the following conditions:

- (i) Upgradation is done only in those Mail/Express trains in which sleeping accommodation is available.
- (ii) This scheme is applicable only to the passengers who have booked their tickets on full fare.
- (iii) This scheme is not applicable for block booking transactions.

- (iv) The passengers who have given their option as "NO" at the time of filling of requisition form for seeking reservation are not upgraded.
- (v) Upgradation is done only to the extent of clearance of combined waiting list of all classes.
- (vi) Some prescribed berths are kept vacant for current booking against which no upgradation takes place.

As such it is possible that the waitlist passengers may not get upgraded despite availability of vacant accommodation in higher class, in the event of any of the eventualities mentioned above.

De-addiction Centres in Chhattisgarh

1948. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to implement the Centrally sponsored schemes for de-addiction centres at the Gram Panchayat level in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the de-addiction centres to be set up in the country; State-wise and place-wise;

(c) whether the Union Government has received proposals from NGOs and various State Governments particularly from the State Government of Chhattisgarh for setting up de-addiction centres during the year 2006-07;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) In pursuance of the thrust laid by the 11th Five Year Plan on increasing involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of Government programmes, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is considering revision of the existing schemes for de-addiction so as to assign a positive role to the Gram Panchayats for implementing the programmes.

(c) to (e) During 2006-07 the Ministry had received two proposals from the State Government of Chhattisgarh for setting up de-addiction centres. But the Screening Committee of the Ministry did not recommend the proposals as the NGOs were not found experienced in the field of drug de-addiction activities.

[English]

Employing the Disabled Persons

1949. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA:
SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has recently approved new schemes for disabled to create huge number of jobs for them;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the number of disabled persons that are likely to be benefited under the scheme;

(c) the time by which the new scheme would be implemented; and

(d) the estimated actual expenditure to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government has approved a Central Sector Scheme of providing incentives to the private sector for providing employment of the persons with disabilities.

Under the Scheme, the Government will make payment of the employer's contribution to the Employees Provident Funds and Employees State Insurance for the first three years. The Scheme will be implemented from 1.4.2008 and a provision of Rs. 15 crore has been proposed in the budget of the Ministry.

[Translation]

Post Matric Scholarship for OBC in Rajasthan

1950. SHRI SRICHAND KRIPLANI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of proposals for post matric scholarship for OBC received by the Government from Rajasthan for the years 2004-05 and 2006-07;

(b) whether the required amount was released to State Government by the Union Government;

(c) if so, whether the funds released by the Government are inadequate to meet the need of scholarships for all the students of other backward classes; and

(d) if so, whether the Government is making arrangements to release additional funds for awarding scholarships to all the eligible students?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (d) In the year 2004-05 the proposal of the Govt. of Rajasthan could not be considered due to non-receipt of utilization certificate of previous years. During the year 2006-07, an amount of Rs. 351.80 lakh was released to the Govt. of Rajasthan within budgetary allocation.

[English]

De-addiction Centres

1951. DR. K. DHANARAJU: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by the Government for effective implementation of de-addiction programmes for drug addicts;

(b) the funds allocated during the last three years for de-addiction programmes;

(c) the number of centres that are functional throughout the country, Statewise;

(d) whether the present method for de-addiction is effective; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) Sir, The

Government has taken the following steps for effective implementation of the programme:

- (1) A minimum standard has been prescribed to maintain quality of delivery;
- (2) Community involvement is ensured to exercise effective social control and curbing of deviance;
- (3) Modern methods of treatment is encouraged in appropriate cases and the NGOs have the full freedom to adopt multi disciplinary approach for the whole person recovery;
- (4) A system of networking with referral service set-ups is encouraged to obtain maximum synergy;
- (5) Publicity and propaganda is resorted to for generating awareness;
- (6) Increasing thrust is laid on rehabilitation services for the ex-addicts;
- (7) Funds are released in one installment;
- (8) State Government have been given a notional allocation for attaining regional parity;
- (9) Not more than two similar projects are encouraged in one district
- (10) Performance of the NGOs is reviewed through a multiple monitoring mechanism and also through periodic inspections conducted by officers of both Central and State Governments.
- (11) The funds for a particular year are released after evaluation of performance, utilization of previous grants and the recommendation of
- (12) Grants-in-aid Committee of the concerned State/ UT exercises effective control over the NGOs through its inspection mechanism.

(b) Funds released during the last three years for de-addiction programmes are:

	(Rs. in crores)
2004-05	25.50
2005-06	22.35
2006-07	20.41

(c) A Statement showing State/UT wise number of de-addiction centres through out the country is enclosed.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Statement*State/UT-wise Number of De-Addiction Centres throughout the Country*

Name of the State/UT	Number of De-addiction Centres
1	2
Andhra Pradesh	16
Bihar	12
Chhattisgarh	3
Goa	1
Gujarat	10
Haryana	20
Himachal Pradesh	3
Jammu and Kashmir	2
Jharkhand	2
Karnataka	27
Kerala	21
Madhya Pradesh	18
Maharashtra	52
Orissa	28
Punjab	18
Rajasthan	12
Tamil Nadu	26
Uttar Pradesh	49
Uttarakhand	5
West Bengal	12
Delhi	10
Arunachal Pradesh	1

1	2
Assam	8
Manipur	21
Meghalaya	2
Mizoram	10
Nagaland	5
Tripura	2
Sikkim	1

*[Translation]***Sale of Natural Gas to Power and Fertilizer Sector**

1952. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN"
SHRI SURAJ SINGH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the public sector oil companies sell natural gas to the power sector and the fertilizer sector;

(b) if so, the price at which these companies sell natural gas to the said sectors;

(c) whether the Government propose to hike the price by 27.5 per cent; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons for increasing the price?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Public Sector Oil Companies sell Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) gas, free market gas and imported Re-gasified Liquefied Natural Gas (R-LNG) to power sector and fertilizers sector. APM gas is sold at Rs. 3200 per Thousand Standard Cubic Metres (MSCM) outside the North-East and at Rs. 1920/MSCM in the North-East. Domestic gas produced from pre-NELP Joint Ventures is sold at prices governed by provisions of Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) signed between Government of India and Joint Venture Companies. Price of LNG imported under term contracts is governed by the Sale Purchase Agreement (SPA) between the LNG seller and the buyer, while the spot

cargoes are purchased on mutually agreeable commercial terms.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Shortage of Pilots

1953. SHRI PUSP JAIN:

SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA:

SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU:

SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY:

DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA:

SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL:

SHRI P. MOHAN:

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

PROF. M. RAMADASS:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an acute shortage of pilots in the country;

(b) if so, the gap between demand and supply alongwith the steps being taken by the Government to meet the demand;

(c) whether the retired foreign pilots are allowed to fly our airlines;

(d) if so, the details and the justification thereof; and

(e) the details of aviation universities/training and flying schools set up/proposed to be set up to meet the requirements of the rapidly growing aviation sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Civil aviation industry in the country is facing a shortage of type rated pilots. In order to bridge the gap between the demand and availability of pilots, 944 foreign pilots have been engaged by various airline operators. The Government has taken various steps to reduce the gap between demand and supply of skilled Indian pilots. These include conditionally increasing the age-limit to 65 years for pilots, upgradation and modernisation of training infrastructure of the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) to enhance its training capacity from 40 to 100 pilots per year, setting up of a world class flying training institute at Gondia, Maharashtra for training 100 cadets

and assistance to flying clubs by allocating trainer aircraft through Directorate General of Civil Aviation/Aero Club of India.

(c) No, Sir. The foreign pilots are authorised to fly in India on the basis of their foreign licence issued by ICAO contracting State upto the age they can exercise the privileges of their rating and licence issued by the regulatory authority of the country to which they belong.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) At present there are 24 operational flying clubs imparting flying training. Government has decided to set up a world class flying training institute at Gondia, Maharashtra under the aegis of Airports Authority of India (AAI).

[English]

Setting up of Petrochemical Complex in Oman

1954. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) proposes to set up a petrochemical complex in Oman;

(b) if so, the facts and the details thereof;

(c) whether IOC has completed preliminary studies of setting up of such complex;

(d) if so, the details and the outcome thereof; and

(e) the investments likely to be made by IOC in the said complex?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

(c) No such study has been carried out.

(d) and (e) Do not arise in view of reply to part (c) above.

MoU between ONGC Videsh and Hinduja Group

1955. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:
SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC Videsh has signed a MoU with Hinduja Group for acquiring oil fields in foreign countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of terms and conditions of the MoU; and

(d) the extent to which objectives of said MoU has been achieved so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (d) A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) and Ashok Leyland Project Services Limited (ALPS), a Hinduja Group company, had been signed on 10th December, 2007 for mutual cooperation to pursue two projects, namely South Pars Phase 12 and Azadegan in Iran. Due diligence is being worked out by both the companies in respect of these projects.

Airport Hotels for Commonwealth Games

1956. SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:
SHRI ANIRUDH PRASAD ALIAS SADHU
YADAV:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Airport hotels in Delhi are likely to miss November 2010 target;

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

(c) whether the matter has been discussed by the Committee of Secretaries overseeing the Commonwealth Games, planned for November, 2010;

(d) if so, the details and the outcome thereof; and

(e) the directions issued/decision taken to complete this project within the fixed time period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) Delhi International Airport Private Limited (DIAL) has plans to construct hotels inside Indra Gandhi International Airport, Delhi. It is in the process of obtaining necessary approval from Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) for its hotel project. Committee of Secretaries has reviewed the status and issued directions to Ministry of Urban Development to expedite the approval process.

Railway Stations on the Built-Operate-Transfer Model

1957. SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI PANNIAN RAVINDRAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have decided to modernize some of the major railway stations on the built-operate-transfer (BOT) Model with private-public sector partnership; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Government has decided to re-develop 24 railway stations in metro and mini metro cities as world class stations. This is planned to be done through Public Private Partnership by leveraging land and air space at the stations for commercial utilization.

[Translation]

Monuments under ASI

1958. SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some of the heritage sites protected by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in the country have vanished;

(b) if so, the number of heritage sites protected by ASI alongwith the State-wise details of such vanished sites;

(c) whether land mafia in Delhi have grabbed land of such vanished heritage sites; and

(d) if so, the details of said land and the details of steps taken by the Government to get said land vacated?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) There are 3667 centrally protected monuments/sites as listed by the ASI. Of these, thirty five monuments/sites are found to be untraceable. The details (State-wise) are given in the enclosed Statement. Urbanization, commercialization, and implementation of development projects are the main causes for the disappearance of historical monuments/sites. No instance of land grabbing has come to the notice of the Archaeological Survey of India.

Statement

List of Centrally Protected Monuments/Sites which are not Traceable

Name of Monument/Site

Assam

1. Guns of Emperor Sher Shah at Na-sadia, Distt. Tinsukia

Arunachal Pradesh

1. Ruins of Copper Temple near Paya, Distt. Lohit

Delhi

1. The Moti Gate of Sher Shah's Delhi, Mauza Babarpur Bazidpur, Distt. New Delhi.
2. Pool Chadar, Mauza Chaukri Mubarakabad, Distt. North Delhi
3. Alipur Cemetery, Alipur encamping ground, Distt. North Delhi.
4. Bara Khamba Cemetery, Imperial city, Distt. Delhi
5. Tomb of Capt. Mc. Bamett & others who falls in an attack on Kishanganj, Kishanganj, Distt. North Delhi.

6. Tomb with three domes near railway station, Nizamuddin, Distt. South Delhi.
7. Site of Siege Battery bearing the inscription:- "Right Attack, Lieutenant F.R. Mansell, R.E., Directing Engineer, No. 1 Battery-Right, Major James Brind, R.A., Commanding, Armament five 18-pounders: one 18 inch howitzer. To silence Mori Bastion." East of the hospital in police line, Distt. North Delhi.
8. Site of Siege Battery with follwing inscription:-"No. II Battery-Right, Major Edward Kaye, R.A., Commanding Armament two 18-pounders; seven 8-inch howitzers, To breach Kashmir bastion." Compund of Curzon House, Distt. North Delhi.
9. Inchla Wali Gumti, village Mubarakpur Kotla, Distt. South Delhi.
10. Mound known as Joga Bai comprised in part of Survey plot no. 167 as Jamia Nagar, Distt. South Delhi.
11. Shamsi Tallab together with both the platform entrance gates, Mehrauli, Distt. Delhi.
12. Nicholson Statue, its platform, its surrounding gardens, paths and enclosure wall, Out side of Kashmiri Gate, Distt. North Delhi.

Gujarat

1. Ancient Site, Sejakpur, Distt. Surendranagar
2. Historic Site. No. 431 to 435, Vadodara, Distt. Vadodara

Haryana

1. Mughal Kos Minar, Mujesar, Distt. Faridabad, Haryana
2. Mughal Kos Minar, Distt. Kurukshetra, Haryana

Jammu and Kashmir

1. Rock carving of Sitala, Narada, Brahma and Radha Krishna, Basohli, Distt. Kathura
2. Rock Carving of Devi riding a lion, Basohli, Distt. Kathura
3. Visveswara and other cave temple, Basohli, Distt. Kathura.

Karnataka

1. Pre-historic Site, Kittur, Distt. Mysore.

Rajasthan

1. Inscription in Fort, Nagar, Distt. Tonk
2. 12th Cent. Temple, Baran, Distt. Baran

Uttaranchal

1. Kutumbari Temple, Dwarahat, Tehsil Ranikhet, Distt. Almora
2. Khera Ki Bandi, Old Cemetery, Tehsil Roorkee, Distt. Haridwar
3. Remains of ancient buildings locally identified with Vairatapattana, Dhikuli, Tehsil Ramnagar, Distt Nainital

Uttar Pradesh

1. Closed Cemetery, Katra Naka, Tehsil Banda, Distt. Banda
2. Large ruined site called Sandi Khera, Pali, Tehsil Shahabad, Distt. Hardoi
3. Cemetery, Jalaun (Bus Stand), Tehsil Jalaun, Distt. Jalaun
4. Gunner Burkill's Tomb, Rangaon, Tehsil Mehroni, Distt. Lalitpur
5. Imambara Amin-ud Daula, Lucknow, Tehsil Lucknow, Distt. Lucknow.
6. Three Tombs, Lucknow Faizabad Road at miles 3, 4 & 5, Tehsil Lucknow, Distt. Lucknow.
7. Cemeteries at miles 6 & 7, Jahraia Road, Tehsil Lucknow, Distt. Lucknow
8. Cemetery at Gaughat, Lucknow, Tehsil Lucknow, Distt Lucknow.

[English]

Policy for Food Processing Industries

1959. SHRI UDAY SINGH:
SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA:

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has asked the State Governments to evolve a separate policy for food processing;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the State Governments thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (c) Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MFPI) with the intention to make concerted efforts for development and growth of food processing sector, is encouraging states to frame Food Processing Industrial Policy for their respective states. This will facilitate the states to create enabling environment for creating rural infrastructure, raise level of processing and generate farm level employment keeping in view their distinct agro climatic scenario and availability of rural infrastructure.

Preference to Sick PSUs

1960. SHRI ABU AYES MONDAL: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has asked all the departments to give preference to sick public sector undertakings (PSUs) while placing orders;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent to which the sick PSUs are likely to be benefited?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The Government of India introduced the Purchase Preference Policy in January, 1992 replacing the earlier Policy of price Preference in Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) (including sick CPSEs). The new policy was initially made applicable for a period of three years. It has been subsequently reviewed time and again, and further extended (with or without certain modifications). In June, 2005, the Government decided to extend the policy with certain modifications for a period of three years beyond 31.3.2005. The Government also decided that the purchase preference policy will be terminated with effect from 31.3.2008.

Furthermore, in pursuance to the order dated 18.5.2007 of the Supreme Court of India in the case of M/s Caterpillar India Limited V/S Western Coalfields Limited, the Government reviewed the policy further on 25.10.2007 and decided to reiterate its earlier decision that the policy will be terminated w.e.f. 31.3.2008.

(c) The Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals has evolved a Purchase Preference Policy (PPP) in August, 2006, which is applicable to the purchases made by the Ministries/Departments, PSEs, Autonomous Bodies etc. in respect of a maximum of 102 medicines manufactured by the Pharma Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and their subsidiaries. Further, the Government while reiterating in October, 2007 that the purchase preference policy for products and services of CPSEs will be terminated w.e.f. 31.3.2008, also decided that the concerned Ministries/Departments may independently evolve sector specific Preferential policies. Moreover, the Government has been taking measures for revival/rehabilitation of sick and loss making CPSEs. A Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE) has also been set up in December, 2004 inter alia to consider the cases of sick and loss making CPSEs and make appropriate recommendations to the Government for their revival/restructuring. Based on the recommendations of the BRPSE, the Government has approved the revival cases of 28 CPSEs.

[Translation]

Air Passengers

1961. SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of air passengers travelled during the last three years in the country;

(b) the number of civilian aircraft in the country during the last three years and their present number; and

(c) the number of aircraft of private airlines and those of the national carrier?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The number of air passengers travelled during the last three years in the country are as under:-

Year	Domestic (in Millions)	International (in Millions)
2004-05	19.44	17.27
2005-06	25.20	20.17
2006-07	35.79	23.75

(b) The number of civil registered aircraft in the country during 2005, 2006 and 2007 were 839, 1025 and 1228 respectively. As on 5.3.2008, the number of civil registered aircraft is 1274.

(c) The number of aircraft of private airlines and those of the national carrier are indicated with the name of carriers as under:-

National Carrier

- (i) NACIL (Air India) 37
- (ii) NACIL (Indian Airlines) 72
- (iii) Airlines Allied Services 20
- (iv) Air India Charters 18

Private Airlines

- (i) Jet Airways 80
- (ii) Kingfisher 41
- (iii) Jet lite 25
- (iv) Air Deccan 41
- (v) Spice Jet 19
- (vi) Interglobe Aviation (Indigo) 17
- (vii) GoAir 06
- (viii) Paramount Airlines 05
- (ix) Blue Dart Aviation 07

[English]

Tourism Projects

1962. SHRI RAGHUNATH JIA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the details of tourism projects sanctioned during 10th Plan and how many of them are still pending for completion, State-wise;

(b) the measures taken for timely completion of these projects;

(c) whether important heritage sites and tourists destinations are not well connected with roads and if so, action taken to connect heritage sites with national highways; and

(d) the steps taken to promote domestic tourism?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) Development and promotion of tourism including connectivity with important heritage sites and tourist destinations is primarily undertaken by State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations. Ministry of Tourism, however, provides financial assistance for tourism projects on the basis of proposals received from them subject to availability of funds and inter-se priority. State-wise details of projects sanctioned during the Tenth Plan are given in the enclosed Statement.

Implementation of the projects is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. However, Ministry of Tourism monitors & reviews the progress of the projects through site visits and review meetings from time to time.

The Ministry undertakes campaigns in the print, internet and electronic media for promotion of domestic tourism. Information is also disseminated through the website and Indiatourism offices in the country.

Statement

State-wise details of Projects Sanctioned and Amount Sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism during the 10th Five Year Plan

(Rs. in lakh)

Sl.No.	State	No. of projects sanctioned	Amount sanctioned
1	2	3	4
1.	Andaman and Nicobar	1	6.25
2.	Andhra Pradesh	33	8428.24
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	39	6087.85
4.	Assam	41	6635.61

1	2	3	4
5.	Bihar	26	6632.44
6.	Chandigarh	10	508.45
7.	Chhattisgarh	37	7746.70
8.	Dadar and Nagar Haveli	4	37.86
9.	Daman and Diu	9	581.85
10.	Delhi	45	7123.36
11.	Goa	7	157.26
12.	Gujarat	25	3726.79
13.	Haryana	44	4895.42
14.	Himachal Pradesh	55	7134.19
15.	Jammu and Kashmir	64	14020.86
16.	Jharkhand	12	4280.44
17.	Karnataka	47	9052.02
18.	Kerala	61	13809.94
19.	Lakshadweep	1	7.00
20.	Madhya Pradesh	62	9724.34
21.	Maharashtra	52	8267.75
22.	Manipur	17	1162.43
23.	Meghalaya	20	2668.69
24.	Mizoram	30	6038.02
25.	Nagaland	36	7441.48
26.	Orissa	37	7235.39
27.	Pondicherry	9	1685.16
28.	Punjab	29	5544.82
29.	Rajasthan	50	8183.85
30.	Sikkim	49	7496.31
31.	Tamil Nadu	62	10345.34
32.	Tripura	21	1702.48
33.	Uttar Pradesh	44	9590.24

1	2	3	4
34.	Uttaranchal	42	7673.42
35.	West Bengal	39	5535.25
Total		1160	201167.50

**Development of Railway Stations
as Model Stations**

1963. SHRI ANANTH KUMAR:
SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria prescribed for selection of any railway station for development as a model railway station;

(b) the details of additional facilities provided in the model station, alongwith medical facilities;

(c) whether the Railway have any proposal to convert the existing Yashwantpur railway station;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the features of the model railway station; and

(e) the details of the railway stations proposed to be developed as model stations in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) While presenting the Railway Budget 1999-2000, the then Minister of Railways declared that all efforts will be made to make atleast one station in each division as model station where higher level of passenger amenities will be provided. Consequent upon the announcement so made, 61 stations were initially selected as model station. Later on, more model stations were added from time to time. As per the announcement made during the presentation of Railway Budget 2006-07, all 'A' and 'B' category stations were selected as model stations.

(b) Model Stations are to be provided with additional amenities depending upon the category of the station such as retiring room, waiting room, public address system/computer based announcement system, electronic train indicator board, public phone booths, water coolers, standardized signages etc. Augmented First Aid Boxes are provided at the Model Stations.

(c) and (d) Yesvantpur railway station has already been identified as model station for the purpose of

providing upgraded passenger amenities and instructions in this regard were issued on 29.5.2006. All passenger amenities as per norms prescribed for Model Station have already been provided at this station. Following amenities like retiring room, waiting room with bathing facilities for common, upper and second classes, cloak room, national train enquiry system, interactive voice response system, refreshment rooms and internet have been planned for completion by March 2009.

(e) Development of railway stations (including under Model Station scheme) is a continuous process and works are undertaken through Annual Works Programme depending upon availability of funds and other relative priorities.

Indo-Iran Gas Pipeline

1964. SHRI FRANCIS FANTHOME:
SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan has agreed to reduce tariff/transit fee for gas from Iran to India;

(b) if so, the details of the tariff/transit fee now proposed by Pakistan and the reaction of the Government thereon;

(c) the steps taken to resolve this issue bilaterally;

(d) the details of the commitments given by Pakistan regarding safety of the Indo-Iran gas pipeline;

(e) the time by when this gas pipeline agreement is likely to be finalised; and

(f) the countries which have agreed to be co-signatories to this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (f) India is pursuing the import of natural gas from Iran through Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) Gas Pipeline Project. India and Paksitan have been discussing inter alia payment of transportation tariff and transit fees for passage of natural gas through Pakistan territory. It has been agreed that transportation tariff for passage of gas through Pakistan shall be based on cost of service to be achieved through International Competitive Bidding.

However, discussions are continuing regarding transit fees. Five meetings of India-Pakistan (JWG) have been held. Six meetings of tripartite JWG of Iran, Pakistan and India have been held. Suitable provisions will be included in the contract with the Pakistan side for safety & security of the pipeline. Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions, as all the aspects have to be carefully examined and deliberated upon to the satisfaction of the participating countries to protect each country's interests and avoid any problems in the future in the successful operation of the project. Finalization of the agreement can be achieved when satisfactory resolution of issues under discussion is reached by the countries participating in the project, viz., Iran, Pakistan and India.

**Social Welfare Scheme by
Public Sector Oil PSUs**

1965. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV:
SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the works undertaken under social welfare scheme for the public by oil PSUs i.e. Indian Oil Corporation, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and GAIL during the last three years in various parts of the contry and particulary in Bihar;

(b) the amount of funds have been allocated or spent during above period for such public welfare schemes/projects, company-wise; and

(c) the norms and criteria laid down for undertaking such works in public interest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) As per the policy on Corporate Social Responsibility, various Public Sector Oil Companies including IOC, HPC, BPC and GAIL are spending 0.5 to 1% of their net profit of the previous year towards donations/contributions and community/social developmental activities every year. The donations/contributions and Community Developmental activities focus in specific target areas. These activities relate to welfare and economic development of weaker sections of the society including special component plan and tribal sub plan. These are mostly undertaken near their

installations mainly in the areas of providing clean drinking water, expansion of education and health & medical care etc. as measure to discharge Corporation's social responsibility towards neighbouring community.

The amount of funds allocated/spent during the last three years for such public welfare schemes/projects are as follows:

(Rs. in Lakh)

Name of the Oil PSUs	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
IOCL	1012	680	806
HPCL	525	700	700
BPCL	1110.50	306.37	701.68
GAIL	1304.22	1428.61	1134.29

In so far as State of Bihar is concerned, the total expenditure incurred by IOCL and HPCL on such activities during the last three financial years in the State of Bihar are Rs. 129 lakh and Rs. 70.45 lakh respectively.

[Translation]

Passengers Safety In Flights

1966. SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned Oxygen masks down, AI plane flies' appearing in the Times of India dated February 8, 2008;

(b) if so, the facts and the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is not paying much attention to the maintenance and up-keeping of big planes of the Air India due to which private airlines are taking direct entry into the aviation sector; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by the Government for the maintenance and up-keeping of the planes of the Indian and the Air India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The news item captioned oxygen masks down, AI plane flies refers to the incident of Air India aircraft VT-AIM operating flight AI-136 on Delhi-Mumbai sector on 1.2.2008.

The incident was investigated by the Permanent Investigation Board (PIB) which has concluded that the incident was due to non-adherence to Standard Operating Procedures by the flight crew. In view of this the Pilots have been derostered.

(c) and (d) All the aircraft in NACIL fleet are maintained to the highest airworthy standards, meeting all the requirements of the regulatory authorities, as per the approved maintenance schedule/programme & mandatory modifications stipulated by the DGCA as well as the regulatory authorities of the country of the aircraft manufacturer.

[English]

Post Matric Scholarship

1967. SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has announced Rs. 510/- p.m. (Hostellers) and Rs. 330/- (Day scholars) for M.Phil./Ph.D. students as post matric scholarship;

(b) if so, the number of students who have been benefited from such scheme since its inception, State-wise;

(c) whether Government is planning to increase the rate of scholarship; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of post-matric scholarship for higher education from class XI up to Ph.D., and technical and vocational courses of Industrial Training Institutes/Industrial Training Centres (affiliated with NCVT) of class XI and XII level, for students belonging to the minority communities has been launched. The last date for receipt of applications from students was 29.02.2008. State Governments/UT Administrations will send the proposals for sanction and release of funds during March, 2008.

There is no proposal, at present, to increase the rate of scholarship.

Corruption in the Railway Board

1968. SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are aware that officials in Indian Railway Board and Zonal Railways accepted bribes worth lakhs of rupees to provide contracts to Kolkata based Pioneer Friction Limited as reported in the Statesman dated February 16, 2008;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether no transparency exist in awarding railway contracts to private/foreign companies;

(d) if so, whether an inquiry would be conducted and involved officials be held responsible; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, a News item was reported in 'The Statesman' dated 16th February, 2008. The News item mentioned that between 2001 and 2005, officials in the Indian Railway Board and Zonal Railways accepted bribes of at least \$ 137,200 (about Rs. 55 lakh) to provide contracts for procurement of high friction composite brake blocks to Kolkata based Pioneer Friction Ltd, a subsidiary of Westinghouse Air Brake Technologies Corporation (Wabtec), USA. The Newspaper further reported that Wabtec acknowledged to US Justice Department of such improper payments.

(c) to (e) No Sir, transparency does exist. The allegations reported in the news item are being investigated by the Departmental Vigilance.

Import of Natural gas from Russia

1969. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:
SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have established co-operation with Russia in oil and gas sector;

(b) if so, the details of the agreements signed to establish Indo-Russia co-operation in this regard;

(c) the projects likely to be started by both the countries in the field of oil and gas; and

(d) the amount of investment involved in these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Oil Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) of India have signed Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs) with Russian companies for cooperation in the field of exploration and production of oil and gas. These MoUs are at various stages of implementation. Sakhalin-I is a major project in which ONGC Videsh Limited has 20% Participating Interest with a total investment of US \$ 2.77 billion. The gas supplies and oil production has started since September-October 2006 in this project.

Compensation of Passengers on Delay of Flight

1970. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:
SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDALIKRAO
GAWALI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to make any norm/law to provide compensation to passengers, if any flight is delayed/cancelled during the foggy season;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, Government is monitoring the punctuality of airline operations. While there are several factors like bad weather, technical snags, air traffic congestion etc. which may be beyond the control of airlines, some of the delays could be attributable to the airline industry. Government is already working with airlines industry through the forum of the Federation of Indian Airlines on the need to maintain the approved schedules. Government is also continuously improving the infrastructure at the

airports and reviewing procedures to accommodate more flights at busy airports.

Post Matric Scholarship

1971. SHRI SARVEY SATYANARAYANA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is increase in the post matric scholarships for SCs, especially in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the guidelines for these schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to the Scheduled Castes students for all recognized courses pursued in recognized institutions. The financial assistance includes maintenance allowance, reimbursement of non-refundable compulsory fee charged by educational institutions, Book, Bank facility and other allowances. The scholarships are available for studying in India only and are awarded by the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations to which the students actually belong. The scholarship is paid to the students whose parent's/guardian's income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 1.00 lakh per annum.

The Scheme is implemented by the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, which receive 100% central assistance from the Government of India for the total expenditure under the scheme, over and above their respective Committed Liability. However, in the case of North Eastern States, the Government of India meets 100% expenditure, without applying the concept of the Committed Liability.

[*Translation*]

Manufacture of Transparent Cylinders

1972. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has taken a decision to manufacture transparent cylinders made with composite material in place of those made with iron which would show the level of gas decreasing everyday;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which the above mentioned cylinders are likely to be manufactured; and

(d) the likely capacity of transparent cylinders in comparison to that of the iron cylinders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) Government has conveyed "in principle" approval to the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) for expanding the product line by way of introduction of composite cylinders for marketing domestic LPG, subject to there being no subsidy element in the LPG to be marketed through these composite cylinders. To start with Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) along with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) intend to import some cylinders and do test marketing in selected cities. The composite cylinders are translucent and will show the level of LPG present in the cylinder.

(d) OMCs have reported that the capacity of composite cylinders presently being considered for marketing of LPG is approximately 10.5 kg. LPG as against the present capacity of 14.2 kg in the domestic cylinders.

[English]

New Railway Division

1973. SHRI CHENGARA SURENDRAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have fixed norms for formation of new Railway Divisions;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether all the norms have been fulfilled for the formation of Salem Division; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken by the Railways to formulate the Salem Division?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per the criteria fixed by the Railway Reforms Committee and Advisors' Committee, new Divisions are set up keeping in view factors like size, workload, accessibility, traffic pattern and other operating/administrative requirements etc. consistent with the needs of economy and efficiency without any regional considerations.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The new Salem Division has already been operationalised w.e.f. 1st November 2007.

Fuel Adulteration

1974. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Environmental Pollution Control Authority has directed Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) to carry out an investigation on fuel adulteration;

(b) if so, the details of recommendations made by the CSE;

(c) whether the oil companies/Government have failed to check the rising fuel adulteration cases; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Consequent to the Supreme Court order dated 22.11.2001. in Writ Petition 13029/85 the Environmental Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority for the National Capital Region has directed Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) to carry out an investigation on fuel adulteration. The details of the recommendations made by CSE in section 9 of the Report are enclosed as statement.

(c) and (d) Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) undertake regular and surprise inspections of Retail Outlets and also take action under Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG) and Dealership Agreements against those indulging in adulteration and malpractices. MDG provide for termination of dealership in the first instance itself for serious malpractices like adulteration, tampering of seals and unauthorized fittings/gears in dispensing nits.

In spite of above, the possibility of adulteration of petrol/diesel by some unscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out due to huge price difference between petrol/diesel and various adulterants available in the market and the easy miscibility of these products with petrol/diesel.

In order to check adulteration, the Government has taken a number of additional initiatives viz., Automation of Retail Outlets, Third party certification of Retail Outlets, Monitoring of movement of tank trucks through Global Positioning System (GPS), Jan Kerosene Pariyojna (JKP), Use of Marker in Kerosene, Revision of MDG etc.

Statement

"Recommendations

Our investigation shows that the current product quality monitoring system is extremely weak and stems largely from weak regulations and enforcement, skewed market prices of the petroleum products and lack of accountability in the petroleum sector. Unless this is corrected the root cause of the problem cannot be eliminated. Immediate direction is needed in the operational, technical and economic areas. While there is a unanimous agreement that skewed prices are responsible for adulteration, so far no solutions have been possible for political reasons. This study clearly shows that unless we take serious steps to improve the system to prevent and check adulteration, we will not even begin to touch the profitable business of adulteration. The current system is compromised from testing methods that are not adequate to detect adulteration to penalty systems designed to let the manufacturers go scot-free. It is possible to create a library of different refinery samples of automotive fuels and possible adulterants. With the help of the standard library chromatogram it will be much easier to detect fuel adulteration.

Make oil companies accountable for the quality of fuel at the retail end

Any extent of vigilance and surveillance will be meaningless unless strict liability is imposed on the oil companies to take full responsibility for the quality of fuels they sell at their retail outlets. As of now the responsibility and penalty are all fragmented along with supply chain. Though retailers and the transporters are penalized by the oil companies if malpractices occur, the oil companies are not held accountable. To put it simply

consumers cannot sue the oil companies for adulterated fuels. Unless this is done checks and balance in the system will not work effectively to prevent malpractices at any level. The best way that consumer pressure can be intensified on the oil companies is to develop a system of public rating of the retail outlets by the name of the oil companies on a monthly basis based on an independent inspection, testing and audit of the outlet. In a competitive market there are multiple oil companies rivaling for market share. This will become more severe with decontrol of the petroleum sector soon. In such a situation protection of brand name would be most critical for the oil companies to guard their market share. Therefore, quality based public rating of the retail outlets by the name of companies would work best in disciplining the supply chain and preventing the widespread malady.

Improve testing procedures and tighten fuel quality standards

Immediate attention should be paid to tightening the fuel quality standards and regulating some key parameters that are not done today like aromatics, olefins in petrol, and PAH in diesel. Even the broad range that is allowed under the current specifications should be adequately tightened. Tighter the net easier it is to catch dubious samples.

Develop alternative testing procedures for more accurate detection

For more accurate detection alternative testing methods and protocols should be adopted straight away and applied for surveillance".

Security System at ONGC Installations

1975. SHRI RAMESH DUBE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the installations of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) are without modern and sophisticated security systems;

(b) if so, the reasons for neglecting the security aspect of such sensitive installations in view of growing threat from terrorists; and

(c) the action taken to install modern and sophisticated security system in all sensitive and vital installations of ONGC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) No, Sir.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has taken adequate measures in respect of its vulnerable/sensitive installations. All vital installations are being audited/inspected by internal and external agencies periodically and the recommendations made by such teams are being implemented.

[Translation]

Airports in Madhya Pradesh

1976. SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the airports which are being upgraded in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) whether the airports of Indore, Bhopal, Gwalior, Jabalpur and Khajuraho are proposed to be upgraded as international level airports by extending their runway and providing them more facilities;

(c) if so, the details alongwith the outline of the action plan; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Airports Authority of India (AAI) is developing and upgrading the facilities at Indore, Bhopal and Khajuraho airports, which would be comparable to International standards.

Gwalior airport belongs to defence and renovation of its terminal building is to be undertaken in co-ordination with Defence authorities.

At Jabalpur, there is a proposal for undertaking extension of runway, night landing and other related works.

(c) and (d) Details of projects undertaken are as under:

Khajuraho—(i) Extension of runway upto 7500 ft. and strengthening of its entire length has been completed. (ii) Construction of a new terminal building to cater to 500 passengers is scheduled for completion by November, 2008.

(iii) Construction of apron to part 5 aircrafts, isolation bay, link taxiway and other allied works are scheduled for completion by March, 2008.

Bhopal—Extension of runway to 2745 m and strengthening of its entire length, construction of a new integrated terminal building to cater to 500 domestic and 200 international passengers are scheduled for completion by May, 2009.

Indore—Extension of runway to 2750 m and strengthening of its entire length, construction of a new apron including isolation bay, construction of an integrated terminal building to cater to 500 domestic and 200 international passengers are scheduled for completion by April, 2009.

ATM Facility in Railway Stations

1977. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Railway stations equipped with ATM and Bank facility as on date; and

(b) the number of Railway stations located in Jharkhand for which the Government have accorded or propose to accord approval for upgradation in and providing ATM facility?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): At present Automated Teller Machine (ATM) facility is available at around 442 locations of Indian Railways.

(b) The provision of ATMs and upgradation of stations on Indian Railways including in the State of Jharkhand is an ongoing process. In the State of Jharkhand, sanction has been issued recently for installation of ATMs at around 16 railway locations and 29 stations were selected as modern stations during 2006-07 and 2007-08 for provision of upgraded passenger amenities.

[English]

Investment by CPSEs in Share Market

1978. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA:
SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the surplus funds available to each Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) till date;

(b) whether the Government has allowed these CPSEs including Navratna and Miniratna to invest surplus funds in the share markets through mutual funds;

(c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the quantum of profit likely to be made by the CPSEs therefrom; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the CPSEs to complete with private sector players through this process?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV):
(a) As per Public Enterprises Survey, 2006-07, the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) had a cash and bank balance of Rs. 2,03,260 crore as on 31.3.2007. Details of CPSEs having surplus funds in the form of cash and

bank balances of more than Rs. 100 crores as on 31.3.2007 are enclosed as statement.

(b) Government have allowed only Navratna and Miniratna CPSEs to invest in SEBI regulated public sector mutual funds subject to fulfillment of certain conditions.

(c) and (d) Investments of surplus funds by Navratna and Miniratna CPSEs in schemes of such mutual funds, having equity investments, should not exceed 30% of the available surplus funds of the concerned CPSE. Further, the Board of Directors of these CPSEs will decide the guidelines, procedures and management control systems for investment in such mutual funds in consultation with the administrative Ministries. The quantum of profit from such investments is dependent upon the performance of the schemes of mutual funds in which investments have been made. CPSEs which compete with private sector enterprises are on a level playing field with them in terms of investment options.

Statement

List of CPSEs with Cash & Bank Balances more than 100 Cr. as on 31.3.2007

		(Rs. in Crore)
S.No.	Name of the Company	2006-07
1	2	3
1.	Air India Ltd.	305.36
2.	Airports Authority of India Ltd.	1980.87
3.	Antrix Corporation Ltd.	842.52
4.	BEML Ltd.	347.84
5.	Bharat Coking Coal Ltd.	960.97
6.	Bharat Dynamics Ltd.	1211.03
7.	Bharat Electronics Ltd.	2081.73
8.	Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd.	5808.91
9.	Bharat Petroleum Corpn. Ltd.	863.97
10.	Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd.	37452.96
11.	Broadcast Engg. Consultants India Ltd.	155.55
12.	Cement Corpn. of India Ltd.	141.98

1	2	3
13.	Central Coalfields Ltd.	334.09
14.	Central Warehousing Corpn.	133.6
15.	Coal India Ltd.	3728.98
16.	Cochin Shypard Ltd.	662.09
17.	Container Corporation of India Ltd.	1062.59
18.	Cotton Corpn. of India Ltd.	292.6
19.	Dredging Corpn. of India Ltd.	398.55
20.	Eastern Coalfields Ltd.	846.71
21.	Electronics Corpn. of India Ltd.	245.02
22.	Engineering Projects (India) Ltd.	115.8
23.	Engineers India Ltd.	941.42
24.	Export Credit Guarantee Corpn. of India Ltd.	2783.82
25.	Gail (India) Ltd.	2660.41
26.	Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd.	1178.88
27.	Goa Shipyard Ltd.	571.47
28.	Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.	16705.52
29.	Hindustan Copper Ltd.	434.86
30.	Hindustan Paper Corporation Ltd.	203.69
31.	Hindustan Shipyard Ltd.	281.7
32.	HMT Ltd.	429.38
33.	HMT Machine Tools Ltd.	187.02
34.	Housing & Urban Dev. Corpn. Ltd.	1607.24
35.	HSCC (India) Ltd.	247.07
36.	India Tourism Dev. Corpn. Ltd.	171.76
37.	India Trade Promotion Organisation	427.26
38.	Indian Airlines Ltd.	696.54
39.	Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.	925.97
40.	Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corpn. Ltd.	122.97
41.	Indian Railway Finance Corporation Ltd.	972.54

1	2	3
42.	Indian Rare Earths Ltd.	202.01
43.	Indian Renewable Energy Devt. Agency Ltd.	1024.92
44.	IRCON International Ltd.	950.4
45.	Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd.	260.15
46.	Kudremukh Iron Ore Co. Ltd.	1298.9
47.	MMTC Ltd.	1440.79
48.	MSTC Ltd.	1042.64
49.	Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd.	2427.67
50.	Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd.	1868.81
51.	Mangalore Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd.	132.9
52.	Manganese Ore (India) Ltd.	321.49
53.	Mazagon Dock Ltd.	2427.87
54.	Mecon Ltd.	160.04
55.	Mishra Dhatu Nigam Ltd.	171.23
56.	Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation Ltd.	231.6
57.	Narmada Hydroelectric Development Corpn. Ltd.	349.4
58.	National Aluminium Company Ltd.	3686.53
59.	National Bldg. Constr. Corpn. Ltd.	751.41
60.	National Hydroelectric Power Corpn. Ltd.	466.9
61.	National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated	391.02
62.	National Jute Manufacturers Corporation Ltd.	143.92
63.	National Mineral Development Corpn. Ltd.	4849.17
64.	National Textile Corpn. Ltd.	2107.46
65.	Neyveli lignite Corpn. Ltd.	4253.06
66.	North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd.	188.69
67.	Northern Coalfields Ltd.	3095.74
68.	NTPC Electric Supply Company Ltd.	123.94
69.	NTPC Ltd.	13314.57
70.	Nuclear Power Corpn. of India Ltd.	5524.85

1	2	3
71.	Numaligarh Refinery Ltd.	390.31
72.	Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.	19280.8
73.	Oil India Ltd.	3275.7
74.	ONGC Videsh Ltd.	406.69
75.	PEC Ltd.	210.64
76.	Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd.	300.85
77.	Power Finance Corporation	507.67
78.	Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd.	1196.82
79.	Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd.	524.94
80.	Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Ltd.	230.54
81.	Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd.	7194.68
82.	RITES Ltd.	424.79
83.	Rural Electrification Corpn. Ltd.	2297.27
84.	Satiuj Jal Vidyut Nigam Ltd.	621.04
85.	Security Printing and Minting Corpn. India Ltd.	999.8
86.	Sethusamudram Corpn. Ltd.	336.77
87.	Shipping Corporation of India Ltd.	2624.69
88.	South Eastern Coalfields Ltd.	3212.61
89.	STCL Ltd.	114.57
90.	Steel Authority of India Ltd.	9609.83
91.	Uranium Corporation of India Ltd.	200.57
92.	Western Coalfields Ltd.	1296.62
	Total	200034.52

[Translation]

Scholarship for Disabled Persons and OBC

1979. SHRIMATI KALPNA RAMESH NARHIRE:
SHRI TUKARAM GANGADHAR GADAKH:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether several State have sought to increase the scholarship amount for physically challenged and backward class students from the Union Government;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Government thereon; and

(c) the details in respect of Maharashtra and Uttaranchal in particular?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (c) The Government has not received any proposal from the State Governments for increasing the scholarship amount for physically challenged and backward class students.

[English]

Reservation in Awarding Contracts for Catering

1980. SHRI RASHEED MASOOD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any policy has been formulated to introduce reservation in awarding contracts for catering facilities in the Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether introduction of reservation in the Railway catering contracts is likely to affect the quality of catering facilities;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the minority communities and handicapped persons have also been provided reservation in Railway catering contracts; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Reservation has been provided to the weaker sections of the society in the allotment of railways catering contracts. Besides Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes, reservation has also been provided to categories like, Freedom Fighters, Women, Minorities, Physically and Mentally Challenged Persons etc.

(c) and (d) Quality control is uniformly implemented on all catering units irrespective of their mode of allotment.

(e) and (f) Reservation is provided to physically and mentally challenged persons and the minorities which include Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis).

Coach Production at Integral Coach Factory and Rail Coach Factory

1981. SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have plans to increase the coach production capacity of the Integral Coach Factory and Rail Coach Factory;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is true that according to an estimate, Railways need 4,500 coaches per annum in the XI Plan and the production in the above two factories accounts to only 2,900 per annum; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Railways to meet the gap of 1,600 coaches per annum?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The annual installed production Capacities of Integral Coach Factory (ICF) and Rail Coach Factory (RCF) are being augmented from 1000 coaches to 1500 coaches per annum, each, respectively.

(c) Yes, Sir. The production in the above two factories will be 3000 coaches per annum after augmentation.

(d) It is estimated that BEML can additionally manufacture approximately 450-500 coaches per annum. Further, supplementing the acquisition of coaches by way of outsourcing some EMU/MEMU and DEMU coaches, through tendering, is also planned. A new coach manufacturing unit is being set up at Rai Bareilly with a manufacturing capacity of 1000 coaches per annum.

In addition, to meet requirements beyond this level, it has also been announced to set up a new rail coach factory in the state of Kerala, in the Railway Budget 2008-09.

"Palace on Wheels" on Other Routes

1982. SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY:

SHRI HARIN PATHAK:

SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are considering to introduce a "Palace on Wheels" type train as a tourist attraction in any other part of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating therein the names of States and the routes particularly on Madurai-

Kodalkanal-Ooty section and Ahmedabad-Udaipur section; and

(c) the time by which it will be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Railways have received proposals to run luxury tourist trains from the State Governments of Karnataka, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. Approval has been given by the Ministry of Railways to run luxury tourist trains in Karnataka and Punjab. The proposal to run luxury tourist train with the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has been examined and the State Government have been advised to send a consolidated proposal. The luxury tourist train in association with the Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation has been inaugurated on 02.02.2008. No such proposals covering the route of Madurai-Kodalkanal-Ooty section and Ahmedabad-Udaipur section have been received by this Ministry. However, the proposal of Government of Andhra Pradesh has mentioned Madurai, as a part of the itinerary.

Kohinoor Diamond

1983. SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to bring the Kohinoor diamond and the Kalighat paintings, both the part of India's heritage, from England;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Question does not arise.

Increase in the Import of Pesticides

1984. SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA:
SHRI M. APPADURAI:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an increase in the import of pesticides every year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the domestic industry has suffered due to import of pesticides;

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to reduce the import of pesticides and boost the domestic pesticides industry in the country;

(e) whether the use of chemicals pesticides has adversely affected the crop production in the country; and

(f) if so, the details in the regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) The Government follows liberalized regime for production, export and import of pesticides. As per the statistics maintained by Directorate General Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Kolkatta, the production, export and import of pesticides during the last 5 years is as follows.

(Figures in 000 MT)

Group	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Growth (%) Carg
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(06-07/01-02)
4. Pesticides (Tech.)*							
Production	82	70	85	94	82	85	0.72
Imports	1	1	3	3	3	3	24.57
Exports	13	26	26	27	27	33	20.48

*Pesticides include Insecticides monitored by the Department.

(d) to (f) Does not arise in view of above.

Market Share of Air India

1985. SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a constant fall in the market share of Air India in the total domestic air services since July, 2007;

(b) if so, the share of different domestic air carriers as on January, 2007 and January, 2008, showing the growth rate of each;

(c) whether the Air India has withdrawn some of the services from major airports during this period; and

(d) if so, the details and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Development of PCPIR in Karnataka

1986. SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVRAJ:
SHRI NARAHARI MAHATO:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Karnataka has drawn an ambitious plan to develop a Petroleum, Chemical and Petro-Chemicals Investment Region (PCPIR) on over 60,000 acres of land in Udupi and Dakshina Karnataka districts;

(b) if so, whether the said plan has the potential to attract huge investments from global majors;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether only non-agricultural land, lands with shrubs and lands with large plateaus have been identified for setting up the project;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) the precautions being taken by the Union Government to ensure that agricultural land is not acquired for setting up of PCPIR in various States; and

(g) the details of the rehabilitation plan for those displaced by acquisition of land?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (g) The Govt. of Karnataka has submitted a proposal for hosting a PCPIR in terms of the recently approved Policy for setting up of Petroleum, Chemical and Petrochemical Investment Regions (PCPIR). The PCPIR is a specifically delineated investment region having an area of about 250 sq. kms. (with at least 40% area earmarked for processing activities). This region would be a combination of production projects, public utilities, logistics, environmental protection, residential area and administrative services. The purpose is to encourage global scale investment in petroleum, chemical & petrochemical sectors to accelerate economic growth. The Central Government will consider and approve applications from the State Governments for establishment of PCPIRs in terms of this policy and also facilitate availability of external physical infrastructure linkages including rail, road, ports, and airports. Similarly, the State Government, applying for a PCPIR, will ensure that all physical infrastructure and utilities linkages under its jurisdiction are provided. The technical/initial scrutiny of the proposal has been completed and now the State govt. will submit a revised proposal.

The State Government in its initial proposal has informed that investment of Rs. 230,000 crores is expected.

It has been informed by the Govt. of Karnataka that the State Govt. doesn't propose to acquire any fertile land. The PCPIR policy lays down that as far as possible acquisition of agricultural land may be avoided. The acquisition of land if any must be in accordance with law and must provide for rehabilitation as per the laid down norms.

Utilization of Funds for Disabled Persons

1987. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the funds for disabled persons is not utilized;

(b) if so, the total funds earmarked for disabled persons for the last three years;

(c) the details of the funds remained unutilized out of it;

(d) the main reasons for the same; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to take certain measures to utilize these funds in the future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (e) Government of India releases funds for the various programmes connected with persons with disabilities mainly Non Governmental Organisations, National Institutes, Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India and National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation. During 2004-05, 2005-06, and 2006-07, Rs. 130.55 crore, Rs. 124.71 crore and Rs. 122.19 crore were released. Since there is no earmarking of funds State-wise, actual releases are dependent upon timely receipt of proposals with complete set of documents.

Taking into account past experience, the procedure for sanction of grant-in-aid to Non Governmental Organizations has been streamlined from current financial year. The State Government had been advised to send consolidated proposals after getting them scrutinized by a multi-disciplinary committee.

To ensure proper utilization of funds, periodic progress reports are obtained apart from audited statement of accounts, list of beneficiaries and utilization certificates.

Facelift of Taj Mahal and other Monuments

1988. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to give a facelift to Taj Mahal and other historical monuments across the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Conservation of centrally protected monuments including

Taj Mahal is a continuous process. Conservation works are taken up depending upon the availability of resources and the need of repairs to particular monuments. Clay pack treatment has been used successfully for the scientific cleaning of Taj Mahal and marble surfaces of some other monuments.

[Translation]

Redefining of Term "Minority"

1989. SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to redefine the term Minority;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions has expressed its reservation;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reaction of the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (e) The Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Bill to confer constitutional status on the National Commission for Minorities was introduced in the Lok Sabha in December, 2004. The Bill includes a definition of minority. The recommendations of the Standing Committee on Social Justice & Empowerment regarding the Bill have been considered and some issues, including those raised by the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, are still under examination.

[English]

E-Ticketing

1990. SHRI P. MOHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is considerable fall in the work load at the Railway computer reservation counters throughout the country after the introduction of e-ticketing system;

(b) if so, the percentage of such work shedding due to diversion;

(c) the actual number of Ticket Booking Staff who would be rendered surplus owing to this outsourcing, meaning e-ticketing in Railways throughout the country;

(d) whether the total ticket booking work is going to be entrusted to private parties in the long run;

(e) if so, whether ticket booking staff would become a dying cadre in Railways; and

(f) if so, the likely effect on the ticket booking staff career?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Nil

(d) No, Sir.

(e) and (f) Do not arise.

Milk Processing Plants

1991. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has a proposal to set up more number of milk processing plants with Central assistance during Eleventh Plan period;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal mooted in that regard and funds earmarked therefor; and

(c) the details of the Central assistance proposed to be provided to various States for setting up of milk processing plants in that plan period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (c) The Milk and Milk products processing in Dairy sector plays a vital role in rural economy since the Dairying is a major source of income for farmers of India. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MFPI) is promoting organized Dairy processing sector to accomplish upcoming demands of processed dairy products and helping to identify various areas of research for future product development, scalable efficient technologies and quality improvement to revamp the Indian dairy processing sector for domestic as well as export

market by way of providing financial assistance to the dairy processing units. MFPI provides financial assistance under its plan scheme 'Setting up/Modernization/Expansion of food processing industries' which includes the Milk and Milk processing plants also. The financial assistance is 25% of the cost of Plant and machineries and technical civil work subject to maximum of Rs. 50.00 lakhs. In case of difficult areas the financial assistance is 33.33% subject to maximum of Rs. 75.00 Lakhs.

The Dairy Technology Institutes, National Dairy Research Institute etc. are being provided financial assistance under R&D Scheme of MFPI in order to develop specialized milk products having appeal in the domestic and international market and for upgradation of their processing technologies.

Strict processing standards in Dairy industry against adulterants contaminants and microbiological counts require to be followed. Therefore, for promotion of HACCP, GMP processing lines in Dairy industry with Modern Laboratory infrastructure, financial assistance is being provided under the scheme of Quality Assurance, Codex standards.

The total funds earmarked for the scheme of setting up/modernization/expansion of food processing industries during the 11th plan is Rs. 600.00 Crores. Including that for milk processing plants in various States. Besides, in the 11th plan it is proposed to provide financial assistance to Dairy sector under the Cold Chains component of the scheme for Infrastructure Development for food processing industries.

[Translation]

Revival of Closed Fertilizer Units

1992. SHRI TEK LAL MAHTO: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of fertilizer manufacturing units lying closed at present alongwith Sindri in Jharkhand;

(b) the number of workers and officers working in these closed fertilizer units and the details of the monthly/annual expenditure incurred on their wages, salaries and maintenance during the last three years;

(c) the action taken by the Government to revive these fertilizer units and the time by which all these units are likely to be revived; and

(d) the reasons for delay in their revival?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) The information is furnished in the enclosed statement.

(c) and (d) The Government is in the process of reviving the closed units of Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd. (FCIL) at Gorakhpur, Ramagundam, Talcher, Sindri and Korba and those of the Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. (HFCL) at Barauni, Durgapur and Haldia subject to availability of feedstock. As the process of revival is under different stages of examination, at this stage it is not feasible to indicate a definite timeframe.

Statement

Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. (HFCL)

No. of Fertilizer Manufacturing units lying closed: 3

No. of workers and officers working in these closed units:

Name of unit	No. of Officers	No. of Workers
Barauni	5	1
Durgapur	5	-
Haldia	10	6

In addition to the above closed units HFCL has the officers/workers in the Kolkatta based officers and Noida based Corporate Officers as under:-

	No. of Officers	No. of Workers
Kolkatta based offices	2	2
Corporate office, Noida	6	2
Total No. of employees Working as on date	28	11

The details of the Annual Expenditure incurred on wages, salaries and maintenance during the last three years:

Year	Total Number of		Annual Exp. on Salary/ Wages	Maintenance Charges (Rs. in lakh)
	Officers	Workers		
2004-05	43	12	153.46	8.09
2005-06	40	12	137.46*	4.18
2006-07	30	12	1120.29**	4.38

*This includes Rs. 7.26 lakh towards VSS payment.

**This includes Rs. 994.63 lakh towards VSS payment.

Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd. (FCIL)

No. of Fertilizer manufacturing units lying closed: 5

No. of workers and officers working in these closed units:

Name of unit	No. of Officers	No. of Workers
Sindri	13	01
Gorakhpur	04	05
Ramagundam	04	02
Talcher	09	02
Korba	02	01

In addition to the above closed units FCIL has the officers/workers in the Central Office at Noida as under:—

	No. of Officers	No. of Workers
Central office, Noida	07	02
Total No. of employees Working as on date	39	13

The details of the Annual Expenditure incurred on wages, salaries and maintenance during the last three years:-

Year	Total Number of		Annual Exp. on Salary/ Wages	Maintenance Charges (Rs. in lakh)
	Officers	Workers		
2004-05	56	14	97	630
2005-06	46	14	115	621
2006-07	42	14	115	630

Pyrites Phosphates & Chemicals Ltd. (PPCL)

The company is under liquidation, pursuant to the order of the Patna High Court and the properties/units have been taken over by the Official Liquidator. Therefore, the Management of the company has ceased to exist.

PRS at Anjhi Shahabad Railway Station, UP

1993. SHRI ILYAS AZMI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Passenger Reservation System (PRS) has been sanctioned for Anjhi Shahabad railway station between Hardoi and Shahjahanpur;

(b) if so, the date on which it has been sanctioned alongwith the reasons for not installing it so far; and

(c) the time by which the said PRS is likely to be installed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Unreserved Ticketing System-cum-Passenger Reservation System (UTS-cum-PRS) for Anjhi Shahabad Railway station has been sanctioned on 23.7.2007. Process for installation of UTS-cum-PRS has been initiated by Northern Railway and is expected to be commissioned 30.9.2008.

[English]

Drug Addiction

1994. SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the growing menace of drug addiction in the country, particularly among students;

(b) if so, whether any study has been conducted in this regard to know the reasons; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (c) Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is aware of the problems

of social deviance in India and their manifestation also in the form of drug abuse. The Ministry, in collaboration with the United Nations Organization on Drug and Crime (UNDOC) conducts various thematic studies and surveys focusing on the pattern and extent of drug abuse. However, these studies/surveys do not suggest that addiction among students is increasing.

Rail Connectivity to Bedi and Porbandar Ports

1995. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI:
SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are considering to provide rail connectivity to more minor ports;

(b) if so, the State-wise ports which are under consideration particularly ports of Gujarat State;

(c) whether the Railways have received any proposals from the various States in this regard;

(d) if so, the State-wise details thereof; and

(e) the present status of those proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The list of Ports where Railways are considering rail connectivity is given hereunder:

Sl.No.	State	Port
1	2	3
1.	Maharashtra	1. Rewas Port 2. PNP Port 3. Dighi Port
2.	Orissa	1. Dhamra Port 2. Kirtania Port 3. Gopalpur Port
3.	Andhra Pradesh	1. Gangavaram Port 2. Krishnapatam Port 3. Machilipatnam Port

1	2	3
		4. Nizampatnam Port
		5. Kakinada Port
4.	Gujarat	1. Hazira Port
		2. Bedi Port
		3. Porbandar Port
		4. Rozi Port
		5. Dahej Port
5.	Tamil Nadu	1. Karaikal Port
		2. Ennore Port
6.	Kerala	1. Vallarpadam Port
7.	Karnataka	1. Belekeri Port
8.	West Bengal	1. Diamond Harbor

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The list of proposals received from various States is as under:

Sl.No.	State	Port
1.	Orissa	1. Kirtania Port
2.	Andhra Pradesh	1. Machilipatnam Port
		2. Nizampatnam Port
3.	Tamil Nadu	1. Karaikal Port

(e) The status of these proposals is as under:

Orissa:

Kirtania Port likely to come up at the mouth of the river Subamarekha in Balsore District of Orissa. Railways are yet to receive the draft feasibility report pending which no comments can be offered.

Andhra Pradesh

The proposal of Government of Andhra Pradesh for rail connectivity to Machilipatnam Port is under consideration of South Central Railway.

The proposal for Nizampatnam port near Bapatla Railway station at a distance of 20 Kms. in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh is a Preliminary Stage only.

Tamil Nadu:

M/s Karaikal Port Private Limited has engaged a consultant to develop a suitable layout for a siding to serve the Port. The consultants have submitted a feasibility report on 05.03.2008 and the report is under consideration of the Railway.

Implementation of Sachar Committee Report

1996. SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to constitute an autonomous Assessment and Monitoring Authority (AMA) to evaluate the extent of development benefits, which accrue to different Socio-Religious Categories (SRCs) through various programmes based on Sachar Committee Report;

(b) if so, the steps the Government propose to take towards implementing the same;

(c) the functions and powers granted to AMA;

(d) whether AMA will have a Central level body or have branches at the State level; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (e) The Planning Commission has constituted an autonomous Assessment and Monitoring Authority (AMA) to evaluate the extent of development benefits accruing to different socio-religious communities (SRCs) through various programmes; to visit various places to have first hand information about conditions of Minorities; and to give directions to the concerned Central Ministries/Departments, State Governments, U.T. Administrations to implement effectively the programme for Minorities. No State level branch is envisaged.

Development of Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar

1997. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA:
SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the projects/proposals for development of tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands are pending for approval with the Union Government;

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

(c) the time by which these are likely to be approved; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to develop and promote Andaman and Nicobar beaches and other beaches in the country?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) Development and promotion of places of tourist interest including beaches is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations themselves. However, the Ministry of Tourism provides central financial assistance on the basis of project proposals received from them as per guidelines under the following schemes:

- (1) Product/Infrastructure development of tourist destinations/circuits
- (2) Large Revenue Generating projects
- (3) Fairs/festivals/events
- (4) Information Technology projects

The project proposals received from Andaman and Nicobar during the current financial year were not complete as per guidelines and hence were not sanctioned.

Two projects worth Rs. 992.76 lakh have been sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism during 2007-08 for the development of infrastructure at beaches. The Ministry of tourism also promotes and publicises all places of tourist interest in India including Andaman & Nicobar Islands through the electronic, internet & print media, the India tourism Offices in India and abroad and through its website www.incredibleindia.org.

Construction of Bhopal Gas Tragedy Memorial

1998. SHRI NARAHARI MAHATO: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the date on which the decision to construct Bhopal Gas Tragedy Memorial was taken and the amount sanctioned therefor by the Government;

(b) whether the design of the memorial has been selected;

(c) if so, the steps being taken by the Government for immediate construction of the memorial;

(d) the time by which the work is likely to be completed and the total expenditure to be incurred thereon;

(e) the estimated quantity of chemical waste currently dumped in the Union Carbide premises;

(f) the reasons for its non-removal so far; and

(g) the time by which the waste is likely to be removed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (d) The State Government of Madhya Pradesh has informed that the decision to construct a Bhopal Gas Tragedy Memorial was taken by the State Government on 23rd February, 2007. The Planning Commission, Government of India has approved one time additional central assistance of Rs. 10.00 crore for this purpose, provided during 2006-07 to the Government of Madhya Pradesh. The State Cabinet Sub-Committee has approved the conceptual plan for construction of Bhopal Gas Tragedy Memorial.

The extent of Government of India's responsibility in the matter of construction of memorial is limited to the additional central assistance released to the State Government by Planning Commission. The State Government has moved an application before the Madhya Pradesh High Court, Jabalpur in Writ petition No. 2802/2004 pending before the High Court seeking permission to start construction of the memorial. The construction will start after receiving the permission of the High Court.

(e) to (g) The estimated quantity of toxic wastes lying at the Union Carbide Plant site is approximately 386 MT. The High Court of Madhya Pradesh while hearing the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed in Writ Petition No. 2802 of 2004, constituted a task Force vide its orders

dated 30.3.2005, 13.5.2005 and 15.3.2007, under the chairmanship of Secretary (Chemicals and Petrochemicals), Government of India, for monitoring the process of the removal of the toxic wastes lying in and around the UCIL plant site. The Government of Madhya Pradesh has submitted a Road Map to the High Court of Madhya Pradesh giving details of the activities to be undertaken for the removal/disposal of these toxic wastes. The Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board (MPPCB) is the executing agency for coordinating the activities covered under the Road Map, as per the provisions of the Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 1989. The High Court is regularly monitoring the progress made by the Task Force and has issued necessary directions to the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board and Government of Madhya Pradesh.

Harassment of Foreign Tourists and NRIs at the Airports

1999. SHRI AMITAVA NANDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of foreign tourists and NRIs are harassed at International Airports in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the incidents/complaints have been reported to the concerned authorities during the last three years till date and action taken by the authorities in this regard;

(c) whether the Government has any plan to bring about an attitudinal change amongst the officials and promote healthy tourism in the country; and

(d) if so, the details alongwith action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) No case has been reported in respect of international airports managed by Airports Authority of India (AAI) except at Amritsar International airport during the last three years. Seven complaints have been received against Airlines and regulatory agencies at Amritsar International airport. These complaints have been forwarded to the concerned Agencies for necessary remedial action.

(c) and (d) Regular in-house training programmes are organized at the AAI training centre (NIAMAR), New Delhi. In addition, regular local level training programmes

are conducted at the airports. AAI has also taken initiative to arrange to impart training in behavioral aspects to other agencies operating at airports, such as taxi drivers, security/customs/immigration personnel etc.

[Translation]

Development of Manikpur-Jhansi Rail Line and Stations

2000. SHRI SHYAMA CHARAN GUPTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal by the Railways for doubling and electrification of rail line along with the overall upgradation of the stations from Manikpur to Jhansi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the reasons for constant neglect of the said zone?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) At present, there is no scheme/sanctioned work for doubling & electrification of railway line from Manikpur to Jhansi. However, the following development works have been planned at various stations from Manikpur to Jhansi:—

(i) Extension of platforms to accommodate 23/24 coaches trains at Manikpur, Mahoba, Harpalpur, Atarra & Chitrakutdham Karwi stations.

(ii) One additional platform made at Atarra.

(iii) Extension of platform shelter at Mahoba and Banda.

(iv) Improvement of Water supply arrangement at Barusagar, Niwari stations.

(v) Improvement of station building, platform, circulating area at Chitrakutdham Karwi and Atarra stations.

(vi) Extension of Loop line at Newari, Kulpahar, Teherka, Ranipur Road, Belatal, Orchha and Barusagar stations to accommodate longer trains.

(vii) Improvement of staff and public amenity works at station platforms, retiring/waiting rooms, circulating area, roads and other buildings etc.

by augmentation of power supply, providing lighting, illumination, air circulators, high mast towers etc. at Jhansi, Banda Atarra, Chitrakudham Karwi and Manikpur stations. It includes provisions of 1 no. 62.5 KW DG set at Chitrakudham Karwi.

(d) There is no negligence of developmental works on this zone.

[English]

Fixation of Prices of Imported Formulations by NPPA

2001. SHRI M. APPADURAI: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) had been fixing the prices of all imported formulations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether several such imported formulations are being over-charged than the ones fixed by NPPA;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (e) The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority has been fixing prices of only the Scheduled imported formulations under the provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995. As per para 7 of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO 95) in the case of a Scheduled imported formulation, the landed cost shall form the basis for fixing its price alongwith such margin to cover selling expenses and distribution expenses including interest and importer's profit which shall not exceed 50% of the landed cost. The "landed cost" means the cost of import of a formulation inclusion of the customs duty and clearing charges.

Till date in one case one pharma company has deposited Rs. 116.59 lacs towards overcharged amount and Rs. 6.95 lacs towards interest.

Works in BCPL

2002. SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the works in Brahmaputra Crackers & Polymer Limited (BCPL) at Lepetkata in Dibrugarh district is going on as scheduled to start its production by 2012;

(b) if so, the details thereof?

(c) whether the process of land acquisition and also the process of providing compensation to the land-owners had been completed; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Brahmaputra Crackers & Polymer Limited (BCPL) have informed that the project is being implemented for 60 months project completion schedule from the date of laying foundation stone by Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at Lepetkata on 9th April 2007 i.e. Project is to be completed by 2012. Following project activities have been undertaken as per schedule:

- The feedstock Agreement with OIL for supply of gas & Term sheet with NRL for Naphtha supply was signed on 19th September, 2007.
- Gas supply agreement was signed with ONGCL on 15th October, 2007.
- Award of topographical & Geo-Technical survey works and for site office works have been completed.
- Notice for Inviting Tenders (NIT) for various civil works like site grading work, construction of powerhouse, construction of productware house etc. are being issued as scheduled.
- Finalisation of contract for various Licensors is under progress.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Government of Assam have informed that 1108 acres of land for the Assam Gas Cracker Project at Lepetkata, Dibrugarh and 400 bighas for project township and 70 bighas of land for CISF colony

have already been acquired. The State Government has released Rs. 58.17 crores for payment of compensation to the Deputy Commissioner, Dibrugarh who has already paid compensation. Another Rs. 1.54 crore for rehabilitation of 66 nos. of families is sanctioned and is being released. In addition Rs. 61.28 lakhs is also being released for payment of compensation to 22 nos. of left out families. With regard to acquisition of 70 bighas of land for CISF colony and 400 bighas for township, payment have already been made by Brahmaputra Cracker & Polymer Ltd. and the land has already been handed over to the company.

[Translation]

Revenue Earned by the Tourism Sector

2003. SHRI V.K. THUMMAR:
SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise details of revenue earned by the

Government in the tourism sector during the last three years, till date;

(b) the State-wise details of the amount allocated for the development of tourism sector; and

(c) the details of the major works carried out for the promotion of tourism during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The Ministry of tourism does not compile State-wise estimates of revenue earned from tourism. However, the foreign exchange earnings from tourism for the country as a whole during 2005, 2006, and 2007 are estimated at US\$ 7.49 billion, US\$ 8.93 billion and US\$ 11.96 billion respectively.

(b) and (c) The details of the amount allocated to the State Governments/UT Administrations and the number of projects sanctioned for the development of tourism during 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

State-wise Tourism Projects Released during the Last Three Years of Tenth Five Year Plan

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl.No.	State/UT	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
		No. of Projects Sanctioned	Amount Released	No. of Projects Sanctioned	Amount Released	No. of Projects Sanctioned	Amount Released
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Andhra Pradesh	16	2240.68	7	1700.00	3	1195.44
2.	Assam	8	766.22	10	1698.45	9	1813.21
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	9	927.96	10	1655.21	12	1497.24
4.	Bihar	7	1527.71	3	722.49	2	974.59
5.	Chhattisgarh	6	897.93	7	1436.54	16	2491.12
6.	Goa	3	38.00	1	8.00	0	0.00
7.	Gujarat	2	111.14	5	1169.04	7	359.51
8.	Haryana	6	513.64	7	515.77	5	902.39

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9.	Himachal Pradesh	12	2161.00	6	921.00	8	1226.13
10.	Jammu and Kashmir	5	699.04	22	5320.31	29	3392.90
11.	Jharkhand	2	756.72	5	697.76	3	769.99
12.	Karnataka	12	1937.37	8	1001.21	4	1081.81
13.	Kerala	10	1820.33	13	3889.90	18	3441.61
14.	Madhya Pradesh	11	942.21	12	2419.54	10	2797.75
15.	Maharashtra	10	925.30	9	1662.99	13	2278.46
16.	Manipur	0	0.00	2	3984	9	649.48
17.	Meghalaya	2	807.91	1	4.00	9	1149.93
18.	Mizoram	6	382.38	10	1687.29	9	2044.80
19.	Nagaland	7	1413.40	9	1873.17	8	1862.51
20.	Orissa	8	1059.38	10	1586.44	13	1974.66
21.	Punjab	7	581.47	5	1150.13	13	1968.68
22.	Rajasthan	13	1375.07	7	2086.40	8	763.06
23.	Sikkim	8	531.33	14	2213.74	13	1647.77
24.	Tamil Nadu	7	705.83	19	3007.68	11	1496.87
25.	Tripura	1	16.00	3	569.43	4	96.01
26.	Uttarakhand	7	1750.73	13	2193.18	16	1434.34
27.	Uttar Pradesh	9	831.19	18	3126.03	7	2663.24
28.	West Bengal	10	407.43	5	792.48	10	2195.35
29.	Andaman and Nicobar	0	0.00	1	5.00	0	0.00
30.	Chandigarh	3	373.60	1	13.70	2	14.00
31.	Dadar and Nagar Haveli	0	0.00	2	25.92	0	0.00
32.	Delhi	8	511.00	2	17.00	5	1209.54
33.	Daman and Diu	0	0.00	4	208.61	0	0.00
34.	Lakshadweep	0	0.00	0	0	1	5.60
35.	Puducherry	2	360.00	2	375.51	1	400.00
Total		217	27371.97	253	45793.76	278	45797.99

Note—This includes the projects relating to Circuits, Destinations, Large Revenue Generating Projects, Rural Tourism (Software and Hardware) Projects, IT, Event, Fair & Festivals Projects.

*[English]***Kannur Airport**

2004. DR. P.P. KOYA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to set up a civilian airport at Kannur in Kerala;

(b) if so, whether any action has been taken to acquire land and the time by which the formalities will be completed in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the total amount required for the project and the quantum of amount earmarked for the construction of the said airport?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Government has accorded "in-principle" approval to the proposal of Government of Kerala to set up a Greenfield Airport at Kannur.

(b) and (c) Government of Kerala has accorded sanction for acquisition of 2000 acres of land for the construction of the proposed Kannur airport.

(d) As per the Technical Economic Feasibility Report (TEFR), submitted by Government of Kerala the total project cost is Rs. 929.5 crores with expenditure planned over 30 years.

Working Steam Engines in Railways

2005. SHRI RAMCHANDRA PASWAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of working steam engines presently in use with Indian Railways, zone-wise; and

(b) the cost incurred in maintaining them and the revenue earned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) As on date 29 steam locomotives (Central Railway: 01, Northern Railway: 05, Northeast Frontier Railway: 16 and Southern Railway: 07) are working on Indian Railways.

(b) The approximate cost of maintenance for 2007-08 is Rs. 3.59 crores as per revised budget estimates.

Revenue earnings are maintained service-wise and not traction-wise.

Construction of Patan-Bhiladi Missing Line

2006. SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have any proposal for construction of Patan-Bhiladi missing link in Gujarat;

(b) if so, whether the construction of missing link between Patan-Bhiladi, a dedicated freight corridor between Pipavav, Surendranagar, Viramgam, Mahesana, Patan, Bhiladi up to Bhatinda is feasible; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The new broad gauge line from Patan-Bhiladi is already sanctioned as a part of Viramgam-Bhiladi gauge conversion project. Preliminary activities like preparation of plan, estimates, etc. are in progress.

(b) The portion of Patan-Bhiladi does not come under the identified alignment of the Western route of Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC). However, Mehsana-Viramgam-Surendranagar-Pipavav (395 kms) is an identified feeder route for the Western Freight Corridor which is getting upgraded to DFC standards.

(c) Does not arise.

Air Services between India and Pakistan

2007. SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of flights operating between India and Pakistan at present;

(b) whether an agreement has been signed to increase the number of flights between the two countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the final decision likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) At present, Indian Airlines and Pakistan International Airlines are providing 1 and 12 services per week in India-Pakistan sector respectively.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) As per the MoU signed between India and Pakistan during bilateral air services consultations held on 14-15 February, 2008 in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, the capacity entitlements for the designated airlines of each side have been enhanced from 12 flights per week to 28 flights per week, with immediate effect. Also, Islamabad and Chennai have been granted as additional points of call for the designated airlines of India and Pakistan respectively.

Funds Released to NGOs in Maharashtra

2008. SHRIMATI PRIYA DUTT: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the budget released to the voluntary organizations in Maharashtra for the year 2006-07, scheme-wise and district-wise;

(b) the details of the projects of voluntary organizations from the State which are still pending for clearance by Government for the year; and

(c) the details of the reasons for non-clearance of these pending projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) The scheme-wise and district-wise funds released to the voluntary organizations in Maharashtra is given in Statement I.

(b) and (c) The scheme-wise number of projects of voluntary organizations from the State which are still pending for clearance by the Ministry along with the reasons for their non-clearance is given in Statement II.

Statement I

District-wise and Scheme-wise funds released to NGOs of Maharashtra during 2006-07

(Rs. in lakhs)

Name of the District	Name of the Schemes						
	Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme	Assistance to Voluntary Organisations working for Scheduled Castes	Assistance to Disabled Persons for purchase/fitting of AIDS/Appliances (ADIP Scheme)	Integrated Programme for Older Persons	Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug Abuse)	Assistance to voluntary organisations working for welfare of OBCs	Coaching & Allied Assistance for weaker sections including SCs & OBCs and Minorities
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Ahmednagar	—	—	3.50	2.76	—	—	—
Akola	—	2.41	—	—	—	—	—
Amravati	14.46	4.43	5.00	—	5.49	—	—
Andheri (W)	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.60
Aurangabad	—	11.47	—	—	3.40	2.92	—
Beed	—	—	5.00	—	—	—	1.35
Bhandara	—	—	—	1.95	3.40	—	—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Devlali	1.45		—			—	—
Dhule	4.48	24.24	—	5.95	7.50	—	—
Gadchiroli	25.41	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gondia	—	—	—	—	3.40	—	—
Hingoli	—	3.94	—	—	—	3.85	—
Jaigaon	—		—	—	—	7.17	4.38
Kolhapur	34.49	4.32	—		—	—	—
Latur	12.49	34.49	—	2.94	8.26	1.85	1.35
Mumbai	38.39	—	5.00		—	—	—
Nagpur	2.91	11.63	—		7.06	4.14	—
Nanded	—	32.93	—	2.75	6.30	—	—
Omanabad	—	16.41	—		—	—	—
Parbhani	—	5.29	—	0.97	10.21	—	—
Pune	37.33	4.24	2.50	—	—	1.38	—
Raigada	—	11.14	—	—	—	—	—
Satara	—	13.49	—	—	—	—	—
Solapur	—	—	—	—	3.51	—	4.38
Thane	—	—	—	—	3.40	—	—
Washim	6.92	8.95	—	—	3.40	—	—
Yavatmal	—	3.94	—	2.76	3.40	—	—

Statement II*Scheme-wise number of projects pending for clearance along with the reasons*

Sl.No.	Name of the Scheme	No. of project pending for clearance	Reasons for pending
1	2	3	4
1.	Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme	25	(i) Non-receipt/late receipt of requisite documents from the voluntary organizations. (ii) Dispute among the members of the Management Committee in case of one organization.

1	2	3	4
2.	Integrated Programme for Older Persons	14	Non receipt/late receipt of State Government recommendations and non-receipt of requisite documents from the voluntary organisations.
3.	Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug Abuse)	6	(i) Non-receipt of State Government recommendation. (ii) Complaints against the voluntary organisations

Low Cost Air Journey

2009. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that some private airlines have started air journey at low cost in the domestic and international routes to attract the passengers;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to start such scheme in the public airlines also;

(c) if so, the details thereof, route-wise, scheme-wise; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to compete with private airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Domestic and International air fares are not regulated by the Government. Airlines are free to charge air fares as per the market forces.

(b) to (d) Air India and other full-service airlines vary their air fares in line with demand and market dynamics.

Cancellation of Trains and Change in Train Routes

2010. SHRI SUBRATA BOSE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any State Government had expressed its displeasure by objecting to the change in the route of different trains or their cancellation by Railways without taking the State Government into confidence, in the name of Bandh of Maoists in the concerned States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the basis of decision of cancelling of trains or changing their routes; and

(d) the level where the decision is taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) In the past the Government of Jharkhand had requested Railway Authorities to desist from cancellation/diversion of trains on considerations of law and order without prior consultation with State Government officials whenever Bandhs are called by Left Wing Extremists.

(c) and (d) Based on review of the threat perceptions that could possibly endanger life of passengers, Railway personnel and railway property, General Managers of zonal railways covering the state of Jharkhand had taken precautionary measures in the past to cancel/divert/reschedule trains that are suspected to be vulnerable from attacks by Left Wing Extremists.

[*Translation*]

Disinvestment of the Airports

2011. SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:-

(a) whether the private sector company GMR has been assigned the contract of modernising certain airports in the country;

(b) if so, the details of such airports;

(c) the airport-wise details of the revenue relating to the contract given for modernisation and terms and conditions in regard to disinvestment;

(d) whether disinvestment is being made by the company as per rules;

(e) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the details of the revenue received by the Government from the company so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi has been restructured under Public Private Partnership (PPP) and transferred to M/s Delhi International Airport Private Limited (DIAL) on 03.05.2006 for operation, management and development. GMR Group led consortium holds 74% equity stake in DIAL.

Revenue earned by DIAL in 2006-07 and 2007-08 (up to 31.01.2008) was Rs. 591.38 crores and Rs. 692.20 crores respectively. Airports Authority of India (AAI) gets a share of 45.99% in DIAL's revenue.

(f) AAI has received Rs. 271.98 crores during 2006-07 (from 03.05.2006 to 31.03.2007) and Rs. 318.34 crores during 2007-08 (up to 31.01.2008) as its revenue share.

[English]

Model Stations in North East States

2012. SHRI M.K. SUBBA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the North Eastern Railways had so far developed and declared 35 stations in the North-East as model stations;

(b) if so, the details alongwith other amenities provided thereon;

(c) the names of the stations developed in Assam and other North East States; and

(d) the names of the stations to be developed under the Eleventh Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Thirty three (33) railway stations have been identified for development as Model stations on Northeast Frontier Railway out of which following 15 stations fall in North East States including Assam;

1. Kokrajhar 2. Gosaingaonhat 3. Srirampur 4. Rangiya 5. Tezapore 6. New Bongaigaon 7. Guwahati 8. Kamakhya 9. Dimapur 10. Silchar 11. Dharmanagar 12. Lumding 13. Dibrugarh 14. New Tinsukia & 15. Jorhat Town.

Minimum Essential Amenities as per norms have already been provided at these stations. Under the Model Station Scheme further facilities planned to be provided at these stations as per norms depending upon category of the stations are as under:

Retiring room, Waiting room (with bathing facilities), Cloak room, Enquiry Counter, National Train Enquiry System (NTES), Inter Voice Response System (IVRS), Public Address system/Computer based announcement, Book stalls/other stalls of essential goods, Refreshment room, Parking/circulatory area with lights, Washable apron with jet cleaning, Electronic Train indicator board, Public phone booth, Touch Screen Enquiry system, Water vending machines, Water coolers, Signages, Modular Catering Stalls, Automatic Vending Machines, Pay & Use Toilets, Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS), Computersation of complaints, etc.

Development of railway stations is a continuous process and is undertaken as so warranted by increase in traffic depending upon availability of funds and other relative priorities. Further stations would accordingly taken in hand for development during the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

[Translation]

Privatisation of Catering through IRCTC

2013. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the system of providing licenses for catering services is being done away with and privatisation of this sector is being done through IRCTC;

(b) if so, the railway zone-wise details thereof;

(c) the alternative arrangements made for the livelihood of the licensees rendered unemployed due to the above process; and

(d) the railway zone-wise details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Exploration of Oil and Natural Gas

2014. PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of oil and natural gas exploration in the country during the last four years;

(b) the time by which and the quantity of oil and natural gas likely to be available as a result of the explorations and the new licensing policy;

(c) the present details of oil production in different oil fields of the country;

(d) the percentage of requirement met out from the domestic production of oil and natural gas;

(e) names of the countries alongwith the details of the quantity of import of oil and gases and the average expenditure incurred yearly in this regard;

(f) the progress of alternative sources of oil production besides extraction and import;

(g) whether there is any possibility of becoming self-reliant in the field of oil and natural gas;

(h) if so, the details thereof; and

(i) the quantum of oil and natural gas available and possible availability from oil reserves in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) During last four years (2003-04 to 2006-07), the total quantum of exploratory inputs expended by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), Oil India Limited (OIL) and Private Companies in their operational

areas include acquisition of 15402.52 Ground Line Kilometre (GLK) of 2D seismic and 20977.76 sq km of 3D seismic data in the country. During this period 762 exploratory wells were drilled by these companies in the country.

(b) Projected crude oil and natural gas production during XI Plan Period (2007-12) is enclosed as Statement I.

(c) State-wise crude oil and natural gas production during 2006-07 are enclosed as Statement II and III respectively.

(d) During the year 2006-07, the percentage of domestic crude oil production were 22.3%.

(e) The information with reference to crude oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) are enclosed as Statement IV and V respectively.

(f) Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP), bio-diesel, hydrogen energy and gas hydrates have been identified as potential future alternatives to supplement petrol and diesel. Government of India has already awarded 26 Coal Bed Methane (CBM) Blocks in order to produce CBM gas from coal fields. In one of the blocks in West Bengal, CBM gas production has commenced with effect from July 2007.

(g) No, Sir.

(h) Does not arise in view of (g) above.

(i) In the country, hydrocarbon reserves estimated are of the order of 28 billion tone, out of which 8.8 billion of in place reserves have been established. Remaining reserves are yet to be discovered. Government of India has targeted to increase area of exploration upto 80 percent of Indian Sedimentary Basinal area by the end of XI plan i.e. year 2012.

Statement I

Projected Crude oil Production in MMT (Million Metric Tonne) 11th Plan

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Total
ONGC	27.16	28.00	29.00	28.53	27.37	140.06
OIL	3.50	3.55	3.75	3.91	4.30	18.99
Pvt./JV	10.57	10.78	9.76	8.75	7.85	47.71
Total	41.23	42.33	42.49	41.19	39.51	206.76

Projected Natural Gas Production in BCM (Billion Cubic Meter) 11th Plan

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
ONGC	22.10	22.53	22.77	22.99	22.00
OIL	3.13	3.21	3.25	3.28	3.56
Pvt./JV	8.55	22.55	29.41	28.77	37.67
Total	33.78	48.29	55.43	55.03	63.23

Statement II*Crude Oil Production (During 2006-07)*

Million Metric Tonne (MMT)

State/Regions	ONGC	OIL	Pvt./JV Companies	Total
Offshore	17.993	—	4.669	22.662
Andhra Pradesh	0.251	—	—	0.251
Arunachal Pradesh	—	0.004	0.063	0.067
Assam	1.33	3.106	0.008	4.444
Gujarat	6.123	—	0.090	6.213
Tamil Nadu	0.354	—	—	0.354
Total	26.051	3.11	4.830	33.991

Statement III*Natural Gas Production (During 2006-07)*

Billion Cubic Meter (BCM)

State/Regions	ONGC	OIL	Pvt./JV Companies	Total
Offshore	16.567	—	5.908	22.475
Andhra Pradesh	1.525	—	—	1.525
Arunachal Pradesh	—	0.003	0.006	0.009
Assam	0.499	2.057	0.016	2.572
Gujarat	2.185	—	1.109	3.294
Rajasthan	0.017	0.2	—	0.217
Tamil Nadu	1.13	—	—	1.130
Tripura	0.52	—	—	0.520
Total	22.443	2.26	7.039	31.742

Statement IV*Country-wise Crude Oil Imports*

			Qty. in MMT
Region	Country	2006-07	2007-08 (Prov.) (Apr-Dec 08)
1	2	3	4
Middle East Region	Iran	14.70	13.793
	Iraq	13.45	10.514
	Kwait	11.38	7.778
	Neutral Zone	1.63	1.977
	Oman		0.136
	Qatar	1.73	1.984
	Saudi Arabia	24.63	19.847
	UAE	8.76	7.973
	Yemen	4.54	1.723
	Sub Total	80.82	65.725
Other Region	Algeria	0.65	0.296
	Angola	2.61	3.797
	Australia		0.077
	Azarbaijan	0.71	1.477
	Brazil	0.42	
	Brunel	0.63	0.283
	Cameroon		0.110
	Egypt	1.93	1.479
	Equador		0.257
	Equitorial Guinea	0.41	1.355
	Equitorial Kenya	0.29	
	Gabon	0.14	
	Ivory Coast	0.15	0.146
	Libya	0.13	1.802

1	2	3	4
	Malaysia	4.73	3.361
	Mexico	1.95	1.108
	Nigeria	13.07	7.855
	Russia	0.40	0.448
	Sudan	0.16	0.772
	Venezuela	2.32	0.876
	Sub Total	30.69	25.500
	Total Crude Oil Quantity	111.50	91.225
	Total Value (Rs. Crore)	219029	193041

Statement V

Total quantity of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) imported by Petronet LNG Ltd, Hazira LNG Pvt Ltd. and GAIL (India) Ltd. during last five years is as under:

Figures are in million tonnes

2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
NIL	0.247	2.50	5.06	6.87

The above imports were mainly from Qatar, Egypt, Algeria and Malaysia.

Recruitment of Technical Staff in BHEL

2015. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any recruitment is being made in Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) after giving VRS to 15000 employees;

(b) if so, the reasons for giving such VRS to the earlier workers;

(c) whether the new recruitments are proposed to be made by the BHEL only on high technical posts; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRY, MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) and (b) Four VRS Schemes were launched during April 1999 to March 2004 in BHEL to optimize the manpower utilization when business outlook was showing a downturn. 14,452 employees of BHEL of different categories opted for VRS during the period. Now the business prospects have changed and the company is registering growth above 25% since 2005-06.

To meet the emerging requirements of the country, BHEL has enhanced its power generating equipment manufacturing capacity from 6000 MW to 10,000 MW by December 2007 and is in the process of further augmenting it to 15,000 MW per annum by end of December, 2009. This has necessitated immediate expansion of human resource.

(c) and (d) The new recruitments in BHEL are proposed for high technical posts as well as at induction level posts.

*[English]***Incidents of Emergency Landing of Flights**

2016. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that several incidents of emergency landing of Indian Airlines and Air India flights have been reported frequently;

(b) if so, the details thereof for the last six months alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of losses incurred to the airlines as a result thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to avert such incidents in the future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) There were no emergency landing made by NACIL aircraft during last six months.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) National Aviation Company of India Limited (NACIL) follows a preventive maintenance programme formulated in consultation with the aircraft manufacturers and approved by the DGCA. This programme aims at ensuring the airworthiness of aircraft at par with worldwide standards. All aircraft incidents are investigated by Permanent Investigation Boards (PIBs), which have been set up at respective aircraft bases, and their recommendations are sent to respective departments after review by a higher level body at Headquarters.

India-Africa Hydrocarbon Conference

2017. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an India-Africa Hydrocarbon Conference was held in November, 2007;

(b) if so, the agenda of the Conference and the names of the participating countries;

(c) the details of the outcome of the conference; and

(d) the extent to which it is likely to reduce India's dependence on the OPEC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The agenda of the Conference and Exhibition was to promote a mutually beneficial partnership between Indian and African public and private sector companies and also to showcase India's capabilities in the field of oil and gas. Participating countries in this event were:

1. Ethiopia 2. Mauritius 3. Chad 4. Sudan 5. Mozambique 6. Namibia 7. Comoros 8. Malawi 9. Tanzania 10. Mauritania 11. Algeria 12. Kenya 13. Libya 14. Zambia 15. Egypt 16. Senegal 17. Cote d' Ivoire 18. Niger 19. South Africa 20. Tunisia 21. Morocco 22. Togo 23. Central African Republic 24. Democratic Republic of Congo 25. Ghana 26. Nigeria.

(c) A road map of cooperation was drawn out, the contours of which envisage (i) Hydrocarbon Cooperation Agreements at the macro level to identify the broad areas of cooperation in the field of Exploration and Production and Refining; (ii) stepping up crude oil imports, and exports of petro-products, by India; (iii) technology transfer and cooperation in R&D; (iv) retail marketing of Fuels and Lubricants by Indian Companies in Africa; and (v) training of technical and managerial personnel of African nations in hydrocarbon industry management.

(d) At present, it is not possible to quantify the reduction, if any, of India's dependence on the OPEC as a sequel to this Conference.

Appointment of Attendants for Rajdhani and Shatabdi Trains

2018. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWASI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether IRCTC appoints attendants for railway coaches including Rajdhani and Shatabdi trains;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these attendants are appointed after proper police verification and health check up;

(d) if so, whether an internal inquiry has revealed that most of these attendants have got jobs without proper police verification and health check up;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor;

(f) the steps taken or being taken by railways to ensure fool proof security in the trains; and

(g) the officials found guilty and the action taken thereon for appointing these attendants without police verification and health check up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

(f) To ensure fool proof security, the trains are escorted by the Railway Protection Force and the Government Railway Police. Modern security equipments like close circuit televisions, bomb detection & disposal equipment and hand-held metal detectors have been provided to them. In addition, intelligence network has been geared up by conducting awareness programmes among the licensed porters and staff from the various departments for identifying Improvised Explosive Devices so as to immediately pass this information to the Police.

(g) Does not arise.

EMU Train Services between Delhi and Gurgaon

2019. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had decided to introduce EMU trains between Delhi and Gurgaon three years ago;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay in introduction of EMU train; and

(c) the time by which dedicated EMU service between Delhi and Gurgaon is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There is no such proposal at present.

[Translation]

Development of Tourism In Punjab

2020. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the projects/proposals received by the Government from the State Government of Punjab for development of tourism and lying pending for approval of the Government;

(b) the details of such projects cleared by the Government so far; and

(c) the time by which the remaining proposals/projects will be cleared by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, extends financial assistance to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for tourism related projects which are identified in consultation and interaction with them under the Scheme, Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits;

Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned Rs. 5544.82 lakh during the 10th Five Year Plan and Rs. 397.89 lakh for the current financial year to the Government of Punjab for development and promotion of tourism in the State.

Following projects proposals have been received from the Government of Punjab for grant of Central Financial Assistance:—

Sl.No.	Name of the Project
1.	Proposal for Integrated Development of Destination Fatehgarh Sahib
2.	Integrated Development of Destination Kapurthala
3.	Institute of Hotel Management Bathinda
4.	Food Craft Institute at Hoshiarpur
5.	Development of Amritsar as a Mega Tourist Destination

Project proposals received from the State Government/Union Territory Administrations that are complete in all respects are approved on the basis of inter-se priority and funds released subject to availability under respective head.

[English]

Opening up of Restricted and Protected Areas

2021. SHRI K. S. RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to open up restricted and protected areas to domestic and foreign tourist in north-east and other parts of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of areas and locations in different parts of the country banned for domestic and foreign tourist and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) A comprehensive review of the Protected Area Permit/ Restricted Area Permit (PAP/RAP) regime to relax the restrictions imposed to visit some locations in the concerned State/UTs, from the tourism perspective has been undertaken by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Specific proposals in this regard have been received from the concerned State Governments/UTs. These proposals are examined from the tourism and security perspectives with the concerned State Governments/UTs and an appropriate decision expedited in the matter by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

(c) **Protected Areas:** The Protected Areas are those areas falling between the 'Inner Line' and the International border of the State.

(i) Whole of Arunachal Pradesh (ii) Parts of Himachal Pradesh (iii) Parts of Jammu & Kashmir (iv) Whole of Manipur (v) Whole of Mizoram (vi) Whole of Nagaland (vii) Parts of Rajasthan (viii) Whole of Sikkim (partly Restricted & partly in Protected area) (ix) Parts of Uttarakhand.

Restricted Areas: Under the Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963 the following areas have been declared as 'Restricted Areas'. No foreigner can enter or stay in the restricted areas without obtaining a permit from the competent authorities.

(i) Andaman & Nicobar Island—entire Union Territory
(ii) Sikkim—Part of the State.

A foreigner is not normally allowed to visit a Protected/Restricted Area unless it is established to the satisfaction of the Government that there are exceptional reasons to justify such a visit.

Setting up of Petroleum Economic Zone

2022. SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether recently a proposal has been mooted to set-up an exclusive Petroleum Economic Zone for service providers in the oil and gas industry, with a view to pooling in knowledge from diverse public, private and foreign institutions about India's geology and using it to attain energy security; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and its present status?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) As a result of a Brainstorming Session organized with the support of this Ministry on Research & Development (R&D) in Upstream Sector held in 2005, a National Working Committee (NWC) was constituted to prepare a report on development of an upstream service hub in India. NWC, in consultation with petroleum Federation of India (Petrofed) and Pricewater House Cooper (PWC) inter alia suggested setting up of a Petroleum Economic Zone (PEZ) along with other proposals.

Financial Help for SC and BC Organizations

2023. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Backward Class (BC) organizations are facing financial difficulties in implementing various schemes under each organization;

(b) if so, the funds allocated for each scheme for each organization during the last two years, State-wise;

(c) the funds utilized by the same;

(d) whether the Government is willing to give more funds to implement the schemes without disruption; and

(e) if so, the modalities worked out in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (e) Funds were not allotted State-wise under the Scheme of Grants-in-

aid to the Voluntary Organizations working for the SCs & OBCs. However, details of funds released are given in statement I and II.

Funds are provided as per guidelines of the Schemes and they are generally utilized by NGOs. Further before sanctioning grants-in-aid, recommendations from the State Governments are obtained, which contain details such as audited accounts & utilization certificates.

Statement I

State-wise release of grants during 2005-06 and 2006-07 under the Scheme of grants-in-aid to Voluntary Organizations working for Scheduled Castes.

(Amt. in Rs.)			
S.No.	States	2005-06	2006-07
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	29830735	33763546
2.	Assam	5102006	5634324
3.	Bihar	5337869	4085649
4.	Delhi	33480187	39382781
5.	Gujarat	7383770	9589195
6.	Haryana	1794642	2094631
7.	Himachal Pradesh	318600	243130
8.	Jammu and Kashmir	128250	851066
9.	Karnataka	25769967	32630762
10.	Kerala	772200	0
11.	Madhya Pradesh	17800081	8299338
12.	Maharashtra	29223432	41579212
13.	Manipur	4901994	5287012
14.	Orissa	20702373	42577894
15.	Punjab	0	0
16.	Rajasthan	44644485	13449525
17.	Tamil Nadu	258828	0
18.	Tripura	508896	508896

1	2	3	4
19.	Uttar Pradesh	29685777	30859997
20.	Uttaranchal	2516310	2519415
21.	West Bengal	11634598	16657574
Total		271795000	290013947

Statement II

State-wise release of grants during 2005-06 and 2006-07 under the Scheme of Assistance to Voluntary Organisation working for the Welfare of OBCs

Rs. in lakh			
Sl.No.	Name of the State/UT	2005-06 Amount released	2006-07 Amount released
1.	Andhra Pradesh	9.99	0
2.	Assam	8.12	5
3.	Chhattisgarh	0	0
4.	Gujarat	1.07	0
5.	Haryana	5.31	9.91
6.	Jammu and Kashmir	2.46	0
7.	Karnataka	1.25	1.65
8.	Madhya Pradesh	22	10.09
9.	Maharashtra	71.95	17.46
10.	Manipur	44.67	18.52
11.	Orissa	8.82	4.73
12.	Rajasthan	65.16	4.16
13.	Tamil Nadu	0.77	0
14.	Uttarakhand	3.57	1.29
15.	Uttar Pradesh	55.47	47.97
16.	West Bengal	4.86	9.06
17.	Delhi	18.21	61.36
Total		323.68	191.20

Rehabilitation Council of India

2024. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the role of the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI);
- (b) the management structure of the RCI;
- (c) the objectives of the RCI
- (d) the budget of the RCI in the last fiscal year;
- (e) whether RCI has to be modified to make it more relevant for the needs of the country; and
- (f) if so, the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (f) Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) has been entrusted with the responsibilities of standardization and regulation of training of professionals in the field of rehabilitation and special education. In addition, the Council also negotiates with other countries for reciprocal recognition of qualifications, maintains register of rehabilitation professionals, and prescribes code of conduct and ethics for these professionals. The budget of RCI in 2006-07 was Rs. 3.93 crores (Rs. 3.00 crores under Plan and Rs. 0.93

crores under Non-Plan). The management structure of the RCI consists of a Chairman at the apex level, a Member Secretary and supporting staff. There is no proposal to make any modifications in the RCI.

Tourist Circuits

2025. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme for integrated development of tourist circuits;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the State-wise details of financial assistance provided by the Government for the integrated development of the tourist circuits during the last three years, till date?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Tourism has a scheme of Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits. Financial assistance is provided to States/Union Territories under this scheme on the basis of project proposals received from them subject to availability of funds and inter-se priority.

(c) State-wise details of projects sanctioned for development and promotion of tourism including development of destinations and circuits during the last three years is given in the statement enclosed.

Statement*State-wise Tourism Projects Sanctioned during the last Three Years of Tenth Five Year Plan*

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl.No.	State/UT	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
		No. of Projects Sancd.	Amount Sancd.	No. of Projects Sancd.	Amount Sancd.	No. of Projects Sancd.	Amount Sancd.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Andhra Pradesh	16	2827.19	7	2615.82	3	1540.58
2.	Assam	8	986.03	10	2,140.00	9	2453.39
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	9	1325.50	10	2240.16	12	1887.80

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4.	Bihar	7	1901.43	3	1212.23	2	1937.29
5.	Chhattisgarh	6	1117.94	7	1775.59	16	3540.17
6.	Goa	3	110.00	1	10.00	0	0.00
7.	Gujarat	2	138.93	5	2011.58	7	443.65
8.	Haryana	6	693.55	7	639.71	5	1836.16
9.	Himachal Pradesh	12	2680.00	6	1645.00	8	1871.00
10.	Jammu and Kashmir	5	819.25	22	6,856.01	29	5233.82
11.	Jharkhand	2	945.91	5	1227.27	3	956.35
12.	Karnataka	12	2461.76	8	1706.52	4	1323.89
13.	Kerala	10	2283.63	13	4858.88	18	4474.02
14.	Madhya Pradesh	11	1595.19	12	3047.39	10	3668.47
15.	Maharashtra	10	1620.62	9	2075.04	13	2839.05
16.	Manipur	0	0.00	2	49.80	9	939.35
17.	Meghalaya	2	963.30	1	5.00	9	1435.29
18.	Mizoram	6	1086.35	10	2273.41	9	2613.38
19.	Nagaland	7	2250.69	9	2528.97	8	2340.32
20.	Orissa	8	1320.74	10	2309.61	13	2826.84
21.	Punjab	7	724.68	5	1437.67	13	3223.37
22.	Rajasthan	13	2516.61	7	2591.87	8	953.84
23.	Sikkim	8	660.81	14	2844.56	13	2609.42
24.	Tamil Nadu	7	1308.92	19	4264.62	11	1866.41
25.	Tripura	1	20.00	3	716.26	4	291.27
26.	Uttaranchal	7	2199.98	13	2738.00	16	1907.50
27.	Uttar Pradesh	9	1044.93	18	3905.23	7	3329.06
28.	West Bengal	10	513.04	5	989.35	10	2978.32
29.	Andaman and Nicobar	0	0.00	1	6.25	0	0.00
30.	Chandigarh	3	467.00	1	13.70	2	15.00
31.	Dadar and Nagar Haveli	0	0.00	2	29.79	0	0.00
32.	Delhi	8	628.85	2	20.00	5	2400.09

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
33.	Daman and Diu	0	0.00	4	262.28	0	0.00
34.	Lakshadweep	0	0.00	0	0	1	7.00
35.	Pondicherry	2	451.00	2	469.39	1	500.00
Total		217	37663.83	253	61316.96	278	64242.08

Expansion Plan of Air India

2026. SHRI MILIND DEORA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India is looking to approach global aviation leasing companies for aircrafts following a delay in the delivery schedule of 27 Boeing 787 "Dreamliner" Aircraft to the airline by the American aviation giant "Boeing";

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Air India has taken up the matter of compensation with Boeing in view of the delay;

(d) to what extent the expansion plans/programmes of Air India are likely to hit; and

(e) the details of other aviation companies to who air India can look forward to able to meet the demand urgently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Boeing has informed of the delay in the delivery schedule of first 12 aircraft out of 27 B787=8 aircraft being procured by National Aviation Company of India Limited (NACIL). The feasibility of extending the lease period of dry/wet leased aircraft is being explored to take care of the delay. A global tender has also been floated inviting bids to take B747-400, B 777-2000 ER, B 777-300 ER, B 777-200 LR, B787=8, B 330-200 and A340-300 aircraft for long term dry-lease.

(c) The compensation for delay in delivery of aircraft is already covered in the purchase agreement signed with Boeing.

(d) The B787 capacity was not only for expansion but also for replacing the A310 fleet in NACIL and the expansion programmes will get postponed by the period of delay in deliveries.

(e) As at (a) above.

Coal Venture

2027. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Coal Ventures International Ltd. (CVIL)—newly formed Special Purpose Vehicle promoted by Steel Authority of India Ltd., National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd., Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd., Coal India Ltd. and National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. has invited expressions of interest from global investment bankers to assist in scouting for both metallurgical and thermal coal assets abroad as reported in Business Line dated January 2, 2008; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Coal Ventures International (CVI) a Special Purpose Vehicle jointly promoted by Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL), National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd. (NTPC), Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL), Coal India Ltd. (CIL) and National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. (NMDC) has invited Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from global investment/merchant bankers to assist CVI in scouting for both metallurgical and thermal coal assets abroad. The EOIs were invited through an open advertisement dated 29th December, 2007 from investment/merchant bankers having global footprints, experience in mergers and acquisitions, particularly of coal assets, and a successful record of advising clients.

[*Translation*]

Special Component Plan for SCs

2028. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the funds allotted by the Government under Special Component Plan, Centrally sponsored schemes and other programmes/schemes for the welfare of SCs in various States including UP during the last three years;

(b) whether the funds released have been fully utilized;

(c) the steps taken to ensure proper utilization of funds released; and

(d) the number of persons belonging to SCs community benefited in above States during the said period as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) No funds are

allocated by the Ministry for Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (earlier known as Special Component Plan). State Govt./ Union Territory Administrations are required to formulate and implement Scheduled Caste Sub Plan as part of their Annual Plans by earmarking resources. The Ministry, however provides Special Central Assistance as an additive to Scheduled Caste Sub Plan. Details of the Special Central Assistance and funds released under other schemes to State/UTs including UP is given in the enclosed statement.

(b) and (c) The Ministry monitors the welfare programmes for SCs periodically through State Governments/Union Territories to ensure appropriate utilization of funds.

(d) The details are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Number of Beneficiaries

In Rs. Crore

Year Scheme	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	Released amount	Beneficiary	Released amount	Beneficiary	Released amount	Beneficiary
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Special Central Assistance	394.27	532837	407.36	546205	459.15	577669
Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana for SCs Students	40.95	13790	52.26	11016	54.04	24475
Upgradation of merit of SC Students	1.77	1334	6.22	4398	2.99	2183
Coaching and Allied assistance for SCs OBCs and Minorities	467.47	10412	262.52	5206	390.76	6727
Post Matric Scholarship scheme for SCs	330.27	22,64,000	548.10	24,99,000	526.03	26,50,000
Pre Matric Scholarship Scheme for Children of those engaged in unclean occupation	9.89	5,81,294	10.80	5,81,151	20.25	6,57,046
National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for SC students	9.00	20	1.60	20	1.05	15
Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme for Scheduled Castes	The scheme implemented from 2005-06		16.03	1333	34.17	1333
Grant-in-aid to NGOs	26.53	38,944	27.18	41594	29.00	38255

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
National Safai Karamcharis Finance Development Corporations	43.77	9539	57.79	37299	55.97	22891
National Scheduled Castes Finance & Development Corporation	135.98	34372	147.95	53315	169.02	77970

**Selection of Dealers and Distributorship
Oil PSUs**

2029. SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:
SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the oil marketing companies select dealers and distributorship on the basis of their guidelines;
- (b) the extent of control by the Government on them;
- (c) the arrangements made by the Government to ensure that no act of corruption and no work against public welfare is done; and
- (d) the reasons for not carrying out work as per rules of the said arrangement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (d) After dismantling of Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) with effect from 1.4.2002, based on certain broad parameters laid down by the Government, public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs); frame their guidelines for the selection/appointment of retail outlet dealerships and LPG distributorships, and have been making selections in terms of these guidelines. These guidelines, which are objective and transparent in nature, provide for a detailed procedure to be followed by the OMCs in making selection of dealers/distributors. This Ministry regularly reviews the Dealer Selection Guidelines of OMCs and advises the required modifications to make the dealer selection transparent. The selection guidelines have also laid down a grievance/complaint redressal system for complaints related to dealer selection. Upon receipt of the complaint the same is investigated by the concerned OMC and if the same is found to be established, appropriate action is taken.

[English]

Setting up of Libraries

2030. SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI:
SHRI TUKARAM GANGADHAR GADAKH:
SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the State-wise number and other details of libraries in the country;
- (b) the details of libraries established during the last three years;
- (c) the State-wise details of funds released for the development of the aforesaid libraries during the last three years;
- (d) whether there is any new scheme for the development of the said libraries; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) State-wise number and the details of libraries in the country is not maintained in the Ministry.

(c) State-wise and Scheme-wise assistance rendered by Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, an autonomous organization of the Ministry of Culture, is enclosed as Statement-I.

(d) Ministry of Culture has proposed the setting up of a "National Mission on Libraries", which has recently received in-principle approval of the Planning Commission. Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation has proposed two new schemes during the XI Plan period.

(e) The details of National Mission on Libraries and two Schemes of Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation are enclosed as statement-II.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Lakshadweep							72	0											
Pondicherry								0											
Chhattisgarh								0											
Jharkhand								0											
Uttaranchal							41	1081773											
Total	165	11239009	166	1591000	3	149500	11058	97792360	3061	20314203	129	25272021	20	13006303	30	915000	44	931200	166210596

State-wise and Scheme-wise Statement of Assistance Rendered During 2005-06

(Amount in Rupees)

Name of the State/UT	Vol. Scheme		Children Scheme		Cent. Celebrat		Book Assistance		Storage		Increasing Accom.		Computer		Seminar		Mobile		Grand Total
	Lib. No.	Amount	Lib. No.	Amount	Lib. No.	Amount	Lib. No.	Amount	Lib. No.	Amount	Lib. No.	Amount	Lib. No.	Amount	Lib. No.	Amount	Lib. No.	Amount	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Andhra Pradesh	0	0	35	350000	0	47500	435	5239362	71	682464	28	5680000	0	0	2	50000	16	420000	
Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assam	5	392145	0	0	0	0	240	2499999	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bihar	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	52275	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gujarat	13	523245	31	305000	1	92000	804	21579666	200	1785605	1	200000	0	0	1	50000	0	0	0
Goa	1	20395	2	20000	0	0	90	767076	1	10000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Haryana	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	2932433	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Himachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0	0	451	124200	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25000	0	0	0
Jammu and Kashmir	0	0	0	0	0	0	53	4792962	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Karnataka	8	690125	0	0	0	0	175	7464425	967	9492129	40	5395000	5	995730	0	0	0	0	0
Kerala	86	5634640	25	250000	0	0	300	415739	100	467000	22	2900000	0	0	0	0	39	390000	0
Madhya Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0	0	800	5599444	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maharashtra	12	1435353	26	260000	0	0	1030	10570514	0	0	10	1983359	4	734111	4	100000	1	50000	0
Manipur	4	287375	0	0	0	0	121	2218774	120	1383424	0	0	0	0	3	285000	0	0	0
Meghalaya	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mizoram	2	270000	0	0	0	0	421	2599989	0	0	3	6000000	0	0	2	75000	0	0	0
Nagaland	1	150000	0	0	0	0	244	3497622	150	1500000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orissa	13	771845	9	90000	0	0	600	7938600	110	1087602	1	200000	0	0	3	92989	1	30000	0
Punjab	0	0	4	55000	0	0	13	2251647	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rajasthan	0	119240	0	0	0	0	7800	15336152	102	996682	0	0	0	0	10	250000	0	0	0
Sikkim	0	0	0	0	0	0	57	3363948	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	0	0	44	440000	0	0	1910	13748208	663	2875908	0	0	13	2475716	16	400000	0	0	0

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Orissa	22	953875	5	48000	0	0	600	28575886	59	537201	1	2000000	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	1350000	31963092
Punjab	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	4271	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	300000	304271
Rajasthan	1	29810	1	19000	1	47500	7800	6077128	6	50778	13	4300000	0	0	15	750000	0	0	3	738191	12013407
Sikim	0	0	0	0	0	0	57	2377656	0	0	0	0	0	4	200000	0	0	0	0	0	2577656
Tamil Nadu	2	80950	15	750000	0	0	1910	15587428	629	4200440	5	880000	10	4676282	0	0	0	0	5	750000	26825100
Tripura	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	3133367	22	400222	0	0	0	4	20000	0	0	1	15000	3883679	
Uttar Pradesh	8	309930	4	35000	0	0	212	14758351	360	1741894	0	0	13	8737800	0	0	0	0	6	1050000	26632975
West Bengal	40	1775740	57	1829727	5	243500	2484	6060517	63	198998	44	8819758	5	7106071	15	332750	4	93200	7	998961	27157222
Andaman and Nicobar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	840076	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	150000	990076
Chandigarh	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4268751	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	750000	5018751
Dadar and Nagar Haveli	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delhi	0	0	0	0	0	0	72	8112131	126	625875	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8738106
Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pondichery	0	0	0	0	0	0	366	367045	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	367045
Chhattisgarh	1	23600	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23600
Jharkhand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uttarakhand	0	0	0	0	0	0	228	3577784	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3577784
Daman and Diu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	228	12854320	190	5718079	7	341000	18714	175611206	3327	24556892	140	32708358	38	24861434	62	2357750	42	694110	75	12522700	292326849

Statement II

The proposed National Mission will undertake the following activities:

- (i) A national census on libraries so as to create an adequate database about the infrastructure and manpower requirements of the libraries.
- (ii) Massive infrastructure upgradation programmes for public libraries in association with the State Governments.
- (iii) A widespread training programme meant for overall human resource development in the library sector with a sense of urgency
- (iv) Undertake and encourage R&D projects in the library sector for customizing technology for the Indian conditions
- (v) Take-up special schemes for improving the

collection in public libraries and help create locally relevant materials.

- (vi) Create special materials with technological support for visually challenged and hearing impaired persons.
- (vii) Creation of at least one knowledge Centre per block.
- (viii) Networking of public libraries in the country.

New matching scheme:

Name of the scheme: Assistance towards purchase of reference books, text books for distant education and books on competitive examinations:

The main objective of the Foundation is to promote library movement in the country. In view of rapidly expanding library and information services and the first changing character of public library services due to

introduction of distant education by different open universities, it has become inevitable to plan the public library acquisition in a completely changed manner. In case of distant education, the materials for the study is not generally available in any library neither the clientele have an access to the resources of college and university libraries. As such, it is the public library who can come forward to solve this problem for supply of materials for the huge number of students, now reading under various distant education programme. It is also the public library which can help the job seekers for supplying the books on competitive examinations. Keeping in view all this grassroots realities, the new scheme has been planned. A provision of Rs. 600.00 lakh has been provided during the Eleventh Plan Period under Matching Scheme with the State Government and Union Territory Administrations.

New non-matching schemes:

Name of the scheme: Assistance towards establishment of Knowledge Centre at Block Level:

With the emergence of Internet as a major tool for receiving information and producing new knowledge which can be used for the benefit of the local clientele, public library has a special role to play by offering these enormous and extensive information to its clientele. As the information overload by Internet is vast, simply accessing Internet is not going to yield good search results for the public. As the Govt. of India has decided to convert the society into a knowledge society for extending the benefit of knowledge and information to all, a public library can play a bigger role in this effort. Here the main objective is to impart appropriate knowledge to every user and provide useful information to the public which shall than trigger transformation in the society.

[Translation]

Aviation Facilities at Surat Airport

2031. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:
SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY:
SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the scheduled flights operated at Surat airport at present;

(b) the future planning to increase number of flights and air connectivity from surat airport;

(c) the major cities directly connected by air with Surat airport;

(d) the cities to be linked by direct air connectivity with surat airport by the end of year 2008; and

(e) the time by which the terminal building of the surat airport will become operational for all purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) At present, Delhi and Ahmedabad are air linked with Surat airport as per the details given below:

Indian Airlines Delhi-Surat-Delhi	4 flights/weeks
Kingfisher Airlines Ahmedabad-Surat- Ahmedabad	Daily

Government has laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country including North-East region. It is, however, up to the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. As such, the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of route dispersal guidelines issued by Government.

(e) Part Terminal Building has been put into operation from 6.5.2007. The Terminal Building Phase I shall be fully operational from April, 2008.

Black Marketing of Cooking Gas

2032. SHRI RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA:
SHRI HEMMAL MURMU:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has taken up the matter with the States seeking their assistance in checking black marketing of cooking gas; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. To ensure that diversion/ unauthorised use of LPG for purposes other than household applications is strictly kept under check by the State Government, Chief Ministers and Chief Secretaries of all State Governments were requested to direct the concerned State agencies to conduct inspections under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act (EC Act) to check diversion and other forms of misuse with the assistance of Officers of the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs).

While the OMCs are striving to ensure supplies to distributors in accordance with the registered customer strength of the distributors, active cooperation of State Governments is also required to cap, reduce and eventually eliminate the diversion of domestic LPG to the black market and unauthorised use which takes place on account of the wide gap between the retail price of LPG for domestic use and the market price for commercial LPG.

Fixation of Consumer Price of LPG

2033. SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government taxes, other expenditures, commission and basic price are included in fixing consumer selling price of LPG in the country;

(b) if so, the consumer price of LPG at the end of year 2006-07 and the itemwise break up of the said price;

(c) whether any formula has been arrived at for fixing basic price; and

(d) the reasons for giving priority to the said formula?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (d) The retail selling price of domestic LPG is calculated by taking into account:

1. Issue Price
2. Freight up to the market.

3. VAT @ 4% and other local levies

4. Distributor Commission

The Government had decided that the subsidies on Domestic LPG, in the Post-Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) era starting from 1.4.2002, would be on a specified flat-rate basis for each Bottling Plant and would be met from the fiscal budget. After providing for the aforesaid subsidy, the retail prices would then vary as per changes in the international oil prices. The subsidies are to be calculated as per the difference between cost price and issue price of LPG, where:

Cost price of domestic LPG for any bottling plant will be calculated on import parity basis. Details of elements in cost price have been specified in PDS kerosene and Domestic LPG subsidy scheme 2002 notified on 28.01.2003.

Issue Price for the bottling plants from which sales of domestic LPG are being effected prior to the commencement of the scheme, the issue price of the product as on 31st March 2002, will be continued as such post 1st April 2002 till revised by the participating company.

The basic selling price of domestic LPG is uniform across all refinery locations. The final selling price in markets varies on account of freight from refineries, local levies, delivery charges etc. The retail selling price build up of domestic LPG at Delhi as on 1.4.2007 is given below:

S.No.	Particulars	Rs/Cyl.
1	2	3
1.	Ex-Storage Price	231.51
2.	State Surcharge	0.03
3.	Price Adjustment Factor	21.43
4.	National Rail Freight	1.42
5.	Freight	10.00
6.	Company Billing Rate	264.39
7.	Sales Tax	10.58
8.	Sub Total	274.96
9.	Dealer Commission	19.05

1	2	3
10.	Sub Total	294.01
11.	VAT (on Dealer Commission)	0.76
12.	Retail Selling Price	294.77
13.	Retail Selling Price (Rounded)	294.75

Despite the steep increase in international oil prices, the Government has not increased the price of domestic LPG over the last three years.

The issue of post APM pricing of Domestic LPG was re-examined by the Government in 2003-04 and it was decided that OMCs would not increase the selling prices of these products during 2003-04 and that the resultant under-recoveries of OMCs would be partly shared/absorbed by the upstream oil companies. Accordingly, an appropriate mechanism for sharing the under recoveries of OMCs was put in operation.

[English]

Signal Failure

2034. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of signal failures during the last three years;

(b) if so, the main reasons for the signal failures; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken to improve the signal system in Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Signal failures during last three years are as under:—

2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
123752	114585	147966

(b) The main reasons for the signal failures are overaged signalling assets, inadequate reliability of equipments, human lapses in maintenance and operation of gears, outside interference and theft of field gears.

(c) The main steps being taken to improve signal system in Railways are the expediting the replacement of overaged signalling assets, periodic sanction of replacement works to cater for fresh accruals, implementation of programme for reliability improvement & minimizing outside interference and intensive training courses for upgradation of skills of signalling staff.

Earn While you Learn Scheme

2035. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI:

SHRI ABU AYES MONDAL:

SHRI AMITAVA NANDY:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has launched a short term training programme known as the earn while you learn scheme to train students as tourism volunteers;

(b) if so, the details of the salient features of the said scheme;

(c) the criteria for availing such training; and

(d) the details of institutions authorized for the said purpose in various States?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Tourism has launched a Scheme titled Earn While You Learn with a view to inculcate appropriate tourism travel traits and knowledge amongst trainees to enable them to work as student volunteers. The salient features of the Scheme are:

(i) College-going students pursuing graduation courses or graduates in the age group of 18 to 25 years would be eligible for the training programme.

(ii) The Indian Institute of Tourism & Travel Management (IITTM) would conduct the programme and select the candidates through a written tests.

(iii) The duration of each programme would be 21 working days.

(iv) The course content has been finalized by the IITTM in consultation with the Archaeological Survey of India, the Institute of Archaeology and eminent academicians.

Post Matric Scholarship

2036. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:
SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to withdraw the twin eligibility criteria added recently for Dalit students to avail the post-matric scholarships;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there is any proposal to restore the old scheme;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Union Government has consulted the States in this regard; and

(f) if so, the response of the States thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (f) The Scheme of Post Matric Scholarship to students belonging to Scheduled Castes has been continued during current Plan without any changes.

Ethanol Blended Petrol

2037. SHRIMATI MINATI SEN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether with the two successive failures of Sugarcane Crop, the mandatory sale of five per cent ethanol-blended petrol in nine States has been put off; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) No, Sir. There has been no successive failure of sugarcane crop in the immediate past. In fact, during the sugar seasons 2006-07 and 2007-08 there has been excessive production of sugarcane and thereby excess production of sugar.

(b) Does not arise.

Sub-Plan for Muslim Minority

2038. DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to have the concept of a sub-plan for the Muslim minority to ensure their development on the lines of the sub-plan for the scheduled tribes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (c) The report of the Working Group on the empowerment of the minorities suggested various schemes including creation of a separate Minority Sub-Plan for the 11th Five Year plan. A view has not been taken on this. The planning Commission has advised that the issue required wider consultation.

Production of Steel

2039. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Steel Policy envisages indigenous steel production of 110 MT per annum by 2019-20;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the shares of public and private sector units therein; and

(c) the details of the new steel production units and expansion programme of the existing units during the next five years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The long-term goal of the National Steel Policy (NSP) is that India should have a modern and efficient steel industry of world standards, catering to diversified steel demand. In order to achieve the long term goal alongwith global competitiveness in terms of cost, quality and product-mix and global benchmarks of efficiency and productivity it is envisaged in the NSP that a indigenous production of over 100 million tonnes of steel per annum will be required by 2019-20 from the 2004-05 level of 38

million tonnes, implying a compounded annual growth of 7.3 percent per annum. The NSP does not determine the share of public sector and the private sector in the estimated total indigenous production of steel of over 100 million tonnes by 2019-20.

(c) The growth in the steel sector is driven by the growth in the Indian economy. The Indian economy has

been growing at a sustained rate of 8%-9% per annum and resulted in much higher demand for steel and consequent expansion plans in the steel sector. As per the latest estimates the steel production capacity in the country will be 124.06 million tonnes by 2011-12. The break-up of this estimated capacity in respect of major steel producers is given below:

(In million tonnes as on 01.04.2007)

Investor	Existing Capacity	Expansion Plan		Total Capacity 2011-12 (Most Likely)
		Brownfield	Greenfield	
Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL)	12.84	12.00	-	24.84
Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL)	2.90	3.90	-	6.80
Tata Steel	5.00	5.00	3.00	13.00
Essar Steel Holdings Ltd.	4.60	3.90	6.00	14.50
JSW Steel Ltd.	4.10	6.90	-	11.00
Jindal Power & Steel Ltd.	1.20	4.80	4.45	10.45
Ispat Industries Ltd.	3.00	2.00	-	5.00
Other & Secondary Steel	23.20	2.00	13.27	38.47
Total	56.84	40.50	26.72	124.06

Hindustan Machine Tools, Kalamassery

2040. SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hindustan Machine Tools, Kalamassery has taken steps to sell portion of its land;

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

(c) the further steps taken/being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRY, MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) HMT Limited sold 70 acres of surplus

land located at Kalamassery, Kerala in the year 2006 to generate resources required for liquidation of its liabilities.

Tatkal Scheme in Trains

2041. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details to trains having Tatkal Scheme;

(b) whether the Railways are proposing to introduce Tatkal Scheme in more trains; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Tatkal scheme is available in all Mail/Express trains and in all reserved classes except First Class and AC First Class.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Oil Bonds

2042. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:
SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE:
SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Oil Bonds issued by the each oil marketing company (OMC) as a partial non-cash compensation for revenue losses incurred due to failure to revise the oil prices during the last three years;

(b) whether such oil bonds figured in fiscal deficit of respective financial years;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) The details of the Oil Bonds issued to Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) namely Indian Oil Corporation, (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPC) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPC) since 2005-06 are given below:

	Rs./crores			
	IOC*	BPC	HPC	Total
2005-06	6,992.02	2,163.12	2,344.86	11,500
2006-07	13,943.21	5,247.90	4,929.89	24,121
2007-08 (Apr-Sep 07)	6,362.25	2,539.13	2,355.54	11,256.92

*Including IBP for 2005-06 & 2006-07.

(b) to (d) Ministry of Finance has informed that in terms of the extant accounting arrangement, budgetary support in the form of special securities is reflected in the gross expenditure but would not impact the deficit indicators as the investment in these special securities are adjusted against receipts. Only the servicing of these securities in the form of interest payment is taken into account for the calculation of fiscal deficit.

National Pharmaceutical Policy

2043. DR. M. JAGANNATH:
SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently finalized a National Pharmaceutical Policy;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) whether the policy has been approved by the Cabinet; and

(d) if so, the timeframe by which the policy is likely to come into effect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (d) The Cabinet considered the draft National Pharmaceutical Policy-2006 in its meeting held on 11.1.2007. It was decided that the matter may, in the first instance, be considered by a Group of Ministers (GOM). GOM has since been constituted under the Chairmanship of Shri Sharad Pawar, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution. GOM has held three meetings so far on 10.4.2007, 12.9.2007 and 30.1.2008. GOM is yet to make its recommendations to the Cabinet.

Setting up of Petrochemical Projects Abroad by GAIL

2044. SHRI JUAL ORAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gas Authority of India Ltd. (GAIL) proposes to set up some petrochemical projects in other countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether GAIL has signed any Memorandum of Understanding for the purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA

PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. GAIL is pursuing opportunities for setting up of petrochemicals projects in other countries. Currently, GAIL is looking for investment opportunities in Middle East, Russia, CIS and African countries.

(c) and (d) GAIL has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Reliance Industries Limited on 4th December, 2007. The major area of cooperation agreed in the MoU is setting up gas-based Petrochemical Complexes in gas rich countries.

MoU between GAIL & Oil India Limited (OIL) has been signed on 27th December, 2007. GAIL and OIL agreed inter alia to examine various opportunities available in the petrochemicals sector in India as well as abroad.

GAIL and ITERA Oil and Gas Company have signed an MoU on 13th February, 2008 and agreed to participate in methane based Petrochemicals projects in Russia.

Setting up of CNG Filling Stations

2045. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI:
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:
SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up CNG filling stations in 20 more major cities in the country by 2010;

(b) if so, the details thereof, city-wise;

(c) the estimated quantity of gas required for such expansion in the country by 2010; and

(d) the manner in which the Government is planning to procure such quantity of CNG for the said purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) The expansion of CNG infrastructure in different cities in the country is being taken up in a phased manner. Providing of CNG facilities depends upon availability of gas, setting up of necessary infrastructure and economic viability. In order to promote investment

from public as well as private sector for laying trunk natural gas pipelines and city/local natural gas distribution networks throughout the country, the Government of India has enacted 'The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006' and notified the Policy for Development of Natural Gas Pipelines and City or Local Natural Gas Distribution Networks'.

(c) and (d) According to the Working Group Report on Petroleum and Natural Gas for the XI Five Year Plan, the estimated demand of natural gas for City Gas Project in 2010-11 would be 14.8 Million Standard Cubic Metres Per Day (MMSCMD). The demand for natural gas in the country is higher than its production. However, the Government of India has initiated various steps to augment gas supplies for the domestic market. These cover:—

- (a) Intensification in domestic E&P activities;
- (b) Exploitation of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) gas;
- (c) Implementation of Natural Gas Hydrate Programme (NGHP) for evaluation of hydrate resources and their possible commercial exploitation;
- (d) LNG Import; and
- (e) Gas sourcing through transnational gas pipelines.

[Translation]

International Flights from Ahmedabad

2046. SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:
SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has accorded approval for operating international flights from Ahmedabad airport;

(b) if so, the details for the last three years till date; and

(c) the names of the countries and the airlines to whom permission has been granted for operating their flights?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) At present, Ahmedabad is available as a point of call to 16 foreign countries viz. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Brunei, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Kuwait, Qatar, Russia, UAE (Dubai, Sharjah). Among these, the designated airline(s) of ASEAN and SAARC countries have an unlimited access to operate to/from Ahmedabad. However, actual operation by any airlines is always guided by its commercial judgement. At present, the designated airlines of Singapore, UAE, Kuwait and Turkmenistan are providing connectivity to Ahmedabad from their respective countries. On the other hand, Indian carriers are providing connectivity to USA, France, UK, UAE, Oman and Kuwait from Ahmedabad.

[English]

Revival of IDPL

2047. SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Finance Ministry has opposed the Rs. 4500 crore plan to revive the Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd. (IDPL) units; and

(b) if so, the present stage of the proposal and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) The revival of IDPL is at present under consideration of the Group of Ministers (GoM).

[Translation]

Setting up of Refineries in Rajasthan

2048. SHRI SRICHAND KRIPALNI:
PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up new oil refineries in the country particularly in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government have given direction to HPCL to set up refineries in Punjab instead of Rajasthan;

(d) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(e) the State-wise number of refineries situated in various States of the country along with their refining capacity at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Consequent on de-licensing of refinery sector since June, 1998 a refinery may be set up anywhere in India by a Private or Public Sector Enterprise depending on the promoter's assessment of its commercial viability. The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited has reported that it is undertaking optimization studies for improving the techno-commercial viability of refinery to set up a refinery at Barmer in Rajasthan. Further, the matter relating to setting up of a refinery in Rajasthan is at present sub-judice. Besides, new refineries are being set up by HPCL-Mittal Energy Limited (a Joint Venture Company between Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and M/s. Mittal Energy Investments Pte. Limited at Bhatinda (Punjab), Indian Oil Corporation Limited at Paradeep (Orissa) and Bharat Oman Refineries Limited (a Joint Venture Company between Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Oman Oil Company Limited) at Bina (Madhya Pradesh)

(c) and (d) Government of India had approved a proposal of HPCL for setting up a 9 MMTPA Punjab Refinery Project through a Joint Venture Company between HPCL & their Co-promoters in 1998. In order to expedite the refinery at Bhatinda, the Government has in July, 2007, approved a proposal for the formation of Joint Venture with the induction of M/s. Mittal Energy Investments Pte. Limited, a 100% subsidiary of M/s. Mittal Investments S.a.r.l., Luxembourg and HPCL namely, M/s. HPCL-Mittal Energy Limited with 49% equity participation from both the partners.

(e) The State-wise installed capacity of the refineries are as under:—

Sl.No.	State	Refinery	Capacity (MMTPA)
1.	Uttar Pradesh	IOC-Mathura	8.00
2.	Gujarat	IOC-Koyali	13.70
3.	West Bengal	IOC-Haldia	6.00
4.	Bihar	IOC-Barauni	6.00
5.	Assam	IOC-Guwahati	1.00
		IOC-Degboi	0.65
		BRPL-Bongaigaon	2.35
		NRL-Numaligarh	3.00
6.	Haryana	IOC-Panipat	12.00
7.	Maharashtra	HPC-Mumbai	5.50
		BPC-Mumbai	12.00
8.	Andhra Pradesh	HPC-Visakh	7.50
		ONGC-Tatipaka	0.078
9.	Tamil Nadu	CPCL-Chennai	9.50
		CPCL-Narimanam	1.00
10.	Kerala	KRL-Kochi	7.50
11.	Karnataka	ONGC-MRPL, Mangalore	9.69
	Sub Total PSU		105.468
	Gujarat	RIL-Jamnagar	33.00
		EOL-Vadinar	10.50
	Sub-Total Pvt.		43.50
	Grand Total		148.968

[English]

National Commission for Welfare of Religious and Linguistic Minorities

2049. DR. K. DHANARAJU: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has appointed a National Commission to recommend the measures for welfare of

socially and economically backward sections among religious and linguistic minorities;

(b) if so, any progress has been made so far; and

(c) the date from which it will be functional?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (c) A National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities (NCRLM) was set up in October,

2004 to suggest criteria for identification of socially and economically backward sections among religious and linguistic minorities and to recommend measures for their welfare, including reservation in education and government employment and to suggest the necessary constitutional, legal and administrative modalities, as required for the implementation of their recommendations. Subsequently, the Commission was asked to give its recommendations on the issues raised in W.P. 180/04 and 94/05 filed in the Supreme Court and in certain High Courts relating to para 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, in the context of ceiling of 50% reservation as also the modalities of inclusion in the list of Scheduled Castes and to prepare a White Paper on the status of the minority communities other than Muslims.

The Commission submitted its report to government in May, 2007.

Management on Safety to Air Traffic

2050. SHRI FRANCIS FANTHOM:
SHRI B. MAHTAB:
SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that there are increased cases of safety lapses at the international airports in the country;

(b) if so, the number of such lapses reported to the Government over the past six months;

(c) whether the Government is examining measures to improve safety of air traffic in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government invited international safety management experts to give their advice in this regard; and

(f) if so, the details alongwith the progress made in this connection so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) During the last six months a total of 10 incidents including 02 ground incidents were reported.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. After examining and analysing the cause of incidents, appropriate actions and remedial measures are taken to avoid recurrence of such incidents. Standard operating procedures (SOP) are regularly formulated and revised depending upon Air Traffic and Safety requirements. The following steps have been taken to enhance safety level and prevent recurrences (i) modernisation of Air Traffic Services, (ii) implementation of Safety Management System at various airports to mitigate the risk of accident/incident, (iii) implementation of flexible use of airspace for reducing traffic congestion in airspace, (iv) installation of Airborne Collision Avoidance System (ACAS), (v) proficiency checks and corrective training to various personnel, (vi) most of the Indian Air space is brought under the radar coverage for better surveillance. Extended VHF is being provided for better communication in remote areas. Also guidelines for apron discipline have been issued by DGCA.

(e) and (f) International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme was carried out during 2006 as per ICAO Safety Audit Programme. Also Airports Authority of India (AAI) has conducted two safety management system seminars to create safety awareness among the officials from different organisations viz. AAI, Delhi International Airport Limited, Mumbai International Airport Limited, Bangalore International Airport Limited, various airlines, DGCA in the month of May, 2007. This programme was conducted by the experts from ICAO headquarters, Canada.

Prices of Liquefied Fertilizers

2051. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV:
SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has allowed use of liquefied fertilisers in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the wholesale and retail prices of each type of major/important liquefied fertilizers in the country during the last three years; and

(c) the mechanism adopted by the Government to monitor the retail and wholesale prices of such liquefied fertilizers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) The Fertilizer Control Order (FCO), 1985 issued by the Government of India includes three liquid fertilizers viz. Urea Ammonia Nitrate, Super Phosphoric Acid and Ammonium Poly Phosphate. Besides, the FCO also includes 11 grades of Liquid/100% Water Soluble Fertilizers. The Department of Fertilizers administers Concession Scheme on DAP, MOP, MAP, SSP and Complex fertilizers. However, the Liquid Fertilizers/100% Water Soluble Fertilizers as mentioned above are not under the Concession Scheme. Since they are in FCO, their sale usage as fertilizers is permitted by the Government in the country.

(b) and (c) Since the Liquid/100% Water Soluble Fertilizers are not under the Concession Scheme; Government does not indicate their retail/wholesale prices. The prices are determined by the seller as per the requirement of the farmers. Since these fertilizers are specialty fertilizers and used for floriculture and horticulture and cash crops, the farmer makes a choice based on the expected returns.

[Translation]

Computer Training Centres

2052. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise/U.T.-wise number of Computer Training Centres being run for the Scheduled Castes and other backward Classes;

(b) the number of said centres being run in Chhattisgarh alongwith the names of the institutions which are running the same;

(c) the performance of these centres so far; and

(d) the number of beneficiaries who started their own business after getting training from these centres?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (d) Presently the Ministry is not giving financial assistance to any Voluntary Organization for computer training centres for OBCs.

Information in respect of Computer Training Centres for Scheduled Castes is being Collected and will be placed on the table of the House.

[English]

Development of Iron Ore Mines

2053. SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority of India Limited has recently decided to appoint consultant of global repute for the development of the world famous iron ore mines; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has decided to appoint a consultant of global repute for the purpose of developing the iron ore mines at Chiria, Rowghat and Taldih with the state-of-the-art technology for mechanization/beneficiation, etc. A Global Tender has been issued to ensure selection of competitive superior technology for development of large-capacity mines.

Pantry Cars in the Trains

2054. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of criteria laid down for providing attached pantry cars in the trains;

(b) whether many long distance trains do not have pantry cars facility; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to provide modern pantry car in each long distance train?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Attachment of Pantry cars to trains is based on various considerations such as priority of the train, journey time, commercial justification and availability of pantry cars, etc.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Catering services are provided in trains not having pantry cars are also provided through train side vending and through static catering units available at stations en-route.

Automatic Weather Station at Airports

2055. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up Automatic Weather Station at the airports of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds to be invested on setting up of said station; and

(d) the benefits likely to be accrued by setting up of such station?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. India Meteorological Department (IMD) is in the process of installing Integrated Automatic Aviation Meteorological System (IAAMS) at eight airports namely Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Guwahati, Amritsar, Jaipur, Hyderabad (new) and Bangalore (new) airports. IMD has also planned to install IAAMS at 20 more airports by March, 2009 and at another 22 airports by June, 2010.

(c) A sum of Rs. 60 crores (approx) is likely to be invested on setting up IAAMS.

(d) These Automatic systems will be used for real time acquisition, processing, dissemination and display of meteorological parameters like Wind Speed & Direction, Temperature, Humidity, Atmospheric Pressure and Runway Visual Range (RVR) all of which affect landing and take-off operations. Such automation would help in better control of air traffic and air safety.

Encroachment on Monuments

2056. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPAPARAI:
SHRI RAMESH DUBE:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of monuments of historical importance are being damaged due to illegal encroachment;

(b) if so, the details of such monuments;

(c) whether the Government is aware that a number of monuments under the Archaeological Survey of India have been struck out as being irreparable;

(d) if so, the details of such monuments; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to remove encroachment in and around of monuments of historical importance?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) The Archaeological Survey of India undertakes conservation of centrally protected monuments including those under encroachment, to the extent possible, based on the need of monuments and subject to availability of resources.

(c) The Archaeological Survey of India has not struck out any monument as irreparable.

(d) Question does not arise.

(e) The Superintending Archaeologists of the Circles have been delegated the powers of the Central Government to issue 'Show cause Notice' to encroacher for removal of encroachments under the provisions of AM & ASR Act, 1958 and Rules 1959.

They are also vested with the powers of Estate Officer under the provisions of the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971 to initiate immediate legal action against the encroachers. They watch and inspect the centrally protected monuments/sites on a regular basis. They also interact with the District authorities and the State Police from time to time to thwart/remove encroachments. The ASI has deployed watch and ward staff in addition to the deployment of private security guards, State Police and Home Guards, and CISF in selected cases.

Wherever feasible and necessary, efforts have been made to provide fencing around centrally protected monuments.

Post Matric Scholarships

2057. SHRI SARVEY SATHYANARAYANA: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is increase in the post matric scholarships for minorities especially in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the guidelines for these schemes?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (c) The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of post-matric scholarship for students belonging to the minority communities from class XI up to Ph. D., and technical and vocational courses of Industrial Training Institutes/Industrial Training Centers (affiliated with NCVT) of class XI and XII level, has been launched. The details/guidelines for the scheme are available at website www.minorityaffairs.gov.in. The last date for receipt of applications from students was 29.02.2008.

The feasibility of further enhancing the scope and coverage of the scheme is being examined. Any enhancement that might take place will include Andhra Pradesh.

Availability of First Aid on the Trains

2058. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any comprehensive scheme to ensure easy availability of first aid in the trains;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the said scheme is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) First Aid Facilities in all passenger carrying trains are provided with First Aid Boxes containing essential drugs and dressing materials and the First Aid Boxes are available with the Guards of all the trains. The frontline staff viz. Train Superintendents, Train Conductors, Travelling Ticket Examiners, etc. are also trained in rendering first aid.

In addition Augmented First Aid Boxes with wider range of medicines, disposable medical material, etc. have been provided with the Train Superintendents/Pantry car Managers of Rajdhani/Shatabdi Express Trains and on nominated long distance Mail/Express trains. Services of doctors travelling as passengers are utilized to attend to passengers who are in need of urgent medical assistance. For this purpose the allopathic doctors travelling in such trains are provided with 10% concession in the train fare.

There is a very well developed system to send informations to the Station Managers where there is next scheduled halt of the train. The Station Managers have authority to call the Railway doctor/Govt. doctor/Private

doctor to come to Railway Station and to attend the sick passengers travelling in the train. Necessary medical treatment is being provided. This is being used extensively at present. Trains can also make unscheduled halts, if necessary, at the stations en-route in extreme emergencies. The Station Managers have details of doctors, clinics & hospitals of Railways, Government and Private, in the vicinity of the station, so that their services could be requisitioned, in such situations. In addition, a database has also been developed regarding availability of the medical facilities of Railway, Government and Private Sector along railway tracks and at station en-route, for providing emergency medical care to sick travelling passengers in the Trains and during Railway accidents.

(c) The scheme has already been implemented.

Drilling on off-shore sites by Oil Companies

2059. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has proposed a three-year moratorium of drilling on off-shore sites by oil companies under NELP contracts due to shortage of drilling rigs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the government has cross-checked with global rig leasing companies on the veracity of claims by NELP contractors seeking relaxation of commitments and deadlines; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) A few E&P companies have approached Government seeking a drilling moratorium for a period of about three years for deepwater areas in view of global shortage of deepwater rigs. No final decision has been taken by the Government on this issue.

(c) and (d) Directorate General of Hydrocarbon (DG) coordinated a study by Rig Management Norway AS (RMANS), in September, 2006 which brought out world wide rig situation as under:

- Currently worldwide drilling fleet is fully utilized.
- Availability of Rigs in near term is very limited.
- In deepwater market, no rig is available till 2008.

[*Translation*]

**Expenditure Incurred on Modernisation/
Maintenance in SAIL and RINL**

2060. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the expenditure incurred on modernisation, maintenance and repair of Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL) and their ancillary companies during the last three years and the current year as on date;

(b) the number of accidents occurred and the accidental deaths of workers/officers caused as a result

thereof in the said companies during the said period; and

(c) the details of the action taken against the guilty persons and the assistance and compensation given to the dependents of the victims?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) The expenditure incurred on modernization, maintenance and repair of steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL), Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL) during the last three years and the current year are given as under:

(Rs. in Crore)

	Expenditure on Modernization					Expenditure on Maintenance and Repair			
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08*		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08*
SAIL	530.00	817.00	1148.00	1210.00	SAIL	239.83	356.98	383.43	355.15
RINL	70.75	150.24	409.77	1150.95	RINL	93.41	97.24	109.70	92.75

*For the year 2007-08, figures for SAIL correspond to the period up to Dec. 2007 and the figures for RINL correspond to the period up to Feb. 2008.

(b) The number of accidents and accidental deaths that occurred during the said period is given as under:—

	SAIL			RINL		
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Accidents occurred	391	300	166	67	63	55
Deaths occurred (including contract workers)	25	23	22	5	3	1

(c) Apart from the monetary compensation, employment has been provided by the company to next of kin in fatal cases involving regular employees of the company. As regards the contract workers, the monetary compensation has been settled by Employee State Insurance. In case any person is found guilty, action is taken as per company conduct and disciplinary rules. However, in case violation by contractors are found, financial penalties are imposed on them apart from the legal consequences and responsibilities as per the prevailing laws.

Assistance to District Disability Centres

2061. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of demand and supply of aids and equipments for the persons with disability from District Disability Rehabilitation Centres in Jharkhand during the years 2006-07 and 2007-08;

(b) the district-wise details of total number of persons with disability in Jharkhand; and

(c) the number of such persons occupationally rehabilitated during 2003-04 and 2004-05?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) Only one proposal from DDRC Hazaribagh for Grant in aid for distribution of

aids and appliances was received during 2006-07, however funds could not be released due to incomplete documentation.

(b) District-wise number of persons with disability according to Census 2001 is as under:—

Sl.No.	District	No. of Disabled Persons
1.	Garhwal	21611
2.	Palaman	54799
3.	Chatra	13747
4.	Hajaribagh	29674
5.	Koderma	7502
6.	Giridih	26340
7.	Deogarh	15412
8.	Godda	16995
9.	Sahibgai	13756
10.	Pakur	10592
11.	Dumka	25555
12.	Dharibad	43013
13.	Bokaro	24963
14.	Ranchi	49341
15.	Lohardaga	5026
16.	Gumla	22757
17.	Paschimi Singhbhum	28552
18.	Purbi Singhbhum	38742

(c) No such information is compiled.

[English]

Increase in the Price of Petroleum Products

2062. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has worked any plan or strategy to meet the challenge posed by spiralling cost

of crude in the international market and to tide over the situation without resorting to hike in the prices of consumer products like kerosene and LPG, by way of duty cuts;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken in pursuance thereof; and

(d) the steps taken to protect the interests of farmers and BPL family from the adverse impact of price rise of petroleum products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) The duties on sensitive petroleum products namely petrol, diesel, domestic LPG and PDS kerosene have been rationalized to mitigate the impact of high international oil prices on their retail selling prices. The Customs Duty on petrol and diesel has been reduced from 10% to 7.5% effective 14.6.2006 and the Ad-valorem component of Excise Duty on unbranded petrol and diesel has been abolished with effect from 1.3.2008. The Customs Duty and Excise Duty on domestic LPG and PDS kerosene were also abolished with effect from 1.3.2005. Further, consequent to enactment of Finance Bill 2006, domestic LPG becomes "Declared Goods" under CST Act and the maximum Sales Tax/VAT rate is 4% effective 19.04.06 across all the States/Union Territories.

The prices of domestic LPG and PDS kerosene which are considered as common man's fuels have not been increased since November, 2004 and March, 2002 respectively, despite steep increase in the international oil prices.

(d) The international prices of crude oil and petroleum products have remained high and volatile since 2004. As passing on the entire impact of the increase in the oil prices to the consumers would have resulted in acute hardship to the common man, the retail selling prices of sensitive petroleum products have not been increased in tandem with the international oil prices. Due to this, the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are incurring under-recoveries on domestic sale of the sensitive petroleum products. To deal with the steep escalation in international oil prices, the Government has adopted the principle of equitable burden sharing between the Government, the oil PSUs and consumers to protect the interests of the common man and vulnerable sections of society, as also the financial health of OMCs.

In this context, the Government has made a marginal increase in petrol and diesel prices by Rs. 2/litre and Re. 1/litre respectively with effect from 15.2.2008, which is actually in the nature of a restoration of the retail prices of these products to the price level operating before February, 2007. Even after this, it is estimated that the OMCs would suffer under-recoveries of about Rs. 70,000 crore on the sale of petrol, diesel PDS kerosene and domestic LPG during 2007-08. The Government has issued Oil Bonds and the Upstream Oil Companies have also contributed by offering discount on crude oil and petroleum products to partially compensate the under-recoveries of OMCs.

The Government is closely monitoring the international oil prices and will continue to protect the interests of the consumers, particularly the vulnerable sections of society.

Revival of Nadirgul Flying Club

2063. SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any effort has been made by the Government for reviving Nadirgul Flying Club;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) No proposal has been received from Nadirgul Flying Club for starting flying training.

Road Over-Bridges in Tamil Nadu

2064. SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the road over-bridges in Tamil Nadu under construction;

(b) the total expenditure incurred on these bridges so far;

(c) whether construction work on some of the bridges is lagging behind the time schedule;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by the Railways to expedite the completion of these bridges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) At present 108 works are sanctioned on cost sharing basis, physical works at 20 sites is going on. 25 more works have also been included in the Works Programme of 2008-09. 4 works of ROBs (Road over Bridges) have been completed during the year 2007.

(b) An expenditure of Rs. 21 crore have been incurred during 2007-08 (upto February, 2008)

(c) Yes, Sir. At 7 sites the construction works is lagging behind the time schedule.

(d) Reasons for delay are mainly (i) delay in arriving at a general consensus on the demand by local public and technical requirements of various Governments Agencies involved. (ii) Contractual problem due to escalation in prices of construction material.

(e) Changes in designs and methods like adoption of composite girders (steel & concrete) launching thereof (composite or PSC) instead of cast-in-situ etc, taking up of more numbers of works simultaneously in section, calling of mega tenders clubbing several ROB works in each tender, in addition to chasing State Govt. for early approval of General Arrangement Drawing, acquisition of land-required for approaches and obtaining Estimates of approaches etc, are the steps being taken by the Railways to expedite construction of these works.

Development of Tourism

2065. SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the role of the Union Government with regard to the development of tourism in the country in addition to grant of funds to the States;

(b) whether the Union Government have formulated any scheme to create employment opportunities in the tourism sector; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The Ministry

of Tourism formulates national policies and programmes and coordinates activities with various Central Government agencies, State Governments/Union Territories and the Private Sector for the development and promotion of tourism in the country.

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Tourism implements plans and programmes for education and training in tourism and hospitality and under the Capacity Building for service Providers Scheme to meet the growing demand for trained manpower in the tourism sector.

[Translation]

Gradation of Railway Stations

2066. SHRI GANESH SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some of the important railway stations in the country are to be awarded as 'A' or 'B' grade stations by the Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether Satna and Maihar Railway stations of West-Central Railways are under the above mentioned grades; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Stations over Indian Railways have been classified into seven categories i.e. A1, A, B, C, D, E and F based on the annual passenger earnings. Zonal Railways have been advised to reclassify the stations on the basis of annual passenger earnings of 2006-07. State-wise details of the stations are not maintained.

(c) and (d) Satna railway station is 'A' category station. Based on the passenger earnings of 2006-07, Maihar railway station has qualified to be categorized from 'B' to 'A' category station.

[English]

Schools Run by Railways

2067. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways has decided to gradually close down the schools managed by Railways;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the list of such schools managed by the Railways in North Frontier Railway and present status of each school?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Ministry of Railways has provided educational facilities to a limited extent within the constraints of available resources, purely as a measure of staff welfare at such places where educational facilities provided at by other agencies, both Government (Central/State) and private, are either non-existent or inadequate resulting in hardships to the employees. With the passage of time there has been extensive development and expansion of educational facilities by Ministry of Human Resource Development, State Governments and private agencies and accordingly continuance of railway schools at various locations is being reviewed as a continuous process.

(c) List of Railway schools being run on Northeast Frontier Railway is set as Statement. There is at present no proposal to close any Railway Schools on Northeast Frontier Railway.

Statement

Higher Secondary/High Schools

1. NVP Railway Higher Secondary Schol, Maligaon, Assam
2. Railway Higher Secondary School, Maligaon, Assam.
3. Railway Higher Secondary School, Lumding, Assam
4. Railway Higher Secondary School, Badarpur, Assam
5. Railway Higher Secondary School, Alipurduar, West Bengal
6. Railway Higher Secondary School, Siliguri, West Bengal
7. Railway Girls High School, New Jalpaiguri, West Bengal
8. Railway High School, Dimapur, Nagaland

Primary Schools

1. Railway Primary School, Rest Camp, Pandu, Assam
2. Railway Primary School, Dharamnagar, Tripura
3. Railway Primary School, Domohani, West Bengal
4. Railway Primary School, Tinsukia, Assam

Austerity Type Primary Schools

1. Railway Double Teacher Primary School, Barsoighat, Bihar
2. Railway Double Teacher Primary School, Amingaon, Assam
3. Railway Double Teacher Primary School, (Central Gotanagar), Maligaon, Assam
4. Railway Double Teacher Primary School, Adabari, Maligaon, Assam
5. Railway Double Teacher Primary School, Gosala, Maligaon, Assam
6. Railway Double Teacher Primary School, (Assamese Med.), Mariani, Assam
7. Railway Double Teacher Primary School, (Bangla Med.) Mariani, Assam
8. Railway Double Teacher Primary School, Tinsukia, Assam
9. Railway Double Teacher Primary School, (Assamese Med.), Dibrugarh, Assam
10. Railway Double Teacher Primary School, (Hindi Med.), Dibrugarh, Assam
11. Railway Single Teacher Primary School, Malbazar, Alipurduar, West Bengal
12. Railway Single Teacher Primary School (Hindi Med.), Bongaigaon, Assam.
13. Railway Single Teacher Primary School, (Assamese Med.), Bongaigaon, Assam
14. Railway Single Teacher Primary School, Nambari, Maligaon, Assam.

Non-Completion of Bangalore-Shravana Belagola-Hassan Line

2068. SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVARAJ:
SHRI M. SHIVANNA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Mangalore Express between Yeshawantpur (Bangalore) and Mangalore is forced to take a circuitous route, making the commuters to spend 13 hours instead of 9 hours;

(b) if so, whether this is because of non-completion of the work on the Bangalore-Shravana Belagola-Hassan line; and

(c) if so, the time by which the work will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) 6517/6518 Yeavantpur-Mangalore Express running via Mysore takes 12 hrs. 30 minutes/11 hrs. 55 minutes respectively.

(b) and (c) There is at present no railway route from Bangalore to Mangalore via Shraavanabelagola. The new line from Bangalore to Shraavanabelagola will be completed in the coming years depending upon availability of resources.

Railway Projects

2069. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are about 80 railway projects worth over Rs. 20,000 crores lying derailed as these projects are mostly in rural and backward areas and thus are not commercially viable;

(b) if so, whether the Government is seriously considering now as a socio-economic consideration to undertake all these projects under priority list in future; and

(c) if so, the time by which the final decision in allotting the funds for completing these projects are likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Most of the new line and gauge conversion projects except a few required on operational considerations are aimed to improve connectivity to backward, tribal, remote and under-

developed areas of the country so as to bring about socio-economic development of the region through which the line passes. However, railways have a huge throwforward of ongoing projects requiring over Rs. 61,000 crore for completion. The funds are limited and projects are being progressed as per the availability of resources. Keeping in view the operational requirements and other considerations, the prioritization of railway projects under new line and gauge conversion was done by the Government in April, 2005 in the following categories:-

- Category (I) — Projects where progress is more than 60% and throwforward is less than Rs. 100 Crore.
- Category (II) — Viable/Operationally required projects.
- Category (III) — National Projects, Projects in Assam & North East Region, Cost Sharing with State Governments, Defence Funded Projects and projects covered under Public Private Partnership.
- Category (IV) — Other ongoing projects not covered in Categories (I, II & III).

(c) A number of initiatives have been taken to expedite completion of these ongoing projects. Minister of Railways has also written to Chief Ministers of concerned States to consider suitable cost sharing for the ongoing new line and gauge conversion projects to the extent of 50% or more.

Restoration of Jantar Mantar

2070. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to restore Jantar Mantar and other historical monuments in Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof and estimated cost of project; and

(c) the time by which the renovation work is likely to be taken up and the expected time of completion?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Conservation and restoration of Jantar Mantar as well as

other centrally protected monuments is a continuous process and is taken up depending upon the needs of monuments and availability of resources. For conservation and development of Jantar Mantar at Delhi, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with M/s Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited under the aegis of the National Culture Fund in the year 2000. So far the work relating to illumination and improved signage at the monument has been completed. The donor has so far contributed Rs. 16.09 lakhs towards the project. An estimate amounting to Rs. 11.98 lakhs has been prepared for the conservation of the Misra Yantra at Jantar Mantar. Since the work involves various agencies, no specific time limit for the completion of the work has been fixed.

[Translation]

Food Processing Industries in the Rural Areas

2071. SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up food processing industries in the rural areas to extend the employment opportunity at their doorstep;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to provide financial assistance to the food processing industries set up in private sector;

(d) if so, the name of industries to which financial assistance is likely to be provided; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (e) For promotion of industries in the food processing sector, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries extends financial assistance for Establishment, Technology upgradation and Modernization of food processing units in the country including in rural areas, in the form of grant-in-aid @ 25% of the cost of plant and machinery and technical civil works subject to a maximum of Rs. 50 lakhs in General Areas or 33.33 % subject to a maximum of Rs. 75 lakhs in Difficult Areas such as Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and North Eastern States, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Laskshadweep and ITDP Areas. Under the Mini Mission IV of Technology Mission for

Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States including Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, assistance at still higher rates i.e. @ 50% upto Rs. 4 crores for setting up of new food processing units and upto Rs. 1 crore for upgradation/modernization of existing units is available for units set up for processing of horticultural produce. Ministry of Food Processing Industries does not set up food processing industries on its own. The financial assistance provided under the above scheme for setting up, technology upgradation and modernization of food processing units is available to industries in the private sector as well. The financial assistance to units is considered based on the application submitted by them to the Ministry.

New Rail Line from Gola Gokran Nath to Mohammadi

2072. SHRI ILYAS AZMI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted in 1997 to lay a new rail line from Gola Gokran Nath to Mohammadi;

(b) if so, whether the Railways has assured to reconduct the above survey;

(c) if so, whether the survey has been initiated again; and

(d) if not, the time by which the survey is likely to be initiated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. An updating survey for a new line from Gola Gokran Nath to Mohammadi (62.121 kms) was completed in Oct, 2004, as per which the cost of construction was assessed as Rs. 172.38 crore with the Rate of Return of (-) 14.92%. In view of un-remunerative nature, acute constraints of resources and heavy throw-forward of ongoing projects, it was not found feasible to consider the proposed work. Survey has not been taken again.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Rajkot Airport

2073. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Airports Authority of India (AAI) has to acquire land from railway authorities for the purpose of upgradation of Rajkot Airport;

(b) if so, whether the railway authorities have agreed to give land to the AAI;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken to complete the work of upgradation of the Airport?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. Railway Authorities have agreed to transfer the land measuring 21 hectares (approx.) on lease with the condition that Airports Authority of India (AAI) should rehabilitate the affected residential units and pay its market value.

(e) Railway Board has been requested to transfer the land at a concessional rate so that upgradation project remains viable.

Recruitment of SC/ST in NSD

2074. SHRI HITEN BARMAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the reservation as per norms is implemented in recruitment of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates in various posts in National School of Drama (NSD), New Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof, indicating their present percentage, category-wise; and

(c) the measures being taken by the Government to ensure recruitment of SCs/STs as per existing reservation policy?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details are given in the enclosed Statement.

(c) Orders issued by Government of India under its reservation policy have been conveyed to National School of Drama from time to time.

Statement*Reservation Position in respect of SC/ST employees in Group 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D'*

Sl.No.	Group/ Category	Total No. of Posts	% of SC in place	% of ST in place	Remarks
1.	Group 'A'	6 (excluding Director tenure post) and Teaching Faculty) (Vacant-1)	1 17%	—	Most of the posts falling under this Group are isolated posts and for the purpose of direct recruitment, these are grouped as per the orders of the Government of India. Reservation is being followed for filling up the post from OBC/SC/ST under the mode of direct recruitment. Reservation for SC/STs is also being followed in promotions as per the instructions issued by Government of India from time to time.
2.	Group 'B'	22 (Vacant - 3)	3 14%	—	-do-
3.	Group 'C'	56 (Vacant - 5)	12 21%	1 2%	-do-
4.	Group 'D'	54 Safai Karamachari - 10; Other than Safai Karamchhari-44 (Vacant-10)	16 30% Safai Karamachari- 8%; other than Safai Karamchhari-8	2 4%	Reservation is being followed for filling up the post from OBC/SC/ST under the mode of direct recruitment. Reservation for SC/STs is also being followed in promotions as per the instructions issued by Government of India from time to time.

Private Sector in ATC and Ground Operation

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

2075. SHRI AMITAVA NANDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any decision to lease out Air Traffic Control/ground operation to the private sector;

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

(c) whether any proposal of FDI has been planned; and

(d) if so, the details alongwith the security report has been prepared thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) There is no proposal to lease Air Traffic Control and related ground operations to private parties.

Crude Oil Production

2076. SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to boost domestic crude oil production by 50 percent to 50 million tones in the coming 15 years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of works carried out by the Government in this regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) As per Hydrocarbon Vision-2025 a document of Government of India, the crude oil production

by 2025 is expected to be 61.4 Million Metric Tonne (MMT) from the current production of 33.98 MMT in 2006-07.

To achieve this target Government of India has taken following steps:

1. Implementation of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) to offer more area under NELP for E and P activities so as to bring 80% of Indian Sedimentary basins under exploration by the end of XI Plan.
2. Implementation of Improved Oil Recovery (IOR)/ Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) for more oil recovery from aged fields.
3. Introduction of alternate fuels such as Coal Bed Methane (CBM), Bio-fuels, etc.
4. Extraction of gas from gas hydrates under National Gas Hydrates Programme (NGHP) by involving suitable production technology.

[Translation]

Night Shelters for Poor and Homeless

2077. DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:
SHRI TUKARAM GANPATRAO RENGE
PATIL:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to build night shelters for the poor and homeless people in every district;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) There is no such proposal in the Ministry.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The mandate of the Ministry is to implement the schemes of educational, economic and social empowerment of Scheduled Castes, Other Backward

Classes, persons with disabilities, elderly people and victims of substance abuse only.

[English]

Corpus Fund for Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial

2078. DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to give corpus fund for development and maintenance of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial at Karamsad;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The matter is under consideration.

Joint Venture to Manufacture Bogies

2079. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have signed MoU with Autokast Ltd., Kerala, a unit of Steel Industries Kerala Ltd. (SIKL) for forming a Joint Venture Company to manufacture fabricated bogies for Indian Railways; and

(b) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Proposal is under consideration.

Patna Airport

2080. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Patna International Airport is far behind the standard of any International airport;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken by the Airports Authority of India to provide such facilities at this airport as are available at the airports of other countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Though Patna airport is not an international airport, Airports Authority of India (AAI) has endeavoured to provide modern facilities at this airport. The airport has been included in the list of 35 non-metro airports to be modernised. AAI has plans for expansion of terminal building, construction of additional apron and isolation bay, a new integrated cargo complex etc. subject to land being made available by the State Government. Extension of runway has not been possible due to non availability of land.

Rail Link between Gangapur to Dholpur

2081. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have any proposal to provide rail link between Gangapur to Dholpur;

(b) if so, whether there is also a proposal for the Gauge Conversion from Dholpur to Sarnathura; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to implement the above proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) A Reconnaissance Engineering-cum-Traffic Survey for gauge conversion of Dholpur-Sirmuttra metre gauge line with extension upto Gangapur City (New Line from Sirmuttra to Gangapur City) (144 kms) was completed in 1997-98. As per the survey report, cost of the project was Rs. 170 crore and its Rate of Return was (-) 1.87%. The project has not been taken up in view of its unremunerative nature.

However, an updating survey for gauge conversion of Dholpur-Sirmuttra rail line has been taken up.

Indian Oil Agreement with Maruti Suzuki

2082. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Oil has signed an agreement with Maruti Suzuki for marketing of Maruti Genuine Oil in the country;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the extent to which annual income of Indian Oil will be increased by the implementation of said agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has signed an agreement with Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MUL) for marketing of lubricant as Maruti Genuine Oil in the country. The salient features of the agreement are as under:-

(i) Agreement is valid till 31.03.2009.

(ii) Agreement is for marketing of Maruti Genuine Oil for all the Maruti vehicles through Maruti authorized service stations, Maruti authorized dealers and other marketing channels of IOC like Retail Outlets, bazaar counters, etc.

(iii) The agreement allows IOC to use Maruti's trade mark as Maruti Genuine Part (MGP) in respect of product on the terms and conditions mutually agreed, for which license fee is payable by IOC.

(c) With this agreement, IOC will be able to generate sales revenue of approx. Rs. 50 crores per year.

Development and Beautification of Hill Resorts

2083. SHRI SUBRATA BOSE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received any proposals/projects from the West Bengal and Assam Governments for development and beautification of State's hill resorts in the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the Union Government is likely to be cleared these proposals/projects?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The development and promotion of tourism including beautification of hill resorts is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/Union Territories themselves. However, the Ministry of Tourism provides funds on the basis of project proposals received from the State Governments/Union Territories for grant of central financial assistance every year under the following schemes:

- (i) Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits
- (ii) Large Revenue Generating projects
- (iii) Fairs and Festivals/Events
- (iv) Information Technology
- Project proposals received from the State Governments/Union Territories that are complete in all respect are examined as per scheme guidelines and approved on the basis of inter-se priority and funds released subject to availability under respective head.
- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has sanctioned Tourism projects to the tune of Rs. 453.71 lakh and Rs. 5549.42 lakh to the States of West Bengal and Assam respectively in the last three years. A list of the projects sanctioned is given in Statement I and II.

Statement I*Projects Sanctioned to the State of West Bengal in the Years 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07*

(Rs. in lakh)

Sl.No.	Name of Project/Scheme	Amount sanctioned
1	2	3
2004-05		
1.	Vishnupur Mela	5.00
2.	Goi-Undp endogenous project at village Ballabhpur Danga, District Birbhum	20.00
3.	Development of Village Sonada, District Darjeeling as a Rural Tourism Destination	50.00
4.	West Bengal Mahotsav 2004	10.00
5.	West Bengal Tourism Festival 2004	5.00
6.	Teesta and Tourism Festival	5.00
7.	Goi-Undp endogenous project at Mukutmanipur in Bankura District	20.00
8.	Development of Rangbhang as a tourist spot (Near Mirik)	171.54
9.	Extension and Beautification of Rohini Lake at Rohini tourist complex, Kurseong	218.50
10.	Darjeeling Carnival 2004	8.00
	Total	513.04
2005-06		
1.	Kalighat Re-Development project at Kolkata	500.00
2.	Development of Tourism at cooch Behar city	475.00
3.	Celebration of West Bengal tourist festival in Feb. 2006	4.35
4.	Celebration of 18th vishnupur mela, 2005 (District Bankura)	5.00
5.	Celebration of Mahotsav, 2005 Kolkata	5.00
Total		989.35

	2	3
2006-07		
1.	Integrated Development of "Tea tourism circuit" in North Bengal	715.85
2.	Creation/Setting up tourism infrastructural facilities at Goke	355.49
3.	Development of Beach Tourism circuit in Purba Medinipur District	598.02
4.	Development of Eastern Dooars Tourism circuit in Jalpaiguri district Kharvela Festival, 2004-05	683.58
5.	Setting up of a Night-Safari park Jorepokhari in Darjeeling	15.00
3.	19th Vishnupur Mela, 2006	5.00
7.	Sharadotsav (Mahotsav), 2006	7.00
3.	Development of Kalimpong in the state of West Bengal	498.38
3.	Village Antpur, District Hoogly	50.00
).	Development of Rural Tourism at Village Mukutmonipur, District Bankura	50.00
.	Development of Rural Tourism at village Antpur, District Hoogly	50.00
	Total	3028.32

Statement II*Projects Sanctioned to the State of Assam in the Years 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07*

(Rs. in lakh)

.No.	Name of the Proposal	Amount Sanctioned
2		3
2004-05		
	Development of Dehing Patkai Kshetra, distt Tinsukia as a rural tourism destination	44.33
	GOI-UNDP Endogenous Project at Village Sualkuchi, distt Kamrup	19.95
	GOI-UNDP Endogenous Project at Village Durgapur, distt Golaghat	20.00
	Development of Village Sualkuchi, distt Kamrup as a rural tourism destination.	50.00
	Tourist Arrival cum Reception Centre, Guwahati	384.00
	Development of Tourism Circuit, Assam	437.75
	Celebration of Kaziranga National Park and 3rd Elephant Festival	15.00
	Total	971.03
2005-06		
	Development of Adventure Tourism in Kaziranga	44.95
	Circuit development of Manas-Guwahati-Kaziranga	781.00

1	2	3
3.	Ecotourism development at Kokrajhar	460.00
4.	Development of NE circuit in Assam	280.00
5.	IT project for Assam Tourism	47.80
6.	Celebration of Rongali Bihu Festival	10.00
7.	Celebration of Dehing Patkai Festival	5.00
8.	Integrated development of Dhubri-Goalpara-Guwahati-Silchar-Karimganj Tourism Circuit	432.28
9.	Rural tourism project at Asharkandi, Dhubri	48.97
10.	Kaziranga Festival	5.00
11.	Tea Tourism Festival	5.00
12.	Break Valley Festival	5.00
	Total	2125.00

2006-07

1.	Construction of Kamakhya Pilgrim Centre in Assam.	80
2.	Eco-Tourism Resort at Bhalukpong in Assam	45.00
3.	Development of internal road leading to Kaziranga National Park and renovation of old Inspector Bungalow in the Park, Assam	25.00
4.	Upgradation of Tourist Lodge at Sibsagar in Assam.	15.00
5.	Construction of Integrated Convention Centre and Wellness Centre in the Compound of Hotel Brahmaputra Ashok, Guwahati under Integrated Destination Development Scheme, Assam	454.28
6.	Development of Kamakhya and Satellite Pilgrimage Township of Hajo, Assam	436.54
7.	Destination Development Sivasagar, Assam	369.05
8.	Integrated Development of Tourism Circuit Orang-Tezpur-Bhalukpong-Biswanath-Cheriali-Gohpur circuit in Assam	798.00
9.	Destination Development of Brahmaputra River Front and Cruise Vessel, Assam.	365.52
10.	Celebration of Rongali Bihu festival, 2007	10.00
11.	Celebration of the Tea Tourism festival, 06	5.00
12.	Celebration of Elephant Festival, 07	10.00
13.	Celebration of Dehing Patkai Festival, 07	5.00
	Total	2618.39

Gas Cracker Project at Lepetkata

2084. SHRI M.K. SUBBA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gas Cracker Project at Lepetkata has been inordinately delayed;

(b) if so, the progress made in implementation of the project so far and the reasons for the delay; and

(c) the time by when the project will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Foundation stone of the Project has been laid on April 9, 2007 at Lepetkata, District Dibrugarh. The Government has approved implementation of the Project at a project cost of Rs. 5460.61 crores. Provision of Rs. 2138 crores and Rs. 908.91 crores has been made for capital subsidy and feedstock subsidy respectively. Joint Venture Company, has been incorporated as 'Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited' (BCPL). Gas Supply Agreement (GSA) has been signed with OIL and ONGCL. Naphtha supply Term Sheet has also been signed with Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL). Necessary environmental and pollution control clearances have been obtained. About 90% of the land committed by Government of Assam has been acquired by BCPL; the balance land will be transferred after completion of the rehabilitation of the project affected families. Regarding financial closure, OIDB has granted in-principle approval for a term loan of Rs. 327 crores. EIL has been selected as Project Management Consultant. Notice Inviting Tender for LLDPE/HDPE and polypropylene units has been released. The work for topographical survey has been awarded. Steps required prior to commencement of construction, viz.,- Basic Engineering design and Water and power required for construction etc. have been initiated.

As per the approval accorded by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), the project is to be completed within 60 months from the date of financial closure. Project is expected to be completed as per target schedule.

[Translation]

Termination of Porters

2085. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the porters engaged in loading work for Railways at ports have been terminated from Parcel and Goods Services and the same has been handed over to big companies;

(b) if so, the zone-wise details thereof;

(c) the zone-wise details of porters terminated by the implementation of the said scheme;

(d) the details of the alternative arrangements made for the livelihood of porters who have been rendered unemployed by such scheme; and

(e) the zone-wise details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

[English]

Assistance to Handicapped Passengers

2086. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:
SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE:
SHRI MILIND DEORA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)'s draft guidelines on Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR) for the physically disabled passengers has been opposed by the Federation of Indian Airlines and are unwilling to provide free help to disabled passenger;

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

(c) the reactions of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) The

matter of Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) on carriage of disabled persons is under consideration of the Government.

Use of LPG as on Automotive Fuel

2087. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government plans to set up retails network for pushing use of LPG as an automotive fuel;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (d) the effect on domestic LPG supplies by setting up these retail outlets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) Government have permitted the sale of auto-LPG for vehicles vide the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of use in Motor Vehicle) Order, 2001. OMCs have set up, and are setting up, Auto LPG dispensing Stations (ALDS) based on their commercial considerations and upon the availability of suitable sites in various cities to meet the requirement of auto LPG.

At present, OMCs are operating 306 ALDS in different cities in the country and also propose to set up 158 more ALDS in different cities in the country.

The total sale of auto LPG during the period April, 2007 to January, 2008 was 170 Thousand Metric Tonnes (TMT) as against 108 TMT during the corresponding period of last year, showing a growth rate of 57.4%.

(d) Government has not given approval for use of domestic LPG in vehicles. As per the auto-LPG Control Order, only imported or import-substituted auto LPG can be used in vehicles. OMCs are meeting the demand of auto LPG through their refineries/imports.

Asian Gas Grid

2088. SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal of Asian Gas Grid;

(b) if so, the details including the countries associated with it and the pipeline that would cover India as a part of the proposal; and

(c) the present status of the proposal and the envisaged period of completion of the above project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) The idea of an "Asian Gas Grid" linking the natural gas producing countries in North and Central Asia and Gulf with the consuming countries in Asia was first proposed by the then Minister (P and NG) at the Third Asian Gas Buyers' Summit in New Delhi on February 14-15, 2005. A presentation on the subject was made by a private international energy consultancy organization at the Ministerial Round Table of North and Central Asian Oil Producers with Principal Asian Consumers in New Delhi on November 25, 2005. The proposal envisaged setting up of a series of transnational gas pipelines linking Asian producing and consuming countries to form an "Asian Gas Grid". As per the presentation, 22,000 km of additional pipelines would have to be laid in Asia, costing about US \$22 billion.

Though the Government is pursuing import of natural gas from Iran and Turkmenistan through transnational pipelines, there is no concrete proposal pertaining to the Asian Gas Grid before the Government at present.

Railway Projects for South Western Railway

2089. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the railway projects sanctioned for South Western Railway during the last three years;

(b) the funds allocated and spent by each project;

(c) whether the projects are still incomplete despite having sufficient funds; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Details of works sanctioned during the last three years i.e. 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 are as under:-

(Rs. In crore)

Sl.No.	Project	Year of sanction	Expenditure incurred upto March, 2007	Outlay provided during 2007-08
1.	Tumkur-Rayadurg new line (212 kms)	2007-08	Nil	1
2.	Dharwad-Kambargani doubling (26.15 kms)	2006-07	0.06	26
3.	Hubli-Hebsur doubling (18.75 kms)	2006-07	0.06	18
4.	Arsikere-Birur doubling (44.25 kms)	2007-08	Nil	1
5.	Ramanagaram-Mysore doubling (91.50 kms) including electrification of Kengeri-Mysore	2007-08	Nil	5.16

(c) and (d) projects are being progressed as per availability of funds and resources.

New LPG Connections

2090. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA:
SHRI GANESH SINGH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of persons are in the waiting list for LPG connections in the country;

(b) if so, the number of persons on the waiting list for LPG connection in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh as on date, district-wise;

(c) the time by which the list is likely to be cleared; and

(d) the criteria fixed for providing gas cylinders per consumer, per month?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that at present new LPG connections are available across the counter for genuine domestic customers. Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) has further reported a waiting list of 0.47 lakh as on 1.3.2008 for release of new LPG connections with their distributors in the country.

(b) and (c) IOC has reported that as on 1.3.2008, there is a waiting list of 6297 and 3062 for release of new LPG connections with their distributors in the States of Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh respectively. The waiting list is expected to be liquidated by 15.4.2008. The district-wise details are available with the Directors (Marketing) of concerned OMCs.

(d) OMCs have reported that there is no fixed criteria/ quota for providing gas cylinders per customer per month.

Congestion in Major Railway Stations

2091. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are aware that there are huge congestion in the major railway stations in the country;

(b) if so, the names of stations which are affected due to congestion;

(c) whether the Railways have taken any steps to ease the congestion in those stations;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The Railway Stations are identified and classified on the basis of passenger earnings and not on the basis of congestion which is not quantifiable. During festival and other holiday

asons there is a log of rush of passengers. Also during peak rush traffic hours the suburban stations also have lot of rush.

(c) to (e) As part of station improvement, Railways execute various works aimed at decongesting the stations, such as, widening and extension of platforms, remodeling of station building, expansion of circulating areas, augmentation of foot-over-bridge, construction of sub-ways etc. which is an ongoing process. Besides, following steps have been taken by Railways to decongest the Railway Stations:

1. Running of trains have been rationalized so as to achieve the objectives of automatic dispersal of passengers as under:-
 - (i) Special trains are introduced touching only one terminal point so as to avoid rush at all the terminals in the same area.
 - (ii) Similarly certain trains have been rescheduled in such a manner that they do not pass through all the terminals in the same city.
 - (iii) In trains in which there is a lot of rush, these are being originated from end platforms so as to avoid passengers using the foot-over-bridges.
2. Railways have undertaken an exercise for converting 24 existing major stations into World Class stations. This apart from improving amenities will also plan to decongest stations by segregating arrival and departure of concourse, etc.
3. Generally, the presence of beggars, urchins, hawkers and vendors makes the platforms overcrowded. Drives are launched from time to time to remove them from the platforms.
4. Haphazard stacking of parcels/packages at platforms too hinders the free movement of passengers. Instructions are issued from time to time to the Station Managers/Suprevisors to ensure proper stacking of parcel consignments.
5. Ensuring placement of trains at platforms in such a fashion that the dispersal of passenger becomes smooth. Such problems are also addressed during the regular review of time tables.

6. Modern security gadgets like Closed Circuit Televisions are being installed to monitor the crowd management.
7. Presence of Railway Protection Force/ Government Railway Police staff at important stations has been augmented.

Increase in the Frequency of Rajdhani Express Trains

2092. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the proposal to increase the frequency of some Rajdhani Express trains are pending with the Railways;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken to implement the above proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) In the Railway Budget 200-09, it has been announced to increase the frequencies of the following Rajdhani Express trains during the financial year 2008-09:-

- 2425/2426 New Delhi-Jammu Tawi Rajdhani Express from weekly to daily
- 2421/2422 Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express from bi-weekly to tri-weekly
- 2431/2432 Nizamuddin-Thiruvanthapuram Rajdhani Express from bi-weekly to tri-weekly

Hong Kong Based Firm to Develop New Delhi Railway Station

2093. SHRI MILIND DEORA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Railways have appointed a Hong Kong based firm for the development of the New Delhi Railway Station (NDRS) to world class standard;
- (b) if so, the reasons and details thereof; and
- (c) the time by when the project is likely to be started/ completed alongwith expenditure likely to be incurred on the said project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. No agency has been appointed for redevelopment of New Delhi railway station. However, an Architect and Technical Consultant has been appointed for preparation of Master Plan and Feasibility Report for the project. The Architect and Technical Consultant is a Hong Kong based firm and it was selected through global competitive bidding.

(c) Process for engagement of a concessionaire for the development of New Delhi railway station has been taken in hand through global bidding. Project is planned for completion by 2013 and this being Public-Private Partnership Project, no expenditure is anticipated, except depending on response, limited expenditure, to the extent of viability gap funding, may have to be resorted to in extreme circumstances.

Chiria Mines for SAIL

2094. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item appeared in Business Line on January 02, 2008 captioned, "SAIL plans to go awry if denied Chiria mines".

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) has 6 mining leases in Chiria and 4 at Gua with an estimated Iron Ore reserve of 2 billion tonnes. All these mining leases were originally granted to Indian Iron and Steel Company Limited (IISCO), and have been in operation for the last five decades. Out of the 10 leases, the renewal of 4 leases is under dispute with the Government of Jharkhand and is at present pending before the Courts.

SAIL's current reserves in the state of Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand are much less than its requirement of 5,736 million tonnes of iron ore in the next 50 years. Out of this total requirement, 2710 million tonnes of Iron Ore are required for SAIL's Brownfield

and Greenfield Plants in Jharkhand. Therefore, the Chiria and Gua mines are absolutely vital for SAIL's future growth plans, especially within the State of Jharkhand.

Vigorous efforts are also being made with the State Government of Jharkhand at appropriate levels in the Government of India to resolve the matter amicably out of court.

Employment of Women belonging to SCs

2095. SHRI K. S. RAO: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken/being taken to empower women belonging to SCs with training in entrepreneurship and skill development to improve their lives and livelihood;

(b) the number of women belonging to these groups in each State needed to be provided with jobs training and the estimated expenditure required for the purpose;

(c) whether the Government proposes to involve non-government organizations and industrial houses besides Government agencies to provide these women with training, inputs and information in home care, domestic help care, running beauty parlours and caring for the aged etc. to instill in them the confidence to make their life more meaningful and value to the family and society; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (d) National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) sponsors short term Skill Development Training Programmes through its State Channelising Agencies for the educated unemployed youth of the target group living below double the poverty line. Under these Programmes, SCAs are required to cover 30% women beneficiaries. The women beneficiaries are provided Skill Training at various Government/Semi Government/Autonomous Bodies in those trades which have good potential based on local requirements of the States.

Besides, vocational training programmes for SCs are also being implemented through NGOs. These programmes, among others, include training in typing and shorthand, craft centres, creche centres/balwadis, hand

block printing, spinning and weaving, ophthalmic nurse technician course etc.

[Translation]

Utilisation of Air India Aircraft

2096. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:
DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of aircraft owned and hired on lease by Air India and its ancilliary companies;

(b) the details of the destinations of their flights;

(c) the number of aircraft owned and hired on lease by Jet Airways, Kingfisher, Jet-lite, Air Deccan and Spice Jet companies and destinations of their flights;

(d) whether the Indian and its ancilliary companies are not using their aircraft optimally in comparison to other companies; and

(e) if so, the steps taken by the NACIL to acquire more aircraft to compete with the private airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) National Aviation Company of India Limited (NACIL), into which erstwhile Air India Limited and Indian Airlines Limited have merged, and its subsidiary companies have a fleet of 149 aircraft, out of which 92 are owned and 57 are leased.

(b) NACIL and its subsidiaries connect 47 international (including 9 Code Sharing stations) and 60 domestic destinations.

(c) The details are as under:

Jet Airways-79 leased aircraft operating to 44 domestic and 15 International destination, Kingfisher-40 leased aircraft operating to 41 domestic destinations, Jet Lite-25 leased aircraft operating to 26 domestic and 2 international destinations and Spice Jet-19 leased aircraft operating to 18 domestic destinations.

(d) and (e) The aircraft utilisation of NACIL is comparable to the industry average for similar type of aircraft. NACIL has already placed an order with Boeing

for 68 aircraft and with Airbus Industries for 43 aircraft to be inducted in the fleet by 2011-12.

Production Cost of Chemical Fertilizers

2097. SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production cost of various chemical fertilizers producing industrial units in the country varies;

(b) if so, the maximum and minimum production cost of each chemical fertilizer produced in the country during April to December in 2007-08 separately, unitwise; and

(c) the reasons for difference between the maximum and minimum production cost?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQU): (a) to (c) The cost of production of urea is different across various units in the country with the highest cost of production for the urea being Rs. 22899 PMT for M/s Madras Fertilizers limited and lowest being Rs. 5054 PMT for M/s National Fertilizers Limited-Vijaipur-1. The main reason for difference in the cost of production of these units is due to the wide difference in the price of feedstock being used by these units for production of urea. The cost of production also varies as some of the units are old with negligible depreciation costs, whereas others are comparatively new units with significant depreciation cost.

The fertilizers units producing DAP in the country have been divided into two groups based on the process through which DAP is produced in these units. The cost of production of Group-I units (producing DAP based on imported rock phosphate) has been Rs. 19786 PMT in 2007-08 (April to September) whereas the cost of production of Group II units (producing DAP from imported phosphoric acid) has been Rs. 17767 PMT.

With regard to the complex fertilizers, every unit produces varying grades of complex fertilizers and the cost of production of same depends upon feedstock/raw material being used by the units. The average cost of production of various grades of complex fertilizers in 2007-08 (April to September) is given as below:-

Grades of Complex Fertilizers	Cost (PMT)
16:20:00	12212
20:20:00	13284
23:23:00 (gas)	14807
28:28:00 (urea)	17344
10:26:26	17499
12:32:16	17372
14:28:14	16531
14:35:14	18207
15:15:15 (gas)	13896
17:17:17	15330
19:19:19	16765

[English]

Dedicated Freight Corridor

2098. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have created a special purpose vehicle called Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the projects likely to be taken up by the Corporation; and

(d) the details of the modalities devised for investments in these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A

Exploration

Year	Plan for the period 2004-07			Actual during 2004-07		
	2D GLK/LK	3D sq. km.	No. of Expl. Wells	2D GLK/LK	3D sq. Km.	No. of Expl. Wells
2004-05	613	1821	109	16685	20421	109
2005-06	2248	3169	92	6197	19865	106
2006-07	250	5667	98	9751	24172	87
Total	3111	10657	299	32633	64458	302

Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), namely, Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL), a Public Sector Undertaking under the administrative control of Ministry of Railways has been set up in October 2006 to implement the Dedicated Freight Corridor Projects.

(c) Dedicated Freight Corridors on the Western Route from Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), Mumbai to Tughlakabad/Dadri and Eastern Route from Ludhiana to Dankuni have been sanctioned to be taken up by the Corporation.

(d) The Dedicated Freight Corridor Project is proposed to be financed through a mix of internal generation, market borrowings, budgetary and non-budgetary resources including multilateral and bilateral funding.

Exploration of Crude Oil by ONGC

2099. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation has achieved its targets of exploration and Production during the last three years including the current year;

(b) if not, the reasons therefore;

(c) whether ONGC has higher targets for production of crude oil and natural gas during 2008-09 as compared to year 2007-08;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the details of the steps being taken by the ONGC to fulfill the targets fixed for 2008-09?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) The details of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC)'s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) targets vis-a-vis actual achievements for exploration and production for the last three years are given below.

Production

Year	Oil production Million metric tonne (MMT)	Gas production Million metric square cubic meters (MMSCM)
2004-05		
Target	26.174	22127
Actual	26.484	22970
2005-06		
Target	26.614	21406
Actual	24.404	22574
2006-07		
Target	27.350	21966
Actual	26.051	22442

In 2007-08 against the target of Crude Oil and Natural Gas for 29.04 MMT and 25050 MMSCM respectively ONGC has produced 20.922 MMT and 18985 MMSCM till December, 2007 respectively.

The reasons for not achieving targets under exploratory wells are on account of down-hole complications logistics constraints, floods, bandhs/ barricades and local agitations in the States.

The reasons for not achieving crude oil production are unfortunate fire accident at Mumbai High North (MHN) platform in Mumbai High in July, 2005 and less production gain than envisaged from ongoing Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) and Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR), schemes.

During the current year, 2007-08 (as on 01.01.08) ONGC has acquired 1771.15 GLK/LK of 2D, 8980 sq km of 3D seismic data and drilled 67 exploratory wells against the plan target of 32500 GLK/LK of 2D, 24497 sq km of 3D seismic data acquisition and drilling of 139 exploratory wells. Sustained efforts are being made to achieve the target by the end of the year i.e. as on 01.04.2008.

(c) to (e) MOU targets for 2008-09 are awaited from Department of Public Enterprises. However, ONGC has taken various actions for augmenting/maintaining the crude oil production. In addition to focus on repair of existing wells, artificial lift and stimulation of wells, various efforts have been made/planned for enhancing oil production in

the fields being operated by ONGC which includes IOR/ EOR, developments of marginal fields, technological initiatives to enhance oil/gas production and hiring of Domain Experts etc.

[Translation]

Amendment of Existing Acts for SCs

2100. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to amend the existing acts/laws relating to Scheduled Castes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by when final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (c), The suggestions have been received from several State Governments and Union Territory Administrations in regard to amendments in the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. However, no final decision has been taken to amend the Acts.

*[English]***Stake in Russian Oil and Gas Projects**

2101. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has sought stake in future Russian oil and gas projects, including the prestigious Sakhalin III and IV oil fields of the Russian East Coast;

(b) if so, the response of the Russian Government thereon; and

(c) the steps taken by the India to boost the tie between the two countries in the hydrocarbon sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) India's strategy for securing Energy Security which has been incorporated in "Hydrocarbon Vision-2025" a document of Government of India, includes investment in equity oil abroad. The significant steps, initiated by the Government and public sector undertakings for enhancing energy security, inter alia, include equity oil and gas from abroad. This Government-to-Government dialogue and MOUs have resulted in creating a conducive environment for the companies to cooperate in acquiring assets in third countries. Oil Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) after examining various proposals and finding it fruitful, acquire oil and gas assets abroad.

The issue of cooperation in Sakhalin-III project and others has been a subject of discussion between India and Russia. This highly prospective group of Blocks is likely to be auctioned after the Law on Subsurface is promulgated in Russia.

Supply of Additional Natural Gas to Andhra Pradesh Plants

2102. DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM:
DR. M. JAGANNATH:
SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the present position with regard to approve a State-wise gas pipeline network which enables the AP State Government to reap all the benefits from the discoveries close to State boundaries as proposed by KGGNL (Krishna, Godavari Gas Network Ltd.);

(b) whether State Government of Andhra Pradesh has recently demanded for half share of Natural Gas in KG basin free of cost;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Union Government have accepted the proposal; and

(e) if so, the action taken by the Government on the State Government of Andhra Pradesh proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) Kakinada-Hyderabad-Uran-Ahmedabad Pipeline with a length of 1385 km is being laid by M/s Reliance Gas Transportation Infrastructure, passing inter alia through 563 km in 7 districts in Andhra Pradesh. Government has issued authorizations to Vijayawada-Nellore-Chennai pipeline and Kakinada-Basudebpur-Howrah pipeline passing through Andhra Pradesh. Krishna Godavari Gas Network Limited (KGGNL)'s application for grant of authorization for laying, building and operating common carrier natural gas pipelines in the state of Andhra Pradesh has been forwarded to Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) for consideration, since the provisions of Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006 (except Section 16) have been made effective from 01.10.2007.

(b) and (c) The Legislative Council of Andhra Pradesh has adopted a resolution urging the Government of India to allocate 50% of the profit gas of KG basin to Andhra Pradesh free of cost. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has sent the resolution to Government of India, for it to take appropriate action in the matter.

(d) and (e) The natural gas produced in KG basin is intended to be supplied to consumers in various parts of the country, including Andhra Pradesh.

Purchase of Coal Mines Abroad

2103. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently signed any contract for purchase of coal mines outside the country so as to ensure uninterrupted supply of coking coal used in the furnaces of the plants of Steel Authority of India Limited functioning in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand;

(b) if so, the details of the terms and conditions including the names of the countries with which contracts have been signed; and

(c) the quantum of coal to be extracted from these foreign mines alongwith the likely cost thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) to (c) No, Sir. At present, the Government has not signed any contract for purchase of coal mines outside the country. However, Government has accorded approval for the formation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) constituted by the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), Coal India Limited (CIL), Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) for securing metallurgical coal and thermal coal assets from overseas for these companies.

High Speed Trains

2104. SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the average speed of Express Trains in the country;

(b) whether several foreign countries have fast moving trains, much faster than the Indian average;

(c) if so, the maximum and minimum average speed of such fast moving trains; and

(d) the steps taken by the Indian Railways to acquire such technical knowledge so as to start such fast moving trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The average speed of mail/express Broad Gauge trains during the year 2006-07 was 48.5 kilometre per hour.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. In Japan and France trains are running upto a maximum commercial speed of 300 kilometre per hour (kmph) and 350 kmph respectively.

(d) Indian Railways is planning to conduct pre-feasibility studies for High speed trains for four corridors in India. These studies could provide lot of insight in the technologies being used in other countries.

[Translation]

Rail Link between Khurda-Bolangir

2105. SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Khurda-Bolangir Rail Link Project with the date of sanction and the target date fixed for completion;

(b) whether this project has not been completed so far;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) the time by when the said project is likely to be completed;

(e) whether the required funds have so far not been allocated for the said project; and

(f) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken to allocate adequate funds for the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Khurda Road-Bolangir new line (289 Kms) project was included in the Budget 1994-95. The latest anticipated cost of the project is Rs. 700 crore. So far, 848 acres out of 1838 acres of land has been acquired between Km. 0 and Km. 110. Earthwork and bridgeworks have been taken up from Km. 0 to 36 from Khurda Road end. An expenditure of Rs. 67.83 crore has been incurred on the project up to 31.03.2007. An outlay of Rs. 20 crore has been provided in the Budget 2007-08 and an outlay of Rs. 32.43 crore has been proposed in the Budget 2008-09. The work is being progressed as per its operational priority and availability of resources. No target date of completion of the project has been fixed.

(e) and (f) Adequate funds are being made available to the project every year so as to progress the work on the project as planned for the year.

[English]

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Setting up of New Retail Outlets

2106. SHRI JUAL ORAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any oil companies propose to set up new retail outlets in 2008-09;

(b) if so, the places selected therefor;

(c) whether any new outlet is proposed to be set up in the mineral and industrially developed Sundargarh and Keonjhar districts in Orissa; and

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), viz. Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) propose to set up 1830 new Retail Outlets (ROs) across the country during 2008-09 as per the state-wise details given in the statement I.

(c) and (d) OMCs have proposed to set up 58 new ROs in the districts of Sundargarh and Keonjhar in Orissa as per details given in the statement II.

Statement I*Details of New Retail Outlets proposed to be set up during the Year 2008-09 State-wise*

Sl.No.	State Name	BPCL	HPCL	IOC
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	20	50	58
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0
3.	Assam	1	5	8
4.	Bihar	15	12	60
5.	Chhattisgarh	20	10	25
6.	Delhi	1	2	0
7.	Goa	5	4	2
8.	Gujarat	25	38	42
9.	Haryana	25	16	69
10.	Himachal Pradesh	2	4	8
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	2	6	11
12.	Jharkhand	5	5	30
13.	Karnataka	20	44	52
14.	Kerala	20	18	37

1	2	3	4	5
15.	Madhya Pradesh	20	28	42
16.	Maharashtra	40	70	55
17.	Manipur	0	0	1
18.	Meghalaya	1	1	3
19.	Mizoram	0	1	1
20.	Nagaland	1	0	1
21.	Orissa	22	10	42
22.	Punjab	20	26	65
23.	Rajasthan	20	47	55
24.	Sikkim	0	0	1
25.	Tamil Nadu	35	44	79
26.	Tripura	0	0	0
27.	Uttar Pradesh	35	35	133
28.	Uttarkhand	10	4	10
29.	West Bengal	15	18	40
Total		380	498	930

Details of New Retail Outlets proposed to be set up during the Year 2008-09 Union Territory-wise

Sl.No.	Union Territory Name	BPCL	HPCL	IOC
1.	Andaman and Nicobar	0	0	0
2.	Chandigarh	0	0	8
3.	Dadar and Nagar Haveli	0	0	4
4.	Daman and Diu	0	0	4
5.	Lakshadweep	0	0	0
6.	Pondichery	0	2	4
Total		0	2	20

Statement II

Details of New ROs to be set up in the District of Sundergarh and Keonjhar in Orissa during the Year 2008-09

SI.No.	Loc. Name	District
1	2	3
BPCL-22 Locations		
1.	Jamunalia	Keonjhar
2.	Bangamaruni	Keonjhar
3.	Banspani	Keonjhar
4.	Bambabari	Keonjhar
5.	Ruguri	Keonjhar
6.	Champua	Keonjhar
7.	Harichandrapur	Keonjhar
8.	Koira	Sundargarh
9.	Ring Road, Rourkela	Sundargarh
10.	Ved Vyas	Sundargarh
11.	Rajgangpur	Sundargarh
12.	Bonai	Sundargarh
13.	Duduka	Sundargarh
14.	Nuagaon	Sundargarh
15.	Nalda	Keonjhar
16.	Telkoi	Keonjhar
17.	Himgir	Sundargarh
18.	Bisra	Sundargarh
19.	Subdega	Sundargarh
20.	Sundargarh-Basundhara MCL Road	Sundargarh
21.	Kebalang	Sundargarh
22.	Latikatha	Sundargarh
HPCL-20 Locations		
1.	Within 5 KM of Jagmohanpur on NH-6	Keonjhar
2.	Bolani Mines Road	Keonjhar

1	2	3
3.	Nalda	Keonjhar
4.	Between Rugudi to Guali NH-215	Keonjhar
5.	Billipada	Keonjhar
6.	Bhadrasai	Keonjhar
7.	Champua	Keonjhar
8.	Bhadrasahi to Rugudi	Keonjhar
9.	Ghatgaon	Keonjhar
10.	Palaspanga	Keonjhar
11.	Sundargarh Bypass SH-10	Sundargarh
12.	Vedvyas	Sundargarh
13.	Tensa-Koira Road	Sundargarh
14.	Rajganipur SH-10	Sundargarh
15.	Rajamunda	Sundargarh
16.	Koil Nagar, Raurkela	Sundargarh
17.	Within 5 KM of Anandpur on NH-215	Keonjhar
18.	Barbil-Thekrani	Keonjhar
19.	Within 5 KM of Jurudi	Keonjhar
20.	Within 8 KM of Keonjhar on NH-6	Keonjhar
IOCL-16 Locations		
1.	Jhumpura	Keonjhar
2.	Barbil Town	Keonjhar
3.	Ghatgaon	Keonjhar
4.	Rem uli	Keonjhar
5.	Jamunanaki-Kuamunda	Sundargarh
6.	Kansabahal	Sundargarh
7.	Rourkela Ring Road	Sundargarh
8.	Bamebari to Nayagarh	Keonjhar
9.	Nalda	Keonjhar
10.	Jagang	Keonjhar
11.	Tanto on NH-215	Keonjhar

1	2	3
12.	Joda	Keonjhar
13.	Bhadrasahi to Kalapahad Chowk	Keonjhar
14.	Talsankara on SH-10	Sundargarh
15.	Kulamunda on NH-23	Sundargarh
16.	Between Jalda and Suidih on NH-23	Sundargarh

Conservation of Ajanta Ellora

2107. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI:
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to undertake the conservation work of Ajanta Ellora;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Japan Bank of International Cooperation has agreed to provide assistance for said work;

(d) if so, the details thereof along with the terms and conditions thereof;

(e) whether the Government has also informed the UNESCO's Worlds Heritage Centre in this regard; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of UNESCO thereto?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) Conservation of Ajanta-Ellora is an ongoing process. After successful completion of Phase I of the Ajanta-Ellora Conservation and Tourism Development Project with loan from Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC), an Agreement was signed with JBIC on 31st March 2003 under which work on Phase II commenced in April 2004. The target date of completion is March 2009.

The Executing Agency for the project is the Ministry of Tourism and the Implementing Agency for monument conservation is the Archaeological Survey of India.

According to the Project Memorandum, a Panel of Experts has been constituted comprising 4 International and 4 Indian experts for monitoring and smooth implementation of the monument conservation component.

(e) and (f) In September 2002, a UNESCO Mission comprising three International experts inspected the works executed in Phase I of the JBIC Project and noted that the work has been implemented in consonance with international and national conservation norms.

ASI has kept UNESCO's World Heritage Centre informed, as necessary, regarding interventions in Phase II.

[Translation]

Supply of Crude Oil to Refineries by ONGC

2108. SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:
SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) sells the extracted crude oil to the refineries;

(b) if so, the year-wise quantum of crude oil sold during the last three years along with the price at which it was sold;

(c) the price at which the refineries sell the refined oil;

(d) whether there is big difference in the prices of crude oil and refined oil; and

(e) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) sells the extracted crude oil to Public Sector oil refineries i.e. Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and its subsidiaries, Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPC) and its subsidiary, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPC) and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd., (MRPL). The quantities sold during the last three years along with the price are given below:

Year	Quantity of crude oil sold by ONGC MMT	Gross (Pre-discount) Crude Price (US\$/bbl)	Net (Post-discount) Crude Price (US\$/bbl)
2004-05	22.46	43.20	37.79
2005-06	20.72	59.66	42.34
2006-07	22.58	66.33	44.22
2007-08- (Apr-Dec 07)	16.64	80.87	53.69

Note: The post-discount price is after considering total subsidy on crude oil.

Refineries sell the petroleum products to Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) at refinery transfer price. The refinery transfer price is on import parity for PDS kerosene and Domestic LPG and trade parity for petrol and diesel. The international prices of crude oil and products are given in the enclosed statement.

The international prices of crude oil and petroleum products have remained high and volatile since 2004. As passing on the entire impact of the steep increase in the international oil prices to the consumers would have resulted in steep increase in the domestic prices of sensitive petroleum products i.e. petrol, diesel, PDS Kerosene and Domestic LPG and created inflationary impact, it has not been done. This has resulted in under-recoveries for OMCs on sensitive petroleum products.

The Government has adopted the principle of equitable burden sharing between the Government, the

oil PSUs and consumers to protect the interest of common man, vulnerable sections of society and also the financial health of OMCs. The Government has issued Oil Bonds and the Upstream Oil Companies have also contributed by offering discount on crude oil and petroleum products to partially compensate the under-recoveries of OMCs.

The amount of subsidy borne by ONGC by offering discount on crude oil and petroleum products during the last three years are given below:

Year	Amount of subsidy (Rs. Crore)
2004-05	4,104
2005-06	11,958
2006-07	17,025
2007-08 (Apr-Dec 07)	13,528

Statement

Trend in the international oil prices

	Crude oil (Indian Basket) \$/bbl	Petrol \$/bbl	Diesel \$/bbl	Kerosene \$/bbl	LPG \$/MT
Mar-02	23.31	26.43	23.27	23.65	194.00
2002-03	26.65	30.04	28.86	29.24	279.67
2003-04	27.97	35.01	30.39	31.11	277.02
2004-05	39.21	48.97	46.91	49.51	368.57
2005-06	55.72	64.51	64.7	69.43	481.04
2006-07	62.46	72.62	74.12	77.03	499.67
2007-08 (up to 4th March 08)	77.62	89.33	90.47	92.09	672.54

*[English]***Rail Neer Project in Tamil Nadu**

2109. DR. K. DHANARAJU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Rail Neer Project is running in profit;
- (b) if so, whether the Rail Neer manufacturing unit is to be started in Southern Railway also;
- (c) if so, the steps taken so far to implement this project in Tamil Nadu; and
- (d) the time frame set up to implement this project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) It has been decided that IRCTC (Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation) will set up a new 'Rail Neer' plant at palur near Chennai. Identification of the land for the same is now in progress.

(d) No time frame has been fixed for setting up of the said plant.

*[Translation]***Air Services for Bilaspur and Jagdalpur**

2110. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any proposal is under consideration of the Government to start air services upto Bilaspur, Jagdalpur;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to provide air service for the said cities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) National Aviation Company of India Limited presently has no plans to start air service upto Bilaspur and Jagdalpur as its available resources are fully deployed.

(d) The Government has laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country. It is, however, up to the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. As such, the airlines are free to

operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of route dispersal guidelines issued by the Government.

*[English]***Security Steps taken by the Railways**

2111. SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government are aware that train passengers are targeted by extremists, terrorists, anti-social and criminal elements;
- (b) if so, whether the check such threats and harassment, the Union Railway and Home Ministers have reviewed the position and propose to take some effective steps in this regard; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) A high level meeting between Home Minister and Railway Minister was held on 13.1.2008 in the Ministry of Railways to review overall security system in Railways, which was attended by senior officials of Home and Railway Ministries and following decisions were taken:-

1. There is a need for better cooperation and coordination between RPF, GRP, State Police and IB. To ensure these objectives, Ministry of Railways will nominate State-wise Nodal Officers. List of such nodal officers will be sent by Railways to IB.
2. Present set up of Intelligence and coordination among various stakeholders is not proper. Therefore, a mechanism will be set up for intelligence sharing and dissemination among them especially Intelligence Bureau, Railway Protection Force and State Police.
3. RPF will accord top most priority to the security of passengers among its charter of duties.
4. Owing to increase in the charter of responsibilities after amendments in the Railways Act and the RPF Act, which give the responsibility of the security of Railway property, passengers and passenger area to the RPF, there is a definite need to proportionately increase the strength of RPF.
5. In view of increased responsibility on the face of high vulnerability of Railways and travelling public, legal empowerment of RPF is essential for providing effective security to passengers and passengers area. This should be examined and necessary amendments in the Act and rules may be resorted to.

6. Suitable measures be taken to remove stagnation in RPF Officers' Cadre duly ensuring that their promotional and Career prospects are brought at par with other Group 'A' services of Indian Railways.
7. Concepts of Security should be in built in the Railway project, especially in disturbed regions, at the time of inception of the project.
8. It was agreed that RPF needs to be provided with appropriate security gadgets and electronic surveillance equipment. Adequate budgetary provision will be made available for this at the appropriate state.

New Production Units in the 11th Five Year Plan

2112. SHRI SARVEY SATYANARAYANA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Railways are proposing new production units in 11th Five Year Plan;
- (b) if so, the details worked out so far; and
- (c) the present status of production units in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Railways have obtained approvals to set up the following new production units (Pus) in 11th Plan:-

New PUs	Product	Estimated Cost	Sanction Year	Capacity
Wheel Manufacturing Plant, Chhapra	Wheel Discs	Rs. 881.19 Crores	2005-06*	1,00,000 wheels per year
Green Field Electric Locomotive Factory, Madhepura	Electric Locomotive	Rs. 1293.57 Crores	2007-08	120 Locos per year
New Rail Coach Factory, Rae Bareilly	Coaches	Rs. 1685 Crores	2007-08	1000 coaches per year
Diesel Locomotive Manufacturing Unit, Marhowra	Diesel Locomotive	Rs. 2052 Crores	2007-08	150 Locos per year

*Though sanctioned in 10th Plan, the plant is expected to be functional in the 11th Plan.

While presenting the Railway Budget 2008-09, it has been announced that a new rail coach factory will be set up in the state of Kerala to meet the requirement of passengers coaches in the country.

(c) At present there is no production unit in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Indian Tourism Office in China

2113. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and China had agreed to open their tourism offices on either side of the border under the Friendship through Tourism Programme;

(b) if so, whether China has already opened its tourism office in India, and India is still undecided about the location of its office in China; and

(c) if so, the reasons for the delay in opening the India Tourism Office in China?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) As per the Action Plan adopted for celebrating 'India China Year of Friendship Through Tourism' both countries agreed to open their tourism offices in each other's country. China has already opened its tourism office in New Delhi in August, 2007 and Government of India has approved the opening of India Tourism Office in Beijing, China.

Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

2114. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA:
SHRIMATI PRIYA DUTT:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of social security programmes for the senior citizens launched under Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007;

(b) the name of the State which have since given effect to the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007;

(c) the steps taken to give effect to this Act with respect to the Union Territories; and

(d) the number and percentage of the senior citizens have so far been covered under the protection of this Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (d) The Ministry has requested all the State Governments for notifying the Act in their respective States at the earliest. Further, the Ministry of Home Affairs has also been requested to take similar action in respect of all Union Territories. Upon notification, the Act comes into force in the respective State/UTs.

Separate Commission for Non-Muslim Minorities

2115. SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up a separate Commission like the Sachar Commission to assess the socio-economic status of non-muslim minorities in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (c) The National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities (NCRLM) was set up in October, 2004 to suggest criteria for identification of socially and economically backward sections among religious and linguistic minorities and to recommend measures for their welfare, including reservation in education and government employment and to suggest the necessary constitutional, legal and administrative modalities, as required for the implementation of their recommendations. Subsequently, the Commission was asked to give its recommendations on the issues raised in W.P 180/04 and 94/05 filed in the Supreme Court and in certain High Courts relating to para 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, in the context of ceiling of 50% reservation as also the modalities of inclusion in the list of Scheduled Castes and to prepare a White Paper on the status of the minority communities other than Muslims.

The Commission submitted its report to government in May, 2007.

[Translation]

Appointment of District Level Distributors by SAIL

2116. SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) proposes to appoint district level distributors to ensure the availability of steel in every State of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof particularly in Uttar Pradesh, State-wise and district-wise; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) to (c) The Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has expanded its dealer network with a view to covering almost all the districts in the country. As on 1st March 08 SAIL has appointed 1536 dealers all over the country.

The present number of dealers in Uttar Pradesh is 231 covering all the 70 districts of the state. District-wise number of dealers in the state of Uttar Pradesh is given in the enclosed statement.

Statement**Dealership Status Report-Uttar Pradesh**

Sl.No.	State	District	No. of Dealers in the District
1	2	3	4
1.	UP	Agra	5
2.		Aligarh	3
3.		Badaun	1
4.		Etah	1
5.		Firozabad	2
6.		Hathras	2
7.		Mainpura	2
8.		Mathura	2
9.		Allahabad	7
10.		Ambedkarnagar	1
11.		Azamgarh	7
12.		Balla	2
13.		Basti	3
14.		Chandauli	4
15.		Chitrakoot	3
16.		Deoria	2
17.		Faizabad	6
18.		Ghazipur	6
19.		Gorakhpur	4
20.		Jaunpur	4
21.		Kaushambi	7
22.		Kushinagar	5
23.		Maharajganj	6
24.		Mau	5
25.		Mirzapur	4

1	2	3	4
26.		Pratapgarh	5
27.		Raebareli	4
28.		Sant Kabirnagar	1
29.		Sant Ravidasnagar	3
30.		Shrawasti	3
31.		Sidharthnagar	1
32.		Sonbadra	3
33.		Varanasi	5
34.		Baghpat	1
35.		Bareilly	2
36.		Bijnor	2
37.		Bulandshaher	3
38.		Gautambudhanagar	7
39.		Ghaziabad	19
40.		J P Nagar	2
41.		Meerut	4
42.		Moradabad	3
43.		Muzzafarnagar	4
44.		Rampur	3
45.		Saharanpur	3
46.		Auraiya	2
47.		Bahraich	2
48.		Balrampur	1
49.		Banda	1
50.		Barabanki	3
51.		Etawah	3
52.		Farrukhabad	2
53.		Fatehpur	1
54.		Gonda	1

1	2	3	4
55.		Hamirpur	2
56.		Hardoi	2
57.		Jalaun	1
58.		Jhansi	3
59.		Kannauj	1
60.		Kanpur	8
61.		Kanpur Dehat	3
62.		Lakhimpur	2
63.		Lalitpur	1
64.		Lucknow	7
65.		Mohaba	2
66.		Pilibhit	2
67.		Shahjahanpur	2
68.		Sitapur	3
69.		Sultanpur	1
70.		Unnao	3
Total			231

[English]

**Agreement with Foreign Company to
Train Indian Pilots**

2117. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has entered into an agreement with a foreign company to train Indian pilots;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the company is likely to develop pilot training infrastructure on modern lines;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the number of pilots to be trained in the first phase; and

(f) the time by which the shortage of pilots is likely to be overcome?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A management contract has been signed between Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) and M/s. CAE Inc. and a Joint Venture agreement has been signed between Airports Authority of India and M/s. CAE Inc., Canada for establishment of Rajiv Gandhi National Flying Training Institute (RGNFTI) at Gondia, Maharashtra.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) M/s. CAE would implement a professional management system at IGRUA on modern lines. RGNFTI will also have State of art training facilities like simulator, office automation equipment, other training devices with course material and modern techniques meeting the Directorate General of Civil Aviation requirements.

(e) The training capacity of IGRUA will increase from 40 cadets per year at present to 100 cadets per year and also the training period will come down from two years to one year. RGNFTI will also train 100 students within one year of inception.

(f) With augmentation of training capacity, the demand of trained pilots will be met to a great extent.

**Stoppage of Rajdhani Express to Kerala at
Alappuzha Station**

2118. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways has received any representation for the stoppage of Rajdhani Express to Kerala at Alappuzha Station; and

(b) if so, response of the Railways thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The request has been examined but not found feasible for implementation.

New Civil Aviation Policy

2119. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Government has formulated any Civil Aviation Policy to address all the issues relating to the boom in passenger and cargo traffic;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures taken to strengthen the security at the airports keeping in view the increase in number of passengers and air traffic?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The New Civil Aviation Policy is presently under consideration of a Group of Ministers (GoM).

(c) Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) by way of formulating procedures and measures on aviation security in compliance with the National Aviation Security Programme approved by the Government, has taken adequate and effective steps to regulate aviation security.

The following plans have been formulated to provide adequate security at airport to meet the increase in number of passengers and air traffic:

- (i) Contingency Plan to deal with unlawful interference with airports in the country for keeping up their preparedness against any unlawful interference at all time;
- (ii) Counter Terrorist Plan has been prepared to effectively deal with any contingencies;
- (iii) BCAS prepares National Aviation Security Quality Control Plan every year for aviation security Audit. Inspections, tests etc. to ensure compliance of aviation security standards and procedures by all agencies.

Cargo Handling Facilities

2120. SHRI SUBRATA BOSE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up dedicated textile cargo handling facilities at the major international airports to boost this sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, inter-alia indicating the places in West Bengal where such facilities are proposed to be created?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Funds Reimbursed to States for Disabled Persons

2121. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the expenditure incurred by the State Governments on Centrally sponsored offices and cells for disabled persons is reimbursed by the Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the State-wise expenditure on the said scheme during the last three years including the current financial year alongwith the funds sanctioned by the Union Government for the same;

(d) the details of the amount demanded by the State Governments along with the amount paid by the Government and the amount still remains to be paid;

(e) whether the Government propose to sanction the remaining amount within the fixed time limit; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (f) The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of employment of the handicapped had been transferred to State Sector w.e.f. 01.04.2005 and hence no provision is being made in the Central Government's budget for the Scheme.

[English]

Foreign Pilots in Indian Airlines

2122. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether DGCA has issued guidelines to all the airlines in regard to hiring foreign pilots as well as engaging and giving preference to Indian pilots; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and to what extent the Indian pilots are likely to get priority over foreign pilots in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued Civil Aviation Requirements Section 7, Series "G", Part-II, wherein it has been stipulated that operator shall furnish his plan for training Indian flight crew and due justification for employing the foreign pilots. All the operators shall clearly indicate their plans of phasing out the foreign flight crew.

Train between Bhubaneshwar to Mysore

2123. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have a proposal to introduce a direct train between Bhubaneshwar to Mysore via Bangalore;

(b) if so, the steps taken to introduce the train services in that route; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. At present, there is no such proposal.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Due to operational and resource constraints.

Methodology for Estimation of Foreign Exchange Earnings

2124. SHRI MILIND DEORA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has revised the methodology for estimation of foreign exchange earnings through tourism;

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

(c) whether the current methodology is substantially underestimating the foreign exchange earnings from tourism; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and how does the current methodology differ from the revised methodology?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) gives preliminary quarterly estimates of Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) from tourism with a time lag of 3 months and provisionally revised estimates with a time lag of about 6 months. However, Ministry of Tourism (MOT) prepares monthly estimate of FEE from tourism with a time lag of one week.

The methodology earlier followed for estimating the FEE from tourism for a particular month was based on the following main inputs:-

- (i) A norm of FEE per visitor from Bangladesh and Pakistan;
- (ii) The ratio of FEE per visitor from countries other than Bangladesh and Pakistan; and
- (iii) Total number of foreign tourist arrivals in that month.

The ratio of FEE per visitor from countries other than Bangladesh and Pakistan was derived using the FEE data from the RBI, but had not been updated using the latest estimates from RBI. This resulted in significant variation between the estimates of FEE from tourism given by the MOT and the RBI.

In the revised methodology currently being used, the old norms of FEE per visitor from Bangladesh and Pakistan have been done away with. Further, the revised methodology uses the latest provisionally revised estimates of FEE from tourism available from the RBI. Another improvement in the new methodology is the use of Consumer Price Index (Urban Non-Manual Employees) in place of Wholesale Price Index to adjust for inflation.

As the new methodology has provision for using continuously the latest information of FEE from tourism given by RBI, the variation between the estimates of MOT and RBI in future also is likely to be only marginal.

Taxes Charged by the Private Airlines

2125. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that many of the private airlines in the country have included various charges viz. Passenger Service Fee, Fuel Surcharge, etc. under "Taxes";

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether those items shown as "Taxes" has been deposited properly with the Government;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, whether the Government has issued any instructions to the airlines to clarify their fare and tax structures; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) At present, air fare charged by the private scheduled domestic airlines comprise basic fare, fuel surcharge, congestion surcharge, passenger service fee and transaction fee (if the ticket is booked through any point of purchase other than the website). Out of the aforesaid charges, only passenger service fee is the component which is collected by the Airlines on behalf of the airport operators.

(c) to (f) Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had sought clarification from the private scheduled airlines regarding tax components being charged by them and confirmation whether all the taxes shown on their respective websites are deposited with the Government.

The airlines responded that they have made changes in their web site to indicate correct position of the breakup of the various charges in the ticket.

Cold Chain Facilities

2126. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA:
SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item appeared in Business Line dated January 1, 2008 captioned, "Government in talks with Dole Food for cold Chain facilities";

(b) if so, the details of the talks with the US based food processing company Dole Food Company to set up cold chain facilities and backward linkages in the country; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (c) Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MFPI) takes steps to attract private investment including Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Food Processing sector which has great potential for growth of employment and income. Dole Food Company alongwith others have shown preliminary interest in investments in strengthening cold chain infrastructure and backward linkages leading to higher income to farmers and overall development of food processing industries in the country.

LPG Distribution through Fair Price Shops

2127. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to distribute LPG cylinders through fair price shops;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any modalities have been worked out in this regard; and

(d) the time by which final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (d) No, Sir. Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) do not support the proposal to supply LPG cylinders through Fair Price Shops (FPS) interalia on account of the following reasons;

(i) It is not a practical proposition to put domestic LPG in the FPS as LPG is not rationed good. This is purely commercial good marketed by OMCs through their LPG distributors appointed as per their commercial considerations.

- (ii) It would be difficult to keep a check on the diversion of domestic LPG cylinders for unauthorized commercial use.
- (iii) At present, OMCs make delivered supplies of filled cylinders to the distributors godowns. The inclusion of additional transportation costs from the distributor's godown to each of the proposed sub-distributors and sub-distributor's commission in the price would make the monitoring of end selling prices difficult.
- (iv) It would be difficult to enforce the observance of safe practices by the FPS owners.
- (v) The necessary infrastructure and expertise for attending to leakage complaints and other associated services would need to be developed at FPS.

[*Translation*]

Status of Railway Projects

2128. SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:
DR. CHINTA MOHAN:
SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL:
SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the Railways are aware that several railway projects are not completed in time, resulting in time and cost-overrun of the projects;
- (b) if so, the details of such projects, zonewise;
- (c) the reasons for the delay in these projects, zone-wise;

(d) the present progress report of the projects started more than 10 years ago, zonewise;

(e) whether the Railways have evolved any policy to complete the said projects at the earliest;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Railway projects under the Plan heads of New Line, Gauge Conversion, Doubling, Railway Electrification and Metropolitan Transport on all the Zones are progressing as per the availability of funds on year to year basis. Ongoing Railway projects undergo cost escalation on account of various reasons like change in the standard of construction and technology, scope of work, inflation, etc. In the absence of assured availability of matching funds at the time of taking up of a project, time and cost overrun are not feasible to be evaluated.

(d) As on 01.04.2007, there were 60 projects taken up prior to 2007-08 and which are in various stages of progress. Zone-wise details of projects is given in the enclosed statement.

(e) to (g) Efforts are being made to generate non-budgetary resources to expedite completion of the ongoing projects. A number of initiatives have been taken for getting additional resources through Public/Private Partnership, cost sharing with State Governments funding through Ministry of Defence and National Projects and increased availability of resources through internal generation. With all these initiatives, the ongoing projects are expected to be completed within next few years.

Statement

The details of ongoing projects, zone-wise taken prior to 1997-98 are as under:—

(Rs. in crore)

Sl.No.	Railway/Zone	Plan head	Year of inclusion in Budget	Name of the Project (s)	KMs	Cost	Expenditure upto March 2007	Outlay 07-08
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Central	NL	1993-94	Amravati-Narkher	138	284.27	168.23	7.00
2.	Central	NL	1995-96	Ahmednagar-Beed-Parli Vajinath	261.25	482.67	15.42	10.00

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3.	Central	GC	1993-94	Miraj-Latur	374	515.57	373.95	75.53
4.	Central	DL	1996-97	Parvel-Roha	75.44	3.88	3.33	0.01
5.	Central	MTP	1996-97	Belapur-Seaewood-Uran electrified double line	27	495.44	83.92	15.00
6.	Central	MTP	1996-97	Thane-Turbhe-Nerul/Vashi part of corridor No. 1 in New Mumbai	23.3	403.39	362.96	1.00
7.	East Coast	NL	1993-94	Lanjigarh Road-Junagarh	56	142	37.18	12.00
8.	East Coast	NL	1994-95	Khurda Road-Bolangir	289	700	68.22	20.00
9.	East Coast	NL	1996-97	Haridaspur-Paradeep	82	594.34	69.41	20.00
10.	East Coast	DL	1996-97	Talcher-Cuttack-Paradeep (2nd Bridges on Mahanadi and Birupa)	3	1227	54.12	64.00
11.	East Coast	RE	1995-96	Kharagpur-Bhubaneswar Including Talcher-Paradeep	540	406.51	384.78	2.00
12.	East Central	NL	1996-97	Khagaria-Kusheshwarsthan	42.3	162.87	33.58	5.00
13.	East Central	NL	1996-97	Sakri-Hasanpur	76	89.7	69.9	20.00
14.	East Central	GC	1996-97	Mansi-Saharsa and Saharsa-Dauram Madhepura-Purnia	142	330.51	132.91	40.15
15.	Eastern	NL	1995-96	Mandarhill-Rampurhat via Dumka	130	254.07	95.6	17.00
16.	Eastern	MTP	1972-73	Dum Dum-Tollyganj Design and construction of Rapid Transit System	24.95	2709.12	2116.5	193.25
17.	North Central	NL	1985-86	Guna-Etawah	344	515.24	392.06	30.00
18.	North Central	GC	1995-96	Mathura-Achnera	35	33.67	0.12	30.00
19.	North Central	DL	1995-96	Kanpur-Panki 3rd line	9	69.58	96.8	4.00
20.	North Central	DL	1995-96	Tundla-Yamuna Bridge	21	27.07	20.06	4.06
21.	North Eastern	NL	1995-96	Rampur-Laekuan-Kathgodam ROB on NH	0	16.06	0.1	0.50
22.	Northeast Frontier	NL	1984-85	Eklakhi-Balurghat and Gazo-Ithar	113.11	282.74	216.46	2.00
23.	Northeast Frontier	NL	1992-93	Dudhnoi-Depa	15.5	22.33	0.5	0.02
24.	Northeast Frontier	NL	1996-97	Harmuti-Itanagar	33	158	0.01	5.00
25.	Northeast Frontier	NL	1996-97	Kumarghat-Agartala	109	879.99	576.53	45.00
26.	Northeast Frontier	GC	1993-94	Lumding-Dibrugarh with linked fingers, Haibargaon-Mairabari (44.8 kms) and Senchoa Jn-Silghat Town (61.85 kms).	734.65	882.12	736.43	5.00
27.	Northeast Frontier	GC	1996-97	Lumding-Silchar including alignment between Migrendisa-Ditlockchera and extension from Badarpur to Bhanigram	367.79	1676.96	627.96	90.00

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
28.	Northern	NL	1981-82	Nangal Dam-Talwara and Taking over siding of Mukerian Talwara	83.74	300	125.1	15.08
29.	Northern	NL	1994-95	Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramula	292	11270	4186	0.00
30.	Northern	RE	1992-93	Ambala-Moradabad	274	249.67	244.25	5.00
31.	Northern	RE	1996-97	Khurja-Meerut-Saharanpur	207	89.21	0	0.00
32.	North Western	NL	1996-97	Dausa-Gangapur City	92.67	208.83	28.45	5.00
33.	North Western	GC	1991-92	Bhildi-Samdari	223	244.74	102.51	110.00
34.	South Central	NL	1993-94	Peddapally-Karimnagar-Nizamabad	177.87	517.63	205.64	35.00
35.	South Central	NL	1996-97	Nandyal-Yerraguntla	126	173.32	43.66	15.00
36.	South Central	GC	1992-93	Guntur-Guntakal and Guntakal-Kalkuru New line from Pendakallu to Gooty	546.54	528.38	479.21	60.00
37.	South Central	RE	1992-93	Reniguntal-Guntakal	308	182.5475	56.1	3.00
38.	South East Central	NL	1995-96	Dallirajahara-Jagdalpur	235	968.6	0.437	13.00
39.	South East Central	GC	1996-97	Jabalpur-Gondia including Balaghat-Katangi	275.2	524.88	239.68	60.00
40.	South Eastern	NL	1974-75	Howrah-Arma	73.5	154.3	83.3	5.00
41.	South Eastern	GC	1995-96	Rupsa-Bangriposi	90	135.56	66.3	35.00
42.	South Eastern	GC	1996-97	Ranchi-Lohardaga with extension to Tori	113	324	211	10.00
43.	Southern	NL	1996-97	Karur-Salem	85	229.88	108.07	20.00
44.	Southern	GC	1995-96	Tiruchchirappali-Nagore-Karaikkal (200 Kms) with extn Nagapattinam-Tiruthirapundi (43 Kms)	243	205.79	203.12	30.00
45.	Southern	DL	1995-96	Calicut-Mangalore	221	530.86	520.81	15.00
46.	Southern	DL	1996-97	Irugur-Coimbatore	17.7	38.67	33.66	10.00
47.	Southern	MTP	1996-97	Thirumalair to Velecherry-MRTS (Ph. II)	11.17	733.39	631.97	8.00
48.	South Western	NL	1995-96	Kottur-Harihar via Harpanhalli	65	206.82	49.99	30.70
49.	South Western	NL	1996-97	Bangalore-Satyamanglam	260	901.62	0.293	1.00
50.	South Western	NL	1996-97	Hassan-Bangalore	166	412.91	218.54	21.00
51.	South Western	NL	1996-97	Hubli-Ankola	167	997.58	69.78	5.00
52.	South Western	NL	1996-97	Kadur-Chickmagalur-Sakleshpur	93	274.29	55.52	10.00
53.	South Western	GC	1992-93	Shimoga-Talguppa (Bangalore-Hubli-Birur-Shimoga)	630	539.43	27.19	70.00
54.	South Western	GC	1993-94	Sholapur (Hotgi)-Gadag	284	357.7	311.9	50.00

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
55.	Western	NL	1989-90	Dahod-Indore and Dewas-Makai	236	678.56	56.2	6.00
56.	Western	GC	1990-91	Bhildi-Virangam	157	124.65	110.12	40.00
57.	Western	GC	1993-94	Phulera-Marwar-Ahmedabad, Ahmedabad Yard remodelling, Sabarmati-Khodiyar	654.5	517.07	496.62	5.28
58.	Western	GC	1994-95	Rajkot-Veraval, Wansjalia to Jetalsar with new line from Veraval to Somnath	281	508.87	370.14	38.00
59.	Western	GC	1996-97	Surendranagar-Bhavnagar, Dhola-Dhara-Mahuva with exn. to Pipavav	387	279.47	509.89	30.00
60.	Western	DL	1990-91	Kalapipal-Phanda/Makai-Bhopal	41.49	97.84	88.27	25.00

[English]

City Gas Grids

2129. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has sought the help of European Union on city gas grids;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the total investment involved in the venture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Investment on the Developmental Activities by Oil PSUs

2130. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Oil Public Sector Undertakings together will invest more than 2.7 lakh crore on various developmental activities during the Eleventh Plan period;

(b) if so, the details thereof, PSU-wise; and

(c) the details of the focus areas proposed for such investments by each oil PSU?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) The approved outlay for all Oil PSUs during the XI Five Year Plan period (2007-2012) is Rs. 229071.59 crore. With this proposed investment, the Oil PSUs would undertake all activities in the oil and gas sector, such as, Exploration and Production; Refining and Marketing; Petrochemicals and Engineering. Details are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Sector-wise Eleventh Plan Outlay for Oil PSUs

(Rs. in crore)

Sl.No.	PSUs	SI Plan Outlay
1	2	3
A.	Exploration and Production	
1.	OVL	45332.87
2.	ONGC	75983.77
3.	OIL	13439.02
4.	GAIL	10326.83
5.	IOC	2982.00
6.	HPCL	2000.00
7.	BPCL	868.00
Sub Total (A)		150932.49

1	2	3
B. Refining and Marketing		
1.	IOC	28567.75
2.	HPCL	8714.00
3.	BPCL	11344.80
4.	CPCL	3275.00
5.	BRPL	1444.53
6.	NRL	593.00
7.	MRPL	8643.02
Sub Total (B)		62582.10
C. Petrochemical		
1.	HPCL	773.00
2.	GAIL	1618.00
3.	IOC	11844.10
4.	BRPL	591.90
5.	CPCL	300.00
6.	MRPL	83.00
7.	NRL	111.00
Sub Total (C)		15321.00
D. Engineering		
1.	BALMER LAWRIE	205.00
2.	BIECCO LAWRIE	31.00
Sub Total (D)		236.00
Total Petroleum and Natural Gas Sector (A+B+C+D)		229071.59

[Translation]

Reservation Provision in NGOs

2131. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to collect details of persons appointed by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) on reserved posts at the Central level;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to set up any cell at the Central level to monitor the compliance of provisions of reservation by NGOs; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

[English]

Joint Venture Projects by SAIL

2132. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) has embarked upon a Joint Venture with any private company during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any tenders were floated in this regard with special reference to Bokaro Steel Plant; and

(d) if so, the number of bidders and the process adopted for finalisation of bids and indicating the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. During the last three years, Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has entered into two Joint Venture Projects for Cement and one Joint Venture Agreement for Coal, as per details given below:

(i) A Joint Venture Company has been incorporated in April, 2007 for setting up a Cement Plant at Bhilai with a capacity of 2.2 million tonnes per annum. The Joint Venture partner, M/s Jaiprakash Associates Limited has a share of 74 percent and SAIL's share is 26 percent.

- (ii) Shareholders' Agreement has been signed in February, 2008 for setting up a Joint Venture Cement Company at Bokaro Steel Plant with a capacity to produce 2.1 million tonnes per annum. The Joint Venture partner, M/s Jaiprakash has a share of 74 percent and SAIL's share is 26 percent.
- (iii) SAIL has signed a Joint Venture Agreement with Tata Steel in January, 2008 for Mining of Coal.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. For both the Joint Venture projects at Bhilai and Bokaro, SAIL has adopted an Open Tender process.

In case of Bokaro Steel Plant, in response to advertisement issued in December, 2005, six parties had responded. Finally, in May, 2007 three parties submitted their final bids. Based on techno-commercial evaluation, M/s Jaiprakash Associates was selected as the strategic partner in October, 2007.

Fast Moving Rail Corridor

2133. SHRI P. C. THOMAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is a demand for fast moving rail corridor from Mumbai to Kanyakumari;
- (b) if so, the response of the Railways thereto;
- (c) whether Railways intend to start rail routes in different States for such fast trains; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A proposal from Chief Minister of Kerala has been received for Mumbai-Kanyakumari corridor. Ministry of Railways is undertaking a pre-feasibility study of Bangalore-Coimbatore-Ernakulam section of this corridor.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. Presently Ministry of Railways intends to conduct pre-feasibility studies only, for five selected corridors, namely;

- (i) Delhi-Chandigarh-Amritsar
- (ii) Pune-Mumbai-Ahmedabad

- (iii) Hyderabad-Dornakal-Vijaywada-Chennai
- (iv) Chennai-Bangalore-Coimbatore-Ernakulam
- (v) Howrah-Haldia

Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd.

2134. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI:
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. has signed a traffic guarantee agreement with SAIL;
- (b) if so, the salient features of the said agreement;
- (c) the details of equity contribution of Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. for development of railway line under the said agreement; and
- (d) the steps taken for timely completion of all requirements of the said agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Agreement among the shareholders of Haridaspur-Paradip Railway Company Limited (HPRCL), RVNL and East Coast Railway has not been initiated indicating the corrective intention to sign the legally vetted draft. Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) is one of the partners and has offered guaranteed traffic of 0.5 Metric Tonne Per Annum (MTPA) on the project line. The Traffic Guarantee Agreement provides for guaranteed traffic by the offerors and evacuation of traffic by the Railways.

(c) Equity contribution is not a part of the traffic guarantee agreement. RVNL has committed a contribution of Rs. 133.20 crore as equity in Haridaspur-Paradip Railway Company Ltd. for implementation of Haridaspur-Paradip new railway line on East Coast Railway.

(d) The draft Traffic Guarantee Agreement has already been sent to Ministry of Law for vetting.

Rail Accident in Koval District of Tamil Nadu

2135. DR. K. DHANARAJU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that three elephants died in a rail accident recently in Kovai District in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether anti collision devices are capable of detecting elephants and other similar objects on the track;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the steps taken to avert such accidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Such accident had taken place on 4.2.08 with a passenger train No. 631/A-Erode-Palakkad Town between Podanur Jn. and Madukarai station.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Instruction has been issued for special caution orders to train Drivers wherever there is a possibility of such elephants crossing the railway tracks.

Setting up of SPV on Airports

2136. SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to set up a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to develop airports in the country; and

(b) if so, the details of the airports on the modernization list?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Funds allocated for Disabled Persons

2137. SHRI AJIT JOGI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of discrimination in allocation of funds under the schemes/programmes being run by non-governmental organizations in various States to provide various facilities for disabled persons;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons behind the huge difference in allocation of funds under the said schemes/programmes for different States; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (d) Funds for persons with disabilities are not distributed State-wise. Hence, there is no ground for discrimination.

In fact, for empowering persons with disabilities in the areas not adequately covered/served by any of the Government/Semi-Government agencies or Non-Governmental Organizations, measures are taken by the Government for promoting voluntary action, awareness generation, capacity building, etc.

[English]

Procurement of Domestic LPG Cylinders from Norway

2138. SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to procure domestic LPG cylinders from Norwegian company;

(b) if so, the features of the new LPG cylinders to be procured from Norwegian company;

(c) the terms and condition on which such LPG cylinders would be procured;

(d) whether the safety aspects of such LPG cylinders have been taken into account; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) Government has conveyed "In principle" approval to the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies

(OMCs) for expanding the product line by way of introduction of composite cylinders for marketing domestic LPG, subject to there being no subsidy element in the LPG to be marketed through these composite cylinders. To start with, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) along with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) intend to import some cylinders and do test marketing in selected cities.

(d) and (e) OMCs are procuring LPG cylinders from cylinder manufacturers who have valid manufacturing licences from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the Chief Controller of Explosives (CCOE). LPG cylinders procured by OMCs meet the required quality standards.

OMCs have reported that necessary approval of CCOE has been obtained for use of composite cylinders for LPG. CCOE has also granted approval to M/s Ragasco AS, Norway for their composite cylinders.

12.01 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises for the year 2008-2009.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8226/08)

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): I beg to lay on the Table –

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:-

(i) Review by the Government of the working of the Utkal Ashok Hotel Corporation Limited, Puri, for the year 2005-2006.

(ii) Annual Report of the Utkal Ashok Hotel Corporation Limited, Puri, for the year 2005-2006, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8227/08)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Handique.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI G.K. VASAN): I beg to lay on the Table –

(1) A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation for the year 2008-2009.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8228/08)

(2) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation for the year 2008-2009.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8229/08)

MR. SPEAKER: I got a notice from him that he will not be present in the House.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): I beg to lay on the Table –

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:-

(a) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Projects and Development India Limited, Noida, for the year 2006-2007.

(ii) Annual Report of the Projects and Development India Limited, Noida, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8230/08)

(b) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Limited, Dibrugarh, for the year 2006-2007.

- (II) Annual Report of the Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Limited, Dibrugarh, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8231/08)

- (c) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Limited, Noida, for the year 2006-2007.

- (ii) Annual Report of the Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Limited, Noida, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

- (2) Three statements (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8232/08)

- (3) A copy each of the following Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions):-

- (i) Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs for the year 2008-2009.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8233/08)

- (ii) Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers for the year 2008-2009.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8234/08)

- (4) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers for the year 2008-2009.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8235/08)

- (5) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers for the year 2008-2009.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8236/08)

- (6) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

- (7) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (6) above.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8237/08)

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NARANBHAI RATHWA): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table.

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Railway Sports Promotion, Board, New Delhi, for the year 2006-07, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Railway Sports Promotion Board, New Delhi, for the year 2006-07.

- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8238/08)

- (3) (i) A Copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Railway Welfare Organisation, New Delhi, for the year 2006-07, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Indian Railway Welfare Organisation, New Delhi, for the year 2006-07.

- (4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8239/08)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): I beg to lay on the Table -

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

(i) Review by the Government of the working of the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

(ii) Annual Report of the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8240/08)

(3) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Rehabilitation Council of India, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Rehabilitation Council of India, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

(4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8241/08)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRY, MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): I beg to lay on the Table —

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:-

(i) Statement regarding Review by the Government of the working of the Bharat Bhari Udyog Limited and its subsidiaries, Kolkata, for the year 2006-2007.

(ii) Annual Report of the Bharat Bhari Udyog Limited and its subsidiaries, Kolkata, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8242/08)

(3) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Automotive Testing and R and D Infrastructure Project Implementation Society, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Automotive Testing and R and D Infrastructure Project Implementation Society, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

(4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8243/08)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): I beg to lay on the Table —

(1) A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for the year 2008-2009.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8244/08)

(2) A copy of the Solvent, Raffinate and Slop (Acquisition, Sale, Storage and Prevention of Use in Automobiles) Amendment Order, 2007 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R.689(E) in Gazette of India dated 1st November, 2007 under sub-section (6) of section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8245/08)

(3) A copy of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (Salaries, Allowances and other

Conditions of Service of Chairperson and Members) Amendment Rules, 2007 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 405(E) in Gazette of India dated 31st May, 2007 under section 62 of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8246/08)

(4) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (i) Review by the Government of the working of the GAIL (India) Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.
- (ii) Annual Report of the GAIL (India) Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8247/08)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): I beg to lay on the Table —

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (a) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Bharat Refractories Limited, Bokaro Steel City, for the year 2006-2007.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Bharat Refractories Limited, Bokaro Steel City, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8248/08)

- (b) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Manganese Ore (India) Limited, Nagpur, for the year 2006-2007.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Manganese Ore (India) Limited, Nagpur, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8249/08)

(c) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited, Bangalore, for the year 2006-2007.

(ii) Annual Report of the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited, Bangalore, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8250/08)

(d) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Sponge Iron India Limited, Hyderabad, for the year 2006-2007.

(ii) Annual Report of the Sponge Iron India Limited, Hyderabad, for the year 2006-2007, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(2) Four statements (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8251/08)

12.02 hrs.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Referring to the Committee of Privileges the Petition to Disqualify a Member

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that on 25 January, 2008, Shri Avtar Singh Bhadana gave a petition under rule 6 of the Members of Lok Sabha (Disqualification on ground of Defection) Rules, 1985 against Shri Kuldeep Bishnoi praying that the member be declared to have incurred disqualification for being member of the House under paragraph 2 (1) (a) of the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution for having voluntarily given up membership of his original political party *viz* Indian National Congress.

In terms of Rule 7 (3) of the said Rules, I caused copy of the petition together with its annexures to be forwarded to the respondent and the leader of the Indian National Congress for furnishing comments in the matter.

After going through the comments and having regard to the nature and circumstances of the case, I have, decided to refer the petition to the Committee of Privileges under rule 7 (4) of the said Rules for making a preliminary inquiry and submitting a report to me.

12.02¹/₂ hrs.

**REPORT ON PARTICIPATION OF INDIAN
PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION IN THE
19th CSPO CONFERENCE**

[English]

SECRETARY- GENERAL: I beg to lay on the Table (Hindi and English versions) of the Report on Participation of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation in the 19th Commonwealth Speaker and Presiding Officers Conference held at London from 2 January to 5 January 2008.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8252/08)

12.02³/₄ hrs.

**PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES—
SUMMARY OF WORK**

[English]

SECRETARY-GENERAL: I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the 'Parliamentary Committees (other than Financial and Departmentally Related Standing Committees) – Summary of Work' (Hindi and English versions) pertaining to the period from 1 June, 2006 to 31 May, 2007.

(Placed in Library, *See* No. LT 8253/08)

12.03 hrs.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

17th Report

[English]

SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI (MADRAS NORTH): I beg to present the Seventeenth Report (Hindi and English

versions) of Estimates Committee on the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Higher Education) – University Grants Commission.

12.04 hrs.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

63rd to 66th Reports

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): Sir, I beg to present the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Public Accounts Committee (2007-08):-

- (1) Sixty-third Report on Action Taken on 19th Report of PAC (14th Lok Sabha) on "National AIDS Control Programme",
- (2) Sixty-fourth Report on Action Taken on 38th Report of PAC (14th Lok Sabha) on "Performance Audit of Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy";
- (3) Sixty-fifth Report on Action Taken on 40th Report of PAC (14th Lok Sabha) on "Management of Projects relating of Utilization and Conservation of Soil and Water undertaken by Institute of ICAR"; and
- (4) Sixty-sixth Report of Action Taken on 43rd Report of PAC (14th Lok Sabha) on "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)".

12.05 hrs.

**COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF
SCHEDULED CASTES AND
SCHEDULED TRIBES**

26th and 27th Reports

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU (Jhargram): I beg to present the following Reports:-

- (1) Twenty-sixth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the Ministry of

Finance (Department of Revenue) on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their Twelfth Report (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on "Reservation for and Employment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC)"; and

- (2) Twenty-seventh Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the Ministry of Finance (Department of Financial Services – Insurance Division) on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their Nineteenth Report (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on "Reservation for and Employment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in United India Insurance Company Limited".

12.05¹/₂ hrs.

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON OFFICES
OF PROFIT**

6th Report

[English]

SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH (Farrukhabad): I beg to present the Sixth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Joint Committee on Offices of Profit.

12.06 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Status of Implementation of the recommendations contained in the 17th, 19th and 24th reports of Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers pertaining to the Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): I beg to lay the

statement on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the seventeenth report of the Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers in terms of Direction 73-A of the hon. Speaker, Lok Sabha, issued vide Lok Sabha Bulletin Pt. II dated September 01, 2004.

2. The Department of Fertilizers (DOF) comes under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers. The main objective of the Department is to ensure adequate and timely availability of fertilizers for maximizing agricultural production in the country and for this purpose to promote and assist industries in the fertilizer sector and to plan and arrange import and distribution of fertilizers.

3. The main activities of DOF include planning promotion and development of the fertilizer industry, programming and monitoring of production, pricing, import and supply of fertilizers and management of financial resources by way of subsidy/concession for indigenous and imported fertilizers. The Department also disburses payments to manufacturers/importers of decontrolled fertilizers under the concession scheme made available to the farmers at the indicative Maximum Retail Price (MRP).

4. In addition, the activities of DOF also include the administrative control of the following public sector undertakings and cooperatives in the fertilizers sector:-

- (i) FCI (under closure)
- (ii) FACT
- (iii) MFL
- (iv) NFL
- (v) RCF
- (vi) BVFCL
- (vii) HFC (under closure)
- (viii) PDIL
- (ix) PPCL (under closure)
- (x) FCI, Aravali Gypsum Minerals India Ltd.
- (xi) KRIBHCO

* Laid on the Table and also placed in Library, See No. LT-8254/08.

5. The office of the Executive Director, Fertilizers Industry Coordination Committee (FICC) also works under the Department of Fertilizer. This office provides the secretarial support to FICC constituted to administer the Retention Price Scheme for Nitrogenous Fertilizers and various incentive schemes to augment production of indigenous fertilizers.

6. This report contained 14 recommendations on the following issues:-

- (i) Revival of the closed units and availability of gas
- (ii) Revision of the rate of concession of the SSP to make the units viable and fully productive.
- (iii) Review of the existing policy for investment in the fertilizers sector
- (iv) Time bound programme of reviewing the success of NPS.
- (v) Quality and adulteration of fertilizers at various transit points.
- (vi) Timely distribution and movement of fertilizers from plants and ports ensuring that no pilferage or adulteration take place during the movement of fertilizers.
- (vii) Rationalization of the freight in case of controlled fertilizers under NPS-III
- (viii) Monitoring the distribution of fertilizers in all the districts of the country.
- (ix) De-bottlenecking and expansion of fertilizers units.
- (x) Encouraging more Indian Companies setting up joint venture companies abroad.
- (xi) Shortage of natural gas.
- (xii) To take adequate steps to raise the production of bio-fertilizers.
- (xiii) Development of organic in the North Eastern States.

- (xiv) Issue of increase in railway freight with Ministry of Railways

7. Action taken replies of the Govt. on the recommendations contained in the 19th report of the Standing Committee of Parliament on Chemicals and Fertilizers have further been reviewed by the Committee. The Committee in their 24th report submitted to the Parliament on 20.11.2007 have accepted the replies with regard to issues mentioned in para 6 (ix) to (xiv). In respect of issues mentioned in para S. No. 6 (v), the Committee have not accepted the replies of the Govt. In respect of other replies, the Committee in their 24th report have made further recommendations on the following issues:-

- (i) Revival of the closed units and availability of gas
- (ii) Revision of the rate of concession of the SSP to make the units viable and fully productive.
- (iii) Review of the existing policy for investment in the fertilizers sector
- (iv) Time bound programme of reviewing the success of NPS.
- (v) Quality and adulteration of fertilizers at various transit points.
- (vi) Timely distribution and movement of fertilizers from plants and ports ensuring that no pilferage or adulteration take place during the movement of fertilizers.
- (vii) Rationalization of the freight in case of controlled fertilizers under NPS-III.
- (viii) Monitoring the distribution of fertilizers in all the districts of the country.

8. Action taken replies of the Govt. on these recommendations have been submitted to the Lok Sabha Sectt. On 5th February, 2008.

9. Briefly present status of the recommendations contained in the 24th report of the Committee is as follows:-

- The Government is seized of the issue relating to revival process of the closed fertilizer units and the units will be revived once availability of the gas for these plants is tied up. The Empowered Group of Minister (EGOM) has decided on 12th September 2007 that all existing and future requirement of gas for fertilizer sector will be met in its entirety from the existing and future discoveries of natural gas. The Department is regularly pursuing the matter regarding commitment of gas for revival of closed units.
- Subsidy on SSP has been increased from Rs. 975 per MT to Rs. 1125 per MT with effect from 1.4.2007. Further revision of the concession rate is under consideration of the Govt.
- Contours of new investment policy for urea sector have been finalized in consultation with Industry so as to attract more investment in this sector. The proposal is presently under active consideration.
- Provisions of Fertilizer Control Order, provide for appointment of inspectors both by the State and Central Government to check quality of the product. These checks are being exercised by the Central Government, through number of laboratories. Manufacturing units have also been advised to set up quality control cells to monitor quality of finished product.
- The performance of the NPS Stage-III with respect to growth of production and industry is proposed to review at the end of 2007-08.
- In respect of decontrolled fertilizers, ad-hoc increase in the subsidy on account of increase in freight has been effected from 21.4.2007.
- Steps have been taken by the Govt. to sensitise all the stakeholders as also the general public to create awareness about the fertilizer monitoring system.

12.07 hrs.

**STATEMENT CORRECTING REPLY TO
STARRED QUESTION NO. 114 DATED
22.11.2007 REGARDING CAPACITY
AUGMENTATION ON SATURATED ROUTES
ALONGWITH GIVING REASONS FOR
DELAY IN CORRECTING THE REPLY***

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): Sir, this is with reference to the reply to part (a) and (b) of the Starred Question No. 114, answered on 22.11.2007 asked by Shri Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy. In Para 1, it has been stated that, "Approximately 75 per cent of the total freight traffic is carried on 25 per cent of the route kilometers." In order to include both passenger and freight traffic, the reply was changed to "Approximately 71 per cent of the total traffic is carried on 28 per cent of the route kilometers".

Further in Para 3, it was stated that "Further, Railways have already announced two Dedicated Freight Corridors between Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust-Tughlakabad and Sonenagar-Ludhiana at a cost of more than Rs. 28,000 crores to give relief to two of the densely saturated High Density Network routes viz. Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Kolkata High Density Network routes". Since Ministry of Railways have already stated that the Dedicated Freight Corridor between Sonenagar-Ludhiana will be later extended to deep sea port of Kolkata, the reply was changed to "Further, Railways have already announced two Dedicated Freight Corridors between Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust-Tughlakabad and Ludhiana-Sonenagar (to be later extended to the deep sea port of Kolkata) at a cost of more than Rs. 28,000 crores to give relief to two of the densely saturated High Density Network routes viz. Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Kolkata High Density Network routes."

THE REVISED POSITION THEREFORE IS AS UNDER:

Para	Existing	Revised
1.	Approximately, 75% of the total freight traffic is carried on 25% of the route kilometers.	Approximately, 71% of the total traffic is carried on 28% of the route kilometers.
3.	Further, Railways have already announced two Dedicated Freight Corridors between Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust – Tughlakabad and Sonenagar-Ludhiana at a cost of more than Rs. 28,000 crores to give relief to two of the densely saturated High Density Network routes viz. Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Kolkata High Density Network routes	Further, Railways have already announced two Dedicated Freight Corridors between Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust – Tughlakabad and Ludhiana – Sonenagar (to be later extended to the deep sea port of Kolkata) at a cost of more than Rs. 28,000 crores to give relief to two of the densely saturated High Density Network routes viz. Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi Kolkata High Density Network routes.

REASONS FOR DELAY

The corrective statement of the Parliament question could not be made before the Parliament as the final approval was received on 06.12.2007 and the Parliament was adjourned sine die on 07.12.2007 leaving no time to put up this reply.

12.08 hrs.

FORWARD CONTRACTS (REGULATION)
AMENDMENT BILL, 2006

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): I beg to move for leave to withdraw a Bill further to amend the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1952.

MR. SPEAKER: Motion moved:

“That leave be granted to withdraw a Bill further to amend the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1952.”

Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan, what is your objection to this?

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil): In the statement given by the hon. Minister, it is stated that ‘in view of the above, the Forward Contracts (Regulation)

Ordinance, 2008 was promulgated with effect from 31st January 2008, on the lines of the Forward Contract (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2006. This is my objection.

Sir, normally, I speak extempore. But today, I would read out my objection.

MR. SPEAKER: How many pages you are going to read?

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: I am giving my objection, under rule 72. I am questioning and challenging the legislative competence.

MR. SPEAKER: Legislative competence of what? Is it of withdrawal?

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: It is about our legislative competence as well as the Government's competence to withdraw. That is also a motion.

MR. SPEAKER: How many pages you are going to read?

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: I am going to read out only two or three sentences. Do not be in a hurry; I am raising only valid points, and only very constitutional points.

MR. SPEAKER: I am in a great hurry to bring you here and keep you sit here!

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: I am getting old.

MR. SPEAKER: No. No. Everyone is.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: It may be pointed out that the Forward Contract (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2006 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 21.3.2006. It was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee. The House is in possession of the Bill. The Standing Committee, after taking evidence, submitted its report on 19.12.2006. It is stated after examining the recommendations, the Government issued an ordinance. It may be pointed out that the Ordinance 2008 was promulgated with effect from 31st January 2008 on the lines of the Forward Contract (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2006. They would also admit that there is a Bill in the House. The Bill is in possession of the House. When the Bill is in possession of the House, they have issued an Ordinance.

It is equivalent to issuing an Ordinance when the House is in Session. There is a clear position in the Statute that no Ordinance can be issued when the House is in Session. Here is a case that the House is in possession of a particular Bill, that too an amendment Bill. When the House is in possession of a particular Bill, the Government has no right to withdraw without a withdrawal motion. This ought to have been done earlier. By moving a withdrawal motion here and getting the approval of the House they can issue an Ordinance. Here is a case where the Bill is under the consideration of the House. The House has not taken a decision. Only a report was submitted. During the pendency of the Bill in the House they have no right to issue an Ordinance on the very same topic. Here they have done it. That is equivalent to the issuance of an Ordinance when the House is in Session. It is a clear violation of article 123. They have no right to do that.

An emergency can be considered when there is unforeseen and unexpected situation requiring the Government to take some immediate action. Here is a case when there is no such unexpected, unforeseen situation arisen. Even if there is, there must be a mention in the Statement. Nowhere urgency is given in the Statement. I would have withdrawn all my submission if the Minister had stated that this was the urgency. There is no such thing. The Minister has stated that a new Bill is introduced on the lines a Bill which is under the consideration of this House. I would read the last paragraph:

"The emergency provision in the Constitution is meant to meet an immediate situation, unexpected and unforeseen when the House is not in Session. The

Statement did not mention any word why the Government resorted to the emergency provision in the Constitution."

It appears as a case of misuse of the provision. We are kept in the darkness. This case has been construed as an encroachment on the legislative powers of this House.

Secondly, the Bill introduced through a Motion and referred to the Standing Committee cannot be withdrawn *suo motu* by the Government. A withdrawal motion ought to have been brought here and the Government must have got the approval of the House. Only after getting the approval on the withdrawal motion they can issue Ordinance. That was not done. They must formally move the Motion of Withdrawal and get the approval of the House. Without resorting to such a procedure the Government cannot presume it as a withdrawal and promulgate an Ordinance in a casual manner. I would now read my last paragraph:

"An Ordinance cannot be issued when the House is in possession of an Amendment Bill on the same topic. Government cannot presume withdrawal *suo motu* and issue Ordinance in its place."

The Government has withdrawn it *suo motu* and issued an Ordinance *w.e.f* 31st January of this year. I have every reason to object the procedure as the Government is doing all these matters without observing the constitutional propriety and that the Bill should originate in the House and not in the Ministry. These matters may be discussed. I request, Sir, that we must strictly obey the constitutional provisions. Our Constitution is very clear. When the House is seized of a matter, they have no right to issue an Ordinance. This is my objection. I challenge the Government, what right it has to issue an Ordinance when the House is in possession of the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: I have to give a decision. Mr. Minister, do you wish to say anything on this or leave it to me.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): I leave it to you, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I think all your objections are very strong observations, as I could understand, relating to the issuance of Ordinance. But the hon. Minister is only guilty of asking for leave to withdraw a particular Bill and nothing to do with the issuance of an Ordinance now. Therefore, I think you better reserve your objections for some other appropriate occasion. It does not arise now.

The question is:

"That leave be granted to withdraw a Bill further to amend the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1952."

The motion was adopted.

DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH: Sir, I withdraw the Bill.... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Your objection is valid but not appropriate now.

12.16 hrs.

FORWARD CONTRACTS (REGULATION) AMENDMENT BILL, 2008

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): Sir, on behalf of Shri Sharad Pawar, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1952 and the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1952 and the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992."

The motion was adopted.

DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH: I introduce the Bill.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have got several notices. I am not minimizing the importance of the subjects which many of the hon. Members wish to raise, but certain obvious things are there. More than one hon. Member

should not speak at a time so that it is intelligible. I will give opportunities. Please hold patience. I am requesting you to please see that the relevant things are said which relate to this House and the Government of India. Although some of them may not strictly arise, however, let me consider.

Now Shri Dhindsaji to speak.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have not said that I will not call you.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Sir, the Chairman assured me to give first chance. I do not think that Chairman's orders will not be carried out.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: O.K. You Will be given opportunity offer the speech of Shri Dhindsa over.

[English]

There is no question of defying the Chairman's orders. But unfortunately, I was not aware.

[Translation]

O.K. You will be given an opportunity.

[English]

You will be called as per the assurance.

[Translation]

SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA (Sangrur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have given the Notice because thousands of farmers from Punjab are sitting on dharna at Jantar-Mantar and nobody is prepared to listen to their problem or receive memorandum from them. If the Government don't pay any attention to them, those people will certainly continue their dharna.

Sir, the land of Punjab is getting barren and the water table is gradually receding. In this regard, they are neither being provided any facilities nor anything is being done for them. Therefore, a very big dharna is being staged there by the Bharatiya Kisan Union. I demand that the Government should pay attention to their problems. They had sought appointment with the Prime Minister but have not been given the same as yet. They have asked that atleast their memornadum should be received and replied to. No one is bothered to listen to the farmers of

the state which contributes 50 percent foodgrains to the central pool. Those people are sitting there and preparing their food (langar) for themselves. I demand the Government that they should ask to them and appointment to meet the Prime Minister be given to them. The more time the Government take, the longer will be their dhama.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you Dhindsa Saheb, you have raised it with a sense of responsibility.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: All the hon. Members who wish to associate, may send their names. The following hon. Members associated themselves with the matter raised by Shri Dhindsa:

1. Shri Avinash Rai Khanna
2. Shri Sandeep Dikshit

12.18 hrs.

SUBMISSIONS BY MEMBERS

- (I) **Re: Alleged violation of security guidelines by an MP during his visit to Orissa**

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Shri Tripathy to speak. He is very anxious.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Sir, I am not anxious but this is a violation of the provisions of the Act of this Parliament and the Constitution.

MR. SPEAKER: You come to the subject.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: I am coming to the subject. The discovery of India visit of Shri Rahul Gandhi, Member of Parliament and General Secretary of the AICC, to naxalite infested area of Koraput District of Orissa has put Orissa Government in a very fix and difficult position. Shri Gandhi is provided with 'Z' plus security, we had passed this Act for 'Z' plus security for VIPs and we are spending about Rs.100 crore in Budget for this purpose. Sir, you are always preaching for democracy that all are equal but I think some are more equal... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: We are also more equal than many of the citizens of this country.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This is the difficulty. Please sit down. I would request Mr. Tripathy to refer to the subject.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not right.

You are referring to the activities of some hon. Member of Parliament and so let us show some respect for each other.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, I am only telling that in a country where we are practising democracy, all are equal and some are more than equal. I am not telling about anybody... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You have passed this law in Parliament.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, we have passed this law in Parliament... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please come to the subject.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, even though Shri Rahul Gandhi has been provided with Z+ security cover it is the responsibility of the State Government to provide him the necessary security other than the SPG security to which he is entitled. In accordance with the extant rules, all his movements are to be conveyed to the State Government for his safeguard. It is reported in the media that Shri Rahul Gandhi had left NALCO guest house ... (*Interruptions*) I am only referring to this in the interest of his safety. I am not telling anything against him... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not right. The only thing here is about violation of a law. If there is a violation of law, then it endangers the security of the country. That is the only point.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, I am coming to the point. He left the NALCO guest house in Koraput at about 8.15 p.m on 7th March for an undisclosed destination... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: What is the issue?

... (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: If you act like this, the House is not likely to transact its business. I know the way the things happen. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (Barrackpore): Do you want to stall the House on this issue?... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Topdar, what are you doing?

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Please listen to me... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Topdar, why are you agitated? Please take your seat. Everybody, please take your seats. Please sit down. Nothing, except what Shri Tripathy is saying, would be recorded.

(Interruptions) ...*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, it has been reported in the media that at 8.15 p.m. he left NALCO guest house at Koraput for an undisclosed destination.... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: He has that right as an hon. Member of Parliament and also as a citizen of India. How has the security been violated?

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, I will come to the point... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: When will you come to the point?

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, if I do not give you the background, how would you know where is the violation?... *(Interruptions)* After four hours, at 12.15 a.m, without taking the State police into confidence and keeping them in the dark he came back after his nocturnal visit... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry to say that this is not right.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: When told by SP, Koraput Shri Deepak Kumar that the security of Shri Rahul Gandhi was his security he was instructed by AIG, SPG... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please do not record this.

(Interruptions) ...*

MR. SPEAKER: I have deleted that portion.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Please try to listen what I am saying... *(Interruptions)*. Have I said anything against anybody? I have not said anything unparliamentary... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seats.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: My good wishes to Shri Gandhi for his India visit. I have no objection about that. I have my good wishes for him... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Tripathy, you are a senior and responsible Member.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, I do not have any objection for his visit. I always have my good wishes for him. ... *(Interruptions)* Have I told anything unparliamentary? *(Interruptions)* ...* It is a serious lapse on the part of the SPG as any untoward incident in a naxalite affected district would have shown the State Government in a poor light. ... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Do you not want the House to run? Then I will adjourn and just go away.

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: If Members behave in this manner, what can I do?

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You are unnecessarily prolonging the matter. I am very sorry to say this, Shri Tripathy. This is not the way to do it.

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You please take your seats. What do you want?

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: This is a deliberate attempt of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India to violate the provisions of the Constitution of India which is total interference of the law and order arrangement of the State. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Tripathy, you have given an assurance and you are not keeping it up.

... (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: Enough is enough and you may please take your seat now.

... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Let him conclude.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot allow anything more.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, I would just refer to a letter of the Principal Secretary of the Government of Orissa to the Home Secretary, Government of India.... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I am not concerned with the Home Secretary's letter.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: You may not be concerned but we are concerned.... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: The House is not concerned with that letter.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: A number of instructions have been issued by the Government of India regarding security arrangements.... (*Interruptions*) Sir, this

is a serious matter regarding security arrangement . Always the Home Ministry is asking the State Government to maintain law and order in the State.

MR. SPEAKER: You have mentioned it. What more do you want to say?

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: I want to say the same thing. The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India has instructed the State Government to give proper security to the VIPs, namely, 'Z' plus security. It is the responsibility of the State Government. But if the SPG says that they do not require any such thing, then who will be held responsible? That is my point. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You have said it. Nothing more will be allowed. I have allowed you to mention the matter which you told me.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I have allowed him. What more is to be done?

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I have allowed him to raise the main issue which he told me. Nothing will be recorded.

(*Interruptions*)^{*} ...

MR. SPEAKER: If you want to hear the Government's response, then please take your seat. Do not record anything. Sorry, Shri Tripathy.

(*Interruptions*)^{*} ...

MR. SPEAKER: It is not being recorded. Why are you saying this?

(*Interruptions*)^{*} ...

MR. SPEAKER: You have made your main point and I have allowed it.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: What is my point?

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Do not ask me.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: I want to make my point clear now. This is a clear circular issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs.... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Do you not want the Government's response on this matter? If you do not want their response, then I will call the next hon. Member to speak.

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded.

(Interruptions) ...*

MR. SPEAKER: Do not record without my permission.

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Sethi, this is not fair. Whatever has been permitted by me has been recorded. After I disallow, it is not being recorded.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI (Bhadrak): Sir, every time an hon. Member starts speaking, after a brief while, the hon. Speaker directs that nothing should be recorded.... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What do you mean by this? What is this? I do not agree with you.

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have allowed the matter to be raised.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: What unwanted thing have I told? The Chief Minister has taken a review regarding the security arrangements of the VIPs, about their programme.... *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: I allowed you to raise the matter, more than this what could be done?

... *(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: What he told me, I have allowed it to be raised. It is on record.

He is persisting and repeating the same thing. I cannot allow this. How can I allow this?

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have allowed it to be raised. It is on record. What can I do?

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have asked the Government also to respond to it.

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: He cannot go on speaking unlimited. I have allowed it to be raised. It is on record.

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: It is very easy to make allegations against the Chair. I am cooperating with you. I have allowed it to be raised.

... *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please wait just a minute. Let me hear him. Let there be silence in the House.

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Chowdhury, please take your seat. Let there be silence in the House. What are you doing?

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I do not know what is going to happen to this country. Will you sit down? Please sit down now. What is happening here? What is going on?

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You are not to dictate to me. Please take your seat.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, very politely, I am drawing their attention.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no question of drawing their attention. You have said what you wanted to say, what you mentioned to me. Whatever you said has been recorded. You are going on and on talking on the same issue which is not relevant.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: There is no repetition.

MR. SPEAKER: I will decide what is relevant and what is not relevant. You cannot go on reading a four-page statement.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: This is a circular of the Home Ministry, Government of India. It has been stated that an unscheduled programme is a clear violation of the instructions laid down in Circular No.VI-23014/124/05-IS-VIII issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Only Shri Tripathy's statement is to be recorded so far as I allow it.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: What is happening here? It has been specifically laid down in sub-clause (v) to (ix) of clause 3.11 of Part-I of the Circular that for any programme that is undertaken in the night time, especially in sensitive areas, necessary security arrangement should be made by the S.P. of the district. Similarly, clause 4.8 of Part-II of the said Circular prescribes that regular contact with the District Police Authorities should be maintained by the Escort Party of the visiting VIP. None of the above instructions have been followed.... (*Interruptions*) What is happening here?

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing more is allowed. I will not allow. You have raised the point. What is going on?

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: A number of instructions have been issued by the Government of India regarding security arrangements.

MR. SPEAKER: You are not cooperating with the Chair.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You need not reply, Mr. Minister.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing more will be recorded. You do not want the Government to respond.

(*Interruptions*)* ...

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

(*Interruptions*)* ...

MR. SPEAKER: Other hon. Members have important matters to raise. You are not allowing that. I have already allowed him. I have also spoken to the Minister to respond to that. Even that is not being respected. What more can I do?

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You do not want it. I will have everything expunged. Everything will be expunged unless you take your seat.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat now. Your further submissions had been allowed.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, why is there a problem with mike again and again.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: When I say 'not to be recorded', you should stop.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I allowed you again. You have made your statement and that has been recorded. Now, I have permitted Mr. Basu Deb Acharia because he is not talking.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): I have a very urgent matter to raise. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Tripathy, I can only say that this is very unfair. I have allowed you. Now you cannot conclude at your will. What you have told me, what you have been allowed to say, you have said more than once. You are going on and on. This is not right. For your sake now, I said that the Minister should respond.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: A number of instructions have been issued by the Government of India regarding security arrangements for Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, Shri Rahul Gandhi and other Members of the family.

MR. SPEAKER: Do not repeat. Repetition is not permitted.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: As per these instructions, the Home Ministry communicated in a letter dated 8th June, 2005.

MR. SPEAKER: Bring the proceedings to me. I will decide.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: This is a clear violation of the instructions laid down in the letter dated 8th June, 2005. This is a violation of the instructions. This is a violation of the Constitution. This is a federal structure.

MR. SPEAKER: Will you take your seat now?

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: If the Government of India has a parallel police administration in the State, how will the State Government function?

MR. SPEAKER: Bring it to me. I will decide.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: If the SPG people do not abide by the decisions and instructions of the Collector and SP, how can law and order be maintained?

MR. SPEAKER: Take your seat now.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: This is a violation of the decisions. ... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded any more.

(Interruptions) *...

MR. SPEAKER: If you want to listen to him, he will say; otherwise I will start the next business.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): My distinguished colleague from BJD Party in Parliament tried to raise this issue based on the material that he had in his possession. I am not here to hurt the honour of any party or any Member. The distinguished Minister is competent in the State to communicate the law and order situation to the Union Home Ministry. The Union Home Ministry is also competent to communicate or correspond with them as to what has happened. Regarding this matter, I will submit very humbly, with all respect to all the Members that a young Member of Parliament who came first in Parliament. About him, if I have not forgotten the rules, if any kind of allegation ... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Let him finish.

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is too much.

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is too much. You cannot dictate to any Member. Only Shri Dasmunsi's statement will be recorded.

*(Interruptions)** ...

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, I salute them for their concern. But the rule says that a Member must serve a copy of the notice to the concerned Member. Initially I did not know whether they served or not, but at least as the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, I ascertained and found that no such copy has been served. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have given notice. ... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Arjun Sethi, please sit down.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, this notice has been there for the last four days.

MR. SPEAKER: So what?

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, first of all, I congratulate the BJD, their Chief Minister and the State Government of Orissa for showing tremendous concern for our young leader. That is very good. I know that very distinguished Members are here. I cannot forget the glorious contribution made by Shri Harikrishna Mahtab to the country and to our party. Shri B. Mahtab is here. His concern for this leader is very natural. I feel that Shri Arjun Sethi's concern is also very natural because he has been there with us for a long time. Equally, I also salute the wisdom of Naveen Patnaikji and his Government for their concern. His father Shri Biju Patnaik, besides being a close associate of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, was also the Chief Minister of Orissa. Shri Naveen Patnaik's concern should be more because he normally likes dynamic, young leaders moving here and there. I sincerely feel for their concern. But since this matter concerns the State Government and the SPG, I shall bring it to the notice of the Home Minister. That is all I can say on this, but let them please continue their concern for this young leader. I salute them for this.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, since the Home Secretary of the Government of Orissa has written a letter about this incident to the Home Secretary of the Government of India, I want the Home Minister to respond to this issue.

MR. SPEAKER: If you had cooperated with me, I would have got everything. But unfortunately you did not cooperate with me. However I will consider your suggestion.

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government of India has taken a decision to close down the existing airport at Hyderabad as a new airport, which is 45 kms. away from the city of Hyderabad, will be inaugurated tomorrow. When the agreement was finalized in 1999-2000, the growth in the civil aviation sector was only 6 per cent. This agreement was finalized when the NDA was in power. Today the growth in the civil aviation sector is 20 per cent.

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot talk about the entire civil aviation sector here.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I will have to justify it.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not the time for justification of making a reference.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Only when I justify, what I want to say will be covered. They have taken half-an-hour. You are not giving me five minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: They have taken half-an-hour, but how they have taken, you know everything.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I know.

MR. SPEAKER: Don't follow such an example.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I will take only five minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, the total capacity for which a new airport has been built was for 6.5 million passengers. Today, in Hyderabad Airport, the total number of passengers is 7 million. The same is the case with Bangalore Airport. Now there is a scope for renegotiations because the agreement was made on the basis of the projection which was made at that point of time.

Sir, the new airport has been built up under private sector or joint venture companies. Now, there is no justification to close the existing airports of Hyderabad and Bangaluru. If, by tomorrow, they are closed down, the people will face a number of difficulties.

Since the agreement was done with the GMR, we have been demanding that new green field airport can be built up, but the brown airport, the existing airport, should not be closed to protect the interest of the private sector. Since day before yesterday the employees union of Airports Authority have started a non-cooperation movement. They have not gone on strike. But ESMA, a draconian Act, has been imposed in Indira Gandhi International Airport in order to thwart the peaceful movement of the employees of the Airports Authority of India.

We can have a new green field airport, but the existing airports of Hyderabad and Bangaluru should not be closed down. The ESMA, which has been imposed by the Government, should be withdrawn and the Ministry should start negotiating with the unions for settlement of the issue and for redressal of the issue. The Government should reverse its decision to close down the existing airports of Hyderabad and Bangaluru.

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Babu Rao Mediam, Shri Prahlad Joshi, Shri Ananth Kumar, Shri Sunil Khan, Shri Amitava Nandy, Shri Samik Lahiri, Shri Chandrakant Khaire, Shri Mohan Singh, Shri Gurudas Dasgupta and Shri Ajoy Chakraborty are allowed to associate with this matter.

... (Interruptions)

MD. SALIM (CALCUTTA – NORTH EAST): Sir, there are so many notices given on this issue... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not a debate. I will not allow.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have mentioned the names of the hon. Members who have given notices.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR (BANGALORE SOUTH): Sir, it concerns the Bangaluru Airport... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have called the name of Shri Ramji Lal Suman. Mr. Suman, please do not refer to a State matter. You may refer to the hon. Member's problem.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, so many hon. Members have given notices... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have read all the names to be recorded.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR (BANGALORE SOUTH): Sir, I have also given notice... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have mentioned your name also that you associate with this.

... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: I have mentioned the names of all the Members. It will not be done this way.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Nandy, this is not fair. I have allowed your Leader full opportunity. I have mentioned the names of other hon. Members also.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have mentioned his name also.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have called another Member, Shri Ramji Lal Suman.

... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN (Bhagalpur): Please allow a Member to speak from this side also.

... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: This is just a Special Mention matter, you know that.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded. I do not mind, you go on.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Very well, go on.

...(Interruptions)

12.50 hrs.

SUBMISSIONS BY MEMBERS—Contd.

(ii) Re.: Need to provide compensation to the family of a worker who died in an accident while working on a Railway Project

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Ramji Lal Suman.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on 8th of March, the office of Hon'ble M.P. Smt. Jaya Prada of the Samajwadi Party from Rampur, Uttar Pradesh was ransacked.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon'ble Minister has made a statement in this regard.

[*English*]

You cannot go on utilising this time for the purpose of converting this to a debate. I will not allow. You can go on disturbing the House. It will not be allowed; not be recorded. Only the observations of Shri Ramji Lal Suman, so far they are admissible, will be recorded.

...(Interruptions)*

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Stones were pelted on her office and her belongings were thrown out. The Guard at her office had to close himself in the kitchen in order to save his life ...(*Interruptions*) The activities regarding loot and sabotage kept on for a quite long time and when a report to this effect was lodged, the Culpable sections were taken out from it ...(*Interruptions*) Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a very serious matter. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Only Ramji Lal Suman's observations will go on record.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Should I do it? You want to raise the issue but others do not like you to do so. What should I do? You please speak.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Jaya Prada is the Member of Parliament of our party from Rampur Parliamentary constituency in Uttar Pradesh. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the workers of the BSP wreaked a sabotage in her office on 8th March without any reason. The hoardings of her office were smashed ...(*Interruptions*) It was the International Women's Day on 8th March and this whole Violence was erupted on that day ...(*Interruptions*) Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a very serious matter ...(*Interruptions*) The guard at her office had to run into kitchen to save his life ...(*Interruptions*) Mr. Speaker, Sir, what is this happening? We seek your protection ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, I will go to the debate. You are not willing to cooperate with the Chair.

...(Interruptions)

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: Please listen to what I am saying.

[*English*]

All your colleagues are doing this. I cannot listen to you.

*Not recorded.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: To speak.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

[*English*]

Will you sit down, please?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Do not refer to any State matter.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute. Let me conduct. Shri Ramji Lal Suman, the hon. Member has written to me only this morning. I have not had time to go through it. If any intervention is needed by me, I shall take it.

...(Interruptions)

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: It is the question of the prestige of the Parliament. Will the Members of Parliament be treated like this? The Members of Parliament would face difficulty in doing this work if you don't give them protection. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: What are you doing this?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I can assure you that I am wholly concerned about our Members' rights and privileges. Nobody will be allowed to interfere with them. But this is not the way you are enforcing your rights and privileges.

I am telling everybody and to the whole country that she has given a letter to me today morning and I did not have any time to go through it. I am promising here that I will go through it. Whatever action is needed, I shall take, and I shall keep the House informed about it. What more can I do? Please give me that opportunity. I am concerned about your rights and privileges, and I am not minimizing.

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV (*Sambhal*): Thank you, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: If everybody speaks together, nothing can be recorded.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No sentence, I respect your views and your comments. I shall go through it myself. You know that three or five minutes before 11 a.m. today you gave it to me. I have not been able to go through it and I promise that I would report it to the House. What more can I do? Now, Shri Ganesh Singh.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have called Shri Ganesh Singh to speak. You are not Shri Ganesh Singh. Please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI GANESH SINGH (Satna): Mr. Speaker, Sir, first of all I would like to thank you and like to draw the attention of the Government of India towards a very important matter. Since the beginning of globalisation in the country, a process of handing over the various public sector undertaking one by one to the private sector, has begun. Consequently, on the one hand the public capital in the country is diminishing and at the same time lakhs of labourers have been rendered jobless. If the management of Public Sector Undertaking in the country is streamlined and the Government provide economic assistance to these undertakings, they can be turned into profit making undertakings.

I would like to submit that a big paper mill is located at Neapanagar in Khandawa district of Madhya Pradesh State. The Government of India are preparing to hand it over to the private sector. This exercise will render lakhs of people jobless. The Government of Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhanda, both have given lakhs of hectare of land free of cost to that mill for carrying out afforestation. That mill may become viable with little improvement in management and a little economic assistance.

I would like to request not to hand over profit making factories of public sector to private sector. The Central Government should adopt such policy.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. Leaders want, I can introduce what is being done in the other place, that is, after three minutes the mike is automatically disconnected. If you want it, I can do it but I will talk to all of you about that.

Now, Adv, Suresh Kurp.

[Translation]

Please pay attention leaving aside everything else.

[English]

ADV. SURESH KURUP (Kottayam): Sir, for the last two weeks, in Delhi, BSNL mobile phones are not working. The private operators are using the infrastructure of MTNL and BSNL and their mobile phones are working properly, and MTNL and BSNL do not provide service to the customers. For the last two weeks, this has been happening and nobody is responding to the request of the customers. The Government should take note of this and I would request the hon. Minister to make a statement regarding this.

MR. SPEAKER: Shrimati P. Satheedevi and Dr. Sujan Chakraborty are associating with this issue.

SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI (Badagara): Sir, the customer care cell not responding to the complaints made by the customers to MTNL ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Shri, Ram Kripal Yadav.

DR. SUJAN CHAKRABORTY (Jadavpur): I have a point. This situation is continuing both in MTNL and BSNL for a long time. It seems that MTNL and BSNL are not taking care of the interest of their customers but taking care of the interest of the private operators. The service of MTNL and BSNL to the people is getting disturbed ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You are not Shri Ram Kripal Yadav. Please sit down.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister of Railways towards a labour contractor named Shri Madhurai who was working at Chapra station.

MR. SPEAKER: Do not raise individual matter, ask the question on the issue.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a very important incident.

13.00 hrs.

He was very poor and helpless person. He was somehow earning his livelihood. Unfortunately one day, when he was working on the railway tracks at Chhapra Station, the Barh Express train ran over him and he was killed on the spot. This is a very unfortunate incident. The main concern is that there is nobody to take care of his family.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not so.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: The Government should give compensation and job to the family of the deceased to enable them to earn their livelihood. Hon'ble Minister is here. I would request him to express his feelings in this regard, this is essential *...(Interruptions)* His family has become helpless *...(Interruptions)*. Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble Minister wants to say something *...(Interruptions)*.

MR. SPEAKER: Everything has been arranged.

...(Interruptions)

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways (Shri Naranbhai Rathwa): Mr. Speaker, Sir, last week, in an unfortunate incident, a person died after he was run over by a train. Railways has information about this. An order has been issued on behalf of the Ministry of Railway to Zonal Railway to conduct an inquiry into this incident. I understand that a poor person was working on the track. The Railway Ministry has issued order giving compensation of rupees two lakh to the family of the deceased *...(Interruptions)*.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Arun Kumar Sarma.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN (Indore) Mr. Speaker, Sir, to make such a statement by the Minister is uncalled for...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You are right, I agree with you.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: What is this going on in the House.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record except the submission of Dr. Arun Kumar Sarma.

*...(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: Anything can be said at anytime by anybody.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Burn the rule book before the statue of Gandhiji.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: He should not have given the information like this.

[English]

I agree with you. When I realized that it was an individual issue, I was objecting to it.

[Translation]

What can I do? Nobody listens to me. Look at my throat, what has happened to it.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Only the hon. Member known as Dr. Arun Sarma will speak.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (Lakhimpur): Sir, I thank you very much for allowing me to raise this important issue. More than 50,000 families in Assam, which were rendered homeless and landless by the last floods in the year 2007, are still taking shelter on temporary sheds over embankments and roads. But so far, they have not been given any rehabilitation assistance. Even the assistance under the Central Relief Fund has not been extended to them. They are mostly from the rural areas, they are from the farming communities. Most of the roads and embankments, which were damaged during the last floods are yet to be restored.

Sir, the National Calamity Relief Fund, which is envisaged for helping the State for rehabilitation of the people very much affected by the national calamity has not been granted from the Central Government.

Therefore, I would urge upon the Central Government to immediately release the Central assistance. Last year, a Central Expert Team had visited Assam but still, so far, no Central assistance has been released to the State of Assam. This is very unfortunate. When we can spare Rs.10,000 crore for rehabilitation of the Tsunami affected

*Not recorded.

people, why the floods affected people, who are still on the roads for the last couple of years, are not being granted any Central assistance from the Government. I strongly protest and I also condemn the failure of the Government of India as well as the Government of Assam on this particular issue. This is a neglect to the farming community of the State of Assam.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Sir, earlier, when there was a move to shift the Foreign Department of the State Bank of India from Kolkata, there was an intervention from the former Chief Minister of West Bengal, Shri Jyoti Basu; and on his request, there was a decision taken that at least 50 per cent of the core activities of the Foreign Department will be retained at Kolkata only. Now, that there is a move to shift the rest of the activities from Kolkata to Mumbai, there is a resistance from the employees and the users of that Foreign Department, and for the last two days, an indefinite hunger strike is going on.

Now I would urge upon the Government, and particularly the Finance Minister who is here, that the Government must intervene in the situation because the situation is daily becoming serious and West Bengal Circle of State Bank of India employees and officers have taken a decision to go for a strike. If the Government does not intervene in such a situation, it will affect the interest of the wider public, those who use this Foreign Department. I seek the intervention of the Finance Minister in this matter.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR (Sagar): Sir, my hon'ble colleagues have raised a number of issues about Uttar Pradesh that the Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: We had agreed that only five matters would be allowed. I have allowed 14 matters and other Members have also associated.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Issues of all members are very important.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR: Sir, there is serious drought throughout Bundelkhand. My colleagues from Uttar Pradesh have also raised this issue. The drought like situation is prevailing in Sagar, Damohi, Tikamgarh,

Chhattarpur and Panna districts of Bundelkhand due to scant rainfall in the last three-four years. Due to this, animals are not getting water to drink on the one hand and on the other people are migrating to Delhi and Punjab in search of employment even without locking their homes, keeping thorn bush at the door steps. The ponds, the identity of Bundelkhand extending from villages to towns, have dried up. Serious water crisis have cropped up there and that is why I, through you, would like to request the Central Government that drought hit Bundelkhand of Madhya Pradesh State...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded other than what the hon. Member speaks.

...*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR: For that the government of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have demanded a special package to Rs. 25000 crore for the farmers of Bundelkhand and districts in Bundelkhand. The Central Government should co-operate to fulfill this demand.

SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA (Hamirpur, U.P.): I associate myself with the issue raised by Shri Virendra Kumar.

SHRI CHANDRA PAL SINGH YADAV (Jhansi): I associate myself with the issue raised by Shri Virendra Kumar.

[English]

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha): Sir, I want to draw the attention of the Ministry of Labour and Employment to the issue of revision of wages of agricultural labour throughout the country. In a number of States, the agricultural wage is so low. Under the NREGP, the agriculture minimum wage is the basis and on the basis of that, even the piece rates have been fixed. As a result, the labourers do not go to work or have no incentive to work on those works. In many States, it is as low as Rs. 50. In fact, these wages are not revised for a long time.

I just want to draw the attention of the Ministry and the Central Government and request to at least tell the

*Not recorded.

State Governments to revise the agricultural wage, so that the labourers working under NREGP can get more wages, and also to increase the piece rates. Many States are deliberately not doing this simply because this is a Central scheme and they do not want to give higher wages to the labourers. As a result, the entire intention of the Programme that the poor people should get more money and reviving the entire rural economy is getting affected. In fact, they are dis-serving this nation. There should be some provision whereby the Union Government can compel the State Governments to take care of this issue.

DR. KARAN SINGH YADAV (Alwar): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw your attention to the disturbing news this morning where two infants died in incubators in the hospitals of Ahmedabad and Delhi because of a fire which resulted from short circuit in electric connection. There was also a news item that the cotton wool in hospitals is in short supply. There was another news item that the budgetary provision for AIIMS under Non-Plan has been cut down and the budgetary provisions for Safdarjung Hospital has also been cut down. What I want to bring to your notice is that we thought that the Health Budget should be three per cent of GDP, but it is not increased more than one per cent. We feel that successively every day, the health situation is deteriorating in the cities. As the National Rural health Mission is doing good work in the rural areas, I think, similar kind of provisions to strengthen the hospitals in cities and these institutions need to be taken care of.

I would urge upon the hon. Finance Minister to see that the hospitals and medical area are given both budgetary provisions so that such tragic events which happened in the hospitals do not take place again.

MR. SPEAKER: I am allowing one more important matter as a special case and because of a request made. Since more than what is our scheduled quota has been exceeded, there will be no recess today and also because so many hon. Members wish to speak. As an exception and special dispensation on the ground of no more slogans by you, I am allowing Shrimati Kiran Maheshwari.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI (Udaipur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, regarding the draft of National Mineral Policy presented in the year 2006-07, I would like to draw the attention of the House, through you, to the fact that some State governments involved in mining had sent to the

Union Government source recommendations suggesting amendments to it and the recommendations to the effect from the states of Rajasthan, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa were sent by none other than the Chief Ministers themselves of these states. But we are yet to receive any information from the Union Government in this regards and are still clueless whether the amendments recommended by them have been incorporated in it or not. We have come to know that this subject is slated to come up for discussion in the meeting of the Union Cabinet which is likely to be held today itself. Therefore, I would like to put it before you and the Ministers present here as a very important issue that out of the amendments which have been suggested by the Chief Ministers of our State Governments and the Chief Minister of Rajasthan has requested the Prime Minister in a personal meeting that she has suggested amendment, to the draft of mineral policy as sent by him to the State Governments. These amendments may kindly be incorporated, since the revenue of our state largely depends on the minerals. So I would like to know as to what you propose to do about the suggested amendments...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SRICHAND KRIPLANI (Chittorgarh): Mr. Speaker, in this regard, I would like to request that Rajasthan...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: That is the problem, you people are not first time Members.

SHRI SRICHAND KRIPLANI: I would like to request that all the five states...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Now nothing else except your speech will go on record.

...(*Interruptions*)*

MR. SPEAKER: Why are you shouting?

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Sir, here I would like to say that the Minister should reply...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Just now you yourself said that the Cabinet is going to discuss the matter, so what can he say right now!

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Would he ascertain whether the amendment recommended by our Chief Minister has been incorporated or not.

*Not recorded.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Srichand Kriplani, Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat, Shri Braja Kishore Tripathy, Shri Bikram Keshari Deo, Smt. Susheela Bangaru Laxman, Shri V.P. Singh, Shri Mahavir Bhagora, Shri Ram Singh Kaswan, Shri Dhan Singh Rawat, Shri Nihal Chand, Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and Shri Kharabela Swain will all be associated on this issue.

... *(Interruptions)*

13.12 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The matters under rule 377, listed for the day, will be treated as laid on the Table of the House.

... *(Interruptions)*

- (i) **Need to give concessions on fresh loans to the farmers who have repaid their loans in time**

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN (Dindigul): There has been a steep fall in the agricultural production for the last several years. The basic problem is that farming has become an unproductive proposition. Previous years statistics show that thousands of farmers are committing suicide. Successive Governments both at the Centre and the States have failed to address this fundamental problem with the result that after becoming self sufficient in food production we have reached a stage where under we have to import 20 lakhs tonnes of wheat last year to meet domestic demand. The situation would become bad to worse unless corrective measures are taken in time. The Government need to address the problem of stagnating agriculture sector.

I congratulate the Government for announcing the loan waiver scheme for small and marginal farmers. But this measure will alone not solve the problems of farmers. However the problem still continues and this problem will persist unless farming is made productive.

I would also refer to the problem of not giving incentive to the farmers who have already repaid the loans.

I would urge upon our Hon'ble Finance Minister to devise a scheme by which farmers who have repaid the loans and who come for fresh loans would be given additional quantum of credit and concession in interest rate as an incentive for their earlier prompt payments.

This incentive will go a long way in ensuring that farmers who make prompt payment are not discriminated against.

- (ii) **Need to extend the benefit of loan waiver scheme to the farmers having 16 acres and 10 acres land in unirrigated and irrigated areas respectively**

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD (Yavatmal): Finance Minister in his Budget Speech has mentioned that for marginal farmers (i.e., holding upto 1 hectare) and small farmers (1-2 hectare), there will be a complete waiver of all loans that were overdue on December 31, 2007 and which remained unpaid until February 29, 2008. In respect of other farmers, there will be a one time settlement (OTS) scheme for all loans that were overdue on December 31, 2007 and which remained unpaid until February 29, 2008. Only 30% farmers of our country fall under the above mentioned category (1-2 hectare) and 70% farmers will not be able to get the benefit of this loan waiver scheme. So, this scheme should be extended to the farmers holding up to 16 acres unirrigated land or 10 acres irrigated land, because these farmers also come under small farmers category. The Government should consider the cause of these small marginal farmers and render justice to them by giving benefit of loan waiver scheme to the farmers holding upto 16 acres in unirrigated area and 10 acres in irrigated area.

- (iii) **Need to give approval to pending schemes of electrification under 'Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana' in Rajasthan**

[Translation]

SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA (Salumber): Sir, Schemes with regard to 32 districts of the state of Rajasthan have been forwarded to Rural Electrification Corporation for sanction under Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana. The total cost of these districts based schemes is approximately Rs. 1111.93 crores. These schemes include provision of domestic connection to 17,55,435 BPL families and 527901 General ones.

* Treated as laid on the Table

Total 27 schemes have been sanctioned by the Rural Electrification Corporation. Out of these 27 sanctioned schemes, the work of Sawai Madhopur (under Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Viduyitkaran Yojana) and Barmer (under AIEP Yojana) has been stopped by the REC.

The implementation of schemes with regard to Bhilwara and Jhalawar is proposed to be executed by PGCIL. Out of the rest of 23 schemes, 6 schemes of Jaipur electricity distribution corporation, 7 schemes of Ajmer electrification corporation and 10 schemes of Jodhpur electrification corporation are proposed to be executed on turn-key basis by the corporation concerned. These 23 schemes include undertaking electrification of 1705 villages, 4315 clusters of houses in the field and domestic connection to 699651 BPL families and 309632 ordinary families. Sanction to 12 schemes has been accorded in principle with the stipulation that so long as official sanction for them is not accorded by the Rural Electrification Corporation, no contract could be awarded for their execution.

The sanction in regard to the districts of Nagor and Barmer is pending before the Rural Electrification Corporation. For want of sanction to schemes in these districts of Rajasthan domestic connection alongwith BPL connections cannot be released. thus causing the problem of imbalance in different districts.

By drawing the attention of the hon'ble Union Minister of Power to such an issue of utmost public importance, I would like to urge that in Rajasthan the schemes proposed under the Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Viduyitkaran Yozana should be accorded sanction expeditiously.

- (iv) Need to give compensation to the farmers of Punjab who are unable to cultivate their lands due to border-fencing**

[English]

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA (Hoshiarpur): Punjab has a 553 km long international border with Pakistan. On account of their geographical location the four districts of Punjab i.e. Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tran Taran and Ferozpur are not as developed as others. The farmers of these districts need to be compensated at Rs. 10,000/- per acre annually for 18,500 acres of cultivable land situated across the border fence. The farmers have been deprived of cultivation on account of various restrictions place due to fencing. The border roads are required to be upgraded as

these roads are also used by para military forces and army. These roads are of about 750 kms length. Further the State also require a package for setting up industries on the border as per the package given to Himachal Pradesh, J and K etc.

- (v) Need to construct over bridges under East West corridor on N.H. 8-B linking Gondal-Rajkot-Wankaner Boundary In Gujarat**

DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA (Rajkot): The six-laning work is going on NH-8 B from Porbandar to Rajkot to Wankaner Boundary, under East West corridor development project. From Gondal to Rajkot bypass and Rajkot bypass to Wankaner Boundary the four laning was already done by state Government under another scheme, so this work is not included in E-W corridor project. But there are no over bridges as per E-W corridor norm at Gondal bypass, Ribda Chokdi, Shapar, Veraval crossing. Navagaon Maliasan and Kuvadava crossing which may be included in the project. It is requested to consider the above request.

- (vi) Need to cover the wait-listed applicants for BSNL broad-band internet services in Latur & Osmanabad districts of Maharashtra**

[Translation]

SHRIMATI RUPATAI D. PATIL (Latur): Sir, the waiting list for the use of broad band services being provided for the internet by the BSNL is increasing day by day in Latur and Osmanabad districts of my constituency. In this matter, though a request for clearing the waiting list by expanding the broad band services was made to the officers of BSNL, but due to inaction on the latter's part in expanding the same, there is great resentment among the consumers place in the broad band waiting list in both the above districts.

Today, in this area of information technology, keeping the importance of broad band in view, it is necessary to extend it by providing broadband connections to all the persons in the waiting list. You know that internet service provider companies in the private sector are providing internet connections instantly to the consumers on soft terms and conditions. In such a scenario, there is strong likelihood of BSNL lagging behind private companies in the matter of competition.

Keeping this fact as well as increasing demand for the local people in view, I demand that immediate steps

should be taken for the extension of broad-band and to provide broad-band connections to all consumers already placed in the waiting list. Keeping the aforesaid facts in mind action may be taken on priority basis by the Government.

(vii) Need to protect traditional rights of fishermen community in Coastal areas

[English]

DR. K.S. MANOJ (Alleppey): In the Draft Notification on the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) 2007, it is feared that the interest of coastal tribes (Fishermen) is not protected even though its objective is protection and sustainable development of coastal management based on sound scientific principles taking into account the vulnerability of the coast to natural hazards, sustainable livelihood of coastal community and conservation of ecologically and culturally significant coastal areas.

The customary rights of fishermen are not seen protected. As a result the fishermen community will be marginalized or thrown out of coastal area.

Fishing has not been identified as a key activity requiring sea frontage and hence their access rights to sea and sea beach is under threat.

The seaward line prescribed is 12 nautical miles as against 500 metres from the High Tide Line prescribed by CZR Act 1991.

In the absence of well-defined regulation and No Development Zone (NDZ) in the Draft Notification, private tourism sector may infiltrate into the coastal area.

The rights of fishermen to build houses and settlements, keep fishing implements in open Beach and free access to beach and sea will be affected.

In the CZR Act 1991 certain restrictions were imposed in CRZ-I for protection of environment. In the Draft CZM notification no such restrictions appear to be prescribed.

The customary rights of the fishermen community should be ensured and their basic occupational needs such as housing, schooling and healthcare are to be satisfied, besides facilities to keep the crafts and nets to be provided and access rights to sea and beach have to be ensured. There should be ample provisions in the

Notification empowering the State Govt, to deal with such vital issues of social importance.

(viii) Need to increase the area of cultivable land for enhancing the production of food-grains in the country

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Ferozabad): Sir, as you all know that India is an Agricultural country and 64% of its population are farmers. The area of land on which wheat has been cultivated in the country from October to January during the Rabi season this year is less by 5 lakh and 70 thousand hectares as compared the corresponding period last year. If we look at the figures, we find that the area of cultivation has decreased not only in the matter of wheat but also oilseed in whose case it has decreased from 96 lakh 10 thousand hectare in the previous year to 86 lakh 60 thousand hectare this year i.e. there is a decrease in the area of cultivation of both wheat and oilseeds. It is clear that during last year the Govt. had to import wheat at soaring prices inspite of its cultivation in the country on a larger area. So, the claim of the Govt. to have record crop of wheat this year in spite of lesser area of cultivation is not understandable.

One of the reasons for the diminutive area of cultivation for Rabi crops has been the delayed functioning of sugar mills in Uttar Pradesh. The sugar mills in Uttar Pradesh started out very late due to which the farmers could not sow wheat and oilseeds in their fields which were occupied by standing crops of sugarcane and by the time the sugarcane reached the mills from the fields the season for Rabi cultivation (of wheat and oilseeds) had passed. The existing policies of the present State Govt. are responsible for this bad condition of agriculture and for which the innocent farmers had to pay by doing the lesser cultivation.

Therefore, I would like to ask the Govt. the basis on which it is claiming of record crop inspite of lesser area of cultivation as compared to last year.

(ix) Need to set-up a Rail coach factory in Banda, Uttar Pradesh

SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD NISHAD (Fatehpur): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble Minister for Railways towards the Bundelkhand area in Uttar Pradesh and would like to say that it has remained neglected since independence

resulting in its coming to be known as backward area and non-existence of a large industry in the area is also a reason for this.

Therefore, I would like to demand the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble Minister for Railways to set up a Rail Coach Factory at Bhuragarh in district Banda for the proper development of the Bundelkhand area so that the local people could be benefited from the same.

(x) Need to set up a Special Protection Force for the safety of ongoing railway projects in insurgency-hit North Eastern Region

[English]

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (Lakhimpur): I would like to draw the attention of the Government regarding delay in implementation of National Projects in the NER generally due to inadequacy of fund allotment as well as difficult terrain and limited working season. More particularly in certain sections like Lumding-Silchar-Agartala, Jiribum-Imphal and part of Rangia-Murkongselek regular extortion, kidnapping and attack by insurgent groups play a major role in delay. It is, therefore, observed that unless the Union Government constitute an independent security agency specifically for this purpose comprising trained persons from Assam Government and Tripura Government, paramilitary forces and RPF, the implementation of these Railway projects will never get reality. Moreover, taking advantage of the ongoing gauge conversion work, the NF Railway has avoided the regular maintenance, upgradation of service and passenger amenities in the Lumding-Silchar and Rangia-Murkongselek section of metre gauge line.

I, therefore, urge upon the PMO and the Home Ministry to form a special protection force exclusively for the purpose of executing these National Projects. Railway authorities is also urged to concentrate on regular maintenance and upgradation of service as well as passenger amenities so that passenger do not suffer till gauge conversion is completed.

(xi) Need to exempt the Local Self Government Institutions from the levy of service tax on the rent of buildings owned by them

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (Idukki): The Union Budget for 2007-08 envisaged levy of service tax of 12.8% on income deriving from rental of immovable properties including buildings. In pursuance of this provision, the Central Excise Department now demands service tax from the Local Self Government Institutions in Kerala on the rent of buildings owned by them. Imposing of service tax on immovable properties, including buildings owned by the

LSG institutions in Kerala would axe away a reasonable share of revenue of these bodies and thereby affect the capacity of the LSG institutions for meeting their obligatory developmental responsibilities. They have created the immovable assets by availing huge loans from institutions like HUDCO and KURDFC at high interest rates to generate income to meet its obligatory and developmental responsibilities and won't be able to repay the loans regularly, if the rental incomes are taxed.

As such, I request the Government to withdraw/exempt the Local Self Government Institutions from the levy of service tax on the rent of buildings owned by them.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Tripathy, you know that one hon. Member cannot raise two issues during this time.

[Translation]

Still your name was recorded. I will make you Chairman so that you sit on the Chair.

[English]

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Sir, they should consider the amendments proposed by the States because the States are more concerned about it...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing more to be recorded. Please cooperate with the Chair.

...*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI (Udaipur): Would you like to incorporate the amendments given by our Chief Minister.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shrimati Kiran Maheshwari, I allowed you to speak, but see how it is being misused. I have allowed you to speak without any notice.

[Translation]

Please ask them to cooperate.

...*(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is being recorded.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Rawat, what is this? This does not behave you?

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: What do you want? You yourself said that it would be taken up in the Cabinet meeting today. How can you ask the Government to respond to you? This is not fair. Please sit down. I will not allow this. Please do not compel me to take any unfortunate action.

[Translation]

Please sit down. You didn't even care to submit the notice.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Do you want it to be expunged? I will expunge it.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Sir, please ask the Union Govt. to provide us the information.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I have invited Shri Sharanjit Singh Dhillon to speak on the Budget and he only will speak.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: They have listened to you. This is not the way to make them listen. Please sit down.

13.16 hrs.

**GENERAL BUDGET (2008-09)—
GENERAL DISCUSSION
*DEMANDS FOR GRANTS ON ACCOUNT
(GENERAL)-2008-09
*DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS
(GENERAL)—Contd.**

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That the respective sums not exceeding the amounts on Revenue Account and Capital Account shown in the third column of the Order paper be granted to the President of India, out of the Consolidated Fund of India, on Account, for or towards defraying the charges during the year ending the 31st day of March, 2009 in respect of the heads of Demands entered in the second column thereof against Demand Nos. 1 to 33, 35, 36, 38 to 62, 64 to 74, 76, 77, 79 to 105."

Statement

*Supplementary Demands for Grants—First Batch (General) for 2008-2009
submitted to the Vote of the Lok Sabha*

No. and Title of the Demand	Amount of Demand for Grant submitted to the Vote of the House	
	Revenue Rs.	Capital Rs.
1	2	3
1. Department of Agriculture and Cooperation	280,39,00,000	65,68,00,000
2. Department of Agricultural Research and Education	213,44,00,000	...
3. Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries	24,86,00,000	1,00,000
4. Atomic Energy	609,12,00,000	37,39,00,000
5. Nuclear Power Schemes	6,23,00,000	...
6. Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals	7,11,00,000	...
7. Department of Fertilisers	52865,56,00,000	...
8. Ministry of Civil Aviation	10,14,00,000	...
9. Ministry of Coal	2,58,00,000	...
10. Department of Commerce	360,66,00,000	1,00,000
11. Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion	27,89,00,000	...
12. Department of Posts	1945,25,00,000	...
14. Department of Information Technology	100,00,00,000	...
15. Department of Consumer Affairs	8,66,00,000	...
16. Department of Food and Public Distribution	5109,45,00,000	...
17. Ministry of Corporate Affairs	14,48,00,000	30,00,00,000
18. Ministry of Culture	98,89,00,000	...

*Moved with the recommendation of the President.

	1	2	3
19. Ministry of Defence		354,39,00,000	9,81,00,000
20. Defence Pensions		1941,00,00,000	...
21. Defence Services-Army		6303,26,00,000	...
22. Defence Services-Navy		688,88,00,000	...
23. Defence Services-Air Force		1120,79,00,000	...
24. Defence-Ordnance Factories		100,00,00,000	...
25. Defence Services-Research and Development		259,65,00,000	...
27. Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region		1,90,00,000	...
28. Ministry of Earth Sciences		49,76,00,000	1,00,000
29. Ministry of Environment and Forests		27,03,00,000	70,00,000
30. Ministry of External Affairs		778,11,00,000	...
31. Department of Economic Affairs		204,43,00,000	1000,60,00,000
32. Payments to Financial Institutions		40668,40,00,000	4996,23,00,000
33. Department of Financial Institutions		9,00,00,000	...
35. Transfers to State and Union territory Governments		3240,66,00,000	...
38. Department of Expenditure		7,18,00,000	...
39. Pensions		2050,00,00,000	...
40. Indian Audit and Accounts Department		344,97,00,000	...
41. Department of Revenue		40,49,00,000	...
42. Direct Taxes		303,55,00,000	...
43. Indirect Taxes		373,29,00,000	...
44. Department of Disinvestment		57,00,000	1,00,000
45. Ministry of Food Processing Industries		2,10,00,000	...
46. Department of Health and Family Welfare		378,30,00,000	1,00,000
47. Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH)		35,60,00,000	...
48. Department of Health Research		7,00,000	...
49. Department of Heavy Industry		813,99,00,000	1,00,000
50. Department of Public Enterprises		79,00,000	...
51. Ministry of Home Affairs		255,36,00,000	...
52. Cabinet		41,78,00,000	...
53. Police		5065,79,00,000	2,00,000
54. Other Expenditure of the Ministry of Home Affairs		84,35,00,000	...
55. Transfers to Union territory Governments		165,00,00,000	...
56. Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation		2,17,00,000	...
57. Department of School Education and Literacy		282,35,00,000	761,54,00,000
58. Department of Higher Education		554,68,00,000	...
59. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting		238,19,00,000	...
60. Ministry of Labour and Employment		117,35,00,000	625,00,00,000
61. Election Commission		1,87,00,000	...
62. Law and Justice		208,28,00,000	...
64. Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises		53,63,00,000	...
65. Ministry of Mines		77,02,00,000	...
66. Ministry of Minority Affairs		1,72,00,000	...
67. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy		3,55,00,000	...
68. Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs		1,38,00,000	...
69. Ministry of Panchayati Raj		74,00,000	...
70. Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs		92,00,000	...
71. Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions		142,55,00,000	...
72. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas		65944,54,00,000	...
73. Ministry of Planning		10,83,00,000	...
74. Ministry of Power		29,79,00,000	...
76. Lok Sabha		24,89,00,000	...
77. Rajya Sabha		10,28,00,000	...
79. Secretariat of the Vice-President		30,00,000	...
80. Department of Rural Development		21360,57,00,000	...
81. Department of Land Resources		79,00,000	...
82. Department of Drinking Water Supply		100,42,00,000	...
83. Department of Science and Technology		118,15,00,000	...
84. Department of Scientific and Industrial Research		207,09,00,000	...
85. Department of Biotechnology		12,32,00,000	...

	1	2	3
86. Department of Shipping		17,20,00,000	1,30,00,000
87. Department of Road Transport and Highways		13,22,00,000	...
88. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment		12,72,00,000	...
89. Department of Space		220,95,00,000	5,00,00,000
90. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation		56,89,00,000	...
91. Ministry of Steel		2,88,00,000	...
92. Ministry of Textiles		245,05,00,000	1,00,000
93. Ministry of Tourism		5,70,00,000	...
94. Ministry of Tribal Affairs		4,27,00,000	...
95. Andaman and Nicobar Islands		116,14,00,000	205,00,00,000
97. Dadra and Nagar Haveli		14,18,00,000	...
98. Daman and Diu		12,03,00,000	...
99. Lakshadweep		17,73,00,000	2,00,000
100. Department of Urban Development		12,09,00,000	400,00,00,000
101. Public Works		112,65,00,000	...
102. Stationery and Printing		40,23,00,000	...
103. Ministry of Water Resources		112,70,00,000	1,61,00,000
104. Ministry of Women and Child Development		13,07,00,000	...
105. Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports		551,07,00,000	...
Total		218482,09,00,000	8139,97,00,000

MR. SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That the respective supplementary sums not exceeding the amounts on Revenue Account and Capital Account shown in the third column of the Order Paper be granted to the President of India, out of the Consolidated Fund of India, to defray the

charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 2008, in respect of the heads of Demands entered in the second column thereof against Demand Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 to 15, 18 to 26, 28 to 33, 35, 39 to 48, 50 to 61, 65, 69, 70, 72, 78 to 87, 89 to 99, 103 and 104."

Supplementary Demands for Grants—Third and Final Batch (Excluding Railways) for 2007-2008 to be submitted to the Vote of the House

No. and Title of the Demand	Amount of Demand for Grant to submitted to the Vote of the House	
	Revenue Rs.	Capital Rs.
1	2	3
1. Department of Agriculture and Cooperation	321,25,00,000	2,00,000
2. Department of Agricultural Research and Education	2,00,000	...
4. Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (Previously Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries)	1,00,000	...
5. Atomic Energy	64,96,00,000	1,00,000
7. Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals	1,00,000	25,17,00,000
8. Department of Fertilisers	4000,00,00,000	...
9. Ministry of Civil Aviation	132,40,00,000	...
10. Ministry of Coal	6,81,00,000	...
11. Department of Commerce	3,00,000	...
12. Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion	435,12,00,000	...
13. Department of Posts	54,22,00,000	...
14. Department of Telecommunications	1,00,000	...
15. Department of Information Technology	2,00,000	...
18. Department of Food and Public Distribution	5836,87,00,000	2,92,00,000
19. Ministry of Culture	10,02,00,000	...
20. Ministry of Defence	229,79,00,000	...
21. Defence Pensions	595,00,00,000	...
22. Defence Services-Army	232,22,00,000	...
23. Defence Services-Navy	60,11,00,000	...
24. Defence Services-Air Force	298,21,00,000	...

	1	2	3
25. Defence Ordnance Factories	193,93,00,000	...	...
26. Defence Services-Research and Development	23,09,00,000	...	...
28. Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region	37,16,00,000	...	1,75,00,000
29. Ministry of Earth Sciences	3,00,000	...	1,00,000
30. Ministry of Environment and Forests	100,28,00,000	...	...
31. Ministry of External Affairs	316,28,00,000	...	...
32. Department of Economic Affairs	455,63,00,000	...	6259,39,00,000
33. Payments to Financial Institutions	11536,76,00,000	...	10100,01,00,000
35. Transfers to State and Union territory Governments	8296,60,00,000	...	...
39. Pensions	1287,00,000	...	...
40. Indian Audit and Accounts Department	12,98,00,000	...	...
41. Department of Revenue	539,48,00,000	...	...
42. Direct Taxes	220,70,00,000	...	29,72,00,000
43. Indirect Taxes	59,70,00,000	...	1,00,000
44. Department of Disinvestment	4,00,00,000	...	1,00,000
45. Ministry of Food Processing Industries	1,00,000	...	...
46. Department of Health and Family Welfare	2,00,000	...	11,95,00,000
47. Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH)	2,00,000	...	...
48. Department of Heavy Industry	7,26,00,000	...	165,76,00,000
50. Ministry of Home Affairs	10,27,00,000	...	1,00,000
51. Cabinet	2,96,00,000	...	26,00,000
52. Police	324,89,00,000	...	...
53. Other Expenditure of the Ministry of Home Affairs	319,40,00,000	...	...
54. Transfers to Union territory Governments	55,64,00,000	...	...
55. Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation	1,00,000	...	...
56. Department of School Education and Literacy	49,12,00,000	...	...
57. Department of Higher Education	6,00,000	...	...
58. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting	2,00,000	...	1,00,000
59. Ministry of Labour and Employment	88,63,00,000	...	1,00,000
60. Election Commission	1,00,00,000	...	...
61. Law and Justice	2,00,000	...	...
65. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy	1,00,000	...	...
69. Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions	6,46,00,000	...	...
70. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas	9326,09,00,000	...	...
72. Ministry of Power	2,27,00,000	...	1,00,000
78. Department of Rural Development	980,66,00,000	...	...
79. Department of Land Resources	1,00,000	...	...
80. Department of Drinking Water Supply	1,00,000	...	...
81. Department of Science and Technology	1,00,000	...	1,95,00,000
82. Department of Scientific and Industrial Research	2,00,000	...	20,00,000
83. Department of Biotechnology	8,30,00,000	...	...
84. Department of Shipping	2,00,000	...	1,00,000
85. Department of Road Transport and Highways	161,88,00,000	...	1,00,000
86. Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (Previously Ministry of Small Scale Industries)	1,00,000	...	...
87. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment	83,00,000	...	...
89. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation	1,00,000	...	...
90. Ministry of Steel	...	...	5,00,00,000
91. Ministry of Textiles	509,68,00,000	...	1,00,000
92. Ministry of Tourism	1,00,000	...	1,50,00,000
93. Ministry of Tribal Affairs	1,00,000	...	...
94. Andaman and Nicobar Islands	99,00,00,000	...	1,00,00,000
95. Chandigarh	93,57,00,000	...	41,08,00,000
96. Dadra and Nagar Haveli	16,32,00,000	...	9,90,00,000
97. Daman and Diu	129,50,00,000	...	11,50,00,000
98. Lakshadweep	32,77,00,000	...	...
99. Department of Urban Development	2,00,000	...	589,06,00,000
103. Ministry of Women and Child Development	2,00,000	...	...
104. Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports	4,00,000	...	...
Total	47587,56,00,000	17258,25,00,000	

[Translation]

****SHRI SHARANJIT SINGH DHILLON (Ludhiana):**
Hon'ble Speaker Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me permission to speak on the General Budget 2008-09 in my mother-tongue Punjabi.

Hon'ble Finance Minister has presented a politically motivated Budget this year. This Budget totally ignores the common man, although the Government claims that it is a Budget for the common man. The common man will not gain anything from this Budget.

13.16½ hrs.

(MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

Sir, I would like to present the findings of a recent survey. According to the 2007 report of the National Commission for Enterprises in Unorganized sector, 77% people in India are poor or hovering around poverty-line. Mere announcements cannot help these poor people make both ends meet. The announcement of waiving of loans for small and marginal farmers is faulty. The Government claims that 4% farmers will benefit due to this announcement. However, out of 77% poor people, the Government will give relief only to 4% people. What about the 73% poor people for whom the Government has made no provisions in the Budget?

88% of the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes of India fall in the 'very poor' category. They have neither any land, nor any employment. Hon'ble Finance Minister has totally ignored these people.

Sir, as I have said, the agriculture waiver scheme of the Government is faulty and will not benefit the needy farmers. In India, different states follow different methods of agriculture. Madhya Pradesh follows a different method of agriculture. Similarly, Punjab has its own methods of agriculture. The cost of tilling the land and growing food-grains also varies from state to state. Agriculture loans should have been waived keeping in view the different situations prevailing in different states.

The cost of tilling the land and growing food-grains is on the higher side in Punjab. As per a survey conducted by experts of Punjab Agriculture University for

Punjab Farm Commission in 2006, the small farmer in Punjab is groaning due to debts, worth 2822 crore rupees.
... (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am talking in your favour. Please listen.

***SHRI SHARANJIT SINGH DHILLON:** Please do not disrupt my speech. Sir, as per the 2006 survey, out of the total debt of Rs.2822 crores, the loans taken by the farmers from the banks is to the tune of Rs.1799 crores. The loan for the principal amount is only Rs.360 crores and the crop-loan is even less. As per an estimate, the crop-loan is only to the tune of Rs.200 crores. What I want to emphasise is that out of the total loan-waiver amount of Rs.60,000 crores, Punjab will get only 0.3 %. On the other hand, Punjab contributes 40% to 60% food-grains in the Central Foodgrain Pool. Step-motherly treatment has been meted out to Punjab. Punjab has been cheated for the second time. When a special package of 17,000 crores was given to farmers of the southern states, Punjab had been cheated for the first time, as it got nothing. We are not against the relief granted to southern states. However, why have the just demands of Punjab been ignored?

Sir, it is a sad state of affairs that the genuine demands of Punjab are being ignored time and again. The farmers of Punjab are groaning under a debt of 26,000 crores. Farmers are in a miserable condition. As per a survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization in 2003, the family of each farmer in the country is under an average debt of Rs. 12,505 whereas family of each farmer in Punjab was groaning under a huge debt of Rs. 41,576. It is almost three and a half times the national average.

Sir, under the loan-waiver scheme mooted by the Central Government, only 0.8% of the total loans of the farmers of Punjab will be written off. The scheme is totally flawed. The loans of farmers who have 2 hectares of land, have been waived. However, farmers who have 3 or 4 hectares of land, have not been considered for relief under this scheme. What kind of flawed justice is this? Farmers, who have 3 or 4 hectares of land, have also contributed to the Central Foodgrain Pool. Why then have they been ignored? This is sheer discrimination. These farmers have been second to none in bringing about the Green Revolution and in making the country self-sufficient

** English translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

in the production of foodgrain. These farmers had to take loans for tractors and other agricultural implements. But the Government has kept them out of the purview of debt-relief. This is a step-motherly treatment on the part of the Government. This is also a dangerous move on the part of the Central Government. The centre is indulging in a 'divide and rule' policy. All the farmers should have been included in the debt-relief package.

Sir, the water-table in Punjab is going down at an alarming rate. The Budget is silent on this aspect also. To meet this challenge, no money has been sanctioned.

The industrial scenario in Punjab is dismal. The Government has done nothing to bail out the sick industries of Punjab. The industrialists of Punjab have been cheated by the Government. Relief in taxes have been announced in the Budget for the industries of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand. We do not grudge the facilities being provided to the industries of other states. However, why pick Punjab for injustice? We will not tolerate this. This industries in Punjab are in shambles. Industrialists are fleeing Punjab. They are re-locating their industries in Himachal Pradesh. Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand due to favourable conditions there. These states have been granted tax benefits. However, the genuine demands of the industrialists of the border state of Punjab have been consistently ignored. Natural calamities have wreaked havoc in Punjab. However, the Hon'ble Finance Minister has totally ignored the just demands of the industrialists of Punjab. Punjab has been cheated in this Budget.

Industrially, Punjab is a backward state. The Finance Minister should be have made a special provision in the Union Budget for the industries of Punjab. However, after the Union budget was presented, the rate of iron-ore has increased from Rs.2500 per tonne to Rs.5000 per tonne. This has sounded the death-knell for this industry in Punjab. I met the Hon'ble Minister Shri Ram Vilas Paswan along with a delegation of industrialists from Punjab. Shri Paswan had assured us that the rate of iron and steel would not go up for the next three months. However, we have been cheated. The prices of iron and steel have gone through the roof. If this trend continues, the people will find it difficult to purchase agricultural instruments, build their houses or purchase even a bicycle. If the industries in Punjab are forced to close down, it will further aggravate the problem of unemployment.

The export of iron-ore should be stopped immediately. The Central Government should stop playing with the future of the country. Prominent Indian companies like Tatas, Jindals, SAIL and Hindustan Ispat arbitrarily arrive at the decision to increase the prices of iron-ore and steel. The Government should intervene in this matter and stop these companies from increasing the iron and steel prices arbitrarily.

Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, the state of agriculture and industries in Punjab is miserable. Only the service sector has a future in Punjab. Punjab badly needs premier institutes like I.I.T.s. However, no announcements in this regard have been made in the General Budget. There is a sense of discontent and disillusionment among the youths of Punjab and India. The Budget is silent regarding generation of employment. Today, 65% people of India are below 40 years of age. Out of these people, 54% people are capable of serving the country. However, unemployment is on the rise. No schemes have been announced for the unemployed.

The mention of setting up of new universities or institutes is like a drop in the ocean. Due to lack of employment avenues, educated unemployed are migrating to foreign countries. Brain drain is badly affecting the country. No new schemes have been launched by the Government to tap the potential of the educated unemployed youth

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. No. Nothing is going on record. Please sit down.

*(Interruptions) *...*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please sit down.

... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do not waste the time of the House. Please sit down.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI SHARANJIT SINGH DHILLON: Please listen to me. Please do not disrupt me.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please try to understand what he says.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHARANJIT SINGH DHILLON: Please do not disturb me. I am voicing the concerns of my party.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please address the chair.

[Translation]

*SHRI SHARANJIT SINGH DHILLON: We hoped that the Hon'ble Finance Minister would announce an Unemployment Allowance for the unemployed youth of Punjab and the country. However, not a single paise is being spent in this Budget for the welfare of the unemployed youth of the country. The Finance Minister has cheated not only the unemployed youth of Punjab, but the unemployed youth of the whole country.

Hon'ble Deputy Speaker Sir, the Union Budget has also ignored the road transport sector of the country. 70% of the goods in the country is transported through trucks by road. Only 30% goods is transported by rail. However, the truck-owners are groaning under the burden of heavy taxation. Service-tax is imposed on the truck-owners whereas goods trains have been kept out of the purview of service-tax. The truck owners have to pay TDS on freight charge. However, no TDS is imposed on the railway goods transportation system.

The Government has dished out a whopping sum of 28,000 crores for construction of a "Dedicated Freight Corridor". On the other hand, the truck owners have to pay toll-taxes time and again. The truck owners have to pay Rs.5000/- as national permit for every state. Other types of cess on diesel etc. is also collected from truck owners. Despite collecting so many taxes, the Government does not ensure that the roads are in a good condition. In fact, highways are often full of pot-holes. The truck-drivers find it very difficult to drive on such bad roads. The present Budget is silent on aspects related to road safety. Some relief has been provided for buses and bus-chassis but trucks have been completely ignored. Step-motherly treatment has been meted out to the truck-owners.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude now.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

[Translation]

*SHRI SHARANJIT SINGH DHILLON: Hon'ble Deputy Speaker Sir, I want to make certain suggestions. This Budget is a politically motivated Budget. It has nothing to do with development. No long-term policies have been framed for the welfare of farmers and industrialists.

I appeal to the Government to include my suggestions as amendments in the Budget. The farmers of India should be provided more subsidy as is being done by the western countries for their farmers. The rate of interest on the loans being given to the farmers should be brought down to 3%. All loans of the brokers and commission agents of the farmers should also be written off. The Minimum Support Price for the crops should be linked to Price Index. The gains of crop-insurance is limited to only 10% farmers. All farmers should be brought under its purview. The insurance amount should be paid by the Government. The agricultural loans taken by medium and large farmers should also be written off. Loans taken by agricultural labourers, small shopkeepers and landless labourers should also be waived off. Only 0.3% of the GDP is being spent on agricultural research. It should be increased to 3% of the GDP. Punjab should be declared an industrially backward state. A special package should be granted to Punjab to bail out its industries. Subsidy should be announced on all raw materials. There should be a ban on the export of iron-ore. Iron and steel prices should be brought down. Unemployment Allowance should be granted to all the unemployed youths of the country. More self-employment schemes should be announced. Truck owners should be provided a relief in toll-tax. Road tax should be abolished on diesel. Relief should be given on truck-chassis also.

Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am convinced that this Budget will further increase inflation. The Government claims that it will remove poverty. However, this Budget will kill not the poverty but the poor people of India. Prices will further sky-rocket. The poor people will find it difficult to make both ends meet. The gulf between the rich and the poor will widen further. This Budget will have disastrous consequences for the country.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sh. Thawar Chand Gehlot.

SHRI THAWARCHAND GEHLOT (Shajapur): Mr. Speaker, it is 'Tha' of Thapa in my name...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Thawar Chand Gehlot.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

SHRI THAWARCHAND GEHLOT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in four or five of our states, Saturday is called Thawar and as I was born on the same day, I was named Thawar by my family.

Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I am discussing the budget of 2008-09. This is the fifth continuous budget of Hon'ble Minister of Finance and the Minister praised himself every time he presented each budget. He said that there will be no inflation, there will be increase in the agriculture growth rate and decrease in the monetary inflation. He made similar Speech every time but economic survey shows that the economy of the country has faced a setback and their estimates made by him during the last budget have not proved right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know that the prices are soaring high continuously during these years and people of the country are suffering due to this and particularly the farmers are compelled to commit suicide thereby losing their lives. This time also the Minister of Finance has praised himself excessively. As we go forward in the budget, it seems that this time also the budget is full of illusion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, whenever a magician shows his magic everyone is caught into his fancies but when asked later they term it as illusion. The magic of magician is a tricky play. This budget is just like that. It is not what it looks like. I am saying this and the people of the country second my view. It is not so often that Minister of Finance presents the budget, and another minister of same Government criticises it. In this Government the Cabinet colleagues of Mr. P. Chidambaram have criticized this budget and have shown dissatisfaction...*(Interruptions)*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't want to take anyone's name. They all are educated. They should read the newspapers, otherwise I will have to take their names. I have the cuttings of the newspapers wherein the Ministers have shown their dissatisfaction. Mr. Kamal Nath, Mr. Sharad Pawar, Mr. Manishankar Aiyar and Mr. Vilasrao Muttemwar have expressed their dissatisfaction and have said that this budget is not going to help the common man especially farmers...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is why I asked you to keep quiet.

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Sir, when the Minister of Finance presented the budget, he centred it around waiving of loans of the farmers and whole of the House clapped for him and in this way he tried to mislead the people especially the farmers of the country. I would like to analyse whatever he said and would request him to tell the number of farmers likely to be benefited from the announcement of waiving of the loans. They haven't included all the farmers in it. They have said that small farmers i.e. up to one hectare and secondly the marginal farmers i.e. up to one or two hectare will be benefited from the same provided the farmers who have taken loan up to 31 march 2007 have not paid back the same upto 31st Dec. 2007 and it has become overdue and besides, the amount of overdue is not repaid upto 29 February 2008, will be benefited from the same. I would like to bring to the kind notice of Hon'ble Minister and would like to tell him that when the NDA Govt. implemented the Kisan Credit Card Scheme and provided loan at the cheaper rate of 9% in the interest of the farmers, most of the farmers took the loans under the scheme and if any farmer takes the loan under Kisan Credit Card Scheme, there is no limit prescribed for installment.

There is no chance for overdue as the farmer can withdraw all the amount deposited in his account as and when required and can repay the same when available, during the time limit of the Kisan Credit Card. So, what I want to say is that there is no overdue of loan against those farmers as the prescribed period under the cash credit limit is not monthly or quarterly. So, there will be no overdue. As an alternate to this hon'ble Minister has said that other farmers who come under the purview of 2 hectare and do not repay the loan, they would have to submit 75 percent at one go and their 25 percent of loan will be waived off.

Now it is also an illusion because managers of banks are empowered that if a farmer is not able to repay his loan and it becomes overdue and for a long time he has not been able to repay the loan and if he approaches the manager and requests that he is not to repay full amount and requests for reaching and settlement. He offers to make some payment and wants waiving off remaining loan then in this situation the Managers of banks are authorised to write off the amount upto 25 percent.

The hon. Minister has not obliged by announcing it. He has the authority to write off debt upto 20 to 25 percent. Therefore I would like to say that the announcement made about the farmers is just a fraud, it

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is making fun of them and an attempts to insult them. It is not going to benefit them. I want the hon. Minister to tell us as to how farmers would be benefited and let me know the number of farmers likely to be benefited from this?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I am saying is also published in many newspapers. The hon. Minister must state the amount of loan given to the farmers by Nationalized Banks which has become overdue and is covered under this definition. Co-operative Banks are under the control of State Governments and come under the purview of State Governments. The economic condition of many co-operative banks is very bad, they are incurring losses. For them it would be very difficult to write off their debts. The hon. Minister has also not made any provision in the budget for them in regard to waiving of these loans. Many newspapers have concluded on this basis that so far as the farmers who have taken loan from nationalized banks are concerned as per the announcement made by hon. Minister probably loans up to a total of rupees ten thousand crore are likely to be waived off and not more than that. The institutes engaged in banking business under license from the government and pay taxes should also be covered under this announcement. Similarly, nothing has been said about loan waiver by the non-nationalized banks. That loan should have been waived. I would still demand that loans taken by farmers from those banks be waived, records be solicited and inquiry conducted. If it is correct their loan should be waived off and if there is mistake somewhere, then inquire about it. I feel sorry to say that Shri Sharad Pawar, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture who is known as the leader of farmers is venting his ire by telling the farmers not to repay the loans taken from moneylenders because the farmers would not get any benefit from this budget. Can such thing ever happen? If those moneylenders have carried out this business without license, then find them out, take action against them and put them in jails. If they have taken licence following the rules of the Government, carrying out their business after paying taxes and giving loans to the farmers then action should be taken to waive loans taken by such farmers. Nothing as such has been done by the Minister of Finance and the farmers are being asked to repay loans. Hon. Minister is advising them to take law into their hands. If the farmers would not repay their loans, would it not create disputes. The farmers would be forced to commit suicide even after that. Those who have given loans will retaliate.

I would like to give one more suggestion. It would have been better if arrangements were made for protection

of interest of the farmers, but the Government did not do anything.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude. Other members from your party are also to speak.

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Sir, I would like to say that when this government presented its first budget for providing remunerative price to farmers, hon. Minister of Finance may go through it, he had assured the House and people of this country in respect of question no 10 and 11 of 8th July, 2004 that he will implement agriculture income insurance scheme for farmers. When Rajnath Singh was the Minister of Agriculture, he had formulated this scheme and decided to start it in 19 districts of 12 states on experimental basis. Shri Chidambaram had mentioned it and assured that if it is needed he will make slight changes and modify it and implement agriculture income insurance scheme in the agricultural system of the country. However, he has not taken any step in this direction till date? I condemn this and request him to implement agriculture income insurance scheme in the country if he wants to protect the interest of farmers so that they may be given compensation in case of any loss...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, I have committed some mistakes. There are 45 not 5 members from your party and there are 42 members from Congress party. Please conclude now.

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: I want to submit that whatever time hon. Members get they will speak accordingly and I shall conclude after requesting you.

It is the policy of our party that loans up to Rs. 50 thousand for all the farmers should be waived off and loan facility at 4 percent rate of interest should be provided to farmers. When Bhartiya Janta Party and JDS came to power in Karantaka, they provided loans to the farmers at 4 percent rate of interest. The Government of Madhya Pradesh is providing loans to the farmers at 5 percent rate of interest. The Central Government also needs to take similar action.

Madhya Pradesh was hit by drought and subsequently by frost. The Government of Madhya Pradesh has demanded a package but the Central Government did not pay and heed to it. The same situation prevails in Bundelkhand. Therefore, I would like to submit that the package demanded by Bundelkhand and Madhya Pradesh should be given to them.

I want to make one more request. Cow stock is the main stay of agriculture of this country. The Constitution of India also provides for protection of cow stock and Department of Animal Husbandry comes under Ministry of Agriculture. Until and unless killing of cow stock is stopped in this country our agriculture system can never be strengthened. So the need of the hour is that the Government should ban cow slaughter throughout the country like Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh and help the system strengthen agriculture...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude now.

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: I will take just two-three minutes. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are being continuously subjected to injustice for the last four years and in this year too, it is the misfortune of the country that Prime Minister of the country says that Muslims have the first right on the budget of the country. What wrong have we people belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes committed? ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SURENDRA PRAKASH GOYAL (Hapur): They have also been given...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: We have got very little...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please keep quiet. Next member from your party is to speak.

[English]

I have to control them.

[Translation]

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: I would like to request hon. Minister to see page 8 of his budget speech. As much as Rs. 75 crore have been allocated for National Minority Development and Finance Corporation and Rs. 106.50 crore have been allocated for three National Development and Finance Corporations for weaker sections in which sanitary employees, Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes are included if we look at their population, it is about 9-10 percent of the population. Rs. 75 crore have been allocated for them, but for the population of OBCs, Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes which is about 50 percent of the population. Only Rs. 105-06 crore have been allocated. Is it not discrimination which is reflected in this budget. Moreover, only Rs. 50 crore have been given to National and State Finance and Development Corporation for Scheduled

Tribes. Proportional provision as per the demand of the population of the Scheduled Tribes in the country has not been made, which is deplorable.

Alongwith it, I would like to draw your attention towards page 9 where it has been mentioned that in continuation of the initiative taken this year more minority candidates will be recruited in the central paramilitary forces, whereas there is a ban on recruitment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Government will recruit them in paramilitary forces by giving them special relaxations and issuing special order, what wrong the people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have done? Why injustice is being meted out to them? They are also patriots, they are also ready to protect the borders of the country and ready to sacrifice their life for the country then, why this step-motherly treatment is meted one to them? ...*(Interruptions)* This should not be done. Similarly, a multi regional development scheme will be formulated for each of the ninety minority populated districts for which Rs. 540 crore have been earmarked in the year 2008-09, but why not for SCs, STs and OBCs? 256 branches of public sector banks will be opened by December, 2008 in many minority populated districts but why not in the tribal belt? Why not in the Scheduled Tribe populated districts? This clearly indicates that they are indulging in vote bank politics, politics of appeasement, trying to march forward on the principle of dual nation and trying to create atmosphere of separatism in the whole country again...*(Interruptions)*.

They talk about Bharat Nirman. In Bharat Nirman there is Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, National highways...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is his party's time.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni): All the parties will be allotted time like this because by 11 p.m. in the night nobody remains here.

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: NDA Government had started it. Only 23.36 percent work has been done on it. They are lagging behind in the execution of two third work from economic and physical point of view and they make claims of Bharat Nirman. For Bharat Nirman interlinking of rivers is essential. At one place flood occurs and at another drought takes place which results in loss of life and property. We see villages submerging in the river water and getting devastated. The Government grants

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billions of rupees for their reconstruction and rehabilitation. After that rain comes again. There is only one way out which is interlinking of rivers Scheme initiated by the NDA Government for providing water to every region, work to every individual and making the whole country prosper but this Government has no plan in this regard...*(Interruptions)*. They have no intention in this regard and no provision has been made for this purpose in this budget too. No work for completion of North to South and East to West Corridor is being done. Pradhanmantri Gram Sadak Yojana is essential for connecting villages with city headquarters. NDA Government had targeted to connect the village with the population up to 500 with main road and roads approaching towards district block development headquarters by the year 2007. Firstly, they discontinued that scheme for a year and half. Neither they scrapped the scheme nor continued rather they kept this scheme under Suspended animation. Later on they restarted it and fixed the target of connecting villages having population upto one thousand by the year 2009. While our Government had fixed the target of 500 population and all such villages were to be connected by year 2007 whereas this Government have fixed the target of one thousand population and these are to be connected by the year 2009 and in this way, this Government has pushed back this country and the development of the rural areas by 5 years. I condemn it...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He is speaking on behalf of his party. He is taking his party's time.

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: I want to make a request and will try to conclude after that because you have your own limits which I have to keep in mind.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is his party's time, why are you doing this? Members from your party will also speak.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: I am saying that if time allotted to every party is maintained then I am happy.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will keep within that.

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Sir, NDA Government had launched Antyodaya Anna Yojana. There was a provision under this scheme to provide two rupees as kilogram wheat, three rupees a kilogram rice and 35 kilogram of foodgrains per family per mensum. This Government have cut short that arrangement and made

it 15 kilogram and that too is not fit for human consumption. They are providing inferior quality of wheat like red wheat perhaps imported from Australia or some other country. This red wheat is not fit for consumption even by animals and then question of its consumption by us does not arise. In every state red wheat is being supplied, which is also an injustice to the people of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes. This injustice should be removed and the supply of red wheat should be stopped. Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme was started. In the article 45 of the Constitution of India, it is provided that the Government shall make provision for free and compulsory education to the children upto the age of 14 years.

I would like to thank the then Prime Minister and the Cabinet that they amended the Constitution and included education into fundamental rights and enacted laws for providing free and compulsory education. After that this Government have not made any arrangement for providing free and compulsory education. There is neither uniform syllabus nor uniform pattern of education. The children of rich people are studying in good schools and the children from poor families Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes are compelled to study in those schools where there are no benches and no teachers. Should arrangement of providing free and compulsory education under Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan scheme not be made? They will say, definitely, it should be done. I want to request that if they want to do it then they should implement this scheme honestly. Alongwith it, I want to make a suggestion and make submission about the rate of income tax and about the slab of Rs. 1,50,000 which has recently been increased keeping in view the report of Sixth pay Commission which is due to submit its report in March or April. I know that elections are going to be held. The Government will anyhow try to win the elections and implement the report of Sixth Pay Commission as soon as it is submitted. When the Government will implement this report the employees, who will be benefited by the Sixth Pay Commission will not get the benefit of income tax slab which has been increased. As such, it will be an illusion. Besides, employees getting salary of more than one and half lakh rupees will have to pay a tax of 10 percent, employees drawing salary more than that will have to pay 20 percent tax and the employees getting salary of more than five lakh rupees will have to pay a tax of 30 percent. Gap between rich and poor in this country is widening because of such wrong policies. The slab of 10 percent fixed for the middle class families should be reduced to 5 percent and slabs should be

divided into five categories instead of three categories, namely, first of 5 percent, second of 10 percent, third of 15 percent, fourth of 20 percent and fifth of 25 percent. It will benefit the Government as the people will not hide their income, the State Governments will get more sales tax, the Central Government will also get more central sales tax, nation's coffers will swell and common people particularly poor and middle class people will get benefit from it. So, it is needed to be done...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now you conclude your speech.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would also like to submit that the cooperative banks which are going to waive off loans should be contacted as soon as possible to ascertain the amount of loans to be waived off by them, although the number of beneficiaries is not very large. Amount of loans waived should be compensated without any delay. Again the loans to be provided by the Nationalized Banks, cooperative banks or Regional Rural Banks to the farmers in future should be given at lower interest rates, Amount of loans waived off by banks should be reimbursed otherwise they would incur losses and would not be in a position to provide loans in future. If such a situation emerges, the development of the country would be hampered. Even otherwise it does not seem that the present budget would place our country in the category of developed countries from present status of a developing country. The present budget and policies are not going to translate into reality the vision of our great leaders to see India as developed nation by the year 2020, with these wases, I conclude..

[*English*]

SHRI RAHUL GANDHI (Amethi): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak in support of the Budget for 2008-09. Each one of us is responsible for listening to the people of India and reflecting their voice in this august House.

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are permitted to speak from the front bench if you want so.

[*English*]

SHRI RAHUL GANDHI: I am all right from here.

It is therefore a privilege for me to put forth my views here today. There are two distinct voices in India today. One of these voices is a louder voice. It is a voice that is easily heard, it is the voice of empowered India, an India that shown the rest of the world what it is capable of doing, an India that is educated, an India that is moving forward rapidly. There is another voice in India today. This is a deeper voice and it is a voice that is heard reverberating around the country. It is not as loud as the first voice, it is the voice of a decent franchise, people of India. These people are no different than the people who are doing well.

14.00 hrs.

These people too have the potential that the other Indians have. They too are enterprising, hardworking and self-reliant and they ask only to be given an opportunity. Some believe that the progress of these two Indias is not just separable, but mutually exclusive.

Some believe that India can shine only when we direct attention and resources to those Indians who are already soared. While ignoring the aspirations of the disempowered, others believe that the poor will progress only if we strive for our nation's entrepreneurial energy.

Our Government believes that India's growth can and must be symbiotic. The two India's are fundamentally inseparable. Our philosophy is not to choose which India to nurture to grow together. There are two reasons for this view.

First, the poverty of our people is an assault on our principles. Freedom from poverty is not a matter of charity or luck. It is a right. I am proud that under the leader of the Prime Minister, our Government has recognised and institutionalised this idea. The NREGA delivers employment as a right. The Tribal Act delivers ownership of land as a right. The RTI delivers information as a right. The Rehabilitation and the Resettlement Bill seeks to deliver basic minimum rights to those being displaced.

14.02 hrs.

(MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

Second, the speed and continuity of our economic growth depend on inclusion. A small resource rich section of India cannot grow indefinitely, while a vast disempowered nation looks on. If opportunity is limited to

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a few, our growth will be a fraction of our capability as a nation.

Permit me, Sir, to give an example to illustrate why it is crucial to connect these two Indias. Mr. Speaker Sir, on the one hand we have thousands of young Indians looking for job and on the other we have a galloping industry with massive manpower demand. But we have invested too little in developing the skills of our youth. This renders them unqualified to do the jobs our industries require. Indian enterprise will realise its full potential not by distancing itself from the poor, but by fully connecting with their aspirations.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the true magnitude of our economic potential will only be realised when the voice of the empowered and the aspiring speak as one. This is the core of our *aam Aadmi* agenda. I compliment the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister for giving us the Budget that stays true to this goal.

Mr. Speaker Sir, a strong voice begins with effective education. The allocation of Rs.34,000 crore to education will allow for two lakh more teachers and five lakh more classrooms. It will also provide for programmes such as the mid-day meal, meals based scholarship and schools for children so that the most vulnerable are clearly heard. Our investments in expanding IITs, IIMs and other institutes of higher learning will ensure that our brightest minds continue to shine on the world stage. The Budget invests extensively on vocational education and the creation of a National Skills Development Organization. This will ensure that our technical training institutions will respond effectively to the voice of our youth.

Mr. Speaker Sir, permit me to reflect on a subject critical to our nation's future. The UPA has given the nation an education budget three-and-a-half times what it inherited. However, we must acknowledge that there are deep structural issues with our delivery infrastructure. It is my conviction that our schools and universities will become worthy of our nation's voice only when the education sector undergoes a revolution of the kind we saw in telecommunications.

Returning to the Budget at hand, Sir, a child's voice is much stronger when it is healthy, well-fed and sheltered. Our Government has recognised and provided for this. The sum of Rs. 16,500 crore allocated to health will help combat illness and disease. Allocations to programmes such as Bharat Nirman, Indira Awas Yojana, Pradhan

Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission are delivering to Indians everywhere a minimum standard of life.

The Budget pays special attention to the poor and makes provision to support our most marginalised people. The allocation plan for NREGA will take the programme nationwide and then every eligible Indian access to basic social support. The allocation to the Backward Regions Grant Fund will allow us to correct inequalities by directly targeting devastated and chronically neglected regions such as Bundelkhand and KBK. This year's Budget has specially heeded the plea of the debt-ridden farmer. A historic decision has been taken to free 40 million of our poorest farmers from the bonds of indebtedness. This decision has corrected a grave injustice and given our small and marginal farmers the ability to look to the future with hope.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, our Nation's social objectives are being achieved without burdening the economy or the taxpayer. Our economy has grown at 8.8 per cent under the stewardship of the Prime Minister. The UPA Government continues to bolster economic growth. The exemption threshold for personal income tax has been raised to Rs. 1,50,000. The Government maintains its sharp focus on enabling enterprise through the creation of infrastructure. For example, the allocation for road transport and highways has risen 70 per cent to Rs. 17,550 crore during the tenure of our Government. The continued emphasis on Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission encourages States to build urban infrastructure capable of absorbing the massive migration to our cities.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to put forward some suggestions. The loan waiver brings tremendous relief to our farmers. I have discussed the scheme with several experts. We would like to make two points. First, the current ceiling of two hectares for eligible farmers does not account for land productivity and excludes deserving farmers in poorly irrigated areas. I refer specifically to dry-land areas like Vidarbha. Perhaps, Sir, we could consider making the land ceiling variable based upon land productivity.

Secondly, in some parts of the country, the cropping cycles are such that the bulk of loans that have been taken out have been taken out after the cut off date of March 31, 2007. A single cut off date unfairly penalises farmers in these regions. It would greatly help if localised

cut off dates were considered so that every deserving farmer benefits from the waiver.

Finally, Sir, I would like to make a few suggestions regarding service delivery, accountability and transparency in institutions. Recently some colleagues of mine and I conducted an evaluation of NREGA in our constituencies of high profiling States. We compiled a set of recommendations that we presented to the hon. Prime Minister. I would humbly submit to the Finance Minister that a host of Government programmes would be better implemented if fund transfers are linked to achieving RTI and social audit objectives.

Sir, the Budget establishes total financial inclusion as a key objective and specifically targets SHGs and instruments to access credit. Building SHGs is a resource-intensive process. I would humbly request the Finance Minister to consider budgetary provisions and incentives to encourage States to build SHG networks which comprehensively cover the poor.

Finally, in dwelling upon accountability and transparency, I cannot omit to mention our Panchayati Raj Institutions. Panchayati Raj brings the voice of even the poorest Indian into decision shaping their lives. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would humbly urge the Finance Minister to place PRIs at the centre of programme implementation and create incentives for the States to do the same.

With that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I conclude my submission by once again complimenting the Prime Minister and the UPA Government on a landmark Budget.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (Sriperumbudur): Sir, on behalf of DMK, I rise to support this General Budget for the year 2008-09. This is one of the popular Budgets in the last five years. This is the first Budget which has become more popular because the UPA Government has followed the Government of Tamil Nadu which is headed by Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi, who waived the cooperative loan of the farmers worth Rs. 7,000 crore for the first time in the country.

Our hon. Prime Minister followed the Tamil Nadu Government and waived the agricultural loan worth of Rs. 60,000 crore. I would like to thank the Central Government for that. I would also like to say about our leader, Dr. Karunanidhi, who appreciated this Budget and said: "This is one of the best Budgets of the UPA in the

last five years." On behalf of DMK and on behalf of the people of Tamil Nadu, I would like to express our sincere thanks to our hon. UPA Chairperson, Madam Sonia Gandhi, to our hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, who has a rich experience, and also our hon. Finance Minister for having done this.

Sir, by presenting this General Budget, the hon. Finance Minister has done justice to the vision of the UPA Government, which is reflected in each and every paragraph of his Budget speech. I am grateful to the hon. Finance Minister and to the UPA Government for setting up a desalination plant in Tamil Nadu and allocating fund of Rs. 300 crore this year. He has also allocated fund for setting up a power-loom project in Erode. I would like to thank our hon. Finance Minister for these.

Besides these, the hon. Finance Minister has announced various schemes and programmes - Rs.2,40,000 crore for the development of agriculture in the country; raising the income tax exemption limit and reducing the tax rate in respect of the common man; providing Rs. 31,280 crore for projects under Bharat Nirman; providing Rs. 8,000 crore for the welfare of SCs and STs; providing Rs. 16,000 crore for the National Rural Employment Scheme; and also increased the allocation of Rs. 500 crore for the welfare of minorities.

Sir, I would like to mention specifically about education. It has been increased by 20 per cent this year. Our hon. Finance Minister is the follower of Karmaveer Kamaraj, who made a revolution in the field of education in Tamil Nadu. I would request the Central Government to intervene specifically and allocate more funds to education. The students who are studying in the rural areas are not having proper infrastructure, and there is no proper school building in the rural areas. Funds provided for constructing buildings through SSA and NABARD will not fulfill the needs of the students who are studying in the rural areas. That is insufficient. Providing drinking water and toilet facilities to the students studying in the schools of the rural areas are the most important things. Sir, if you go to the rural area, you will notice that toilet facilities are not there particularly to the women students. In this regard, I would urge upon this Government to allocate more funds to schools for constructing the building and also providing drinking water and constructing toilets in the rural areas.

[Shri A. Krishnaswamy]

Sir, there is a discrimination between the students who study in the urban areas and those who study in the rural areas. Those who study in the urban areas sit on the benches in their classrooms and those who study in the rural areas sit on the floor. This is the discrimination. I urge upon the Central Government to pump in more funds to schools in the rural areas for providing benches and tables in the classrooms.

Sir, the hon. Finance Minister has provided merit scholarships last year in order to avoid dropouts of the children among the SCs and STs, and allocated a sum of Rs. 750 crore for that. It is continuing now. It is a very important scheme. I welcome this.

For ICDS, the hon. Finance Minister has enhanced the salary of the workers from Rs.1,000 to Rs. 1,500 and also of the helpers from Rs. 500 to Rs. 750. I would request the hon. Finance Minister to increase the salary of the helpers from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000 because in most of the Anganwadis, the helpers feed the children and also the pregnant women. If it is not increased, then the helpers will themselves feed the food provided to children and pregnant women. So, I would request the hon. Finance Minister to increase the salary of the helpers from Rs.500 to Rs. 1,000.

Sir, today, it is the vision of this Government to create more employment in the country. After the UPA Government came at the centre, the number of employment is increasing day by day. A lot of Foreign Direct Investment is coming to our country, specifically, in Chennai and around. I hail from Sriperambudur Constituency and we see that several industrial developments are taking place there. I am saying it from my personal experience. We are just lacking skilled labour. Today, there are more than 50,000 unskilled labours in and around my district. So, we have to increase the number of skilled labours. For this, we have to train more skilled labour. But we are lacking in I.T.Is we are lacking in polytechnics and their modernisation. In this Budget, our Finance Minister has upgraded only 300 I.T.Is under the PPP scheme. But I would request him to increase the number of I.T.Is, polytechnics and engineering colleges, which would compete with the companies of the Foreign Direct Investment and would produce more skilled labours in our country. Then, we would be producing more intellectuals in this country, which would be help in increasing the economic growth of this country.

Sir, it is a right time to establish non-profit corporations. The Government has allocated Rs. 1,000 crore for non-profit corporations, which would develop and benefit the skilled labours.

I have come to know that Rs. 750 crore has been allocated for upgradation of I.T.Is. My submission is that this allocation has to be increased by more than 10 times. Then only, we would be able to develop more and more skilled labours in the country.

Further, I also thank the UPA Government for increasing the allocation on of subsidy on IAY schemes. They have increased this amount from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 35,000. It is a welcome measure. For the past one decade, we have been demanding for increasing this allocation, but this is the Government, which has increased it, which has increased it by Rs. 10,000. I must thank the Government for increasing this fund.

Sir, I have some more submissions to make regarding this scheme. We have increased the allocation for each unit. But for each district, the Central Government is allocating funds under this scheme, for 1,000 to 2,000 houses. But my point is that when it reaches, it benefits only three to four families/houses that are benefited. If you really want to benefit the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes under this scheme, you have to increase the allocation of funds so that it reaches to more and more number of houses in the villages. Then, only it would be considered as the real development in the country.

Further, Sir, our hon. Finance Minister had stated to this House that before 31st of this month, the Report of the Sixth Pay Commission would be submitted here. Lakhs and lakhs of employees of the Central Government and other Governments are expecting the Report of the Sixth Pay Commission. The Report of the Fifth Pay Commission was coincidentally submitted by the same Finance Minister. I would urge upon the Union Government to implement the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission as early as possible without any deletion of the recommendations made.

Sir, in regard to the textile sector, I would submit that the exporters are largely affected due to devaluation of dollar. As such, I would request the hon. Finance Minister to grant subsidy to the export sector. In China, the production of cotton, yarn and fabric is monitored by a separate Committee, and the rates are fixed by the

Government itself. It is greatly benefiting the exports there. Whereas in India, it is not the case and our exporters are facing great hardships, and they are failing to compete with the world markets of textiles, which is resulting in heavy loss to our foreign exchange. I would again request the hon. Finance Minister to propose some schemes, which would go to be benefit of our small textile exporters in this country.

Sir, before I conclude my speech, I would give some suggestions. Since the formation of the DMK Government under our leader Dr. Kalaignar, the Government of Tamil Nadu has introduced various schemes there. One such important scheme is Marriage Benefit Scheme, which supports the women there. The women who are matriculates are being given Rs. 15,000 by the State Government. But my submission is that same such scheme may be followed by the Central Government.

It is not only just the Marriage Benefit Scheme, in Tamil Nadu, we have a scheme called Assistance to the Pregnant Women. The Central Government provides an assistance of only Rs. 750 for the pregnant women, but in Tamil Nadu, the State Government is providing Rs. 6,000 for the pregnant women. Similarly, that scheme may also be followed by the UPA Government, which would benefit the pregnant women in all the States of the country.

Not only that, in regard to Mid-Day Meal Scheme, we provide meals three times a week. That scheme should be extended all over the country. Therefore, I earnestly urge upon the Government that they should take care of below the poverty line people, they should take care of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Classes. Therefore, I extend my full cooperation to the Government in reaching the benefits of this Budget to the country.

[Translation]

*SHRI KASHIRAM RANA (Surat): I want to express my views before this august House on the budget 2008-09 presented by the Finance Minister in the House.

A provision of Rs. 50,000 crore has been made to waive off the loans marginal and small farmers of the country and in addition to it Rs. 10,000 crore has been provided in the budget as a one time settlement scheme

for providing relief to such farmers who are reeling under loans. The BJP had been demanding for the past many months that in order to prevent the suicides by farmers, The announcement for waiving off bonus would be made at the earliest. I therefore, welcome the announcement made by the Finance Minister and thank him for the same.

But, it is not enough for the well being of the farmers of the country. Neither the condition of the farmers would improve permanently just by waiving off their loans nor the foodgrains production would increase. The hon. Finance Minister has accepted that the foodgrains production in the country is declining year after year and only 2.5 percent increase in foodgrains production was recorded in the last year which signals that there would be increase in the cost of foodgrains production in coming days. There would be not only price rise but incidents of starvation deaths would also occur. The Finance Minister has not suggested any way out for this in the budget. Following measures should be taken to arrest the price rise and make farmers prosperous:-

1. Foodgrains production should be increased by providing remuneration prices to farmers for their produce and by putting ban on imports.
2. The interest rate on the loans given to farmers should be fixed at 4 percent instead of 7 percent.
3. Farmers should be provided seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. at subsidized rates.
4. Loans should be waived off in case of farmers having 4 hectares of land instead of the present ceiling of 2 hectares.
5. Immediate measures should be taken to increase foodgrains production to growth rate 7 percent.

Agriculture and industry are two wheels of economic development but foodgrains production has been sidelined in the budget. Likewise, the Finance Minister has perhaps ignored to help industry that is reeling under severe recession. There is no provision in the budget to correct the declining industrial growth rate. Export is declining due to strengthening of Indian rupee against dollar. Exporters are incurring losses but the Finance Minister, instead of satisfying their demands is advising them the opposite. In fact, he has not paid any heed to the wise advice of the Commerce Minister. The Commerce Minister himself has openly criticized the budget. Today the mills

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Kashiram Rana]

and factories in the country are running at 40 to 50 percent of their capacity. Lakhs of workers are on the brink of starvation as they have become unemployed. Therefore, it is necessary to implement the justified demands of exporters by having meetings with them so that our exports could be increased and foreign currency earned therefrom would provide further impetus to the pace of development in the country.

There is no positive element in the budget for the textiles industry. A sum of Rs. 1090 crore has been provided in the budget for TUF whereas the textiles ministry has asked for Rs. 1600 crore. Effective implementation TUF could not be taken up due to inadequate allocation. Not only that, the TUF scheme has been abolished by levying 8 percent CVD excise duty on the imported machinery necessary for the modernization of textiles industry such as rapier, Urget and voterjet. There was a demand to abolish 8 percent excise duty on textiles synthetic, filament but the Finance Minister has not done that. The demand for increasing capital subsidy in TUF scheme from Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 5 crore has also been turned down. Not only that, the request for lowering customs duty on the machinery for diamond industry from 10 percent to 5 percent has been rejected and the Finance Minister has done injustice by not providing any relief to the industry. Likewise, the mega cluster has been given to Bhiwandi and Erode even when Surat is having the maximum number of power looms which is not fair. Around 2 lakh people in Surat are employed in Zari and embroidery work. Even then injustice has been meted out to the poor workers of Surat by providing mega cluster of handicraft to Narsapur and Muradabad. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Finance Minister should waive off the loans of handicraft and handloom owners in the same way as he done in case of farmers.

The Finance Minister has acted well by increasing the exemption limit of income tax. I would like to suggest that the limit for scrutiny, which is presently fixed at 5 lakh in case of profit should be increased and fixed at 10 lakh. Likewise, presently, the audit limit is Rs. 40 lakh which should be fixed at Rs. 1 crore. Since the price rise has dramatically changed the currency value and the Government has taken many steps to simplify it, so this limit ought to be increased.

There is wide spread corruption in Public Distribution System of the country. No mention has been made in the Budget to rectify it. Likewise, as per the report received about NREGS scheme, it seems that half the

funds of the schemes has been misused. The scheme that has been framed to provide employment to the poor of the country has become source of embazziement of the government fund for the middlement, officers and government employees. These two schemes should be amended and culprits punished and the state government should also be cautioned about it.

Efforts are being made to provide facilities to cities under JNURM scheme. A sum of Rs. 6866 crore has been provided for it in the year 2008-09. I think that people from villages are migrating in large number and the population of the towns is increasing at a fast pace. Due to the large scope of employment, lakhs of people have arrived at a fast pace. But, they are facing difficulties due to inadequate transport facilities. Therefore, the scheme of metro and overhead rapid transportation should be immediately implemented in cities like Surat.

The Finance Minister has increased Rs. 10,000/ per unit for Indira Awas Yojana and I thank him for that. Likewise Rs. 1200 crore have been given for the total sanitation scheme for the year 2008-09 which is inadequate. It is in the interest of the country to complete the scheme at the earliest. I demand from the Government to double the amount of fund, being given under this scheme per unit so that sanitation facilities could be made available in each of the House. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I request the Government to implement the Sixth Pay Commission's report at the earliest for providing financial support to the employees reeling under price rise. Likewise, relief should be provided to the general public by implementing the announcement about Banking Cash Transaction Tax from 1 April, 2008 instead of 1 April, 2009.

Likewise, the Finance Minister has made a proposal to impose Commodity Transaction Tax. I would like to suggest the Finance Minister that the future commodity trading should be banned as it helps in future price rise of the commodity.

Before I conclude, I would request the Finance minister that he should act honestly to save agriculture and industries of the country instead of aiming at getting election related benefits so that the glory of the country can be enhanced and the countrymen can enjoy the fruits of prosperity; otherwise the poor people, too, along with the farmers of the country would begin to commit suicide and the industrial growth rate that has declined from 9 percent to 8.7 percent would shrink to 2 or 3 percent like agriculture.

I thank you for allowing me to express my views.

*SHRI V.K. THUMMAR (Amreli): I thank the Finance Minister for the provisions that has been made in the budget to give momentum to economy and to uplift the weaker sections of the society. In our country almost 82 percent people are farmers and among them are such small farmers who are facing problem in bringing up their families. Because they find themselves unable to repay the loans that they had taken. The present UPA government has solved this problem in the budget and the 82 percent people of the country who are farmers express their gratitude towards the Finance Minister. The waiving off of Rs. 60,000 crore loan outstanding against the farmers would benefit 4 crore farmers and it is an unprecedented step. I would like to submit in this regard that entire amount of the loans repaid by the farmers should be given back to them. The Hon. Finance Minister has mentioned that around Rs. 40000 crore is due as loan against the farmers and a provision of Rs. 60,000 crore has been made in the budget. Therefore, Rs. 20,000 crore can be returned to farmers making regular payment, otherwise, a negative trend would emerge in the country.

For the last few years the agriculture sector has remained neglected one; banks were not giving loans and it was being given at higher interest rate which resulted in the fall in foodgrains production and there was less investment in agriculture sector. But the UPA government has lowered the interest rate to 7 per cent and the amount of agriculture loan has been doubled by taking into account the problems faced by the farmers. It would herald another into Great Revolution. The previous NDA government had not given serious consideration to the problems of farmers which resulted in present pitiable condition of the farmers. The present UPA government has again provided them prosperity by correcting the wrong doing of the NDA regime. This year production of the foodgrains stood at 217 million tonnes due to these factors and it is a record.

Many schemes have been framed to spread literacy in the country which will prevent illiteracy among people and bring awareness among them. The allocation for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid Day Meal has been increased as more than 11 crore children of the country are being benefited from it. It is true that many states are not using this money properly and so we are not getting proper and timely result of this scheme. We have to make monitoring system more effective. The Finance Minister has announced the setting up of a monitoring

committee for that purpose which will monitor centrally sponsored schemes so that misuse of funds could be arrested.

There is an urgent need to make investment in certain areas of infrastructure sector for the development of the country. We have to increase irrigation facilities as even today more than 60 per cent land is being irrigated by rain water only. There is also an urgent need to construct roads in villages, link villages with roads and complete the projects that are running behind schedule to prevent cost over-run. The Government has made a 16 per cent increase for its centrally sponsored schemes.

Setting up of industries is restrict to only some places in the country. There should be a balanced development in this direction so that industries could be set up in every district according to the availability of raw material to check migration of people. The government has provided Rs. 5800 crore for the development of backward regions and for setting up of industries at those places. The National Employment Guarantee Scheme has been implemented in all the 595 districts of the country. It will discourage people from migrating to cities and village development would gain momentum from it. The development of the villages of the country would reflect real development of the country as India is a country of villages. My parliamentary constituency, Amreli has not been connected with any National Highway till date. Therefore, it should be connected So that adequate facilities of transportation can be made available to the people of my constituency.

There have been many complaints about supply of foodgrains at cheaper rates to poor people in the country. The foodgrains allocated for poor people are sold in black market due to which the foodgrains intended to be supplied to the poor people by the Government do not reach them. There is a need to take stringent measures to check this trend. Many people were thinking that subsidy on foodgrains will be discontinued from the current year but we are happy to find that hon. Minister of Finance has not only continued it but also increased it from 32 per cent to 33 per cent.

Agricultural crop insurance scheme is being implemented in the country in order to compensate the losses caused due to natural calamities. But the farmers are required to follow very complicated rules to avail the benefits of the scheme. These rules should be simplified. Working of banks is also not satisfactory in this regard due to which farmers are not being paid their dues under the agricultural crop insurance scheme for many years.

[Shri V.K. Thummar]

Farmers are facing difficulty due to it as they have taken loans and they have to pay interest on that loan. If they are paid their dues under the Agriculture crop insurance scheme at the earliest then they would be in a position to repay their loans without delay.

The poor people and farmers in the country do not have cheaper means of entertainment and they cannot afford to buy costly means of entertainment. So, the FM broadcast service should be extended to each and every district of the country so that the poor people and farmers could avail the entertainment facility and they could also be kept informed about various schemes of the government.

The rural, cottage and medium industries in the country have to face a lot of competition while they are instrumental in increasing employment and achieving balanced development of the country. If food processing sector is reserved for these industries, then fruits and vegetables worth Rs. 300 crore which get rotten every year can be saved from getting perished and they could be processed and exported by which we can earn a good amount of foreign exchange.

In this year's budget, battery driven cars have been exempted from excise duty but battery driven two wheelers have not been exempted from excise duty. It will create a lot of anomalies. Therefore, battery driven two wheelers should also be exempted from excise duty. These are used by common man and people belonging to lower strata of society.

With these words I support the budget.

*SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL (Mehsana): Hon. Minister of Finance has tried his best to exploit the available resources to the hilt in every sector by making best use of the prevailing financial scenario. The way he has announced various concessions that indicates that the Minister of Finance has tried to please every section of the society.

The life of elderly people in rural areas of the country had become miserable. For that the Government has increased the amount under Indira Gandhi National old age pension from Rs. 87 lacs to Rs. 157 lacs This will help in making the life of elderly people in rural areas comfortable. In our country the existing UPA Govt. has earned a lot of name and fame by bringing the country

on the path of development. Had the development been on the same pace in the past as well, then India would have achieved a better position in the world map. The present Government have played a major role in bringing GDP to 9.5 per cent and if it is maintained even at 8 per cent then sustained development of the country could be ensured.

To save people from price rise in retail market, CENVAT has been reduced from 16 to 14 per cent. It will help in checking the price rise and the consumers will get things at cheaper rates. The record production of foodgrains this time may create a situation leading to export instead of import of the foodgrains.

In my parliamentary constituency Mehsana, ONGC produces 40 per cent of the total production of oil and gas of India. In the process of drilling oil and gas, farms of the farmers are damaged. The water level goes down. In this area the fluoride element is getting mixed in water which is causing diseases among people. The roads also get damaged. ONGC gives royalty to the state Government of Gujarat for this work which should be utilized for development of Mehsana, but, the State Government does not spend this royalty money on the development of Mehsana. Therefore, through this House, I request the Government, that provisions should be made to ensure that royalty is utilized for the area and in works for which it is given. My constituency Mehsana has made India self dependent by providing oil and gas to the country but the Gujarat Government is not spending this royalty money for development of Mehsana and to compensate the damage being done to the people of the area and ONGC is drilling out oil and gas day and night to increase its profits and is not doing anything which ONGC is supposed to do as its social obligations. It is spending crores of rupees on other places, where oil and gas is not drilled out. Provisions should be made by the Union Government to ensure that royalty money is utilized for the areas for which it is given. It should also be ensured that the public sector and private companies should spend 15 per cent of their profits in the areas from which they are getting the raw materials.

Prices in the country have been rising for many years and the income tax limit has been increased from 1 lac to 1.5 lacs keeping in view the demand made by the people for many years and the slab limit has also been increased. It has provided a lot of relief to middle class people and Government employees and other employees. I congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance for that

*Speech was laid on the Table.

Simultaneously, many rules have to be complied with in regard to assessment of income tax and payment of taxes which causes a lot of difficulty to the people. So there is a need to simplify the rules in regard to receipt of taxes to ensure that taxes are paid by the people.

In this budget, excise duty on two wheelers and small vehicles have been reduced. It will give relief to middle class people. There is no change in the customs duty. Many types of raw materials are imported in the country. Duties should be reduced on the import of raw material whereas it should be increased on the import of readymade items. It will help provide raw materials to the industry as well as increase the production and the employment. The import duty on raw material of gold is comparatively higher than finished goods made of gold. Owing to it, the people bring finished goods made of gold in the country. It negatively affects employment. If the raw material is produced in the country, then industries will be saved from being closed and people will also get employment.

The sales tax has been reduced from 3 per cent to 2 per cent. It will reduce the prices in the country by 1.5 to 2 per cent. This budget seeks to arrest the price-rise. Government should also take care that taxes charged on raw material should be less while there should be higher taxes on finished goods. If it is not so, many types of taxes would be charged on the same thing because of which assessment, payment of taxes would have to be made a number of times. For example if tax is not levied on finished bulb but on its raw material it results in price rise and people engaged in its production also resort to various means of corruption. If tax is levied on a finished bulb the Government would not face loss and there would be no price rise.

It is observed that only 15 per cent of the money that the Central Government releases to the states for the development of villages, promotion of education, for social welfare and poverty alleviation reaches the beneficiaries and the rest 85 per cent is spent on administration resulting in under utilization of funds under the scheme and the benefits do not reach the targetted sections. Therefore, funds should be provided directly to the districts. It can be implemented in few districts on trial basis. It would prevent wasteful expenditure and money could be made available for the schemes expeditiously and work will not be affected.

In my parliamentary constituency there are many tourism spots but the schemes of the Central Government have not been implemented there. Even one or two

schemes that have been implemented are not provided adequate funds. The scheme framed by the Government for the development of Nursery would help in using wasteland and it will boost flower production and the people would get employment too. It is also fine that it has been exempted from Income tax.

In my parliamentary constituency, compensation for land is given due to the works related to oil and gas. Though, this is agriculture land and it would have remained so but against the payment of compensation, the Government is deducting TDS and the land owners have to hire advocates to get the same and they have to spend substantial money for it. In many cases people do not go to receive compensation as its amount remains lesser than the expenditure involved to receive it. I therefore request the Government not to deduct TDS as the land is acquired from the farmers after the exploration of oil and natural gas. If we keep through history then we find that our textile industry was very famous all over the world and it had employed maximum number of people on agriculture at the time of independence but gradually these industries faced closure. NTC mills in the country became sick and the volume of export of textiles is declining with the passage of time. The weavers are not getting material at cheap rates. Today, the textile industry is reeling under price rise and we have to guard against it effectively. The Government has made a provision to provide Rs. 100 crore for the upgradation and development of basic facilities for textiles industry which is not sufficient. It should be increased. There is a programme to establish 30 textile parks in the country and Rs. 450 crore would be spent on it. I thank the Finance Minister for abolishing 1 per cent calamity tax on polyester. Surat, in Gujrat is called the mini Japan and this city is famous for textiles, but regretfully I would say that there the office of the Textiles Commissioner has not been established so far and people have to go to either Mumbai or Delhi, I would like to bring one more thing this to the notice of the Government, through the House that due to the scrutiny and assessment of tax being done separately, corruption increase and the revenue that should go to the Government goes in the hands of corrupt people. Therefore, scrutiny and assessment should be done simultaneously. This is the demand of traders and it is justifiable demand.

In our country, 82 per cent people are farmers and the farmers would always remain greatful as their loans have been waived off which amounts to Rs. 60,000 crore. The farmers had come under the debt burden during the regime of NDA and had resorted to commit suicides. But

[Shri Jivabhai A. Patel]

the UPA Government have waived off the loans of the farmers and justice has been done to them so that they can live with dignity. The Finance Minister, the Prime Minister and Mrs. Sonia Gandhi deserve congratulations for this.

(English)

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (Kasargod): Sir, while I am supporting and appreciating many of the suggestions in the Budget presented by our hon. Finance Minister, I would submit that more serious issues and more important issues have to be addressed by the Finance Minister and the Government also in future.

Compared to the figures of the last year – we say that we are growing – the growth rate has declined from 9.6 per cent to 8.6 per cent. India being an agriculture country, contribution of agriculture to growth rate is only 2.6 per cent. Though we are able to check our inflation rate, this is not translated in the experiences of the common man, especially in respect of price rise.

There are a number of suggestions which are positive as far as farmers are concerned. Especially the writing off the loans and interest is really a positive step taken by the Government. I remember that for the last four Sessions, we have been discussing this issue. So, it is too late that the Government has taken the decision to give some relief to the small farmers and marginal farmers. At the same time, I fully agree with hon. Member, Shri Rahul Gandhi that there should not be a single cut off date with regard to giving relief to the farmers. Take the example of Kerala in this regard. Kerala Government has passed Debt Relief Act last year, especially for the farmers. On the basis of that Act, the Government has taken the decision to waive interest of the farmers. The State Government has allocated about Rs. 60 crore or Rs. 80 crore for farmers. They are not coming in the line if we follow this definition.

We see the miserable conditions of the weavers and fishermen also. They really come under the definition of agriculture, but the Government has to think whether that section can also be included in the case of this loan benefit scheme. Swaminathan Commission has made a remarkable observation that from 1981-82 onwards, we see that there is a big difference between agricultural sector and non-agricultural sector. Really, the land under cultivation is becoming less; production and productivity is also going down. The infrastructure facilities, such as irrigation facilities, are also low. So, what we need is not

an agriculture policy but policy for the farmer because the farmers face such a difficult situation now-a-days.

We see in the relevant statistics that out of the total debt that the farmers have taken, only one-third is taken from the financial institutions, cooperative banks, commercial banks and national banks; and two-third of debt is really taken from moneylenders and private institutions. Really I agree with the Government that they have given some relief, but at the same time, what is the reaction of the Government with respect to large number of people who have taken loan from the moneylenders and also from other sources? It is only giving some relief to them. We are proud of that and we feel that this Government should do something more to this section also.

Coming to the activities and functions of the Government, the most important issue that we discuss and we have been discussing is the issue of price rise. The Government said that it was an international phenomenon and a national phenomenon. However, we have made it clear that there are three or four factors for the prices going up. The Public Distribution System has become a real failure. Take for example the State of Kerala. We have a very effective Public Distribution System, and we were able to give foodgrains and other necessary items through the fair-price shops. But now the Government of Kerala is unable to do that. It is because we were sanctioned 1,13,000 and odd metric tonnes of rice, but now it has been reduced to 21,000 metric tonnes. How is it possible for a Government to run the Public Distribution System with such a drastic reduction in the case of foodgrains? There is nearly about 80 per cent reduction. The Chief Minister of Kerala and we, the Members of Parliament, have approached the Union Government on this issue. Even if there is a better Public Distribution System, we are not able to run it just because the Government is not in a position to do so. Why is it so? It is because whenever the procurement takes place, the Government has to go first and offer better prices to the farmers. But now, it is Reliance and other private parties that are going first and the godowns owned by the private parties are full. The Government godowns do not have stocks and, that is why, it has to import wheat. We are paying better or higher prices to foreign countries, but we are paying a lesser price to our farmers. Therefore, the foodgrains procurement policy needs to be really reviewed. The liberal policy really affects many sections of our country.

Similarly, from the list of essential commodities, just like the NDA Government, the UPA Government has taken

away many of the items. The prices can be controlled through better Public Distribution System and through better procurement of foodgrains. In this case, the Government has to give much more importance to this issue.

The Government has addressed some of the concerns of the Kerala Government like the sanctioning a Central University and setting up of Scientific and Research Centre, besides giving some relief to the coconut, pepper and cashew sector. However, in case of plantation sector, Kerala is facing a severe crisis. About 17 estates have already been closed down and thousands of workers have become unemployed. Such cases have to be considered by the Central Government as it is not possible for the Government of Kerala alone to do so. Some more assistance has to be provided by the Central Government in this regard. We have already submitted a representation to the Central Government on this.

Kerala has better health, education and housing facilities. But it should not be a reason to punish the State of Kerala. In case of fund allocation, the State of Kerala is getting less funds on the ground that we have better education, health and housing facilities. Have we committed any mistake by having better facilities? Even though we have cent per cent education, there are problems with regard to higher education. Our State is not in a better position in terms of higher education and, therefore, we are demanding the setting up of an IIT there. We need technical experts and scientists. What we need is higher educational institutions like IIT, AIIMS and other things.

Take for example the health sector. It is better compared to many other States, but at the same time, the incidence of cancer is spreading in every village and we do not know the reasons for it. Similarly, the incidence of chicken guinea is also spreading. Therefore, more funds have to be provided. (*Interruptions*) Cancer is spreading not only because of smoking but also because of other reasons. Many persons who are not smoking are also affected by cancer; even ladies who do not smoke are suffering from cancer. So, you cannot say that it is spreading because of smoking only.

If you take the statistics, the Central Government allocation and the public investment is really decreasing year after year. So, you have to contribute and provide assistance to education, health and housing sectors. If you take the judiciary, police and Coast Guards, they are

not merely a State subject; though it is really a State subject, technically it is a subject of the Centre. The security of the nation is also involved. We have a long coastline of about a thousand miles. So, modernisation of Coast Guards, modernisation of judiciary, and modernisation of police force is essential. However, the fund allotted is meagre.

Coming to the Panchayati Raj system, in a discussion in the House itself hon. Panchayati Raj Minister complimented Kerala for being the first State to have made a grand success of it. However, with these many of Central schemes being given to the State for implementation, how can the State implement all of them successfully? That can be done only through devolution of power—power of the fund, functions and functionaries—which is not there. We have implemented the Panchayati Raj System, after the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution. However the staff pattern and procedures followed in 1964 continue even today. We have given Constitutional status to it but other issues have not been addressed.

Manpower is very less in Kerala. They have to take up all the Centrally-sponsored schemes and the State Government schemes. So, the manpower has to be increased. It also needs more financial assistance. You should not give the excuse that we have implemented the Panchayati Raj system better. We are implementing it but, at the same time, the volume of work is very high. Many of the schemes are Centrally-sponsored ones. Of course, the State can construct road and school infrastructure. But ours is a nation with diverse conditions. Situation differs from one State to the other. It is not possible for us to construct an eight metre road under PMGSY at some places because the density of population is high there. So, we have requested for reduction of that norm to six metres. You say that we are not using the funds. How can we use the funds? Norms in some cases have to be reduced.

Take for example the noble scheme of SSY. Kerala is in a relatively better position as far as primary and secondary education is concerned. The hon. Minister knows it. So, how can we use the funds? For that the norms have to be changed. It cannot be treated equal to other States in which more importance needs to be given to primary and secondary education.

NREG scheme is really a noble idea. We can construct a lot of infrastructure under that. From my own

[Shri P. Karunakaran]

experience in my District, I can see that women go to work in large numbers and not men. The large numbers of women that go to work take the responsibility. The Government of Kerala has already proposed that the norms have to be changed for this. Only the labour content is not enough. The material content also has to be added. Otherwise, many of the works cannot continue. Not only that, take the issue of work in the marginal farms. We are discussing about the farmers' issues. They cannot give you the wages. They are in a difficult position. So, work in marginal farms and house site works in targeted groups should also be included. Then only this NREG scheme can become a grand success. That will give employment guarantee. The best thing about this scheme is that there are no middlemen involved. It is the Board Panchayat or the District Panchayat which has to take the responsibility. So, these norms also have to be changed to some extent.

I am thankful to the Government for increasing the honourarium for the Anganwadi teachers and helpers. I also agree that the helpers' allowance has to be increased to at least Rs.760 or Rs.1000 because they are doing much of the work. That also can be considered. The Government has proposed a special programme for the housing scheme for targeted group. I would suggest that there are a number of housing schemes in our country. These are all spread in different Ministries. Sometimes same person may get the benefit. It should be brought under one umbrella and implemented them through panchayats or the district panchayats or gram panchayats.

In regard to the scheme of IAY, I would say that the fund allocation is not sufficient because if we want to achieve the target, the present allocations for the IAY fund is not at all sufficient, especially for the poor people, who may get it. Hence, that also has to be increased.

We have been talking in this House about the Women Reservation Bill. I am sorry to say that either in the Presidential Address or in the Budget Speech nothing is mentioned about it. We need a categorical reply and assurance from the Government that the Bill would be presented and implemented in this Session itself.

Sir, a decision has been taken by the Government to close Hyderabad and Bangalore airports. It was discussed in the House and it was true that there was an agreement but we have reviewed many agreements, we have reviewed the agreement on ENRON because it was against the interests of the country. We are not

against the construction of new airports there but these two airports have better facilities, not only that crores of rupees have been spent two years back for the maintenance of Bangalore and Hyderabad airports. But the Government has taken this decision. What was the hurry to spend huge amounts? These two airports have to be maintained and should not be closed.

Regarding the LIC employees, I would say that they have made a number of demands. The most important among them is the FDI in the LIC and also the privatisation of LIC. LIC is really a public institution which has very close relations with the common people. Not only that, the investment of the LIC can be used for construction of our country. So, their demands have to be viewed in that context.

I am reluctant to speak with regard to the freedom fighters in this House. It is because I had raised this issue many times in this House. Many of the Members have also raised this issue many times. Hon. Chair has also positively remarked about this. I am very sorry to say that we are spending crores and crores of rupees for many other purposes but we are forgetting the heroic freedom fighters. The Central Government has already identified as to which are the freedom struggles. It is on the basis of this decision that the State Governments have formed the monitoring committees and they have identified the persons who really deserve it and they sanctioned it. Many of the freedom fighters who get the State pension are also getting the Central pension but most of them are not getting. Ministers may say, of course, they adopt a positive approach but at the same time when applications to their offices, they seek clarifications and they want the certificates of 1939 and 1941, which is not possible to get it. They are in the sick-bed. They are in the last days of their lives. Very meagre amount is essential for them. I think that at least this time when we are speaking in the 61st year of Independence, we are speaking about many other things in the Budget but we are forgetting the freedom fighters and their relatives. I once again request the Government to take this issue and address it.

Lastly, we have a large number of NRIs. About nine billion dollars we are getting from NRIs every day.

MR. SPEAKER: Nine billion dollars every day!

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN: Sorry, Sir. It is nine billion dollars every year. But nothing is mentioned about them.

We have discussed that issue and raised that issue many a time. That also can be taken because they are also Indians. You know that they are going not because of any pleasure but because they are not getting job here, forgetting all their families and friends. When they go there and work, especially from South India and from some other places, they are really helping us. We are not rendering any justice to them. That issue has also to be taken care of. With these words, I support the Budget.

*SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVRAJ (Udupi):
Hon'ble Speaker Sir, my submission is with reference to the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill, 2007 and the Rehabilitation & Resettlement Bill 2007, which are now under consideration by the Standing Committee on Rural Development, headed by Shri Kalyan Singh ji.

Presently, many of the States do not adopt the Land Acquisition Act 1894 for acquiring lands. Karnataka Industrial Development Board (KIADB) acquires lands through the 'Karnataka Industrial Area Development Act 1966' (KIAD Act). Any land even when required by a Private Company, whatever the purpose may be, is declared as "industrial area" without considering nature of the lands, the displacements, adverse Impact on the livelihoods, health and environment of the area.

Under the Act, the notifications once served remain valid for decades forbidding the farmers to carry out any developments in their lands. This Act allows taking possession of lands even without payment of compensation, in as much as, the final notifications under section 28(4) of the Act are issued without even receiving deposit of funds for payment of compensation from the promoters. The Act is full of loopholes and the Board exploits it and invariably fabricates records to deceive Courts and deny the basic rights to the villagers. While the government machineries are used to provide concessions to the rich and powerful who do not require help, the vulnerable sections in farmers, fishermen and tribal are treated like guinea-pigs. Anyone resisting the acquisition in my constituency must travel 400 km away to Bangalore live in costly hotel rooms and hire lawyers to seek relief from the High Court.

The Board has very clear direction from the Honorable Supreme Court in Civil Appeal No. 7405 of 2000 that lands cannot be acquired without studying the impact of the development on the environment and the society. Yet, the Board carries on taking possession of

the lands. The successive governments in the State use this draconian law armed with excessive legislative powers indiscriminately to favor private Companies unrestricted concessions at the cost of the lives and livelihoods of the affected people.

The 1015 MW capacity coal based power project by Nagarjuna Power Corporation, being illegally put up in Yellur Village of my constituency Udupi is an extreme example.

The project was originally notified as 360 MW captive power plant by the State Government in 1994 within the already approved Steel Plant in Thokur, Kenjar & Bykampadi villages of Mangalore Taluk, where 1,381 acres were already taken possession through KIADB Act 1966 after displacing hundreds of agricultural families. Thereafter, the Steel Plant was dropped for unknown reason and the power plant was clandestinely moved to Udupi Taluk from there. No notification was issued. The owners prepared an Environmental study report for the village of Nandikur and Shri Deve Gowda government granted *NOC* in March 1996.

Shri Deve Gowda carried the Nagarjuna project with him to New Delhi when he became the Prime Minister on 1st June 1996 along with another power project called "Cogentrix". Cogentrix was given clearance even before he proved majority in the house. But Nagarjuna did not have the money and was given the clearance on 20.3.1997 a few days prior to his fall as Prime Minister on 21.4.1997. It is well known that Cogentrix faced *strong* public objection and was involved in bribery cases etc and was eventually withdrawn because escrow cover and counter guarantee* were denied by the government Nagarjuna, got the clearance on 20.3.1997 with 5 year validity to Padubidri village with another 1,350 acres of lands. The families displaced in the earlier location are not rehabilitated till today and the lands remain unutilized.

Thus in a nutshell: The project is notified in Thokur village of Mangalore Taluk on 1381 acres in 1994; The environment study was prepared for Nandikur village in 1996; The environment clearance is issued for Padubidri in 1997 on another 1350 acres; but The project is being set up in Yellur village since 2007.

In the process, none of the affected, neither in Mangalore Taluk nor in Udupi is rehabilitated. Those who gave up live miserably in rented places without means of livelihood and those who did not face threat to their lives. Large protests were staged. A public petition signed by

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Smt. Manorama Madhavraj]

4,272 persons was submitted to the Chief Minister Dharam Singh. I personally met Shri Dharam Singh and was promised that the coal based project will be cancelled and instead gas based will be set up in Mangalore Taluk through ONGC-MRPL JV.

The twin districts of D.K. and Udupi, are covered by the Western Ghats from 3 directions North-East and South at close distance with Arabian Sea to the West and has low wind-speed throughout the year except monsoon. Consequently, the pollution cannot disperse sufficiently and the ground level concentration will be high. Moreover, our literatic red soil bed is already acidic and highly porous. Well water is the main source for drinking and irrigation in the villages which will be denied to the people due to contamination. Heavy crop losses, health problems and sea pollution affecting the coastal fishing are the main apprehensions about the project. The location is surrounded by several townships like, Palimar, Mulki, Hejmadi, Padubidri, Yermal, Uchla, Kaup, Katpadi, Mudarangadi, Belman and Manchgal among others within 10 km aerial distance.

Udupi is undisputed district of temples and educational institutions and known to be the part of the creation of Sage Parashurama the 6th incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The Renuka Temple built by the Sage Himself in the memory of his mother and the Pajaka where he sat in meditation is in Katpadi at an aerial distance of about 8 km. The triple-temple complex of Kaup Mahadevi is at 4 km; Shri Udupi Shri Krishna Temple is at about 16 km; Mahabali Gomateshwara Statue of Karkala is at 16 km and the Thousand-Pillar Jain temples complexes of Mood-bid-ri are at 20 km. Belman Mahadevi Temple, Kavtar Temple complexes and several other Temples including the only Mahalaxmi Temple, Uchila are among at least 20 temples that are within 10 km distance. Most of these Temples are 800 to 1200 years old Hindu religious places. There are several Churches some within half km from the project and there are at least 80 to 100 junior schools and degree colleges within 10 km radius. The survival of all these places as well as the health of more than 10 lakhs people within 10KM radius will be at very high risk if the project comes up.

The joint study by Indian Institute of Science & Centre for Environment Study, NEERS report under the direction of the Honorable Supreme Court, DANIDA report jointly made by the Govt of Karnataka and Danish Government under the direction of Government of India, and the report by the UNEP Engineer Sagar Dhara has all rejected such

a project in the area. The Government of Karnataka itself made State of the Environment Report 2003 jointly with the World Bank and reported that without the carrying capacity study of the region projects should not be cleared. As a matter of fact a notification was issued to carry out the study but was secretly withdrawn to accommodate Nagarjuna Power Project.

The Ministry of Environment & Forest (MOEF) had rejected the use of Yellur village several times. The MOEF experts even visited the area and have specifically and categorically rejected the use of Yellur on environment and social grounds during 1991-92. The Secretary, MOEF accordingly wrote to the State Chief Minister as well as the PMO on 22/11/1991. I do have the copy of the communication to PMO.

Government of India Issued guidelines in January, 95 to award Independent Power Project (IPP) only through competitive bidding but this project is converted into IPP in 1996 without bidding and given to Nagarjuna Power Corporation. The Company has no experience in power generation and was virtually bankrupt The owners from Andhra Pradesh were notorious in Andhra for defrauding the people. Andhra Pradesh High Court had even ordered closure of one of the Company and the equipments were auctioned. Newspapers have reported that there were 9! cases registered against the directors of the Company in the Courts and Police Stations of Hyderabad.

Despite such being the status of the Company, Shri Deve Gowda government awarded this project and his sons, Shri Revanna and Shri Kumaraswamy, even went to the extent of granting the escrow facility to cover 80% of the borrowings of. the project, granted government counter guarantees and exemption of all stamp duties, rates and taxes. The adverse economic impact of extending such facilities in previous cases including for Tanner Bhavj In Karnataka and the famous Enron in Maharashtra is well known. While elsewhere in the country the Independent Power Projects are awarded through bidding this project is awarded not only without tender invitation but is granted all sorts financial sops and excessive land concessions.

Nagarjuna always wanted to trade the project and not implement it. The Lanco Group of which Shri Raj Gopal, the Congress MP from Vijayawada is the founder Chairman and his brother Shri Madhusudhan Rao is the Chairman and Managing Director has now bought the project. This is the same group which virtually brought

the Ultra Megha Power Project (UMPP) schemes to a grinding halt with their, miss-representation in SASAN project bidding.

No Public Hearing is conducted by the project and the project owners have managed to obtain a letter from the Ministry of Environment on 31.01.2005 that Public Hearing is not required although it had become mandatory in law on 10.04.1997. The Environmental Clearance issued expired several times and was extended without authority of law.

With the money power Lanco is able to suppress the affected people and even bring in hired goods to beat up the landowners to force them to surrender the lands. Those who refused, live in miserable conditions as deep trenches are dug up or large piles of soil around their dwellings are stored. Deafening rock blasting is carried out day and night with splinters endangering the lives of the residents. The area is fenced and the gun-wielding security guards physically search even the women and school going children. An ancient road approved under Prime Minister's Grama Sadak Yojana scheme for development is illegally ordered by the Deputy Commissioner to be blocked with gates on either side.

The project is not site-specific to the clearance and no public hearing is conducted as legally required. Yeliur village has no environmental clearance yet with the money power the Company has commenced work in Yeliur. By imposing prohibitory orders under section 144 for nearly three months vast area of the village is fenced with several families inside. 171 acres of dense forest cover private and government has been cut and transported under police cover without survey and valuation or payment of compensation while the prohibitory order was in force. The villagers filed several FIRs but 'B' reports are filed against them and cases closed without any action. The loss of forest was even a subject of heated debate in the State Council when the State Forest Minister admitted the theft of forest assets worth at least 20 crores and an investigation at Additional Secretary level was assured but without any progress.

Once the self-sufficient agricultural families of the village are now split in dividing the compensation money and are without livelihood. They are made to live as daily wage laborers and it is quite unlikely that they would be self-sufficient ever again in their lifetime. There are 3 PILs filed by the local NGOs, the Churches and the Hindu Temples in the High Court of Karnataka and they are pending un-heard since 2005.

Therefore, this Honorable House should not only ensure that the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill 2007 is made a law as early as possible but also ensure that the States and Union Territories adopt this bill for land acquisition and that all the existing provisions of the various State Acts like the KIAD Act of Karnataka to acquire lands be superseded by this Bill in order that justice prevails equally nationwide.

It is also necessary that all the pending land acquisition notifications irrespective of their stages where the compensations are not paid or not accepted by the landowners and where the acquisition is challenged in the Courts and decisions pending to be withdrawn with immediate effect or at least held in abeyance till this Amendment is passed and the Bills become law.

The questions rising out of the fraudulent implementation of the Nagarjuna Power Project in Yellur needs to be looked into by this Honourable House so that an indecent precedent is not created in the country by making mockery of laws by the rich and powerful.

*SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA (Jagatsinghpur): Mr Speaker Sir, it is my proud privilege to present my views on the Union Budget for 2008-09.

Hon'ble FM through the Union Budget 2008-09 has attempted to recharge the Indian economy through vibrant and strong domestic consumption. He also tried to ensure that there is no further downward slope in GDP growth as India is currently facing the challenge emanating from a possible global recession. No doubt, this is a commendable achievement but it is a matter of concern that this growth has been proved to be an urban phenomenon, impacting largely the urban economy where the so-called upper class people get the benefits. Further, The Economic Survey 2007-08 clearly highlights the apprehensions of slowing manufacturing and agriculture growth and the impact of rupee appreciation on the export-driven textile and technology sectors. Thus, it is a matter of investigation whether the provisions made in this Budget 2008-09 will lead to the prosperity of the real Bharat i.e., the rural India.

All of us know that more than two-thirds of our billion population are dependent on primary sector. This provides employment to 64 percent of the country's total workforce. All the Hon'ble Members would agree with me that rural prosperity is a 'must' for a nation like ours. However, ever since the beginning of the UPA rule, while sectors

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Brahmananda Panda]

like manufacturing and services are given a special thrust in one way or the other, the primary sector has been severely neglected. The agriculture sector has been witnessing downward trends in the growth of production and productivity in a number of food-grains across the country. Considering a rampant rural-urban migration, one can easily say that it is the lack of development of rural and agro-based infrastructure which is the main culprit in the ongoing socio-economic divide between the rural and urban areas.

A scheme of debt waiver and debt relief of Rs. 60,000 crore for farmers has been announced in the Budget where debt worth Rs. 50,000 crore is waived for all small and marginal farmers, for loans taken up to March 31, 2007 and is overdue as on December 31, 2007. Three crore farmers with land holdings not more than 2 hectare are expected to benefit from this. In addition, a one time settlement [OTS] of loans worth Rs.10,000 crore has been announced for the remaining 1 crore farmers for the same period with a rebate of 25% against payment of the 75% balance. I have an apprehension on the implementation of the scheme as the money as proposed to be given as subsidy has not been budgeted in the Union Budget 2008-09.

Many a time, disguisedly unemployed rural agrarian folk are compelled to shift their occupation to other economic activities and sometimes even migrate since present-day agriculture in India has low capacity to generate additional income. There has been no dramatic technological breakthrough in agriculture in the country since the 'Green Revolution' of 1960s. The potential of the existing agro-based technologies has not been fully exploited and the growth rate in the productivity for most of the food-grains has remained virtually stagnant during the last two decades. This clearly indicates lack of basic and prioritized research and development initiatives in the field of agriculture and agro-technology.

The Budget 2008-09 has no new or innovative provision for the Indian Agriculture. This is why the agriculture sector, in spite of minimal relief ensured in the 07-08 Union Budget, has not witnessed a dramatic change last year. Hon'ble FM's measures like allocation of funds to multiplicity of farm-based schemes, facilitating access to credit, extending training and provisioning insurance and rural infrastructure are well-intended. However, these provisions are very unlikely to have a positive impact on agriculture since the most critical aspect regarding the intended outcomes and the delivery

mechanisms of these policy directions have not been addressed skillfully. Considering the gestation lag in the investments in the farm sector, accumulated and acute supply-side constraints may not give the requisite thrust to the Indian Agriculture to score the planned growth rate.

Here, I must refer to my State, Orissa, the land of lord Jagannath. The State is endowed with rich natural resources in the form of vast mineral deposits, forest, productive land, bountiful surface and ground water resources, long coast line, and picturesque places and pilgrim shrines with tremendous tourist potential. However, it is a matter of great concern that due to the Centre's continuous apathy and step-motherly approach towards effective, adequate and successful exploitation of these resources, the State has never had a chance to generate satisfactory income opportunities for the millions of its inhabitants. All of us know that this State directly witnesses the problems of poverty and destitution due to its socio-economic backwardness. Half of its population is estimated to be under the poverty trap. Large proportion of people in the state has very poor living conditions.

Proposal to reduce the credit burden on the people dependent on textile sector has not been considered. I could have been happier, if the budget would have considered innovative mechanisms to protect the interest of our poorest of the poor country-side weavers. They lack technology and marketing. The traditional skill and knowledge are on the verge of extinction. The lack of proper implementation of Central Schemes on development of handlooms and handicrafts has made the weaver's life miserable not only in the State of Orissa but also across the States.

Sir, Orissa feels proud not only of her rich socio-cultural heritage, but also of the skills and knowledge base of her million weavers who are capable of weaving a silk *saree* of an average length which can be stored inside a small bamboo stick. I must bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Members here that the art of the rural artisans and weavers in the State is dying day by day; suicidal incidences are on the rise; distress sales are rampant and access to credit which is essential for the smooth operation of artisan activities is severely constrained. In earlier occasions, I have raised my concern about the problems faced by our rural artisans in this August House. Since the budget failed to outline any comprehensive package for the up-liftment of these poor weavers and artisans, I may not consider it as a Budget for the 'AAM ADMI'.

The Hon'ble FM mentioned that revenues were buoyant for the fourth year in a row. A review of the balance sheet of the country would paint the picture otherwise. With the help of a little arithmetic we can easily conclude that India has a very grim financial situation. While the revenue receipt was stated as buoyant, both revenue and capital expenditure are stupendously large and considerably higher than the degree of buoyancy in the revenue receipt. Further the interest payments towards our internal debt are more than 60 percent of our total revenue receipt. This indicates that we are not far away from an internal debt trap.

"Bharat Nirman" which has six vital infrastructure components viz., irrigation, roads, water supply, housing, rural electrification and rural telecom connectivity is yet to give the rural economy a new shape as very minimal expansion and strengthening of existing rural infrastructure and creation of additional infrastructural facilities have been achieved in a transparent manner in various infrastructurally backward States like Orissa. This programme apart from a media hype could not succeed in generating a synchronized approach to converge the benefits of this infrastructure-building initiative with various other development oriented programmes already in operation in rural areas like, programmes for alleviating poverty, generating gainful employment, ensuring social security, enhancing standards of health, hygiene, sanitation and education. This has resulted in under-utilization of resources and corruption. This Budget, instead of hiking allocation under this composite programme could have addressed the problem areas in the implementation and outlined stringent measures towards effective and intended execution.

I am pained to state before the House that the plans and policies meant for the million poor have not yielded desired results even after attaining 6 decades of Independence. In the socio-economically backward states like Orissa, assessments of various anti-poverty programmes (by the Planning Commission, Government of India) indicate that several problems like complex administration, high administrative costs, mis-utilisation of resources, ill-defined multiple objectives, lack in quality and accountability and inadequate monitoring had been the prime reason for the high incidence of poverty in the rural Orissa. In the State of Orissa, the percentage of rural families living below the poverty line is found to be very high. The State is also witnessing acute shortage of rural infrastructure. Industrialisation in the State is inadequate which has a direct impact on the service and

primary sector. In spite of immense interest shown by the MNCs, Lack of connectivity, power shortage have discouraged many prospective global entrepreneurs to come to Orissa and invest here. Hon'ble CM of Orissa have also urged to your good self and the Hon'ble PM regarding the provision of a special package to Orissa keeping in view the backwardness of the State. These are the reasons for which I have been sincerely requesting for Orissa to be considered as a special category State and entitle it to attain special attention and special package from the Centre.

The present budget, to me, is completely inflationary budget. We have seen that the dual excise taxation policy of the government could not cure the inflationary situation. Increase in the money movement in the country, high interest rate structure, acute shortage in the food-grains supply, faulty policies regarding procurement and buffer stock operation and distribution of food-grains have continued to plague the rural economy and affect the price situation adversely.

We are demanding establishment of IIT, AIIMS and Central University in Orissa but Centre is not paying any heed to the same from which it is evident that the Centre is deliberately discriminating State of Orissa and on that scope no special allocation has been provided in the Budget, though our Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik is consistently demanding for establishment of these institutions and also demanding a special package for the State of Orissa.

It is very pertinent to mention here that Shri Rahul Gandhi, General Secretary, All India National Congress after his visit to Orissa seeing the poverty of tribals and Scheduled Caste people expressed his pain and set tears for them. So in the circumstances Orissa deserves a special package and a special status be given to the State of Orissa for its all round development.

The Union Budget 2008-09 has lost the confidence of the people at large, failed in fulfilling the high sounding objectives of poverty alleviation, defeated in reigning inflationary situation in the economy and prescribed no new recipe for agricultural resurrection.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Mr. Speaker, Sir, not only this time but many times earlier also the Hon. Minister of Finance has presented the budget but

[Shri Ramji Lal Suman]

no initiative has ever been taken to reduce non-plan expenditure. Rs. 2,43,386 crore have been earmarked for plan expenditure during this year's budget which is 32.4% of the total budget. Balance of Rs. 5,07,499 crore have been allocated for non-plan expenditure. Roughly, it means a sum of Rs. 3 will have to be spent on giving one rupee to a person.

14.41 hrs.

(SHRI MOHAN SINGH *in the Chair*)

It would have been better if some concrete steps had been taken to reduce non-plan expenditure. Increase in Gross Domestic Product is often discussed and it is said that the GDP of the country has increased from 7.5 to 9.5 per cent during the period from the year 2005 to 2007. This increase is 2.6% in the agriculture sector, 11% in service sector, and 9.5% in manufacturing sector. It is true that the increase in GDP is essential for the growth of the nation but it cannot be helpful for the all round development of the country. I would like to submit that the areas which the Government have identified for this increase in the annual growth rate are all capital intensive. Therefore, the benefit of growth is confined to the capitalists only. Right now, Rahul Gandhiji was delivering his speech and was saying that industries are being established in the country and our country is making progress. The Hon. Minister of Finance is present here, I would like to make a humble submission to him that unless the manpower of our country is utilized properly, the nation can not progress. All the industries are being promoted are capital intensive Industries and in a country like India where population is 120 crore the condition of the people will not improve and property will not be alleviated until labour intensive industries are promoted. The Hon. Minister of Finance has himself admitted the fact that there is recession in paper, appliances, transport cotton industries etc. These are all labour intensive industries. I request that these industries should be promoted.

As per a U.N. survey report published in the newspapers, every third citizen of our country is forced to lead his life with just Rs. 20 a day. The hon. Finance Minister himself has admitted that growth of agriculture has been stagnated. The amount of loans to be provided by public sector banks has trebled Pawan Bansalji has made an important suggestion that loan being provided to the farmers would not help them rather it is diminishing their repaying capacity. If Hon. Prime Minister wants to

save the agriculture sector, then he will have to restrict the interest on the credit that is given. Yesterday, Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav, from our party, had also said that the Government should accept Dr. Swaminathan Committee's Report to provide loan to the farmers at the rate of 4 per cent. Besides, production cost on agriculture should be reduced. Last time, the Hon. Finance Minister had assured to amend the procedures of subsidy being provided on fertilizers so as to give the benefit to the farmers. But no changes have been made in that procedure till date. The Government have announced to waive off loans amounting to Rs. 60,000/- crore for the small and marginal farmers having land upto one to two hectares. I would like to tell the Government that the farmers with only 1 to 2 hectares of land grow grains for their own consumption, they do not go to the market because they do not have excess grains to sell. The advisor to the Prime Minister Shri Rangarajan has given a report regarding the loans being given to such farmers and has stated that only 27% farmers take loans from Government banks and rest of the farmers take loans from moneylenders in rural areas. The problem today is that those farmers who take loans from moneylenders are compelled to commit suicide because they have to pay heavy rate of interest. The Government have announced to waive off the loans amounting to Rs. 60,000/- crore of the farmers but our party has continuously been demanding to waive off all sorts of loans of the farmers. The Congress and the Nationalist Congress party—led Government is in Maharashtra. Even the Government of Maharashtra has expressed the view that nearly waiving off loans of Rs. 60 thousand crore will not ameliorate the condition of our farmers. Therefore, the loans involving an amount of upto Rs. 50000/- should be waived off. The Government have fixed a cut off date that all the loans taken till 31.03.2007 would be waived off but what will happen to loans which have been taken after that date?

Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have repeatedly raised the issue of the appalling conditions prevailing in the Bundelkhand region. Bundelkhand region is reeling under drought for the last three years. Not only that, the members of Madhya Pradesh have also raised the matter because most of the part of such drought affected area falls in their state. There is no mention in the budget regarding any special package which should have been provided for this region. Who will argue for irrigation and water management there? I request the Government to make such provision for that area. Our friends from Maharashtra have been mentioning the matter of suicides

committed by the farmers of Vidarbha. Hon. Prime Minister had announced a special package for the Vidarbha region. Despite, the number of such incidents over there has not declined. Therefore, I request that special incentive should be provided to these areas. The basic question today is how to make agriculture profitable? For that, it is essential that water should reach the farmers' fields. Previous Government had talked about promoting accelerated irrigation and water resources management related programmes but we could not achieve even one-fourth of the target fixed for it. This Government have announced in the budget that it would spend more money on irrigation. I think that more money is required to be spent on irrigation. There are 24 large and 753 small irrigation projects in our country. Although there is a target to complete these projects in one or two years, but I would like to say that these irrigation projects cannot be completed even in the coming several years. The number of irrigation projects that started during Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru's regime could not be completed even after so many years. We should have a target and a time bound programme to complete projects within the fixed time. The Government had decided three years ago that such projects would be revived. I would like that when the hon'ble Minister of Finance gives his reply, he should elaborate the extent to which the government have succeeded in implementing the works undertaken by it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, 14 irrigation projects have been approved at the national level but in the 11th Five Year Plan only three projects were undertaken. Their construction cost is nearly Rs. 7 thousand crore. The Government have sanctioned only Rs. hundred crore for the execution of the projects. I think there could be no bigger farce than this. I allege that this Government is not serious about irrigation. I would like to say that the situation in India cannot change until water is made available for the Indian farmers. Prices are skyrocketing in our country from the time this Government came to power. The Government give very peculiar reasons for it. Sometimes they say that there is no shortage of foodgrains in our country and it is sufficient. Sometimes they say that prices of foodgrains have risen at international level so we are helpless. In the week ending 23rd February, 2008, the wholesale Price Index has risen above five per cent. When the wholesale Price Index is five per cent then obviously the Consumer Price Index would be more than eight per cent. The Government say that prices of foodgrains have risen in the international market. Now, America have put some pressure on India to put some restriction on import of food items. This

clearly indicates that the food items in India are dearer and they are cheaper in America. As such America wants to make India a market. Their arguments are not convincing.

The Government talk about concessions on the prices of fuel, diesel, petrol and medicines. Most of the big companies are operating in those sectors which are already tax free. So, the consumers are not going to get any benefit of concession on medicines and even after 15 days, prices of medicines did not decline.

Sir, they talk of putting emphasis on education. This was not our programme but it was the common minimum programme of the present Government to spend six per cent of Gross Domestic Product on education. This was their commitment and our Communist colleagues are also sitting here. It is hardly 3 per cent in this budget. There are no schools in villages. At some places there are no teachers. The condition of education is very bad. The money required to be spent on education and for which the Government was committed, is not being spent on education. Only half of this money is being spent.

Sir, a lot of welfare measures for women have been talked about. During the year 2007-08, 3.3 per cent of the budget was spent on the welfare of women and in the present budget of 2008-09, it is 3.6 per cent. There is a meagre increase in it. Sir, there is an organization of professors, teachers and staff of the AIIMS named AIIMS Front for Social Conscience. Their memorandum is with me. The All India Institute of Medical Sciences is the only institution in India where poor people come for treatment. I know about the pressure on this institution. We, the representatives of the people of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh issue recommendation letters for treatment, mostly for treatment in AIIMS. The patients come and stay at our residences. What have you done for AIIMS? You reduced non-plan expenditure of AIIMS to 18 crore rupees. You reduced 10 crore rupees in plan-expenditure. In this way, you have reduced 28 crore rupees in the budget the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. This institution is meant for the poor, where people are helped and the helpless people come here, what message does this Government want to give by reducing the budget of this institution to such an extent?

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I allege that the Government is not paying attention towards the health of the poor. All the hype created about this budget is nothing but jugglery of words. I think that the expectations of the people of India is not going to be fulfilled in the coming years. The

[Shri Ramjilal Suman]

farmers need more favours. Large scale damages have taken place in many neglected areas like Bundelkhand. They need protection at these places. This country will continue to face such damages until crores of people of India get employment. I had to make this submission.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would like to tell all the hon'ble Members that I am helpless because I have received 115 names and since it is the Annual Budget, so all the hon'ble Members want to present their views. But, the Chair has its own limitations. If 115 hon'ble Members are allowed to speak continuously as per their wish, then, we will have to sit till tomorrow evening continuously for completion of their speeches. So, a way out of it has been worked out that the hon'ble Members who want to present their views in written form can lay it on the Table because I see that most of the Members are reading written speeches. So, it would be better if you lay the written speech on the Table of the House so that it becomes part of the proceedings. It will save our time and the hon'ble Minister will also get an opportunity to reply to it.

[*Translation*]

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPA (Trichur): Sir, I am happy to participate in the discussion on the Budget, 2008-09. This is the fifth Budget presented by Shri Chidambaram on behalf of the UPA Government. There is a significance here. This is the first Budget presented after the Eleventh Plan has been finalized.

In this Budget, there are certain things which are very much appreciated. One is the debt waiver measure taken by the Government and another is the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme that has been spread all over the country. These are some measures that will be appreciated but at the same time, when debt relief measure has been adopted—a huge measure—and when we welcome it, there are certain points to be noticed. Just now, Shri Rahul Gandhi has mentioned it and I support that. It was about the cut-off date. The second is about the definition of small and marginal farmers. There is a difference between those who are in the dry areas and those who are in the irrigated areas. That difference should be taken into account when we decide on how it will be implemented.

I remember a very interesting African proverb. If a hungry man comes to you and if you give him a fish, he will be happy. He is happy because he is hungry at that time. But if you want to find a solution to his hunger, you have to teach him fishing.

15.00 hrs.

This attitude is not there in this Budget. You have come out with good debt relief measures. But this is only a relief. How the peasants in India got indebted? It is a big problem about which even the Britishers were worried. You know about the Royal Commission Report on Indian peasants' indebtedness. I am not going into all that. If you really want to find a solution to the problem, then the solution lies in strengthening the agrarian economy. The most important weakness of our economy lies in the agrarian sector.

The hon. Prime Minister repeatedly says that – he said that very emphatically even in the National Development Council meeting – if you have to sustain nine plus per cent growth rate of the GDP, then it is necessary that we should achieve four per cent growth rate in the agrarian sector. But where are we today? The Budget says that its growth rate is declining. The present rate of growth in the agrarian sector is only 2.6 per cent. So, how are you going to remedy this situation?

The National Common Minimum Programme speaks eloquently about land reforms, a thing about which they were silent for the last four years. Other measures are required. More investment is required, public as well as private, in agrarian sector. You have to strengthen the infrastructure. But for this sector, the action taken so far or the Budget allotted so far is not enough. There may be marginal increase here and there. But the issue is we have to bring the agrarian sector, which is in deep crisis, to the level where it will flourish. A lot of peasants are committing suicide. Your approach is one of relief. Of course, relief is welcome. We also want relief to peasants. But the more important thing is taking concrete measures to strengthen the agrarian economy as a whole. I do not think that approach is there in this Budget. That is a great weakness. I would like to point out that.

The hon. Prime Minister, in all his speeches, says about "inclusive growth". This has become fashionable now-a-days to speak about "inclusive growth". The Planning Commission in its document on Eleventh Plan also said this Plan will be a Plan of "more inclusive growth". I was eager to know what exactly is this "inclusive growth". "Inclusive growth" according to the meaning provided by the *pandits*, is a growth process from which nobody is excluded. So, that means everybody should be included in the process of economic growth that we are achieving. ... (*Interruptions*)

I will show you the *Forbes* magazine, which published a profile of global billionaires, dollar billionaires. Some people got very enthusiastic about it. According to *Forbes* magazine, Shri Anil Ambani is the biggest gainer with his wealth having increased 23.8 billion dollars since the last list was published. In fact, he is just one billion behind his brother, Shri Mukesh Ambani. If their wealth is put together they will become the biggest billionaires in the world. We are very much excited that 28 billionaires are added to the list after the previous list has been published. We also can feel happy that we are living among the billionaires. But what about the conditions of our people in this country, about which this House is more concerned? The life of the people has been described. It is not by the Communists... (*Interruptions*) You may not like the description of the Communists. But the description has been given by a Congress Member of the other House Dr. Arjun Sengupta who was asked to inquire into the living conditions of the unorganized labour. A lot of facts are there. I am not going into this. He says that we categorise these people. According to Dr. Arjun Sengupta, about 77 per cent of those people—whose number, according to him, is 836 million which means 86 crore—live with a paltry income ranging from Rs. 8 to Rs. 20 a day. It is here worthwhile to mention Ambani's income per minute, not per day, not per year. It is Rs. 40 lakh. 836 million Indians are living under conditions of appalling poverty and unemployment. Is this inclusive growth about which the Planning Commission, the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister are talking? Let me come to you. They were once thinking that India was shining. They were also parading the same statistics. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI (Sarguja): You have admitted that you are wrong.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN: You are admittedly wrong. So, you are sitting there. It is good that you are sitting there. But I am telling about those people who are sitting there.... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha): You will sit in the middle!

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN: No. You are getting our support. That support has a condition. That condition is that you should be true to the Common Minimum Programme, to which you are not. So, all these smiles will fade away when you face the election. These people think that they will come back. It may not be so. You

may not be there if you do not change your attitude and if you do not change your policy.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY: You will certainly not be here?

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN: We will certainly be here. We will continue our struggle. We have to struggle. Somebody has to struggle for these people. Let us not debate like this. What I am saying is this.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY: I am pretty sure that you will never be here.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN: I am not sure how he is so sure of it.

Do not think that this is all everything. There are places where we can come to power. We make a different path which you can see. You can see how we are tackling these issues differently.

Coming to the point, what I am saying is that when we speak of very beautiful and fine things, the reality is very different.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): It is nobody's case that we have achieved hundred per cent financial inclusion or growth. We have not done it. We are moving towards that.

[*Translation*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, you may reply later.

[*English*]

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN: Hon. Minister has said they have not achieved it hundred per cent. I did not say that you have achieved your policy.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: He is striving for that.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN: You are not. That is my case. Take one case regarding agriculture. From the last four Budgets, when they were introduced, we were telling that it is not enough that from credit, the agricultural sector will improve. Credit is only one aspect. The Swaminathan Committee, which you have appointed, made the recommendations. The first part of their recommendation came when they were in the second or

[Shri C.K. Chandrappan]

third year. That says that the rate of interest should be lowered. Even you are not caring for that. The Swaminathan Commission recommended a four per cent rate of interest. I come from Kerala. We give interest-free loans to the peasants who are cultivating paddy there. We charge four per cent rate of interest from small and marginal farmers. That is a thing that you cannot even imagine. We do all that under the federal structure. ... (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chandrappan, you may please speak.

[*English*]

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN: All right. They are distracting me.

[*Translation*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: They want you to withdraw your support, but when you are unnecessarily supporting them, then what can they do?

[*English*]

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN: We must have a different approach to the whole planning and the whole Budget. They had been given five years to do that. I must say they have wasted four years. An election is in the offing now. Even your people are saying that this is an election-Budget. Our differences with them are not only on the nuclear deal but more on the economic problems where they have failed. It means that they have not fulfilled the commitment they had made to this country in their Common Minimum Programme. That is a very serious case, I would say.

Now, regarding certain other aspects, I would like to say this. Now, Kerala is a deficit State in relation to food. Under the Indira Gandhi regime, after a lot of struggle, we got a statutory rationing system which was running properly. Now, what has happened? The Centre has reduced the quota. In Kerala, the food prices are going up. Your party men sitting in Opposition are agitating, but you are reducing the quota and asking them to agitate in Kerala. This is very unfair. It is starving a population whose contribution to this country is well known

in many spheres, even in economic sphere. So, the quota allotted to Kerala should be given for rice, sugar, kerosene and everything. But, it is all being brought down. That leads to price rise. It is a very good Public Distribution System about which my friend was talking. Let me add that once Shrimati Indira Gandhi wrote to all the State Chief Ministers a letter saying that every State should emulate the system which is in Kerala. That system has been brought to smother by your policy of throwing the public distribution system to dogs. So, that will have repercussions among the common people not only in Kerala but all over the country.

My friend mentioned something about the Essential Commodities Act. The NDA Government had amended it. On this issue, between NDA and UPA, there seems to be no difference. They have been allowing the private sector to intervene at the time of procurement and hoard rice and wheat in big godowns and abandon Public Distribution System, by abandoning FCI. That is the idea. Now what has happened? All Ambanis have enough wheat and food grains. It was pointed out by Pandit Nehru once about the FCI that that was the public sector that was going to save India from starvation and hunger. The FCI has been degraded. That is almost finished now. Now what has happened? Everywhere the price is going up and the food security is in danger. The Government is going with begging bowls again to all the wheat producing countries asking for wheat.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN: I will finish in two minutes.

They send substandard wheat to us and the Government pays a high price for that. Despite our repeated requests, the Government of India never cared to procure from the ordinary peasants in India who are producing wheat at a little higher price. What kind of policy is this? The Government has no problem in paying a very high price to Australian peasants or Australian multinationals, but they are like a miser opening his purse when it comes to the price of wheat or other food commodities here when that goes to our own peasants. That attitude should go. These are some of the problems.

I will conclude by mentioning about one or two problems relating to Kerala. Kerala, apart from these things which I mentioned, all along has a sea coast in which many portions are vulnerable to sea erosion. A

very concerted effort is needed to protect the coast of Kerala from sea erosion. Otherwise, it may be a Tsunami like situation all the time. The Government of India considers that sea erosion is not a natural calamity. In the Act which the Government brought, despite our request, it was not included. So, calamity relief will come to Kerala not for sea erosion. Therefore, I would request that there should be an amendment in the Act. Otherwise, also a friendly attitude towards Kerala should be there so that the problem of sea erosion can be solved to some extent.

Sir, lastly, chickengunya is playing havoc in Kerala. I do not know whether you have any experience. I think it was there in Uttar Pradesh. Once somebody is afflicted by it, almost for one year the person is unable to work even if he is alive. This is the effect of the vector-borne disease. We had an institute in Alleppey District of Kerala which was called VCRC to control the vector. Somehow that has been taken away by the Centre and it is now there in Puducherry. My request to the Government is that an ICMR Institute should be set up in Kerala, probably in Alleppey District for vector control so that chickengunya problem could be somewhat solved.

With these requests, I thank you for showing me so much indulgence. Thank you very much.

*SHRI SUGRIB SINGH (Phulbani): Sir, I oppose the union budget presented by the Hon'ble Finance Minister because while presenting the union budget he has not considered the problems being faced by the tribal community and scheduled caste community of this country particularly from my State Orissa.

Sir, I represent Phulbani parliamentary constituency of Orissa and there are more than 60 % of population in Khandmal belongs to tribal community and more than 20% population are of schedule caste. There is no proper health care infrastructure in Khandmal and Boudh districts. The people of these districts are affected by Malaria most of the malaria/brain malaria cases are positive in these areas, some how Govt. has declared these area as Malaria Prone but without sufficient financial support from the union Govt. state Govt. alone is unable to tackle this problem. The condition of human resource development in these two district remain same. The children of these areas have to go to far away for their education. There is no good quality higher education institution. The Govt. should consider to set up one of the IIT/IIM in the areas which is dominated by tribal community. The central

*Speech was laid on the Table.

sponsored Advasi schools/colleges in these area are not sufficient to meet the growing demand. There should be a one central sponsored adivasi school/college in every block.

Sir, the Union Budget has also neglected the road connectivity work and also arrangements for potable water. There are a large number of people in tribal areas who do not have proper and good quality drinking water supply so far. The special attention is needed to connect each and every village with road and to provide potable water in these areas. Sir, when we have finalized our mission to moon in this modern era we have forget the basic needs of the poor people a large section society in my parliamentary constituency still compel to live without electricity. Sir there is a need to expedite rural electrification by providing electric connection to each and every village and every household in these district since the norms for laying the electric pool delay the electrification process necessary steps should be taken to relax the norms in respect of Khandmal and Bondh districts.

The local people of these districts are depending on the forest produces like turmeric, zinger and in some places organic vegetables cultivation is their main source of livelihood. Besides the climatically condition of the area is suitable for coffee plantation. The developments of these areas are depending on special plan of the union Govt. If a special plan/package is formulated for these two districts and special financial package is announced then there would be a real development of the areas.

Besides these two districts there are three Assembly constituencies i.e. Sonpur, Bhinka, Bhajragar have also been facing lack of facilities like road, drinking water, educational institutions and health facilities. There is also a need to give attention to these areas.

Sir, through you I would request the Hon'ble Finance Minister to pay special attention to the problems highlighted by me and to make special provision in the budget to resolve these problems and to develop these area in the benefit of the tribal community as well as scheduled caste community and other below poverty peoples upliftment.

[Translation]

*SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR (Sagar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, many questions have been raised about the provision

*The speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Virendra Kumar]

made in the budget regarding waiving off the farmers' loans, that if the rural, cooperative and commercial banks would waive off such a big amount and strike off loan entries from their account books, they are most likely to suffer a huge loss. In the budget, no provision has been made to meet the loss caused to the banks. So, whether the banks would be left to make up their loss themselves. Forty three per cent farmers in the country are in the clutches of money lenders and the maximum number of farmers who commit suicide, fall under this category.

This package is not going to solve the problems of farmers and there is every possibility that the implementation of loans waiver scheme of farmers may be assigned to the same corrupt authorities and the farmers may get a little and major portion of the amount may go to other persons.

Despite the fact that the farmers loans were waived off in the past, they are still facing problems and their amount of debt has gone up. The same thing may happen this time also, because waiving off loans does not solve the basic problems of farmers. If there are problems like that of irrigation natural calamities, inferior quality seeds, increasing cost and price-risk, farmers can no longer remain safe from the trap of debt.

I hail from Sagar, the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh. The farmers of Bundelkhand are not happy with this budget wherein nothing has been done to mitigate their problems and they are now facing starvation after drought. No funds have been allocated for providing basic facilities like water and irrigation in the region. Bundelkhand has been facing drought for the last 3-4 years. Ponds over there have dried up. Due to shortage of water, people have let their pet animals move free. Here, projects encouraging check dam or water shed management should have been announced. So long as drought problem continues, the farmers would take loan again for the ensuing crop and if it does not rain this year also, the situation may turn to be alarming. Therefore, the Union Government should sanction a special economic package to the tune of Rs. 25000 crore towards drought relief as sent by the Government of Madhya Pradesh.

In the budget no special attention has been paid to encourage agricultural research. Nothing has been done in this budget to implement the river interlinking project initiated by the NDA Government. If this project is implemented expeditiously water would be easily made available to the farmers and other people living in the drought affected areas.

Unemployment is the major challenge before the unemployed youths of the country. The problem is not going to be solved by providing employment for 100 days only under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. No specific policy has been formulated to provide better opportunities of employment to unemployed educated youths. In the absence of such a policy, it would be very difficult to keep them safe from frustration and moving on wrong paths.

The NDA Government had proposed to establish 6 hospitals on the line of AIIMS at various places in the country. Nothing has been said in the budget about immediate construction of these hospitals. In view of extending the health facilities, this should be done on a priority basis. Customs duty on life saving drugs should be abolished completely. Health facilities will not reach the people in the rural areas until and unless senior and specialist doctors are appointed and deployed in the villages and equipped with basic facilities.

Madhya Pradesh had a great expectation from this budget. The demand of the state for opening an IIT has been overlooked. It was announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister that 16 Central universities would be opened in various states of the countries. Sir Hari Singh Gaur University located at Sagar is one of the oldest and biggest universities of the State. It was also said that this university fulfils the eligibility criteria to be declared as the Central University. Last year, on the occasion of the diamond jubilee celebration of the university at Sagar, the Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development had given an assurance to confer Central University status to this university. So, it should be announced as a Central University.

The greatest expectation of tax payers from the budget was to extend the income tax exemption limit. Keeping in view the price rise, salaried employees were expecting that income upto Rs two lakh per year, at least, would be exempted from income tax. The Government has already increased the tax burden on the people by bringing many services under the service tax purview. The expectations of tax payers have not been fulfilled.

In the budget, there is no effective action plan to check price-rise. Price-rise has disturbed public life. Gone are the days when people used to satisfy themselves with DAL-Roti only. Now, even rates of pulses have gone very high so that they have gone out of the reach of the poor people. In some states, the prices of vegetables

have gone very high due to scanty rainfall and the poor are forced to eat Roti with salt and without vegetables. Even the women are not happy with this budget because prices of gas cylinder, flour, pulses and petrol have gone up and water bottles, school bag and other domestic products such as buckets, brooms etc. would be costlier due to an increase in the prices of plastic.

It has become very difficult for the common man to construct his own house due to the increasing prices of cement and iron. Now, it would become very difficult to construct a residential unit with the money provided under the Indira Awas Yojana and Beedi Mazdoor Awas Yojana. Therefore, funds under these two schemes should be doubled.

Great discrimination is being made in allocation of funds to the states for construction of houses meant for beedi workers. During the last few years, the maximum number of residential units meant for beedi Mazdoors were allocated to a particular state, while Madhya Pradesh, where beedi workers live in a large number was allocated lesser residential units. Therefore, Madhya Pradesh should be allocated beedi worker residential units in proportion to the number of beedi workers in the State.

At last, I would like to say that as regards Bharat Nirman, it would remain incomplete unless the poorest of the poor get a house to live in, clothe to wear and medicines on being unhealthy, and the unemployed get jobs. For the purpose of development, many schemes are formulated but the target of Bharat Nirman would remain incomplete unless an appropriate scheme is formulated under which funds meant for the beneficiaries actually reach them. There is no mention in the budget to keep a check on corruption. In a nutshell the budget seems to be populist outwardly but its actual shape would come to the fore after the next election only.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to speak in support of the General Budget for the year 2008-09. I would like to express my gratitude to the hon. Prime Minister, the UPA and the hon. Minister of Finance that they have taken a historic step by presenting this time a budget mainly centres around the common man and farmers. For this, I would like to express a lot of thanks to them.

Sir, the hon. Minister of Finance has taken some specific steps. The important step taken is that the loan of rupees 60 thousand crore to the farmers has been waived off. Relief has been provided to the middle class people by reducing income tax rates. The National Rural

Employment Guarantee Scheme is being implemented in 596 districts of the country which would help reduce unemployment amongst labour class and benefit one crore sixty lac families. Through this Budget, this important step has been taken. An allocation of Rs. 2150 crore has been made for the Swarna Jayanti Gramin Swarozgar Yojana. Provision of mid-day meal for one crore 40 lac school children, especially for the children belonging to poor class, has been made. 7 crore 60 lac infants and mothers have been covered under the Shishu Vikas Sewa. Old age pension of one crore 60 lac old-aged persons has been increased. A provision to incur 20 per cent more funds on education and 15 per cent more funds on health has been made as compared to the provisions made last year in this regard. More allocation has been made under schemes pertaining to the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and Anganwadi Programmes compared to the last year's allocation. The step taken to enhance funds meant for the Anganwadi workers is a specific one. Basically, important steps which are being widely discussed throughout the country are about the improvement in the conditions of the deprived classes and the minorities about which there is a mention in the Reports of the Sachchar Committee and the Raghunath Mishra Committee. I would like to express my thanks to them for taking these steps. The allocation for the Ministry of Minority Affairs has been increased to Rupees one thousand crore by doubling its allocation as compared to the last year's allocation. It is a good initiative. Rs. 3,780 crore would be incurred on development schemes in 90 minority-dominated districts. An allocation of Rs. 80 crore for the pre-matric scholarships and an allocation of Rs. 45.45 crore for the madaras would be made. Rs. 60 crore would be provided for the Maulana Azad Education Foundation. Approx. Rs. 1400 crore would be provided to the students under the scholarship. I think it is a historic step. 288 branches of public sector banks would be opened in minority-dominated districts in the year 2008 and the number of banks will be also increased in 2008-09. It is also a good step.

Despite all these things, the condition of common men in the country is not good. I think the step taken by the hon. Minister to waive off the loans of Rs. 60 thousand crore of farmers is a historic one and it would also provide relief to them. It would benefit 81.89 per cent small and marginal farmers, 17.10 per cent medium farmers and 1.01 per cent big farmers as also 72 per cent small and marginal farmers. The state-wise detail in this regard has also been given about which I don't want to make a mention. I think it is certainly a historic step

[Shri Ram Kripal Yadav]

and the farmers and labourers who were on the verge of starvation and forced to resort to committing suicide due to indebtedness, would remember the UPA Govt. for this. It is a different thing that the condition laid down in this regard should be reconsidered. Many hon. Members have discussed about irrigated and non-irrigated land. You have made uniform assessment about all which is perhaps not likely to benefit the farmers. Through you, I would like to request the hon. Minister of Finance to pay attention to it. Hon. Members of all the parties have asked to reconsider it a little bit so that more and more farmers could be benefited from it. The condition of farmers in the country is not good. I think little attention has been paid to 75 to 80 per cent population of the country since independence which depends on farming. People are facing difficulty due to this reason. Farmer pays very little attention to farming. People are migrating to cities. They want to earn their livelihood by migrating to the cities. Especially, the people from backward and poor state like Bihar are facing this problem. There are states like Orissa and Uttar Pradesh where the condition of farmers is not good. Your state is also no exception to it.

I would like to tell to tell you that no investment on such a scale is made in Bihar required to improve the condition of people since independence. Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar. The condition of present day Bihar is very miserable. The people there are earning money but they don't have foodgrains to eat. The geographical condition there is not favourable to them. On the one hand, the north Bihar remains largely flooded while on the other remaining Bihar has to face drought. There is no proper irrigation facility there. As such, the hon. Minister has increased allocation in respect of every sector. This time, the Govt. has increased funds for irrigation sector by approx. 81 percent. last time, this fund was to the tune of 11 thousand crore rupees that has been increased to 20 thousand crore rupees this year. The Govt. has taken a big step in this regard.

The hon. Minister has resolved to take up a total of 24 projects including all the small and big schemes. You want better irrigation facility in place but at present Bihar is not able to be benefited from that because you shirk your responsibilities by terming it a state matter. I mean to say that it is our country and Bihar is part of this very country. Bihar is also entitled to give its share in it. I would like to know the number of industries set up by you in present day's Bihar since independence? Some industries were set up in Jharkhand during the regimes of Shrimati Indira Gandhi and Nehruji. But after that, no

big industry has been set up there for the last many decades. I would like to express my thanks to the UPA Govt. the hon. Prime Minister, Shri Manmohan Singh and especially to the Minister of Railways because they have made efforts to set up a few industries there during two financial years. The UPA Govt. has extended their positive co-operation in this regard. For this, I would like to express a lot of thanks to the hon. Minister of Finance also. But our condition has deteriorated now. People from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are migrating to other states to earn their livelihood and facing humiliation. What is the reason behind it? These people would not have migrated to other states to earn their livelihood if they had been provided basic amenities to earn their livelihood by living within their concerned states. The people of these states are hard working and capable enough. They can produce foodgrains not only for themselves but also contribute it for the rest of the country. But, they don't have means nor do they have proper irrigation facilities. All the drains are in a bad condition there.

I would like to submit that the hon. Finance Minister had held the portfolio of the same ministry earlier also. He is a scholar and has always had affection towards Bihar. He may himself take a stock of the situation prevalent there. By this, he may come to know the present situation of Bihar. The condition of farmers there is very miserable. The farmers can't lead a happy life unless they are provided the opportunities. You have introduced the Employment Guarantee Scheme. It is a good step. This time also, you have enhanced funds for this scheme but these funds are not being utilized properly. The concerned State Govt. is responsible for implementation of this scheme because the State Govt. acts as an agency. You are providing funds for here but it is the duty of the concerned State Govt. to supervise the proper utilization of these funds but the concerned State Govt. fails to do so. There is a system of issuing job cards under the scheme but fake job cards are being issued. They are to work manually. Fake job cards are being issued. You have to admit it and I think there is a bungling involved in the scheme throughout the country.

Your intention of providing living to the unemployed and poor under the Employment Guarantee Scheme is not being fulfilled. There is so much corruption there that not a single person is able to get a job. Every work is being done with the help of machine and contractors are making money fraudulently with bogus job cards. The condition there is very horrible. The condition of mid-day meal is also the same. If the system is not set right, the

benefit of money, whatever amount it is, given by you will never reach the needy. Bihar Govt. is not able to spend the amount allotted to it during last three-four years, by the Union Govt. for construction of roads, providing electricity and making bridges but it is our duty to monitor the same as it is definitely going to help...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. The time allotted to your party is up.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir, please oblige me. Let me speak. As you know that I come from the State where the condition is worst.

I was saying that that if employment opportunities are available us we won't migrate. This is the condition of the whole State. It has become a trend now-a-days that the interest of people towards the village is decreasing and they are migrating towards the cities. This is not a good sign for the country. I think that the steps taken by the hon. Finance Minister and amount allotted by him shows his efforts in good light. There should be a check on price-rise. I don't want to delve into the details of steps taken by the Govt. to check the price rise but the common man should know about the amount that the Govt. is giving for them. You are giving them benefits but they are not reaching them, they are even not able to feed themselves, this is why there is unrest among the people. So, the inflation needs to be checked.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALN" (Begusarai): Election are likely to take place, what control they will have on the prices now?

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Sir, I would like to request that the people of Bihar are very hardworking but no attention has been paid towards them. There are two types of system prevailing in the country. These is a need to think over it and analyse it. If the Parliament and the Govt. do not give it a thought then, who will. The gap between the rich and poor is widening. After independence the country is divided into two types of people those who are living in Bharat and those who are living in India. Special attention was given to India but Bharat was ignored. We are engaged in Bharat Nirman and it is our commitment also. Those who carried a campaign on India Shining are not in power and therefore we have to make an effort to distance ourselves from 'India Shining'. We will have to make efforts to materialise our resolution for 'Bharat Nirman'. It will happen only when the hunger and poverty stricken population of India

living in villages will be taken care of. If india is hungry it can't make progress. It is a matter of great concern that there is dissatisfaction everywhere naxalism is spreading and there is not a single state left where there is no naxalism. Until there economic condition is improved we can't solve the problem of naxalism. For this they need to be given employment to earn a living. Population of our country is also increasing rapidly, it is also a cause of worry. Population also denotes human power but we need to prepare a plan in order to utilize it effectively. We will have to provide them facilities such as health and education and give basic ementities like electricity and roads. You have definitely increased the allocation for all these things but this is not sufficient. People are not satisfied with it. I think if they are not satisfied then our work is futile.

I will conclude after some time. However, there are so many other issues but I won't raise them due to lack of time. I would like to say an important thing to Hon. Finance Minister. Our region Bihar has the largest number of cattle. Dairy industry is growing in the country and we producing a large quantity of milk. Despite, the people engaged in dairy farming are not getting their due. Tax is imposed on dairy farming and they are not satisfied with that. I would like to tell the hon. Finance Minister that the way they have kept the agriculturists free from the tax, dairy farmers should also be given the same facility. This will promote the dairy industry and milk will be produced in larger quantity. Further, the dairy farmers will also get the fair prices. Today dairy farming has emerged as a new concept. If this industry is encouraged, it can also eradicate unemployment. Therefore, I would like to request the hon. Finance Minister to pay attention to the dairy farmers and make this industry tax free.

I would like to thank hon. Finance Minister for taking the decision to set up a central university in Bihar. It is a welcome step. They have been demanding it for a long time. Similarly you have decided to establish six hospitals like AIIMS in the country. Bihar is also included in it but the work is moving very slowly. A large number of people from Bihar and UP are coming to Delhi for treatment. It also causes a lot of inconvenience for the MPs of Bihar and UP as they have to manage for their boarding and lodging. They come here for treatment after selling their jewellery, utensils and everything in their possession to save their lives. Therefore, the slow pace of the construction work of hospital be increased and be completed so that the people of the state could get the treatment in their state only and get away with all these hardships.

[Shri Ram Kripal Yadav]

We would also like to thank you to have said about opening of an IIT in Bihar. You should make arrangement for its early set up. I would like to request if the common man of the country is not happy we can't be prosperous. It is right that you are trying hard to achieve this but is not being reflected in villages. You have done a lot for the workers of unorganized sector. We would like to thank you for that. But the cottage industries of the villages and towns are closing. Cottage industries were the dream of Mahatma Gandhi and they are on the verge of closure due to inadequate support. Today the foreign companies and big industrialists have involved themselves in the small industries in the country as a consequences of which opportunities for our people are decreasing. If we want to save the people engaged in agricultural farms we will have to provide them with food and employment. India has the pool of intelligence and talent in the world. If it is utilized in a productive way, our country can become a developed country. India can also register its presence amidst the other countries. We have got that power but we need to make efforts to achieve that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude because you have taken a long time.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Mr. Chairman, Sir I am going to conclude. Yesterday Mr. Malhotra was speaking during a discussion on Budget. He criticized the allocation in the budget for minorities. They termed it as communal saying such things about the minority. It was his view whereas this is not a reality. We want to say that his comments have made his speech communal. Minorities have worked hard for the progress of this country and given their sweat and blood for the country and participated in the freedom movement of the country and also contributed a lot in its progress.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude, otherwise I would have to say that this will not go on records.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: I am just concluding my speech. They helped us in development of the country with their labour and they are also securing our country. Therefore, there is nothing wrong if we talk about giving them justice and take steps in this regard.

With these words I support this budget and conclude my speech.

SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN (Deogarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir first of all I thank you that you have given me an opportunity to speak on this general budget. Hon'ble Minister of Finance has told about their philosophy

on 29th February while concluding the Budget speech. As per his philosophy this is a people oriented budget. I want to repeat a saying given by a great person. He quoted a statement of great Saint Thiruvalluvar of Tamil culture to define Sushasan (good governance). The governance, which gives grants generously, sensitive, runs the Government as per the ethics and provides foodgrains to the poor is called Sushasan (good governance). This is the philosophy of this Budget as hon'ble Minister of Finance has mentioned in his speech.

Hon'ble Minister of Finance, you are a part of the present Government and we get the opportunity to hear the speech of the person who is the future of your political coalition, it was a very good speech. I thank Rahulji for such a speech, which was full of facts. He mentioned about both faces of India. I admire such sensitiveness and thank him for highlighting the facts. The Central theme of both the speeches was that the common man, the poor man whether living in city or village is central to their system.

I am not much against this budget. I want to appreciate two-three things, which I like the most. They provided grant for 'Indira Awaas Yojana' and announced that central universities will be set up all over the country; these are welcome steps. But I want to mention the infrastructural shortcomings, the basic shortcomings in this budget, prominently, the political opportunism. This Budget is anti-poor, anti-village and anti-India. This budget is for rich people who have money, who have power. These people who are assuring ethical governance have governed the country for 50 years in 60 years of post-independence period. A family has ruled for 37 years. I would like to divide my speech in four parts and want to inform how they don't keep their promises with common people, deprived them of justice. Now they are talking about ethical governance, talking about food for the poor. They are reminding us the 2000 years old ethics, we are thankful to him for that but they should not forget that they have governed this country for 50 years.

Elections are close and our Minister of Finance is remembering social sector keeping a reformist image before the country. I would not like to criticize so much but I want to remind them some data. There is so much appreciation about increased outlay for two sectors of Education and Health. Mr. Chairman, Sir, with all humbleness on my part I would like to mention before you whether hon'ble Minister of Finance is honest towards the common man, whether the UPA coalition is responsible towards common man? Four years back the political coalition and opportunistic coalition was formed and a

Common Minimum Programme was drafted and I want to quote something from it. They promised that 6 percent of GDP will be spent on Education sector. But only 2.84% is being spent on it. Is this your honesty?

Regarding health, it has been told that Budget outlay has been increased. It has been increased only in records. If we see the figures for the last year and outlay of expenditure, of course, it has been increased. But what was their commitment? They had assured that they will spend at least two to three percent on health sector. Even one percent was not spent. Does it deserve to be called a sensitive governance. Is it a wise step to promise something but not fulfilling it? This is only opportunism. Giving reply to a Parliament question in Rajya Sabha in the year 2007 regarding expenditure of the Government on child labour, it was stated by the Government that they have spend Rs. 121 crores in total on welfare of child labour in the country. If we calculate it than it comes to 30 paise per child. This is the example of sensitivity of this Government, should one congratulate it for that?

Sir, much has been spoken about development of economy. This is the destiny of the country and call of the time and no one can stop it. I would like to thank the Minister of Finance that he had mentioned in his budget speech that Rs. one thousand crore has been sanctioned in the budget and more money will be mobilized from Private Sector to establish a skill development centre. I would like to ask the hon'ble Minister regarding skill development through you as to what provisions you have made for skill upgradation of lakhs and crores of people who are non-matriculats and living in villages?

Mr. Chairman, Sir we want to produce some figures before this pro-people Government, which is very sensitive for its people. It will not be fair if we compare our Human Development Index with European countries. We may compare ourselves with our neighbouring countries. This Government is in power for four years and we can see its performance. In this regard, I just want to give an example. In fact, infant mortality rate in India is 57 per thousand births whereas in Bangladesh it is 52 per thousand. In Vietnam, infant mortality rate is 15 per 1000 births. This is an example of Government's sensitivity.

Mr. Chairman, Sir there has been intense discussion about Agriculture sector. Rs. 60,000 crore have been provided for 4 crore people in Agriculture sector. Obviously this is a good move but a half-hearted move. These members and so-called leader of future have given their speech and they have accepted that this is a limited step. Two-three more things should be included in this. I want to present some figures before you. Presently 85 percent people are living in villages and they depend on

agriculture. I have to mention with a heavy heart that if we see the figures of 11th Five Year Plan of Planning Commission and of the year 1993-94 and 2004-05, we find that unemployment is increasing by leaps and bounds in this country. It was 5% in the year 1993-94 but in the year 2004-05 it reached 15.3%. This is the situation of agriculture sector in the country.

Something more was required to be added to the matter mentioned herein. Rahulji has given two suggestions but his advisors have forgotten to give him one advice. Rahul ji is leader of future and we are in opposition. Had he invited us over a cup of tea, we could have reminded him about that. The Finance Minister had constituted Radhakrishna Committee. It had recommended about Moneylender loan redemption fund. Four years later you have remembered the farmers again. We welcome this move. The advisor in your ministry, journalist of civil society, the agrarian workers and intellectuals, all are saying that this is a limited approach. What remedial action they have taken about the loans taken from moneylenders? If the Finance Minister will consider our suggestion and request, it will be better. They should consider about the Setting up of funds recommended by the Radhakrishna Committee.

I represent Orissa and therefore would like to end my speech after discussing a subject. Much have been told about NREGS in the field of employment. I would like to submit some data of national level and particularly of my State. Employment Guarantee Scheme was not introduced in five States. Earlier Swarn Jyanti Rojgar Yojana, Food for Work Scheme had been implemented. If these schemes were combined and Special Component Plan had been enclosed then it would have been a better option. If we combine and assess the total value of foodgrains and funds given, it comes to Rs. 18,406 crore. In 2006-07 it has been reduced to Rs. 16,117 crores and in 2007-08 it has been further reduced to 15 thousand crore. Our Finance Minister is a scholarly person and I am very much impressed when he speaks in English. Though I find his voice, very pleasant but how cleverly he takes the bread out of the poor's mouth with this pleasant voice cannot be imagined by anyone. He has reduced it by Rs. 16,000 crore. He has assured to provide more funds, if the same is needed Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is wrong. In Orissa works under the scheme were provided in 19 districts in 2006-07 and Rs. 775 crore were allocated in the year 2007-08 five more districts were added under the scheme for that I am obliged. It was due to the assistance of Shri Raghuvansh Babu that the total number of districts in the scheme were increased upto 24. We should have been allocated one thousand crore rupees but we have got Rs. 5333 crore. So far this shows how responsible the government really is!

[Shri Dharmendra Pradhan]

I will conclude my speech by making one or two points more. The Finance Minister announced that IIMs would be set up at several places in the country but why was Orissa left out in this regard? Why did we not get IIMs? You have announced to set-up a national institute. What was the problem with Orissa? Why was Orissa denied a Central Institute? NDA Government had announced to set-up AIIMS at various places. You have been saying in every budget that you are giving funds for that but no structure has been erected so far. Why is Orissa being meted out such treatment? Paradeep refinery is an ambitious project in Orissa. The tax holiday for oil refineries upto 2009 has been withdrawn and Orissa is likely to be worst affected as a result thereof. So, now I would like to urge the Hon'ble Finance Minister to reconsider it and give special grant to Paradeep Refinery.

There are two methods of funding—one through Planning Commission and other through Finance Commission. You are against the poor States. That's why my State has to suffer a lot. I humbly submit that Orissa and other poor states viz. Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand make a substantial contribution towards the government exchequer. 90 percent population of the country hail from such states, but what have we got in return? You talk of Bharat Nirman and if you care for the poor people of these three states, you must bring changes in the tax distribution system. You share 29 percent tax through Finance Commission route and give 71 percent grant to States. Why do you do that? The budgetary support pattern is 80:20, What is this? Why are you doing this? States have to spend, they are capable of themselves, some states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, etc. have proved themselves to be self sufficient. If you have to take eastern poor states of India forward, Government of India will have to do justice to the poor states in the federal set up.

In the end, I would like to say that such populist slogans will not serve any purpose whether it is about the leadership of people who talk about the future or something else, if you have love for the poor, you will have to look India as one entity only then Orissa will prosper and our poverty will end. With this, I conclude my speech and I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

SHRI K.S. RAO (Eluru): I rise to support this Budget, not merely because I happen to be a Member of the

UPA Government but with substance. I consider this Budget as very historical and very bold and it is for the rural areas, for the farmers, for the poor and for the middle classes. Never in the past, any Budget was presented with this much concentration in the rural areas— be it the Congress Government or the NDA Government.

I have heard Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra, Chief Whip of BJP, speaking. To begin with, he called the Budget as a populist announcement and anti-development and anti-productive. He is a learned professor and a learned gentleman. I could not under his logic as to how he could call it as an anti-development; as to how he could call it as a populist Budget. If the provisions were to be made to give incentives to the exporter, or a tax holiday to an industrialist, then, he might have called it as a Budget for development. If the money were to be given or allocated to the poor man, who is expecting only small things – all that a poor man expects from the Government is the basic requirements like food, shelter, education, some healthcare and then employment. Later, in the old age, a pension. Here is the Budget which has provided all those things, and that Budget he calls as anti-people. I could not understand the rationale in this.

If the share price index were to go up or industrialists were to earn lakhs and lakhs of crores of rupees, he might have called it as a very productive, for the people, which people are only a dismal number in the country. If a decision were to be taken or if an allocation were to be made to a poor man, that is called a populist theme. It is surprising!

In fact, I spoke in my constituency a couple of months back when farming community were aggrieved and that the prices that were being decided for their produce was not remunerative, and was not on the same line as the Government is fixing up for the industrial products. I told them in that meeting that any Party that is in the Government was scared to increase the prices of agricultural products. The reason being that once the prices of the agro products are increased, which are the basic requirements particularly for a poor man, then there is always a fear that the prices of the essential commodities will go up in the country and that the Party which is sitting in Opposition will take advantage and criticize the Government as a Government incapable of containing the inflation and price rise, thereby, taking advantage by going to the poor to say that here is a Government where the prices of onion has gone up; the

prices of tomato has gone up; the prices of *allo* have gone up; the prices of *mirchi* have gone up.

16.00 hrs.

They wanted to convince the poor people, who are in large numbers in this country and say that it is anti-poor. Our elder, Prof. Malhotra said the same thing. He said that the prices are going up. The prices of wheat are going up? The prices of *dal*, edible oil, milk, vegetable, etc. have gone up, and so, this Government has failed and it is an anti-poor people. On the same count, injustice is being done to the farmers for decades.

If the UPA or the Congress were to sit tomorrow in the Opposition Benches by chance, the same thing will get repeated. The Opposition would say that it is anti-poor Budget and they would also say that the prices of the agro products must be increased, and they will make a lot of *dharma*; this is the situation that is going on. In a meeting, I told that there must be a Government which is bold enough to increase the prices of the farm produce, prepared to lose the Government, prepared to lose the elections next time. But which party would be ready to lose the elections? So, no party would be interested to raise the prices of the agro products. But here is a Government which is bold enough to increase the prices of the agro products and which has written off – never in the history – Rs.60,000 crore of the farming community. It is in a way, like the youngster Shri Rahul Gandhi was telling the other day in the Press, that is, it is not a favour to the farmer; it is our responsibility; it is our duty. I believe in it; the reason being that no farmer requires subsidy; no farmer requires waiver, when he gets a remunerative price for his products. Since he is not getting remunerative price, he is aggrieved. He is falling into debt trap, a situation where he is not able to repay the loan, as a result he is committing suicide.

It is time for us to go to his rescue. Not once, but at regular intervals, it should be done, if a situation were to come to such a stage; at that stage, any Government which is in power, has got to do it as a responsibility. Today, the GDP is growing at 10-11 per cent in manufacturing and services sectors, while the growth in agriculture is only 2.6 per cent. That means, there is a disparity of 8 per cent growth between the industry or the urban area and the rural area. If this were to continue for 10 years, what would be the situation? Then, there will be lack of peace; there will be too much disparity between the rural and urban areas. This has to be set right.

All that is done today is 'transfer of money from urban area to the rural area or the richer section to the poorer section. How much was the amount? We have been reading that one day's increase in the share market is increasing the capital of the richer people by Rs.10 lakh crore and with a day's fall, they say that they lose Rs.18.3 lakh crore. We have transferred an amount of Rs.60,000 crore, which is not a good amount at all. In that case, there is no reason why anybody should be aggrieved and disgruntled. Everybody must be happy and say, you must transfer just not Rs.60,000 crore, but Rs.1.2 lakh crore. I would have been happy; had Prof. Malhotra said that Rs.60,000 crore is not enough, you could have done more. But he did not say so. He said, 'it is anti-poor'. Is giving money to the poor or a farmer anti-people? I could not understand that.

The other thing is that he said it was a communal budget. I am sorry; I have been hearing this in this Parliament. Once a decision is taken on the minorities, immediately Muslims come into the field. Is that only religion that is to be considered? We must also see the economic status of the Muslims in this country. We all know that majority of the Muslims in this country are living in poverty.

If something is done for them why should it be thought in terms of only religion? Why should it not be thought in terms of poverty? When we are thinking in terms of helping the poor or alleviating the poverty we do not need to discriminate between a caste, religion or region. Surprisingly, not only Malhotra Ji even Advani Ji was saying that the Budget was communal. He was the Leader who had said that Jinnah is secular. On the contrary, increasing the Budget to the Ministry of Minority from Rs.500 crore to Rs.1000 crore becomes communal. I could not understand the logic between the two. Our former Finance Minister, Shri Yashwant Sinha has also said that this is a communal Budget and BJP cannot keep quiet on that. It is quite surprising. What do they do? I do not know.

The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister who is going to elections soon is worried. He is of the opinion that because of this pro-poor Budget he must do something more. He wanted to give support of Rs.100 per quintal of paddy or wheat. Similarly, he wanted to reduce the electricity tariff to help the farmers. Obviously, seeing the provisions made in this Budget by the UPA Government he wanted to compete and do much more. I welcome it. I support that and I do not grudge it but I will not say

[Shri K.S. Rao]

that the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh is anti-poor. All of us can compete with each other in doing a favour to the poor persons.

Why I say this Budget is pro-poor? Agriculture is the area which is neglected for many years. Not much is done though something is done. In regard to the poverty alleviation, the growth in agriculture will be twice as effective as the growth in other sector. About 60 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture. While 60 per cent of the people are working in this sector their contribution to the GDP is only 18 per cent. When 234 million cultivators or land less people are working in rural areas if the Government allocate Budget either for their health care or for loan waiver everybody must be happy.

I now come to the steps taken with regard to poverty alleviation.... *(Interruptions)* Sir, why do you give a bell so early? You may give me some time though not as much as you give to others.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already taken 15 minutes.

SHRI K.S. RAO: Sir, this Government has taken step to increase the credit from Rs.70,000 crore – when they left the Government – to Rs.2,35,000 crore till 31st March and the Minister promises to take it to Rs.2,80,000 crores to the farming community. I have been fighting with the Finance Minister right from the beginning that we must not only increase the credit but also reduce the rate of interest. Our Communist Member, Shri Chandrappan was telling that it should be 4 per cent. I even go to the extent of saying that it must be zero per cent one day because the farmer will not be able to pay back the loan with interest at the way in which we are fixing up the prices for the commodity.

If we think that 60 per cent of the people should not depend on agriculture then it is our duty that gradually all the people in the villages are given skills. When they are given skills naturally they will shift from the rural area to an industrial area. But we are not doing it. Today, this Budget has done it. The Minister has provided Rs.16,000 crore exclusively for skill development. This must be done on war footing.

We have to change the system of education in this country. The present system of education will not help this country at all. We have to entirely concentrate on providing skills. If Germany, America, South Korea or

Malaysia were to come up, it is all because of skill development only. It is not because of degrees.

The most specific thing that this Budget has done is to look after the poor. I have been telling that one-time Parliament Members are getting pension all their life time. What crime have these people in the villages done? They have been spending income from 10 years to 65 years of age sitting in the village. Now, who will take care of them after they attain the age of 65 years? It is this Government who came out with a scheme called the Indira Gandhi Old Age Pension Scheme. That is our responsibility. It is not a favour. The money allocated for this purpose is Rs. 3,004 crore. I would like to submit that enough money should be provided to take care of the people above 65 years belonging to the BPL families. What is it they want? They want health care. If a poor man were to go to a Government hospital, the people would not attend to them. He cannot even pay the bills of the hospitals set up by the corporate sector. So, here is a scheme by name the *Rashtriya Swastha Yojana* wherein the hon. Finance Minister has assured a sum of Rs. 30,000 every year for every family and that is considered enough for them. They are not asking for a sum of Rs. 10 lakh or Rs. 20 lakh. He has also provided insurance for all the workers. I am happy about it. He has provided insurance cover for life risk, disability and even for natural death. Otherwise, who will take care of them?

One development that has taken place in this country is the growth of the Self-Help Groups of women. They are coming up in large numbers. Today there are about 35 lakhs Self-Help Groups in this country with about four crore women engaged in them. They have been provided with free insurance to take care of themselves. I have been suggesting on these points item by item and I had even written a letter to the hon. Finance Minister for making provision on all these points and I am happy that he has allocated money on these counts.

Sir, in regard to education my friends were finding fault saying that 6 per cent have not been provided, instead 0.6 per cent have been provided for. Allocation that has been made today is Rs. 34,400 crore and the concentration is on primary education. It is not on higher education. What has been found in the villages is that there are a large number of dropouts at the primary school level. The children belonging to poor families drop out of schools. The Government has provided more money in schemes like the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and Mid-day Meal to create a congenial atmosphere in the

primary schools and upper primary schools by which the children from poorer families would be attracted to attend school. Otherwise, what do the parents of these children think? They think if their children were to be educated, there is no employment opportunity and so why should they waste their ten years and instead if they send their children to work they would find one more person to earn Rs. 80/- on a daily wage basis which, in turn, would help in supplementing the income of their families. They are driven by such considerations and prevent their children from attending schools. But with these provisions being made, the rate of dropouts have come down at the primary level in the village schools. We are very happy about that. A sum of Rs. 16,000 crore has been provided for this purpose.

Apart from this I want that the people living in the villages must be provided with the opportunity of skill development so that the problem is automatically solved. In that case they would not have to be in the villages. We would not require so many people to be engaged in farming activities. They must come into the industries and the service sector as well. That is possible only when skill is provided and unless we provide skill in the days to come, the rate of unemployment again will go up substantially and all the provisions that are being made today would be useless.

Sir, I do not have any major issue to mention. What I would like to submit to the hon. Finance Minister is that making the provisions, these are revolutionary in my opinion, are not enough. We never expected him to make these many provisions for the people living in the rural areas in such a big way. But having made it, I would humbly request him to see that these are implemented without loss of any time. He should also motivate the officers concerned and the also the State Governments to monitor these regularly and ensure their implementation in right earnest.

Sir, with these few words I thank you and also the hon. Finance Minister for making provisions for the people in the village areas, the poor people, the farmers and also women.

[Translation]

*SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM (Jamnagar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I welcome this general budget. Also I congratulate the whole UPA Government for presenting this good budget.

*Speech was laid on the Table.

I want to make some points in brief which may be considered by the Government.

1. There is no engineering college, women engineering college, pharmacy college in the district of Jamnagar in Gujarat. (Our Jamnagar city fall under municipal corporation).
2. A diploma school for nursing needed to be set up at Jamnagar, Porbander, Bhawnagar, Dhrangadha, Palanpur, Wapi and other districts in Gujarat to facilitate girls students pursue this course.
3. I have a suggestion that in Central schools, the student intake should be increased by 25 percent on yearly basis. This should be done in Gujarat as well as in the whole country from this year itself.
4. A provision has been made to set up new IITs in the country. It is very good thing but I request you to sanction one new IIT for Gujarat.

I request you to expedite the policies of the budget only then general public will get benefits.

[English]

*SHRI VIJAY BAFUGUNA (Tehri Garhwal): Respected Speaker Sir, I rise to congratulate the Finance Minister and the Prime Minister, and our leader Smt. Sonia Gandhi ji, for presenting such a vibrant budget, which has taken a historic step to fulfill the dream of the father of nation Mahatma Gandhi Ji of "Ghar Ghar Pahunche Swaraj".

Farmers are the backbone of our economy and they have been passing through a phase of distress and frustration. In this budget by waving the loans of small and marginal farmers and by giving a concession of 25% to all other category of farmers in one time settlement of loans has paved the way for upliftment of Agricultural Production and national prosperity. The other Laudable feature of the budget is the increase in the allocation of funds for providing scholarship for the SC, ST, OBC and minority students and of setting up of 16 new central university and 3 IIT's.

The entire middle class of the country have a smile on their face due to the income tax relief provided in the

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Vijay Bahuguna]

budget and by reducing the excise duty on small car and two-wheelers.

The economy has recorded a growth rate of 12 percent in successive quarters up to December 31, 2007 and the GDP has increased showing an average rate of about 8.8%

It is a matter of grave concern that some State governments such as Uttarakhand are not fully utilizing the funds available to them under the centrally sponsored schemes. It is necessary that a strict monitoring is done by the central government and remedial measures are taken so that the benefits proposed in this budget to the "Aam Admi" reaches them.

Sir, whereas the country has been progressing satisfactorily, there are some clouds which must concern us. Sir, I would like to draw the kind attention of the Finance Minister to the economic backwardness of the Himalayan States in general and the State of Uttarakhand in particular. The economic backwardness of the entire Himalayan region in general and Uttarakhand in particular concerns us. It is a matter of fact, that our younger generation in the Himalayas, has to seek employment in the plains of the country. It is also a fact that in such distant, remote regions, with such difficult topography, quality education has not reached them. The opportunities of local employment are few and far between. It thus leads to alienation of the population, which combined with the destabilizing forces from across the border, can be a very potent danger mix.

To mainstream our population living in such distant areas, it is important to utilize every available opportunity and technology. It is a matter of concern that from Kashmir to the North East, all Himalayan states barring two, have some degree of fissiparous forces which engage our security forces and cost a huge amount of expenditure on the security apparatus alone.

To end this alienation, I have certain suggestions to make and the Government may like to consider them:—

1. Please use all available technologies to provide connectivity, to even the remotest hamlet. Making roads may take a long time but can we use the available network and IT technologies, so that a family sitting in a remote village in Tehri can, at least, talk face to face with their loved ones, who are doing some job in Mumbai. After all,

web conferencing is a known technology and we must provide it ubiquitously across all such regions.

2. Land is limited, as most of the area is taken up by the forests. The hill state Uttarakhand has 78% of forest cover where non-forest activities cannot take place. The forests have to be preserved to save the environment and reduce the factors responsible for global warming. The central govt, should compensate the hill states so that their economic growth is not hampered.

The hill states require a totally different planning and approach in Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Industries, Irrigation, Drinking water, Health and Roads.
3. But there is another lesson in this and that is to provide job-oriented education to our youth in these areas. This kind of education could range from job-oriented education in Information Technologies to horticulture, production, harvesting, postproduction technology and marketing.
4. If we are unable to stop the alienation of our youth and mainstream them into the economic development taking place in the rest of the country, there is a serious apprehension that we may end up creating far more problems for ourselves.
5. It is therefore necessary that there is coordination among the hill states especially in the field of Power Generation, Tourism and Road connectivity. The hills states which have international border should be given special economic package so that the youth get opportunity of employment and do not fall prey to terror outfits which are posing a serious threat to our sovereignty and law and order problem.
6. To uplift the economy of the Himalayan states, it is necessary that a separate ministry of hill development is created and the states of Uttarakhand, Himanchal and Kashmir are included in the ministry of Hill development. We already have a D O N E R and a separate Department for J & K. I would, therefore request the Hon'ble Prime Minister to constitute a "Himalayan Development Authority" or a separate ministry for "hill development" and to provide

adequate funds in this budget to fulfill the aspiration of the vast population living in the difficult terrains of Himalayas.

[Translation]

*SHRI NIHAL CHAND (Sriganganagar): I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on budget 2008-09. There is no provision for the upliftment of the farmers in the budget speech. Mere waiving off loans of few farmers is not a great work. As long as the farmers don't get proper price for their production, their upliftment cannot take place. The farmers of the country are still debt-ridden. Even today per capita indebtedness in the country is Rs. 10,000/-. In 1990, the price of cotton was between Rs. 2500-3000 per quintal while the price of the diesel was between Rs. 18-Rs. 20 per litre. Today in 2008, the price of cotton produced by farmers is about Rs. 2300/- per quintal but diesel costs Rs. 33/- per litre which is costlier than before. Farmers pay high price for pesticides. They get spurious pesticide from market which is affecting their production. Farmers in Maharashtra, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh are committing suicide. There should have been provision of 16 percent growth rate for agriculture in the budgets which did not take place. The average land holding of farmer in the country is 0.40 acre. The Government have made no provision to convert barren land and marshy land into cultivable land. The Government should have made provisions for the same. On account of increasing the short term capital gain tax from 10 percent to 15 percent and the proposals to bring the share market within the periphery of service tax, the share market (BSE) Sensex fell down by 245.76 points to 17578.72 or 1.38 percent. Even in National Stock Exchange (NSE) Nifty recorded 1.17 percent fall or 61.60 points fall. As the Finance Minister Shri P. Chidambaram made his speech, everything came to light.

The UPA Government did not make any concrete efforts to check the price rise in the budget for the last four years and inflation is on the rise day by day. Neither food nor shelter which is a basic need, is available to common people at low cost nor their safety is guaranteed. These days, food is costlier than lives. It is an irony that tall claims of making India a developed nation have cheated the poor people of the country and amidst these populists announcements, starvation deaths are taking place and riots for food have taken place. Skyrocketing prices have badly affected the budget of the common

man. One can imagine enormity of situation by the fact that during the NDA tenure, the same godowns of foods grains were full.

Recently 50 lakh metric tonnes of wheat has been imported into India which has had the cascading effect of pushing every article beyond the paying capacity of the common man who now has to purchase pulses vegetables, flour at higher prices. At the same time the Government could no longer put on hold the rise in the prices of petrol and diesel. During the NDA regime cooking gas was easily available, while the present Government could not check increase in the price of even the LPG. With the exception of manufacturers of consumer goods and the automobile sector no further relief has been given to the corporate sector. The entire world is going through recession and America and the European countries are contemplating some other measures besides reducing the rates of interest to deal with this recession. No such scheme for India has been reflected in the Central Budget. The growth rate of GDP in India was continuing to be in double digits. Now it has slided to single digit i.e. 8-9 percent. Something was to be contemplated expected to be done in the Budget to encourage the manufacturing sector but nothing of that kind came to be seen in the Budget.

During the NDA rule of the then Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee minimum 126 lakh tonnes and maximum 190 lakh tonnes wheat were procured at the minimum support price from 1998 to 2004 whereas the Government of Congress UPA had procured 92 lakh tonnes wheat in 2006 and 110 lakh tonnes of wheat in 2007 which is relatively quite low in comparison to the procurements made during the NDA regime.

The Central Government has nearly betrayed its intent to benefit the private companies when it declared the minimum support price for wheat at Rs. 1000/- per quintal. During this year the Government procured wheat at the rate of Rs. 850 per quintal comprising minimum support price of Rs. 750 per quintal plus Rs. 100 per quintal as incentive. The Central Government could have procured wheat by paying Rs. 150 more per quintal as incentive. But it was with ill intents towards the common man's interest that the Manmohan Singh government threw open an opportunity to the private companies to fill their godowns with wheat which have at present much as 20 lakh tonnes of wheat in their godowns. At present the price of wheat in the market is Rs. 1000/- per quintal and the private companies procured wheat at the rate of

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Nihal Chand]

Rs. 1000/- per quintal. If we include expenses of godowns, interest etc. the cost of wheat comes upto Rs. 1100 per quintal. Now after the declaration of minimum support price the price of wheat will rise hitting the poor consumers very hard. The policies of UPA Government are anti-farmer and anti-poor, which the people of the country are not going to accept the people will counter those policies when the time comes.

Sir, provision be made for the education of children, the future generation. generation. The Government should provide playgrounds and all sports material for each school so that children may have healthy bodies. The Central Government must check the rising prices too. The Government should also provided interest-free loans to every unemployed person between 21 to 30 years of age till he gets employment. The elderly people should also have been taken care of in this budget. There should have been arrangement for free of cost medical treatment of the citizens above 55 years of age so that the poor people could receive proper treatment. The poor people from villages do not have food to eat. They are not able to get themselves treated at big hospitals. Announcement should be made in the budget for free of cost treatment of every citizen of more than 55 years of age.

SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA (Salumber): While taking part in the discussion on General Budget for the year 2008-09, I would like to say that the honourable Finance Minister has very cleverly tried to prove through figures as if the Government of United Progressive Alliance is concerned about the welfare of the common man and specially about the welfare of SCs, STs and other backward classes. But it is evident from the Budget figures that the hon. Minister has presented the Budget after making a small increase in the allocations of the previous year. The budget allocations have been reduced under various heads, this year in comparison to budget allocations made in the previous year.

At per the census of the year 2001, the population of SCs and STs constituted 16.23 percent and 8.2 percent respectively of the total population. However, the percentage of literacy in case of the SCs and STs was estimated to be 55 percent and 47 percent respectively as against 65 percent rate of literacy at the national level. But these figures are not real, because the surveyers have not calculated the data on the site itself. The data have been prepared in the office only.

In the budget, it has been stated that the Union Government is implementing educational schemes for these communities in order to raise their educational standard, enhance their enrollments and retention and reduce the rate of dropouts among them. Seven and eight schemes are being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs respectively for the welfare of SCs and STs. These schemes include different types of benefits like making provision for Scholarships, construction of hostles and school setting up of book banks, remedial and special coaching and sanction of grants-in-aid to voluntary organizations engaged in the welfare of SCs and STs. But the beneficiaries are not getting the benefit of these schemes due to several lacunae like diversion of funds, non-utilization of funds under schemes by various states, delay in releasing funds, delay in releasing remaining funds. As a result, the objectives of the schemes are not being achieved.

Similarly, other schemes like pre-matric and post matric scholarship scheme for the children of the people engaged in scavenging occupation are ridden with numerous shortcomings like minimal inclusion of eligible beneficiaries but payment of scholarships to the ineligible beneficiaries, delay in the payment of the scholarship, inflated payment of the scholarship and deficiency in the selection process of beneficiaries, delay in the construction of Ashram schools as well as giving less priority to maintenance of schools, establishment of less number of book banks under Book Bank Scheme, procedural irregularities in the purchase of books, delay in purchase, lack of facilities, non-utilization of facilities, lack of coaching facilities and improper maintenance of records due to which beneficiaries are not able to get information on proper benefit of the schemes.

Similarly in the scheme regarding assistance to voluntary organizations engaged in the welfare of SCs and STs it has been seen that the funds provided to the black listed non-governmental organizations were not recovered. However, the Government have not yet acquired the assets created through the government aid. Nor have government rehabilitated the beneficiaries. As regards the scheme of setting up educational complexes in the low literacy areas for the development of women organizations funds were sanctioned for the projects in such districts that were not included in the identified districts. As regard scholarships schemes and Book Bank scheme, non-establishment of monitoring system, lack of inspection and evaluation, improper internal audit, have deprived these sections of the timely benefit of the schemes.

I would like to draw the attention of the honourable Finance Minister to demand No. 88 of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, demand No. 94. of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, demand no. 83 of the Department of Science and Industries containing SC and ST sub-plan demand nos. 8, 60, 87, 93, 55 having budgetary provisions for the schemes and programmes for the welfare of ST. I would urge him to make budget provisions in proportion to wholesale price index so that the full benefits of schemes reach the beneficiaries.

*DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY (Mandsaur): We are discussing financial proposals for the year 2008-09. The hon'ble Minister of Finance has very aptly tried to project in his speech that this budget is people friendly, aims at freeing farmers from the clutches of debt and provide employment opportunities alongwith promotion of agriculture in rural areas. It also seeks to provide ample opportunities of employment to urban unemployed. But if we look at it minutely, we will be disappointed. The issue which has been highlighted pertains to waiving off loans of the farmers to the tune of Rs. 60 thousand crore but various banks and economists have themselves said that as per the figures available with them, this amount is not more than Rs. 25 to 30 thousand crore. However, it has not been mentioned from where this money will come. A popular newspaper Navabharat Times has published news about it in detail. Apart from this, the people going to be benefited from it are marginal farmers or the farmers having low holdings who generally do not take loans. In such a situation, large number of farmers will remain deprived of this loan waiving scheme, Members of Parliament from various States, particularly from Vidarbha region of Maharashtra and Bundelkhand in Uttar Pradesh have registered their protest. I would like to say here with all seriousness that until any concrete policy for giving remunerative prices of crops to the farmers is framed, there is no guarantee of their progress and that waiving of loans will not mean that they will not take loan in future. Today farming is becoming an unprofitable vocation. Children of the farmers are leaving their villages and coming to cities. Whereas the population is increasing in the cities at the same time new problems are also arising, which include the problems of housing, water, electricity, hygiene etc. In the cities, ample opportunities of employment are not available and it is virtually becoming impossible to check unemployment in the cities. On the other side, number of neo rich is rising and this tendency, instead of bridging the gap between rich and poor, is

widening this gap. In the budget there is no specific plan for solving this problem. Be it Bharat Nirman Programme, Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Rural Housing Scheme or efforts made for upgradation or beautification of the cities, they all have their importance, but the results so far have been disappointing.

Another problem is that though pace of economic development is taking place and there has been increase in the flow of money due to foreign and domestic investment but simultaneously prices are also skyrocketing. One can see the difference in the prices of general consumer goods in the pre-budget and post budget situations? It is becoming difficult for a common consumer pull on his life. Increase in the prices of edible oils is translating into reality the proverb *Tel Dekho tel Ki Dhaara Dekho*. What we can say about increase in the prices of pulses and vegetables. Dhara refined which was Rs. 70 a kilogram in October 07, is now being sold at the rate of Rs. 84 a kilogram. Mustard oil which was sold at Rs. 50 per kilogram earlier, is now being sold at the rate of Rs. 78 per kilogram. Likewise prices of other oils have also been published in detail by the English daily 'The Pioneer'. The condition of Public Distribution System is also deplorable. A farmer's commission was set up under the chairmanship of Dr. Swaminathan which has given many recommendations regarding agriculture and farmers. One of the recommendations was providing loans to the farmers at the rate of 4 percent interest. The farmer's land is also not free from trouble. I would also like to mention here that you have waived off the loans of the farmers but a farmer affected by nature's fury always remains in trouble. I would like to mention here about lakhs of opium farmers whose opium farming is under the control of the Central Government and the whole produce belongs to the Government. But at the time of natural calamities like frost and hailstorm, the yield does not commensurate with the targeted production. In that case farmers forced to uproot their crops which results in loss to them to the tune of thousands of rupees. It should be ensured that they get compensation. There is a need to redefine farmers affected due to indebtedness and by natural calamities. Facilities should be given to the eligible farmers after proper assessment. There should be assured crop insurance for all crops of the farmers. Medium and small industries are getting vanished. Employment opportunities are diminishing. In spite of the announcement of continuous assistance by the Government, such industries are continuously closing down or are on the verge of closing. Textile industry is facing sickness. Prices of coal, steel and cement are rising continuously. It is

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey]

natural that prices will rise in the market due to all these things. The Government should control it so that the prices could remain stable. Efforts should be made in this direction Likewise there should be check on rising prices of other commodities. The entry of big businessmen in the small industry particularly in consumer industry should be stopped. There is a need to pay special attention towards education and health. Infectious and dangerous diseases like AIDS, Tuberculosis, Chickenpox are spreading again.

Naxalite and Terrorist activities have risen in the country. The Government should allocate more funds to Ministry of Home Affairs in the wake of such activities. Today each State and every district of the country is affected by terrorism. The people are feeling insecure. The naxal problem has affected Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh the states of Special funds should be allocated to the Ministry of Home Affairs for taking action in a phased manner in this regard. Be it the problem of Bangladesh, problem of Arunachal Pradesh or the work of barricading border areas, there is a need to strengthen the defene line and for this purpose budgetary allocation of Ministry of Defence should be increased.

The farmer should be freed from debt, the common man should be freed from fear, the youth should get employment, unemployment should be under check and control and dream of Bharat Nirman should come true. It will happen only when there is allocation of funds in the budget according to need. There are problems of electricity and water. Level of water is going down in the villages quite rapidly and there is non-availability of drinking water. There is no supply of electricity, no sanitation and environmental problems are also rising.

Altogether, this budget is going to increase the prices. It is going to widen the gap between the rich and the poor and it is going to put the people in trouble.

I have presented my views in brief. Kindly pay special attention to these views.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' (Begusarai):
Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to participate in the discussion on the general Budget.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in a democracy the Government is elected for five years and thereafter it again goes before the electorate with its performance. The policies that the Government formulates are meant for five years and

actually the general budget is a policy document of the Government. Sir, the UPA Government is in the last year of its present tenure. All the problems that are before the country, be it related to the common man, the poors the labourers or the farmers, the Government never Showed any concern towards these problems for the last four years. Now it has come before the House with the last budget and is shedding crocodiles tears saying that it is very much concerned about the farmers and the poor of the country hence are making announcements. These announcements are an indicators of this fact which was reported by the newspapers, the media of the country, that it has been done keeping in view the elections at hand. It is a matter of shame that they did nothing in the last four years, almost nothing. If they do not work for bridging the gap between the poor and the rich, then we cannot come in the category of a developed nations. During their five years regime, the gap between the poor and the rich has widened and poverty, too, has increased. They want to prove this fact of poverty by providing figures. I do not want to go into the survey that they have carried out for knowing the number of BPL people and the Planning Commission is working on it. They are not accepting the figures that have been collected through door-to-door survey. They are establishing the number on their own. They are trying to belittle poverty in figures whereas it has actually increased and they have failed in every field.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, today price rise is the biggest problem of the country. Has the Finance Minister ever tried to go into the root of it. It is true that the background of the Finance Minister defers him from being affected by the market price, because he does not visit market for purchasing. He does not go to purchase salt, vegetables, rice, flour, mustard oil etc. so he remains unaffected but he has ever imagined how the common man earning 15-20 rupees as his wage would be sustaining his life. I do not think so. They have mentioned a lot about the previous years. What was the dearness rate last year, it was two to three percent. Today it is five to six percent. When he presented this budget on the 29th of February the dearness rate was at 5.06 percent, and he was saying that it is a pro poor budget. Right now, Shri Rao Saheb was also saying that it is a pro poor budget. If you go through the last five years budget speeches and the discussion made on it, every time same thing has been said. They have been unsuccessful in arresting price rise. Today the dearness rate is 5 to 6 percent and what about the consumer price index? Definitely, it is many times more. He is saying

that they have been in power for the last five years. If they go through the records during the last four years they have put varied reasons for price rise from low production of foodgrains to increase in international prices. Sometimes they said that there has been a fall in industrial production. Again they also blamed hoarding done by traders which resulted in price rise. They failed to arrest price rise during the last four years as it kept on sky rocketing. They are saying that there is shortage of foodgrains and the Ministry of Agriculture claims that there has been a record production nevertheless they are also making imports from foreign countries and the rate at which it is being imported is also a matter of concern though I do not want to discuss it right now. The Minister of Agriculture will have to unnecessarily clarify the position. They rejected the tender invited in February for wheat but later imported it in June at much higher rate from what was quoted previously. What is the minimum support price that they are giving to the farmers for wheat? How would they feel enthusiastic and they are claiming to pay attention to Agriculture. Here the farmer is on the brink of starvation. He is dying of it. They failed to check price rise and the condition of farmers worsened day by day. They have mentioned about the NDA regime. There was such a bumper production of foodgrains during the NDA regime that the FCI godowns fell short to store it. It got rotten and was thrown into rivers and sea. They are saying that during the NDA regime the polices were faulty. During of the NDA regime the farmers were very much prosperous but they failed on this count too. They are claiming to check price rise by making cut in excise duty, but it is not possible. They cannot stop price rise by reducing excise duty. They will have to formulate a different policy to arrest price rise and need to focus on that but they have done nothing.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, a lot of discussion has been done about farmers loan. They have mentioned about waiving off Rs. 60 thousand crore loan amount of farmers but no provision has been made for it in the budget. They have mentioned nothing in the budget speech about how the provisions have been made for this Rs. 60 thousand crore. They said that they would mobilize this fund through bonds and loans. The Governor of Reserve Bank has said that he is collecting bank-wise data of loans outstanding against each farmer. It was their directionless policy decision. They did it to gain cheap popularity and announced it. They did not frame any policy as to how the farmers would be given relief but considering the elections at hand and under pressure from the left parties which sent signals that elections could be held any time

so they made a populist announcement gaining cheap popularity. They had neither made any preparation nor formulated any well defined policy in this regard but the announcement was made.

16.23 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not know about other States, I belong to Bihar and know about the situation prevailing there. Mr. Finance Minister, Sir, you are aware of Bihar, you had visited Patna and seen the C.D. ratio there. The banks hardly provide loans to farmers so they turn to private money lenders for loan who give it at high interest rate. What arrangements the Government have made for it, the loans that has been taken by farmers from money lenders should also be included in it but the Government have not formulated any well defined policy in this regard. They have not made any provision in the budget and simply made an announcement to waive off loans. It has been done with the sole purpose that they should brace themselves for the ensuring elections.

Mr. Finance Minister, when a student appears in an examination after studying for two years he feels morally very high while entering in the examination hall and feels that he would answer any question asked in the examination. But many students do not study during the entire year, they study only in the last days. We sometimes read in newspapers about many students attaching hundred rupee note in the answer sheet for the examiner requesting for better marks even though they have not studied properly during two years. You have also done the same thing. You did nothing during the last four years and by making numerous announcements in the last year you have tried to impress upon people that you are doing a lot so that you may get their votes. The Election results will tell where do you actually stand. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, tall claims have been made about the progress of the country in the Budget. It has been stated that the economic progress made during the previous years is comparatively more than that made during the previous decade. Where the common man and poor got the benefit of that? I would like to explain it by giving an example from unorganized sector. Recently, a national commission has published an astonishing report. In that report it is stated that 94% of the total manpower of the country is in unorganised sector. In this 94% manpower under unorganised sector, each of the 77% labourers earns only Rs. 20 daily. Now you can imagine as to what can be done in Rs. 20. The rate of

[Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan']

unemployment in the year 1993-94 was 6.8% but today it is 8.3%. Where this country is being led? Of Course, they can mislead the country with their policies and figures. The common man constituting 80% or 77% of the population of the country is not getting its benefits. Therefore, the need of the day was to formulate a concrete policy. Had they taken the policy decision to remove unemployment and control price-rise, then common man and poor people of the country would have benefited from it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to talk about employment guarantee scheme. I will conclude my speech after referring to one or two main issues, hon. Minister of Finance mentioned Employment Guarantee Scheme. When it was introduced, wide publicity was made of it and an assurance was given to provide minimum 100 days' work in a year to every poor labour in the country. Current report of CAG states that only 3% people have been provided employment of 100 days in a year. What happened to their preparations and claims and now they say that they are alleviating poverty and they are pro-poor. In 2005-06 when the Employment Guarantee Scheme was started, then they had covered 150 districts under this scheme and a provision of Rs. 406 crore was made for this purpose. Now they have announced to implement this scheme in every district of the country. But only Rs. 600 crore have been allocated for this scheme in the Budget. How will this scheme be implemented? They have been able to provide employment to only 3% people under this scheme. Now they are saying to implement this scheme...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, conclude now.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir I will conclude after speaking for 2 minutes about minorities. The policy regarding minorities is for vote bank only whether it is formulated by the Government or by the main opposition. They use this forum just for politics of vote. Neither the Government nor the main opposition party is concerned about minorities. They have not given minorities what is actually their due. Where had they been for the last four years? I want to give an example in 1989 communal riots that had erupted in Bhagalpur, I think it was the biggest riot case in the country. Thousands of Muslims were killed in these riots. After the State Government there changed, an enquiry commission was constituted. The enquiry Commission in its report recommended pension for every affected family. The State Government implemented it immediately. The State Government there had written to the Central

Government that riots affected families there should be given compensation on the lines of riot affected Sikh families. They have sat over it and talk of the welfare of minorities? Thousands of families over there are on the verge of starvation. Thousands of families were completely eliminated and their dead bodies were buried under the leaves in cabbage fields. The State Government has sent a proposal to the Central Government but they have not taken any action in this regard. Why do it they take policy a decision and give compensation to the riot affected people there? They should provide compensation to the minorities there. They shed crocodile tears and merely make announcements. How many schemes meant for the welfare of minorities have been implemented? Hence the need of the hour is that...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right. Now you please conclude.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am just concluding. The need of the hour is that if the Government wants to alleviate the poverty, and bridge the gap between rich and poor then they will have to formulate an appropriate policy and focus on agriculture. They will have to give priority to agriculture and arrange for better water management, water and fertilizers etc. In addition, if they want to improve the condition of farmers, then they will have to fix minimum support price of the agricultural produce at the rate, at which they import them. They import at the rate of Rs. 1600 per quintal, then they should give the farmers, at least, at the rate of Rs. 1200 per quintal. Unless they give priority to agriculture and develop it as a major productive industry, the country cannot progress.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I request the next hon. Member to speak,

[Translation]

I have a list of over 100 members who want to speak so if anyone wants to give his written statement,

[English]

He is allowed to lay it on the Table of the House and it will be treated as a part of the proceedings of today.

[Translation]

*SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA (Hoshiarpur): While participating in the discussion on Budget, I want to lay my written statement on the Table of the House.

*Speech was laid on the Table.

Government have several responsibilities to common people it functions with the money of the people and the tax given by people is returned to them through different services. It is the duty of every Government in power to provide educational, health facilities, maintain law and order and provide food clothes and shelter, to its countrymen. The Government have failed on every aspect from this view point. So far as education is concerned, several poor children are dropping out off schools because there is no teacher and thus they are adding illiteracy. The rich person provides some how good education to his child but it has adverse impact on the children of poor families. Hon. Finance Minister should make adequate funds in the Budget for education so that every child could get education. A survey suggests that if the status of education in the country remains same, then 48% children will not be able to get primary education. Of course, there are total 10,37,813 schools in the country, out of them, 8,80,545 are Government schools and 1,57,268 are private schools.

However, so far as the number of teachers are concerned there is acute shortage of teachers in the Government schools and basic amenities are just for namesake. Despite several schemes being launched by the Government, children are not attracted to school due to shortage of teachers. Therefore, I request that special attention should be paid to education.

Thus, the poor person is exploited from the cradle to grave. A child is born on roadside and parents don't have enough money to go to hospital while another child is born in an air-conditioned hospital. If a poor person gets sick consultation of doctor, medical tests and medicines is an unrealized dream for him. Provision should be made in the budget to provide medical facility easily to every one in the country and no one should be left without medical assistance. Doctor's help should be inexpensive and easily accessible to common man.

Unless each and every citizen of the country is given social security, he cannot lead a life devoid of tension. A citizen is always worried about his future as he bear heavy financial burden due to expenses incurred on the education of his children till they get job and also due to other expenses. The Government should make provision of social security for each citizen so that every citizen can get equal opportunity in life.

What does the Government do to honour the self-respect of a taxpayer? I suggest that for honouring

taxpayers, the highest taxpayers should be included in government committees, institutions and be offered other posts. If a taxpayer visits any government office, he being a taxpayer should be given respect so that he may realize that he is doing something concrete for the country and the government is recognizing his acts. A portion of the tax amount paid by the taxpayer should be deposited in a separate account in his name and during his old age, that amount should be returned to him gradually as pension. If any taxpayer dies suddenly, leaving no earning members in his family, the government should give his family some financial help as lump sum payment encouraging the taxpayers continue to give taxes to the government and as a reciprocal measure the government may come to help him for his services and provide him security.

All of us are aware that in spite of many announcements made by the government, farmer, the producer of food grains is forced to commit suicide. It is because of the reason that he is under burden of heavy loan and he has no fixed income. If the Union Government make a provision for insurance of crops and also ensuring fixed income for him it would help in making him self-dependent. Today, the biggest problem of the farmer is that he is not getting remunerative prices, for his crops. If a farmer gets remunerative prices for his crops, it would be a matter of great relief for him.

When it came to power, the U.P.A. government coined a slogan, 'Congress Ka hath Aam Aadami Ke Sath'. But the last four years have proved that the government is acting against the interest of common man. From Prime Minister to common man everyone needs essential items to run his kitchen but the U.P.A. government is doing nothing to alleviate their problems. In spite of assurance given after discussion on price rise during each Session, no government has been successful to contain price rise. Today, prices of edible items have risen so much so that it is having a bad impact even on our culture. In our culture a guest gets very warm welcome. But during this present time of price rise, people do not like to entertain guests and this tendency is putting adverse impact on our culture.

Therefore, the policy being adopted by the government to check price rise should be explained in detail. During U.P.A. regime it has become very difficult to construct a house. The prices of cement and iron have increased very much. Due to that, the industries of the country are on the verge of getting ruined.

[Shri Avinash Rai Khanna]

Industrialists in Punjab staged demonstrations and met the ministers, but got nothing except assurance. This also requires attention.

At the end I would like to give a suggestion. Educated youths of the country are unemployed. lakhs of rupees of the parents spent on their education have become sheer wastage. In dejection the youth are getting addicted to drugs. If the Government is not in a position to provide them employment, they should be given at least, a respectable allowance. With these few words I hope that hon'ble Finance Minister, keeping in view the above points would certainly make some good announcements.

[English]

*SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack): Respected Sir, After this Budget been placed before this House many people are talking about farmers. The loan waiver has been a topic of discussion in every sphere. It is nice to see that the urban population has become conscious of the plight of the farmers and the gloomy agricultural scenario that is prevalent in the country.

In this Budget the Finance Minister has something for everyone—from farmers to the average tax payers. But the biggest announcement is the farm loan waiver, encompassing all sections of the farming community. This includes a full waiver for small and marginal farmers. Medium and large farmers also stand to benefit with 25% of the outstanding amount proposed to be waived if they pay up the remaining 75%. This sounds good. However, as the farmers survey of the National Sample Survey Organisation showed this may benefit less than half of the indebted farmer households as institutional source account for less than 60% of all farmer loans. Nevertheless, the waiver in itself is a welcome step, though late in the day. This will at least help the middle and small farmers in mitigating the debt burden.

However, two of the important recommendations of the Radhakrishna Committee on Agricultural Indebtedness, which deserved some serious attention, seem to have been bypassed. The first concerns the measures recommended by the committee for financial inclusion of the financially excluded section of the farming community. The loan waiver does not offer anything for these farmers who not only pay the highest rate of interest, but are also vulnerable to the high handed tactics of moneylenders. It is these farmers who are taking their

*Speech was laid on the Table.

lives in distress, not the privileged ones who have access to institutional sources. The failure to touch moneylenders debt is just the first problem. Second is, no distinction has been made between dry land farmers and others. One may be surprised but it is a fact that West Bengal and even the non-crisis regions of Kerala have large numbers of farmers below the two hectare limit. With agriculture in bad shape nobody should grudge them the windfall the waiver brings. But aren't we aware that farmers of West Bengal and Kerala have far more access to bank credit than those in Vidarbha, Bundelkhand, Orissa and Bihar?

According to the C. Rangarajan Committee, only 27 per cent of the farm households take loans from formal sources. Most others borrow from private moneylenders, who charge heavy interest rates. The Finance Minister announced a package. But this would only benefit about 3 crores small and marginal farmers and 1 crore other farmers. The actual impact of this schemes will be rather different. It will not have any real beneficial effects for the areas and cultivators that are the worst affected by agrarian distress at present. It has excluded all the farmers on dry land and poor quality land who hold more than two hectares. Such distressed farmers are there in Vidharbha region of Maharashtra, Rayalseema in Andhra Pradesh, South Kamataka, KBK region of Orissa who will not get the debt relief. This package also excludes the majority of farmers who have taken debt from private sources since there is no attempt to deal with the private outstanding debt. Yet we all know, private debt accounts for more than two thirds of total rural debt. I appreciate the steps taken by the UPA Govt, for providing debt relief to troubled farmers, by establishing a Debt Relief Fund. But a Commission would have been better. This would identify the areas and categories of severe agrarian distress and could provide relief accordingly including to those holding private debt by refinancing the moneylenders. This would necessarily mean that the Central Government make available real finance for this purpose, instead of the book transfer between government and banks that is currently being used to finance the proposed scheme.

I am told that currently the amount of unpaid loans of small and unpaid loans of small and marginal farmers currently held by the scheduled commercial banks is estimated to be around Rs.20,500 crores. This is around the same amount that is routinely written off every year as bad debts of the banks, mostly to industrialists. So what is being touted as a huge, once for-all gift to Indian

farmers is something this is regularly provided to industry without any fuss.

Does this Budget has anything else that would make cultivation a viable or profitable activity once again? Is there any budgetary allocation for significant increase in agricultural extension activity or input provision, or price stabilization schemes that would protect farmers from the price volatility that has made cultivation so risky. The Radhakrishna Committee recommended for creating a Price Risk Mitigation Fund to compensate farmers in situations of price collapse. The Committee had also recommended to reduce the interest rate of 4% but all these have missed the attention of the Finance Minister. These are the measures that would have had a long term impact on insulating the farmer from the clutches of moneylenders as well as from sudden risks from price volatility. It is therefore, very surprising to see that this is being presented by the government as a "farmer friendly budget". Either the Government has been misled by its own propaganda or it cynically believes that it does not matter how farmers actually fare, as long as they can be convinced that the government cares about them. But how can one say this if he has a read a book entitled "A view from the Outside" In this book, in the very first chapter, the writer has stated, "notwithstanding input subsidies and minimum support prices, India's farmers bear the burden of a negative subsidy. India's agricultural producers are actually subsidizing consumers. The anomalous situation is because of our attitude to food prices—we pay our farmers ridiculously low prices for their produce. The Japanese zealously protect the interest of the 2 per cent of their population engaged in agriculture look at the prices we pay our farmers. At the end of a normal year, the farmer finds himself, economically, in the same position as he was at the beginning—poor and struggling. "While concluding the chapter, the writer has stated that "the key to removal of rural poverty is agricultural prices". Wouldn't you like to know who that writer is? He is our Finance Minister. This article was published on August 9, 2002 in Indian Express. After six years, has his perception changed? If not, what steps he has taken for mitigating the distress of the farmers? He has not said a word on the need to raise prices of agricultural commodities in his budget speech. This silence is ominous. It indicates that the Finance Minister is interested in keeping farm prices on the lower side. In consequence, the gains made by farmers from write off loans will be small and soon forgotten while loss incurred by them from low prices will be large and perpetual.

As food price inflation has already emerged as a major area of concern and as global prices of essential foodgrains are rising, domestic procurement prices must also rise accordingly. As Government is the procurer of food grain for public distribution system and other uses like mid-day-meal scheme. Therefore, there should be a rise in food subsidy to ensure adequate procurement and prevent basic food prices from going up too much for retail consumers. However, the allocation for food subsidy shows hardly any increase. It was Rs.31,546 crores in 2007-08 and for 2008-09 the proposed outlay is Rs.32,667 crore. This is even less than the government's own inflation projections for the coming fiscal which means there will be a decline in real terms. A pathetically small amount of Rs.48 crores is all that is allocated for strengthening and expanding the PDS System.

Food prices inflation has already emerged as a major area of concern, and it is going to get worse in the near future. Global prices of essential food grains are rising and domestic procurement prices must also rise accordingly. But that is not the case.

The National Rural Health Mission which is said to provide quality health care is of little help. It runs on the underpaid labour of women, ASHAs who receive at least Rs.800 per month. The total spending on NRHM is Rs. 11000 crores and this spending will barely keep pace with inflation.

In NCMP, it was promised to bring education spending to 6% of GDP. This promise was certainly not kept last year. The Economic Survey Report showed that it was less than 3 per cent. But in the current year the allocations suggest that it will remain in this region which is less than the NDA Government spent as a share of GDP. What is most shocking is the reduced commitment to elementary education. Allocation to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan have actually fallen, as the Government moves to pass more of the burden to state governments. This makes a mockery of the government's commitment to ensuring the right to education.

Though there is welcome increase in budgetary allocations for secondary and higher education, Orissa does not figure at all in the scheme of things, especially establishing IITs, and IIMs. Even setting up of AIIMS like institute has been forgotten even after repeated assurances.

Finance Minister cannot claim that there is shortage of fiscal resources to provide for these crucial areas of

[Shri B. Mahtab]

spending. His own Budget estimates project an increase in revenue receipts of 17.5 percent while total spending is to increase by less than 6 per cent. It is often said here that the tax revenue is increasing. This year the tax revenue has gone up to GDP growth is 3.3% whereas deficit is still there. Is it a good thing? Are a high fiscal deficit and increased government spending a prerequisite for inclusive growth? The fact remains that half of our upper middle class, especially the skilled categories, is raising its income by a minimum of 25%. This part is good. But on the other side, the unorganized sector, the wages are not increasing. So there is a real sense of disparity. If this means no wage growth for the poor, no health, no housing, no education, it results in a lot of bad inequalities. So, a lot of this 301 million people is dependent on the government for education, health services, employment schemes. But the question is, are they getting all this despite the higher allocation? The answer is no. Our public delivery system has become worse. The real challenge for India is to hold people responsible for non-delivery. Another problem is the funds allocated are more schematic in nature. In many a cases, State Governments are not in a position to give necessary financial support nor are they prepared to take the programme and implement it. Why does the Centre, thrust certain programmes and schemes on the State? Why don't you provide lumpsum money and allow the State to implement or execute their programme?

In this Budget, we see gender budgeting. We also find number of packages. Packages for spice, coffee, tea, etc. package for Tamil Nadu to set up a desalination plant etc. We also find community budgeting, with communal overtones. But do we find equitable distribution of wealth? Do we find under developed areas get better attention. No Orissa, which is under-developed in many aspect has not been provided with any package, as such. The subsidies that are provided through fertilizers goes to the rich farmers and states which utilize more quantity of fertilizer. Orissa's use of fertilizer, is meager. States like Orissa lose out on that front too. While at the all India level, the share of population living below the poverty line is 27.5 % Several states have much larger proportion of poor people. Orissa has around 46% followed by Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand all above 40% Even Madhya Pradesh has 38% BPL population. But states like Punjab, Haryana, Kerala has below 10%. But where are the investments being made? Not in Orissa, Chhattisgarh or Jharkhand. For whom the special packages been given? Not for these underdeveloped states. This type of

budgetary allocation has given rise to inequality. Poor and underdeveloped states are becoming poorer and the developed states are becoming rich. This is of grave concern.

Before I conclude, I would like to draw the attention of this government about the proposed withdrawal of tax holiday to new refineries announced in the Budget. This move will reduce the profitability of Indian Oil Corporation's new refinery being planned at Paradip in Orissa which was to come up with an estimated investment of Rs.24 thousand crore. I was informed that the end of tax breaks may cost upto Rs. Five thousand crore to the company. The Budget has proposed to end the seven year income tax holiday for refineries that start operations after April 2009. This proposal would affect all new refineries except of Reliance Petroleum Ltd. It is not Indian Oil alone, ONGC is going to be affected which has put up a plant at Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh and is doubling its Mangalore refinery. Whom is this proposal going to benefit?

This Budget is a disappointment as far as the proposed spending on basic conditions of life and human development are concerned. This budget is not for equitable distribution of wealth; this budget is not for sustainable development. Rather prices of food is rising alarmingly and poor are becoming more poor day by day, the number of rich is growing though.

PROF. M. RAMADASS (Pondicherry): On behalf of my party, I rise to support the Budget for the year 2008-2009. The hon. Finance Minister deserves our appreciation for presenting a people-friendly, farmer-friendly, industry-friendly and growth-oriented Budget. As you know, this is the 5th Budget of the hon. Finance Minister as well as of the UPA Government and in my considered view, this is the finest of all the Budgets, the most productive of all the Budget that this Government has presented to the country. Some hon. Members were finding fault with the Government for not eradicating poverty, not annihilating unemployment and not reducing inequalities in this country. These are all age-old problems. These cannot be tackled by a Budget. A Budget is not a ten-year perspective plan wherein you can include all schemes.

Now, we must understand the context in which the Budget has been prepared. What are its connotations and implications? Simply stated, a Budget is only an annual financial statement anticipating the total revenues of the Government and the total expenditure. Of course,

by using the revenue and expenditure instruments, the Government can try to achieve its goals: it can try to solve the existing problems in the country and also carry forward the process of growth that has been achieved so far. A Budget has to be implemented in a number of parameter. We have to look at the parameters and then judge the Budget. Looked at from all these angles, I would say that the Union Budget is a first-rate Budget. I would give, as a Professor of Economics, 75 per cent marks for this Budget. It satisfies the parameters of tax reforms, fiscal discipline, expenditure controls, macro equilibrium, efficiency, equity, growth and social justice. Among other things, the most salient aspect of this Budget is that it carries the mandate given in the National Common Minimum Programme. That has been translated into reality in this Budget and it has not strayed away from the path that has been chartered by the Common Minimum Programme and all the expenditure proposals and the tax proposals are within the ambit of the Programme. That means that the Budget shows how proficient it is, how professional it is. It has to be looked at from that angle. Secondly, this is the Budget of the second year of the 11th Five Year Plan. Naturally, the Budget has to carry forward all the plans and schemes that have been given in the 11th Plan and it has to subserve the goals of not only growth but also inclusive growth.

Now, in the second year of the Plan, the Budget has to make provision for the gross budgetary resources. The Planning Commission itself has said that during the second year of the Plan the Government will have to make a gross budgetary support of Rs. 2,28,725 crore. But the hon. Finance Minister has exceeded that assumed amount and he has provided Rs. 2,43,386 crore which is more by Rs. 14,661 crore and which is more by Rs. 38,286 crore over the allocation in 2007-08. Besides, he has assured that all the ongoing programmes will find sufficient funding. I think with this magnanimous funding of the Plan Schemes, we will be able to achieve the double digit growth in this country maybe in a year or two.

Sir, only growth can relieve India from the clutches of poverty and unemployment. No magic remedies are available except that we have to promote sustained growth in agriculture, sustained growth in industry and sustained growth in infrastructure or service sector. Without that it is not possible and that would be possible only with generous funding which is achieved by the Finance Minister. What else can you expect for promoting growth? So, in that aspect also, I appreciate the Finance Minister.

Thirdly, this Government in general and the Finance Minister in particular is very accountable in his budgetary exercise. He not only insists that outlays are important, but more important than outlays are the outcomes. That means, every rupee, which is spent by the Government, should result in positive outcome towards certain important goals. Now, in this respect, perhaps this is the only Finance Minister who has presented an Outcome Budget along with the General Budget every year. Can any Member of the Opposition in the NDA or the Left friends show, in any of the States which is ruled by them or in any of the previous Government which they have supported, this kind of an Outcome Budget? He is accountable to Parliament. That means, the money is not simply frittered away on unproductive schemes, but all outcomes are given by the Government.

In the Budget Speech itself, the hon. Finance Minister said how accountable the Government is. While speaking about Bharat Nirman, the hon. Finance Minister says that on each day of the year 290 habitations are provided with drinking water, 17 habitations are connected with an all weather road, 52 villages are provided with telephones, 42 villages are electrified and 4,113 rural houses are completed. Which Finance Minister in this country has provided this kind of a balance-sheet of the budgetary process? It has to be appreciated. Let us not make a political gain sitting here or sitting there. We will have to appreciate the good things that have been done by the UPA Government.

Fourthly, this Government is a most responsive Government. Perhaps, among all the Central Governments, this Government is living with the people, nearer to the people, understanding their problems, understanding their requirements and is responding to the needs of the people. The loan waiver scheme about which much has been said is a classic example of how this Government responds to the dire needs of our farmers who have been indebted from various sources and that is one example of how the Government is performing.

Sir, the Union Finance Minister has increased the capital formation in agriculture from 10.2 per cent of GDP to 12.5 per cent of GDP. Why is this done? This is just to create infrastructure in the agriculture sector. Without capital formation, without creating infrastructure, you cannot maintain even 2 per cent growth rate in agriculture. It is not by subsidies, it is not by doles, it is not by concessions that you can promote agricultural growth in

[Prof. M. Ramadass]

this country. You have to provide for permanent palliatives and those permanent palliatives can come only through capital formation. This has been done and this is in response to the requirements of the people. The issue of minorities, the issue of health development, the issue of education, all these things are responding to the needs of the people. Therefore, this Budget is responsive in its approach.

Sir, another commendable initiative of the Finance Minister is that he has fulfilled the commitment that he had given to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act of 2003.

At the time of launching this Fiscal Finance Act, the Government has committed that the fiscal deficit will be reduced to this extent, the revenue deficit will be reduced to this extent and this Finance Minister, through his credit, I must say, has reduced the fiscal deficit from 4.5 per cent of GDP in 2003-04 to 3.1 per cent of GDP in 2007-08 and this year, it is going to be 2.5 per cent of GDP. This is a remarkable achievement which I think, in many of the countries in the world any Finance Minister could have done.

Those who have studied fiscal study, those who have studied budget making would definitely endorse my view that this is a remarkable achievement. On the revenue deficit side, the hon. Finance Minister has reduced it from 3.6 per cent to 1.4 per cent and now it is about one per cent and it is likely to be 0.5 per cent in the near future. These are all commendable initiatives which no one can ignore in evaluating the Budget of the Government.

Sir, much has been said about inflation. It is true that inflation hurts the poor, hampers economic growth and badly distributes income and misallocates resources. There is no doubt about it. But we must take a holistic view of how inflation is arising and who is responsible. No particular Government is responsible. I should say, sometimes, nature induced inflation is there. Internationally imported inflation is there, physical constraints are there and too much of money chasing to a few goods are there and Government's inappropriateness and inadequacies of policies are also important. But it is totally uncharitable to corner a Government for rise in the prices.

Rising prices affect me, you and everybody in the country. There is no doubt about it. But this Government has never failed on the front of reducing the price rise.

That is our contention. If he had wanted, he could have kept the customs duty and the excise duty untouched. But what would have happened to the cascading effect on the inflation. But realising the need for reducing the prices, he has reduced the customs duty on many items and the excise duty on many items which will have a sobering effect, a soothing effect on moderating the inflationary forces. We hope that with the increasing production and productivity in the next two years, we will be able to achieve reasonable price stability and we must safeguard the interest.

Public Distribution System is an important element in reducing the prices. Here also, he has found a new innovation in terms of smart cards and he says that he has found two Chief Ministers, one from Haryana and another from Chandigarh. I would only appeal to him that he can find a friend in the Chief Minister of UT of Puducherry also for using smart cards and we hope that targeting of subsidies and giving subsidies to the people will be taken care. So, I think, in one or two States, they are following the system of food stamps where the family ration card system is there. We can improve the system and try, as in the case of Tamil Nadu, to give more commodities, more articles through the Public Distribution System and we will be able to do that.

Another remarkable achievement to the Budget is, the Government has, I think, understood that the manpower of this country is the greatest asset. We are not only second to China in terms of population, but we have one more advantage which China does not have. That is, about 40 per cent to 45 per cent of the people in the country today are in the younger age group of 18 to 35 years and this is a remarkable asset which we call as the population dividend and by using this power, we can bring greater growth in the country.

But what is needed is that we will have to upgrade the skills of the people and naturally, realising this imperative need, the hon. Finance Minister has introduced what is called the Skill Development Mission for which he is going to set up a non-profit organisation for which he is planning to garner about Rs.15,000 crore. Out of that Rs.2,500 crore will be provided for this situation. It is a good initiative.

At the same time, I would like to remind the hon. Finance Minister that the education system today and the manpower planning in the country today are not properly correlated. We are creating a paradoxical situation

where thousands and thousands of graduates, post-graduates and Ph.Ds. are coming up.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude now.

PROF. M. RAMADASS: On the other hand, we find a large number of sectors crying for skilled manpower. Therefore, we have to bridge this gap between the demand for manpower and supply of manpower. I would urge upon the hon. Finance Minister to develop a manpower planning system wherein you will be able to deliver this problem.

In Pondicherry, we have introduced a system called 'community colleges' which produces short-term courses and medium-term courses which produce the manpower required for the community. They immediately get a job. The American community college system that has been introduced in Puducherry is now doing excellently well. I would request the hon. Finance Minister to introduce this system, at least one community college, in each district in the country.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Kindly conclude. You have taken more than 15 minutes.

PROF. M. RAMADASS: Sir, I will take only two minutes. Pondicherry University, which is a Central University, was established in 1985. It is 23 years old. That institution has been suffering for want of greater funds for creating infrastructure for Pondicherry University. Now that the hon. Finance Minister upgraded the institutions to national importance and to international levels, I would request him to pay attention. The University has submitted a proposal for Rs. 195 crore. That may be accepted.

Karaikkal is a backward region. The backward regions grant may be given to it. What is more important is that we should be able to find out a proper delivery mechanism of all the schemes that we are implementing. Without a proper delivery system, without bringing the Panchayati Raj Institutions to the fore, it may be difficult for us to carry forward all the bigger schemes that we have introduced and we should be able to do it. At the State level also, Sir, we should be able to bring more of coordination. We should also remember that there are more inequalities developing in the country.

Finally, perhaps this is my final plea to the hon. Finance Minister – Pondicherry should be upgraded into a 'B' grade city.

[*Translation*]

*SHRIMATI SUSHILA KERKETTA (Khunti): Sir, the announcements made in the Budget presented by the Finance Minister, hon'ble P. Chidambaram, is a bold step and appreciable.

On the pattern of Congress Ka Hath Aam Aadami Ke Sath many provisions regarding relief, concession and improvement in standard of living of common man have been made in this Budget and this is an appreciable step.

To promote agriculture sector, loans of small and middle level farmers totaling 60 thousand crore rupees were waived off. This would benefit to 4 thousand crore farmers and incidents of farmer's suicide would stop. And by making provisions in the budget to continue subsidy on food and also by streamlining loan distribution, the Finance Minister has taken a bold step that is appreciable.

An announcement for enhancing budget of the Ministry of Minority Affairs from Rs. 500 crore to Rs. 1000 crore to implement the recommendations of Sachchar Committee would be helpful in improving economic, social and educational conditions of the minorities.

By restructuring the present income tax structure, concession in income Tax has been provided to all sections of the salaried class including the women and the senior citizens which has been appreciated by these people.

The provisions for establishing a National Institute for the welfare of senior citizens, granting of an amount of Rs. 644 crore for agriculture insurance scheme, doubling the loan to agriculture sector, increasing the grant under Indira Aawas Yojana from Rs. 25000 to 35000, increasing salary of Aanganwadi workers are the main achievements of the budget and this will enhance facilities and create opportunities for common man, improving his standard of living.

Excise duty has been made reasonable. It would benefit consumers of the middle and lower classes. This will improve their standard of living and they would be able to buy consumer goods like two-wheeler, three-wheeler, fridge, disk T.V. and small car and fulfill their dreams.

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Smt. Sushila Kerketta]

In brief, this budget presented by Chidambaram ji is a budget, which is appreciable, public welfare oriented and capable of fulfilling expectations of the common man.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, after a long gap time, a Finance Minister has rationalized the tax proposals. The Finance Minister deserves thanks for providing relief to all categories of tax payers by changing the income tax slabs. But, before the passage of the finance bill, we would have the report of the sixth Central Pay Commission before us. I hope that all the employees in the country would come under the slab of Rs. one lakh and fifty thousand. We can't say that they will not have to pay tax. However, efforts have been made to raise the exemption limit. The proposals for raising the tax slabs for women and elderly people are justified and it is a welcome step. In the railways, the elderly people of 60 years age get concession and other facilities. But, in case of income tax, the persons who have attained the age of 65 years fall within the definition of senior citizen. I think that it is not a practical definition. The Finance Minister should think about reducing the limit for this purpose. The rates of excise and custom duty are also rational. But, when the Government is too much concerned about the growth in agriculture sector and think that fixed income and the pace of growth cannot speed up in the absence of growth in the agriculture sector in the country, then all agricultural implements and inputs should be exempted from the excise duty.

Secondly, the Government have been repeatedly saying that the economic growth of our country would enter into double-digit. If we want to ensure double-digit growth rate then we will have to prepare a strategy to increase the pace of growth in agriculture to four per cent per annum. If the Government is waiving off the loan of the farmers with the above intention then, I think that it is the need of the hour. In 1990, the Government waived off the loans of the farmers. The people who are praising the Government for waiving off the loans of farmers, the same people had started shouting at that time when the loans were waived off saying that the banking system of the country will collapse by such waiver. It was stated to be a foolish step taken in 1990 will become an honest and prudent one in the year 2008. There is no rationale in this point.

The other thing I would like to say that the Government should take initiatives to find out a solution to the problems faced by farmers. According to the report

of the Radhakrishnan Committee per capita indebtedness among farmers in the country has been rupees one lakh twenty five thousands. When on an average one farmer owes a loan of Rs. one lakh twenty five thousand, then how will we waive off the loan of all the farmers with an amount of Rs. fifty thousand crore. I fail to understand it. It is also mentioned in the report that on an average every farmer family in the country owes a loans of Rs. twenty five thousand. In the budget, it is proposed that loan of Rs. fifty thousand crore of 4 crore farmers would be waived. One can think about the average loan per farmer. If every family owes a loan of Rs. 25 thousand and the Government waive off loan amounting to Rs. 12-13 thousand, how we can claim that we have waived off indebtedness the entire loan of the farmer.

Thirdly he has talked about indebtedness and loans taken by the farmers in the country. The farmers living in north India have taken minimum loan since the banks do not have branches in the villages. Alongwith it, the banks were reluctant to provide loans to the farmers and open their branches in the villages. In Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh out of 100 farmer families 22, 33 and 45 families respectively are burdened with bank loans. But, on the other in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra 92% 94% and 88% families respectively have taken loan. We have analysed that the farmers of the so called prosperous states, Where diversified agriculture is done took loans and planted strawberry saplings. They manufactured wine, chips and beer from it. They sold these things in the market and earned huge money. They did this type of jobs also, therefore, they took loan for this purpose.

Therefore, the farmers of the so called prosperous states became indebted. Therefore, the Radhakrishnan Committee recommended for opening more and more branches of banks in the rural areas. If necessary, mobile banking system should be introduced so that the needy farmers can avail of the loan facility. The district represented by the Finance Minister of our country owed maximum loan. Therefore, the above district is included in the areas which owed maximum loan. It seems to me that there was local influence and pressure on the Finance Minister of the country for waiving off the loan. Therefore, the Government gave a slogan in a hurry that it has waived off the loan off all the farmers of the country. It will create enthusiasm.

My humble submission is that in the Hindu religion it is a beleif that the act of Charity done by one before

death rewarded in the next birth. One does not get its benefit in this birth. Therefore, the government should not think that by waiving off the loans of the farmers it will get entire votes of farmer community in the elections to be held in the next two-three months. They should not live any illusion in this regard. Instead the Government should humbly make efforts to find out the solution of the basic problems of farmers of the country. The problem is that the cost of agriculture inputs has been increasing constantly. The Government has waived off the loan of Rs. fifty thousand crore but on the other hand Rs. fifty two thousand crore are being spent to provide subsidy on fertilizers every year. The industrialists and the factory owners are enjoying the benefit of subsidy amounting to Rs. fifty thousand crore by this or that way. The farmers are not getting the benefit of subsidy. Therefore, I request that the Government should formulate a programme to provide direct benefit of subsidy of Rs. fifty two thousand crore to the farmers. I think the farmers would get some relief.

Secondly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, particularly, in your state, per hectare maximum yield was recorded in the year 1967, 1968 or 1969. The State of Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh and the agriculture Universities of Karnal, Pant Nagar and Hissar were the pioneers of wheat revolution which was also named as green revolution. But, among the north Indian states, the number of indebted farmers are in Punjab today. They are not in a position to repay their loan. Their tractors are being auctioned. We daily read in the newspaper that banks are providing loan to purchase Innova car at 6 per cent rate of interest. But, the rate of interest on tractor loan is 10 percent or 11 per cent and the banks do not provide tractor loan even at this rate of interest. Therefore, I would like to say that excise duty on agricultural equipments should be abolished and its delivery system should be streamlined. As per the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission, the rate of interest on loan for purchasing agricultural equipments should be 4 percent.

Sir, the third points is that resources of irrigation are reducing in the country. As per the report of the Ground Water survey, Only 5 percent ground water is left. With the help of the above 5 percent ground water we cannot solve the irrigation problem of the farmers. 70 percent agriculture land is irrigated through government canals and tubewells. The Government should make arrangement for hundred percent irrigation of the agriculture land. We have drawn the figures pertaining to Uttar Pradesh.

The agriculture land there is irrigated by canals and tubewells. From this, 32 crore of rupees are earned as

income there but, to recover this amount, Uttar Pradesh Government spends Rs. 14 crore. I think this is not a very huge amount for such a big state and therefore there is no need to put any unnecessary pressure on farmers for recovery of this amount. My suggestion is that Government should charge nothing for irrigating from canals and tubewells. Therefore, Union Government should look into the matter and find out a solution after having dialogue with State Governments.

17.00 hrs.

When elections are held in various States, the respective State Government makes false promises to farmers that if their Government comes to power again, they will provide free of cost electricity to farmers for irrigation purpose. Why this is not done in whole of the country, inspite of the recommendations made by Swaminathan Commission in this regard. The committee, have suggested that after taking into account the cost price of farmer's produce, Government should fix minimum price adding 50 percent to the cost of production. To support their views, they have collected and submitted various datas also.

I am sorry to say that Government paid Rs. 2100 per quintal for consignment of wheat imported last time from Canada. The quantum of wheat purchased was about ten lakh tones. I know what happened last year. Union Government allowed multinational companies to go and procure wheat directly from the farmers. As a result thereof, the wheat which was to be procured by the Government @Rs. 650-700 per quintal was directly purchased by the multinational companies @Rs. 950 per quintal due to which the Central pool did not get any wheat from States like Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh etc. Consequently, a vast country like India had to import 55 lakhs tones of additional wheat on easy instalments. Had the Union Government accepted the recommendations made by Swaminathan Commission for determining the procurement price, there would have been sufficient production and no need to import wheat from outside the country. This year, Union Government have stated that they would produce one crore tonnes of paddy, 80 lakh tones of wheat and 40 lakhs tones of mustard in the country. But this is not possible unless cost of investment is brought down and procurement price for farmer's produce is stepped up because this will infuse enthusiasm among farmers and they will increase their production. If this is not done, then I think, polices of the Union Government to address the problems of our farmers will not be effective.

[Shri Mohan Singh]

When agriculture production decreases it becomes a matter of concern for us. When we give impetus to agro-sector, our industrial growth is affected. If you read today's newspapers, then you will come across news items mentioning that in one month, India's industrial production has decreased by five and a half percent. Whenever strategy to boost up agricultural sector is framed, industrial production declines and when industrial strategy is chalked out, agricultural production falls. Consequently, unemployment, inflation is rising. Therefore, we need to have a uniform policy for both, agricultural and industrial sector so that balanced growth is achieved in both the sectors. Without development of these two sectors, employment opportunities can not be created. If this is not done the number of poor and unemployed people is not going to decrease. Therefore, Union Government should follow an integrated policy in respect of both these sectors. With these words, I conclude my speech and I thank you for the opportunity you have given me to speak.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have said earlier and I am saying it again that I have a list of 100 hon'ble members who have to take part in the budget discussion. Therefore, I request all the hon'ble members to complete their submissions in five minutes.

[English]

*SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP (Rajampet): Mr. Speaker Sir, I rise to support the General Budget presented by Hon'ble Finance Minister Shri P. Chidambaram ji for 2008-09.

Sir, this time Hon'ble Minister has given more benefits to all the farmers of the country for their upliftment, further, covering all sections of the people more particularly, women and child education and health sectors, industries, irrigation etc.

Sir 80% and above are eager to note whether the Government is going to give any priority to small and marginal farmers. Sir, loans about 60,000 crores are availed by small and marginal farmers taken from the different institutions. Sir, all over the country nearly 4 crores farmers will be benefited out of the announced scheme in waiver of loan availed from the different institutions. Sir, in my State Andhra Pradesh alone, 60 lakhs farmers of small and marginal agriculture are being benefited. Keeping this in view we can expect how many farmers will be benefited all over India.

*Speech was laid on the Table.

Sir, in this regard I submit to this house that the Finance Minister has given a signal to the small and marginal farmers to avail loan facilities only from the institutions. It shows the commitment of the UPA Government coming to the rescue of the small and marginal farmers.

Sir, it was said that the farmers who have cleared the loan availed in time, should also be involved in this scheme by a method formulating by a team of members from Farmers Community, Management of the Institutions and District Authorities. They should have correct information about the loans distributing to small and marginal farmers who have cleared loans. So that UPA Government can also create confidence in the minds of farmers who are respecting the institutions and handling the institutions as per law. Sir, the human culture itself is mainly framed by the Farmers Community. The word "Indian hospitality" in History made path from the farming community.

All credit goes to UPA Chairperson Smt. Sonia Gandhi, Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Hon'ble Finance Minister Shri P. Chidambaram for supporting the values of the farmers, entrepreneurs from all sides in our country. The economy of our country moved with a higher growth plan from the year 1980 year by year. The projected economic growth is 8.7% from 2007-08. Sir per capita income and consumption will go hand in hand when we concentrate to improve the achievement in all angles.

Sir, economic development has moved considerably during the last 5 years, indicating average rate of 3.1% during 12 years period i.e., 1980-81 and 1991-92 marginally accelerated to 3.7% per annum. During next 11 years the growth in per capita income is projected from the year 2007-08 will be 7.2%. Sir, coming to the agriculture growth rate stood at 2.6% only. Incentives started by way of waiver of loans. It is an indication given by UPA government to concentrate on small and marginal farmers for their benefit and for the benefit of the nation. Sir, the Agriculture Ministry planned to reach 4% growth rate but failed to reach the target.

Now, the Agriculture Minister planned to reach food production to 235 million tons before 2011-12 keeping in view of the population growth in our country. Sir, the rate of increase between population and food production growth is very serious. Food production is 1.6% but population growth is 1.9%. If we do not control the

population growth by giving indications and incentives through medical and health sections particularly to control population in our country. Every District should have clear instructions by the Union Government in this regard. Sir, you have clearly said that GDP growth in our country is 25%, which always depends on the Agriculture. We have to club Finance Ministry, Agriculture Ministry, Water Resources Ministry and Public Distribution System. Then only the clear picture will come out whether we can reach targeted 4% growth rate in the agriculture production.

Sir, Krishi Vigyan Kendras who mainly identify not only activities of farmers, but also impart knowledge by giving the new technology.

They should also possess in every district an indicator to know the weather conditions in different areas at different times so that they can inform farmers community who mainly depend on rainfed crops well about the weather conditions from time to time. Sometimes, in unnoticed conditions, farmers normally lose their crops as they do not have proper information about weather conditions. In a period of 4 years time only they may be successful in getting expected yield. So to avoid losses in production as well as investment side Krishi Vigyan Kendras should be given all required assistance from the central government. Sir, also consider the irrigation sector to store rain-water in draught prone areas to bring the storage of water to the minimum levels at least. So minor irrigation side we have to give priority for watersheds, constructing check dams to store rain-water for future needs. So that allocation of funds for minor irrigation projects should also be increased from Rs.348 Crores to Rs. 1000 Crores achieve the targeted growth rate in farm production. With all this I conclude.

[Translation]

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA (Ujjain): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are discussing General Budget of Union Government. Hon'ble Finance Minister has taken the guidance and followed the path shown by the saint Truwalyuvar who had said:—

"Kodyai Aatri Singhol Kundi Oambal Ningum Udyanam Vandharku Oall"

Generosity in Charity, respect towards others feelings proper management and help to dalits are hallmark of good governance. Definitely this ideology is great, but

one need to be resolute enough to achieve this ideology. This has been affirmed in our scriptures also.

"Na Kamaye Rajyan Na Swarg Na Punarbhawam
Kamye Kukh Taraptanaam Praninaam Aart Nashnam"

Our ultimate goal is not to achieve new heights of success one after another. The aim of politics is to provide better administration to needy, distressed and poor people. This has been our guiding force from time to time:

"Kabira soi peer hai Jo jane par peer
Jo par peer na janeye vo be peer kafir"
Saint Ravidas had also said:

"Asisa chahoon raj mey miley saban ko Ann chhot
badon sam basey Ravidas rahe prasan"

In nutshell, I would like to say that this General Budget is for common man, but it has nothing for him, nowhere he has been taken into account in this Budget. General Budget should focus on common man and his problems should be at the centre of it but sadly he finds no place in this Budget. I know that Government have some limitations but our intentions should be pure as hon'ble Mohan Singh has just said that we have not done any undue favour to our farmers by waiving off their loan rather we have extended them the much needed help. We should not expect any thing in return for this help and if we do, then it will be the most disappointing factor. We should have a holistic view about our farmers and their problems. We should see as to how our farmers can be helped.

Ours is a country mainly dependent on agriculture. At the same time, it is faced with a lot of problems but does the Government have any solution? Therefore wherever there are problems we need to address them immediately.

Good quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticide should be made available in sufficient quantity and irrigation facility should be provided, only then agriculture will be benefited on account of this. All arrangements should be made for linking roads. However, there is no comprehensive approach towards farmers and on account of this the difficulties of farmers are increasing day by day. If we go through the reasons of suicide by farmers we find that when they were unable to repay their outstanding loans and out of remorse they commit suicide. It is a tragedy and the Government should seriously ponder over the ways to tackle this problem and protect

[Dr. Satyanarayan Jatiya]

the farmers. So the loan waiver scheme introduced recently achieved the objective partially.

If any farmer has repaid his instalment upto 31 March, 2007 then he will not be covered under the loan waiver scheme. That means honest and sincere farmers will be in loss. They will not get justice. That means those who are honest towards their duty and are sincere in repaying their loans have been deprived of this benefit. From this point of view they should also be benefited by this scheme. Then it has been stated that the Government will arbitrate for 25 per cent waiver of bank loans of big farmers however, factual position is that, not to talk of 25 percent, the banks even agree for settlement with farmers at 50 percent in respect of repayment of loans. As far the announcement of the Government in this regard is concerned, in fact it is bad debt, non performing assets and the Government want to take credit of recovery of such bad debts by adding to its achievements.

Sir, I observe previous years and there is no need to say anything but still I would like to submit something. I know that there is paucity of time, however, there is substance in the observation of a common man as well. During the previous Budget it was written that there is no relief to common man from the General Budget. Regarding the performance of the Government on economic front, earlier it was written that the Government have neither checked the price rise nor it has any concern for the common man and also for the farmers who are compelled to commit suicide on account of burden of loans. It has also not provided any relief to the individual tax payers. Over and above the hon'ble Minister of Finance, Shri P. Chidambaram could not please any section of society by his budget. Such thing was written last time. From the point of view of common man, there is no concern for them in the Budget. In view of disappointment on account of election results in Uttarakhand and Punjab and the price rise, it was expected that the Government would give some concession to the common man in the Budget, however Shri Chidambaram has confined his concerns for common man in words only. He has repeated the pervious years experience, this year as well. What is the matter that he could feel the entire experience at a time. It appears that the Government has become spell bound after making these announcements. It seems that the Government is in a festive mood and whole spectacle is beyond understanding. What does it indicate, they have sidelined the people. It is unfortunate that after the Budget was presented, price rise has created problem for people and their survival has become very difficult. They do not find any solution to this problem.

Sir, we will have to remove the difficulties cropped up due to the presentations of the Budget and to protect our people from the price rise. But the Government have not taken any measures to tackle this problem. What was the reason that after budget the prices of essential commodities for common people like sugar, flour, rice, sugar, oil tea etc. were increased. The prices of oil and sugar have increased and the survival of common people have become very difficult.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Price of sugar has increased!

[Translation]

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA: Prices of sugar and steel have increased. We are quoting our prices. If the prices have come down, then I will certainly extend my thanks for this, however, till now what has been felt is this.

Sir, dearness allowance has not been included in the pension and salaries being paid to the industrial workers. So the Government should think about the industrial workers. Merger of banks is being done. The State Bank of Indore has been merged. I would like to submit that level playing ground should be provided to all the regional banks to remain in competition. The interest of the rural and poor people should be protected. They talk about full employment, instead of providing 100 days employment, employment should be provided for all 365 days. How will they survive during remaining 265 days? This should also be a matter of concern. The Government remembers Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, women and minorities only at the time of elections and then after the elections the Government forget them. Then God knows where do the people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes go and after five years why are they remembered? This is the policy of the Government towards Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Why do the Government not take any welfare measure for them, when there is no election. There is laxity in issuing caste certificate to the scheduled castes people all over the country. The year 1950 is treated as the base year for issuing caste certificate. Caste certificate should be issued to the students belonging to scheduled castes or who so ever need it on the basis of the certificate of their parents. The gist of the entire discussion is that though the Government make many claims, however it is not going to serve the purpose of welfare of people. Only tall promises can't serve our purpose. We need only things fulfilling our basic needs.

*SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur): No Changes have been made in income tax rate for tax assessment year, 2008-09 for all the tax payers in Finance Bill, 2008 presented alongwith the General Budget 2008-09 by the hon'ble Minister of Finance Shri P. Chidambaram. For example tax exemption limit for males, females and senior citizens will be Rs. 1,10,000, Rs. 1,45,000 and Rs. 1,95,000 respectively. In addition to this secondary and higher education cess will be taken as surcharge at the rate of 1 percent of the total income tax paid. There will be no surcharge on the total income of Rs. 1 crore of the domestic companies and joint ventures.

However, a very attractive proposal has been made regarding the income for financial year 2008-09 on which taxation will be done in the assessment year 2009-10. For example tax exemption limit for all tax payers has been increased from Rs. 1,10,000 to Rs. 1,50,000. Now the new tax rates will be as follows—

Tax on the total income of Rs. 1,50,000	Nil
Tax on the total income of Rs. 1,50,001 to Rs. 3,00,000	10 percent
Tax on the total income of Rs. 3,00,001 to Rs. 5,00,000	20 percent
Tax on the total more of Rs. 5,00,000	30 percent

Tax exemption limit for a resident Indian woman tax payer below 65 years of age will be increased from Rs. 1,45,000 to Rs. 1,80,000. She will have to pay income tax at following rates:—

Tax on the total income of Rs. 1,80,000	Nil
Tax on the total income of Rs. 1,80,001 to Rs. 3,00,000	10 percent
Tax on the total income of Rs. 3,00,001 to Rs. 5,00,000	20 percent
Tax on total income of more than Rs. 5,00,000	30 percent

Tax exemption limit for a resident senior citizen, who is aged 65 years or more will be raised from Rs. 1,95,000 to Rs. 2,25,000. He will have to pay income tax at the following rates:—

Tax on the total income of Rs. 2,25,000 to	Nil
Tax on the total income of Rs. 2,25,001 to Rs. 3,00,000	10 percent

Tax on the total income of Rs. Rs. 3,00,001 to Rs. 5,00,000	20 percent
Tax on the total income of Rs. Rs. 5,00,000	30 percent

On the above income the provision of surcharge will continue and two types of education cess would be payable. No change in income tax surcharge and education cess has been made in the case of tax payer companies and firms for the financial year 2008-09 and the tax-assessment year 2009-10.

Some main points in regard to the proposed amendments in the Income Tax Act 1961 by way of Finance Bill 2008 are as under:-

1. 15 per cent income tax on short term capital gains of equity shares and some units—section 111 A and section 115 AD

If any security deal is undertaken on company's equity share or equity related funds, regarding short term gains on transferred units then 15 per cent income tax will be charged instead of 10 per cent, which will be applicable from assessment year 2009-10, related to financial year 2008-09.

2. Filing of income tax return by 30th September made compulsory for certain category of tax payers—Section 139 (I)

For a company or any tax payer for whom tax audit is compulsory or such partnership establishment for whom conducting audit is compulsory and for his partner till now 31 October was treated as last date for filing income tax return. Now this has been preceded by one month from this year itself i.e. for assessment year 2008-09, it is 30th September 2008-09 and till 30th September 2008 such statement has to be filed.

3. In case of cash payments for business expenses exceeding Rs. 20,000 in a day such expenses will not be allowed for deduction—section 40A (3)

If any tax payer makes any payments by non-crossed cheque or by Demand Draft for payment of his business expenses or makes cash payments and if the payments so made exceed Rs. 20,000 and even if he has made such payments to different parties, such expenses will not be allowed for deduction in case the total of all such payments exceeds Rs. 20,000.

4. Additional deduction on payments of medical insurance premium for parents—section 40D

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava]

If any tax payer pays health premium of his parents then he will receive additional deduction of Rs. 15000. And if any of his parents is a senior citizen i.e. 65 years or more then, deduction amount will be Rs. 20,000. This amendment is to be implemented from tax assessment year 2009-10.

5. Two more categories of investment included for tax deduction under Rs. 1,00,000 ceiling for savings made for income tax deduction purposes—section 80C

Under section 80C for investment not exceeding Rs. 1,00,000 deduction is available for post office time deposit rules and an investment under the senior citizen savings scheme Rules will also be applicable under this deduction. But if someone has withdrawn the amount before the completion of five years then the amount withdrawn in the said year will be counted for deduction purposes. This amendment on this investment will be applicable w.e.f. the financial year 2007-08.

6. Commodities transaction tax:

Under new tax related to commodities authorized under commodities exchange, if any transaction is undertaken then on the commodity the tax at the rate of 0.17 per cent to 0.125 percent on transaction option according to sale is applicable from financial year 2008-09 and implemented from tax assessment year 2009-10. This new tax will be deducted from the business income derived from such transaction.

7. Miscellaneous Amendments

1. If some income is derived from sale of plants or saplings grown in nurseries then it will be deemed as income tax free agricultural income—section 21A.
2. If any tax payer provides grant under conditions to a company for scientific research then he receives 124 percent deduction—section 35 1.11.
3. Now STT i.e. securities transaction tax amount will be counted from deductible business income— section 36.1.
4. For reverse mortgage of senior citizens no capital gain tax will be deducted—section 2.47
5. A company will not give dividend disbursement tax again on the dividend received from its subsidiary company, if it fulfills some conditions—section 154.

6. Expenditure incurred on maintenance of guest houses not to be considered under FBT. Similarly, some unchangeable electronic meal cards which can be used at some specific places are not to be counted in expenditure incurred on incurring expenditure on Sponsoring some employees as player, expenditure incurred on sponsoring sports and amount spent on crech facilities for children of employees not to be counted. From only 20 percent of the amount spent on festivals would be counted under FBT.
7. Under Section 194C, for any association of persons or body of individuals, tax to be deducted at source and it would be implemented from 1.06.2008.
8. Reforms in providing facilities like tax assessment, appeal, sending notices etc. administrative works.
9. Ending tax on cash withdrawal from banks w.e.f. 1.4.2009.

[English]

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL (Vijayawada): Thank you very much, Sir. I rise to recollect the words of Shrimati Indira Gandhi ji – we have challenges right at our door steps; we do not have to go to mountains or cross high seas; we have poverty in our villages; we have caste system in our homes; these are the mountains we need to claim, the oceans, we have to cross. These are the famous words of Shrimati Indira Gandhi ji to bring in to usher in equitable growth, equitable development and inclusive growth.

India is a complex society encompassing of different regions, different religions, different castes, different communities, different cultures, different languages. India is a vast country with diverse nature. So that is the reason we need to bring in inclusive and equitable growth throughout the length and breadth of the country. That is exactly what under able guidance of Shrimati Sonia Gandhi ji, with the direction given by our hon. Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh ji, our Finance Minister, Shri Chidambaram not only through this Budget, not only through this event this year, but year after year, every year, right from day one since the UPA Government has assumed office, we have been presenting Budgets. A Budget which is inclusive in growth, which is equitable in growth in the entire country.

Some people might say that this is an election Budget. I am sure that every year they have been saying, right from 2004, that it is an election Budget because they think that the UPA Government and the Congress leaders think only about elections. We do not consider people as voters; we do not think about elections. What we think of all is the people. We are not here to pay lip service. It is not the words that are most important. Yes the Budget might contain words, it might contain numbers but what is more important is not the words, not even the action, not even the deed, what is most important is a comprehensive and a complete solution for the people of this country, both in urban areas and in rural areas. Poverty is everywhere, in every village, every town and in most of the places. We need to eradicate that poverty. That is the reason this Government talks about *Bharat Nirman*. We are not talking about demolition of a temple; demolition of a mosque; and demolition of a church. We speak about *Bharat Nirman*, a modern India. Like Jawaharlal Nehru said, we are trying to bring back the entire economy back on tracks. What was left for us? In 1991, all of us know that this country has pledged gold and was able to get money. Then, the Congress came to power. Everyone knows how we ushered in economic growth; how we brought about a change. In the same way, when this UPA Government came into power in 2004, at that time before elections, there were slogans about 'shining'. And also before that, there was a talk about when we are going to build temple; when we are going to demolish another church. It was only about demolition or construction of place of worship. Jawaharlal Nehru said that the modern temples of India are Bhakra Nangal, Hirakud, Nagarjuna Sagar, etc. These are the ones which anybody would remember for centuries to come. These are the ones on which we need to focus upon.

That is the reason this UPA Government when it talked about *Bharat Nirman*, it is not mere a scheme, but it has come out with outlays and we are monitoring the outcome. Right from housing, irrigation potential, electrification, communications, roads – we have been monitoring all these six components with allocations. Even in this Budget, we have allocated, Rs.31,500 crores for *Bharat Nirman*. We would be coming out with the outcome Budget also. That is the reason that in this Government, whatever we do, we do it with all sincerity. All our achievements are based on sincerity. That is the reason when we spoke about agriculture, I am shocked to see the House that day, when the Finance Minister presented the Budget.

The moment the Finance Minister rose and when he was half-way through his Budget speech, he said that he is going to waive off the entire amount of Rs.60,000 crore debt of farmers in this country; the entire Opposition was shocked; it was led by TDP leader Shri Yerrannaaidu; they thought, it was a nightmare. Was it a thunderbolt? Was it a lightning? What woke them up? The Finance Minister announced loan waiver of Rs.60,000 crore; and they were all on their feet, like after a nightmare, like a child who gets up at the dead of night. They were all shocked. They did not know what to say. Later on, realization dawned upon them. Then, they sat down; they thought that it was good for the country and good for the farmers. The entire nation was watching them; there was spontaneous eruption of joy in each and every part of the country. What are we doing? Are we opposing the proposal of loan waiver announced by Finance Minister?

This Government fulfilled the people's dream; this Government does not dream, but we perform. We are not people of dreamers; we are performers. That is the reason NDA had nightmares; we do not have nightmares. We have planned everything right from the first day.

So, let us look at the allocation. What was the allocation of NDA for rural development? They have allocated Rs.19,000 crore; a year before it was Rs.18,000 crore; a year before that, it was Rs.17,000 crore; a year before, it was Rs.8,000 crore. What was our allocation? The very first year, we allocated Rs.24,000 crores; the next year, it was Rs.31,000 crore; the next year, it was Rs.41,000 crore; in this Budget, it was Rs.49,000 crore.

Take the allocation for HRD. The NDA Government allocated, in their last year of governance, Rs.9,600 crore, including the allocation to Women and Child Development sector. What did this Government do this year? We allocated, Rs. 34,500 crore without allocation for Women and Child Development sector, and including that, it goes up to Rs.41,700 crore. In every sector, there is an enhanced allocation.

Take the health sector. What was NDA's allocation? It was hardly Rs.7,000 crore. What was UPA's allocation this year? It was Rs.16,500 crore. Let us take the dream project of transport, the National Highways. How much allocation was made by NDA in the last year? It was Rs.7,500 crore. How much UPA allocated? It was Rs.17,500 crore.

[Shri L. Rajagopal]

Take the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. They allotted at their peak Rs.2,300 crore. In this year's Budget, we allocated, Rs.7,500 crore. You take any Department and any scheme. We have far exceeded the allocations made by the NDA. Even then, they have the audacity to ask, 'what we have done.' In each and every sector, we have done a lot of things.

Take for example agriculture. Right from the first day we did that; we reduced the interest rate from nine per cent to seven per cent. At that time, agriculture credit was hardly Rs.80,000 crore. Within a span of four years, we have increased the agricultural credit this year, to Rs.2,80,000 crore, an addition of Rs.2 lakh crore. That means, many farmers have come out of the private debt trap. We have brought everybody out of the private debt trap; it was Rs.2 lakh crore, much more than what they have allocated. The allocation was three times more than what they ever did.

You look at water and water resources, and the way we managed; how much did they allot for water resources? What was it for AIBP? They have allotted Rs.2,500 crore. How much this Government allotted this year? It was Rs. 20,000 crore in this Budget.

Our Finance Minister and all of us were shocked to hear other Members saying that the schemes did not percolate down to places like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, etc. We are not in governance there; we do not have Congress Governments there; we do not have UPA Governments there. If you want to see the real performance, come and see in Andhra Pradesh; see it in Haryana. You can see at those places that the agricultural credit is not at seven per cent; it has come down to five per cent. Right from the first day, it was five per cent.

Congress Government in AP has also differentiated the farming communities – uplands to the delta lands. We try to give free power – the entire electricity consumed by the small and marginal farmers is free, especially in upland and dry areas. Free power was being given for the last four years; there was no question of election year. It was not for elections; it was a promise that we were fulfilling. It is people's desires and hopes; we are bringing them into reality. That is exactly we do and perform.

Similarly take the case of education – Sarva Siksha Abhiyan is the most important thing. The moment we

talk of education we remember the small children sitting under the banyan tree and getting educated. Allocation made to SSA by the previous Government was hardly Rs.1,960 crore, the UPA Government the very first year allocated Rs.3000 crore and enhanced it immediately to Rs.4,500 crore and successively it was increased to Rs.7000 crore and Rs.11,000 crore and this year the allocation to SSA is Rs.13,100 crore. These are not just the real numbers. These have been transformed into brick and mortar and into lives of the people in every nook and corner of this country. Now you can see almost every school, in the entire five lakh villages in this country, has at least one or two concrete roof. I can see it happening in my constituency Vijayawada.

Similarly, if you look at rural development, when we came to power we had a number of SC, BC or minority areas which did not have the overhead water tank. Now, because of the allocation made by the Central Government coupled with the performance of the State Governments, we have laid the pipeline and constructed water tanks.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude now.

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: Sir, I am just giving the bare facts. The fact is that in this country we have provided the solution to the problems of the people in an effective, better and efficient manner. That is why I am saying, Sir that if at all somebody is criticizing the Budget, it is a mere formality. We could know the response of the entire nation and the Opposition the same day the Budget was presented. Every Budget has been getting the same response. I have seen Malhotra Ji criticizing and saying what has the Congress Government done.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude now. You have taken more than 13 minutes.

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: In 1947, when Nehru Ji came into power, he was the first Prime Minister who laid the seed of the growth. He started the Five Year Plan. When we were not in a position to make even a safety pin we are now able to send man into the space. That is the achievement of the successive Congress Governments. Indira Ji brought in land reforms to remove the social disorder, social inequality so that everyone has some sort of a land or the other. Similarly, Rajiv Ji brought revolution in the field of communication. As a result of that now we can talk for hours and hours at a very low cost. This mode is not only effective for individuals but also for businessmen. In all spheres, in all... *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions)...*

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: Sir, please give me one minute. I would like to conclude by recollecting the words of Indira Ji:

"Excellence does not necessarily mean doing extraordinary things. It is judged equally by doing ordinary things extraordinarily well."

[Translation]

**SHRI RATTAN SINGH AJNALA (Taran Taran): Hon'ble Deputy Speaker Sir, I am grateful to you for granting me the opportunity to speak on the General Budget 2008-09.

Sir, I was listening to the debate on the Budget with rapt attention. It has been almost sixty years since we gained our independence. And the Congress Party has presented fifty Budgets in this august House in this period. Poverty has increased by leaps and bounds during their tenure. My question to the ruling party is: 'Do you present the Budget for the welfare of the poor or the rich people?' Your policies have only led to abject poverty among masses. You claim to have provided relief to the farmers by waiving off their loans worth sixty thousand crores. Why then are the farmers still holding rallies and protests in Delhi? Why are they still on the war-path? The figure of Rs. sixty thousand is a grossly inflated figure. The fact is that you have miserably failed to provide any relief to the needy farmers. Sir, the Congress party has failed to provide succour to the farmers. They have cheated the farmers. Like the previous Budgets, this Budget is also anti-poor.

Sir, the Akali Dal-BJP combine held a farmers' rally on 26th February, 2008. It was a massive protest organized by us to get justice for the farmers. On the other hand, the Congressmen from Punjab were busy felicitating the Congress President for the loan-waiver announced in the Budget. *...(Interruptions)*

Sir, the Congressmen had arrived in Delhi on 25th February, 2008, whereas the General Budget was to be presented on 29th February, 2008. This means, these people knew the details of the Budget even before the

Budget had been presented in the Parliament.
...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please continue your speech.

[English]

**SHRI RATTAN SINGH AJNALA: Sir, loans of those people have been written off who do not repay the loans deliberately. However, those who are honest but cannot return their loans, have been kept out of the purview of the loan-waiver scheme. What an irony.

Sir, I hail from a border district. When the NDA Government was in power, the farmers whose land fell beyond the barbed-wire fence, were granted a compensation of Rs.2500/- per acre. When the UPA Government came to power, it stopped giving compensation to the farmers. Sir, the farmers living in the border areas are second to none as far as production of food-grains or facing the enemy is concerned. However, this Government has done nothing for those brave farmers.

The Hon'ble Home Minister visited the border areas of Gurdaspur recently. He told the farmers there that the Government is aware of their problems. I was present there at that time along with Hon'ble Chief Minister of Punjab Sardar Parkash Singh Badal. I requested the Home Minister to provide justice to the farmers of the border areas. He assured me that it will be taken care of in the General Budget. However, I was shocked to find that the farmers of the border areas have been totally neglected in the Budget.

Sir, during times of war or tension with the neighbouring countries, the army takes over the fields of the poor farmers of the border areas. Military exercises are conducted. Landmines are laid. However, the Government has failed to provide any compensation to the farmers in such cases also.

Sir, the UPA Government has been patting its own back on the issue of SEZs. My Comrade friends are present here. I too, had visited Nandigram. There too, the issue of SEZ was at the heart of the problem. The poor farmers were being forcibly evicted from their lands.

*Not recorded.

**Translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

[Shri Rattan Singh Ajnala]

It was an anti-poor, anti-farmer measure by the Government. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Salim, please do not disrupt the proceedings of the House. Please maintain peace in the House. Kindly address the Chair. Only what Shri Ajnala says will go on record.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RATTAN SINGH AJNALA: The Comrades are responsible for the sad incidents that took place at Nandigram. ...(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please speak on the General Budget only.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RATTAN SINGH AJNALA: Sir, the Budget is anti-poor and anti-farmer. ...(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ajnala, the time allotted to your party is over.

*SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID (Periyakulam): Hon'ble Speaker Sir, I Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak a few words in this Well placed Budget 2008-2009 by our Hon'ble Finance Minister Shri P. Chidambaram. I rise to support this bill and thanks to the Hon'ble Finance Minister for allotting Rs.184 crores to Madurai, Bodi Broad gauge Railway line as requested by me.

Sir, Hon'ble Finance Minister has taken much care about the poor agriculturists who as the back bone of our Indian Economy by waiving their loans to the tune of Rs.60,000 crores and by raising of Anganwadi employees salary from Rs.1000/- to Rs.1500/-. Lakhs and Lakhs of poor Anganwadi families are blessing our UPA Chairman,

Hon'ble Madam Sonia Ji and our Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr Man Mohan Singh and Hon'ble Finance Minister Shri P Chidambaram. By raising the taxation limit to the Senior Citizens and the Women has been appreciated by one and all. Even for gents income upto Rs.5,00,000/- only Rs.55,000. Upto Rs.10,00,000 Only 20%. The Government has reduced many taxes on Import Duty for Computer Peripherals and other things which paves way to our country's younger generation to come up well (expertise) in the field of Computer Education. Regarding reduction of duty announced by the Hon'ble Finance Minister for printing, writing and packaging materials, excise duty on cars two wheeler and 3 wheelers, Gems & Jewellery, on specified life saving drugs cattle and poultry feeds, Sports goods, pharmaceutical sectors, refrigeration equipments, Naptha etc will bring out lot of changes and development in our economy and growth of India. People are happy from the benefits they avail from the above said products. The life style of middle income group of people will have lot of changes as the prices will come down for products like computer, television, two wheelers, cars and other essential products Which will be used in their daily day to day life.

Central Government has announced 90 minority concentrated districts in which Tamil Nadu has been neglected. In the districts like Vellore, Chennai, Tirunelveli, Tanjore, Nagapattinam and Ramnad are more muslim concentrated living districts which have been neglected. I would request our Government to include these districts. I am happy to note that Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have identified their districts. But please include the above mentioned districts where more no. of muslims are living below poverty line. Particularly in Ramnad 100% muslim living localities (small village panchayats) have not seen even proper tar roads.

We have about 700 Kms. length of costal areas from Arambakkam to Kanyakumari and from Kanyakumari to Kollachal filled up with muslims and some areas Christians. Their living conditions are very pathetic. The main reason is lack of proper education and are being ignored by the bankers even for small traders loan. On humanitarian grounds well established/financially sound group of people should come forward to help the minority muslims and Christians. Sir you are well aware that the total budget is Rs.6,58,199 crores. But sorry to say that for 15% living minorities in this country only Rs.1013.83 crores had been allotted which is a very small percentage of the total budget . During NDA regime, though they are anti minorities, the went to the extent of taking census

*English translation of the Speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

and declared muslim population as 13.5%. For this only a small percentage was allotted in the total budget of our country. But thanks for allotting nearly Rs.1014 crores. Even for this minor amount NDA leaders like Mr. Malhotra are shedding tears by saying that our government is appeasing muslims. If our Government allots 1% of the total budget proposal of Rs.6,58,199 crores—what they will do. I suppose there will be a big hue and cry by the BJP led opposition. Most of the Indian living minority muslims are still below poverty line in states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and are treated as second rated citizens. I request our government to appoint a separate vigilance and monitoring cell to look after the status of minorities well being and to implement our Hon'ble Dr Man Mohan Singh's 15 point programme of SACHAR COMMITTEE REPORT so that the minority status will improve under the auspicious guidance of Madam Sonia Ji and and Dr Man Mohan Singh Ji. The 15 point welfare plan for minorities have already been elicited response from states with substantial minority population. As West Bengal has announced that it would spend 15% of the funds provided in the financial plans of 8 departments on schemes and projects meant for minorities. The departments include panchayats, municipal affairs, urban development, women and child development. School and technical education, disaster management and finance. One of the Programme of Sachhar Committee Report says Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan or education for all programme in which they have stressed to help the minority (muslim) children in education. One of the thrust areas is to ensure availability of schools in all minority concentrated districts. During 2005-2006, 4624 primary and upper primary schools, and 31,702 education guarantee scheme (EGS) centres were sanctioned in minority concentrated districts. In 2006 — 2007, 6918 new primary and upper primary schools have been sanctioned in minority dominated districts. 32,250 EGS Centres with a total enrolment of 1,20.90 lakh children have been sanctioned for 2006-2007, Sanction has also been accorded for enrolment of 11.25 lakhs children in Alternative and Innovative Education. (AIE) during 2006-2007 in these districts.

Taking note of the fact that a large number of children, especially girls are found studying in Madarasas, the state have been advised that a EGS centre or an AIE intervention may be started as such Madarasas by the local body concerned, whereby free text books and an additional teacher if required can be provided. 4867 maktabs/madarasas have been taken up under EGS/AIE. Provision for 22 lakh children out of school through EGS/

AIE. Madarsa students should be given equal status like Sainik H S school children. Additional Madarasas / Maktbs to be supported under AIE component. Sachhar Committee's Recommendations in the sphere of education include a special focus on free and compulsory education institutionalizing the process of evaluating school text books so that they better reflect Community specific sensitivities, setting up quality government schools especially for girls in areas of muslim concentration and providing priming education in Urdu in areas where the language is widely in use. The government measures outline above show that the country is already moving in the direction pointed out by Sachhar Committee. Under the 15 point programme, the new plan wants to help the minorities by enhancing opportunities for education, ensuring equitable share in economic activities and employment. Improving the conditions of living of minorities. Prevention and control of disharmony and violence. The target groups include the eligible sections among the minorities notified under national commission of minorities' act 1992 viz. muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis. Schemes for recruitment and guarantee placement of members of the minorities with special emphasis on the police and related security services, the minorities shall be adequately represented in recruiting agencies. WAKF PROPERTIES.

Streamlining management and administration of wakf properties, assistance as required for the optimum development of wakf properties, removal encroachments on wakf properties by giving full police protection to vacate lands and buildings, encouraging and supporting the constructive programmes of the wakf boards for educational, health, cultural, commercial community and family oriented programmes. I am happy to say that I am member of JPC on Wakf Properties due to which I happen to visit certain states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and some other Northern States. In Karnataka in prime shopping area, the shop keeper who is holding the wakf property on rent is paying a very meager amount of Rs.4507- only where as the market rent of a shop with similar dimensions is Rs.25,000/-. Secondly a five star hotel in the name and style Windsor Manor with area covering 6 acres of wakf land is paying Rs. 1 lakh only. Similarly in Tamil Nadu companies like BHEL, BEL and a Gun Manufacturing company with an area of more than ten thousand acres and the present value of the land per acre is Rs. 1 crore whereas the company is not even paying the nominal fixed rent for the past 3 years. Even in prime locality like Triplicane in Chennai Wakf property worth crores of Rupees occupied by different tenants are not paying the nominal rent to the wakf board.

[Shri J.M. Aaron Rashid]

My humble request before the August House is to pass a law exclusively for minority muslim community's wakf property which will be useful either in increasing the rent as per the rent control act of the respective states or recovering the accumulated rent and wakf property and with special permission to sell the property for the betterment of minority muslim community in case of dire necessity/emergency. If such a law meant for Minority Muslim Community is passed the whole minority muslim community living all over in India and world will appreciate for the efforts taken by our UPA Government to save the Minority Muslim community. This will also help Minority Muslim Community who are in dire state/below poverty line already surveyed by Dr. Rajendra Sachhar Committee under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh Ji. The efforts taken by Dr. Rajendra Sachhar will not be futile. My prayer is that minorities should be given position in Programme Implementation Department.

Thanks to our UPA Government for granting additional funds to the tune of Rs. 60,000 crores to Maulana Azad Educational Foundation which is being used mainly for education and welfare of muslim minority community people. I would like to appreciate Hon'ble Madam Sonia Ji, Hon'ble Man Mohan Singh Ji, for increasing the limit of subsidy for upgradation of houses from Rs. 12,500 per unit to Rs. 15,000 which will improve the living style of the poor. 41.13 Lakh houses constructed up to December 2007 under India Awas Yojana, by the end of March 2008 51.77 lakhs houses will be constructed. Subsidy per unit in respect of new houses sanctioned after April 1st 2008 to be enhanced from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 35,000 in plain areas and from Rs. 27,500 to Rs. 38,500 in hill and difficult areas to reflect the higher cost of construction. As per this budget the agriculture sector will enjoy lot of benefits as the target set at Rs. 2,80,000 crores with short term crop loans to be disbursed at 7% per annum. Rs. 500 crores being allocated in 2008-2009 with a good target of covering 4 lakh hectare. Also covered in this budget irrigation water resources, soil testing, plantation, crop insurance, subsidy for fertilizers, co-operative credit structure, and insurance for women self help groups has been carefully covered and lot of funds have been allocated for the benefits of our farmers.

My humble suggestion is to give uninterrupted power supply to agriculturists which will improve their production developments will also be achieved in the Oil and Natural Gas, Coal, Information Technology, roads, industry especially textiles, handloom, micro small and medium

enterprises. Allocation of funds for Common wealth games will definitely improve the image of our country in the world. The financial sector, the capital markets, the environment especially the Tiger protection programme has been specially looked upon as the tiger is the national pride of our country and deploying of a Special Tiger Protection Force will increase the tigers in India. I also appreciate the steps taken for allocation of funds in the field of Science and Research, Cultural Relations Programmes, employment, women and child development, drinking water and sanitation, public distribution system, health and education. Now I would like to briefly place some points for the development of my Periyakulam constituency. Theni District is inhabited primarily by hilly tribes from Kodaikanal to Megamalai covering an area approximately 150 kms. bordering Kerala.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people and many varieties of spices like pepper, cardamom, cashew etc. other products like coffee, tea paddy and various varieties of fruits like grapes, chikku (Sapota) Guava and vegetables like Potato are produced in abundance. I would like to thank the Government for opening Computerised E auction Centre in Bodinaikkanur. Theni district also has many people engaged in Textile Industry, in this budget the government has enhanced outlay for establishment of integrated textile parks and technology development fund. I request the government to open purchasing centre for handloom and powerloom textiles in Aundipatti, Theni District which will be very useful for this industry and will flourish more as the weavers will get reasonable amount of money rather than they sell their items to private buyers.

Already I have requested the Government for opening Kendriya Vidyalaya Schools, Navodaya Schools and Sainik Schools as in Ooty, in Kodaikanal or Megamalai hill resort. I request the government to open Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas in the areas of Theni Districts dominated by inhabitants of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people. I request the railway authorities to provide goods booking centre at Bodinaikkanur Theni, to facilitate the Agriculturists, products like vegetable/cotton/cardamom/tea/coffee etc. and the cultivators will be benefited as they have to travel long for necessary booking of their commodities for transportation either to Coimbatore or Madurai which consumes a lot of time.

Thanks to the Government for allocating Rs.80 crores for opening of 410 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas

and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas in educationally backward areas. I would like to emphasise that some amount may also be provided for up gradation of existing schools. I would like to bring to the notice of the government that Theni District is next to Ooty as far as educational backwardness is concerned. Children have to travel from uphill to the plains roughly around 20 to 25 kms. due to which at the time of examinations they are unable to catch the buses in time to reach their schools. Due to heavy congestion in the buses and inclement weather and cancellation of buses, they reach to the examination centre late and due to this they fail in their examinations by losing a year. In this context I request and urge upon the government to open few of the above said Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas in hilly areas thickly populated by scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people.

Theni District is highly interested in Sports activities and so my humble request to the government to open Panchayat Yuva Khel Krida Abhiyan Sports Centre and a good stadium which can be used by nearby schools and colleges where they can conduct more sports events in state and national levels which will give good exposure to the children of scheduled castes and tribes through which they will develop their sports activities. Government of Tamil Nadu and District authorities are prepared to provide land and Infrastructure.

On the whole this is a budget by our Hon'ble Finance Minister which is very much appreciated by the common man, agriculturist, employees, traders, women, senior citizens and all people of other sections. With these words I conclude my speech in support of this wonderful budget presented by our Hon'ble Finance Minister Shri P. Chidambaram. I once again Thank you for the time given to me please.

[English]

DR. SUJAN CHAKRABORTY (Jadavpur): Sir, the Budget for the last year of this Government has been placed. I am thankful to the Finance Minister that at least in some issues, they have tried to relook their own policies to some extent though not enough. I am thankful to the Finance Minister that at least, after a long time, he has quoted Pandit Nehru twice. I believe that political compulsions have forced the Finance Minister in formulating his Budget this year after four years. Judgements cannot be made on this year's budget alone. It should be seen as part of the five years' Government

in which four years' budget have been the reflection of their political and economic philosophy while this year's budget has been a budget of compulsion, a compulsion for election. It is basically on the craving to be elected further and to confirm the placing of the budget next year. So, this Budget is somewhat different though it is not reflecting their political economy which they are thinking that they are continuing.

The Budget was placed on 29th of February while the loan waiving was announced but on the same day, ten such people committed suicide in Vidarbha. In the last year, 1242 farmers have committed suicide, that is, three farmers per day. *The New York Times* has said it as a suicidal plague. This is the gravity of the situation which could not be denied by the waiving that they have announced.

Why are suicides happening? What is the inherent reason for that? Loan waiver may be a good step. But will it solve the problem? Institutional loan in our country is only 22 per cent. The rest is from the money lenders. A lot of our friends talked about this issue. I do not want to go into the details. But, could it not be planned in a more realistic manner so as to reach the benefits for whom it is intended? It has not been done so.

The price rise is rampant and huge. What action has been taken in this regard? The Government is announcing duty cut and some income tax rebate. Will it be effective? The burden of steep price rise will be more than the relief given in the Budget. So, I do not believe that some tangible support or relief can be given to the people by this Budget.

Look at the health sector. I agree that through the National Rural Health Mission, some sort of attempts have been made. The National Rural Health Mission has been given some more funds. But it is a fact that if anyone is getting hospitalised in our country, he has to spend a huge amount on hospitalisation. The Government's own document is saying that 58 per cent of one's annual Budget is spent for hospitalisation.

The cost of living has increased so much whereby the middle class is increasingly deteriorating into lower middle class and lower class is increasingly turned into BPL. That is the reality. Probably, an in-depth study that should have been done, has not been in the Budget as well as in the general functioning of the Government.

[Shri Sujan Chakraborty]

The economy is achieving a growth rate of eight to nine per cent in the last few years. That is true. India is regarded as one of the up-coming countries. It is part of BRIC – Brazil, Russia, India, China. It is talked about all over the world. That is good. There is some growth. But that is only one part.

Is it being used to give stress so that the inherent strength of the country can really be developed? Probably no. The GDP of the country is huge. But 18 to 21 per cent of that is in terms of black money. There is a parallel economy. No tangible action is being taken in this regard. That is definitely a very big problem that could have been addressed in the Budget.

I believe we should have stressed on some very important issues, like education, health, R&D, science and technology, social security for workmen in the unorganised sector, etc. That is not being done.

The amount that has been allotted in terms of rupees cannot reveal what is the real allocation or how we are doing because along with GDP growth we have price rise also. Rs. 100 of today means Rs. 115 tomorrow. Since it is going to be Rs. 115 tomorrow, we cannot say everything is fine. We have to see the allocation in terms of percentage of the GDP.

For education, we should spend six per cent of our GDP if we really want to develop lower-end and higher-end education in the country. For health sector, it should be three per cent of the GDP. But, where are we heading to? Three per cent should be the minimum allocation for R&D. With such a vast pool of scientists that we have, at least three per cent of the GDP should have been allocated, whereas the allocation is only 0.8 per cent. For social security, at least five per cent is required as per the international norms, whereas the allocation is less than one per cent. So, we should look into the allocation in terms of percentage of the GDP.

The hon. Finance Minister is not present here now. I would like to raise two specific issues. One is regarding micro and small industries, the SME groups. They are the highest or the biggest employers in this country, contributing hugely to the growth of our country. Those are not being taken care of properly. While replying, I would urge upon the Government to see that this is given proper emphasis.

The hon. Finance Minister is visiting Sunderbans probably on 15th. It is a good news for me because it

is almost part of my constituency. It is a world-class place from the nature's point of view. Special attention must be given for Sunderbans. Special attention should be given for not only Sunderbans but also for the general environment, climate and nature for the country as a whole.

It is true that there are two countries within India – one is the big Bharat within a so-called shining India. These disparities are increasing every day. Yes, we are the country having the highest number of richest people of Asia. Yes, we are the country having the highest number of poor people in the world simultaneously. We are talking of symbiotic growth. We are talking of inclusive growth while the disparity is increasingly widening. It is widening to a huge extent, to an extent that will definitely cause harm to the entire country. Most interestingly, we have 55 billionaires as against the world ranking of 128. We have 5 richest Indians who have an asset of more than Rs. 5 lakh crore. It is in terms of dollars. We have 78 per cent population whose daily income is less than Rs.20. It comes to 80 crore of population having their total annual income of less than Rs.5 lakh crore. The point is that 5 richest persons in the country have an asset of more than Rs.5 lakh crores. About 80 crore people of this country are having less than Rs.5 lakh crore as annual income. What is the disparity? Where are we going to? Where are we heading to? We have 55 billionaires with an asset value of roughly Rs.15 lakh crore which is almost equivalent to our whole GDP. We have 100 people whose individual asset is more than Rs.100 crore. We have one lakh people who are termed as millionaires in the dollar terms. That is more than four crore. We have 55 lakh population having more than rupees one crore as their asset while we have 80 crore of population whose daily income or expenditure is less than Rs.20. So, this is the disparity. If this is not being addressed, if this is not seen with insight, the Budget or some sort of cosmetic changes cannot solve the problems of the country. There is nothing more to disparity. There are very rich persons, highest number of poor persons and there is highest disparity. How do you address this? We are always talking of inclusive growth, symbiotic growth. Is the condition anywhere near that? Probably, no.

To conclude, I would, in fact, say that our hon. Finance Minister has kindly agreed to quote Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru – maybe after a long time. In Bengali, it is called *Vote Baro Balai* which means election is knocking at the door. Now, Pandit ji has been referred

to. But we are moving much away from that. The philosophy of the Government is somewhat different. We are embracing the globalisation era in a negative manner. If we like to develop really while the disparity is widening, deprivation is widening, unemployment is more and what not, we have to address these serious problems. Obviously, the Government has attempted, the hon. Finance Minister has attempted some corrections in this year's Budget. I thank you for that. But it is very meagre. I would request the Government to reorient, to re-look, to re-correct not for the election compulsion but for the real inclusive growth that the country requires

[Translation]

*SHRI RAM SINGH KASWAN (Churu): Hon'ble Minister of Finance has tried to hide the truth of budget by popular announcement. This is my charge that it is an election budget and it will lead to steep increase in prices.

Loan waiving scheme of farmers worth 60 thousand crores of rupees is being widely publicized. No classification has been made regarding irrigated and unirrigated agriculture holdings in this regard. There is more unirrigated area especially in western Rajasthan. It is a common phenomena that a single farmer has forty-fifty acres of land. But there is less production due to frequent famine and lack of irrigation. Here farmers will not get anything who have two or two and half acres of land. Therefore, land holding ceiling and time limit should be removed in loan waiving scheme. Question is also being raised as to from where the fund will come. Because no financial provision has been made in the budget. There may be the reason that fiscal deficit would have been at dangerous level. How and when the Rs. 60 thousand crores of loan waiving scheme of farmers would be adjusted. Honourable Minister of Finance is saying that it would be adjusted in forthcoming three years and the tenure of present Government is only one year so the next Government will have to bear the burden. Bank officers are also saying that procedure of loan waiving scheme can take many years, whereas honourable Minister of Finance has said in his budget speech that this scheme will be implemented completely by 30th June, 2008.

The banks have outrightly refused to waive off the tractors and kisan credit card loans of farmers. Instructions should also be issued to banks for waiving there loans

of farmers. Regarding Kisan credit card it is being said that it is a continuous process.

There is a rural bank in my village Ratanpura Chandgothi in my home tehsil Rajgarh, district Churu (Rajasthan). A lot of applications are under consideration in the above bank for kisan credit card. Farmers are not being granted loan despite their repeated visits. Bank managers are avoiding them. If there is an instruction from you side, why the officers are not giving loan to them. Villagers have met me so many times in this regard but no effective action has been taken so far.

You had constituted a Farmers Commission (Kisan Ayog) under the Chairmanship of Swaminathanji, this Commission had also made recommendations wherein it had suggested to provide loan at the rate of 4 percent interest to the farmers. There is no mention about this in budget speech. Agriculture has played an important role in Indian economy. This sector has participated in a big way in creation of employment and livelihood. The contribution of agriculture in Gross Domestic Product has been deteriorating continuously and it is a matter of national concern because it was 36.4 percent in 1982-83 whereas it has come down to 18.5 percent in 2006-07. Today the situation is that the development in agriculture sector is less than non-agricultural sector.

The population is increasing while crop yield is decreasing day by day which is a matter of concern. Because of this the per capita availability of foodgrains and pulses for consumption come down.

How much wasteland has been converted into fertile agricultural land, whether the Government or Department of Rural Development has any data in this regard. Instead of increasing agricultural land, it is being reduced. Because of development of SEZ agricultural land is becoming lesser and lesser and the farmers are getting agitated and nobody is there to listen to their grievances and that's why today the situation has come when we are compelled to import wheat in the country. Indira Gandhi Canal Project (Indira Gandhi Nahar Pariyojana) was to be completed much earlier but the work on canal is still incomplete. Punjab is not releasing water to Rajasthan as per the agreement. There is agitation at different places due to scarcity of water. The State Government is in crisis. The same situation is with Sindhumukh canal here also Punjab is not releasing share of water meant for Rajasthan Sir, this is very serious situation. If Punjab releases Rajasthan's water share in toto the food crisis of country may be solved to some extent.

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Ram Singh Kaswan]

The Government have totally failed in controlling price rise. The gap between rich and poor is increasing rapidly due to wrong policies of Government and poor in getting poorer. The Government have breached the trust of common man and it deliberately let the inflation rise due to which prices of daily use items have increased from 20 to 200 percent during the last four years.

Today you reduced the prices of and cycles became dearer due to price rise of steel. The prices of steel and cement are skyrocketing. To Building a house for common man has become a dream. You have increased the amount given under Indira Awas Yojana. Today construction of these houses. Would not be possible due to price rise. No effort has been made in the Budget to check price rise.

*SHRI M. APPADURAI (Tenkasi): I would like to participate in the discussion on the Union General Budget for the year 2008-2009 presented by our Hon'ble Finance Minister and share my views.

At the outset I would like to express my thanks on my own behalf and on behalf of the people of my Tenkasi Constituency.

Certain appreciable measures in this Budget must have been announced much earlier or atleast two years back. That would have really been a way of expressing thanks to the people who have voted this Government to power. But now we may have to consider that these budgetary announcements have come when this Government is on the go and the tenure of this Government getting over.

In the announcement pertaining to agricultural loan waiver to the tune of 60,000 crore of rupees, the reference to small and marginal farmers may be reconsidered. Many of the poor farmers have not got loans from either Scheduled Banks or Nationalised Banks or even Co-operative Banks. They have taken loans from the private money lenders. That is why we witness farmers' suicide deaths. Hon'ble Finance Minister has stated that such loans would be repaid to banks in the next four years. We are not sure as to which Government would be in power at that point of time. Had this Government taken this step some two years back, we could have saved the lives of some of the poor farmers who have committed suicide.

*English translation of the speech originally laid on the Table in Tamil.

Our farmers do not get remunerative price even as a Minimum Support Price during this New Economic Policy regime. Punjab farmers are agitated that they do not get a better deal for wheat. But we pay more for the same wheat that is sought to be imported. This paradoxical error must be avoided.

This loan waiver announced in this Budget may not touch the lives of majority of our farmers and easily 69% of our farmers are not going to get the benefit out of this. There must be some relief to the farmers who have paid back all their loans even in the midst of all odds.

Our economic growth is at 8.7%. But statistics reveal that more than two thirds of our population are poor and such people get less than Rs.12/- per day. Rich people make more money now. Our millionaires are becoming billionaires and the list of billionaires club is fattening day by day. Whereas the languishing poor people are becoming poorer still. Our country is an agricultural country. Hence the need for Land Reforms looms large all the time. Even in this Budget, the Government has not spelt out the measures towards land reforms through any of the announcements by the Hon'ble Finance Minister.

In our country 76% of our labourers are in unorganized sector. A Central Act to protect and safeguard their interests is still elusive as a mirage. Hence I urge upon the Union Government to ensure social security to such a vast number of labourers in the unorganized sector. Towards this end, enough of fund must be allocated.

I would like to point out that our Finance Minister has not apportioned enough funds for Health and Human Resources Development. Sufficient enhanced fund allocation may be made because Health and Education and Training are investments to augment National Wealth.

There must be a guarded vision towards Foreign Investment and encouragement should be given to Indian ventures to set up industries in our country. Priority should be accorded with proper fund allocation to promote our own industries.

Match Industry provides livelihood to lakhs and lakhs of rural people. Hence Government must be seen as protecting the interests of workers in the Match Industry.

I urge upon the Finance Minister to issue appropriate guidelines to Banks to disburse Education Loans to needy

students in time. There must be an announcement from the Hon'ble Finance Minister in this regard. Special Economic Zones are getting priority over inland needs. Government must be vigilant over the increase in the capital flow in retail trade. This would affect the livelihood of several thousand crores of people in the country. The basic right to life and livelihood must be protected.

Economic disparity and regional imbalance and backwardness in several parts of the country has given rise to extremism which takes up its ugly head. Hence efforts must be on to stem the root causes for extremism and to wean away the gullible misguided youth. Development of those areas must be ensured. Such areas must get more of funds and economic packages to promote economic development.

I would like to request the Hon'ble Finance Minister to allocate adequate funds for Tamil Nadu in particular. With this I conclude.

[English]

DR. C. KRISHNAN (Pollachi): Sir, I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on the General Budget for the year 2008-09. I am speaking on behalf of the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam headed by Thiru Vaiko, the leader of the Tamils.

I welcome the waiver of loans for farmers who have two hectares and below that. The total amount of waiver in that case runs to Rs.50,000 crore. Another 10,000 crore was set aside for bigger farmers who'll get 25% off on their loans if they pay the remaining 75%. All agricultural loans disbursed by scheduled commercial banks, regional rural banks and cooperative credit institutions would be covered under the scheme. Under this announcement, Government estimated that around three crore small and marginal farmers and about one crore other farmers would benefit.

The tortuous history of farmers suicides and the agriculture growth rate which was 3.9 percent last year and it has come down to an estimated 2.6 percent has prompted the above Sone waiver.

This is a typical pre-election Budget, broadly a populist Budget aimed at votes. In this context of the complete waiver of loans of all small and marginal farmers of the country, Congress and UPA Government feel that they might well like to head for General Elections along with the scheduled assembly elections in states such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan

and Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Delhi, by the end of this year in order to reap the dividends of this feel - good spirit among the farming community is the question now arising in the minds of the common men of the country

Loan-waiver was welcome, but that would help only those who had taken loans from banks and cooperative institutions. These farmers were only one third of the total, and the remaining two-third who took loans from money lenders, are committing suicides. Loan-waiving decision should have been accompanied by a cut in interest rate to 4%. There was no budgetary provision for the loan waiving proposal. Besides increasing the allocation for national crop insurance, the Budget had little to indicate how to improve the yield and acreage fall in food crops, leading to a shortfall in food grains production. UPA is of the hope to imprint its pro-farmer image on the minds of three crore small and the medium farmers and another one crore farmers who could benefit from the one-time settlement scheme offered in the budget. While loans for farmers had been waived, the Government had not formulated any policy to provide remunerative prices to farmers for their produce. On the waiver of loans for farmers, this was only a one-time relief and no concrete policy had been announced for farmers so that they do not get into a debt trap again. Further it is widely believed that the banks will, be asked to float bonds to raise the resources for loan waiver, this is a populist measure and attitude by the UPA Government. It was widely believed that the banks will, be asked to float bonds to raise the resources for loan waiver. There is no plan to give relief to huge number of farmers in the clutches of moneylenders.

"The biggest casualty has been infrastructure sector where the Government did not announce a single major investment or scheme 'with a foresight to the future of farming sector.

The populist schemes in the Budget were a clear indication of early elections.

*Income tax benefit for the middle class
and salaried people*

The old slabs were:

Upto Rs. 1,10,000	Nil
Rs 1,10,001 - Rs 1,50,000	10%
Rs 1,50,001 - Rs 2,50,000	20%
Above Rs. 2,50,000	30%

..... This part of the Speech was laid on the Table.

[Dr. C. Krishnan]

The new tax slabs are:

Up to Rs 1,50,000	Nil
Rs 1,50,001 - Rs 3,00,000	10%
Rs 3,00,001 - Rs 5,00,000	20%
Above Rs 5,00,000	30%

Exemption limit for women hiked to Rs 1.8 lakh
Exemption limit for senior citizens raised to Rs 2.25 lakh
Maximum income tax benefit Rs 44,000 a year
Minimum benefit Rs 4,000. Further the Budget proposed reducing
Central sales tax from three to two per cent. Nothing
was done to contain price rise and strengthening of the
public distribution system. He did not mention even a
single major infrastructure project.

During May 2000 Thiru. Vaiko Leader MDMK at the
time Member of Parliament, had an opportunity to *have*
a discussion in (Private Members Bill) this august House
about linking of interstate rivers of the country with a fine
fore thought to build a strong Nation by providing enough
irrigation facility, electricity promotion and with sufficiently
enough drinking water facility for the country men. Such
concrete projects have not been thought of. Further
nothing to stimulate growth in manufacturing sector. Sixth
pay Commission will give its report by March end this
year. No Budgetary provisions for the huge expenditure
anticipated is mentioned and explained. It is widely
believed that the banks will, be asked to float bonds to
raise the resources for loan waiver.

By admitting 100 per cent FDI *in* retail business the
UPA Government had paved the way for ruining the
domestic retail traders. The entry of multinational and
foreign companies in retail sector will prove disastrous
for the Indian economy which is already facing a big
challenge of unemployment, and loss This is a typical
pre-election Budget, broadly a populist Budget aimed at
Votes.*

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI (Udaipur): Mr.
Chairman, Sir, I am feeling very proud to participate in
the discussions on General Budget for the year of 2008-
09 on behalf of Bhartiya Janata party. The Foundation to
make India a powerful country of the world by 2020 was
laid during the tenure of NDA Government under the
leadership of former Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari
Vajpayee. The Budget presented by a Government is a

very important policy document. This is a very important
channel to deal with challenges coming before the country
and to make optimum use of available opportunities. I
would like to draw the attention towards major challenges
being faced by our economy.

Sir, honourable Minister of Finance was sitting here
but just now he has left. There are a lot of problems of
all States across the country and I would like to
communicate these problems through this budget
statement. When our honorable Finance Minister had
presented this budget, he had said that this budget is in
the interest of farmers, women and dedicated to
employees and senior citizens.

But when we go through this budget carefully, we
find it dedicated to Sonia Gandhiji. So Finance Minister
has dedicated all the scheme to only one family and you
listen carefully and that ought to be heard carefully. The
schemes formulated in this budget have been dedicated
in the name of only one family and this has happened
not only today but always it has been the policy of the
Congress Party National resources are grossly misused
to build the image of a particular family and I would like
to draw the attention that these schemes are named in
such a manner that the misuse of national resources
through this budget becomes perceptible ...*(Interruptions)*
I am Speaking facts. One should have the patience to
hear the facts, and you people are suffering from dynastic
mindset...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not interrupt. If you want
to say something in this regard, you please speak on
your turn.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Please see, how
quickly they get agitated. You should have the patience
to listen...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please wait for your turn to
give explanation. Do not interrupt in between.

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Mr. Chairman, Sir,
We should remember those who sacrificed their lives for
the country. I would like to mention many such names.
The Finance Minister has presented a report on Economic
Survey one day before the presentation of the budget.
As per that survey report, even today there are crores of
such people who do not have sufficient income to make

their both end meet. It is unfortunate that no consideration has been given to them in this budget. You can imagine the condition of women in this country when prices are soaring and nothing has been said about it in this budget. When they go to market with their bag for purchase they find that money in their purse has finished and their bag is still empty. There is no control over soaring prices. Even after the presentation of budget, prices have risen so high that it puts a question mark how the Government is working in the interest of the common man. Government had played a foul play with the people. The prices of petrol and diesel have increased eight times. At the time of Atalji's regime, gas cylinder used to be made available within 24 hrs. but today people have to wait for more than 24 days to get a cylinder. Prices of pulses, and everything have increased...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record except the speech of Shrimati Maheshwari.

...(*Interruptions*)*

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Please have patience to hear. The way they are becoming impatient here, they can speak anything here, but they have to go before the people. When they go before the people they have to be accountable to them. They also have to go before the people, they are elected representatives of the people. Public is very agitated as at the time of formation of the Govt., an assurance was given that this Govt. would be the Govt. of Common man and it would work in the interest of Common man. But this, Government has done nothing for the common man. Today prices are soaring. Please see the prices of flour, oil and pulses, everything is increasing. It is really a sorry state of affairs. If a public representative says something before coming to power and does something else after election, then he is accountable to the people. This situation is very painful.

Soniaji is saying that this is a revolutionary budget and Congress workers are receiving phone calls to celebrate the occasion as commendable budget has been presented. One of the members has just said in his speech that rallies are being organised and the people are expressing their anguish through these rallies. In a rally organised by farmers sometime back, they expressed their grievances.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please wait for a minute. Since it is six o'clock by now and discussion on budget is to continue, so the time of the House is extended for one hour.

(*English*)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): Yes, up to 7 o'clock.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): Sir, if the time of the House is extended, may I lay my speech on the Table of the House?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes please. Those hon. Members who wish to lay their speeches on the Table of the House may do so.

(*Translation*)

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Sir, about the farmers the Hon'ble Minister said that loans outstanding against farmers amounting to Rs. 60,000 crore have been waived if they are lost in self-praises and celebrating their happiness. I would like to celebrate through a small example. Once some players were playing cricket. Meanwhile a ball came from good height and a player caught the ball. On seeing this people began to dance for taking a catch, but sometime later umpire came and said that it was a no ball and the catch had no meaning. Same is their condition. They are feeling happy by waiving of loan of Rs. 60,000 crore, but I want to say that this UPA Government is responsible for the miserable condition of the farmers and a large number of cases of suicide committed by farmers. Whether the loans waived by them relate to loans extended by the commercial or cooperative banks. What is the position in this regard? What about the loans taken by farmers from money lenders. 70-80 percent farmers have borrowed from money lenders and they are not getting the benefit of loan waiver. But they say that they have waived all loans. More than 80 percent farmers are not benefited from this loan-waiver announcement. Loan taken by the farmers having less than 2 hectares of land will be waived off but what about the farmer holding 10 hectares? I would request the Finance Minister to raise this limit. It would be better if Finance Minister increase this limit to ten Hectares. The way, the cost price is fixed, it is also very low. About the condition of farmers some Members have spoken earlier to me also ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude, time is very short.

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Sir, I know that time is short but it is a very important subject. Unless

[Smt. Kiran Maheshwari]

we pay remunerative prices to farmers we can not improve their condition.

Sir, much has been spoken about empowerment of women. The Finance Minister has said that he has made special provisions for women in the budget. If he really wants to empower women financially and want to promote home based industry or cottage industry, he must reduce the rate of interest to 4 per cent on loans granted to them, only then they can be benefited. We can not empower them by merely talking.

Sir, even the issue of women reservation is not being discussed here. It is announced only in common minimum Programme that one-third reservation will be provided to women. But it has not been discussed. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan can give good results only if the classes covered under this programme are extended from fifth and eight standard to Tenth and XIIth standard. Only then, there may be decline in the out rate. So while associating myself with the issue, I would like to say that Congress Party may be absorbed in a state of self praise about it, but common people are not happy with it. I would like to conclude with these four lines:—

Chaman udas hai, fulon ki ankhen nam hai,

Uditi hui titli mein hansi dhundhti hun,

Jahan par chhaya bhi sath chhod deti hai

Andheri Us Gali mein roshni dhundhti hun

I would like to say that all these persons belonging to Congress and Other parties which are in power may celebrate on their own but when we go out from this house on the roads, we find people having tears in their eyes. Nothing has been said about rising prices in this budget. They are so insensitive and I feel pained while mentioning it...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Prabhuji, you please start.

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: I would like to say that the Budget presented by them, should be reviewed.

*The NDA Government under the leadership of the then Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee laid the foundation of turning India into a leading super power of the world by 2020. When the NDA Government came to power India was much behind the world standards in infrastructure, means of communication, education and

health etc. They country was lagging behind in the pace of development due to bad-governance by Congress Party for a long period.

Government Budget is an important Policy document. It is a major source of information to face the challenges coming before the country and to avail of the opportunities in the finest way. What are the major challenges before our economy today?

Major Challenges before the economy

Our main challenges are to maintain the growth rate at 10%, to build a world class infrastructure, to increase agriculture production and diversification in agriculture processing, to streamline the administration and to control the population growth. The Budget simply ignores these challenges. Our Finance Minister says that the Budget is dedicated to farmers, women, service class and senior citizens. But if we take a close look, it appears to be dedicated to Soniaji only. The Finance Minister is dedicating all schemes to only one family. It is a case of serious misuse of national resources for building image of a particular family. One day before the Budget, the Finance Minister had laid the Economic Survey Report on the Table of the House.

The Survey indicates that even today crores of people in the country are unable to secure a square meal due to low income. The Budget shows no concern about them. Soniaji is citing that the Budget is a revolutionary one. Their Left allies are getting angry at it. Because their monopoly on the world revolution is being challenged. The Congress Party workers all over the country have been asked to celebrate.

I remember, once in a Cricket match when a very high scooped catch was taken, all the players started celebrating. Their celebration lasted for very long. Then the empire signalled that the ball was no ball. This Budget is like that. Bhartiya Janta Party has been warning the present Government continuously for the last 4 years in regard to the debtness of farmers, suicides due to financial crisis and decreasing productivity.

Waiver of agriculture loan

We are pleased that due to the pressure created by us through our mass awareness campaign, this Government which is against the interest of common man, had to announce the waiver of loans to farmers. But this announcement is an incomplete one. The loans of only

*This part of the speech was laid on the Table.

those farmers will be waived who have two hectares of land so a large number of farmers will be deprived of the benefit under this scheme. The condition of farmers who have 10 hectares of land in dry and semi-dry regions is also very pitiable.

This class is more prone to suicides. Determining the ceiling of agriculture land to 2 hectares has no judicious ground. This limit should be enhanced to minimum 10 hectares. The Finance Minister has not been able to explain the reason for the calculation of 60 thousand crore rupees. Now it is being said that the loan waiver amount will be around Rs. 23000 crore. No provision had been made to provide relief on non-institutional loans taken by farmers. About 75% farmers are suffering due to this type of loans.

Agricultural Productivity

The main problem being faced by farmers is non-profitability of agriculture and no growth in productivity. The Central Government has paid no attention at all to these problems. Good quality of seeds, fertilizers, adequate irrigation facility and remunerative prices for their produce only can improve the standard of life of farmers.

Budget based on communalism

On the pretext of comprehensive development, the Finance Minister has made the Budget a means of communalism and appeasement. This is one more proof of communal face of Congress doing politics in the name of Mahatma Gandhi. The Ministry of Minority Welfare is the only Ministry where allocation has been doubled by raising it cent per cent. A special scheme of Rs. 3800 crore for minority dominated districts, scholarships to the tune of Rs. 80 crore for this class, special instructions to banks for granting loans and appointments on communal grounds in para-military forces indicate a dangerous trend. Despite policy of appeasement, Congress had to come to an agreement for the division of the country. It is again repeating the same mistakes of past.

Development of Roads

As regards the development of roads the performance of Congress led Central Government has been weak and poor. In the special scheme formulated for North-East, only 30% of the allocated funds could be utilized. Rs. 10867 crore were allocated for the National Highways Development Project for the year 2007-08 but this amount

has been reduced to Rs. 8761 crore in the Revised Estimates. About 24% funds of the Budget could not be utilized. The Government accepts false appreciations by allocating funds for various schemes. But it does not pay attention to the full utilization of the allocated funds. The work of North-South and East-West corridor is lagging behind the targets. The work of Golden Quadrilateral has also not been completed yet. The target for six laning of roads was fixed for 811 kms. But contract was given for 43 km only. This is merely 5% of the target.

Price rise

The Congress Party and price rise go hand in hand. There has been unprecedented increase in prices during the 4 years of this Government. High price rise in respect of wheat flour, oil, ghee, pulses, vegetables and all commodities of common use has made it difficult for a common family to survive. Before the Budget, people were hopeful of special efforts to be made to control prices. The Prime Minister held the NDA Government responsible for all the problems being faced by farmers, labourers and common man. Whether he wants to say that his Government is so incapable and incompetent that even in 4 years, it could not resolve the mistakes made by the earlier Government. Holding others responsible for its own mistakes is the culture of Congress, But coming into power on the pretext of welfare of common man, what has this Government done in this direction?

Rural Development

Rural development has been neglected in all the five Budgets of UPA Government. There was an allocation of Rs. 15,000 crore for the employment scheme last year. This time the employment scheme has been implemented in all 600 districts in the country. But the allocation is only Rs. 16000 crore. No efforts has been made for the development of industry and alternative means of employment in rural areas.

Defence Outlay

Development of defence facilities have also been neglected. There is meagre increase in defence outlay. At present, the defence outlay is merely 15% of the gross domestic product. It is very less in comparison to our neighbouring countries. The Nuclear Deterrent Capacity and other sophisticated defence systems have been neglected by the Government. It will affect our strategic capacity. The Government is not understanding the seriousness of the issues relating to terrorism and naxalism.

[Shrimati Kiran Maheshwari]

All India Medical Sciences Management and Technology Institute

The NDA Government had announced opening of 6 new All India Institute of Medical Sciences in the country. For the last 4 years this Government has not been making any headway in this direction. Last year Rs. 150 crore were allocated for this purpose. However, it could not be utilized. This year the allocation is merely Rs. 50 crore. Similarly, sufficient funds have not been allocated for the Technology and Management Institutes announced recently.

Women Empowerment

Gender budgeting is being discussed in budget, however, for the past 3-4 years there has been no significant change in the actual position of women. The Government should provide home loans to women at 4% interest rate. Similarly, Government should provide cent percent scholarship on education free to all girl students at every level of education. Under internal interest scheme, loans up to Rs. 2 lakh at 4% interest rate should be provided to women entrepreneurs. Substantial benefits accruing to women are not shown at all in gender budgeting process. This way it has been reduced to a farce.

Education and Health

There is a huge difference between budget allocation and actual performance in education and health. The Central Government should embark upon special scheme for providing opportunity to poor students in higher education. Today higher education and quality medical facilities are beyond the reach of middle and lower middle class. The Government shows no concern for it.

Tax Proposal

Towards the fag end of its tenure the Government seems to be smug modifying the income tax rates and income slabs. It is merely a much-delayed implementation of the Kelkar Committee report appointed by the NDA Government. It should have been done in the year 2004 itself. The Government should have fixed the tax exemption limit at Rs. 2 lakh. The first income slab for senior citizens and women should have been raised to Rs. 3 lakh.

The Government has fixed the service tax relief limit up to Rs. 10 lakh. Whereas it is Rs. 1.5 crore in respect

of excise tax. Service tax exemption limit should have been, at least Rs. 50 lakh. Service tax rate should also have been at 8%.

This budget of the Government is directionless and a failure to check the price rise. This is an unsuccessful budget in solving the actual problems of farmers and common man. The Congress party may be narcissist, yet the common man is shedding tears on its plight.

I would only say that:

"Chaman Udaas Hai, Phoolon Ki Ankhen Num Hein.
Magar Udati Hui Titali Mein Hansi Dhoondhti Hoon.
Jehan Par Saya Bhi Saath Chhod Deti Hai,
Andheri Us Gali Mein Roshani Dhoondhti Hoon".

*SHRI ATMA SINGH GILL (Sirsa): Sir, I express my gratitude to you for providing me an opportunity to speak on the General budget 2008-09. Hon'ble Minister of Finance, Shri P. Chidambaram has presented a historic budget in public interest under the leadership of UPA Chief Shrimati Sonia Gandhi and hon. Prime Minister, for which I thank Shrimati Sonia Gandhiji, Shri Manmohan Singhji and the hon. Minister of Finance. People of all sections are likely to be benefited by this budget. Today, the entire country is happy with this budget and I congratulate the Government for it.

Sir, Rs. 60 thousand crore of loans outstanding against farmers have been waived off in this historic budget. It is highly commendable. For the last so many years the farmers of the country, particularly those belonging to Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab were committing suicide under the burden of debt, however, now they need not do so. Farmer who feeds the country was himself going without food, has been given relief by the Government. The farmer of the country will be happy and he will feel encouraged to produce more foodgrains.

Special attention has been paid to the poor, dalits and minority communities—additional provisions have been made for health, education and welfare schemes. Life saving drugs have been made cheaper. Special attention has been paid to taxpayers. On the whole, the hon. Minister has prepared a budget keeping every class in mind. It will facilitate development in the country alongwith bringing the poor in the mainstream.

*Speech was laid on the Table.

Sir, through you, I would like to invite the attention of the Government towards the fact that the prices of essential commodities also should not escalate. Prices of food grains, pulses and minerals should be under control so that the benefits of this budget accrue to the common people.

With these words once again I express my gratitude to you.

[English]

*SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): The General Budget 2008-09 has been applauded by the public for its pro-farmer approach. I congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister for his bold announcement of waiver of Agricultural loans to the tune of Rs. 6000 Crore. However it is a serious matter of concern that the amount needed has not been specifically provided. The statement that it will benefit 3 crore small and marginal farmers would work out to an average of Rs. 19,666/- (50,000 Crore Dividend by 3 Crores) per farmer as full waiver. But I am afraid that the loans which are in arrears for small and marginal farmers on an average would work out to a much larger amount than this; say to 2 lacks, 3 lacks and more. In that case even the declared amount for whole amount are not provided in the budget, will be totally inadequate.

As far as other farmers estimated in the budget as one crore for whom 25% of the loans are to be subsidized, also the amount will be too inadequate. So, it is doubtful whether the Ministry has done enough home work before the announcement has been actually made.

It is also a fact that farmers' loan do not exactly fall in the nomenclature of agricultural loans. They borrow for several purposes like marriage, housing, repayment of agricultural debts, hand loans etc. It is not clear as to whether all the loans of farmers are included in the budget announcement. Actually it is all these types of loans which draw them to ruthless money lenders and ultimately to suicides. It is necessary that relief be given to 'farmers' for their loans rather than strictly adhere to agricultural loans.

The farmers should be empowered to overcome the deficiencies pointed out in the Economic Survey. The Growth Rate of Agriculture has to be improved. It is necessary to provide credits to farmers at a reasonable rate of interest, say 4%.

*Speech was laid on the Table.

This should have been the thrust of the budget so that the farmers can change to modernization and eventual success by increasing productivity. It is a fact that ISRAEL and some other countries have succeeded by modernization which India should follow. Rather the Budget should have given more thrust.

It is also necessary that thrust must be given to organic farming. It is unfortunate that the budget has not given due importance and provision for encouraging organic farming.

The Finance Minister has some provision for plantations. It is a welcome step. Rubber, Coffee, Cashew, Pepper, Candaman and horticultural crops like COCONUT have been given special attention. VANILLA and ARACENUT are also facing serious crisis which should be specially considered. However price stabilization of the producers of the above crops needs attention which should have been considered. If the farmer is helped to get a proper price then the things will differently follow.

The largest public undertaking life insurance Corporation which is facing tough competition needs more attention especially in the field of insurance of crores of poor people. The issue of Development officers and LIC agents also needs to be addressed.

Kerala is a state which stands high in the field of Education. Though the Budget has specially considered Education high priority, a long standing demand of Kerala to set up IIT in the state has not been favourably considered.

It is a good step that 'Health' is also given good importance. But it is a fact that our country was not successful in dealing with some dreadful disease like Chikunguniya and several other diseases spread by filth and mosquitoes. It is time to plan and implement waste management plants in all cities towns and Panchayats. This Budget should have provided a special scheme in this regard and to provide money for the same.

It is necessary to make over tax collection machinery stronger and people friendly. Though there is good success in this regard there are miles to go in this matter.

[Translation]

*SHRI MOHAN JENA (Jaipur): Hon'ble Speaker Sir, I want to place my views regarding the General Budget 2008-2009. This Budget has been described as progressive and historic. But that not the case. I feel this

[Shri Mohan Jena]

Budget will have the following consequences:

- (i) It will result in inflation
- (ii) It is anti-development
- (iii) It is against equality
- (iv) It will widen the gap between the rich and the poor

This Budget presented by the UPA Government mentions about the so-called growth rate. Currently the growth rate is 8.7%. But this growth is not visible in the rural areas. Our economy is moving ahead in such a way that rural and urban gap will further widen. The UPA Government speaks of the growth of India but forgets the growth of 'Bharat'. India has several billionaires on the one hand while on the other, there are a large number of people who are dying of starvation, have no decent place to live, no access to healthcare, sanitation facilities or education even after six decades of independence.

We speak of terrorism, but 'hunger' in the country is even a bigger problem than terrorism.

Prices of petrol and diesel have increased substantially prior to the presentation of the Budget. Now the prices of pulses, edible oils, sugar, tea etc. all have registered an increase. Ever since the UPA Government assumed power in 2004, prices have doubled. Recently an NGO conducted a survey, which revealed that there are people in the country whose per capita consumption per day is a mere Rs.13/-. But in Orissa there are people who survive on a meagre Rs.5/- per day. This sounds unbelievable and shocking, but true.

Sir, the poor people in the country have very dismal purchasing power and hence they have no access to nutritious food. They have no money to buy woolen garments, to purchase essential medicines, to afford healthcare facilities and to educate their children. Hence the present economy and Budget are not meant for the poor.

Our forefathers and freedom fighters had dreamt of an independent India, which is self-reliant and prosperous. We have adopted economic policies like liberalization,

*English translation of the Speech originally laid on the Table in Oriya.

globalisation, and privatisation. But will they fulfill our goal?

Under the chairmanship of Baba Saheb Ambedkar the Constitution Drafting Committee had included a special section called 'Directive Principles of State Policy'. This is the direction in which we should be heading towards. But we are doing just the opposite.

We have two sets of education today one for the children of the rich and the other for the children of the poor. 'Education' figures in the Union List as well as the State List. But I believe the responsibility of the Union is much more to bring educational uniformity throughout the country. Quality education has become so expensive that it is beyond the reach of the common man. A farmer, a labourer or an ordinary villager can never even think of making his son an engineer or a doctor.

As per the descriptions of Mahabharata, Ekalavya, the tribal pupil was denied learning because of his caste. Later on when he got trained himself, Drona, the Guru, demanded his thumb as 'Gurudakshina'. In the modern era the Scheduled Caste and Tribal students are being treated the same way. Education has become such a costly commodity that the poor are left out.

For centuries these people have been deprived of education, property and power and they languish at the bottom of the societal ladder. They are free citizens but are denied quality education. The UPA Government in its Common Minimum Programme had promised that 6% of the Budget will be devoted to education. But that has not happened. The Central Government is indifferent to this issue.

The Congress led UPA Government is taking all the credit for waiver of loans to the farmers amounting Rs. 60,000 crores. Is this not the same party which is responsible for this helpless condition of farmers? Ever since independence this party has been in power for most of the time. UPA Government claims that it will benefit about four crores of small farmers. But this is absolutely wrong. The Government has not made any sincere effort to know the truth. As per the survey conducted by ICRIER about 75% farmers will not be benefited from this waiver of loans.

This survey also reveals that in our country about 35.8% farmers borrow from money-lenders, 32.4% farmers borrow from friends and relatives, 22.3% farmers from

different banks, 4.8% from co-operative societies, 1.6% from S.H.G.S. and 3.1% from different other sources. In this context how will this waiving of loans benefit them? This is only an election gimmick.

In a federal system the centre should pay attention for the equitable development of all states. In our country, the states rich in mineral and natural resources are the most underdeveloped. The centre should help those states whose resources benefit the country. The Government of Orissa has been demanding royalty for coal for a long time, but the centre is not paying heed to it. In the recent past Chief Minister of Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhey Pradesh and Rajasthan had met the Hon'ble Prime Minister and demanded for a fresh National Mineral Policy. It's a matter of concern that nothing has been done so far.

Sir, I come from a economically backward state called Orissa and the Hon'ble Finance Minister should announce a special package for Orissa.

[English]

SHRI R. PRABHU (Nilgiris): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you for calling me. I rise to support the Budget for 2008-09 as presented by the Finance Minister on February 29, 2008. In this House before I spoke, there has been a lot of praise and a lot of criticism on this Budget. It is my duty also to make my submissions on the Budget.

This Budget is in line with the traditional thinking of the Congress Party right from the days of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira ji, Rajiv ji where there has been an attempt to eradicate poverty and unemployment. This traditional thinking has been to see and uphold the thinking and the dignity of every Indian citizen.

This Budget has been prepared in the background of substantial growth rate in this country. In fact, there has been unprecedented growth right from 2004. Today, and probably the next year also, there is a total growth of 70 per cent. I have some figures but since there is paucity of time I am not quoting those figures. In short, I would like to say that in 2003-04, the GDP was Rs. 27.5 lakh crore. After this one year, it is going to be Rs. 53 lakh crore. This is a phenomenal growth rate. I do not think many countries have achieved this kind of growth rate. But what happens when there is such a phenomenal growth rate? Who is the beneficiary? This also has been addressed by this Government. There have been economic theories that when there is a high growth rate, all the citizens of the country benefit. But, firstly who

benefits? The top layer benefits. The growth is supposed to make the benefits percolate down to the layers. Since it is not happening so easily in this country because of the vast population and the vast area, so the Government has started from the bottom. That is why all these social security schemes have been announced a few years ago, and every year more and more money is being allocated to them. In this country, unfortunately, there are 30 per cent people below the poverty line. They are the people who do not have anything. Nearly 40 per cent population of this country is illiterate. They are illiterate that means there is no development at all. They do not even know what development is. So, that is why there are all these great schemes starting from National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), Bharat Nirman, National Rural Health Mission, Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Supply Scheme, Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, and various other schemes for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. The attempt is to transfer these people who are below the poverty line and living in villages from the liability side of the balance sheet to the asset side of this nation. Shri Rahul Gandhi also said this morning, when he was speaking, how important it was for us to develop these people living in villages, to develop these people who are below the poverty line so that they would have good health, good education and they get skills to work for themselves and make a living.

A lot has been said about the Rs. 60,000 crore farmer loan waiver scheme. It is a very novel scheme because we are repaying the farmers for making this country self-sufficient in food. They are striving their very best to keep growing grains to see that people are not hungry in this country. But, I would like to add one or two things. A lot of people have criticized this scheme saying that small farmers go to moneylenders; they do not go to banks. But small farmers do go to cooperative societies in villages. They go to rural banks and they also go to moneylenders. In the 1950s, if you see in Tamil Nadu, before Parliament came into existence, Shri Rajagopalachari was the Chief Minister of the then Madras State, and small farmers started taking loans from moneylenders. So, a new law was made and it is called 'Agricultural Moratorium Scheme' or something like that, and the idea is being whoever took money from moneylenders and who could not repay, moneylenders, by law, had no authority for recovery proceedings, and they could not charge anything more than a certain threshold interest. Now, schemes like this should also be dovetailed into this Rs.60,000 crore loan waiver. Like Shri Rahul Gandhi has said in the morning, productivity of the

[Shri R. Prabhu]

land which they are farming in should also be taken into account. Sir, I am sure that with the skill of the hon. Finance Minister, he could dovetail these kinds of schemes to see that this is done.... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI R. PRABHU: Please allow me for a few minutes more. I will try to conclude my speech as fast as possible.

Sir, he has said that the loan waiver should be linked with productivity if they are farming in dry-land, farming in wet land and farming in irrigated land. So, this should also be a criterion.

Sir, the other day when the hon. Prime Minister was giving the reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, he said that there was a scheme in 2004 whereby the farmers who took money from moneylenders could have a debt swap scheme with the banks, where they could take money from banks and pay back those debts. That scheme is in operation even today. But, Sir, a lot of people did not know that this loan waiver scheme is coming. So, they should be given an opportunity even today to have the debt swap scheme and loan written off.

Sir, it is not enough just to wipe off the debts of the farmers. You have to give money in their hands because they have to do farming, they have to marry off their daughters and they have so many other expenses. Sir, I would request the hon. Finance Minister to come out with a Scheme so that farmers will get loan at four per cent or three per cent from nationalized banks.

Sir, we have now talked about wiping off the NPAs of the farmers. Now, I would like to say a few words about the wiping off the NPAs of the industries. Sir, I come from a constituency called Nilgiris where a lot of tea growers are there. There are a lot of small tea growers and nearly lakhs of tea growers are there. They do not have their own factories to make tea. So, they have factories called 'Bought-leaf Factories' where these farmers give their produce to the Bought-leaf Factories and tea is manufactured. There are 180 factories like this but more than 100 factories are sick. I should say with regret that they are getting a very bad deal from the banks from whom they have taken the loan. I have given these details to the hon. Finance Minister, and I would like him to look into it.

Sir, in the other extreme, you have very big NPAs. I would like to quote one particular example. There is a particular Account, the initial drawing was about Rs. 400 crore, and it became NPA over the years and then this NPA became Rs.1,300 crore but the bank, in the last one month, has sold this Rs. 1,300 crore NPA to an Asset Reconstruction Company for Rs. 180 crore only. The name of the bank is Indian Bank and its headquarters is in Chennai. The account is MVR Export Company based in India and Singapore. Sir, I would like the hon. Finance Minister to particularly look into this transaction. There is something else I would like to say which involves every single Member of this House. When I knew about this transaction, I wrote a letter to the Chairman of the Indian Bank and he said that he would give me all the information within a week. ... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please speak on the Budget. Please conclude now.

SHRI R. PRABHU: Sir, this affects every single Member in this House. ... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: We should limit ourselves only to the Budget.

SHRI R. PRABHU: Sir, this is NPA. I am saying this because it affects every single Member in this House. Sir, I have been a Member from 1980. I get a letter from the Chairman of that Bank after the time gap of one month saying that he cannot reveal anything to me because firstly it is customer confidentiality, secondly that I did not apply under RTI Act, and thirdly there were several judicial proceedings and so that information cannot be given to me. Sir, after an Account becomes NPA, there is no question of customer confidentiality as it becomes a public document. I would request the hon. Finance Minister to please go into this personally. If a Bank Chairman is going to take refuge under customer confidentiality when it is not there to do a major scam like this, how can poor farmers go and see the bank people and get justice?

Even people like us do not get justice. Then, how do you expect a small farmer to go and have a debt swap scheme. That is why, I would request the Finance Minister to dovetail all these schemes into this loan waiver scheme.

Sir, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) ensures that in every district in

this country, one household gets employment. It is a very, very far-reaching scheme. Now, that is at the one end. At the other end, we have the traditional industries like the sugar industry, like the jute industry, like the textile industry, like the plantation industry. These are industries which employ crores of people. Now, systematically, each industry is becoming sick because of some problems, which is beyond their control. Therefore, I would request the Finance Minister to tell the Administrative Ministries that certain packages should be made for textile, for plantation, for sugar. I cannot elaborate packages because there is no time, otherwise I would.

Before, I conclude, Sir, I would like just to say that Rs. 60,000 crore to find, is no big deal with the growth in this country. I am not going to say anything to the Finance Minister, but I would like to say that everyday when we open the newspaper, we find that the Stock Market is going up and down. So, he has imposed a Transaction Tax of 0.125 per cent on transaction. If he can double that tax, he will get Rs. 15,000 crore just to fund this loan waiver scheme. And, that is probably, one of the easiest ways to do it.

[Translation]

*SHRI GANESH SINGH (Satna): I rise to oppose the budget presented by the Minister of Finance of the UPA Government.

Hon. Minister of Finance has presented a revenue deficit and fiscal deficit budget to the tune of Rs. 55,298 crore and Rs. 133,900 crore respectively.

This budget would induce inflation and price rise as was being anticipated on 29th February itself. Exactly after 4 days, the prices of essential commodities have increased by 5%.

The prices of petroleum products were increased before the budget and alongwith it prices of other commodities also increased.

- Car and liquor become cheaper, wheat flour, rice, pulses, oil, spices everything became expensive.
- The hon. Minister of Finance has made an overview of the economic scenario of the country. 8% growth rate was reported in the economy; however, nothing regarding poverty was stated in this.

- 9.6 per cent growth has been registered in the Gross Domestic Product. It is mere jugglery of figures. Whereas reality is something else.
- The hon. Minister of Finance has expressed disappointment in the agricultural sector and the growth rate is expected to remain static at 2.6%.
- According to the hon. Minister of Finance, the prices of rice and wheat have risen by 15% and 8% in the international market, resulting in the increase in the prices thereof.
- Yet it is hoped that the production of foods grains would be 219.32 million tonnes in the current year, which is not possible in any case.
- Several states of the country are falling victim to natural calamities, which are constantly hitting the country. In such a situation the production would decline instead of registering any increase.
- Agriculture loans have doubled, however, the repayment capacity of the farmers should also be taken into consideration.
- Loan waiver of Rs. 60 thousand crore has been announced but there has been discrimination with the farmers even in that. All farmers in the country are under debt burden.
- The policy of the Government is not clear, no information has been provided with regard to the actual amount of loans outstanding against farmers as on date.

Contradictory statements are being made by the Government almost everyday.

A loan repayment by the 30th of June to the Banks has been mentioned in the budget.

It seems that this announcement is targeted to garner votes and the ensuing Government in the foreseeable future will have to bear the brunt of such announcements. The Reserve Bank of India and the other banks have expressed serious reservations and the credit facilities to the farmers have been stopped from today onwards.

I would place the demand of covering the farmers owning 20 hectares of land within the ambit of waiver of loans for the farmers.

On completing 1000 days of Bharat Nirman, the Honourable Minister of Finance has stated that drinking water is being made available to as many as

[Shri Ganesh Singh]

290 settlements on daily basis. 17 settlements are being connected by roads. As many as 52 villages are being provided telephone facilities on daily basis. Power is being supplied to 42 villages on daily basis. 4113 rural houses are being constructed on daily basis.

If it is true that drinking water is being supplied to as many as 290 settlements on daily basis, then 290000 villages have potable water facilities and if metalled roads are being extended to 17 villages daily, then 17 thousand villages have been covered under rural electrification till now. Similarly, 52 villages are electrified daily 52000 villages have been covered under electrification till now.

Similarly, if 4113 houses are being constructed everyday, that means as many as 41,13000 people have been provided with accommodation.

This implies that 60 years of independence has elapsed and the preceding Governments did nothing at all. If it is true then it is none other but the Congress Party which has been in power for a very long time. So, they are to be blamed.

There are about six and a half lakh villages in our country. If it is true that the UPA Government has undertaken the execution of these works under Bharat Nirman in the time span of 1000 day, it means the earlier Governments did nothing. Today lakhs of villages do not have access to safe drinking water. There is no hospital, no roads for travel or transportation. Crores of poor are left to fend for themselves and lead a miserable life under the open sky.

It occurs to me that all these data are only the paper work and the real picture of India is quite different.

Her Excellency the President of India in her Presidential address had sent out a clear signal of vote bank politics espoused by the UPA Government by not mentioning the issue of equitable growth of all classes and all regions of the country. In her address she stated that the Government would incur expenditure to the tune of 15 per cent of its overall expenditure for minorities only. Just in view of the same the Finance Minister has made a budgetary provision of Rs. 1000 crore for the Minorities alone.

If the expenditure is to be incurred proportionate to the population, the backward classes constitute 52 per cent of the entire population of the country.

None the less, these classes have continuously been subjected to gross neglect right from the time of Independence.

Are these backward classes not entitled to avail the resources of the country? It is unfortunate that the regions and the sections that have developed are very limited, where 70 per cent of the budget is spent.

It is piquant that 70 per cent funds are allocated for the regions with 15 per cent of the population and a meagre 15 per cent is allocated for the regions covering 85 per cent population. So there is uneven growth in the country and there lies gross dissatisfaction among the people belonging to various communities.

It is the misfortune of the country that even after 60 years of the Independence, the parameter of development has not yet been determined.

H.E the President had expressed satisfaction over internal security, price-control and diplomatic relations with the neighbouring countries. However, it does not figure anywhere in the budge.

Honestly viewed, no part of the country is safe. The scene is so precarious that nothing is guaranteed. Infiltration is on.

The persons allegedly involved in Parliament attack are yet to be punished. The neighbouring country continues to occupy our territory in the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

There is no control over prices. The Finance Minister has not made any reference about several things in his budget speech.

The prices of all essential commodities have been increasing on daily basis. After 29th February, an increase of 5 per cent has been recorded in the prices of essential commodities.

The items of daily use have become so costly that poor and the middle class can hardly afford to purchase them. On the 3rd day after the budget, there has been manifold increase in the prices of flour, pulses, grocery, oil, ghee, rice and other things.

Nevertheless the Government is making statement that the growth rate is above 9 percent.

It is a fact that the rich became richer and richer. The poor became poorer and was compelled to commit suicide.

Such economic disparity is not found anywhere in the whole world as it prevails in our country.

A committee of the Central Government itself has accepted that 77 per cent of the population have to manage two square meals within the limited income of Rs. 9 to Rs. 19 only.

One fourth of the Gross Domestic product is controlled by the big capitalists and corporate Houses.

If there is actual increase in the Growth rate, then why did lakhs of farmers commit suicide?

If it is agreed that the total production of foodgrains will be 219.3 million tonnes in the year 2007-08, which will be a record in itself then why is it that the Government is procuring red wheat at the rate of rupees 1400/- per quintal which is not even fit for human consumption?

Today I can say with authority that there is no stock of Indian foodgrains in all the warehouses of the country. As things stand today wheat imported from Australia and Canada is being stored in those warehouses.

When the crops get ready. The Government do not purchase it at cheaper rates. The wheat is not purchased at the rate of rupees 800 per quintal from the farmers of country.

It was procured at the rate of rupees 1400/-per quintal from abroad. Will this policy will not largely affect the farmer's production?

That is why I maintain that the projections of record production in the year 2007-08 will prove to be a farce.

Thirdly, Hon'ble President had expressed satisfaction about our improved relations with neighbouring countries.

All our countrymen are aware of the fact that we don't have cordial relations with our neighbouring countries.

If our country accepts the conditions of the neighbouring countries, then we are good.

If we impose some conditions keeping in view our honour, dignity and self-reliance, no neighbouring country comes forward to accept these conditions.

Many countries, especially America is eyeing the market of our country as the fact remains that now our country has been the largest market of the world.

America is extending false friendship bond with our country cunningly

In the first place, it pushed the Government into grave crises by getting signature on 123 nuclear deal and now is wreaking crisis for the entire country.

Whereas the NDA and the left parties opposed this deal from time to time.

Her Excellency, the President has returned to Incredible India and has stated on record that 50 lakh foreign tourists are visiting the country.

I would like to ask that the foreign tourists visit India only to see natural, religious and cultural heritage.

Recently, Red fort was included in the list of monument of World Heritage by the UNESCO and 'Rigveda' has been recorded in the 'World-Memory' register.

If we agree that India is a unique country of cultural heritage, why are efforts being made to break Ramsetu which is the symbol of faith for crores of People.

Is there anyone who is prepared to accept that Bhagwan Ram is a myth and simply does not exist.

Has it enhanced prestige of India at the International level? If it is true, has any institution the world over ever presented a report in this regard?

American agency NASA has proved before the world by demonstrating rare pictures that it is a primitive man made bridge.

Does Constitution of India permit any Government to deride the symbols of religious faith cherished by any religion.

If not, the reasons for such heinous act committed by UPA Government. Will specific religion get preference in matters of cultural heritage. The religion which is eternal and has only one message.

'Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam Sarvjan hitay, sarv jan sukhay.'

[Shri Ganesh Singh]

I would like to ask the Hon'ble Prime Minister whether India can become incredible by insulting a religion which is based on the philosophy of welfare of the world.

Our country, India is known for critical problems emerging from time to time and various Prime Ministers have given slogans to solve these problems but problem will remain as it was. When country became independent. Pandit ji spoke in the capacity of Prime Minister that "Our country is great" but, today country is facing a lot of grave internal problems.

During his Prime Ministership, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri gave a slogan:

"Jai Jawan Jai Kisaan"

but the farmers of the country are committing suicide.

Smt. Indira Gandhi gave a slogan "Jai Jawan Jai Kisaan", but the farmers of the country are committing suicide.

Smt. Indira Gandhi gave a slogan for alleviation of poverty and providing "Roti, kapada and makan" to all. But it could not be materialized. Crores of people are plunged in grave problems.

Once Shri Rajiv Gandhi said that only 15 paise out of a rupee reach the masses at lower level and he had shown the dream to the countrymen to take them 21st century but corruption has increased faster than earlier times.

Shri Narsimha Rao had started globalisation after signing GATT agreement and as a result of that the self-reliance of the country has been eroded now our Prime Minister is busy in strengthening the economy of the country but he is unable to check the price rise, cases of suicide, poverty and unemployment. Though there has been slogans, yet the ground reality remained unchanged.

It is altogether a different issue that every individual of the country is burdened with debt since birth. Poverty is in ascending order. Even today, crores of people are compelled to spend their nights under the open sky. 77% people are unable to earn their two square meals.

Lacs of villages are deprived of basic amenities. Even today, health facilities are not made available in the rural areas at a minimum distance of 30 kms. Crores of people have been suffering from serious diseases. Even today electricity and water is not reaching the fields of the

farmers. Farmers are compelled to commit suicide for want of proper prices for their crops. Even Shri Rahul Gandhi in his recent visit to Bundelkhand of Uttar Pradesh has admitted that the statement of his father that 15 paise out of one rupee are reaching the lower level to the masses is not correct. In reality, it appears that only five paise out of one rupee reach the lower level to the masses.

If it is correct, then whether Prime Minister was not expected to announce a time bound programme to resolve all these problems in his budget speech.

However, for the first time, during the regime of NDA Government in the country Hon'ble Atal Bihari Vajpaiji had started time bound schemes like;

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

Pradhan Mantri fast track Yojna

Potable water scheme

Interlinking of rivers project

Education Mission Scheme

"Upchaar" yojana.

If the country wants to find a permanent solution of these burning problems, a time bound action plan is required to be chalked out and implemented with equitable distribution of available annual resources.

Every year allocation of funds for developmental work is increased but desired results are not coming up on the surface.

Story is like, "Puni puni chandan puni puni pani.

Those who are already benefited are getting further benefits and those who are deprived are becoming more deprived.

At last, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards one more grave problem.

Various States of the country are facing drought and famine. In my State of Madhya Pradesh, 264 tehsils in 39 districts out of total 48 districts of the state are reeling under famine situation. Crores of people are affected and grave problems relating to starvation potable water, arrangement of fodder for cattle, payment of debt have emerged before the people. Water has been provided to Satna city from Vaan Sagar which is 110 kms away. This impossible task has been becoming possible with the efforts of the Chief Minister of our State.

State Government has demanded a assistance of Rs. 24 thousand crores for these areas. In the meantime, a central study team has conducted a study in those areas.

But unfortunately, there was no mention of any special package in this regard in the budget presented by the Finance Minister on 29 February.

I demand that immediate financial assistance should be made available for relief in the said areas.

At last, I term this budget as bogus, inflationary and a fraud with the farmers and also discriminatory. This budget seems to be derailing the economy of the country from the right path.

SHRI MUNSHI RAM (Bijnor): Mr. Chairman, Sir I rise to support the budget for the year 2008-09. This budget has been termed as pro farmers. Out of Rs. 60 thousand crore debt of farmers that have been waived off the Government benefited 50 thousand crores of loan waive, will rear time small farmers. I understand that those farmers have been benefited from the loan waiver scheme whose debt was and out standing in bank account and farmers were not able to repay them. This loan amount might have been on the balance sheets of the banks. By waiving off this loan, the Government has done a good job because revenue department must have been harassing them by sending them to jail or torture them in other ways. Rs. 10,000/- crore loan amount of big farmers have been waived off. The Government propose to give 25% rebate in it and there is a condition of time limit and of payment of lump sum amount and 30th June is the time limit to waive off that debt. I understand that the number of farmers to be benefited would not be consonance with the assessment of the Government. Now, farmers don't want to engage themselves in the occupation of agriculture. On the one hand the total area of land under cultivation is decreasing while population is increasing. Our consumption is increasing and the yield is shrinking. Farmers are shying away from agriculture and the measures being explored by the Government are not working. Government should formulate a concrete policy to keep the farmers engaged in their own profession and they should get remunerative prices for their crops, whatever he produces, otherwise no one will remain in the profession. Now we are compelled to import foodgrains. It clearly shows that whatever progress we wanted to make, has not been made. But it appears to me that Government is unable to formulate a concrete policy in this regard. We have spent thousand crores of rupees on our scientists but they could not develop good quality seeds by now so that farmers could increase their production even on a

small piece of land and can get remunerative price for their produce. When a farmer sows the seeds he does not know how much produce and money for his crop he will get because it is the responsibility of the Government to fix the support price for the crops. Why will farmers do such work?

I would like to demand from the Finance Minister through you that the price of the crops of the farmers should be determined by a Committee consisting of farmers. Fixation of the price of the crop should be made before hand so that farmers can take a decision whether crop to be sown will be profitable to him or not. In this regard, I would like to quote an example. Western UP is the largest sugarcane producing area. That State enjoys second position in production of Sugar in the country. The farmers have sown sugarcane to the proportion they used to sow earlier. But this year there was no buyer for sugarcane. The Government did not care to take note of farmer plight as a result thereof. The Government have failed to make full payments of farmers dues in our area for the year 2005-06, 2006-07 and the current year 2007-08. In such a scenario, how can we think that our farmer will prosper and we shall succeed in producing foodgrains as per our requirement?

Sir, my first and foremost suggestion is that we should impress upon our scientists to produce quality seeds. They draw salaries of thousands of rupees. They should be asked wheat have they given to the Government or the country after drawing lakhs of rupees as salary in a year? The Government have spent millions of rupees to extend irrigation facilities to the fields but we should also ascertain whether the data of land irrigation are merely official figures or do they really exist on the ground after spending so much funds. Even after spending millions of rupees we have not been able to meet the irrigation requirement of the farmers' land. There are some fields where we cannot supply water for irrigation through canals on such fields water should be supplied through the tube wells. Now the farmer cannot spend two, three or four lakh rupees on tube well. Either the Government itself should install tube wells or extend them adequate grants so that they are able to install tube wells. How would they be able to survive their crops even if you installed tube wells for them and did not give them a power supply of even two hours out of 24 hours in a day?

Sir, last year we had to import wheat. I think we might have to import sugar in future if farmers slash their sugarcane production in the coming year in view of the sugarcane farmers plight. We need to consider these things seriously ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please speak up your points and wind up.

SHRI MUNSHI RAM: All right. We have allocated Rs. 32 thousand 667 crore as subsidy under the public distribution system. We have come to know from all kinds of surveys that more than 50% of funds are siphoned off into black marketing and corruption. For whom do we earmark Rs. 32 thousand 667 crore? We allocate that fund to make all facilities available to our poor people. We give them kerosene at the reduced rate of Rs. 25 per litre. Wheat which comes for Rs. 16-17 per kg. is given to them at Rs. 2 per kg. Similarly, rice costing Rs. 20 per kg. is supplied to them at Rs. 3 per kg. In this way that grant is consumed by corrupt persons. It is the responsibility of every Government to provide foodgrains to its poor citizen. Out of this subsidy if Rs. 500 per month. Rs. 6000 per year are provided to two and a half crore B.P.L. card holders, Rs. 15000 crore out of Rs. 25000 crore would be provided. I think that this subsidy would not be properly utilized if wheat of Rs. 2 per kg. is provided to them at Rs. 10 per kg and rice of Rs. 3 per kg. is provided at Rs. 12 per kg. and subsidy on kerosene is withdrawn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you have got a written speech, lay it on the table of the House.

SHRI MUNSHI RAM: In the education sector we have constructed primary schools but teachers are not available there in proportion to the students. Merely construction of buildings is not an achievement. Similarly, building have been constructed under the Rural Health Mission but there are no doctors, staff and medicines. If money is spent only on construction of buildings, the common man is not going to be benefited by the scheme. There is no mention of any scheme in the Budget for providing employment to educated unemployed.

With these words, I lay my written speech on the Table of the House.

*While supporting the Budget 2008-09, I would like to thank the hon'ble Minister of Finance on behalf of the farmers of India for waiving off loans of farmers work Rs. 60,000 crore.

The Government have made a provision of waiving off loans worth Rs. 50,000 crore in this budget. I understand that those farmers will be benefited who were unable to repay loans after borrowing the same from the Banks. The Department of Revenue might have been harassing the farmers for recovery. Such farmers who

might be unable to repay the loans and loans of such borrowers might have been continuously shown in the balance sheet as outstanding. The banks in this way would get nod of the Lok Sabha to write off such amounts from their balance sheets.

The main issue is how to retain the farmers in the agriculture profession because farmers will remain engaged in farming if it is remunerative to them. The per capita land holding is already decreasing with the growth of population. Reduction of land holding and farmer's indifference towards agriculture are not good portends for the country. In your first Budget speech a target of 4% Agricultural Gross Domestic Product was envisaged but ultimately that could not be achieved. It is evident from it that your agricultural policy has not given desired results and you have not been able to formulate a proper agricultural policy.

Though an amount of Rs. 25 thousand crore has been provided for the National Agriculture Development Scheme, yet we have not been able to make desired progress in the agricultural sector.

Consequently, we are importing food items. It means we are unable to meet even our requirements.

I believe that we can achieve good results by working on following points:—

1. First of all, research on production of quality seeds should be undertaken so that higher percentage of yield is achieved on lesser land.
 - We need to consider as to what we have achieved after spending several thousand crores on our scientists.
2. We need to increase production of organic fertilizer to make the land fertile. Chemical fertilizer is decreasing the fertility of land.
3. Means of Irrigation lakhs and crores of rupees are being spent on irrigation schemes which is very essential but apart from data we do not bother to assess how much land is being irrigated on ground. At first, ongoing projects should be completed and later new projects could be taken up so that real benefits can percolate to farmers. There is a need to install tubewells for irrigation at the places where water cannot be transported through canals.

*This part of the speech was laid on the Table.

We have set up Tube wells now the question arises as to how lands will be irrigated if we do not give power supply to the farmers. Therefore, power supply of 18 hours out of 24 hours should be provided to farmers to every day at subsidized rates to enable the farmers to irrigate their crops as per their requirements. Tube wells should be installed by the Government or this facility should be extended to maximum number of farmers on priority by providing 50% grant to them.

Farmer is not aware of price of the crop he is going to sow before its production i.e. the crop prices should be fixed before their sowing season. Representations of farmers should have a say in the price fixation. A system of immediate purchase should be put in place after harvesting because there are many crops which cannot be stored like sugarcane which starts perishing after some time and it cannot be stored.

Today, we have to import wheat. The way sugarcane growers have suffered hardship this year, I apprehend that we might have to import sugar also in future in case its yield goes down. If we do not work seriously in connection with the aforesaid matter, we will not be able to achieve our target in respect of agricultural produce.

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

It is our responsibility to make available food grain to every citizen of the country. We have made a provision of Rs. 32,667 crore for grant under this scheme. According to our all surveys, more than half of the amount is wasted in corruption under this scheme. There is a need to take care of the following points in order to percolate down the amount to the havenots for whom it is meant for in a proper way.

I am of the view that if we revise the rates of wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene and some portion of money saved is directly given to one-fourth of this country—the people living below poverty line as poverty allowance then this money saved from corruption could be utilised properly in this amount if we give Rs. 6000 per annum directly to the 2.5 crore families, there would be an expenditure of Rs. 15000 crore. Besides this, wheat which is sold at the rate of 2 & 5 rupees per kilogram and rice Rs. 3 & 6 rupees per kilogram should be sold at the rate of Rs. 10 per kilo gram and Rs. 12 per kilogram respectively. Similarly, if we withdraw subsidy from kerosene too, I think that no extra money will be needed for it and it would help the poor as well and would also put a check on black marketing and corruption.

Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan. Hon'ble Minister has proposed to spend Rs. 34,000 crore under 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' out of which Rs. 13,100 crore have been provided for spending mid-day meal. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a very urgent campaign to educate the new generation of the country, but there is a need to ensure its proper implementation. The school buildings were constructed in our rural areas for primary and junior education, but most of the money is being misused due to non-availability of teachers in proportion to the students. Therefore, it is necessary to appoint teachers in proportion to students.

HIGHER EDUCATION: Today in the name of higher education, most of the students are in pursuit of courses like medical, engineering and management. Today, the inclination of new generation towards the courses offering higher education to the students is decreasing it is necessary to pay attention to this.

NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH MISSION: is an important mission and a provision of Rs. 12050 crore has been made for it. Today, there is a need to open a health centre at the Panchayat level. Only opening of health centre will not serve the purpose but providing doctors, supporting staff and medicines is also necessary. We do construct the buildings by investing money, but the villagers are not able to take advantage of them because of non-availability of facilities. Full-fledged facilities and good doctors are not available even at district level hospitals. Hence, there is a need to pay attention to it.

UPLIFTMENT OF MINORITIES: Although, a provision of Rs. 1000 crore has been made for the development of minorities yet it is less keeping in view their pitiable condition. There is a need to increase it five times at least and it should be spent only on Muslims among the minorities. This money should not be utilized for other minorities under this head.

Hon'ble Minister, with these words, I would like to draw your attention to the educated unemployed people. There is an urgent need to give opportunity of employment to 100% educated unemployed people by associating them with any of the plan. But you have not paid any attention to it. I am of the view that there is a need to pay attention to it as well.

In the end, while supporting the budget, I once again thank the hon'ble Finance Minister.

SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH (Rajgarh): Sir, I respect the hon'ble Minister of Finance a lot. I am of the view

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that he is one of the luckiest Finance Minister of the country who is presenting the budget of the country for seventh time. Prior to this budget, he has never succumbed to political pressure while presenting the budget whether be it the Prime Minister or any party, and has expressed his own views. But it is sad that he came under political pressure while presenting this budget and that is why he has presented this kind of budget. Even than, I respect him and admire him.

Sir, since waiving off loan has been stated as central point of this Budget and most of the Members of this House have expressed their views on this point I just want to know whether the basis of waving off loan is that the small and medium farmers are committing suicide, therefore, their loan should be waived. Did these incidents of suicide start from only this year or these have been taking place for the last five to seven years. If the loans were to be waived off it would have been better if it had been done in the year 2005 itself, farmers were committing suicide at that time also. Had the waiver of loan been granted at that time, farmers' condition would have improved in these four years. It gives clear indication that such a step has been taken keeping in view the election and interest of the farmers comes thereafter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Minister of Agriculture, Sharad Pawar ji is an experienced farmer; he has made a statement about the waiver of loan. With your kind permission, I would like to readout his statement published in the Hindu newspaper dated 2nd March, 2008.

[English]

The Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said that he was not sure if suicides by farmers in his home State would stop as a result of the Rs. 60,000 crore farmers' relief package announced in the budget.

[Translation]

That is what the Agriculture Minister is saying. Now, whom should we listen to, the Finance Minister or the Agriculture Minister. What kind of contradiction is it?

Mr. Chairman, Sir, if the Finance Minister has granted the waiver of loan, recommendation of Swaminathan Committee would have to be implemented alongwith it. He had recommended that interest rate on loan for farmers should be reduced from seven per cent to four percent. While participating in the discussion on this budget, the hon'ble Members who putforth their views

have also raised this point. Therefore, the limit of loan for farmer must be increased but the rate of interest should be less. If it is done, then the farmer would be able to stand on his own, sustain himself and the suicides could be stopped.

The Bharatiya Janata Party had waived off loans of farmers in Madhya Pradesh in 1990. Then, I was in the Congress Party. The Congress Party itself had strongly opposed that at that time. It is irony of fate that I have to oppose the same thing once again. I believe that waiving off loans is not a solution to this problem. If we have a look at your party's one year regime keeping aside the matter of waiving off loans and consider the figures, we would come to know the situation of each sector. I would like to state that the growth rate in mining sector during the last one year was 5.6 per cent now it has reduced to 3.4 per cent. Similarly, the growth rate in the industrial sector which was 12 per cent last year has come down to 9.4 per cent. The growth rate in manufacturing sector which was 12 per cent last year has also been reduced to 9.6 per cent. Similarly, the growth rate in insurance sector, finance sector which was 13.9 per cent last year has also declined to 11.7 per cent.

The most important thing which was widely talked of is the power generation. A lot of funds has been provided in the budget for an ambitious scheme like Rajiv Gandhi Vidyut Unnayan Yojana. What happened to power generation even after that, I would like to tell you about it. The growth rate of power generation which was earlier 9.8 per cent has decreased to 3.8 per cent. Please let me know after all, what you are getting credit for? If you get the elections held soon by presenting this budget, you know about the result. So, get the elections held in time, not before time.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Rangrajan Committee has itself stated that 23 to 24 per cent small and medium farmers go to banks. Most of the farmers either take loan from some moneylenders or their relatives or friends. Therefore, a small section of the society will take advantage of it. If you keep on distributing gifts like this in the election year, what will happen to the FRBM Act? Has this Act while presenting the Budget you have stated that it has been done within the limits of that Act. But you did not think that you had crossed the limits of the FRBM Act. It is, therefore, necessary that when you present the Budget you should ensure that it should be in the interest of the country and not in the political interest of your party only.

You had got a very good opportunity. As you have just said that your revenue has increased up to 40 per cent by way of taxation, it is a good thing. But you could not deliver the benefits of increase of revenue earned through taxation which should be there in the budget.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister of Finance has made a provision of Rs. 60,000 crore for waiving off loans of the farmers. Where will this money come from? Naturally, you are likely to resort to disinvestment. The policy of disinvestment has been in existence since 1990-91. The NDA Government followed that policy and that policy still exists. But when the NDA Government resorted to disinvestment, what did the present senior Ministers of the Congress say then? With your permission, I would like to read out the statement made by them.

[English]

"We want clarity in all these things. But we oppose the way you are doing it. We would like to see a White Paper which includes as to how you are going to deal with the public sector units in the larger social and national priorities".

[Translation]

All right. I myself demand from you with regard to hon'ble Kamalnathji's statement.

[English]

Will you issue a White Paper when you disinvest to collect Rs. 60,000 crore?

[Translation]

I hope the hon'ble Minister of Finance would respond to this in his reply.

You have framed some good schemes such as you have made a provision of two lac eighty thousand crore rupees in the Budget for the workers engaged in unorganised sector. It is a good thing. But, it is to be seen as to how this scheme will be implemented and What will be the results thereof? JMURM export has decreased and you have formulated this Scheme to increase it with this hope that you would set up expert growth centres around cities, as a result people there would get employment and export would increase. It is also a good thing. I would like you to implement this

scheme in the backward States first where there is more backwardness and unemployment.

You have stated in your budget speech that you are going to set up 500 soil testing labs for the farmers. It is a good thing but it hardly costs Rs. 5-7 lac to set up a soil testing lab which can be set up by us by utilising our MPLAD funds. It would be better if you provide this fund to the Krishi Vigyan Kendras to help those Centres run smoothly. You should spend the funds on their research activities Any Member of Parliament can easily get the soil testing lab set up in his/her constituency by utilizing his/her MPLAD fund.

You have stated that you would set up Nehru Yuvak Kendra in all the districts. It is a good thing. But you should first review the functioning of existing Nehru Yuvak Kendras to see as to what impact they are making on our youth and whether these kendras are succeeding in achieving their targets. If we don't review this, setting up of these Kendras will deliver no benefit. You should set up Nehru Yuvak Kendras but make budgetary provision for sports activities there provide funds to the Nehru Yuvak Kendras so that the people of our rural areas may get sports opportunities and bring credit to the country by playing for the country. Besides, there is a need to teach the youth the lesson of discipline in the Nehru Yuvak Kendras.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Rs. 340 crore have been provided for the cluster approach development in handloom sector. It is a good thing. But, Rs. 340 crore are very less in proportion to the number of weavers. Chanderi sarees are made in Chanderi-Guna district and these sarees are famous all over the world. But you have made no provision for that in this Budget. I would like you to pay attention towards this also.

14 per cent import duty has been reduced on the import of Iranian carpets. When those carpets are sold in our country, what will happen to our carpet industry? Most of our carpet industries are in Bhadohi, Uttar Pradesh and very prominent leaders and big personalities belonging to Uttar Pradesh are incharge there. When these personalities go to Uttar Pradesh the carpet weavers are likely to ask them questions and it is but natural.

There is a need to provide more allocation to the Khadi and village industry. Apiculture should be promoted in far-flung forests where our tribal communities dwell. Processing industries based on micro-forest produce on

[Shri Lakshman Singh]

which they depend for their livelihood, should be allowed to be set up so that our tribals could get employment. Micro and processing industries should be set up there to provide employment to them.

Budgetary allocations for the defence sector is my last point. The budgetary allocation for the defence sector has been enhanced to Rs. 1,05,000 crore from Rs. 96,000 crore. This allocation is also meagre and there is a need to enhance it more. This allocation is very meagre as compared to the allocation made by China for their defence sector. China has increased its budget by 18 per cent in a year and it is necessary for us also to do so in the present scenario because China says that Thang district of Arunachal Pradesh is a part of China. Our Members of Parliament from Arunachal Pradesh have many times expressed their concern in this regard in the House. Keeping in view all these points it is necessary to enhance budgetary allocation for defence sector.

With these words I conclude my speech. I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, I just would like to appeal to you and through you, to the House, I have conveyed this to the hon. Speaker.

[Translation]

I have informed the hon. Speaker in writing that a number of Members have to take part in the discussion. However, the time allotted to the party has elapsed. That is why, I have given this suggestion in writing that the discussion on general budget may be started just after question hour tomorrow and we will not have lunch break tomorrow. The business regarding Private Members' Bill will be taken up tomorrow. It will be nice if the hon. Speaker takes leave of the House, to get it adjusted in the next session so that the discussion on General Budget is over by 4 p.m. tomorrow and the hon. Minister of Finance gives his reply at 5 p.m. and gets it passed following the procedure in the House.

[English]

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (Sriperumbudur): Tomorrow is Friday; at 5 p.m. he need not reply; it is week-end; let him reply on Monday...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: I have already spoken to the Deputy leader of Opposition hon. Malhotraji before doing so. He has no objection in this regard. I would like to inform the House in this regard so that the Members could express their views.

[English]

We have one discipline in our Party. Those hon. Members who took part in the discussion Motion of Thanks on the President's Address and in the discussion on Railway Budget will not participate in this debate so that other hon. Members can be accommodated.

[Translation]

So, I wish to inform the House that tomorrow we would like to follow this procedure in the House.

[English]

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: Sir, Tomorrow is Friday and week-end. Everyone would like to go to their constituencies. Let him reply on Monday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is not decided as yet. It will be decided tomorrow by taking the opinion of all the Parties. So, you may please sit down.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, I would like to inform one thing that we cannot take it up to Monday for this one simple reason—the rule in the case of passage of Vote on Account is that once it is cleared from here, it has to go to the Rashtrapati Bhawan; then, it has to go to the Rajya Sabha. We are left with only three days. In the Rajya Sabha also, we have to get it cleared. Then, only it could be finally passed; it is a financially very important thing. So, we cannot take it to the Rajya Sabha on the 17th unless it is cleared from here tomorrow and goes to the Rashtrapati Bhawan...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is not to be discussed. This is not a point to be discussed.

We are not discussing this point; it will be decided tomorrow by the hon. Speaker.

Now, let us continue with the discussion. Shri Sandeep Dikshit.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (Palani): Sir, I may be permitted to lay my speech.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you can do it.

[Translation]

SHRI SANDEEP DIKSHIT (East Delhi): Sir, I rise to speak in favour of the budget. Before making any observation on the budget, I would like to refer to what I have been hearing in regard to it for the last two three days particularly from the opposition bench that this is a political budget and it has been presented keeping the elections in view.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you are more experienced than me and also there are Members present here who are much more experienced than me. Kindly tell me about any such Minister of Finance who has prepared budget without keeping in view the elections as well as politics. I would ask such a Minister of Finance if there are any such provisions in the budget by which budget can be separated from politics, then there is no need to present it here. We have very learned economists in the bureaucracy, who will be preparing the budget in their own way and we shall be propagating it in the public. I joined politics and came to Parliament only because I thought that I would make my observations on important policies and issues of the country and put forth the ideologies of my party. Some of the people might have taken it otherwise as we are in the treasury benches. If the hon'ble Minister of Finance has prepared budget keeping election and politics in view it could be his compulsion. There are many provisions in this Budget. This Budget has become an issue of discussion not only among the Members of Parliament, financial advisors, economists but also among the public. When I went to my constituency after presentation of the Budget, I heard people discussing this issue. During the last four years, I have witnessed this approach only among a few educated people who used to ask me about Budget. However, I have witnessed a change in this trend over the past 10-15 days that Budget has now become a point of discussion among the common people. People are curious to know about it. People want to gather more information about it. There are people who want to fully understand it. The kind of impact it has made on the masses clearly reflects that there is hardly any section of society, be it rural or urban which has not been favourably affected by this Budget.

Another point raised by the opposition is that this Budget does not cover the common man. I understand this budget in the context of common people as defined by me and my party. I cannot understand why a number

of people are not able to feel the concern of common man in this Budget. Our friends sitting in opposition benches perhaps do not understand our interpretation of the common man. When we talk of waiving the loans of farmers to the tune of Rs. 60 thousand crore, then they visualize only big farmers. They do not see any relief in it. They do not see small farmers among common man, they only see big farmers. They see policy of appeasement in the 80-90 districts where poor sections of minorities reside and which have not witnessed any development for the last 60 years. They do not see common man among the minorities. When ICDS programmes are implemented in all the blocks and upper primary children are included and 13 crore children instead of 11 crore are covered, even in such programmes many people do not see the presence of common man. The expenditure to the tune of Rs. 32 crore instead of Rs. 12 or 14 crore is now being incurred on education. You are well aware that children of poor sections, Dalit and tribal communities get admission in Government schools. They do not see common man among these communities whereas we can easily see them. When scholarships amounting to Rs. one lakh are offered to students of class one to ten every year, then at that time there is no mention of my children or those of yours or even children of affluent families. At that time the focus is on children belonging to common man.

Today, an amount of Rs. 20 thousand crore has been sanctioned for irrigation and also an amount of Rs. 25 thousand crore has been allocated under the All India Agriculture Development Scheme for the benefit of farmers. There is frequent reference of common man on every page, every sentence of this Budget and also on every allocation under the Budget. So, I strongly welcome this Budget. Referring to the loan waiver to the tune of Rs. 60 thousand crore, most people are asking as to why it has been done during the last year. The issue is not regarding the last year or that of the third year or the second year. At times, things reach such a proportion that we have to make way for the common man's interest. Loan waiver to the tune of Rs. 60 thousand crore was announced. However, the speech of the hon. Minister of Finance does not make any reference of this word. The hon. Minister of Finance during this Budget speech had said that no waiver was being announced and only a small portion of the indebtedness towards farmers was being cleared. Other benefits accruing in addition to the loan waiver of Rs. 60 thousand crore would allow them to take fresh loans in the next financial year.

[Shri Sandeep Dikshit]

Many things have been discussed regarding agriculture. Therefore, I would definitely like to express my view in this regard. The problem of agriculture is prevailing for the last 8-10 years. I got an opportunity to visit tribal areas of Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. At that time, those areas were hit by drought, the farmers were dying that is why agitations were held. At that time, I was not fully in active politics. The most funny and surprising thing was that, at that time also, it was very clear that crisis was looming on the agriculture sector. At that time, NDA Government was in power and Laxman Singh ji was in the Congress. It may be so that at that time he trusted those people against whom he is speaking now. At that time neither the Government of India, nor the Andhra Pradesh Government had accepted that a big crisis was looming over the agriculture sector. Though small incidents of suicides were exposing the truth. This problem is such that it cannot be removed in a year or two, but the UPA Government has worked with full sincerity after coming to power. On one side experts were consulted as to what could be done to redress this problem, probably we were not capable of understanding such a big problem and on other side more funds were allocated for irrigation programmes. Earlier only Rs. 2 or 4 thousand crore were allocated, now Rs. 20000 crore are being allocated under the same head. A new area of five lakh hectares has been brought under the irrigation. Earlier the credit given to farmers was probably Rs. 70 to 80 thousand crore, now it has been increased upto 2.5 lakh. If one goes through the achievement budget, one will find that every year 50 thousand new farmers are being linked to this working system. Today, it is said that 22 or 23 per cent loans are taken from the financial institutions and rest of 78 percent are taken from outside. If the issue is of linking the new farmers to this system, the farmers who were not able to avail loan from the financial system are gradually being linked to this system. I would like to tell two-three things to the Minister of Finance, fortunately Bansal ji is present here, who is holding portfolio of Minister of Finance, Banking Division. Bansalji must look into the fact that in small way the banking system is also responsible for the problem of agriculture. I know that the people come with requests at the houses of all hon'ble Members, some people request for loan, some for health facilities, some for old age pension, some demand for ten rupees for school fee but none of Members receive such cases which are not related to the financial inclusion, and the one who is not getting aid from the financial institute. If the MPs see all the cases which are brought before them, they will find that if transfer and posting cases are excluded, all other people come for help due to failure of banking and

financial institutes. I would like to make humble request
t o
Shri Bansalji, that all these things should be taken up in the financial inclusion. Mere credit is not the issue. Today if people are unable to get health insurance facility, they come to us seeking reduction in hospital bill or doctor's consultancy fee. If children go to private school, they are unable to pay their fees, they do not have money to purchase essential items therefore, when financial inclusion is discussed not only credit, but all things related to insurance, lives of common people should be brought under the ambit of financial institutions.

Sir, the Sixth Pay Commission is definitely coming. We are also aware that it is an election year, elections are going to be held in the coming year, in not only the States ruled by our party, but also in States ruled by many other parties. No political party would be in favour of amending recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission. At the time of implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission, two, arguments were given that the rights and welfare of the Government employees are involved in the implementation of the pay commission and that justice should be done to the Government employees, if their salaries are increased, first, quality of their work will improve and secondly, it will check corruption up to some extent. I have not observed these two things in the working of Government offices during last five years. There are many people present here, who have more experience of the working of Government than me, but I would like to say whether they have observed decline in corruption prevailing among Government employees in their respective areas? Has more sensitivity been observed in the working of Government officers? Has quality of work of Government employees improved? If not, then, we have to take the decision. We should definitely increase their salaries because times have changed, they should also get fatter pay packages through Sixth Pay Commission, but if quality does not improve, the sensitivity towards people does not increase, corruption does not decrease, even after giving more salaries, then the House or any Government will commit mistake by fully accepting recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission. I would like to make a humble request to the Government to keep all these points in view while accepting the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to make a humble request to you that there are some other points also and I would like to lay rest of my speech on the Table.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sir, the time-limit has to be kept in mind because permission to extend the House up to 7 p.m. was given but now it has to be extended up to 7.30 pm. Many hon'ble Members cannot attend the sitting of the House tomorrow, therefore, they too have to deliver their speech today, So only five minutes would be given. The hon'ble Members can lay their speeches on the Table, if this time limit is fixed everybody will get a chance. Does the House agree to extend its time up to 7.30 pm.

SEVERAL HON'BLE MEMBERS: Yes, Sir.

*SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (Palani): I am thanking the Chair for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion on the General Budget for 2008-09.

I would also like to thank the Hon'ble Madam, Soniaji, Hon'ble Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singhji and Finance Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram for presenting this populist Budget.

Our Hon'ble Finance Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram has announced number of schemes for the welfare of farmers, dalits, poor rural artisans and other downtrodden communities. The present budget mainly aimed to improve the thrust areas like education, health, agriculture, women and child welfare and infrastructure.

For improving the standard of primary education Rs. 12,100 crores is allocated for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, for Mid-Day Meal Scheme Rs. 8,000/-crore and for secondary education, the allocation is Rs. 4,554/- crore. Allocation of Rs. 750/- crore for National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship and proposal of establishing 6000 High Quality Model Schools and opening of highly 16 Central Universities is appreciable in this Budget.

Through this Budget it is proposed to allocate Rs. 16,534 crore for Health sector, it is 15% higher than previous year. For National Rural Health Mission Rs. 12,050/- crore is allocated.

The National Aids Control Programme is provided with Rs. 993 crore. In this aspect, I want to bring certain facts before the august House about the problems being faced by the AIDS victims. In India, nearly 7 million Indians are living with HIV/AIDS. HIV positive patients living more in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Manipur, Nagaland and Tamil Nadu. HIV infected school

children, housewives and aged ladies are discriminated by community and by family members. Every year, we are allocating huge funds for National Aids Control Programme but the real benefits are not reaching the AIDS victims. Legal assistance to be provided to AIDS victims to get education for their children and to get equal share from the family properties to get treatment in hospitals and maintenance for the victims who were deserted by their family members. For getting their legal rights, a separate fund is to be earmarked throughout the country to constitute Legal Aid Clinics in all districts to provide all legal assistance to AIDS victims with the assistance of National Legal Services Authority.

In this Budget, allocation of Rs. 6,300 crore for Integrated Child Development Programme is highly appreciable. Enhancement of salary for Anganwadi workers and Helpers are welcomable step. However, in this connection, I would like to point out that there are reports from many places that the Anganwadi Workers and Helpers are having arrears of salaries for the past few months and were not yet settled. Hence, I urge upon the Union Government to take necessary steps to clear the salary arrears of Anganwadi workers and Helpers.

Sir, it is decided to provide Rs. 1,200 crore for Total Sanitation Campaign through this budget. In many places, the sanitation workers are not provided with proper protection to cover their mouth, hands and legs and sometimes it leads to suffocation and resulting in death also. Hence, I urge upon the Government to direct the civic authorities for providing adequate health protection to sanitation workers on duty.

Under the guidance of our Hon'ble Leader, Soniaji, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was launched by our UPA Government in certain districts. Now it is extended to 596 rural districts with the allocation of Rs. 16,000 crore. It will save the family of poor farm labourers throughout the country. For the successful implementation of this programme, strict monitoring is necessary.

Through World Bank assisted Scheme, it is decided to upgrade 238 ITIs and 309 ITIs in 29 States have been identified under the Pilot Project Proposed Scheme. Through this Budget, Rs. 750 crore is allocated to upgrade 300 ITIs. I want to kindly submit that during 1960s, an ITI was opened in my hometown Dharapuram and even now it is producing good number of trained youths but there is no adequate infrastructural facilities in it and

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri S.K. Kharventhan]

also the buildings are lying in a dilapidated condition. I request the Hon'ble Finance Minister to include Dharapuram ITI in the above proposal.

I am welcoming the decision of Hon'ble Finance Minister to allocate Rs. 164 crore for Other Backward Class students under pre-post matric scholarship programme. In this county, 70% of population are Backward Class people. Hence, this allocation is not sufficient. More funds are to be allocated. In our country, there is an Ambedkar Foundation to take care of SC/ST students and there is Maulana Azad Foundation to take care of Minorities but there is no foundation for OBC students. Hence, I request the Government to form a separate foundation for OBC students in the name of Late Leader, Shri K. Kamaraj.

Through Indira Awas Yojana Scheme, it is planned to complete 51.77 lakh houses by the end of March 2008. The subsidy is enhanced from Rs. 25,000 to 35,000 in plain areas and Rs. 27,500 to Rs. 38,500 in hilly areas and for upgradation it has been decided to raise from Rs. 12,500 to Rs. 15,000 per unit. Certainly this proposal will help the poor and downtrodden in this country.

Within 60 years after Independence of this country, this is the first time our UPA Farmers' friendly Government has waived the Farmers Loan to the tune of Rs. 60 thousand crore. Farmers living across the country are relieved from their huge debt burden and are very thankful to Madam Soniaji and our UPA Government. According to Economic Survey of India, nearly 48.6% farmers are debtors. Out of which 61% are having less than 1 Hectare Acre Lands. Out of the total debts, 57.7% loans are borrowed from various Nationalised Banks and the remaining 42.3% from private moneylenders. During cultivation and transplantation season, the Nationalized Banks are not ready to advance loan to farmers. Hence, farmers are knocking the doors of private money lenders and fallen into debt trap and finally committing suicide. Hence, I urge upon the Government to take suitable steps to solve this problem and banks are to be advised that they should come forward to grant loans to farmers during cultivation and transplantation period with unnecessary delay.

Furthermore, the changes made in Sec. 40A(3) of Income Tax Act those who transact money above Rs. 20,000/- for more than one time, other than Account Payee Cheque or DD will not attract the purview of

Expense for Taxation Purpose and it will come into effect from 1.4.09. Due to all round inflation, the above ceiling limit may be raised from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 50,000 and it will certainly help various sectors.

The proposed amendment in Sec. 2(10) of IT Act should not affect Chambers of Commerce, Confederation of Indian Industry, Trade Associations and other Professional Association merely because of this amendment. Clear definition is to be given because there is an ambiguity in this proposal. More particularly, the advocates should not be included in this proposal.

Further, I want to put forth certain facts about southern Tamil Nadu. The erstwhile Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Thirunelveli, Kanyakumari districts were bifurcated into Dindigul, Theni, Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Thirunelveli, Tuticorin, Virudhunagar and Kanyakumari districts. Those districts are industrially and economically backward and were not developed for the past 60 years. Even though, all the resources are available to develop multifarious industries but the economy in those districts are very weak and no industrialists are ready to come forward to start any kind of industry in that area. 80% of the population are poor and downtrodden. Lakhs of youths are wandering in the streets for want of jobs. Government of India has to take immediate steps to amend the Article 371 of the Indian Constitution and special status should be given to southern Tamil Nadu for industrial development particularly for the above districts.

I want to bring kind notice of this House about the great son of the soil Shri V.O. Chidambaranar (VOC). Sri VOC was born to Ulaganatham Pillai and Paramayi Ammal. After completion of his early education at Ettayapuram, Tuticorin, he finished his Law Course at Trichy and became a Lawyer. Within few years, he dedicated himself for the Indian Freedom Movement. In 1906, he had started "Swadeshi Shipping Company" and ventured shipping against Britishers. He had started Labour Movement and fought for the welfare of labourers working in Coral Mills at Tuticorin and started agitation on 07.02.1908. Freedom fighter, Vibin Chandra Balar was arrested and released on 9.3.1908. VOC and Subramania Siva were planned to celebrate the day of release of Vibin Chandra Balar in a befitting manner. Britishers arrested VOC on 12.03.1908 and filed criminal cases under various sections of IPC and after namesake trial, he was convicted for 40 years on 7.7.1908 at his prime age. He was imprisoned in Palayamkottai, Kannoor and

finally at Coimbatore Jail. Even now, the oil-crushing Unit pulled by VOC is kept in Coimbatore Jail

I urge upon the Union Government to ear-mark certain fund to award scholarship to meritorious students studying marine education, undergoing research in marine subject throughout the country in the name of V.O. Chidambaranar to honour him.

More particularly, I want to thank the Hon'ble Finance Minister Shri P. Chidambaram for granting exemption to Agricultural Income and Income arising from saplings and seedlings in a nursery. It will boost horticulture plantation in a big way in this country.

On behalf of the farmers of this country, I am congratulating the Finance Minister for the presentation of Agri base budget by fulfilling the dreams and aspiration of our late leader, Shri K. Kamaraj and proved that he is true follower of him.

With these words, I am supporting and concluding my speech.

*SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO (Guntur): At the very outset, let me extend my wholehearted congratulations to our Finance Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram, for presenting the 5th consecutive General Budget of the UPA Government. Many outstanding steps have been taken by the UPA Government in this Budget for 2008-09, under our hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and with the able guidance of our towering and beloved leader, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi.

Before I highlight the salient features of the General Budget, firstly, I would like to request the Government to extend benefits of loan waiver to those who have already cleared the loans. Secondly, I would request the Finance Minister to ensure that Minimum Guarantee Price (MGP) is fixed for chilly, tobacco and cotton. Not only that, the UPA Government should give the chilly, tobacco and cotton growers subsidy and when the prices of these important crops fall drastically, subsidy should be given as per the MGP. I would request the Government to ensure that more funds are allocated for this purpose. I would request that crop insurance should cover all the crops. Thirdly, I would urge the Finance Minister to extend workers' insurance to all the sections of people. I hope the progressive Budget of the UPA Government would

address the above mentioned concerns of the farmers and people of the country.

Now, let me start with the major highlight of this Budget, that is, waiver of Rs. 60,000 crore of farm debt. At present, the pathetic situation is that farmers take loans from moneylenders and commission agents at exorbitant prices and when they could not repay the principal and high interest, they were forced to suicide. Most of the time, their interest component exceeds the principal. Farmers also take loans from banks. When banks refuse loans, they go to moneylenders. This trend should be changed forthwith. Banks should come forward to extend fresh crop loans to the farming community.

Waiver of Rs. 60,000 crore of farm debt would undoubtedly give a much needed relief to the farmers of our country. This is applauded as the 'mother of all waivers'. I congratulate Shrimati Sonia Gandhi for spearheading such a breathtaking effort to help the farming community.

This Budget can be truly called the Budget for the *aam aadmi*. People living in every strata of society are benefited with this path breaking Budget. On the one hand, income-tax payers are benefited on the other hand poor people who cannot afford to buy costly drugs would now get them easily as drugs have become cheaper now. Reduction of excise duty on pharma industry by 8 per cent would go a long way in the availability of drugs at a cheaper price. Likewise, raw materials used in IT hardware industry have been made cheaper, which would give further fillip to the IT sector.

Let me briefly state the benefit accrued to the income-tax payer. As per the old tax regime, if a person is earning a sum of Rs. 5.00 lakhs per year, he was paying Rs. 1.00 lakh as tax. But now, he has to pay just Rs. 55,000. Like wise, if a person was paying Rs. 24,000 for his income of Rs. 2.50 lakh per month, he would be paying a paltry sum of Rs. 10,000. This has been welcomed by the income-tax payers across the country.

After I would like to list out things which have become cheaper and which are of utmost importance to the common man. Namely, TV set-top boxes have become cheaper. So also, tea, coffee mixes, breakfast cereals, *sharbats*, cornflakes.

This Budget has also taken care of middle class people. For example, Small cars like Nano is expected

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Rayapati Sambasiva Rao]

to become cheaper. Types of four-wheeler and two-wheeler would cost less.

On behalf of the people of Andhra Pradesh, in general, and on behalf of my constituency people, in particular, I would like personally thank the Union Finance Minister as he has promised to start a School of Architecture and Planning at Vijayawada. This is certainly a step in the right direction as this would give boost to the education sector of Andhra Pradesh. Secondly, he has also promised to accelerate the works in the proposed IIT at Medak, in Andhra Pradesh. I appreciate his concern in this regard. I extend thanks on behalf of the people of Andhra Pradesh.

Apart from the above, I think, everyone in this House would appreciate the concern of the UPA Government and the Union Finance Minister for extending the mid-day meal scheme from class one to class 10 from the academic year. Not only that, he had even promised to provide more funds for the improvement of infrastructure in schools. This clearly shows the importance and impetus the UPA Government gives to the education sector across the country.

Now, I would like to suggest the following improvements for the benefit of the people in general and the farmers in particular.

In view of the appreciation of the value of Rupee in the international trade and markets the exports of Agricultural Commodities like Tobacco, Cotton and Chillies have declined consuming much hardship to farmers and the trade. Therefore, incentives to the export of those commodities may be created like reducing the export tax and excise duties. To increase food production and to cause the compensation in decrease of cultivable land consequent on the increase in the Industries etc. Irrigation facilities may be increased and to give liberal grants to State Govts. for these projects like "Jal Yagnam" taken up by the Govt. of A.P under the Chief Minister of the state Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy.

Enough measures were taken in the budget for improvement of agricultural productivity, Rural development and agricultural oriented industries. To keep the people happier enough measures may be taken to increase the grants for education and skill development, health and skill development.

Health care is very important for better living of the people especially the Rural population. Unfortunately the

health care has gone into private sector in the name of corporate hospitals. The Rural population, the poor and middle class are suffering for want of medical care in public sector. Action may be taken to strengthen the state government to improve the medical facilities in public sector namely strengthening the Govt. Hospitals and to open new ones in backward areas and agencies.

Industrial development is very important for the welfare of the population and to create employment potential for the purpose wealth tax on vacant industrial land may be abolished as suggested by the confederation of Indian Industry. Regarding Wealth Tax on Motor Vehicles, it may be considered as the motor vehicle are no more the luxury goods and all motor vehicles may be exempted from wealth tax.

Incentives for Tourism: to attract Tourists from abroad and to improve the Tourism incentives may be provided to all types of Hotels and also Tourist Hotels may be provided by Union and State Governments at Competitive prices. This will increase the employment potential and improve the market sales of goods.

Natural resources like coal, oil and gas are bound to diminish in course of time. To eliminate the threat funds may be provided to the harvest wind energy, solar energy and energy from Tidal waves.

In a nutshell, I can say with confidence that this novel Budget would lead to all-round growth and prosperity as it has addressed most of the concerns of every section of the society. Industrialists and common man alike have appreciated this Budget. This augurs well for the UPA Government in the years to come. This also conveys that UPA Government, under the able and competent leadership of Madam Sonia Gandhi and the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, alone addresses the genuine problems of the farming community and common man alike.

Thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to speak on the General Budget.

*SHRI ANANTHA VENKATARAMI REDDY (Anantapur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I extend my wholehearted support and convey my felicitations to the Hon'ble Minister of Finance Shri Chidambaram for having presented a spectacular and dream Budget for the year 2008-2009,

*Speech was laid on the Table.

and his fifth successive one, under the most able and dynamic leadership of Shrimati Sonia Gandhiji, Chairperson, UPA and Hon'ble Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India. The Finance Minister has taken an unprecedented step of waiving off the loans of farmers to the extent of Rs. 60,000 crore which would affect four crore farmers. This is the single-most package extended to the farmers who would be coming out of the clutches of debts.

In this Budget the Hon'ble Minister has taken many pathbreaking and dynamic steps' like setting up of Irrigation and Water Resources Finance Corporation, starting of Rainfed Area Development Programme, special scheme for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana for workers etc.

The most prestigious National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme which was first inaugurated in the entire country in my parliamentary constituency in Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh, by the Chairperson, UPA Shrimati Sonia Gandhiji, was first set up to cover 200 districts and after the meeting of the young and dynamic leader of the Congress Party Shri Rahul Gandhiji met the Hon'ble Prime Minister it was extended to cover another 150 districts and now in this Budget the Hon'ble Finance Minister has extended the scheme to cover all the 600 districts in the country and he has allocated sufficient funds for the same.

If we take the education front, the Hon'ble Minister has set up three new IITs, one of which is going to come in my State. I am sure the entire House would agree with me in singularly congratulating the Hon'ble Minister for the extremely marvelous benefits he has given in the direct taxes front both to the salaried employees and also to the corporate sector. The increase in the exemption limits in income-tax is one feature which would remain a great milestone in the history of this Government for very many years to come.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to bring certain important and basic factors concerning my constituency to the attention of the Hon'ble Minister and urge upon him to pay special attention to these matters. Anantapur district is one of the worst drought-affected districts in the entire country. The rainfall in this district is very minimal and the farmers are suffering a lot. In his first Budget under the UPA Government, the Hon'ble Minister has given a special package for the farmers to go in for

insurance which was revenue-village wise. In our Anantapur district there has been continuous drought for ten years successively and despite the severe difficulties faced by the farmers, they have been regularly renewing the insurance policies for their crops under the hope that some day there would be some benefit. Though there have been situations of utter poverty and even being pushed to the extent of committing suicide, many of the farmers have been regular in paying for the insurance. Such farmers in Anantapur and other such districts in the country would be completely not benefited under the debt waiver scheme of the Hon'ble Minister. Sir, I feel that this is a matter which requires top priority and special consideration by the Hon'ble Minister. Those farmers who have been regularly paying the insurance should be extended the benefit of debt waiver.

Sir, the Government has earlier come to the rescue of the farmers of Anantapur district and sanctioned crop insurance for claim settlement of Rs. 376 crore during the kharif season of 2006. The above crop insurance amount was adjusted by the bankers on their own, to the crop loan accounts of the farmers in August-September, 2007 period and they have renewed the loans of the farmers with this crop insurance money. Though the amounts were paid in August-September, 2007, which was adjusted by the banks, they actually amounted to the loans of kharif 2006 and hence these farmers should be brought under the debt waiver scheme which is the need of the hour. I request the Hon'ble Minister, through you, Sir, to specially consider the plight of the farmers of my district and cover them also under the waiver scheme, if necessary by amending the rules while bringing the Finance Bill for passing before the House.

Sir, I may mention that this is entirely in line with what our respected young and dynamic leader Shri Rahul Gandhi spoke a few minutes ago on the floor of the House about extending the cutoff date for loans for Vidarbha farmers for whom he said this waiver scheme should be extended. I congratulate Rahul Gandhiji for taking special interest in the plight of the farmers and would request the Finance Minister to extend the debt waiver scheme to the farmers of my district.

I am afraid that if the above amendment is not brought in and the debt waiver scheme is not extended to the farmers of my district who were covered under the insurance scheme, not even a single farmer in my district would be benefited by the scheme of the Government

[Shri Anantha Venkatarami Reddy]

and it would lead to utter difficulties and problems for the farmers.

Sir, I request the Hon'ble Minister to provide interest-free loans for dryland farming. The present rate of 7% is very high and the farmers are not able to meet that high costs. If not interest-free loans, they should be given loans at 3% rate only.

I take this opportunity to request the Hon'ble Minister of Finance to enhance the old-age pension which is being given at the rate of Rs. 400 to all the persons above the age of 65 years without any restrictions. In my State of Andhra Pradesh under the able leadership of Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy garu, our Chief Minister every single aged person is given a pension of Rs. 200 without any limitation whatsoever. I request that such a scheme be extended by the Union Government.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I once again take this opportunity to congratulate the Hon'ble Minister of Finance for presenting such an excellent Budget which would remain a historic one for many years to come and extend my wholehearted support to the same. I once again urge upon him to consider the requests made by me about the thousands of farmers of my district who are suffering a lot and would hope that he would come to their rescue at their need of the hour.

Thank you, Sir, for giving me an opportunity.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAIKENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on the General Budget 2008-09. The Government have made many announcements for giving pace to the economy and giving justice to the weaker sections. If one sees the records of the Ministry of Agriculture, it says that 219.32 million tonnes of food grain production has been recorded during the year 2007-08. As far as the question of suicides by farmers is concerned, no announcement in regard to Uttar Pradesh and areas of Bundelkhand has been made, on which discussion has already been held. As far as the implementation of the Swaminathan Report and the Ram Krishna Report is concerned, the Government have waived the loans of 10 per cent farmers by granting sixty thousand crore rupees. But the Government have also laid the condition that the loans of only those farmers who own up to two hectare of land would be waived.

Through you, I would like to request the Government to raise this limit to at least eight-ten hectares of land, then only the farmers would be benefited.

Secondly, I would like to say that Rs. eight thousand crore have been allocated for Mid-Day Meal. While all hon'ble Members are aware of the kind of primary education being imparted today, all staff and children get involved in this scheme and no studies are undertaken. As far as Bharat Nirman is concerned, Rs. 24,603 crore have been allocated for this and it is said that by 2009 all villages will be connected with metalled roads, drinking water would be made available to all, everybody would be having a house. Besides that, targets for electricity, telephone and irrigation have been set. But it does not appear that all these works would be accomplished within this meagre amount. May it not happen that the Bharat Nirman of the UPA Government meet the fate of India Shining of the NDA Government, this is a matter of concern. Therefore, please pay attention to this.

Rs. 34,400 crore have been allocated for the education sector. Six thousand Model Schools, 16 Central Universities, 309 I.T.I. in 29 states and Navodaya Schools in 20 states would be opened. I would like that the area of Bundelkhand, where farmers are committing suicide, and many such backward districts and states should be included in this scheme. It is being said that 410 new Kasturba Gandhi Girl Schools would be opened. I think that backward states and districts should be included under this. Then only its benefit would be reaped.

Provision of Rs. 1100 crore has been made for the National Horticulture Mission. I would like to say in this regard that mango, guava and banana are cultivated in our area, such fruit producing areas should be taken up on priority basis under this mission I would like to say in regard to National Agriculture Insurance Scheme, that the farmers should get direct benefit of it.

Rs. 644 crore have been earmarked for the farmers to meet the expenses incurred as a result of droughts, hailstorms, flood etc. But, I think, the condition of the farmers will ameliorate only when the benefit of this fund reaches them directly.

Many hamlets and villages are left to be covered under the Rajiv Gandhi Vidyutikaran Yojana. Rs. 5500 crore have been earmarked under this scheme. I would like that the power project generation scheme may also be considered along with this scheme.

An allocation of Rs. 12966 crore has been earmarked for the National Highways Development Programme. My demand is that, at least, district headquarters should be connected with the main roads; only then the objectives of this programme can be achieved. Social security of the workers engaged in the unorganized sector has been envisaged; but there is nothing about the agricultural labourers. The Government need to think about them also.

Rs. 3443 crore have been earmarked for 157 lakh beneficiaries under the Indira Gandhi Old Age Pension Scheme, Whereas the number of people being born today equals the number of people getting older. So, there is a need to enhance this fund.

Under the Indira Aawas Yojana you have increased the amount from Rs. 25000 to Rs. 35000 for plain areas. I want this amount to be, at least, Rs. 50,000 so that one room set house with a Verandah could be constructed to accommodate one poor family. There has been a provision of Rs. 5800 crore for the Backward Areas Grant Fund out of which 45 per cent grant has been earmarked for Uttar Pradesh alone. I would say there are many districts which should be covered under this scheme, particularly Bundelkhand must be included under it.

Rs. 3966 crore have been earmarked for SCs/STs. However, in a reply to a question it has now been stated in this very House that only those SC/ST or OBC students are entitled to get the benefit of scholarship who will get not less than 50 per cent marks. This is the matter worth consider action. The Government will have to think about it seriously. In my opinion, the restriction of 50% marks should be lifted, only then the students will get the benefit of it directly. 90 per cent minority dominated areas have been covered under this scheme. As on date, their population is 18 crore in the country for which only one thousand crore rupees have been earmarked which is just like a drop in the ocean. I would like that this amount be increased significantly.

19.00 hrs.

There should be a provision for Madrasa and the minorities who lead a miserable life in the rural areas or in the slums of the urban areas. It needs to be increased up to Rs. 2000 crore. Much has been stated here about NREGA. Rural areas of 569 districts are to be covered under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to be implemented with effect from 1st April. I would like

to say that there will be gross financial embezzlement by officials unless the involvement of area MP is ensured in this scheme.

Secondly, no District Magistrate calls meeting of the Monitoring Committee constituted by the hon'ble Minister. It needs to be dissolved.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by saying one thing. A reference was made to the Sixth Pay Commission. I want it to be implemented with immediate effect after its announcement on 31st of March, 2008. All employees are anxiously waiting for its implementation. I wish that the report of Sixth Pay Commission should be implemented to facilitate all the employees. With these words, I extend my thanks to you for giving me an opportunity to speak here.

[English]

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI (Kutch): Sir, permit me to lay down my speech on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Gadhavi ji, you can lay it.

[English]

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI: Sir, I lay it.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Owaisi ji, if you can conclude your speech within 5 minutes, it is okay and if it is long, then, you can also lay your written speech. That will be included in the proceedings.

[English]

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI (Hyderabad): Mr. Chairman, Sir, because of paucity of time, I will limit myself to the issues pertaining to Muslim minorities.

The Indian Muslims are experiencing a very unique tragedy of irrelevance. Rarely any sensible attempt is made either to understand the Muslim mindset or to analyse, in detail, the ethical values which are dear to them. This tragedy of irrelevance makes us forget, at least temporarily, the real tragedy of relevance, that is, the tragedy of being poor, uneducated, mal-nourished and marginalized. It is a tragedy of having limited or no access to essential things required for a decent living such as

[Shri Asaduddin Owaisi]

health, education, economic opportunities, social security and self-respect.

As of now, the Muslims suffer double discrimination by virtue of being both Muslims and poor. Of late, the Indian Muslims have developed a feeling of extensive marginalization. But, in this context, a great contribution has been made by this Government as far as the Sachchar Committee Report is concerned. The Sachchar Committee has brought to the forefront the tragedy of relevance. This is at a time when irrelevant issues surrounding the Muslims catch the media attention and especially the so-called race attack in the country.

I am very much surprised to know that the Leader of the Opposition has called this Budget as a communal Budget going back to the days of Liaquat Ali Khan days. In my opinion, with utmost respect to the Leader of the Opposition—maybe so in his opinion, in his eyes—I would say the only secular person is Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Apart from him, everybody is a communal. He is calling the giving of the allocation of Rs. 1000 crore to minorities which include the Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and other communities, a communal budgeting of Liaquat Ali Khan days.

[Translation]

Chaman ko jalta hua chhodkar ham yahan naheen aye hain, yahan par jalakar Jinnah Saheb wahan par chale gay ur phir abhee bhee mohabat unheen se hai (We have not come here by setting the garden on fire, but you are still in love with Jinnah despite the fact that he went there by setting this country at fire). We do not have any affection towards Jinnah, we love this land and we are seeking our right on the ground that we love each and every part of this land... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please Speak on Budget.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha): Sir, Mr. Malhotra did not speak on the budget... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can say if you want to say something from your seat, but do not interrupt like this.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Sir, the leader of Opposition did not speak anything.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are speaking irrelevantly. Say the relevant thing. There is time constraint, so it would be better not to indulge in other things.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Whatever is being spoken now is not going on record.

...(Interruptions)*

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI: Sir, I have great respect for Kharabela Saheb. He is a laborious person. I always see him in library... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: This statement will not go on record.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI: It is okay. But yesterday Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra made his statement in which he had stated that providing scholarship to the minorities and.....*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Make your point.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI: I am making my point... (Interruptions)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): He is referring to what another hon. Member had said. This is very much relevant.

[Translation]

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it was said yesterday and it is on record. I would like to ask him whether during the five years of mis-governance of NDA Rs. 250 crore were given to the minorities or not? ... (Interruptions)

[English]

You had given Rs. 250 crores. What this Government has done to correct that mis-governance, to create a concept of social justice, to show that the rule of law applies to everyone and everyone should get an equal share, they have increased the sum to Rs. 400 crores. Ninety nine per cent of the share is being given to minorities in the North-east. I want to know from my BJP

*Not recorded.

friends of North-east, do you not want that amount of money? It is an...concept? If the minorities get their rightful share, what is wrong in that? Do you not want the minorities to come up? With great pain, I would like to bring to notice of this House that if you look at page 164 of Budget, Volume II, out of Rs. 500 crores, Rs. 362 crores have been given. The most difficult part for me is that you you have deducted Rs. 99 crores from pre-matric and post-matric scholarships for minorities. This anomaly has to be rectified for the sake of thousands of minority children. Please ensure that these Rs. 99 crores are given to the Minorities Welfare Ministry so that they can continue with this magnificent programme that this UPA Government had started.

Another issue is regarding Waqf. This year, Rs. 3 crores have been given to the Central Waqf Council, whereas the Sachar Committee had recommended that there is a requirement of Rs. 500 crores. The reasons for this is that there are more than 4.9 lakh registered Waqf properties which have a present market value of Rs. 1.2 lakh crores. If these properties are put to efficient use, they can generate a minimum return of 10% which is about Rs. 12000 crores per annum. You are giving pre-matric and post-matric scholarships, but this is also a very important issue. I request, through you that this issue needs to be taken care of.

Another issue is regarding opening of banks. We welcome it, but what about priority sector lending? When it comes to priority sector lending to Muslims from schedule banks, public sector banks and private sector banks, the Muslims have very less outstanding amount compared to other minorities. When it comes to shares in SIDBI, the total amount disbursed in 2005-06 was Rs. 26000 crores, and Muslims got only Rs. 124 crores. In NABARD, investment credit is only 3.9. Although the Government has committed that the private sector lending will increase to 13% by 2009. But, in reality, no banks are willing to give loans to Muslims. Most of the Muslims are salaried employees. It is very hard to get a loan of Rs. 1.1 lakh, while it is easy to get a loan of Rs. 15 lakh. This is the tragedy of our banking system.

Another issue is regarding primary education. As many as 25% of Muslim children in 6-14 years of age group have either never attended the school or have been dropped out. Why is the Finance Ministry not accepting the Fatimi Sub-committee's Report which clearly says that more primary schools should be opened? Lastly, I welcome the recruitment of candidates belonging to minority communities to CRPF. But at the same time, I

would like to ask a question to the Government. What about Intelligence Bureau? What about NSG? What about RAW? In Intelligence Bureau, there are only two Muslim officers...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

Oh let me finish my speech. You are a poet.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your time was wasted like that.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI: Please give me one minute. I will conclude within one minute. I would once again like to submit that the UPA Government have provided assistance for the minorities during these four years and it is the first Government after the independence of India which has started taking right step in this direction. Though it did not do everything however, it has taken right step. It will certainly be beneficial for the minorities, Muslims and definitely it will cost dearly to BJP because now a days the people are not going to support communalism...(*Interruptions*) why are you taking umbrage? ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why do you create controversy?

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI: At least let me finish my speech...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please sit down. Nothing is going on record.

...(*Interruptions*)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Owaisiji, you please conclude by saying last sentence. The speech of any other hon'ble Member is not going on record.

...(*Interruptions*)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why are you disturbing? I have not allowed you. Your speech is not going on record. Owaisiji, your time is being wasted, I fail to understand it.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI: In the end, I would like to request the Government that it should release fund for developing wakf property. Besides, I would also like to tell them that their interruptions are not going to affect anyone. He is a fan of Jinnah Saheb. May god create more love in his heart for Mohammed Ali Jinnah. We belong to this country and will continue to like here.

*Not recorded.

[English]

*SHRI P.S. GADHAVI (Kutch): Respected Sir I may be permitted to submit my views on General Budget 2008-2009 as under. Sir, I rise to express my views on the General Budget 2008-09 and I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

Hon'ble Finance Minister has presented this year's Budget only in keeping mind of early General Elections of Lok Sabha and, therefore, he tried his level best to grant as many relief as he can to various sections of society.

For enhancing the upper limit for Income Tax purposes, and special relief to women and senior citizens and total debt waiver for marginal farmers and in respect of other farmers rebate of 25% will be given against payment of the balance of 75% and some other measures of relief in favour of SC, ST, etc for which Hon'ble FM deserves our compliments.

But, Sir, what are the expectations of common man from Ruling Govt. that common man can meet with two ends of his requirements for livelihood. Important question is that whether this object has been satisfied by present Budget or not? Sir, answer is in negative.

Because since UPA Govt. has come-in power and which Boast every time that concern of their Govt. is to see happiness of common man, but we all know that due to high rise in prices of almost all commodities required by common man, are rising very steeply and unabated as if there is no control of UPA Govt. to control or check this price rise.

Sir, immediately after General Budget, prices of the following commodities have gone beyond the reach of common man:

Item	Prices 15 days before Budget	Prices after Budget
1. 15 KG of edible Oil	Rs. 750/-	Rs. 1150/-
2. Channa Dal per Kg	Rs. 35/-	Rs. 45/-
3. Kabli Channa per Kg	Rs. 31/-	Rs. 42/-
4. Prices of other Das viz Arhar and Urad has gone up Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 per Kg.		

*Speech was laid on the Table.

5. Prices of Rice has also increased more than 25%
6. Cooking Gas are being sold openly in black @ Rs. 600 to Rs. 700 per cylinder
7. Prices of cement Iron and other building material are increased manifold.

Sir, apparent reasons for this price-rise is the free hand to uncontrolled forward trade contract by big dealers and also absence of visionary policy to control the prices of Petroleum products and utter financial mismanagement.

Sir, as far as hiking of the retail prices of oil is concerned, Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas said in one of his statements that before taking any decision on this issue, Govt. would be in touch with all parties, but Minister has failed to honour his word of discussing the matter with the opposition parties before taking the final decision. Govt has not even consulted with its allied party i.e Left, because Shri Gurdudas Dasgupta, Hon'ble Leader of the CPI has said, which I read in Frontline magazine dtd 14.2.2008 on its page

36, to the effect that "IT IS A DAMN LIE TO SUGGEST THAT THE LEFT PARTIES WERE CONSULTED BEFORE THE UNPRECEDENTED FUEL PRICE HIKE".

Sir, in parliamentary practice, to tell an untruth is a reprehensible offence. Sir, moreover, instead of announcing the new administered prices on February 15, 2008, the Govt. could well have waited for 10 days more and could have a full debate in the Parliament.

Secondly, Sir, Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas has also deliberated at length on this issue, but the Govt. has not considered its recommendations given in its Sixth report which was submitted to the House on April 4, 2005. Instead of accepting the recommendations of Standing Committee, Govt. had constituted a Committee under Chairmanship of Dr. C. Rangarajan, to examine different aspects relating to the pricing and taxation of petroleum products, and that Committee would suggest a comprehensive mechanism for the pricing and taxation of sensitive petroleum products and other allied issues.

But, Sir, again in Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas of June 2006, (Page 10, Point 7), Committee has stated that Dr. Rangarajan Committee has not made any specific

recommendation on the issue of indigenous crude pricing. It has been further observed by the Committee in its report to the effect that "taking note of the fact that components like ocean freight, Insurance, Port dues, etc are in no way connected to domestic crude production. The Committee therefore, reiterated their earlier recommendation and emphasised that Govt should peg the price of domestic crude to the FOB price of the respective marker crude in the International Market.

Sir, it is apparent that the Govt had given incorrect and misleading information to the Standing Committee, and as Standing Committee is a miniature Parliament and therefore, giving misleading or incorrect information amounts to breach of privilege of parliament.

Thirdly, Sir, the fixing of the prices of Petroleum products is in mess. The main components for fixing the prices of oil i.e petrol, diesel, etc, are—

- 1 Price without Taxes
- 2 Customs and Excise duties of the Centre plus 2% Education Cess; and
- 3 Sales Tax (including Irrevocable Taxes) in the State, which varies from State to State.

Sir, in Table 1, the Standing Committee has pointed out exorbitant share of taxes in the retail selling prices of petroleum products.

Share of duties and Taxes on petrol

Particulars	Mumbai	Chennai	Kolkata	Delhi
1 Price Without taxes	17.54	17.28	17.60	17.87
2 Customs & excise duties	13.97	13.82	13.85	13.78
3 Sales taxes in States*	11.72	10.15	9.44	6.19
4 Total taxes (2+3)	25.69	23.97	23.29	19.97
5 Retail selling price (1+4)	43.23	41.25	40.89	37.84

Includes irrecoverable taxes of the State

Source: Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Petroleum & Natural Gas, Aug 2005

Sir, this table reveals that the total tax collected by the Union and State Governments exceed the price of petrol before tax.

Sir, the Standing Committee recommended that the Govt should scrap the import parity pricing method for Petroleum products and instead go in for a more realistic method. Sir, the Committee in its sixth report recommended and also observed that "the various taxes and duties levied on petroleum products are responsible for their high selling prices"

As of now, taxes which comprise Customs, Excise and State level duties are about 132% of the basic price of the products in the country. The Committee had also observed that among developing countries, India has a higher share of taxes in the retail selling prices of products in comparison to most other countries.

Financial Mismanagement

Further, as per the fourteenth Report in April 2007 of Standing Committee has pointed out the expenditure wrongly incurred, out of the cess collected, which was levied by the Govt. under the Oil Industry (Development) Act 1974.

Sir, upto 30th September 2006, the Central Govt has collected more than Rs. 64,000 Crores as cess on crude oil out of which paltry amount of Rs. 902 Crore (1.41%) has been made available to Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB). Even though Committee expressed its concern over the non-availability of adequate amounts to OIDB from the proceeds of cess and desired to know the various activities on which the cess amount was utilized.

The Committee was not satisfied with the explanations submitted by Govt on this issue ultimately it observed that the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas committed grave error of financial mismanagement by spending only 1.41% of the cess, and the rest was wrongly adjusted to expenditures unconnected with development of oil industry.

The ministry is responsible for the misuse of 98.59% of the cess fund to the tune of Rs. 63,098 Crores, in expenditures of extraneous to the purpose of the cess collected. The Committee also reiterated its earlier recommendation and observed that a Price Stabilization Fund should be created by using the money collected from cess on indigenous crude to bring instability in the prices of Petroleum products and insulate the consumers from volatility in the International market.

Sir, common man is concerned only with his requirement of all his essential items which he may get

[Shri P.S. Gadhavi]

at reasonable price, but today the question is that whether common man feels happy in getting his essential requirements at a reasonable prices or not? Answer is certainly not. If common man does not feel happy in meeting two ends of his essential requirements, it has no use of any louder proclamations in the Budget. This Govt has totally failed in controlling the prices of essential commodities required by common man, I, therefore, oppose this Budget.

Further, I would like to request Hon'ble FM through you that he should consider the genuine demand of "Indian Council of Ceramic Tiles and Sanitary Ware" which was submitted to you on issues of

- (1) Rationalisation of Excise Duty on Ceramic Tiles to reduce Excise Duty applicable to this Industry from 16% to 8% for the reasons submitted by them.
- (2) This organization has requested for providing exemption from Basic Custom Duty on Import of clay, required by Ceramic Industry.
- (3) This organization has also requested for deterring of Export of Feldspar (HS Code 2529010, Feldspar Lumps and HS Code 25291020 (feldspar powder), which is an important natural resource of our country. If open export of this important natural resource is continued without control or check, our country will one day face an acute shortage of this very critical natural resource, which will ultimately slow down our Industrial growth in Ceramic Industries.
- (4) It is the demand of this organization to consider their case, with a proposal that the rate of abatement on MRP be increased to 55% from very low abatement on MRP at present. This increase in abatement on MRP will help this ceramic industry in making their products more affordable to the masses and the huge rural population can improve their quality of life by using hygienic product.

I, therefore, request Hon'ble FM to consider the genuine demand of Ceramic Industry, which gives employment to lakhs of rural people.

Sir, I am sorry to say that UPA Govt. has made up its mind to negate the genuine demands of Gujarat State. The Hon'ble FM has not considered the demand of people

of my Constituency i.e Kutch District (Gujarat) of their long standing demand for "Extension of Time Limit for setting up Industries in Kutch District of Gujarat which was virtually ruined due to devastative earthquake of 2001 in which Kutch has lost more than 18000 precious human lives and total destruction of more than 145 villages and cities.

So, I again request Hon Finance Minister to consider this genuine demands of people of Kutch.

I am sorry to say that UPA Govt is not considering the genuine demand of releasing an outstanding amount of Rs. 644 Crores under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) for Sardar Sarovar Project, which is a project of National importance, due to Govt of Gujarat. I request Hon'ble Finance Minister to please see that this amount is released as early as possible and be paid to Govt of Gujarat.

I request Hon'ble Finance Minister to increase the limit of ceiling of land from two hectares to ceiling limits for un-irrigated lands fixed by different states in their respective states for getting benefit of debt waiver relief by marginal farmers, because otherwise, the poor farmers, who are having un-irrigated land and are under heavy debt will not get any relief.

Sir, as you know that our tribal people are deprived of basic amenities viz drinking water, sanitation, roads, electricity, medical facilities, for want of required fund for such facilities. I, therefore, request Hon'ble Finance Minister to declare special package for these basic infrastructural facilities in tribal areas, particularly, in the districts of tribal areas, viz Surat, Bharuch, Narmada in Gujarat.

I once again thank you Sir, for giving me this opportunity to express my views on General Budget of 2008-2009.

19.18 hrs.

[SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN *in the Chair*]

*SHRI M. SHIVANNA (Chamrajanagara): Sir, I rise to support the General Budget presented by the Hon'ble Finance Minister for the year 2008-2009. It is his seventh Budget.

*English translation of the Speech originally delivered in Kannada.

An estimated 6.6 lakh small and marginal farmers in Karnataka stand to benefit from Union Finance Minister P.Chidambaram's loan write off announcement in his Budget speech on 29.2.2008(Friday).

The sum required for this waiver for the eligible 6.6 lakh farmers could be approximately Rs. 4,800 crore. Shri P.Chidambaram has announced in the Budget speech that the total waiver and one time settlement throughout the country would involve a much higher sum of Rs. 60000 crore.

Karnataka, one of the four states to witness high incidence of suicides by distressed farmers, will not get the benefit from this offer because a debt waiver scheme is already in existence in the State which was initiated by the previous State Government headed by Shri H.D.Kumara Swamy and Shri B.S.Yeddyurappa.

This loan waiver scheme will benefit only the farmers, having upto 2 acres of land. I would like to suggest that it should be made upto 10 acres. According to preliminary data compiled by the State Bankers' Associations, as many as 23 lakh small and marginal farmers in the state maintain accounts with Nationalized Banks, Rural Regional Banks and Co-operative Banks.

In all, these farmers have availed aggregate agricultural loan that stood at Rs. 10,500 crore as on December 31, 2007 and out of these around 6.6 lakh farmers will come under Chidambaram's loan waiver scheme and their borrowings approximately Rs. 4800 crore.

The data indicates 16 lakh farmers of small and marginal farmers, have taken loan from Regional Rural Banks and Nationalised Bank (Rs. 8,500 crore) and the rest from Co-operative Banks (Rs. 2000 crore).

Though the Finance Minister has also announced the one-time settlement scheme for rest of the farmers by giving 25% rebate on the repayment of 75% of balance owed by them to the financial institutions, Senior NABARD officials remarked that not many farmers in the state would be eligible to benefit from it.

H.D. Kumara Swamy's Government have waived short term crop loans availed by farmers in the state upto Rs. 25000 from Co-operative Banks in the year 2006-07. The centre is all set to release a minimum of Rs. 769 crore as additional central assistance for long term

reconstruction of infrastructure affected by natural calamities during 2005. Announcing this scheme Hon'ble Finance Minister P.Chidambaram has proceeded forward magnanimously to help the hapless farmers of this country.

Sir, the Government employees will get the benefits of Pay Commission without any discrimination. But when it comes to the loan waiver scheme for the benefit of farmers you have divided them into small, marginal and big farmers. Why such discrimination should be there? While providing Government facilities to the IAS officers you are not putting any condition. But why you are putting conditions for farmers.

Sugarcane growers all over the country are pleading the centre for the last 5 years to give support price for sugarcane. The centre recently increased the (MSP) Minimum Support Price by Rs. 125/- only. The Minimum Support Price is Rs. 965/- per tonne. It should be at least Rs. 1400/- per tonne. The prices of input have risen and I am mentioning this as a farmer. Similarly farmers particularly small farmers producing tomato, potato, silk, cardamom, clover, pepper are in doldrums. Now, it is for the Hon'ble Finance Minister to come to the rescue of these farmers by way of generous allocations to rural areas of Karnataka, so to check farmers suicide.

Marketing facility is another important area where the farmers are facing severe problems. Cold storages, godowns, must be set up in backward areas like Chamarajanagara, Biolar, Gullarga districts in Karnataka.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Sir, kindly allow me to speak for five more minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. You will get further time when the Appropriate Bill is introduced for Karnataka. I do not know why there is delay.

Vote on Account is passed for Karnataka but the Appropriation Bill is not passed. If it is not passed, no payments can be made with effect from 1st of April. It ought to have been passed along with the Vote on Account: I do not know why it has not been passed.

*SHRI M.SHIVANNA: A legislation should be brought to control the harassment of the farmers by private money lenders. Bicycles should be provided free of cost to all

*English translation of the Speech originally delivered in Kannada.

[Shri M. Shivanna]

the school children. Women should be encouraged through Self Help Groups (S.H.G.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri Suresh Waghmare.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: What is this, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can lay it on the Table. Hon. Members who have written speeches can lay them on the Table.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Let me speak, Sir; I am concluding... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Shivanna, your speech will not be recorded. Nothing will go on record except Shri Waghmare's speech.

(*Interruptions*) **...

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Okay, Sir, I am laying the rest of my speech on the Table.

*I am the son of a farmer sir. Inflation is rising steadily. Of course centre gives some relief to its employees in the form of D.A. and implementation of Pay Commission reports etc. But what type of relief is being given to the poorest of the poor. Where will he go? What special programmes the centre contemplate to rescue the downtrodden from the onslaught of price rise.

I am happy that at last the centre has come out with "URBAN HEALTH MISSION IN CITY". In fact, the centre has made an exception for Bangalore to include the city among the first five metros when the National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) will be launched in 2008-09. This programme initially will focus on providing healthcare facilities in slums in the five metros. But I also want to know from the Hon'ble Minister of Health about the style of functioning of Government hospitals in my constituency there is shortage of doctors, medicines etc. At least this year the Centre must provide sufficient infrastructural facilities including an increase of staff in Government hospitals. The services at Jayanagar Hospital, Victoria Hospital, Sanjay Gandhi Accident Hospital, Bangalore, are not at all satisfactory.

*English translation of this part of the speech originally laid on the Table in Kannada.

**Not related.

Finally, law and order situation in the country is in jeopardy. SIMI activities are the wrong signals of the security of the country. About half a dozen students have been taken to custody by police in and around Hubli. It is alleged that they have links with Al Quaida. Big buildings like Parliament in Delhi, Vidhan Soudha in Bangalore, software company buildings in the Silicon city of India are all under the threat of the anti-social elements. In addition there is threat to the lives of women. Rape and molestation incidents are increasing day by day. Acid is thrown on the face of women. Dowry deaths are taking place quietly. The police are reluctant to register FIR cases in such instances. Like this, the law and order situation is deteriorating steadily. The centre has to take some steps immediately. All the above cases regarding law and order situation must be dealt with a severe hand. No mercy should be shown to the people who are indulging in such anti-social activities in the country. Naxal activities were confined to some states like West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh in the past. Now, it is spreading to every states like wild fire.

Couple of days ago, in Karnataka the State Government has asked the mills to increase the sugarcane price by Rs. 125/-. This is in addition to the minimum statutory price (MSP) fixed by Centre for the cane crushed during 2007-08. This has come about after dilly-dallying for several months. Now, the price for a tonne of sugarcane gets Rs. 965/-. Production cost has increased and the farmers all over India are demanding that the support price for sugarcane should be at least Rs. 1,500/- per tonne. I want to know the response of the Hon'ble Government of India in this regard. Agitations and demonstrations are taking place all over Karnataka demanding proper support price for sugarcane.

Mulberry cultivators are also in trouble. Recently, a peculiar disease was spreading and the silk worms were coming out of the cocoons before their proper development. The worms inside the cocoon could not complete the process of metamorphosis; they came out of the cocoon and died. This disease occurred in Kolar and some parts of Bangalore district in Karnataka. Now the Central Silk Board and the Government of India should come to the rescue of Silk Wormgrowers. Whether the centre has any proposal to introduce any Special Insurance Scheme for them? The import of silk yarn and silk garments has to be curtailed. On the other hand, the centre has to take measures to boost export of our silk.

The farmers misery has not been mitigated fully by the centre even after 60 years of independence. Every

thirty minutes a farmer is committing suicide. It is going on unabated for the last one decade. The centre should come out with an explanation about the tragedy. This august House also owes an answer in this regard. His skeleton is in such a way that we can even count his ribs.

Government of India has failed to contain the price rise of essential commodities miserably. It is true that jobs have been created and there is very good flow of money. But the people belonging to lower middle class and the poorest of the poor are still in crisis. They can not buy essential commodities. Price of kerosene has increased. The prices of dals, vegetable, fruits, edible oils and other essential commodities have also increased.

I would like to suggest few things to the Government. They are:-

- (i) Farmers should be provided easy loans from time to time.
- (ii) Quality seeds should be made easily available to farmers.
- (iii) Appropriate information should be provided to farmers about alternative crops.
- (iv) Remunerative price should be given to all agricultural products.
- (v) Electricity should be provided to small and marginal farmers free of cost.

If the Government take up these steps it would be of great help to the farmers, who are feeding the whole nation. Farmers can be rescued from committing suicide.

[Translation]

SHRI SURESH WAGHMARE (Wardha): Mr. Chairman, Sir, while participating in the discussion, I would like to submit that the present Budget is inflationary anti-development and anti-poor. I would like to submit that the present budget is aimed at taking political mileage out of the suicide and death of farmers in Vidarbha region. I feel that present budget will intensify the struggle for survival of the farmers. In view of the facts that have come out on suicides, I would like to submit that the present Budget is about getting political benefit out of the death of the farmers. So, I would like to submit that the present Budget is very harsh for the farmers. Today,

it is being propagated all over the country that the present Budget is a pro-farmer Budget. The farmers in vidarbha committed suicide, as the Government did not bother to think about them. The gap between rich and poor, Bharat and India has widened in the country. The Government did not think about the reason of suicide. There thousand farmers have committed suicide in Vidarbha. The Government should have looked into the reasons of suicide of farmers and should have provided them assistance but the Government did not give them anything and the Budget that has been presented is not pro-farmers.

Sir, today what is the condition of Vidarbha? The marginal farmers of Vidarbha who have land holding of less than 5 acres of land have got benefit at the rate of Rs. 3 thousand per acre. That means they got a total benefit of Rs. 15 thousand. However, in Western Maharashtra farmers have got benefit up to Rs. 75 thousand to Rs. 1 lakh per acre. This contradiction has been created through this Budget. Why there is only four per cent irrigation in Vidarbha region? It is on account of the Congress Government in Maharashtra. The total irrigated area of Maharashtra excluding Vidarbha is 27 per cent. It is a very important thing. The farmers of Vidarbha are committing suicide. Presently, the situation is such that even after the announcement of such a big package the incidents of suicide of farmers have not stopped. Even after making a provision of Rs. 60 thousand crore in the Budget suicide of farmers has not stopped. There is a need to go deep into the root cause of this problem. The present Budget has created a wide gap among farmers. I feel that there is a need to provide loans to farmers at the rate of four per cent. However, it is not being done and after four years the Government is providing relief to the farmers through this Budget. Why did the Government not do this during the first and second year after coming in power? Presenting such budget means only this that the Government have done this to derive political mileage out of the suicide of farmers. Why are the farmers of Vidarbha committing suicide? The Government did not even make effort to look into the reason in this regard. There is a need to look into the root cause of this problem. Unless we go into the root cause the farmers will not be benefited by any step. The situation in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra is such that we have up to 16-hour power cut in a day. There is no power for irrigation. This is the situation in Vidarbha in Maharashtra.

[Shri Suresh Waghmare]

Sir, the population in rural areas of the country keeps on decreasing. Often it is said that 70 to 80 per cent population of this country lives in villages but the fact is that now it has remained only 45 per cent. It has been shown in 1991 census that 70 to 80 per cent population of India lives in villages but now the percentage has declined. The reason behind this is the politics of the Congress Party. They have not properly addressed the problems of rural people.

Sir, hon'ble Swaminathan ji had visited our area and had said something but it was not executed on the ground. The hon'ble Prime Minister had also come and had given some instructions and announced the package but that were also not of any use and the incidents of suicide of farmers have not stopped. It is very essential to provide loans to farmers at the rate of four per cent.

Sir, I feel that there is paucity of time so, I will conclude in two minutes time.

Sir, I would like to say something about infrastructure. It is also essential to make provision for water, power and roads etc. Only then the farmers may get relief in real sense of the term. Besides, I would like to submit that we should bring a separate budget for agriculture as is done in the case of Railways. The farmers will certainly be benefited if there is a separate budget for agriculture.

Sir, discussion is being held regarding ethanol in the country. The sugarcane growers of the country are very disturbed. Law was formulated to make blending of 5 per cent ethanol in diesel and petrol mandatory, however, it is not being implemented. Why is it not being implemented till now? If we blend ten per cent ethanol in petrol and diesel then it will certainly be beneficial for the farmers. So, I would like to demand that such a provision should be made.

Sir, the farmers who have repaid their loans regularly by selling their land and houses have not been benefited on account of this. So, I would like to give a suggestion that a provision should be made in the budget to provide interest free loan to them up to 10 years. Today, the situation in Maharashtra and other parts of the country is such that the farmers who had taken Rs. 1 lakh loan on interest have already paid Rs. 3 lakh as interest and even after paying that they are not free from their liability of loans. So, these concessions should be provided in one time settlement as well...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member, please conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI SURESH WAGHMARE: I lay the rest of my speech.

*Mr. Speaker, Sir, taking part in the budget discussion, I would like to say that this budget is inflationary and anti-development intended to take political mileage out of the suicidal deaths of the farmers particularly in the Vidarbha region. The suicidal deaths of the farmers in Vidarbha caused an uproar in the whole country. I have been repeatedly raising the issue of addressing the problems of farmers for the last two years, but the package was announced after the suicidal deaths of thousand of farmers in Vidarbha region. The package proved to be a complete failure because it witnessed corruption on a large scale. The problems of the farmers were not solved. The suicidal deaths continued and now a package of Rs. 60 thousand crore has been announced to waive off the loans of the farmers having less than 5 acres of land. It means that through the budget, this Government have adopted double standards by creating a differences between small and big farmers in the country and now they boast of taking all these measures for the benefit of the farmers of this country. The farmers have now got attention of the Government after 60 years. There has been no improvement in the condition of farmers during your rule. The Congress party that came to power in the name of Mahatma Gandhi, has forgotten the Gandhian policy. Mahatma Gandhi had said that India lived in villages. This party has done nothing to bring about development in the villages during these sixty years. As per the census, 55 per cent people out of total population of this country live in villages while 45 per cent people live in urban areas and now the Government is trying to glorify itself by giving waiver to the farmers.

According to hon'ble Minister of Finance, the farmers of Vidarbha region have been given waiver of Rs. 3000 per acre of land while in western Maharashtra this waiver has been given to the tune of Rs. 75000 for the same area of land i.e. one acre. Only 30 per cent farmers have got benefit of it in Vidarbha region while 70 per cent farmers did not get benefit of it. Why did such a situation arise in Vidarbha? Your Government did not give any priority to Vidarbha in this regard. Vidarbha has only 4 per cent irrigated land while rest of the state has 27 per cent irrigated land. There is 18-hour power cut in Vidarbha while in other areas of the State there is only 6-hour power cut. Same is the case of infrastructure in Vidarbha.

*This part of the speech was laid on the Table.

There are 30 districts in the country with most cases of suicidal deaths. In Vidarbha, 50 per cent cases of suicidal deaths are reported with regard to those farmers who are having more than 5 acres of land. A number of farmers paid interest two to three times more than the amount of loan taken by them. The Banks sold out land of many farmers. What will be done in case of these farmers? Mr. Chairman, Sir, the price of wheat produced by Indian farmers is Rs. 55 per quintal, while the price of wheat imported from foreign countries is Rs. 1450 per quintal.

Sir, agriculture should be accorded the status of industry. Agriculture price should be fixed keeping in view the cost of production. Farmers should be given loans at 4 per cent interest. There should be differentiation in home loans. There should be provision for rural infrastructure like road, power, water etc. Interest free loan for a period of 10 years should be provided to those farmers who have made regular payment of loans. A provision should be made to mix 10 per cent ethanol in Petrol and Diesel. Like Rail Budget, there should be a separate budget for agriculture.

There should be provision for all the three wings of defence—Navy, Army, Air Force, as per their demands and necessities. In health sector, efforts should be made to promote Ayurveda and Homoeopathy and also priority should be given to them.

There is a need for improvement in education and sports sectors, particularly the Indian sports and education, because despondency has been shown towards these sectors in the budget*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, it is 7.30 now. If the House agrees, we may extend the time of the House by another half-an-hour, that is, up to 8 o'clock so that we are able to cover three or four more speakers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes, Sir. We agree.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. The time of the House is extended up to 8 o'clock.

[Translation]

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL (Dibrugarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the

attention of the hon'ble Minister of Finance towards the budget which has been presented by the UPA Government. In this budget, it has been mentioned that the farmers would get relief. A package of Rs. 60 thousand crore has been given in it, but I would like to say that no steps have been taken in this budget for the farmers of Assam and North-East. The farmers of Assam and the North-East have become homeless due to last year flood, and also because of man-elephant conflicts. No provision has been made for these farmers in this budget. I am saying it with great pain that the people of Assam and the North East are compelled to fight and cry for everything, but during the last 60 years of independence, we have noticed that whenever the Union budget is presented, no provision is made for us i.e. neither for Assam nor for the North-East. Perhaps our hon. Minister of Finance while presenting the budget forgot the fact that India has one more part which is known as North-East.

As per the schemes for Bharat Nirman announced so far, it has been stated that each village will be provided with drinking water electricity and telephone connection facilities, but I would like to tell you that there are thousands of villages in Assam and the North East where there are no such facilities. This time an amount of Rs. 31,280 crore has been proposed against the last year's budget allocation of Rs. 24,603 crore for the sectors under 'Bharat Nirman' (Nation-building). Only Rs. 6000 crore have been proposed under this scheme for our eight states. So, I request the hon'ble Minister of Finance to increase this amount.

I would like to say one more thing which is regarding lakhs of labourers working in tea gardens in Assam who are facing many difficulties every year due to lack of medical facility. They do not get medicines. There are no facilities available to them. I, therefore, request the hon'ble Minister of Finance to make provisions for the labourers of tea gardens.

[English]

Their health care should be covered.

[Translation]

I would like to say one more thing which is that the increase of only Rs. 2000 crore in this budget against the last year's budget allocation for the Zonal Ministry of the North-Eastern region is also an injustice to us Keeping in view our condition in the States of North-East,

[Shri Sarbananda Sonowal]

[English]

in regard to communication, industrialization and many other aspects, we are far more backward than the rest of the country.

[Translation]

At least this amount should also be increased.

[English]

So, that it is adequate to meet the demands of that entire backward region of the country.

[Translation]

I would like to say that the hon'ble Prime Minister and the hon'ble Minister of Water Resources Prof. Soz visited our erosion effected areas Rokmaniya, Majuli and Dibrugarh

[English]

During their visit, they had promised to the people of Assam that flood and erosion is the most vital issue and most serious issue of the people of Assam and that is why, it would be considered as an important issue and as a national problem and that the special packages would also be announced for the people of Assam and the North-East. But this aspect has been totally ignored in this particular Budget. That is why, a separate budgetary provision should be made in this particular Budget during this Session itself so that those affected people, the people of Assam and the North-East can get a little bit of relief.

In this particular Budget, the hon. Finance Minister has declared three important institutions as institutions of excellence and given Rs. 100 crore each. Let me draw your attention to the Assam Medical College which was established long time back before Independence at Dibrugarh. That is the oldest medical college in the country. On what ground, on the basis of what criteria these three particular institutions are declared as institutions of excellence? Why can the Assam Medical College not be taken in that category? This particular college has been for the last so many decades performing well and is producing quality human resource. The people who studied in this college are working at different important places in the globe.

Sir, for your information, I may tell that there is no special policy on the part of the Government with respect

to tea sector, rubber sector, coffee sector and cardamom sector. In this particular Budget, only Rs. 40 crore have been allocated for replantation. This sum is not enough to meet the demands of the growers and growth of the industry. That is why, a separate Ministry should be created for tea, rubber, coffee, spices and cardamom industries, which will take care of the health of those sectors.

About two years back, the hon. Union Minister for Fertilizers and Chemicals visited Namrup and promised to set up the fourth plant at Namrup. That was a categorical promise to the people of Assam. But till now, no progress has been made so far in this regard and no initiative has been taken. That is why, I want to make a special appeal to hon. Finance Minister, through you, that this particular commitment should be placed in this particular Budget.

As you know, Sir, the petroleum history started from Dibrugarh and in the year 1889, the first refinery was set up. Now at Raebareli, you have set up Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology. Our demand to the hon. Finance Minister is that a branch of the Institute should be set up at Dibrugarh to develop petroleum technology.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. Now I will call Dr. Vallabhbai Kathiria.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: Sir, I want to say something about road communication. The East West Corridor project is not expedited and still there are many things to be done. It is going on at a very slow pace. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. Many things can be said in Assam Assembly. The elections are over and the new Government is formed.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: *Sir, FLOOD and EROSION. PRIME MINISTER and WATER RESOURCES MINISTER'S VISIT TO ROHMORIA, MAZULI.

— BVFCL (BRAHMAPUTRA VELLE FERTILIZERS CORPN. LTD. IV PLANT IS YET TO BE

..... This part of the Speech was laid on the Table.

STARTED EVEN AFTER FERTILISER MINISTER COMMITMENT TWO YEARS BACK AT NAMRUP.

- NO BUDGETORY PROVISION OF THE ON GOING NATIONAL PROJECT OF INDIAN RAILWAY (BOGIBEEL RAIL-CUM-ROAD BRIDGE AND LUMDING-SILCHAR-JIRIBAM RANGIA-MURKONGSELEK GAUGE CONVERSION.
 - NO PACKAGE FOR TEA LABOURERS, HEALTH CARE AND PROVIDENT FUND.
 - DEMAND TO SET UP A BRANCH OF RAJIV GANDHI NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PETROLEUM AT DIBRUGARH
 - CREATION OF SEPARATE MINISTRY FOR TEA, RUBBER, COFFEE, CARDAMOM & SPICES.
 - BUDGETARY SUPPORT FOR SETTING UP OF MAHAPURUS SRIMANTA SANKRADEV VISWAVIDALAYA & PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF BRIDAVAN BASTRA OF ASSAM.
 - SPECIAL COMPENSATION PACKAGE FOR THE FARMERS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIFE, PROPERTY, CROPS IN THE LAST DEVASTATING FLOOD AND ALSO ADEQUATE COMPENSATION TO BE GIVEN TO THE MAN ELEPHANT CONFLICT.
 - SPECIAL ECONOMIC PACKAGE FOR SMALL TEA GROWERS OF INDIA
 - DIGBOI SHOULD BE DECLARED & PRESERVED AS A WORLD HERITAGE PETROLEUM CENTRE.
- UPGRADATION OF NORTH EASTERN COAL FIELDS OF MARGERITA, LEDO, JOIPUR AND BY CONTROLLING THE POLLUTION IN AND AROUND THE AREA.
- UPGRADATION OF LEDO AIRSTRIP FOR COMMERCIAL VIABILITY.
 - IMMEDIATE CONSTRUCTION OF EAST WEST CORRIDOR FROM DIBRUGARH, TINSUKIA TO JOIAPUR CONNECTION STILWELL ROAD.

- DECLARATION OF ASSAM MEDICAL COLLEGE AS CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE WITH ADEQUATE BUDGETARY PROVISION.
- SETTING UP OF TEA AUCTION CENTRE WITH FULL FLEDGED TEA BOARD OFFICE AT DIBRUGARH.
- GIVE ADEQUATE BUDGETARY SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSAM ACCORD WITHIN A TIME FRAME.
- PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS (ROADS, BUILDINGS & GRAVEYARD) OF ASSAM.*

*SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL (Kurukshehra): I rise to support the Union Budget for the year 2008-09. Sir, I add my voice to the millions across the length and breadth of the country in complimenting the Hon'ble Finance Minister for presenting this BOLD and BENEVOLENT Budget. This Budget has been acclaimed and described as, "Unorthodox" and "Unparalleled". It is an excellent exercise in fiscal management in more than one way. Based on continued economic buoyancy with an annual GDP growth around 8.8% on an average in the last 3 years, rising resources and expecting a good prospective harvest of wheat and rice, Hon'ble Finance Minister has been able to give something to every section and sector in the country. A newspaper report aptly described this Budget as, "Deftly packaged Politics and Economics". Be it the farmers and agriculture as a whole, health, education, power, roads, oil and gas, infrastructure, defence, foreign trade, dalits, minorities, women, senior citizens, Govt, employees, employees in the unorganized sector, sports, etc. every sector has got an enhanced allocation for the year 2008-09.

Sir, this Budget is the net outcome of cumulative sincere efforts of the UPA Government in the last 4 years under the shrewd stewardship of Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji, our respected Prime Minister coupled with the inspiring leadership of the UPA Chairperson, Smt. Sonia Gandhi ji. It aims at maximizing production and inclusive equitable distribution to all with a special helping hand to the disadvantaged sections of the society. Sir, I shall now come to some of the pronouncements in the Budget and offer my comments thereto.

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Naveen Jindal]

With the announcement of debt relief amounting to Rs. 60,000 crores to the farmers the Finance Minister has re-established Government's commitment to the cause of the farmers. Guided by the recommendations of the Committee under Dr. R. Radhakrishna to examine all aspects of agricultural indebtedness, a scheme of debt waiver and debt relief for farmers has been announced. This scheme would be applicable to all agricultural loans disbursed by the scheduled commercial banks, regional and rural banks and cooperative credit institutions upto March 31, 2007 and overdue as on December 31, 2007. There will be a complete waiver of all loans that were overdue on December 31, 2007 and which remained unpaid until February 29, 2008 for all the marginal farmers holding upto 1 hectare and small farmers holding upto 1 to 2 hectares. In respect of other farmers there will be a one time settlement scheme for similar loans.

Under the OTS a rebate of 25% will be given against payment of the balance of 75%. Loans scheduled in earlier schemes in 2004 & 2006 shall also be eligible for the benefits. The schemes are required to be implemented by 30th June, 2008 and after that the same farmers shall be eligible for new loans. It is estimated that about 3 crore small and marginal farmers and about 1 crore other farmers will benefit from this scheme. The total value of overdue loans thus proposed to be waived is estimated at Rs. 50,000 crores and the OTS relief is estimated at Rs. 10,000 crores.

Sir, it is for the first time that a relief measure of this magnitude has been conceived and is proposed to be implemented. Taking into consideration the miserable condition of a large number of the farmers across the country as also considerable suicides by them, this measure contemplated by the Govt. is a welcome step and shows the commitment of the Govt. and the Congress Party to the cause of the farmers. Sir, India is a land of villages and nearly 2/3rd of its population lives in the villages. Even today basically ours is an agrarian economy. If the farmer is happy the country will be happier. The proposed relief to the farmers is a welcome step and would provide them a much needed relief. I simply wish and pray that this is a one time measure and we shall be able to devise and implement policies and programmes in such a way that the need for such a situation will never arise again and the farmers will be able to lead a life of self sufficiency and respect.

The Finance Minister has already assured that the interests of the institutions from where the above loans have been secured shall also be safeguarded. Similarly, a large number of farmers have secured loans from private money lenders at a high rate of interest. Urgent measures are required to be taken to provide relief to the small and marginal farmers from this problem.

I would like to give another suggestion here that there may be farmers whose land holdings may be more than 2 hectares, but the land may be barren and un-irrigated. They may also have taken loans for agricultural purposes. To ensure that they are also able to derive benefits of this scheme, some mechanism has to be devised other than the criteria of the size of the land holding.

Another aspect is regarding the implementation of this scheme. Effective measures should be taken to implement the scheme with a sense of urgency and certainly within the stipulated period of time. There should be no compromise with those who are not implementing the scheme. Secondly the benefits must reach those for whom these are meant after proper identification and thirdly corrupt practices need not be allowed to creep in.

Sir, it is a matter of great satisfaction that the estimated total output of food grains in the year 2007-08 at 219.32 million tonnes is an all time record. Simultaneously, this is also a fact that due to changes in the eating pattern of the people in the country, the demand for foodgrains, edible oils, pulses, etc. has also tremendously increased.

According to a recent ICAR study reported in the press, India has 50 million hectares of unused land that can be treated and used to grow more food. Since 1980 land used for agriculture has been constant at around 140 million hectares. This unused waste land can either be used for agriculture or it can be used for industry and infrastructure development, which have been increasing pressure on the agricultural land. For example, construction of a new road cuts through a field. Treating India's waste land can tackle this problem. Sir, in this context launching of the *Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana*, with an outlay of Rs. 25,000/- crores and the National Food Security Mission with an outlay of Rs. 4,882 crores are welcome steps. These schemes will be implemented

during the course of the 11th Plan period. It may however be mentioned that the National Food Security Mission is already in operation w.e.f. Rabi 2007-08.

Sir, a sum of Rs. 32,667 cores has been allocated next year for food subsidy and other welfare programmes. This would ensure adequate supplies and efficient delivery of the subsidized food to the target group. It is being envisaged that these subsidized food supplies should be delivered through the Smart Cards. Sir, I am happy to mention about the efforts of my State Haryana to introduce on pilot basis a Smart Card Delivery System. This has been appreciated by Hon'ble Finance Minister in his Budget Speech also. I am sure that other States will follow suit and any alleged malpractices in the implementation of the scheme are totally eradicated. Those for whom the subsidies have been introduced must get proper food and at subsidized rates.

The targetted agricultural credit for 2008-09 is Rs. 2,80,000 crores. Sir, it goes without saying that enhanced investment in the agriculture sector is bound to yield positive results.

Sir, this is also a recognized fact that without augmenting the availability of irrigation facilities, it is just not possible to increase food production to meet our increasing demand. The Hon'ble Finance Minister has raised the allocation for the various programmes in the management and augmentation of water resources from Rs. 11,000 crores to Rs. 20,000 crores. I hope everybody in the House will welcome it. This is expected to provide additional irrigation potential to 500,000 hectares. Similarly another Rs. 500 crores have been allocated to be spent on Micro irrigation covering additional 400,000 hectares.

Additional provision of Rs. 1100 crores to the National Horticulture Mission covering 340 districts in 18 States and 2 Union Territories, Plantation crops - Tea- 40 crores; Cardamom - 10.58 crores; Rubber - 19.41 cores and Coffee - 18 crores, 640 crores for continuation of National Agricultural Insurance Scheme are all steps which go to prove that our Party and the Government are thoroughly conscious of the problems being faced by the agriculturists and we want to pursue a farmer friendly policy. I congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister for these concrete steps in the right direction.

Budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for the year 2008-09 is Rs. 1111.81 crores. Out of this Rs. 781.83 crores have been earmarked for Sports and Games. The allocation for the year 2007-08 was Rs. 780 crores and the share of Sports and Games was Rs. 494.56 crores. This was subsequently revised to Rs. 603.58 crores. This was necessitated for additional funds to be provided to the overlays (SAI, AITA & Indian Olympic Association) Organizing Committee to the tune of Rs. 70.21 crores. Thus we find the allocation in the proposed year is Rs. 178.25 crores more than the last year. Sir, as a sportsman, in the past also, I have been advocating for release of additional funds for sports activities and I plead for the same again. In order to make a mark at the International level we must have access to latest equipments, technique, training and other facilities. This certainly needs more money.

I welcome the launching of the new scheme named Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan with the objective of providing assistance to the State Governments and UTs for the creation of basic sports facilities at the village and block panchayat levels. This would also assist financially holding of competitions at the District, State and National Level and for acquisition of sports equipments. An amount of Rs. 110.50 crores is proposed to be spent on this scheme out of the plan allocation of 605 crores for the year 2008-09. Considering the magnitude of the intended field of activities of the Abhiyan, I request that much more funds should be provided for this scheme exclusively without affecting the allocations for Sports and Games.

Sir, immediately after the presentation of the Budget I offered my comments to the press and I quote:

'I would like to thank the Finance Minister for taking note of the Indian Shooters' need and exempting air weapons from customs duty. I am confident that this decision is going to go a long way in promoting shooting and encouraging budding and present shooters of the country'

Similar other concessions are required to be given in the interest of promoting various sports disciplines in the country.

Sir, recently we have seen affluence being showered on one particular sport and the players of that game.

[Shri Naveen Jindal]

This is a healthy sign and certainly those who bring respect and laurels to the country must be properly encouraged and honoured. I wish the players of other sports and games are also encouraged in the same way either by the Government or by Federations and Associations controlling those games.

I wholeheartedly support the provision of Rs. 624 crores in 2008-09 for the Commonwealth Games. The holding of these games is a matter of pride for the host country and should receive all attention for their proper organization. This would certainly lead to an impetus to love for sports within the country as a whole.

Sir, I would like to congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister for focusing on various aspects of Education in terms of both material and quality. The allocation for education has been increased by 20% from Rs. 28674 crores in 2007-08 to Rs. 34400 crores in 2008-09. Out of this Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan would get Rs. 13100 crores and Mid-day-Meal Scheme will be provided Rs. 8000 crores. Secondary Education gets Rs. 4554 crores. The Mid-Day-Meal Scheme launched as a Centrally sponsored scheme on 15th August 1995 initially in 2408 blocks in the country has been expanded to cover children at primary level in all blocks in the country. The scheme was revised to cover children in upper primary level (Classes VI to VIII) in 3479 educationally backward blocks. The scheme is now being extended to all children up to upper primary level from class I to VIII in all blocks in the country. The total number of children covered under this scheme would thus be 13.9 crores—making it the largest school lunch programme in the world. The introduction of the scheme has certainly encouraged the students for attending schools and receiving education. This would help them in becoming strong, healthy and energetic.

I repeat my suggestions given on earlier occasions that the quality of food being given to the children should be nutritional. Qualified dieticians may be asked to advise so that the meals being served are appealing and appetizing. It should be cooked under hygienic conditions and punctually served to the students.

Sir, realizing the necessity of quality of education being imparted in educational institutions, equal emphasis

has been laid in the Budget on extending quality educational facilities. Subsequent to Hon'ble Prime Minister's announcement, one IIM at Shilong, three IERS at Mohali, Pune and Kolkata and one IIT at Kanchipuram have started functioning. Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas in 20 Districts having a large population of SC, STs, with an outlay of Rs. 120 crores are proposed to be opened. In addition to existing 1754 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas an additional 410 such Vidyalayas as proposed to be opened in educationally backward blocks. These Vidyalayas are to address the issue of equity in the education of girls belonging to SCs, STs, OBC and Minorities. 16 Central Universities in uncovered areas so far, 3 IITs in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan, Two IERS at Bhopal and Thiruvananthapuram and 2 schools of Planning and Architecture at Bhopal and Vijayawada are proposed to be established. All these are welcome steps and concentrate on providing a better quality of education in various spheres in the country with a particular emphasis on those belonging to SCs, STs, OBCs and Minorities. These would enable our students on receive better technical education.

Sir, by raising the tax-slabs liberally for the Salaried and Middle Classes, Women and Sr. Citizens, the Budget proposals are intended to increase growth. Every income tax assessee would be getting a tax benefit of Rs. 4000 at least. Those whose income is Rs. 1,50,000 per annum will save Rs. 4,120 under the new tax rates.

In the case of those whose income is Rs. 5 lakhs P.A. the saving amount will be Rs. 45,320. In the case of women and senior citizens the minimum of the assessable amount has been considerably increased providing them a much sought for relief. All of them would be having extra money in their hands to spend which would definitely generate extra demand in the market for goods and services, which, in turn, would help the economy as a whole. This entire exercise would improve the quality of life in general for which the Hon'ble Finance Minister deserves to be profusely praised.

Sir, the Finance Minister deserves to be congratulated on increasing outlay on health by 15%, Women and Child Development by 23% and on Defence by 10%. The NREGS has been extended to all 596 districts. A sum of Rs. 16000 crores has been provided for this, which would certainly ensure that people in remote rural areas are

either getting work or getting monetary benefit through this scheme. Similarly, allocations have been increased for JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission) for improving urban infrastructure and the Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission. Equally, various Development and Finance Corporations which were set up for disadvantaged groups belonging to SCs, STs, OBCs and Minorities have received additional allocations.

Sir, it would thus be observed that the proposed Budget of the Hon'ble Finance Minister is an intelligent exercise in balancing growth and expectations. It is full of hopes for everyone and touches nearly every spectrum of our economy. I would like to conclude by making reference to another significant announcement by the Hon'ble Finance Minister. He has proposed to establish a Central Plan Schemes Monitoring System to monitor Scheme-wise and State-wise releases for about 1000 Central Plans and Centrally Sponsored Schemes. Evaluations and accounting system of the large amount of money disbursed by the Central Government to State governments and other implementing agencies is a must. We hear unpalatable remarks regarding implementation of various such schemes in the public and media, about ground realities being different from what these appear to be on the paper. The need for such a mechanism has been long felt. By periodical assessment and evaluation of these schemes, new strategies can be evolved for deriving better results.

Sir, in the end it is my firm belief that this Budget would provide relief and succour to every Indian across the length and breadth of the country. This would certainly prove to be a significant mile-stone in the path of economic growth and development and prosperity of the country.

Sir, this Budget aims at providing better education, better standard of life and all round development and progress of the country. It is a Historical Budget which has provided happiness to all in the country without imposing any extra burden on anyone. This is an ideal Budget and I support it wholeheartedly.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker Sir, after the presentation of the Budget. I have seen hope, confidence and happiness on the face of common man. It was well reflected in a large public

gathering organised on the 9th of this month at Ramleela ground in Delhi. Lakhs of people of every community from various parts of the country gathered there to extend their thanks to respected Smt. Sonia Gandhiji and hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singhji. They were enthusiastic and were not tired of extending thanks to their favourite leaders. I am receiving messages from all over India praising the Government in Centre which is vigilant and attentive towards health, education, progress and the standard of living of the common people. Once again, I would like to extend thanks to the hon'ble Minister of Finance on behalf of the common people having faith in the Government.

*SHRI CHANDRABHAN SINGH (Damoh): I would like to submit the following points regarding the General Budget.

The Bundelkhand region has been facing a drought situation for the last three years. In view of the recurrence of drought situation in six districts of Bundelkhand region and 3 districts of Vindhya region, a demand for an amount of Rs. 24244.00 crore has been made. However, no such provision has been made in the Budget.

A proposal for electrification work in 48 districts was submitted under the Rajiv Gandhi Rural Electrification Scheme out of which proposal in respect of 27 districts is lying pending for approval. Provision of funds has not been made in the budget for starting work in some more districts out of 21 districts for which proposal has been approved.

The Union Minister of power had announced setting up of Atomic power station in Madhya Pradesh. However, no provision has been made in the Budget regarding the setting up of a 200 megawatt atomic power station in the State.

Loans of smaller amount have been provided to the weavers, craftsmen etc. and lakhs of unemployed persons belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and religious minority communities by the SC/ST, OBC and minority welfare departments and banks. However, no provision has been made regarding the loan waiver for the categories in the general budget.

*Speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Chandrabhan Singh]

There is a provision to give old age pension to those who are above 65 years of age. However, no provision has been made to give old age pension to people below poverty line in the age group of 60 to 65 years.

No provision has been made in the general budget 2008-09 to give pension to poor widows.

How will the bank loans of the farmers be waived off? How will the Government return the loan waiver amount to the banks and by when?

No provision has been made in the budget to improve the condition of nearly 46 percent farmers who have taken loans from the money-lenders at higher rates of interest.

No concrete measures have been taken in the Budget to provide subsidy to the farmers on pesticides, fertilizers, seeds etc. and to make other general provisions.

No special provision has been made for the woman poor people in General Budget, 2008-09.

No provision has been made to check price rise and increase availability of foodgrains.

Unemployment cannot be removed by merely providing 100 days' employment to labourers under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. So, it is required to be increased to 200 days.

The provision of exemption in income tax to the middle class families is a delayed step. However, on account of rising prices and increase in items of Service tax, middle class families will not be able to save money. So, the income tax exemption limit should be further increased.

No special provision has been made in the Budget for improving the condition of women and labourers, removing unemployment and promoting small scale and cottage industries.

The number of poor beneficiaries under the Public Distribution System and the coverage under the scheme, which is very much essential, has not been increased.

[English]

*SHRIMATI JHANSI LAKSHMI BOTCHA (Bobbili): I thank you for giving me an opportunity to express my views on the historic, revolutionary and path-breaking Union Budget, 2008-09, presented by the hon. Finance Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram on 29-02-2008.

I have no hesitation in saying that the Budget is pro-poor, pro-farmer and satisfies all sections of the society. It has been hailed by the industry also. In the first three years of the UPA Government, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by an unprecedented average growth rate of 8.8 per cent. In the current year too the growth rate will be 8.7 per cent

Our UPA Government's emphasis on inclusive growth is beyond a political slogan; inclusiveness is a critical component of a sustainable growth path. This needs to be tackled at several levels. Transfer payments to provide households a secure and minimum level of subsistence need to be combined with longer-term programmes that build capabilities and earning capacity. The Economic Survey has shown that, despite doubling social sector spending over the past four years, the country's position vis-a-vis the Human Development Index does not show much change. The budget needs to reinforce successful programmes and streamline the entire delivery system, including providing strong incentives to State Governments. I welcome the Finance Minister's initiative to link the outlays with outcomes.

Loan Waiver

So far as loan waiver of Rs. 60,000 crores for poor farmers is concerned, it is the largest debt forgiveness programme announced ever in India; and among the largest waivers in the world. It is testimony to India's fiscal strength that the Government is able to give such a large handout. More than four crore farmers are going to be benefited from this unprecedented move. Some doubts were expressed by the opposition members and some people in the media regarding the practicality of implementation of this loan waiver. I am very sure that the honorable Finance Minister will give a satisfactory reply to put aside all doubts regarding its implementation

*The Speech was laid on the Table.

Here I want to stress that even though every year agriculture credit is increasing, ground realities reveal that majority of these are book adjustments and the small and marginal framers do not get institutionalized loans. The over emphasis on targets has been depriving these farmers from availing institutional loans. The RBI guidelines clearly emphasize that credit should be extended to the farmers by hypothecating either his produce or farm implements like tractors. But yet Banks emphasize on the farmers, producing either the land deed or the tenancy deed. 80% of the farmers in our country are tenant farmers and land given on lease is on trust and not put on paper. Besides small and marginal farmers are required to produce a NOC from other banks which he is unable to produce as he cannot leave his agricultural work and go around the banks.

Inter-banking network needs to be modernized to reduce procedural delays. Therefore, I would like to highlight the efforts made by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in trying to ensure that farmers were formed into groups on the model of Self Help Groups and credit was made available to them. Even as we accept that more needs to be done in strengthening this scheme, I would urge upon the Finance Minister to look into the nitty gritty's of this scheme, and if possible, institutionalize this programme so that the tenant farmer can also avail of himself institutionalized loans

NREGP

As a member of NREGA Central Council, I thank the Finance Minister for allocating funds to extend the National Rural Employment Guarantee program to all the 596 rural districts in the country from 1st April 2008, with a provision of Rs. 16000 crores. This is also a unique program aimed at changing the rural face of India. As suggested by the Honorable Rural Development Minister, Shri Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, we the parliamentarians, irrespective of party affiliations, should see that the program is implemented with full vigor and drawbacks are capped.

Revised Income tax Slabs

Income tax payers are thankful to the Finance Minister for raising the ceiling limit of income in respect

of individuals, women and senior citizens. Because of rationalization of tax structure many people are coming voluntarily into the tax net. The direct tax contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) has risen from 9.2% in 2003-04 to 12.5% in 2007-08. This shows the economic growth achieved by the UPA Government.

Also, the much-awaited relief on banking transaction tax will now be removed from April, 2009.

These measures will put more money in the hands of the consumer, which would give them more spending power, as a little more cash at hand would definitely help consumers. This would also help the consumer durable industry.

Education & Health

Education and health are the twin pillars on which rests the edifice of social sector reforms. The total allocation for the education sector will be increased by 20 per cent from Rs. 28,674 crore in 2007-08 to Rs. 34,400 crore in 2008-09. The skill development mission, 6000 high quality Model schools, upgrading the ITIs and Sainik Schools are all welcome steps. In this regard I want to reiterate once again that exclusive sainik schools for girls should be set up in all States. On a pilot basis, I request the Finance Minister to sanction the first girls' sainik school at Vizianagaram, in Andhra Pradesh.

- The move to provide scholarships to the tune of Rs. 85 crores to encourage our children to take to careers in science and research and development, Sir, is a welcome step. This will encourage children to take up science subject with passion and ultimately basic research.
- Rs. 164 crores scholarship for OBC students is welcome. However, I request the Finance Minister to increase this amount to Rs. 300 crores.

Sir, the excise duty on packaged software is increased from 8% to 12%. People are just getting used to original software. To control piracy of packaged software, I request the Finance Minister to withdraw this proposed hike.

[Shri Jhansi Lakshmi Botcha]

India's Soft Power

Rs. 75 crore to the Indian Council of Cultural Relations to design and implement a programme to achieve the objective of increasing the **soft power** of India is a welcome step. In this connection, I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Finance Minister that there is an ancient Maharaja Government Music and Dance College at Vizianagaram which has been imparting music classes from time immemorial and produced famous singers like Ghantasala, P. Susheela, dancers and musicians. It had been set up in 1919. I would request the Finance Minister to allot some money to this institution from Rs. 75 crore to upgrade it and modernize the infrastructure.

Gender Budgeting

I compliment the Finance Minister for pronouncing in the budget that the **Gender Budgeting has gained wider acceptance and credibility**. According to the statement, Rs. 11,460 crore has been provided for 100 per cent women-specific schemes and Rs. 16,202 crore for schemes where at least 30 per cent is for women-specific programmes. This shows the favourable attitude of the UPA Chairperson, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi and Dr. Manmohan Singh's Government towards women.

Health

Health sector has been allotted Rs. 16,534 crores which will take care of National Rural Health Mission, HIV/AIDS, Polio, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana for Self Help Groups. This would definitely increase the health of the people in urban and rural areas. I compliment the Finance Minister for this.

Indira Awas Yojana (I.A.Y)

I thank the Finance Minister for increasing the allocation for increasing the subsidy from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 35,000 in plain areas under the Indira Awas Yojana. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has taken up construction of houses for the people living below the poverty line on a large scale. I would request the Finance Minister to sanction more subsidy for the SC and ST people so that the Government can take up more constructions of houses for them.

Irrigation

I welcome the budget proposal to establish the Irrigation and Water Resources Finance Corporation

(IWRFC) with an initial capital of Rs. 100 crore contributed by the Central Government.

Among the various infrastructure segments, irrigation tops the chart in terms of highest increase in allocation. The accelerated irrigation benefits programme has received 82 percent increase in outlay to the extent of Rs. 20,000 crore. Here I would like to highlight that irrigation is the subject which is close to the heart of our Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh CM, Dr Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy and he is making no stone unturned to complete the irrigation projects on time. I sincerely believe that the budget allocation for irrigation will give a boost to the irrigation projects in Andhra Pradesh. .

Senior Citizens

I thank the Finance Minister for being considerate to the senior citizens of the country. An allocation of Rs. 400 crore has been made for their welfare and care.

Inland Fisheries

So far as Inland Fisheries Research Centre is concerned, it should be set up in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. At the same time, the benefits enjoyed by the marine fishermen should be extended to the inland fishermen.

With these few words, once again I support the General Budget for 2008-09, presented by the hon. Finance Minister.

[Translation]

*SHRI HARIBHAU JAWALE (Jalgaon): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to lay written speech about my views on General Budget 2008-09. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister of Finance has presented a pre-election populist budget on 29.2.2008 before the country. The focal point of this budget is loan waiver of Rs. 60,000 crore given to the farmers. This is being widely publicised by UPA. In Maharashtra also, the hon'ble Minister is being felicitated by the Cadres of Rashtrawadi Congress party by glorifying it. Everybody was demanding loan waiver for the farmers, we are also happy, but how many farmers will get relief by the loan waiver given by the hon'ble Minister in the budget.

The farmers of western Maharashtra of Shri Sharad Pawar's constituency are going to get maximum relief

*The Speech was laid on the Table.

8700 farmers of Satara district alone are likely to get loan waiver of Rs. 307 crores.

Nothing has been done for the farmers of Vidarbha, Marathwada, and Khandesh in Maharashtra, where farmers are committing suicides.

Through you, I would like to request the hon'ble Minister to extend loan waiver scheme to the farmers owning upto 15 acres of land. The hon'ble Minister has waived off loan taken upto 31.3.2007, but the loan of farmers who have been regularly repaying loans and who have taken loan after 1.4.07 and before or on 28.12.2007 for Kharif and Rabi crops should be waived off because they have not committed any sin and should not be deprived of loan waiver.

Sir, 50 per cent farmers of Maharashtra have taken loan from credit society, nothing has been clarified in this regard. Recovery by the credit society has been totally stopped. Through you, I would like to demand that loans taken by farmers through credit society should also be waived off. Alongwith it, the credit society should also get aid.

Sir, since the presentation of Budget by the hon'ble Minister all UPA people have started dreaming of coming back to power these sweet dreams of Mungerilal are going to be shattered.

I would like to request all Members of the UPA to visit each and every house in the country, only then they will know the reality. Since hon'ble Chidambaramji has presented the budget, the domestic budget of housewives has got disturbed with the rise in prices of essential commodities and the prices of edible oils, pulses, flour have increased by more than 30 percent. The prices of steel, cement etc. required for construction of Houses are sky rocketing. After seeing all this, they will come to know the actual position. The price rise is going to affect the election results, the UPA Government is not going to come back to power.

Sir, four years back Congress was having agenda Congress Ka Haath, Aam Admi ke sath". But now this very hand of Congress is emptying the pocket of common man, so the people are not going to forgive them.

I would like to request the hon'ble Minister of Finance to immediately formulate a plan for controlling the prices

of essential commodities. After loan waiver for farmers further loan at the rate of 3 percent should be given to the farmers, in order to make them self reliant. Additional funds should be made available for agriculture.

Jalgaon constituency in Maharashtra has been the major producer of bananas in the country. For the last four years, banana producing farmers are distressed as various diseases are hitting the banana crop. In the last year, banana producers suffered losses worth crores. Banana Research Laboratory should be set up in Jalgaon by the Union Government. We have been demanding for last many years to set up Banana Food Processing Park in that area so as to give employment to thousands of youths through it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Mahapraya Water Recharge Scheme for artice recharge in Yaval Tehsil. Rauser Chopra in my Parliamentary Constituency. Jalgaon has been sent through the State Government after asking the Ministry of Water Resources for approva and financial provision. The same may please be approved immediately.

A big hospital should be set up through National Rural Health Mission in Jalgaon parliamentary Constituency and Financial aid provided to start new courses in Uttar Maharashtra Vidyapeeth. Funds should be provided to complete irrigation projects in Shesh Gaon, Padalsar, Prabhani Tanda.

[English]

DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA (Rajkot): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to express my views on the General Budget 2008-09. ... (*Interruptions*) Though I congratulate the hon. Finance Minister for waiving loan of farmers, I must say that everything is not fine and fair. ... (*Interruptions*) Even after waiving of loans of farmers worth Rs. 60,000 crore, I would like to submit that there are so many reports – Swaminathan Report, Knowledge Commission Report of Sam Pitroda and NSSO Report and Arjun Sengupta Report – which say that the conditions are not good in the country.

I would like to summarise my points in one or two minutes. Coming to the agriculture, it is good that the loan of Rs. 60,000 crore are waived, but we know that it is said that 'do not supply fish to a hungry man, but teach him how to fish.' It is our imperative duty that such type of events like suicide and indebtedness do not happen off and on.

[Dr. Vallabhbhai Kathiria]

That is why, the agricultural contribution to GDP which was 58.89 per cent in 1950s has come down to 16.7 per cent at present because of lack of concentration on agriculture sector. I would like to say that we should have a separate Agriculture Budget with a massive allocation, like Rs. 60,000 crore in one year, so that all the requirements such as water supply, bio-fertilizers, electricity, etc., can be taken care of and the farmers can get remunerative prices. If this happens, within a few months, our farmers will produce mountains of food grains and we no longer will have to import them.

Sir, with your permission, I would like to lay the rest of my speech on the Table of the House.

*Sir, as per my personal experience in farming, farmer requires enough water, quality seeds, proper fertilizers, remunerative price of crops and value addition in the line of agro processing and comprehensive agricultural insurance, for all crops, all seasons, all types of calamities.

Enough water is there in our country but the problem is that of water management, meagre amount of areas for water conservation will not suffice, Sir, Location specific water management practice should be adopted. If we provide water for all the 12th months, farmer will take 3 crops at least. India's cultivable land is 104 million hectare. India's net sowing area is 96 million hectare. India's net irrigated area is 30 million hectare. It means only 30% land is cultivable except monsoon, due to lack of availability of water.

If we provide water, then during winter another 60% more land will have crops and consider only 50% of total land for 3rd crop. Even then the production of Agriculture produce will be double in one year. That too by water only!

If we provide good quality of Biotech seeds, then there will be increase in total quality per acre. If we provide good harvesting technology, then 15%-20% crops is saved and if we go for value addition, then farmers will get remunerative price also automatically. Loan to farmers should be given at 4% instead of 7%.

Sir it means you give more emphasis on water techniques (1) and B.T. Seeds (2) that our scientists can do as they did in 1965—the green revolution on one call of hon. Lal Bahadur Shastri and schemes for biofertilizer

(3) for more organic food and lastly industries (4) for agro-processing and value addition units which is 2.1% at present.

Sir, if you infuse 60000 crores in above areas and see the result! our farmers will give you the grains. Your GDP will bounce like any thing from just 2.6% at present. Please increase the allocation for agriculture by giving separate agriculture Budget for few years and will have the fruits of development for the country very soon.

No scattered efforts in small areas, go for massive drive for execution as per reports of Swaminathan Committee and other too.

Sir, Tamil poet Thiruvakassur has said, " if the farmers had sicken, even the greatest kingdom will fall. It is now high time to rise above the party to save the farmer, to save the economy and for prosperity of the country.

We have 28.6 crore cattle wealth in our country, which is not explored at all or taken care properly. But there is the comprehensive planning. What is our priority, tiger protection only or overall development of cattle wealth?

India's Economic Situation has been worsening day by day in the midst of rapid growth rate.

Increasing Concentration of Income & Wealth

During the 15 years of globollisation, no doubt India's GDP is rising at an increased rate. It is 9.4% during 2006-07.

However the common man has nothing to cheer about it. This is because of increasing concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands and widening deprivation of the masses. This tendency is very dangerous for the economic and social stability of the country.

All round attack on Agriculture

The farming sector's situation is becoming pathetic day by day. Farmers' suicides are continuing unabated. The M.S. Swaminathan Commission (National Commission on Farmers) Report has almost been thrown to dustbin. On the contrary the Central Government is planning to launch an all round attack on Agriculture, with the purpose of driving away the farmers from their lands and ultimately corporatising Indian Agriculture.

** This part of the Speech was laid on the Table.

Attack-1

Attack seed bill, 2004 has the purpose half taking away the traditional seed right of the farmers and it over to multinational seed companies.

Attack-2

SEZ policy of the Govt., aims at taking away thousands of hectares of good farming lands by force and hand them-over to SEZ land developers.

Attack-3

The model APMC act circulated by the Central Government is being adopted by more and more states. The amendments are aimed at diluting the powers of the APMC's and establish privately owned markets. It also provides for contract farming by multinational and domestic agri business companies. There is no level playing field between the corporates and the poor and unorganized farmers.

Attack-4

Indo-U.S. knowledge initially in Agricultural technologies. The Committee for the purpose from the American side includes Monsanto, the world's largest Bio-Technology company and Wall Mart, the world's largest food retailer. The two U.S. companies made it abundantly clear to India in the very first meeting, that they are only interested in providing India [^]JIM__seeds, Gm fishes and GM animals. This means that the farmers have to lose all their traditional verities of seeds, fishes and animal breeds. And pay hefty royalty to U.S., Companies.

Attack 5: Wheat Import: The Central Government imported last year (2005-2006) pest infected, sub-standard wheat from Australia, duty free to the extent of 4 million tons, at 50% higher price over the MSP to Indian farmers. This year again it is taking the same disastrous steps.

Rising Unemployment: Unemployment in the country has been loss rising continuously with no hopes of employment generation. This is causing social tension and increase in crime rate.

Rising Inflation: The country is witnessing great rise in inflation especially in food articles. This is hurting the common man very seriously.

External Side: On the external front the stalemate in W.T.O., continues and the Doha round is unlikely to conclude by the end of U.S., presidential elections in Nov., 08. The U.S. and E.U. persist with the demand for reduction in Industrial Tariff (Non Agricultural Market access) without commensurate offer for reduction Agricultural subsidies and export incentive. India should make use of the interim period to correct the imbalances in international trade by making use of the restiveness shown by the developing countries. India also should not fall a prey to the machination of the U.S. and reject the offer like extended membership of G-8. The SJM cautions the Government regarding the growing Trade and current account deficits and urge for immediate corrective steps. I feel the strong Rupees as a symbol of self respect and demands the Government not to middle with market forces in currency Trade like sterilisation which increases inflation and burden the common man. I prefer fiscal measures like increased duty draw backs and monetary measures like lower interest for exports.

Sir, steps to be taken to arrest the concentration of wealth and spread of deprivation.

The all round attacks on Agricultural sector should be stopped forthwith and positive measures be taken to improve the income of the farmers.

Sir, steps should be taken to control inflation and reduce unemployment.

Sir, Now come to another important Sector i.e. Education.

Sir, I would like to tell you that what are doing is half heartedly and in piece-meal.

It is a bureaucratic tendency not to increase many fold but only upto 15-20% every year for allocation and similarly for new initiative also. They go over safe guarded. Why I don't understand?

Say for example, for modern school – This year only 6000, out of 1,00,000 I When will you reach the target at this speed?

Sir, amongst 8 millennium Development, Goal, we have to achieve the universalisation of "Education for all" by 2015.

Kothary Committee has recommended at least 6% of GDP in education. What prevents us from doing that? Let us decide our priority.

[Dr. Vallabhbai Kathiria]

Sir, it is disheartening to know that more than 9% of all total habitation in India do not have access to school. (CAG Report 15 of 2006) in west Bengal, it is as high as 43%.

As per 2001 around 46% of our children population 6-14 yrs of age is out of school actually i.e. 15 crores out of 29 crores of total children around. 12% of children do not enroll at all and 24% do not attend the school who are enrolled as they do not like the school environment.

What a scenario, even though we are running Serve Siksha Abhiyan?

By delay or slow pace of growth, we are only increasing the absolute no. of children who are out of school? We have to find out the solution. If we want to be super power in 21st century.

Sir regarding, technical and vocational education, the NDA Govt. prepared a parallel scheme for Std IX onwards. But it is not implemented at all. I would like to tell you that it is so flexible and acceptable scheme for entrepreneurs that everybody in next generation will be skilled as per his/her capacity and affordability and choice.

I earnestly request the Govt. to implement that scheme urgently which lying somewhere in Shastri Bhavan.

Sir I think, though we are celebrating Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas for last 6-7 years, but we have failed to attract our NRI in field of education. In this era of libertization, they would have been inspired to invest in higher education but we have not! Because of our clumsy policy and administrative hurdles, they are hesitant to invest here. No system is evolved to solve their problems, yet.

Sir, Gujarat is prospering, prospering because of its entrepreneurship, because of conducive environment and political will. It is requested to start one IIT in Gujarat. As such IIT- Mumbai-Pavai has shown its willingness to start its campus in Gandhinagar Govt. of Gujarat is ready to provide land free of cost. The matter is pending in central Govt. Please consider it positively.

Sir, similarly Govt. of Gujarat has requested to start IISE and manytime institute as Gujarat has 1600 kms. long coastal area.

Sir, Small, micro & medium industries are the backbone of the country. Due to globalization and attack of multinational and agriculture industrial houses. These industries are in great panic. Still lot of requires to be done to save them as these industries are the real industries giving employment.

Khadi and village industries are not looked after by you. Sir, please have some incentives to save KVI sector.

As I said previously, heavy inflow in agro industries is required to enhance the value addition of Agriculture produce.

Excise exemption was given to earthquake area of kutch, but many industries which are in pipeline and could not come to production by 2007, December: they are waiting for tax exemption. Govt of Gujarat has off & on requested to consider. Please rethink over it. my humblest appeal.

Similarly, surcharged was levied on income tax to generate income for kutch earthquake in 2001-02. 1500 crores rupess, yet are to be disbursed from money collected out of above surcharge. Please release this amount so that rehabilitation work can be completed.

Sir, expert committee has identified Mundra & Pipavav ports for ship building industry on west coast. The demand is pending with Govt. of India. Please expedite the request and oblige.

Sir, surcharge on future commodity market is unwanted and untimely. Please withdraw it for growth of this market properly.

Sir, I have come to know that Govt. has stopped the 90:10, Swajaldhara Scheme providing clean drinking water to villages. Is it correct?

It is very good scheme, people have appreciated it with 10% contribution. So please do not stop it.

As far as health is concerned, all 354 essential drugs should be bought under price control.

Efforts towards traditional medical knowledge should be enhanced and this knowledge should not be allowed to be patented by the MNCs.

Priority for universalization of Gender budgeting including gender audit and outcome assessment by all ministries at central and state levels may be given.*

*DR. ARVIND SHARMA (Karnal): Thank you, Hon'ble Speaker Sir, I stand here to support the General Budget-2008-09.

This is an extra-ordinary budget that is essentially pro-poor and prepared especially for our Aam-aadmi. I pay my fulsome regards and heart-felt thanks to my great leader & UPA chairperson, Madam Sonia Gandhi; our Hon'ble Prime Minister and our very able Finance Minister for this amazing Budget. Our UPA Govt. has been providing exemplary governance and rapid inclusive growth for all people of our great country.

Sir, our Govt. has taken a historic step of providing a Debt Waiver and Debt Relief to small and marginal farmers. This initiative is expected to benefit about three crore small and marginal farmers and one crore other farmers and provide relief of about 60,000 crores to our farmers. I profusely thank our great leader and the Govt. for this. I would however like to also draw the attention of our dear Finance Minister to the plight of those hapless farmers who have borrowed money from private moneylenders. Many of our poor farmers are forced to pledge their precious lands or other items for taking loans. Moreover, farmers with bigger holdings have also been left out of this noble scheme.

Sir, all our farmers deserve the benefits of this momentous decision. I am sure, the Finance Minister will very kindly extend the ambit of this great debt waiver and relief scheme and cover most our farmers. We definitely owe it to our farmers!

Sir, in this context, I would also like to mention about the unending plight of landless workers/farmers, farm labourers, daily wageworkers and the unemployed.

Their plight is unimaginable and needs to be addressed in its entirety. I suggest that our UPA Govt. should bring a similar debt waiver and relief package for these weaker and underprivileged sections of the society.

Similarly Sir, there are eight flagship programmes of the UPA Govt. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) will cover all 596 districts in the country. A whopping 16,000 crore have been earmarked for this initially. I am glad to note that the Finance Minister has promised to provide more money, if required.

Sir, we know that our great leader, Madam Gandhi and our Prime Minister are keeping a hawk's eye on

the prices of all essential commodities yet due to the market forces or other factors that are beyond our control; the prices of many of these essential commodities have been increasing. We are aware that our Govt. is taking all necessary steps to bring back the prices. This is of paramount importance as it is badly affecting the Aam-aadmi. Sir, I would also like to mention that LPG cylinders are being openly black-marketed at high prices in the rural as well as urban areas. Immediate steps should be taken to ensure that the consumers are able to get regular supply of LPG cylinders easily.

Sir, our employees have been serving our country with sincerity and devotion. However, only a brief mention has been made about the 6th Pay Commission in the Budget. No visible allocation of funds has been made in the Budget for this important head. I am sure, our worthy Finance Minister will make appropriate allocations to fulfill the aspirations of our employees.

Sir, it is heartening to note that Rs. 16,534 crore have been earmarked for the Health sector which is an increase of 15% over the allocation in 2007-08. I am sure; the Govt. would do everything necessary for the development and construction of AIIMS type centers of excellence in other parts of the country. Sufficient budget should be allocated to those hospitals also which will be established and upgraded in public interest by the Central Govt. parallel to AIIMS New Delhi. In this budget, there is no budget provision about the establishment of Kalpna Chawla Medical College (a world renowned Astronaut), Karnal, Haryana, which has already been announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in April 2008. I request you to kindly take the necessary steps at the earliest.

Sir, in the end, I would only request our dear Finance Minister to further augment this excellent budget with my humble suggestions made above.

I thank you sir, for giving me this opportunity to make my submissions here today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. The discussion will be continued tomorrow.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we will take up Special Mentions.

SHRI KIREN RIJIJU (Arunachal West): Sir, I am going to raise a very important issue. I thank you for permitting me to raise this important issue. This is regarding the attack on journalists in the North-Eastern Region. In recent few years, many journalists have come under attack from various elements. Those journalists who have reported very well, who have the courage to speak the truth and who have been very, very clear in their profession have been attacked by various elements.

I want to take one example. Last month, on the 10th of February, 2008, the Chairperson of one of the leading television channels of North-East, Ms. Manoranjana Sinha, was attacked, and subsequently, one lady journalist belonging to the Arunachal Pradesh was also attacked. The Government of Assam said that one inquiry was going on.

My request to the Union Home Ministry and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is to find out culprits and pressurize the State Government of Assam to institute an inquiry, have possibly a highest level inquiry, against the culprits who attacked the journalists. The liberty and freedom of the journalists must be protected.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is not the Budget speech. You only have to make a mention of it.

SHRI KIREN RIJIJU: The International Journalists Federation also condemned the incident. The civil societies of North-East, the Assam Students Union, and political parties have all condemned the incident. I also condemn it from this august House. The State Government of Assam is acting against those journalists who are not favourable to the State Government of Assam. It is very shameful. I request you to take necessary action in this regard.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, I call Shri Sarbananda Sonowal. Do not take too much time. This is 'Zero Hour'.

*SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL (Dibrugarh): Hon'ble Chairman Sir, I would like to raise a very important matter in this august House. Under the aegis of Srimanta Sankardev Sangha, a decision has been taken to set up Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev Vishwavidyalaya in Assam. The Assam Assembly has enacted Assam Private University Act, 2007 for setting up of this university. Under this Act Srimanta Sankardev

Sangha has prepared a scheme to set up Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev Vishwavidyalaya. Sir, Srimanta Sankardev Sangha has formed Srimanta Sankardev Education and Socio-Economic Development Trust to look after the affairs of the university. The trust has also prepared a fiscal draft for five years. The trust has been registered under Foreign Currency Regulation Act for exemption from Income Tax for the purpose of collecting Rs. 236,0071,000. Moreover, the Trust has sent a proposal to the concerned authority for setting up of a financial institution, a 200-bedded hospital and for doing some welfare works for the people. Through you Sir, I appeal to the Hon'ble Finance Minister to provide necessary financial aid for the setting up of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev Vishwavidyalaya.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, I call upon Shri Santosh Gangwar. The U.P. Government recommended an ACB inquiry into the matter. It is a State matter.

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to raise a very important issue in the House. A CD about our religious faith is being circulated in various parts of the country, in which derogatory remarks have been made about the character of Lord Ram. An MP of BSP has also accepted that Lord Ram has been depicted as anti dalit in it. The people are agitated in this regard. This CD is not only being distributed in Uttar Pradesh, but in Delhi and other places as well.

I would like to request the Union Government to intervene in this matter, to take action against culprits and conduct a CBI inquiry in this regard so that facts may come to surface because the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh is giving adverse remarks in this connection. I would like to request to ensure that religious sentiments of Hindus is not be hurt.

[English]

SHRIMATI JHANSI LAKSHMI BOTCHA (Bobbili): Mr. Chairman, Sir, on 8th March, 2008, throughout the country we have celebrated Women's Day with much fanfare but it has not been reflected on the ground as we could not voice our concern in the House on that day as it happened to be a Saturday. Despite the goal of reserving one-third of the seats in Parliament and State Legislatures for women, it continues to be elusive. We know that the

*English translation of the Speech originally delivered in Assamese.

Women's Reservation Bill was first introduced in Parliament in 1996. However, with diverse objections from political quarters, the Bill remained a nonstarter. I am happy to learn that the UPA Government has declared that the Bill, which is a priority in the Common Minimum Programme, would be passed.

I regret to say that in a progressive democracy like India only 8.3 per cent of the Members of Parliament are women, according to data published by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Based on the positive experience of reservation for women in Panchayats and urban local bodies, reservation in Parliament and State Legislatures will work strongly to the advantage of women. In a tradition-bound society, if more women are elected to positions of power, the problems that continue to afflict women, such as oppression, domestic violence, discrimination and the lack of opportunities, can be solved. Political empowerment is the only panacea for these society-driven evils. We are only pleading for extension of reservation from Panchayat to Parliament.

I would request political parties – which are resisting this Bill – to set aside their differences and work together to make the just representation of women in Parliament and in State Legislatures a reality by ensuring the immediate passage of this important piece of legislation. Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI BHANU PRATAP VERMA (Jalaun): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to raise an important issue before you. The entire country is familiar with the name of Maharani Laxmibai who had fought the first war of independence. She lost her life while fighting. It is said-

"Bundelo Harbolo ke Munh, Hamne suni kahani Thi, Khoob Ladi mardani, woh to Jhansi wali rani thi".

She never compromised with the Britishers and she earned her place among the great women of India by sacrificing her life for the country. But a book has been published against the brave women, Laxmibai. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Title of the book is rani, and its author Jayshree Mishra lives in London. Today, this book is being sold in the entire country, particularly in Uttar Pradesh. Dr. Kanchan Jaiswal Vice-President of the State Mahila Morcha had staged a dharna and demonstration against

it in Jhansi and alongwith many of the women memorandum in this regard to DM. I fail to understand what kind of writer she is, who writes whatsoever she wishes against anybody. I would like to read out some excerpts of the book. On page 223 and 224, she has described objectionable... between Rani Laxmi Bai and Britisher Robert Alen. On Page 225 and 226, she has narrated daily dialogue between Rani Laxmi Bai and Britisher Robert Alen on page 250, the description of... Rani before Robert Allen has been given. Even on page 255, Rani Laxmi Bai has been addressed with very objectionable... words... (*Interruptions*). This is a very important matter. This book has been banned in the state of Uttar Pradesh. I would like to demand that this book should be banned in the entire country and strict action should be taken against the said writer so that she may not dare to publish any such book on anybody else in future.

[English]

SHRI ABU AYES MONDAL (Katwa): Sir, I do recall that the Members of the Standing Committee on Water Resources while on a Study Tour to Durgapur Barrage of Damodar River expressed their utter worry seeing the critical siltation problems in the surface of Damodar on 12th February 2007. The Committee held a meeting with the engineers of West Bengal State Irrigation & Waterways Department, Central Water Commission and Damodar Valley Corporation to discuss the same.

I understood that Barrage engineers were not in favour of desiltation since the works of desiltation would be much expensive. But it is a matter of great concern that the siltation will cause crisis in water supply to Durgapur city in one hand and inundation on the other in near future. Also it would fail to supply irrigation water for the surrounding areas of river bank for cultivation. The Standing Committee asked the State engineers to make a Detail Project Report (DPR) and send the same to the Central Water Resources Department. But the DPR has not been sent by them.

I would also like to inform the House that the Chairman, Standing Committee on Water Resources drew attention with sorrow in the meeting held on 07.01.2008 regarding not having been made the DPR. The Secretary and other officers of the Ministry present in the meeting

*Not recorded as ordered by the chair.

told the hon. Members that they would look into the matter urgently. But it is a matter of great sadness that nothing has been done till date.

I therefore urge upon the Ministry of Water Resources, in the Government of India to take immediate action regarding the same.

DR. K.S. MANOJ (Alleppey): The fishermen of the country especially the traditional fishermen are facing acute indebtedness. The per capita income of the fishers are among the lowest in the country, that is, about half that of general population. Being a member belonging to the fisherman community, I know the fishermen are the only group of labourers who are not entitled for the wages unless they get some catches from the sea. In addition to that, the rising operational costs, lack of opportunities for organized marketing, presence of middlemen, nonavailability of institutional finance, reluctance of the insurance companies to provide insurance coverage to the traditional fishing crafts, etc. have thrown them in severe indebtedness.

I am glad that the hon. Finance Minister has announced debt waiver to small and marginal farmers to the tune of Rs. 60,000 crore. I am very much pained that the debts of traditional fishermen are not included under the debts waiver. The Government of Kerala has submitted a proposal for Special Central Assistance of Rs. 424 crore to provide debt relief for the fishermen. If some percentage of the debt waver is earmarked for fisher folk it would be a great relief for the fishermen. Hence, I urge upon the Government, to include the debts of traditional fishers also under the Debt Waiver scheme announced by the hon. Finance Minister in the General Budget for the year 2008-09.

[Translation]

*SHRI M. SHIVANNA (Chamrajanagara): Sir, I would like to raise a very important issue regarding the construction of a Drinking Water and Hydel Power Project at Hogenakal Falls by Tamil Nadu Government. Hogenakal is a famous water falls situated on Karnataka Tamil Nadu border. It is in my constituency Chamrajanagara district. Tamil Nadu Government has laid the foundation to construct a Drinking Water Project in this Hogenakal Falls. It is a part of Cauvery and therefore this project should not be taken up as the Cauvery issue is pending before the apex court. ... *(Interruptions)*

*English translation of the Speech originally delivered in Kannada.

[English]

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (Sriperumbudur): Sir, he is misleading the House. The water which overflows only is being used..... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I fully agree

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: No I am not saying that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Shivanna, why do you raise that issue? Cauvery matter is sub judice...

... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Shivanna, you may address the Chair

... *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

*SHRI M. SHIVANNA: The joint survey to demarcate the territory has not been completed. It is expected to be completed by the month of May this year. Since it falls within the disputed area Tamil Nadu Government should not take up any Water project and Hydel Power Project. Already they have laid the foundation stone.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: It is only for drinking purposes and not for hydro project.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: It is a burning issue in my constituency..... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why do you bring all these things during 'Zero Hour', and at the fag end of the day?

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: Otherwise it would prove to be a great injustice to the people of Karnataka. Already a number of organizations in Karnataka, particularly in my constituency have started agitating against this move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That will not come on record.

... *(Interruptions)**

*Not recorded.

SHRI M.SHIVANNA: I am of the opinion that when this matter is sub judice no Government should take up Water Project or any other project on the Cauvery.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record

... (*Interruptions*)*

SHRI M. SHIVANNA: It is not fair Sir.

I would like to request the Union Government to issue necessary directions to the Tamil Nadu Government to stop the construction of this project, before any untoward incident takes place.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record – neither of yours nor of his.

(*Interruptions*) *...

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you are not speaking, I will adjourn the House. You may mention it now.

(*Interruptions*) *...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No word will come on record. If you want to speak, you may do so.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow, the 14th March 2008 at 11 a.m.

19.59 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, March 14, 2008/Phalguna 24, 1929 (Saka).

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