

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) The details are as under :

State	Sanctioned	Completed	Amount Spent
	Kms.	Kms.	
Punjab	452.22	452.22	79.50
Rajasthan	1032.60	719.73	131.73
Assam	158.00	125.54	13.67
Meghalaya	231.00	170.71	24.67
West Bengal	507.00	356.18	64.25
Jammu and Kashmir	180.00	—	11.71

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

[*Translation*]

#### Ban on Begging

2504. SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHLE : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to impose ban on the practice of begging;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to formulate any concrete programme for them; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) to (c) A number of States and Union Territories have enacted legislation for beggary prevention. To supplement the State Government's efforts towards beggary prevention, the Central Government has a scheme for establishing Work Centres in beggar homes run by the State Government.

[*English*]

#### Elephant Habitats

2505. SHRI AYYANNA PATRUDU :

SHRIMATI SARADA TADIPARTHI :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether elephant habitats are endangered on account of human encroachments; and

(b) if so, the measures proposed to be taken to ensure that the elephants do not leave forest owing to encroachments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) Yes, Sir. Human encroachments are potential threats to the elephant habitats as they result in degradation and fragmentation of the habitats.

(b) The elephants sometimes leave the forests because of reasons other than encroachments. However, in order to counter the impact of encroachments as the cause of elephant movements out of the forests, the Central Government provides assistance to the State Governments for implementation of the following measures :

(i) Ecological restoration and protection of elephant habitats;

(ii) Extension, wherever possible, of elephant habitats adjoining National Parks and Sanctuaries;

(iii) Erection of elephant proof barriers at the interface between human habitations and elephant habitats;

(iv) Driving dis-oriented elephant herds back into the forests.

#### Deforestation in Assam

2506. SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that unplanned deforestation in Assam to feed paper mills would definitely cause the environmental hazard;

(b) if so, the measures taken by the Government to check such deforestation;

(c) whether the steps have also been taken so that paper mills in the region could depend on their own plantation of the bamboos; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) The Government of Assam has reported that no such report of unplanned deforestation in Assam for supply of raw materials to the existing paper mills has been received.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The existing paper mills have not yet launched any programme for captive plantation within the State except supply of seedlings/rhizomes to the local villagers.

(d) Does not arise.

[*Translation*]

#### Betal Farming

2507. SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the fact that almost 18 lakhs people in 27 districts of Bihar depend on the betel cultivation;

(b) if so, whether the betel farmers are not getting the benefit of the crop insurance scheme as the cultivation of betel has not been accorded the status of agriculture;

(c) whether lakhs of people of the State are leading pitiable life as a result thereof;

(d) whether betel cultivation has also not been included in the activities of agriculture science centre situated in those district of the State where betel cultivation is undertaken on a large scale; and

(e) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) There is no statistics available on the number of people dependent on the betel cultivation in Bihar. However, it is cultivated in 25 districts of the State.

(b) Betelvine is a horticultural crop do not have the adequate yield data and regular system for yield assessment due to multi picking nature of its yield. Hence it could not be covered under the existing Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Under the all India Coordinated Research Project on Betelvine of ICAR, a Research Centre on Betelvine is located at Rajendra Agriculture University, Pusa. The Centre is catering to the needs of betelvine growers of State. During VIII Five Year Plan, an amount of Rs. 20.92 lakh was sanctioned to the Research Centre.

[English]

#### Inadequate Stock at Ration Shops

2508. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Inadequate stock at ration shops despite assurances" appearing in the Statesman, dated January 12, 1997;

(b) whether the Government are aware that PDS throughout the country has been crippled and stocks at the fare price shops are inadequate;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government propose to make changes in their police and also issue guidelines to the State Governments in the matter;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (c) Public Distribution System is implemented under the joint responsibility of Central and State Governments/UT Administrations. Operational aspects of PDS such as allocations, availability at fair price shops level, etc. vest entirely with the State Governments/UT Administrations. Delhi Government have lifted their allocated quota of foodgrains under PDS as well as under open sale of wheat as indicated below :

	Allocation		Off-take	
	P.D.S.	Open Sale	P.D.S.	Open Sale
Oct. '96	60.00	15.00	48.80	13.92
Nov. '96	60.00	20.00	37.30	16.51
Dec. '96	60.00	36.00	72.40	15.81
Jan. '97	60.00	36.00	76.20	10.43

(In 000 Tons)

(d) to (f) The Hon'ble Prime Minister has made a Statement in the Lok Sabha on 24.2.1997 on introduction of Targeted Public Distribution System and copies of the detailed guidelines containing information on various aspects of TPDS in this regard have also been laid on the table of the House.

#### Transport Charges on Levy Sugar

2509. SHRI GORDHANBHAI JAVIA :  
SHRI N.J. RATHWA :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Food and Civil Supplies Department of Gujarat has sent any proposals regarding "Regrant of transport charges as per road milage in lieu of railway freight of levy sugar in Gujarat" to the Union Government during the last three years and till date;

(b) if so, the details of approved proposals, year-wise;

(c) the number of proposals under consideration along with the reasons therefor; and

(d) the time by which these proposals are likely to be approved?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (d) Till 11.4.1996 the transportation charges were reimburseable either on the basis of (a) actual railway freight or (b) actual transportation charges by road at the rate approved by the State Government limited to the rate of transportation charges approved by the FCI for transporting foodgrains in that State. Where the FCI's rates are not available, the State Governments