

14.04 hrs.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : With your permission, Sir, I rise to announce that Government Business during the week commencing Monday, the 16th December, 1996 will consist of :

1. Discussion and Voting on Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 1996-97.
2. General discussion on Uttar Pradesh Budget for 1996-97.
3. Discussion and voting on the Demands for Grants (Uttar Pradesh) for 1996-97.
4. Consideration and passing of the Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Bill, 1996, as passed by Rajya Sabha.
5. Consideration of any item of Government Business carried over from today's Order Paper.
6. Consideration and passing of the following Bills as passed by Rajya Sabha :
  - (a) The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 1996.
  - (b) The Indian Contract (Amendment) Bill, 1996.
  - (c) The Apprentices (Amendment) Bill, 1996.
7. Consideration and passing of the Constitution (Eighty-first Amendment) Bill, 1996 as reported by Joint Committee.

[Translation]

SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI (Raigarh) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the following items may be included in the next week's agenda-

1. Need to open a branch of State Bank of India immediately in Patthal Gaon in order to remove the banking difficulties being faced in important Commercial centre-Patthal Gaon in Raigarh district of Madhya Pradesh.
2. Need to set up a Medical Institute like All India Institute of Medical Sciences at Jaspur in Madhya Pradesh which is the Central of Scheduled Tribes area of India in order to protect these Scheduled Tribes people from Malaria, Gastroenteritis and other diseases since there is no hospital.

PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA (Samastipur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the item regarding need to restart Samastipur Sugar Mill in the interest of Sugarcane farmers and workers of the Mill after reconsidering the Government's decision to close down the mill may be included in the next week's agenda.

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : Sir, the following items may be included in the next week's agenda :

1. Inordinate delay in submitting the Fifth Pay Commission Report causing resentment among the Central Government employees - immediate steps should be taken to publish the report during this month.
2. Extension of Sixth Bipartite Wage Settlement for Regional Rural Bank employees.

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY (Mandsaur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the following items may be included in the next week's agenda :

1. The migration of people from hundreds of villages of and starvation death in Chhatisgarh region comprising one third area of Madhya Pradesh, due to severe drought, lack of potable water and loss of cattle.
2. Difficulties being faced by common people and traders and heavy loss of revenue to Railways due to slow speed of gauge-conversion work on Neemach-Ratlam rail route on Ratlam-Ajmer section of Western Railway.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : Sir, the following items may be included in the next week's agenda :

1. Telephones installed in most of villages of Rajasthan after spending crores of rupees are lying dead and could not be made operational even after much efforts. These telephones should be made operational by launching a rapid movement.
2. The department of Central Post and Telegraph has stopped opening of new post offices in villages. One post Office covers an area of about 20 miles and it is very difficult to open new post offices under new policy and new recruitment has also been banned. Priority should be accorded to the opening of new post offices.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the following items may be included in the next week's agenda-

1. Need to implement prohibition strictly in order to eradicate criminal tendency prevalent in

the entire country and improve the economic condition.

2. Need to make telecom system more effective, efficient, rapid and modern by setting up exchange equipped with new electronic system having more capacity in place of old and traditional crossbar system at Ajmer Telephone Exchange.

[English]

SHRI P. NAMGYAL (Ladakh) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the following items may be included in the next week's agenda:

1. Regarding the dismal working conditions, the old and worn out machines together with very low standard of programmes and distortion of Ladakhi language and culture being broadcast over the Leh station of A.I.R. needs to be discussed.
2. The non-commissioning of the new A.I.R. station at Kargil which is ready for commissioning for the last year calls for a discussion in this august House.

14.09 hrs.

## STATEMENT BY MINISTER

### WTO Ministerial Conference at Singapore

[English]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : Sir, with your permission, I wish to share some information received from our delegation in Singapore, on the Ministerial Conference which took place recently.

Firstly, the Conference has categorically stated that the ILO is the competent body to deal with core labour standards. The Conference has rejected the use of restrictive trade measures to enforce labour standards. It has emphasised that the comparative advantage of developing countries should not be put in question in any way.

Moreover, the Conference has promised its continued support to the Labour Ministers who are carrying on this work in the ILO. Thus, India's position is completely reflected in the declaration and in our view WTO will do nothing more in the matter.

On the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, the initial proposal of developed countries, particularly the US, was that we should begin an educative process and establish a working group as a prelude to negotiate an agreement, a multilateral agreement. Fortunately, our opposition and the opposition of some other

countries have prevailed and that proposal has not been accepted by the Conference.

Instead, as a result of many other developing countries being persuaded, the Conference has, referring to the existing TRIMS agreement, said that by virtue of article 9 of the existing TRIMS agreement, two working groups may be established to study the matters relating to investment and competition. India opposed this position. However, other developing countries were inclined to agree to establish the working groups. Barring India, no other country was willing to oppose it totally. Even while opposing the idea of working groups, India insisted on two main riders.

The first rider is that the Conference should make it clear that the work that will be done by the working groups shall not pre-judge the question whether negotiations will be initiated at all. The second rider is - it will be clearly understood - that any decision on future negotiations will take place only after an explicit consensus decision among the WTO members. These two riders have been accepted by the Conference.

The Ministers have also welcomed the work underway in UNCTAD and have expressly stated that they encourage cooperation between UNCTAD and WTO. From India's point of view while India has been able to persuade the member countries to reject any reference to Multilateral Agreement on Investment, India is unhappy even with the revised formulation. India's unhappiness has been expressed by the Minister of Commerce while addressing a Press conference immediately after the Declaration.

On information technology, an agreement was arrived at. Some countries have signed it. India has declined to sign the agreement. On labour standards, trade and investment, there are no agreements. There are only references in the Declaration.

The Minister of Commerce is expected to come back to India tomorrow. On behalf of the Government, I would like to say that he will make a full statement on Monday. I have shared the information that I have. I think barring some unhappiness about the reference to two working groups on trade and investment, our brief has been faithfully adhered to by our delegation. They have done their best to persuade the member countries to accept India's position.

On other minor issues, India's position is reflected in the declaration, is my information... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I think the position is clear.

(Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : My request is let us have a debate on Monday... (Interruptions)

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : All right, we can have a debate on Monday. But there are two things ... (Interruptions)