

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(English Version)

Eighth Session
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)



सत्यमेव जयते

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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, August 24, 2006/Bhadra 2, 1928 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

(Interruptions)

(At this stage, Shri A. Narendra and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.)

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I will listen to you at 12 noon. Please go back to your seats.

[Translation]

I will allow you to speak at 12 noon.

(Interruptions)

11.01 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri A. Narendra and some other hon. Members went back to their seats.)

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Let me hear one by one. Question Hour has to be gone through.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJILAL SUMAN (Firozabad) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, today inflation is quite a serious issue ... (Interruptions) inflation has been rising every day... (Interruptions)

11.02 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Rajnarayan Budholia and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, I do not even understand what is the matter. You speak one by one.

(Interruptions)

11.03 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Rajnarayan Budholia and some other hon. Members went back to their seats.)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : You all want to raise your matters. Let me try to give an opportunity one by one. How can I give the opportunity to everybody together? What is this? I do not know what is happening.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : I do not know. How can I decide?

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I do not know what is going on in the House

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I am not a superman. I am a very humble person. How can I listen to everybody at the same time? I do not know what are the matters that are being raised. What can I do? Tell me.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Anyone of you may please come and take this chair.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You people do not want the House to run. Please go back to your seats. ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Madhusudan Mistry, I have no idea as to what you are saying. You go to your seats and raise your point. What is this?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please go back to your seats.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I will allow you after the Question Hour. I will listen to you after the Question Hour. Let me go through the Question Hour. This is very unfair. I have no notice.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Chaudhary Lal Singh, please go to your seat.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Please speak one by one

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Let me regulate the proceedings. I would give you chance one by one.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha) : Mr. Speaker, three days back hairs of a silk person were cut forcefully in Jaipur city of Rajasthan... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I would give your chance though it is a Question Hour. But first of all, please be seated.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I do not know what is happening here.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You are all senior Members of the House. If all of you are behaving in this manner, what can I do?

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Mohan Singhji, you please come and sit here, and control the House.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : If you want your issues be recorded then, please speak one by one.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please, cooperate with me. I will give chance to all of you to speak.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajanj, Bihar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have given a notice on an adjournment motion... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Prabhunath Singh, I have not admitted it. It is not allowed. I have not accepted it.

[Translation]

This is not the time to move adjournment motion.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have given a notice for an adjournment motion. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have not admitted it. I will not suspend the Question Hour just because you have given a notice.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This is Question Hour. Please be seated.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Ramjilal Suman, this is not fair. You are not listening to the request that I am making. I will hear you at 12 noon.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, three days back the hairs of a sikh person were cut. ... (Interruptions)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, a large number of sikhs lost their lives in the riots of 1984. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record except the Question Hour.

(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I have told everyone that I will hear at 12 noon.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned till 11.15 hours.

11.08 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till fifteen minutes past Eleven of the Clock.

11.15 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled at fifteen minutes past Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER : I am thankful to all the hon. leaders for their kind co-operation. Certainly, I shall try my best to accommodate all the important issues to be raised. I want that your important issues should be properly recorded also so that the country may know what are the issues you are raising. If all of you speak together, nobody's matter is being recorded or understood. Even I cannot understand what is being said. Thank you for your kind co-operation.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I will call you after the Question Hour.

(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER : I will call you also, and not, only you.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi) : Sir, what is his privilege, has he given the notice?

[English]

They have not given the notice. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, I would not allow this.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : All of you please sit down.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : What is happening? Then, I will adjourn the House for the day.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seat.

[Translation]

I asked you to sit down. You know everything, please sit down.

11.16 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER : Shri G.M. Siddeshwra, Q.No. 406.

Development of Tourism

*406. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether various State Governments particularly Karnataka have submitted any special plans to the Union Government for development of tourism in the States.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the central assistance sought therefor; and

(d) the response of the Union Government thereto?

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

Statement

(a) and (b) No special plans for development of tourism in the States have been submitted by the State Government including the State of Karnataka.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Tourism provides funds on the basis of projects prioritized every year in consultation with the State Governments/Union Territories. From the 10th Five Year Plan, Ministry of Tourism has been providing funds for the following schemes:

(i) Tourist Circuits

(ii) Product Infrastructure and Destination Development

(iii) Large Revenue Generating Projects

(iv) Fairs and Festivals including Events

Project proposals for prioritized circuits/destination that are received complete in all respect, are examined as per guidelines in inter-se-priority basis and funds released, subject to availability under the respective heads.

The following projects have been prioritized for grant of Central Financial Assistance during the current financial year for the State of Karnataka:—

State	Destination	Circuit	Even	Rural
Karnataka	1. Hampi	1. Bijapur-Bidar-Gulbarga	1. Bangalore Habba-10 lakh	1. Chenputna village-Bangalore
	2. Lingamakki		2. Hampi - 10 lakh 3. Karavali - 5 lakh	2. Alkan village-Bagalacote

The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned the following project for the State of Karnataka during 2005-06:-

S. No.	Name of the Project	Amount Sanctioned (Rs. in lakh)
1.	Destination Development of Jog Fall in Shimoga	462.52
2.	Destination Development of Mysore in Karnataka	353.89
3.	Integrated Development of Tourism Circuit on Mangalore-Ullal-Udupi-Kollur-Honnar-Murudeshwara-Kundapur-Gokarna	698.00
4.	Development of Golf Club of Chikmagalur, Karnataka under LRG project	120.00
5.	Celebration of Bangalore Habba 2005	15.00
6.	Hampi Festival 2005-06	5.00
7.	IT infrastructure for Eco-tourism by M/s. Jungle Lodges & Resorts	53.29
8.	GOI-UNDP Endogenous Project at Village Anegundi, District Koppal	20.00
Total		1727.70

Apart from above, during the 10th Five Year Plan (till 2005-06), the Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned projects worth Rs. 7728.13 lakh for integrated development of tourism in the state of Karnataka.

MR. SPEAKER : Please put your supplementary.

(Interruptions)

*SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is one very big tank known as SILE KERE in my constituency. It is in Channagiri Taluk. It is the biggest tank in Asia continent and its capacity is 3.5 T.M.C. Its circumference is 60 KMs. There is a very famous Siddeshwara Temple near this tank. Its surrounding area is very beautiful, attracting hundreds of tourists every day. This natural beauty has to be developed as an attractive tourist centre Musical fountain and Boating facilities have to be provided in Sule Kere tank. Will the Government come forward to develop this Siddeshwara temple and Sule Kere as famous tourist spots? If so, what is the total amount the Central Government propose to allocate for this purpose? Give details.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Silence please. What is happening in the House? It is a Question Hour.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI : Sir, I must acknowledge that the hon. Member is a very keen Member of Parliament

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada.

to promote projects of tourism relating to Karnataka and more specifically the area he represents. He has spoken of one destination project. There is no doubt that the Ministry of Tourism allocates about Rs. 20 crore for the State for promoting destinations, as the hon. Member has asked me about it, and also for three or four circuits. We receive annually several proposals from hon. Members of Parliament, from NGOs, from MLAs and from other bodies for promotion of tourism and for grant of Central assistance. These projects are put in a priority with the help and advice of the State Governments. They are the implementing authorities.

The hon. Member has asked me for a destination project. If he wants to make it as a complete project, I assure him that we will consider it along with other projects which will be finalised for the State of Karnataka before the year end.

SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA : How much amount are you releasing for this programme?

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI : We release upto Rs. 30 lakh for fairs and festivals. We release Rs. 5 crore and Rs. 8 crore for destination and circuit projects. It depends on how the Government of Karnataka prioritises this particular project. The amount of Central assistance will depend on that.

***SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA :** Sir, there is a very old fort at Uchangi in Davanagere district. Bhagawan Harihareshwar's famous statue and temple are in Harihara, Davanagere district. Very beautiful water fall surrounded by nature's bounty is in Sante bennur. Anagodu is another attractive tourist centre. Marula-Sidda lived here. There is a beautiful large lake in Kondajji. Boating arrangement here has been ignored for a long time..

MR. SPEAKER : The question must be brief and to the point. You are giving the history of Karnataka.

***SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA :** Vaddigere is the famous

**English translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada.*

place where Shivalji's father Sahaji Maharaj had come for revenue collection. He fell down from the horse and died. His wife Jeejabai and brother Akoji buried him there in Vaddigere (Karnataka) on January 23rd 1664. Karnataka Government has allocated 26 guntas of land such that this historical spot can be developed as a tourist spot. Unfortunately, nothing has happened here even after 342 years.

Hundreds of Marathi Visitors alongwith thousands of other tourists are visiting this important place every week. Will the Government of India take interest and come forward to set up an integrated tourist circuit including all the above famous places. If so the total amount the Government propose to allocate for this purpose, and the details is there of.

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Minister, I think you should invite him to your office and discuss with him.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI : Sir, the hon. Member is raising the point about new projects on the floor of the House. I am not authorised to say whether they will be accepted or not because the consultation with the State Government is of paramount importance. This year we have already prioritised a destination project at Hampi and Lingamakki. A Circuit has been prioritised which is the Bijapur-Bidar-Gulbarga section. Three festivals have been prioritised in 2006-2007. They are – Bangalore *Habba* for which Rs.10 lakh have been prioritised, the Hampi Festival for which also Rs.10 lakh have been prioritised and the Karavali one for which Rs.5 lakh have been prioritised. Davanagere has not been accepted this year by your State Government. The hon. Member has written to me two-three times. I am trying my best to be his spokesperson with his own Government. But, I am afraid, they are not listening to him. I cannot guarantee acceptance of this project.

MR. SPEAKER : Well, except Members from Karnataka, everybody is showing interest in this Question. I do not think I can go to any one. There is only one

request from Shrimati K. Rani – at least a Member from South India.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Do not try to dictate to me.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI K. RANI : Sir, tourism, wherever it is, brings with it a lot of revenue. In my constituency there is a tourist spot namely Koli Hills which attraction lot of tourists. It is not developed fully to attract so much tourists as it could do. To reach Koli Hills one has to travel nearly 250 to 300 kilometres.

MR. SPEAKER : I am sorry, this is not allowed.

Is anybody else having a question on Karnataka?

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH : Thank you, Sir. Karnataka is called the Southern Kashmir. We have a lot of destinations like Coorg. These days, the cities are growing like anything. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : At least we are providing to the whole world that this is most indisciplined places.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You do not have to dictate to me. If I need your help, I will ask you.

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH : Sir, there is a place like Nandi Hills which was visited by Mahatma Gandhi. The Gandhi Dham is there. Definitely, it deserves a lot of attention from the Central Government. It is having a beautiful hill station. They are called Panchagiri Hills. It is just 60 kilometres away from the State Capital, Bangalore. These days, the population is increasing and we have to find new avenues to accommodate the tourists. There is also a place called Ramanagaram which is another hill station where series of hills are there, where we can introduce Darjeeling model of toy trains to accommodate the tourists.

MR. SPEAKER : These are all suggestions. There is no question.

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH : I am asking the Central Government what steps they are taking to exploit the tourist destinations in Karnataka.

MR. SPEAKER : We are not fully utilising the Question Hour.

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH : Sir, a lot of people from Delhi were coming and lot of foreigners were coming there. What steps is the Tourism Department going to take to exploit these destinations in Karnataka?

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI : Sir, the Ministry of Tourism gives financial assistance to the States, including Karnataka. I am happy to say that Karnataka is one of the largest recipients, in fact the third highest recipient, of Central financial assistance. We have over the last Ninth and Tenth Five Year Plans given several projects for Karnataka. I have the entire list with me of the projects which the Central Ministry has financed and given financial assistance for, including those in Coorg. We have had Coorg developed as a tourist destination. We have had rural tourism being developed in Coorg. We have a whole circuit which includes Golf tourism for Coorg. These are the projects which have already been done for Karnataka and more specifically for Coorg. Altogether, we have in the year 2005-06 given a total grant of Rs.1727.70 lakh for development of projects.

MR. SPEAKER : Q.No. 407 – Shri Yerrannaidu. Is that your seat?

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Sir, this is my seat.

Condition of Railway Bridges

+

*407. SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU :
DR. K. DHANARAJU :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Commission of Railway Safety had investigated the matter relating to collapse of Kadalundi bridge in 2001;

(b) if so, the details of recommendations made by the Commission thereof;

(c) whether the Railways had started a pilot project to strengthen old bridges particularly those bridges which are more than 50 years old;

(d) if so, the details of those bridges which have been taken up under the said project;

(e) whether the progress of the project is very slow.

(f) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(g) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Railways to replace/renovate these bridges and other safety measures taken for the safety of passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (g) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety conducted statutory inquiry into this accident. In his Final Report, he had made 8 recommendations pertaining to upkeep, replacement/renovation and underwater examination of the bridges, planning for rehabilitation and rebuilding of distressed bridges, and inspection and maintenance of coaches and wagons.

(c) No, Sir. No pilot project has been taken up for strengthening of all bridges over 50 years of age. The life of the bridge is not based on its age but on its physical condition as ascertained by inspections. Those bridges which require repair/rehabilitation are taken up on a programmed basis.

(d) to (f) Does not arise.

(g) Railways have a well laid down system of multi-tier annual inspection of bridges. As a result of these inspections, certain bridges are taken up for repair and rehabilitation on a programmed based. If required suitable speed restrictions are imposed on such bridges till the repair/rehabilitation is carried out. Year-wise repair, rehabilitation/rebuilding of bridges during the last 5 years is given as below:—

Year	No. of Bridges Repaired/Rehabilitated	Expenditure (Rs. in Cr.)
2001-02	725	108.10
2002-03	1151	199.10
2003-04	1563	234.71
2004-05	1579	390.26
2006-06	1431	410.59

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Mr. Speaker, Sir, safety and security of the persons are most important things. Now-a-days, frequent railway accidents are taking place. Even in Andhra Pradesh, last year a major incident took place due to weak bridge and small bridge to deliver the water. Sir, I am asking one question through you.

Out of the money received according to the recommendations of the Khanna Committee, how much money has been spent so far, without diversion to other than safety related matters?

SHRI R. VELU : First of all, in regard to his observation of the accidents increasing in the recent years. I may mention for the information of the hon. Member that in the year 2000-01, the number of accidents was 473. It has gradually come down. In the last two years, the figure is only 234 for 2005-06 and for 2004-05 also, it is 234.

That apart, he has also mentioned about the last year's accident, gruesome accident that had taken place

in Nalgonda district on the bridge which was washed away by an unforeseen kind of cloud burst happening there. There was a bursting of a tank and the bridge could not handle that much of gushing water. So, that had happened. I may inform that the bridge was already inspected before monsoon. It was a joint-inspection done alongwith the State Government. But it was a natural disaster.

Coming to his specific point, I would submit that about Rs.17,000 crore have been allotted under the Railway Safety Fund and we have said that 2,370 bridges will be taken up under this scheme. Accordingly, we have taken up 1,920 bridges upto 31.3.06. Out of Rs.17,000 crore, so far we have spent about Rs.12,976.50 crore. The point in question is that this is a non-lapsable fund and there is no question of diversion of this money to other areas because we are interested to have more safety on the railways and see that all other old assets are renewed, tracks are upgraded and bridges are reconditioned and rehabilitated, wherever it is called for. So, we are very much in favour of doing this work on top priority basis, without diverting the funds.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Hon. Speaker, Sir, we are collecting Safety Cess also from the public for construction and rehabilitation of old bridges, and construction of tracks, etc. The State Governments have also sent so many proposals mentioning the places where they have located weak bridges, etc. How many proposals the Ministry of Railways has received from various State Governments? What action has been taken so far by the Ministry of Railways?

Andhra Pradesh has given so many proposals regarding weak bridges and tracks, etc. that are 100 years old. What is the action taken by the Ministry?

SHRI R. VELU : Sir, as of now, 1,27,768 bridges are there in the Indian Railways of which 42 per cent of the bridges are more than 100 years old, that is, about 51,340 bridges. Further, more than 90,387 bridges are more than

60 years old, which amounts to 75 per cent of the total bridges.

I quite agree with the hon. Member's observations that the age of the bridges does cause concern. Actually, it is the condition of the bridges along that is being evaluated by periodical inspection every year as well as special inspection by five tiers in the organisation to find out about the weak bridges that require rehabilitation.

The question asked by the hon. Members was whether proposals are being received from the State Governments on this issue. I am at loss to know because so far I have not got that kind of information whether Andhra Government has sent such a list. If it has been sent, then it will be definitely gone into, and such action will also be taken so that those bridges are saved.

[Translation]

SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is an old narrow gauge railway line between Muraina and Shivpur, which is in a very dilapidated condition. Whenever a train passes through this over bridge here, the train has to move at the speed of five kilometers per hour because of the fear that the bridge may collapse any time. We have written to the Railway Ministry also in this regard stating that either the bridge should be renovated or the line should be converted into broad gauge. If conversion to broadgauge is not possible then the bridge should be repaired without delay. Through you, I would like to ask the hon'ble Ministry of Railways as to by when this job would be executed and I would be informed about the same?

[English]

SHRI R. VELU : Sir, our hon. Minister for Railways, Shri Lalu, has been contemplating very seriously, and he has also made some remarks at some places where this issue was asked from him that gradually we are going to convert all the Metre Gauge (MG) and Narrow Gauge (NG) available into Broad Gauge (BG). I am saying this because

the working results are not favourable for us by having the MG and NG. In fact, we are also interested in converting them, but we are doing it in phases for want of resources.

The question raised by our hon. Member was whether NG can be converted. We have not at all taken a decision as to which part of it will be taken in the scheme of things. I am saying this on account of the constraint of resources about which I have already mentioned. But the project that was mentioned by the hon. Member will be looked into as to what best can be done, that is, either to repair it or to convert it into BG.

MR. SPEAKER : Md. Salim, are you not interested to put your supplementary?

MD. SALIM : Sir, I am not sitting in my seat.

MR. SPEAKER : Do you want to put your supplementary?

MD. SALIM : Sir, I would like to put my supplementary, but I am not sitting in my seat.

MR. SPEAKER : Please go back to your seat, and put your supplementary.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' : Sir, he is busy gossiping in the House.

MR. SPEAKER : That is something, which I resent.

MD. SALIM : Sir, there are many bridges in the Indian Railway system, which are more than 50 years old. We are continuously asking about this issue – since the Government launched this universal programme in the 1990s – because it involves safety, and in order to avoid accidents. Even from today's answer, it is not clear as to when – in a time-bound programme – the Government is going to renew, re-evaluate, rehabilitate, repair all those bridges, which are more than 50 years old. Please give us a time frame to know that we are safe.

MR. SPEAKER : Some old bridges are also good like old people!

SHRI R. VELU : Sir, I can only agree with the hon. Speaker on this issue because as I have already mentioned that it is not the age of the bridge, but the condition of the bridge that matters the most. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Sir, old is always gold.

SHRI R. VELU : Sir, for the kind information of the hon. Speaker and the hon. Members, the bridges constructed out of stone masonry is still going very strong whereas bridges constructed later are developing cracks, etc.

As I mentioned, 2,370 bridges, under the Railway Safety Scheme, will be completed in another one-year's time because the scheme was from 2001 to 2007, that is, it was a six-year programme. We have completed 6,449 bridges in all over a period of five years. Similarly, I would like to mention for the kind information of the hon. Member that we have done about 14,122 bridges from 1989-1990 onwards.

The point is that irrespective of the bridge being 50 years old or 60 years old, the condition of bridges will be evaluated. I am saying this because it depends upon the material used, quality of work done, kind of wagons being run with more load, the intensity with which it is being used, etc. All these factors go in deciding whether the bridge is in good condition or not. We are also conducting instrumentation tests to measure the stress, so that the bridges are not left high and dry. I think that the bridges will be taken care of with the help of these measures, and we will try to see that no accident takes place on account of the maintenance of the bridges.

MR. SPEAKER : Next supplementary to be asked by Shri Mohan Rawale. Do you have any broken bridges in your constituency?

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to congratulate Shri Lalu Prasad, the hon'ble Minister of Railways, the General Manager and the staff of western railway for restoring normalcy within 12 hrs. of the bomb blasts that took place on the 11th July, where within 11 minutes 8 bomb blasts took place in western railway...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : What are you saying this?

(Interruptions)

AN HON'BLE MEMBER : I am saying what is good.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Now, I would like to say what is wrong.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : There is some uneasiness in some quarters.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Unfortunately, when Nitish Kumarji was the Minister of Railways, a number of people lost their lives while changing track near the Mahalakshmi bridge in my constituency. It has been 10-12 years since the Mahalakshmi bridge collapsed and it has already been 4-5 years since the announcement to reconstruct this bridge was made but the bridge has not been constructed yet. In fact Nitish Kumarji had officially declared that the bridge would be constructed immediately but so far the bridge has not been constructed. Therefore, this bridge should be constructed expeditiously because there is a threat to the lives of the people passing from this railway track. In my constituency there is a need for construction of a footbridge on both eastern and western sides of

Kariroad railway station in Central Railway. A footbridge should be constructed on the Kariroad Namjoshi Marg and on the side of Triveni building in the east. In western lower Parle also a footbridge should be constructed on the side of Sunmill lane. There is Elfinsten in Western railway, and a bridge should be constructed towards the Fitwala road in the West. All these survey's have already been conducted. If he cannot reply to all these now then he can do so later...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, you will get a good response.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : With regard to the four bridge that I have mentioned, he must issue instructions to the railway officials to complete this bridge as soon as possible. ... (Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD) : There is also an ROB footbridge there.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Yes, there is also an ROB footbridge...(Interruptions) A lot of people have lost their lives there while changing the track.

[English]

I am mentioning it here because it is very essential.

SHRI R. VELU : Sir, we will look into the matter, and see whether it is required.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Please also convey it to them to kindly expedite the matter.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : It could be that the Minister agreed out of fear.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, an accident had taken place at the Kadalundi bridge. I would

like to draw the attention of Minister of Railways, Shri Lalu Prasadji towards the fact that the bridges constructed during the British period were so strong that even after 100 years of time they have not collapsed. It is required to construct similar bridges they were constructed during the British times. My second question is that the though UPA Government is running smoothly but its allies take... Telangana and TRS etc. are showing some signs of supplies.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to bring this to the notice of Shri Lalu Prasadji that the UPA Government is a evolution Government and to give it an analogy of Railways it is running on the bridges of different parties. My party RPI is giving a wholehearted support to the Government. It is not not my party alone is lending support to the Government but other allied political parties are strongly with the Governments. There way threat to my party also but that was saved, and now the Government is facing the seat fallen the apart from Telangana State Committee. Therefore, I would like to humbly ask Shurimati Sonia Gandhiji and Shri Lalu Prasadji as to whether they are going to meet the demands of the party with regard to what they have asked for?

MR. SPEAKER : You have talked about bridges which were constructed during the British times.

[English]

There is no need to give any reply. I hope, you do not want that 'zamana' to come back.

[Translation]

SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI (Jodhpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to bring to your kind notice that especially in Western Rajasthan when metergauge trains were running, there were small bridges and level crossings. But since the time of their conversion into broadgauge, these bridges and level crossings have been closed. I would like to say, drawing your attention especially towards Jaisalmer to Jodhpur route that two

trains run there and there exist only or four level crossings on 300 km. long route. On their both sides, roads have been constructed under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana but level crossings have not been opened so far and this is causing a lot of inconvenience to the local people there. I, therefore, would like to ask hon'ble Minister of Railways whether he would open these level crossings.

MR. SPEAKER : He is not talking about constructing new bridge but opening the old level crossings.

[English]

SHRI R. VELU : I think, what the hon. Member means or referring to is about the number of level-crossings that were there earlier, and that its number has been reduced after conversion into broad gauge. We are here to provide such facility, and we are not going to disturb the existing level-crossings on conversion. When we want to have a new LC after a period of ten years, then only the question of the State Government funding the entire thing or the local Government funding the entire thing happens. In this present case, if you kindly bring to our notice whether any existing LC, on conversion, has been dispensed with, we can take note of it and take remedial measures.

MR. SPEAKER : By "LC", you mean "Level-crossings". Railway terms are not understood that easily.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to bring to attention of the Hon'ble Minister that this is mainly concerned with the security of railway passengers and reconstruction of bridges. There is a level crossing named Bharvari in newly created district Kaushambi in my parliamentary constituency, In Uttar Pradesh. It remains closed for half-an-hour or for half and a quarter hour. Many accidents have taken place and a number of people have died there. An amount of Rs.12 crore was sanctioned for that under Rashtriya Sram Vikas Yojna and on the part of

State Government and District Administration and all sides after fulfilling all the formalities, a proposal was chalked out and sent that a new bridge should be constructed on this level crossing but no N.O.C. has been received from the Railways. When correspondence is made with the railway regarding providing NOC, they reply that surcharge of Rs.25 lakh be deposited first, only then NOC can be granted for construction of bridge there. I would like to bring to the notice of hon'ble Railway Minister that a number of accidents have taken place there and railway traffic is disrupted for half or a half and quarter hours due to the level crossing. Will he give his consent for the construction of new bridge waiving the amount of Rs.25 lakh being demanded as surcharge keeping in view the security of the Railways as well as railway passengers.

[English]

SHRI R. VELU : The hon. Member's point is that the bridge is being closed for half-an-hour every time. We do not close bridges; we only close level-crossings. I do not know what exactly he means by it. Wherever there is an underpass...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR : Sir, I am asking for waiving the surcharge being demanded by railways for the construction of new bridge and not to close the bridge.

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down.

[English]

We cannot have a conversation here.

SHRI R. VELU : Regarding construction of overbridges, that is, ROBs, we have mentioned more than once in this august House that there is no problem on the part of the Railway Administration because we have got about Rs.2,011 crore in our kitty to take care of such proposals that come from the State Governments on their own initiative and wherever such level-crossings attract more

than one-lakh train vehicle units. If you have sent the proposal and also agreed to meet 50 per cent of the cost, agreed for the land acquisition and agreed to get the General Arrangement Drawing (GAD) approvals, etc., the Railways always welcomes such proposals with open arms and sanctions it. In fact, in the last Budget, our hon. Minister of Railways sanctioned 104 bridges. There are 186 level-crossing proposals that are eligible now for sanction. We are only waiting for such proposals to come from the State Governments. I think, if that proposal comes, we will definitely consider it provided it is duly qualified.

MR. SPEAKER : For Speaker's constituency, 100 per cent.

No. 408 – Shri M. Anjan Kumar Yadav.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing else will be recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

Production in Ordnance Factories

*408. SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether some of the Ordnance factories are lagging behind their production schedule;

(b) if so, the details of such factories alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(c) the corrective steps taken by the Government in this regard?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE, (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

*Not recorded.

Statement

(a) to (c) During 2006-2007 Indian Ordnance Factories have manufactured products worth Rs.2090.16 crore till July 2006, compared to value of products worth Rs.1994.20 crore and Rs.1255.62 crore manufactured during the same period (April to July) in 2005-2006 and 2004-2005 respectively. However, value of production in following Ordnance Factories, during current year is marginally lower than that of last year.

S. No.	Factory	2005-2006 Achievement Upto July 2005 (Rs. in Crores)	2006-2007 Achievement Upto July 2005 (Rs. in Crores)	Remarks
1.	Ordnance Factory, Katni	27.81	24.47	Less workload of brass cups.
2.	Metal & Steel Factory, Ishapore	51.84	38.44	Reduced target of BMP II Cartridge case and plant break down.
3.	Reffe Factory, Ishapore	70.21	60.44	Input man-hours reduced by reduction in overtime.
4.	Ordnance Factory, Dum Dum	22.18	15.75	Change in product mix and new item is under development.
5.	Grey Iron Foundry, Jabalpur	13.85	6.31	Less workload of vehicle castings.
6.	Ordnance Factory, Varangaon	75.54	58.89	Less demand of 7.62 mm ammunition.
7.	Heavy Vehicle Factory, Avadi	256.29	216.70	Non availability of armour steel plates.
8.	Ordnance Factory, Medak	69.56	30.50	Less workload due to phasing out of BMP II and non availability of armour steel plates.
9.	Ordnance Equipment Factory, Kanpur	81.43	64.57	Non availability of inputs and change in specification of some inputs.

In order to increase production in Ordnance Factories, following corrective steps are being taken by the government:—

(i) Efforts to develop new products.

(ii) Judicious deployment of manpower.

(iii) Expediting procurement of input material.

(iv) Regular interaction with User and design agencies to resolve production bottlenecks.

[Translation]

SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, India has been of all other countries in establishing peace in the world. But we need army and weapons for our security. Ordnance factories are in existence for the last two hundred years in our country and today their number is 39 but they are not functioning according to their capacity.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is production of inferior quality in ordnance factories. Through you, I would like to know from the hon'ble Defence Minister whether any enquiry has been conducted by the Government? If the enquiry has been conducted, the findings thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

[English]

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : Sir, it is not correct to say that the products manufactured by Ordnance Factories are of low quality. In fact, these Ordnance Factories are dedicated units for the service of the Armed Forces. As the hon. Member himself stated, for the last 200 years, starting from 1801 till today, the Ordnance Factories have been catering to the needs of the Indian Armed Forces. Upgradation of technology, production and product mix is taking place constantly. The total expenditure on the development and modernisation was more than Rs.1066 crore in the Ninth Plan. In the Tenth Plan, it was Rs.1500 crore. During the Eleventh Plan, it is Rs.2831 crore.

Secondly, in respect of the production, the hon. Member will have to appreciate the fact that India is not a big exporter of weapons and ammunition. These units are established primarily to cater to the needs of the Indian Armed Forces. We are also catering to the needs of the Paramilitary Forces and the police forces of the States. Therefore, it is also not correct to say that the production is coming down. The figures of production which I have given in the statement relate to a period of only four months, from April to July, of the current

financial year. For instance, one will find that because of the nonavailability of certain steel, production has slowed down. But import arrangements have been made. Over the period of eight months which is still left to complete the financial year, we will be able to make it up, and that is the practice. Over the years, the value of production of the Indian Ordnance Factories is increasing and not decreasing. But we have to take all the 39 Ordnance Factories in a time frame of 12 months and not of three or four months.

[Translation]

SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether permission has been granted to private sector for the production which is being done, at present, by ordnance factories? If so, the reasons therefore? Why are we not able to carry out this production in our ordnance factories?

[English]

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : So far as participation of private sector is concerned a decision was taken sometime in 2000 that private sector can participate in the area of defence production.

Certain Letters of Intents have also been issued. It is yet to be materialised. However, some of the private sector enterprises like Larsen and Toubro, Tata are being associated with some of the projects but those are not for the Ordnance factories. For some development projects initiated by DRDO or by certain other organisations, they are being associated. But as a policy, Indian private sector can participate upto 100 per cent, subject to licenses. It is not free for all. Foreign Direct Investment is also permissible upto 26 per cent. Of course, subject to licenses.

[Translation]

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR : Sir, this has been informed that there is less workload of vehicle casting

in Jabalpur Ordnance Factory. Moreover, such information has also been given that there is no requirement of bombs at some places. The question is that despite extensive capacity of ordnance factory, its sufficient utilization is not being made because orders are placed either by senior army officials or their department. For want of orders, many times their sufficient use is not made. Such a situation is being witnessed there. Will the Government pay due attention to this and make the full utilization of the capacities of all these ordnance factories? Alongwith this, there is shortage of officers or employees at some places. This is also a main reason. Therefore, Government to fill the vacancies officers, employees and technical people and the number of days by when it will be decided so that all these ordnance factories function systematically?

[English]

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : The hon. Member will have to appreciate that these factories are meant for providing the needs of the Armed Forces. Therefore, we ought to create capacity. During the war, capacity utilisation is much more, as it happened during the recent Kargil war. Capacity utilisation was much more because the Armed Forces require the vehicles, weapons, ammunition, systems which the Services will require and the Ordnance factories have to provide as per the requirement. Certain capacities ought to be created. It is not possible to utilise them fully in peace time. At the time of war, we may not get it. Therefore, capacities have to be created. It may happen sometime in some factories, some capacities may remain under-utilised but the overall picture which I have given is being fully utilised.

In respect of the number of personnel today, all the 39 Ordnance factories taken together, the total number of personnel are more than 1.16 lakhs. This is quite a large number. There is no shortage of personnel as such.

SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE : Hon. Minister, in his reply, has mentioned certain corrective steps to increase

production in Ordnance factories. May I know from the hon. Minister what was the result of these steps?

Hon. Minister has just now replied about the participation of private sector in defence production. May I humbly know from him whether private participation in our defence production would cause erosion in our sovereignty?

MR. SPEAKER : Even in the case of Indian Companies?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : So far as the participation of private sector is concerned, as I mentioned, it is not at the cost of the Departmental Undertakings or at the cost of the eight Defence Public Units or Enterprises which we have. It would be the supplementary efforts and of course, it would be the Indian Companies.

Therefore, the question of sovereignty does not arise. When I say that the private sector will participate, I made it abundantly clear in the last two years that the capacities, which we have in the Departmental Undertakings like the Ordnance Factories and Defence Public Sector Units numbering eight that we have, will be fully utilized. This will not be transferred to the others.

So, there is no scope of having private sector at the expense of the public sector. As I mentioned earlier, the production starts from the requisition which comes from the Services. As and when they require it, it will have to be supplied to them. It cannot be produced simply because you do not have any other market.

As I mentioned to you, over the years – this is the national ethos – India does not participate in a big way in export of arms. We are doing a little bit of exports. Therefore, we meet essentially our own requirements; production depends on the requirements as it is reflected by the orders placed; and adequate elaborate arrangements have been made.

MR. SPEAKER : It has been covered. Let us go to the next Question.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : Therefore, I do feel that there is no reason for apprehension either for privatization or for under-utilization of the capacities.

National Rail Vikas Yojana

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*409. SHRI ARJUN SETHI :

SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have implemented National Rail Vikas Yojana to remove capacity bottlenecks in the critical sections of the railway network;

(b) if so, the projects proposed to be implemented under the National Rail Vikas Yojana, State-wise;

(c) the details of projects completed so far under the National Rail Vikas Yojana;

(d) the present status of the remaining projects; and

(e) the time by which these projects are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) to (e) A total of 70 projects were initially identified for implemented through National Rail Vikas Yojana (NRVY). However, 7 projects have been taken out of the Yojana. Out of the 63 projects, 33 are related to strengthening of Golden Quadrilateral, 26 are pertaining to Port Connectivity and development of its hinterland and 4 are pertaining to Mega Bridges. 15 projects have already been completed and works are in various stages of progress on 41 projects. The details of the projects with present status and time of completion wherever fixed is indicated in the Annexure.

Annexure

S. No.	State(s)	Project	Plan head	Length (in Kms)	Cost	Exp. upto Mar. 06	Outlay 06-07	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

(Rupees in crores)

Golden Quadrilateral Works (Sanctioned)

1.	Andhra Pradesh	Balapalle-Pullampet-Ph-I of Gooty-Reningunta	Doubling	41	85	84.02	1	Completed & commissioned
2.	Andhra Pradesh	Gooty-Reningunta-Patch doubling	Doubling	151	305.95	38.2	68.4	This project is to be done by RVNL through ADB funding and targeted for completion by 2008-09.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3.	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka	Raichur-Guntakal	Doubling	81.1	145.81	0	57	Project is being executed by RVNL through ADB funding and targeted for completion by 2007-08.
4.	Andhra Pradesh	Renigunta-Guntakal	Railway Electrification	308	182.55	75.78	7	The work has been completed on Renigunta-Nandalur (86 RKM) section and remaining balance section is targeted for completion during 2006-07.
5.	Andhra Pradesh, Orissa	Bhubaneswar-Kottavalasa	Railway Electrification	457	322.71	288.97	4	Completed and commissioned.
6.	Chattisgarh	Bilaspur-Urkura	Doubling	110	375.42	138.62	28.5	This project is under implementation by RVNL. Bilaspur-Bhatpara (47 Kms) completed and commissioned. Bhatapara-Urkura (60 km) section is targeted for completion during 2008-09.
7.	Delhi	New Delhi-Tilak Bridge 5th and 6th line	Doubling	2.65	53.14	22.01	14.5	6th line (3.4 Kms) is targeted for completion during 2006-07.
8.	Delhi, Uttar Pradesh	Sahibabad-Anand Vihar-3rd and 4th line	Doubling	4	49.57	0	0.5	Work has been taken up and targeted for completion during 2007-08.
9.	Delhi	Anand Vihar Terminal	Traffic Facilities	0				Work has been taken up and targeted for completion during 2007-08.
10.	Delhi, Haryana	Tughlakabad-Palwal 4th line	Doubling	33.5	83	0	10	New work included in the Budget 2006-07. The work is to be executed by RVNL.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11.	Haryana, Uttar Pradesh	Palwal-Bhuteshwar 3rd line	Doubling	81	214.68	0.01	150	Preliminary works have been taken up.
12.	Maharashtra	Pakni-Mahol	Doubling	17	42.73	10.08	30.01	Work is to be executed by RVNL and targeted for completion during 2007-08.
13.	Maharashtra	Pakni-Solapur	Doubling	16.28	38.52	7.01	20.5	Work is to be executed by RVNL and targeted for completion during 2006-07.
14.	Maharashtra	Diva Kalyan doubling of 5-6 line	Doubling	11	70	48.7	5.5	Project is targeted for completion during 2006-07.
15.	Orissa	Cuttack-Barang	Doubling	12	127.13	0	40.15	Work is being executed by RVNL and targeted for completion during 2008-09.
16.	Orissa	Khurda Road-Barang 3rd line	Doubling	35	200.28	0.11	46.6	Work is being executed by RVNL and targeted for completion during 2008-09.
17.	Orissa	Rajatgarh-Barang	Doubling	.20	178.98	1.36	72.7	Work is being executed by RVNL. Land acquisition have been taken up and the project is targeted for completion during 2008-09.
18.	Orissa	Talcher-Cuttack- Paradeep (2nd Bridges on Mahanadi and Birupa)	Doubling	3	109.45	21.06	39.9	2nd bridge on Birupa completed and 2nd bridge on Mahanadi River is being executed by RVNL and is targeted for completion during 2008-09.
19.	Tamil Nadu	Attipattu-Korukkupettai	Doubling	18	70.56	37.55	21	Korukkupet-Ennore (6 kms) targeted during 2006-07.
20.	Tamil Nadu	Chennai Beach- Attipattu 4th line	Doubling	22.1	50.23	0	0.5	After preliminary studies the work has now been taken up by Railways.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
21.	Tamil Nadu	Chennai Beach-Korukkupet	Doubling	4.1	55.23	0	0.5	After preliminary studies the work has now been taken up by Railways.
22.	Tamil Nadu	Pattabiram-Tiruvallur 4th line (15.06 km) & Tiruvallur-Arakkonam 3rd line (26.83 km)	Doubling	41.89	71.94	36.9	28.5	Pattabiram-Thiruvallur (16 Kms) has been commissioned. The work of Tiruvallur-Arakkonam 3rd line is executed by RVNL and is targeted for completion during 2007-08.
23.	Uttar Pradesh	Aligarh-Ghaziabad 3rd line	Doubling	106.15	230.73	65	85.5	Project is being implemented by RVNL and is targeted for completion during 2008-09.
24.	Uttar Pradesh	Kanpur-Chanderi	Doubling	4	16.84	11.36	0.01	Completed and commissioned.
25.	Uttar Pradesh	Kanpur-Panki 3rd line	Doubling	9	65.7	56.93	6	The work is nearing completion and targeted for completion during 2006-07.
26.	West Bengal	Gurap-Shaktigarh 3rd line	Doubling	26	54.14	71.91	0.5	Completed and commissioned.
27.	West Bengal	Tikiapara-Santragachi IV line	Doubling	5.6	46.79	7.51	22.5	Work is targeted for completion during 2006-07.
28.	West Bengal, Orissa	Kharagpur-Bhubaneswar including Talcher-Paradeep	Railway Electrification	540	406.51	359.85	35	Completed.
29.	West Bengal	Chandanpur-Gurap 3rd line	Doubling	17	42.3	42.3	0	Completed.
30.	Maharashtra, Karnataka	Bhigwan-Gulbarga	Doubling	225	394			The bankability report is under finalization by RVNL.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
31.	Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka	Pune-Guntakal	Railway Electrification	641	380			The bankability report is under finalization by RVNL.
32.	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal-Bina 3rd line	Doubling	138.37				The proposal has been processed for necessary approval.
33.	West Bengal	Panskura-Kharagpur 3rd line	Doubling	45	201			The proposal has been processed for necessary approval.

Mega Bridges

1.	Assam	Bogibeel bridge with linking lines between Dibrugarh and North Bank line	New Line	46	1767.4	456.45	230	Boulder collection and earthwork, bridge work in approaches taken up. The tender for main bridge substructure is under process. Proposal has been initiated for reconsideration of Government for declaring the project as National Project.
2.	Bihar	Kosi Bridge	New Line	21.85	341.41	5.46	30	The alignment of the bridge and span configuration has been finalised. Substructure works has been taken up.
3.	Bihar	Munger-rail-cum-road Bridge on river Ganga	New Line	19.8	981	131.1	120	Land acquisition for 6 villages out of 23 have been completed. Main bridge substructure work is in progress.
4.	Bihar	Patna-Ganga bridge with linking lines between Patna and	New Line	19	684.47	235.29	120	Land acquisition for 31 out of 40 villages have been completed. Main bridge sub-

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Hajipur						structure work is in progress. Based on the request of State Government, proposal has been initiated for modifying the scope of work to rail cum road bridge.
Port Connectivity Works (Sanctioned)								
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Obulavaripalle-Krishnapatnam	New Line	113	426.34	0	10	It is proposed to execute through a project specific SPV consisting of Krishnapatnam Port, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, National Mineral Development Corporation and RVNL. Final location survey has been completed and proposal for acquisition of forest land submitted.
2.	Assam	Rangia-Murkongselek alongwith linked fingers	Gauge Conversion	510.33	915.7	0	10	Detailed survey for Rangia-Rangapara North completed and geo-technical investigations have been taken up. Proposal has been initiated for reconsideration of Government for declaring the project as National Project.
3.	Bihar	Mansi-Saharsa and Saharsa-Dauram Madhepura-Purnia	Gauge Conversion	142	257.01	112.91	20	Mansi-Saharsa has been completed and commissioned. Saharsa-Dauram Madhepura-Purnia section earthwork and minor bridges are in progress.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4.	Bihar	Barauni-Tilrath Bypass	Doubling	14	15.37	12.52	2.39	Work has been completed from Barauni to Tilrath except easing out of Bye pass line at barauni for which land acquisition work has been taken up.
5.	Delhi, Haryana	Delhi-Rewari 2nd line	Gauge Conversion	83	143.88	100	40	Completed.
6.	Gujarat	Bharuch-Samni-Dahej	Gauge Conversion	62.36	165.66	0	10	The work is to be implemented by RVNL. SPV is under finalization.
7.	Gujarat	Gandhidham-Palanpur	Gauge Conversion	313	344.62	226.95	65	This work is implemented through SPV named Kutch Railway Company. Palanpur-Samakhiali has been completed and commissioned. The balance work is targeted for completion during 2006-07.
8.	Gujarat	Surendranagar-Bhavnagar-Rajula-Mahuwa with the extn. upto Pipavav and Sihor-Palitana	Gauge Conversion	385	440.19	446.04	5	Completed.
9.	Karnataka	Arasikere-Hassan-Mangalore	Gauge Conversion	236	417.45	326	0.01	Completed. The section has been opened for goods traffic.
10.	Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh	Hospet-Guntakal	Doubling	115.4	268.23	210.37	60	Guntakal-Tornagallu (81 Kms) completed and commissioned. Torangullu-Hospet (32 Kms) section is targeted for completion during 2006-07.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11. Maharashtra	Parvel-Jasai-JNPT	Doubling	28.5	53.25	22.62	8	Completed.	
12. Maharashtra	Parvel-Karjat	New Line	28	137.43	130.58	1	Completed.	
13. Orissa	Daitari-Banspani	New Line	155	913.87	583.48	155.85	The Line from Banspani to Keonjhar (57.44 kms) has been completed and commissioned. Keonjhar-Tomka (98.358 kms) section is targeted for completion by December, 2006.	
14. Orissa	Haridaspur-Paradeep	New Line	82	594.34	29.51	44	SPV is under formation. The work on long lead item of Mahanadi and Luna bridge is already in progress.	
15. Orissa	Nergundi-Cuttack-Raghunathpur	Doubling	43	174.98	164.31	10	Doubling completed.	
16. Orissa	Rahama-Paradeep	Doubling	23	75.51	69.17	5	Completed.	
17. Orissa	Rajatgarh-Nergundi	Doubling	28	84.84	83.04	0.2	Completed.	
18. Rajasthan, Gujarat	Bhildi-Samdari	Gauge Conversion	223	244.74	8.72	115	This project is being implemented by RVNL. Earthwork and bridgework taken up. Project is targeted for completion during 2007-08.	
19. Rajasthan, Haryana	Ajmer-Phulera-Ringus-Rewari	Gauge Conversion	294.97	469.1	0.01	270	The project is under execution by RVNL. Earthwork, bridge works and other works taken up. Targeted for completion during 2007-08.	
20. Tamil Nadu	Cuddalore-Salem via Vriddhachalam	Gauge Conversion	191	261	151.56	80	The work is to be done on cost sharing basis with State Govt. (50:50) and being	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
								executed by RVNL. Vriddhachalam-Cuddalore (57 km) section completed and commissioned. Balance is targeted for completion during 2006-07
21.	Tamil Nadu	Thanjavur-Villupuram	Gauge Conversion	192	231	94.3	100	The project is with RVNL. Thanjavur-Kumbakonam Mayliaduthurai (71 kms) section has been commissioned. Earthworks, bridge works taken up and balance portion is targeted for completion during 2007-08.
22.	Uttar Pradesh	Gonda-Gorakhpur Loop with Anand nagar nautanwa	Gauge Conversion	260	381.17	52.66	5	Earthwork, ballasting and bridge works are in progress.
23.	West Bengal	Panskura-Halidia PH-I	Doubling	14	35.02	28.68	0.5	Completed.
			Port Connectivity (Unsanctioned)					
24.	Gujarat	Surat-Hazira	New Lines	36.36	138.4			On the basis of final location survey, supplementary report has been finalized and is awaiting clear commitment by Hazira Port Private Limited.
25.	West Bengal	Panskura-Halidia PH-II	Doubling	54	239.25			The bankability report is under finalization by RVNL.
26.	Orissa	Chattarpur-Gopalpur	New Lines		50			Planning for the line will depend on the port concessions being awarded by State Government of Orissa.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that a total of 70 projects were initially identified for implementation through National Rail Vikas Yojana. Subsequently, seven projects have been taken out of that Yojana. I would like to know from the hon. Minister which are those seven projects which are taken out of those 70 projects and what are the reasons.

SHRI R. VELU : National Rail Vikas Yojana is the outcome of the announcement made by the hon. Prime Minister on 15.08.2002 in order to develop Railways. It has got three components. One is strengthening of Golden Quadrilateral; the second is strengthening of port connectivity, that is, multi-modal system and the third is construction of mega-bridges.

The hon. Member wants to know which are the seven projects which had been taken out of this scheme. The first is Thane-Mumbra-Diva 5th and 6th line. This is a project connected with Metropolitan Transport System. So, this has been entrusted to them. The second is Kalyan-Kasara 3rd line and the third is Igatpuri-Bhusawal 3rd line. After preliminary studies, these two projects have not been found to be bankable and are also not required to be operational for the present. The projects under this Yojana should be bankable and should be done by the Railways out of their own budgetary support.

The fourth is relating to the upgradation works to run freight trains at 100 kms. per hour. Originally we thought that we could upgrade the Golden Quadrilateral so that we can run the freight trains at 100 kms. per hour. But now we are contemplating on Dedicated Freight Corridors. One will be from Delhi to Mumbai and another will be from Ludhiana to Kolkata. So, we have taken this also out of the scheme.

The fifth is Tughlakabad-Dadri ICD. This work is proposed to be executed as a part of the Dedicated Freight Corridor. The sixth is Vallarpedam-Idapally; this is

a Kerala Project. This has now become a work of the Ministry of Shipping. Once the funds are placed by them, we will execute it. But this is a part of the Ministry of Shipping.

The last is Bhadrak Dharma; it will be a private railway and so, it is take out, of the scheme.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Production and Sale of Natural Gas by ONGC

*410. DR. CHINTA MOHAN :

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN :

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

(a) the quantity of natural gas produced by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) during 2004-05 and 2005-06;

(b) whether the entire quantity of natural gas produced by ONGC during the said period has been sold;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor alongwith the quantity of gas sold during each year;

(d) whether the loss of gas produced has been estimated;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA) : (a) The quantity of natural gas produced by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) during 2004-05 and 2005-06 was 22.970

and 22.574 Billion Standard Cubic Metres (BCM) respectively.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The quantity of gas sold by ONGC, after meeting its internal requirements for artificial lift of oil, generation of power and steam and production of value added products during 2004-05 and 2005-06 are 18.525 and 18.226 BCM respectively.

(d) and (e) The loss of gas produced is mainly due to flaring of gas, which was 3% and 2.6% during 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively.

(f) The following steps are being taken to further reduce gas flaring:-

- Laying of new gas pipelines
- Installation of gas compressors
- Setting up of Gas Collecting Stations
- Setting up of captive power generation facilities
- Identifying consumers for gas produced in isolated fields

Expansion Programme of HPCL

*411. SHRI TUFANI SAROJ : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. has formulated any scheme for its expansion particularly, the Mumbai refinery;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which the expansion programme is likely to be completed;

(d) whether the expansion is likely to have an impact on production of various products of the company; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL) has a refinery each at Mumbai and Visakhapatnam with capacity of 5.5 MMTPA and of 7.5 MMTPA respectively. HPCL is currently implementing projects to upgrade fuel quality as per Auto Fuel Policy and also for capacity expansion in both the refineries at a total estimated cost of Rs.3998 crores. The projects are scheduled to be completed by January, 2007.

As a part of this project being implemented at Mumbai Refinery at an estimated cost of Rs.1850 crores, the refining capacity of Mumbai Refinery will increase to 7.9 MMTPA from existing 5.5 MMTPA. With the implementation of this project, Mumbai Refinery will have the capability to produce Euro III and Euro IV equivalent Petrol and Diesel. The project would result in shift of product pattern in line with the proposed quality. The product slate on commissioning of the project would be:-

Product	Production TMTPA
LPG	434
Naphtha	355
MS	1015
SKO	732
ATF	548
HSD	1990
FO	1595
Bitumen	321
LDO	100
Lubes	218

In addition, HPCL Mumbai Refinery has initiated a project for upgradation of Lube Oil Base Stock quality as per the market requirement from present level of Group I to Group II quality. The project is anticipated to be completed by January 2009 at an estimated cost of approximately Rs.638 crores. Mumbai Refinery has also taken up projects for production of value added products like Mixed Xylenes and Propylene at an estimated cost of Rs.165 crores and Rs.314 crores respectively. These projects are scheduled for completion in June 2008.

[English]

**Augmentation of Railways Stations
In Metro Cities**

*412. SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU :
SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways are planning to construct more stations and reshape the existing railway stations in

Delhi and other metro cities to ease traffic and give facilities to passengers to board the trains at the nearest place of their residences;

(b) if so, the details of plan chalked out in this regard;

(c) whether the Railways have such planning for other cities particularly State capitals and other major cities to decongest the cities;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor and the time by which such proposals are likely to be considered by the Railways?

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

(b) Following works for providing additional stations and reshaping the existing stations in the metropolitan cities have been sanctioned and the works are in progress.

(Rupees in Crores)

S. No.	Metro City	Railway	Name of the work	Cost	Expenditure upto March, 2006	Budget allocation (2006-07)
1.	Delhi	Northern	New Delhi, Delhi, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi Sarai Rohila and Anand Vihar	202.66	92.06	18.22
2.	Mumbai	Central/Western	Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Kurla, Kalyan, Thane, Dadar, Bandra	212.12	100.09	13.48
3.	Chennai	Southern	Chennai Central, Chennai Egmore	14.55	6.48	1.73
4.	Kolkata	Eastern	Howrah, Sealdah, Chitpur	152.42	60.29	11.64
Total				581.75	258.92	45.05

- (c) Yes, Sir. major cities to decongest the cities have been sanctioned and the works are in progress:-
- (d) Following works for State Capitals and other

(Rupees in Crores)

S. No.	Railway	Works for providing additional facilities at State Capitals and other major cities	Cost	Expenditure upto March, 2006	Budget allocation (2006-07)
1.	East Central	Patna	8.90	0.75	3.00
2.	East Coast	Vishakhapatnam, Bhubaneshwar	20.57	11.36	2.94
3.	Northern	Moradabad, Amritsar	24.51	14.65	2.43
4.	North Central	Agra	4.61	0.00	0.001
5.	North Eastern	Lucknow, Chapra, Gombinagar	93.77	66.24	7.70
6.	Northeast Frontier	Katihar, Kamakhya, Guwahati	32.11	9.66	12.56
7.	North West	Rewari, Bikaner	49.12	0.00	0.20
8.	Southern	Coimbatore, Palghat, Kochuvelli	32.39	19.39	4.59
9.	South Eastern	Hatia, Santragachi	10.85	1.75	1.10
10.	Western	Okha	4.57	2.32	0.50
11.	West Central	Habibganj, Sawai Madhopur, Jabalpur	11.41	5.61	2.39
Total			292.81	131.73	37.41

- (e) Does not arise.

particularly between the places of tourist interests in the country;

Helicopter Services

- *413. SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH :
SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH :

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

- (c) the steps taken to implement the said plan?

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government has formulated any plan to introduce small aircraft and helicopter services

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (c) To facilitate operation by small aircraft/helicopters, aircraft/helicopters of less than 80 seats, operated by domestic scheduled operators have been exempted from landing

charges. Concessions have also been provided to such aircraft on Route Navigation Facility Charges (RNFC). Government has also formulated Route Dispersal Guidelines to ensure that scheduled airlines operate 10% of the capacity they operate on Category-I routes (which includes Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Thiruvananthapuram) on category-II routes consisting of North East Region, Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep. At least 50% of the capacity deployed in category-I routes are deployed on category-III routes. However, actual operations to specific places are decided by airlines depending upon traffic demand and commercial viability.

Amongst the public sector airlines, Indian Airlines/ Alliance Air are operating through 52 domestic stations and Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd. (PHHL) provides services to places like Kedarnath and Badrinath. PHHL are also providing helicopters on lease to State Governments of Meghalaya, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Administration to run regular helicopter service.

Import of LNG from Iran

*414. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY :
SHRI GANESH SINGH :

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

- (a) whether Iran has expressed its inability to supply Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to India;
- (b) if so, the reasons thereof; and
- (c) the reaction of the Government there to and further action taken in matter?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA) : (a) While Iran has not expressed its inability to supply liquefied natural gas (LNG) to India, it is yet to agree to give effect to a Sale-Purchase Agreement (SPA) for 5 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) of LNG signed between the National

Iranian Gas Export Company (NIGEC) and the Indian Consortium of GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL), Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), on 13th June, 2005 in Tehran. The contract period is for 25 years, beginning from the last quarter of 2009.

(b) While signing the aforesaid SPA, simultaneously, the parties also signed a side letter to the LNG SPA on 13th June, 2005 as per which NIGEC desired to obtain the approval of their parent company, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), for the SPA to become effective and notify the other party of obtaining such approval thereafter. NIGEC has not been able to obtain NIOC's Board approval and convey the same to the Indian companies till now.

(c) The matter is being pursued with the Iranian authorities.

Railway Container Operations

*415. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether model concession agreement between container operators and the Railways has been finalised;
- (b) if so, the salient features thereof;
- (c) the time by which the said scheme is likely to be started; and
- (d) the extent to which the railway container operations will be benefited therefrom?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) By September, 2006 the Model Concession Agreement is likely to be in place.

(d) It is likely to generate healthy competition among the container train operators, thereby giving a spurt to this traffic.

Discovery of Inscripts

*416. DR. R. SENTHIL : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether any assessment has been made about the number of inscripts discovered in the country so far;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether many of these epigraphs are not properly preserved in the offices of Archaeological Survey of India and are getting destroyed;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the corrective measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

The Epigraphy Branch (Arabic and Persian at Nagpur and Sanskrit and Dravidan at Mysore) of the Archaeological Survey of India has so far discovered and copied 73,901 inscriptions from different parts of the country.

(c) to (e) No, Sir.

The epigraphs that constitute part of the heritage monuments are conserved and preserved as per the established archaeological norms. Those which are movable are kept in the safe custody in the site museums and sculpture sheds of the Archaeological Survey of India. The copies of the inscriptions (stumpages made on beaten paper) are preserved by the Epigraphy Branches of ASI, and are periodically monitored to mend the old and worn out estampages, if any.

Contribution of PSUs in GDP

*417. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY : Will the

Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government has made any assessment of the contribution being made by the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) to the Gross Domestic Products of the country; and
- (b) if so, the details of the contribution made during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) and (b) The contribution of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in the Gross Domestic Product of the country at current prices in the last 3 years i.e. 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04 was 11.6%, 12.5% and 11.8% respectively.

Import of Crude Oil

*418. SHRI K.S. RAO : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

- (a) the volume and value of total cruid oil imported by the each Public Sector Oil Company during the last three years, yearwise;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to constitute a single organization for import of crude oil from different sources for the Indian refineries; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA) : (a) The quantity and value of crude oil imported by Public Sector Oil Companies during the last three years are as under:-

Name of oil company	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06	
	Qty. TMT	Value Rs. Crore	Qty. TMT	Value Rs. Crore	Qty. TMT	Value Rs. Crore
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
IOCL	32746	30777	34833	44163	37512	66541

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
BPCL	10379	9889	11114	14275	11864	21421
HPCL	9099	8181	10226	13258	10463	19435
MRPL	7989	7408	8335	10171	9174	16153

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Concessions/Facilities to Handicapped Persons

*419. SHRI S. AJAYA KUMAR : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the concessions/facilities provided to the physically handicapped persons;

(b) whether the Government proposes to constitute Committees at the State/District levels to identify physically handicapped persons in need of support; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR) : (a) The following concessions/facilities are to be provided to the persons with disabilities:—

Concessions under the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995

1. 3% Reservation in employment in the establishments of the Government of India and the State governments.
2. 3% Reservation in admission to educational institutions receiving aid from the Government.
3. 3% Reservation in poverty alleviation schemes.

4. Unemployment allowance is provided by most of the State Governments/UT Administrations.

5. Preferential allotment of land by the Central/ State Governments at concessional rate for the purposes of (a) housing; (b) setting up business; (c) setting up of special recreation centers; (d) establishment of special schools; (e) establishment of research centers and (f) establishment of factories by entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Concession/facilities from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

1. Assistive devices are provided to needy persons with disabilities free of cost or at concessional rates.
2. Seven National Institutes are developing manpower for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and are also providing rehabilitation and therapeutic services.
3. One hundred twenty six District Disability Rehabilitation Centres, Five Composite Rehabilitation Centres and Four Regional Rehabilitation Centres are providing comprehensive rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities.
4. The National Trust for Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities is providing financial support to families who are willing to look after the health and livelihood needs of destitute and

abandoned children with severe mental and multiple disabilities.

5. National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation provides soft loans for self-employment ventures.
6. Scholarships for 500 students with disabilities are being provided every year.
7. Five hundred forty Special Schools, 214 Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) and 223 other projects for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, run by non-governmental organizations, are being provided financial assistance.

Concessions and facilities provided by other Central Government Ministries, State Governments/ UT Administrations

1. Income tax concession is admissible under section 80 U (for the assessee himself who is a person with disability or severe disability) and section 80 DD (expenditure incurred by the assessee on the medical treatment, training and rehabilitation of a dependent person with disability/severely disability). The threshold limit for men taxpayer is Rs.1.50 lakh for disability and Rs.1.75 lakh for severe disability. For women taxpayers, the threshold limit is Rs.1.85 lakhs for disability and Rs.2.10 lakh for severe disability. In case of senior citizens, no income tax is payable on an income of Rs.2.35 lakh, if he/she is disabled and Rs.2.60 lakh if he/she is severely disabled.
2. Custom duty and Excise duty exemption on aids and appliances viz. talking books, Braille computer terminals, Braille writers and type-writers, assistive listening devices, cochlear implants and stair lifts, crutches, wheel chairs, walking frames, artificial limbs, etc.
3. Concessional travel in rail (75% for persons with blindness, locomotor disability and mental retardation and 50% for deaf and dumb persons).

4. 50% Concession in the airfare for travel by Indian airlines for persons with blindness and persons with 80% and above locomotor disability.
5. Concessional bus passes in State run buses (free bus passes to blind and concessional rate for other disabled persons).
6. Transport allowance for disabled employees at double the rate admissible to other employees.
7. Allotment of STD/Handicapped PCO telephone booths – 25% reservation is provided for persons with disabilities by Railways.
8. Concessional telephone connections to blind persons.
9. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has a goal of eight years of elementary schooling for all children in the group of 6-14 years by 2010. All children with special needs upto 18 years of age are also covered under the SSA.
10. Under the Scheme of Integrated Education of the Disabled Children (IEDC) 100 per cent financial assistance is provided to the Education Department of the State Governments, Autonomous Bodies and Voluntary Organizations for various facilities like special teachers, books and stationery, uniform etc.
11. Seventeen Vocational Rehabilitation Centres (VRCs) are imparting non-formal training and skill-training programmes to persons with disabilities. They also provide vocational guidance and career counseling on the opportunities available for taking up self-employment.
12. Reservation in allotment of flats/shops by some State Governments/UT Administration.
13. Disability pension is provided by some of the State Governments/UT Administration.

(b) and (c) State Governments and Union Territory Administrations are required to constitute Medical Boards at district level for certification of persons with disabilities.

[Translation]

Railway Projects

*420. SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI :
SHRI RAM SINGH KASWAN :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the major ongoing railway projects on which the work has been actually started during the year 2005-06, Zone-wise;

(b) the progress made on each project till date Zone-wise;

(c) whether the work on several railway projects has not been started despite the approval of these projects;

(d) if so, the details of these projects alongwith the reasons for delay, Zone-wise;

(e) the funds sanctioned by the Railways for these project during each of the last three years, Zone-wise; and

(f) the time by which these projects are likely to be started and completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) The work on a project normally commences with the preliminary activities like final location surveys, preparation of plans and estimates etc. once the project is included in the budget and passed by the Parliament. The details of the major projects (costing Rs.100 crore and above) included in the Budget/Supplementary Budget during 2005-06 and taken up are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) and (f) These works were included in 2005-06. Hence, the expenditure for the year 2005-06 and the outlay for the year 2006-07 alongwith targets wherever fixed are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

S. No.	Project	Railway Zone	Cost	Expenditure during 2005-06	Outlay 2006-07	Remarks/Targets wherever fixed
(Rs. in Crore)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Hathua-Bhatni New Line	North Eastern	230	12.25	45	Final location survey completed and estimate sanctioned. Land acquisition papers for 63 villages submitted and land of 5 villages have been acquired. Earthwork and bridge works taken up. The section from Hathua to Bathua Bazar

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
						(22 Kms) is targeted for completion during 2006-07, subject to the handing over of land by the State Government in time.
2.	Pratapnagar-Chhota Udepur Gauge Conversion	Western	148.6	1.33	33.91	Final locatiion survey comple- ted and estimate sanctioned. Earthwork and minor bridges have been taken up. No target for completion has been fixed.
3.	Chhindwara-Nagpur Gauge Conversion	South East Central	383.8	0.74	45	Part final location survey com- pleted and estimate sanctioned. Land acquisition papers have been submitted for 22 out of 61 villages to the State Government. Contract for earthwork and bridge works are under process. Work of precast RCC box taken up.
4.	Ajmer-Phulera-Ringus- Rewari Gauge Conversion	North Western	469.1	0.1	270	Final location survey comple- ted and estimate sanctioned. Earthwork and bridge works taken up. The project is targeted for completion during 2007-08 and is under implementation by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL).
5.	Palwal-Bhuteshwar 3rd line	North Central	214.7	0.01	150	Final locatiion survey has been completed and estimate sanctioned. Earthwork and bridge works have been taken up. The project is targeted for completion during 2008-09 and is under implementation by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	Moradabad-Lucknow Utratia Railway Electrification	Northern	209.2	0.01	75.05	Work has been taken up and targeted for completion during 2007-08.

Growth Rate of Public Sector Airlines*[English]*

*421. DR. RAJESH MISHRA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

- (a) whether public sector airlines are under pressure due to the sharp decline in their growth rate in the recent months;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; alongwith the percentage of decline in growth rate; and
- (c) the steps taken to prevent the decline in growth rate of public sector airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) Passenger carriage by both public sector airlines has increased during past 3 years. In case of Indian Airlines Limited the growth rate of passengers carriage was up 15% in 2004-05 over 2003-04 and 3.1% in 2005-06 over 2004-05 and to 1.9% during 2006 (from April, 06 to July, 06) over corresponding period in 2005-06. The main reason for lesser growth is that Indian Airlines has not been able to induct sufficient capacity to cater to the traffic growth as compared to the private airlines. The Indian Airlines has been able to increase capacity during three years by 7.4%, 6.1% and 2.4% respectively over the previous years whereas domestic traffic has been growing at the rate of 25% (approx.) during this period.

- (c) Government has already approved the proposal of Indian Airlines Limited to acquire 43 new aircraft which would be used to increase the capacity and phase out the old aircraft in its fleet.

Creation of New Railway Divisions

*422. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSAN SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Railways have received proposals from some State Governments for creation of new Railway Divisions in their respective States;
- (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) Demands have been received from various Very Important Persons of different States including Chief Ministers of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh for creation of Divisions at 48 locations over various States.

- (b) The details of number of demands received State-wise are as under:-

Andhra Pradesh: 4; Assam : 2; Bihar : 6; Gujarat : 2; Jammu and Kashmir : 1; Karnataka : 3; Kerala : 1; Maharashtra : 3; Madhya Pradesh : 10; Nagaland : 1; Orissa : 4; Tamil Nadu : 5; Tripura : 1; Uttar Pradesh : 3; and West Bengal : 2.

- (c) 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. The proposals, when seen in the

light of the above considerations, have not been found feasible, except at Salem.

Opening of Halt Stations

*423. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) the criteria for opening a halt station;
- (b) the number of halt stations opened during each of the last three years and the current year on each Zonal Railway;
- (c) whether the halt stations are managed by the contractors appointed by the Railways;
- (d) if so, whether a large number of commercial staff is deployed for issuing tickets and commercial activities at the Halt stations; and
- (e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) A halt station is opened on public demand if found financially viable and feasible from operating and engineering points of view. The opening of halt station is also considered on passenger amenity ground.

(b) The number of halt stations opened during the last three years and in the current year, railway-wise and year-wise are given in statement enclosed.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. Halt stations are normally managed by halt contractors appointed by railways. However, in some special cases tickets are issued temporarily through commercial staff/guard at those halt stations where the halt contractor leaves the halt or contract is terminated before completion of agreement period or where no suitable contractor is found. This is done to continue an essential service to the passengers.

Statement

Railway	Number of halt stations opened during the year			
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07 (upto July, 2006)
	1	2	3	4
Central	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Eastern	06	Nil	02	Nil
East Central	27	20	09	01
East Coast	Nil	Nil	01	Nil
Northern	01	01	Nil	Nil
North Central	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
North Eastern	04	01	Nil	02
Northeast Frontier	01	06	04	Nil
North Western	01	01	Nil	Nil
Southern	03	03	03	Nil
South Central	01	09	02	01
South Eastern	09	10	Nil	Nil
Southeast Central	02	Nil	02	Nil
South Western	05	02	01	Nil
Western	01	Nil	Nil	Nil
West Central	Nil	01	Nil	Nil

Drug Abuse

*424. SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY :
SHRI SUGRIB SINGH :

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

(a) whether drug abuse in the country especially amongst youth is increasing at alarming rate;

(b) if so, the fact thereof;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any survey in this regard recently to find out the causes of this drug menace;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the details of the financial assistance provided to the Non-Governmental Organisation working in this field during each of the last three years; and

(f) the corrective steps taken or being taken by the Government to check the drug abuse?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR) : (a) and (b) There is no authentic data to conclusively indicate that drug abuse in the country especially amongst the youth is increasing at alarming rate.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. According to the National Survey on the Extent, Pattern and Trends of Drug Abuse in India, jointly conducted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the common reasons for drug use are curiosity, experimentation, being in the company of drug users and to experience the effects.

(e) Rs.22.64 crores, Rs.25.50 crores and Rs.22.35 crores were released to Non-Governmental Organisations working in the field of drug abuse during 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively.

(f) In addition to strict surveillance and preventive steps taken by the enforcement agencies, this Ministry, in collaboration with the Non-Governmental Organisations, takes steps to create awareness and educate people about ill effects of drug abuse on the individual, the family and the society at large. Efforts are also made to increase community participation and public cooperation in the reduction of demand for dependence producing substances.

[Translation]

Fire in Ordnance Factories

*425. SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO :
SHRI V.K. THUMMAR :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether incidents of fire have occurred in the Ordnance Factories;

(b) if so, the details of such incidents reported during the last three years alongwith the loss of lives and properties therein;

(c) whether any inquiries have been conducted to go into causes of fire;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to prevent such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (e) Incidents of fire in Ordnance Factories are being reported from time to time. Details of fire incidents reported during the last three years are as under:—

Year	No. of incidents	Loss of human life	Financial loss (Rs. in lakhs)
2003-2004	Nil	—	—
2004-2005	4	1	542.07
2005-2006	3	5	18.20

All the cases of fire accidents in Ordnance Factories are invariably examined by Board of Enquiries (BOE) to determine the causes of fire with a view to take remedial measures to prevent such recurrences. In the above mentioned cases BOE have found following reasons as cause of the fire accidents:-

1. Electrical short-circuit;
2. Excessive ambient temperature;
3. Accumulation of waste explosive for a longer period; and
4. Violent reaction of chemicals, during process etc.

To prevent such fire accidents, adequate fire safety measures have been taken in all the Ordnance Factories. Modern fire fighting equipments have been provided to all the units. Each unit has a dedicated safety section and also fire brigade section, headed by qualified officers and round the clock vigil is kept. Periodical training is imparted to all staff on safety matters. All required precautions as per prevailing norms are being strictly observed.

[English]

Rehabilitation Plan for Snake Charmers

3247. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has chalked out any rehabilitation plan for the snake charmers and their families who have lost their livelihood due to strict enforcement of Wildlife Act and are on the brink of starvation;

- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the fresh steps taken by the Government to provide alternative means of livelihood to these people?

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

(c) and (d) No proposals for the rehabilitation of snake charmers and their families affected due to strict enforcement of wildlife Act, have been received from the State Governments.

Special Schools for Minority Children

3248. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI : Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has any specific proposals to open special schools for minority children for imparting basic general education; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Does not arise.

CBI Inquiry against NGOs

3249. SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether a CBI inquiry is going on against some of the NGOs who have forged the recommendations of the Government of Andhra Pradesh

(b) if so, the details of NGOs and the grants that have been given to them in compliance with the forged recommendations of the State Government; and

(c) the present status of the inquiry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) to (c) Yes Sir, on a reference from Govt. of India, the CBI has registered FIR in RC. 16(A)/2006-Hyd and the inquiry is in progress against the eight NGOs for allegedly forging the recommendation of the State Government of Andhra Pradesh. Their applications were received for grant under the scheme for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse for setting up of de-addiction Centres but no grant-in-aid has been released to these NGOs against the forged recommendations. The details of NGOs are as under:-

- (i) Vennela Educational and Rural Development Society, Khammam District, Andhra Pradesh.
- (ii) Sahaya Welfare Association, Nalgonda District, Andhra Pradesh.
- (iii) Jagruthi Educational and Community Development Society, Khammam District, Andhra Pradesh.
- (iv) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Youth Association, Khammam District, Andhra Pradesh.
- (v) Sharada Educational Society, Ranga Reddy, District, Andhra Pradesh.
- (vi) Chaitanya Yuvajana Sangham, Khammam District, Andhra Pradesh.
- (vii) Rose Vimala Rural Organisation for Women, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.
- (viii) Sivaranjani Educational Society, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

Food Items Reserved for SSI

3250. SHRI SWADESH CHAKRABORTTY : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

- (a) the food manufacturing items which are

exclusively reserved for the Small Scale Industries (SSIs);

- (b) whether current standards of food safety are identical for the items reserved for the SSIs; and

- (c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY) : (a) Food manufacturing items which are reserved for the small scale industries (SSIs) are as under:-

S.No.	Name of the Product
1.	Pickles and Chutneys
2.	Bread
3.	Pastry
4.	Hard boiled Sugar Candy
5.	Rapessed Oil (expect Solvent extracted)
6.	Mustard Oil (expect Solvent extracted)
7.	Sesame Oil (expect Solvent extracted)
8.	Groundnut Oil (expect Solvent extracted)
9.	Ground and processed Spice other than spice oil and Oleo resin spcies.

(b) and (c) The current standards of food safety are uniformly applicable to all the food products, irrespective of whether they are reserved for manufacture in SSI sector or not.

Purchase of Transport Warship from USA

3251. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether there is any proposal to purchase

transport warship USS Trenton from USA as reported in the *Times of India* dated July 26, 2006;

- (b) if so, the facts thereof;
- (c) the benefits which are likely to accrue to the Indian Navy;
- (d) whether technical know how of this ship will also be transferred; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (e) Government approved the acquisition of Landing Platform Dock (LPD), USS Trenton alongwith four Landing Craft Mechanised (LCMs) and associated package for the Indian Navy from the USA at a cost of USD 48.23289 million.

The ship would provide the Indian Navy enhanced amphibious capability. In addition, the LPD can be deployed for disaster relief operations. It can also function as a command and control platform during mishaps at sea like offshore oil installation fires and maritime air accidents.

No technical know how for the construction of such a ship in India is envisaged under the present acquisition. However, the induction of LPD would help in gaining user experience apart from providing essential design inputs for the indigenous construction of LPD.

Development of Wagha Border

3252. SHRI MILIND DEORA :

SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR :

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government has any project for development of Wagha Border as a tourism destination;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the funds allocated for the purpose; and

- (c) the steps taken or being taken to implement the project?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A total amount of Rs.484.58 lakh has been sanctioned during the year 2005-06 for Integrated Development of Attari Wagha Border, Neem Chameli Complex, Attari Mahal, Samadhi Complex, Attari International Railway Station, Ram Tirath Temple Complex, Pul Kanjari, Sarai Amanat Khan Complex and Raja Sansi Village Carpet Weaver Complex.

(c) Implementation and completion of projects sanctioned under various schemes of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is the responsibility of the State Government. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India monitors the progress of the projects and status of utilization of funds through review meetings from time to time.

[Translation]

Security at Airports

3253. SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA :

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

- (a) the amount spent on security arrangements at the major airports in the country during the last three years;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to further strengthen the security mechanism at airports in the country;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the amount likely to be spent on installation of ultra modern system for further strengthening of security mechanism at the airport during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) Information is being collected from concerned agencies.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. It has been decided to install security equipments like Bio-metric access control system, Explosive detection equipment, CCTV, Perimeter intrusion detection system etc. at all the major airports in the country. The security equipments being installed at departure area and their cost are as under:—

In line X-Ray Baggage Inspection System	— Rs.58.30 crores
Explosive Trace Detectors	— Rs.62.27 crores
Metal Detectors	— Rs.5.77 crores
X-Ray Baggage Inspection System	— Rs.34.00 crores

These equipment will be installed in a phased manner.

[English]

Investment by PIO in Aviation Sector

3254.SHRI E.G. SUGAVANAM : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to allow the Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) living abroad to invest in Indian domestic airlines;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (c) The matter is under Consideration.

Bhuntar Airport

3255.SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the expansion plan of the runway of the Bhuntar Airport in Himachal Pradesh has been hampered;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the expansion plan is likely to be completed?

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

(b) and (c) IIT Roorkee has been requested to carry out a Feasibility Study of runway extension by preparation of Digital Terrain Mapping (DTM) for river diversion and reclamation of land for runway extension. The time frame for executing the expansion plan is subject to the submission of the final report by IIT Roorkee and the steps which would be required to be taken thereafter.

Supply of Type-II Wax

3256.SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPIPARAI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that thousands of small match box industries in Tamil Nadu are facing problems due to shortage of adequate Type-II Wax; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or being taken by the Government to supply of Type-II Wax to these match industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) and (b) It has been reported by Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited that on account of its planned shutdown from 24.5.2006 to 25.6.2006 for maintenance, there was some delay in meeting customers' demand of type II wax during the months of June-July, 2006. After completion of maintenance work, production has been resumed on 30.6.2006 and supply situation is expected to improve.

Over-Bridge at Kamtee-Kalmana Railway Line

3257.SHRI SUBODH MOHITE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether construction work on Kamtee-Kalmana over-bridge of South-Eastern Railways has not been started;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways are considering to change its location and design of over-bridge;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the time by which the construction work on the said project is likely to be started and completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Work not yet sanctioned, hence, no construction taken up.

(b) Railways undertake construction of Road-over/Under bridges in lieu of existing busy level crossings on cost sharing basis if the traffic density at the level crossing is one lakh or more TVUs (Train Vehicle Units—a figure obtained by multiplying the number of trains to the number of road vehicles passing over the level crossing in 24 hours) otherwise on deposit terms. Proposal in both cases have to be sponsored by State Government duly fulfilling certain preliminary pre-requisites required under extant rules. The level crossing No.567 at km 1123/9 between Kamptee-Kalumna of Howrah-Mumbai route is having traffic density of 343764 TVUs, hence, qualifying for replacement by Road over bridge on cost sharing basis but the requisite proposal has not yet been sponsored by the State Government.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

Retirement Age of ITDC Employees

3258.SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is considering to enhance the retirement age of ITDC employees from 58 to 60 years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the decision is likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) The Government has no proposal to enhance the retirement age of ITDC employees from 58 to 60 years.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Rehabilitation of Scavengers

3259.SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has made any efforts to find out the number of scavengers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a number of such persons have declined on account of the steps taken by the Government for the eradication of such practice and improve their conditions;

(d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(e) the funds spent by the Government on rehabilitation of such persons during each of the last three years, State-wise and item-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) to (d) A statement showing statewise number of scavengers identified,

number of scavengers assisted for rehabilitation and the number of scavengers that remain to be assisted is given in the enclosed statement-I

(e) A statement showing State/UT wise, Central Assistance released for rehabilitation of scavengers, during the last three years is given in the enclosed statement-II.

Statement-I

Population of Scavengers, Scavengers rehabilitated and no. of Scavengers to be rehabilitated

Sl No.	Name of the State	Population of Scavengers	Total scavengers rehabilitated	Remaining scavengers to be rehabilitated
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	45822	45822	0
2.	Assam	40413	1594	38819
3.	Bihar	12226	285	11941
4.	Delhi	17420	2941	1479
5.	Gujarat	64195	11653	52572
6.	Haryana	36362	15558	20804
7.	Himachal Pradesh	4757	2023	2734
8.	Jammu and Kashmir	4150	211	3939
9.	Karnataka	14555	12597	1958
10.	Kerala	1339	141	1198
11.	Madhya Pradesh	81307	77512	3795

1	2	3	4	5
12.	Maharashtra	64785	19086	45699
13.	Meghalaya	607	0	607
14.	Nagaland	1800	0	1800
15.	Orissa	35049	10681	24368
16.	Pondicherry	476	129	347
17.	Punjab	2988	2988	0
18.	Rajasthan	5776	14169	43597
19.	Tamil Nadu	35561	23687	11874
20.	Tripura	0	0	0
21.	Uttar Pradesh	213975	180719	33256
22.	West Bengal	23852	2338	21514
23.	Chhattisgarh	3243	3243	0
24.	Jharkhand	5750	0	5750
25.	Uttaranchal	1970	493	1477
Total		770338	427870	342468

Statement-II

State-wise Central Assistance Released under the National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers and their dependents (NSLRS)

(Rs. In Crores)

Year-2002-03

Name of the State/UT	Central Assistance Released
1	2
Andhra Pradesh	29.67

1	2
Himachal Pradesh	2.40
Karnataka	8.88
Total	40.95
Year-2003-04	
Assam	1.63
Gujarat	3.74
Himachal Pradesh	3.09
Madhya Pradesh	1.25
Orissa	2.85
Uttar Pradesh	5.37
West Bengal	1.60
Chhattishgarh	1.89
Total	21.41
Year-2002-03	
Karnataka	12.19
Madhya Pradesh	1.37
Total	13.56

Note—No funds have been allocated in the Budget Estimate (BE) for the financial year 2005-06 under the scheme.

[English]

**New Orthopaedic Rehabilitation
Centre In West Bengal**

3260.SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to open a new Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Centre in West Bengal;

(b) if so, whether any preliminary work has been done to locate such an institute in West Bengal;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which the said centre is likely to be opened?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) It is proposed to set up two new District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) in West Bengal, one at Cooch Behar and the other at Birbhum. These centres, apart from other services, will also provide orthopaedic rehabilitation services.

(b) to (d) Primary responsibility to set up DDRC is of the State Government. The opening of the centre will depend on identification of implementing agency, providing of proper building and deployment of manpower by the District Administration.

Upgradation of Museums

3261.SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government provides financial assistance for the development of museums under the scheme for promotion and strengthening of regional and local museums in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of applications received for financial assistance from Tamil Nadu during each of the last three years;

(d) the number of applications considered and remain pending during the said period alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(e) the time by which pending applications are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Under this scheme, financial assistance is given for professional development of museums for promotion of antiquities, numismatics, paintings, ethnological collection, folk art etc., managed by voluntary organizations, institutions, societies, trusts, local bodies, etc., including universities and colleges, registered under the Registration of Societies Act of 1860 (XXI) or under an other law for the time being in force as well as those managed by the State Government. The Central grant is limited to 80% of the project cost (90% in case of North-Eastern region) or the following amount in each category whichever is lower:-

Purpose/Category	Maximum financial assistant admissible (Rs. in Lakhs)	
	For Category I (State Museums renowned Museums)	For Category II (Other Museums)
1	2	3
Renovation/Repairs/ Extension and Modernization of gallery	50.00	25.00
Development of Infrastructure of the State Government Museums in the North East States including Sikkim	300.00 one-time financial assistance will be given	Not applicable
Storage/Modernization of Reserve Collection	25.00	Not applicable
Publication	1.00	5.00
Conservation Laboratory/ Conservation Projects	25.00	12.50

1	2	3
Museum Library	5.00	2.50
Equipment		
(i) Equipment (General)	15.00	7.50
(ii) Equipment for Security System	25.00	NA
Documentation	15.00	7.50

(c) 4, 3 and 2 applications were received for the financial years 2003-2004, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, respectively.

(d) These applications were placed before the expert committee constituted under the scheme. The committee recommended grants to 3 organizations while proposals of remaining 6 organizations ere rejected. No proposal is pending.

(e) The question does not arise.

Auction System for Allotment of Petrol Pumps/LPG Agencies

3262.SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether at present Petrol/Diesel outlets and LPG agencies are allotted to persons/parties on perpetual basis;

(b) if so, the reason thereof;

(c) whether such allotments have sometimes led to complaints of short-filling of petrol/diesel and black-marketing of LPG cylinders;

(d) if so, the number of such cases, category-wise have come to the notice of the Government during the last three years and the action taken against the defaulters;

(e) whether the Government proposes to introduce auction system annually for the petrol/diesel pumps and LPG agencies to eliminate malpractices;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (g) The allotment of retail outlet (RO) dealership and LPG distributorship is done by the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) in accordance with the selection guidelines formulated by them that include issue of advertisement and interviews of the candidates with provisions for reservations for SCs/STs, physically handicapped persons, outstanding sports persons, freedom fighters, para-military/police/government personnel and defence category.

The initial period of agreement for RO dealership and LPG distributorship in respect of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL) is 5 years with renewable option for 5 years. In respect of IBP Company (IBP), the initial agreement for RO dealership is 15 years with a renewable option for 5 years. In respect of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), the initial agreement for RO dealership is 15 years with a renewable option for 5 years and initial agreement of 10 years for LPG distributorship with a renewable option. In respect of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL), the initial agreement is for 10 years for both RO dealership and LPG distributorship with renewable option for 10 years for RO dealership and 5 years for LPG distributorship.

However, the dealership/distributorship is liable for termination if a breach is committed of the terms of the dealership/distributorship agreement.

There is no proposal to introduce auction system for giving RO dealership and LPG distributorship.

The details of malpractices detected by OMCs during the last 3 years is given in the statement enclosed. Action against such defaulters is taken by the OMCs in

accordance with the provisions of the Marketing Discipline Guidelines.

Statement

Company-wise total number of Short filling at retail outlets (ROs) and black marketing of LPG detected during the last three years (2000-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06)

Sl. No.	Name of OMCs	Total No. of cases detected during the last 3 years (2003-2006)	
		Short Filling at ROs	Black Marketing of LPG
1.	IOCL	343	386
2.	IBP	145	Nil
3.	BPCL	350	302
4.	HPCL	264	56

[Translation]

Development of Tourism in Maharashtra

3263.SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra has submitted any schemes for the development of tourism in the State particularly Vidharbha region to the Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has taken steps for promotion of tourism in the Vidharbha region on lines of the draft prepared by the Tata Consultancy Services on the potential of tourism in Vidharbha; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE

(SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) and (b) Development and promotion of tourism places/spots is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/UT Administrations themselves. However, Ministry of Tourism provides funds on the basis of projects prioritized every year in consultation with them. During the 9th and 10th Plan periods (till 2005-06) Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned the following projects for Vidarbha region:-

S. No.	Name of the Project	Amount sanctioned (Rs. in lakh)
1.	Tourist Inn at Tadoba	45.50
2.	Jungle Resort at Khindsey, Nagpur	49.61
3.	Nature Interpretation Centre at Sillari/Pench, Dist. Nagpur	49.94
4.	Tourist complex at Bordam, District Wardha	48.95
5.	Tourist complex at Khekarnala, District Nagpur	49.46
6.	Vidarbha Development Plan	14.75
7.	Adventure and water sports at Chikhaldara District Amaravati	6.71
8.	Adventure and water sports activity at Navegaon, Khairi, Nagpur District	6.91
9.	Development of View Point at Chikhaldara, District Amaravati	30.00
10.	Budget accommodation at Nagpur	48.68

The above projects have already been completed.

However, no project proposal has been prioritized for development of Vidarbha during 2006-07 nor has any such project proposal been received.

(c) No such proposal has been received from the Government of Maharashtra.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Women Coach in Local EMU

3264. SHRI SUNIL KHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether in Sealdah Railway division the women bogies in local EMU have been changed just after vendors;

(b) if so, whether any objections from women's side received by DRM, Sealdah;

(c) if so, the steps taken by the DRM to change the vendors boggy to avoid the congestion of goods at the platforms of nearby women boggy to avoid accident of women specially in Sealdah Station; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. After opening of Circular Railway track between Princep Ghat and Majerhat w.e.f. 01.02.2006 and consequent extension of Circular Railway service from Princep Ghat to Majerhat-Ballygunge-Sonarpur-Champahati-Lakshmikantapur etc., there was a situation that operation of some trains involved rake reversal at Ballygunge. Consequently, location of the ladies compartment with reference to any fixed point on the platform would have changed. No fool proof system could be evolved which would have given pre-intimation to ladies passengers regarding location of ladies compartment in any train. To get rid of this undesirable situation, it was decided to distribute ladies earmarked accommodation at both ends of each rake. Hence, 'D' type coach which consists of partly vendor accommodation and partly passenger accommodation were marshalled next to Driving cars at each end and the passenger portion of the

'D' type coaches were earmarked as ladies accommodation. This also took care of the compulsion to attach ladies coach adjacent to Guard or Motorman. Immediately after this arrangement, there were objections from women's side and the above position was clarified by letters as well as through personal hearing. Further, Railway Protection Force (RPF) protection were arranged to eliminate the infiltration problem and 'floor to roof' solid separations have also been arranged and these steps have satisfied most of the women's representatives. Accumulation of goods on platform adjacent to vendors' coaches is unavoidable irrespective of the location of the vendor coach. However, no report of an accident in Sealdah station on this account is available on record. The above arrangement has created more accommodation for lady passengers and avoided greater inconvenience that would have been caused by reversal of rakes.

[Translation]

Railway Projects of Chhattisgarh

3265. SHRI PUNNULAL MOHALE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the railway projects submitted by the Government of Chhattisgarh to the Railways during 2006-07 for approval;

(b) the details of the projects which have been cleared;

(c) the reasons for not clearing the remaining projects;

(d) whether the Railways are aware that the progress on railway projects of Chhattisgarh is being hampered due to shortage of funds; and

(e) if so, the steps taken for allocating the sufficient funds for completing these projects on time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) No fresh proposal

has been received from the State Government of Chhattisgarh during 2006-07 for approval.

(d) and (e) The projects are being progressed as per their operational priorities and the availability of resources. The Railways have taken a number of initiatives to get additional resources from sources other than the normal budgetary support to expedite the completion of these projects.

Development of Airports in Punjab

3266. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any scheme for development of airports in Punjab;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the allocation made therefor; and

(c) the time by which the development work is likely to be implemented and completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Airports Authority of India (AAI) has taken up development of Amritsar International airport in phased manner. At this airport, the works of construction of new Integrated Terminal Building, construction of New Fire Station, Cargo complex, car park, runway extension works and cargo apron etc. have been completed at a cost of Rs.85 crores (approx.). There are plans for construction of module-II of Integrated Terminal Building, additional car parking, expansion of apron, extension of runway etc. at a cost of Rs.105 Crores (approx.).

There is also a proposal of State Government of Punjab to establish an International Civil Air Terminal at Halwara Defence airfield in co-ordination with the Ministry of Defence.

AAI has a plan to construct a new terminal building and expansion of existing apron to increase the

parking capacity at Chandigarh airport subject to permission and NOC from Indian Air Force (Ministry of Defence).

**Ahmednagar-Parli Vaidyanath
Railway Line**

3267. SHRI JAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD PATIL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a new railway line between Ahmednagar-Beed-Parli Vaidyanath was sanctioned in 1996-97;

(b) if so, the cost of the project and total amount spent so far;

(c) the present status of work on the said railway line; and

(d) the time by which the construction work on the said railway line is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Ahmednagar-Beed-Parli Vaidyanath new line project was included in the Budget 1995-96.

(b) Anticipated cost of the project was assessed as Rs.353.08 crore. Expenditure upto March, 2006 is Rs.15.06 crore.

(c) Land acquisition of 1464.77 hectare in 105 villages has been processed. On Ahmednagar-Narayandoh (15 Kms) section, possession of 56.14 hectare land in 5 villages is given. Earthwork and bridges taken up.

(d) Target date of completion not yet fixed.

[English]

Doubling of Pune-Miraj Railway Line

3268. SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether survey for doubling of Pune-Miraj railway line has been taken up;

(b) if so, the status of the survey;

(c) the financial allocation made during 2006-07 for the said project; and

(d) the time by which the work on this section is likely to be started and completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Survey for Pune-Miraj-Kolhapur doubling (326 kms) completed. As per the survey, the cost of doubling of the line has been assessed as Rs.787.21 crore with a negative Rate of Return of (-) 1.06%. Further consideration of the proposal would depend upon the finalization of the results of survey report.

(c) and (d) Do not arise as this is not a sanctioned project.

Manufacturing of Wagons

3269. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of wagons manufactured by Golden Rock Workshop, Tiruchirapalli during each of the last three years;

(b) whether the workshop has received more fresh orders from the Railways and also from the private sector;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken to further boost the performance of the Golden Rock Workshop?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Number of wagons manufactured and dispatched during each of the last three years:-

S. Type of wagon No.	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
1. BOXNHS	322	153	150
2. BLC (Container Flat wagons)	280	15	325
Total	602	468	475

(b) Yes, Sir. Orders have been recieved from Railways and public sector.

(c) Golden Rock Workshop has received fresh order as below for the year 2006-07:-

S. Order From No.	Type of wagon	Quantity	Reference
1. Railways	BOXN	240	Board's letter No. 2005/RS(B)/971/1, dated 6.2.06.
2. Container Corporation of India (CONCOR)	BLC	1125	Order placed in August 2006.

(d) With the aim of further boosting up the performance of Golden Rock workshop, necessary inputs are being provided from time to time in need based manner. Four works for improving the existing infrastructure, providing effluent treatment plant and creating facilities for overhauling of new generation high horse power locomotives at Golden Rock workshop are on sanctioned list at total cost of Rs.22.2 Crore approximately and are progressing.

[Translation]

Contribution to Soldiers Welfare Boards

3270. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government provides contribution to Central and State Soldier Welfare Boards; and

(b) if so, the amount of contribution made by the Government during each of the last three years, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU) : (a) The Union Government provides 50% share of the administrative expenditure of 32 Rajya Sainik Boards and 340 Zila Sainik Boards that exist presently.

(b) A list of Government's contribution provided to the States during the last 3 years is enclosed as statement.

		<i>Statement</i>		
		2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
		(in rupees)	(in rupees)	(in rupees)
1	2	3	4	5
Total Allotted (Rupees in crores)		14.72	17.70	19.88
S. No.	Name of State	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
		(in rupees)	(in rupees)	(in rupees)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	4474500	4900000	5082500
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	5378983	0	0
3.	Assam	7251663	213800	2260250
4.	Bihar	2179250	1256776	829380
5.	Chhattisgarh	0	1406250	1768750
6.	Goa	411706	443940	380000
7.	Gujarat	4066111	1433750	3270048
8.	Haryana	20688279	14492039	8625000

1	2	3	4	5
9.	Himachal Pradesh	3087500	10980556	6081995
10.	Jammu and Kashmir	0	0	9148606
11.	Jharkhand	0	0	90025
12.	Karnataka	2717750	4493118	5429248
13.	Kerala	4644712	6311976	7279922
14.	Madhya Pradesh	13867221	3249000	5684250
15.	Maharashtra	9269250	17570235	20617650
16.	Manipur	492685	150000	12850
17.	Meghalaya	376025	405450	428288
18.	Mizoram	1215587	3540555	7937622
19.	Nagaland	4558003	3035218	9173750
20.	Orissa	0	0	2396115
21.	Punjab	5346930	19503755	21726358
22.	Rajasthan	6861000	5121000	11860250
23.	Sikkim	1431000	625000	718750
24.	Tamil Nadu	10673500	10593500	25151317
25.	Tripura	429095	499750	577750
26.	Uttaranchal	3345000	3397250	6299122
27.	Uttar Pradesh	22906646	54173177	14071250
28.	West Bengal	679162	3111500	9417046
29.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	0	0	0

1	2	3	4	5
30.	Chandigarh (UT)	339990	435250	1311822
31.	Delhi	0	0	1008809
32.	Pondicherry	0	0	628500
33.	Nepal	3561690	3732955	8606902
Total		146370238	177000000	198800000

Behaviour of Airlines Staff

3271. SHRI RAJESH KUMAR MANJHI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that the behaviour of the staff of the airlines is not courteous and they are not prompt in dealing with the passengers;

(b) if so, the number of complaints received during the current year, and

(c) the 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) Complaints are sometimes received from airlines passengers regarding missing/lost baggage, refund of tickets in case of delays/cancellations, denial of facilities like wheel chair, meals/snacks in case of delayed flights, etc.

(b) A total of 37 such complaints have been received during the current year, till date, by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

(c) All the airlines have been advised by DGCA that they should display on their respective websites various facilities offered to the passengers, both in terms of free and chargeable, in a conspicuous manner so that passengers are aware of these before booking air tickets.

[English]

Development of Airport at Mysore

3272. SHRI C.H. VIJAYASHANKAR : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Karnataka and Airports Authority of India (AAI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop the Airport at Mysore;

(b) if so, whether the land acquisition has been completed for the said project;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the time by which the work is likely to be started?

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

(b) to (d) The State Government of Karnataka was requested to acquire 174 acres of land adjoining the existing airport boundary for development of Mysore airport. However, the State Government has agreed to hand over only 154 acres of land, since a portion of land measuring 2 acres out of the proposed 174 acres is under litigation.

(e) January, 2007.

[Translation]

Introduction of Train between Panvel to Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminal

3273. SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any scheme to run a daily train from Panvel Railway Station to Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminal via Diva and implementation of the proposed Vasai-Diva-Narvel broad-gauge railway line project;

(b) if so, the time by which both these projects are likely to be implemented;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Railways in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (d) Introduction of a daily train between Panvel to Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminal via Diva has been examined but it has not been found feasible due to operational constraints.

There is no station by name Narvel. It is perhaps Panvel. A Railway line already exists between Vasai Road-Diva and Diva-Panvel.

Research Projects in Disability Sector

3274. SHRI G. NIZAMUDDIN : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether any research projects in the disability sector have been sanctioned by the Government to the NOGs during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds allocated and spent under the said projects;

(d) whether the said projects have since been completed;

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

(f) if not, the time by which these are likely to be completed?

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

(b) to (f) A statement indicating details of research projects, funds allocated and spent, date of completion etc. during the last three years is enclosed.

Statement

Details of research projects, funds allocated and spent, date of completion etc. during the last three years is annexed.

Sl. No.	Year	Name of Project and Organization	Name of Institute/ Project Director	Funds Allocated	Spent	Whether the project have been completed	if so, details and outcome thereof	if not, the time by which these are likely to be completed
1	2							9
	2003-04	Manufacture and Trial of Lightweight Hand and Finger Prosthesis using Silicone Elastomers, Dept. of Orthopaedic.	M.S. Ramalah Hospital, Bangalore	3,08,360/-	4,75,977/-	Yes (final report is awaited)	The objective of the proposal was to develop cosmetic finger prosthesis at an economical price and to make available the technology to the needy patients, who have lost full or part of their fingers or hands, with the assistance of silicon elastomers and other material like POP, plasticsene etc. molding technique was developed. Mixing of colour technique was also attempted to standardize to allow availability of prosthesis in various shade. Thirteen patients were fitted with finger prosthesis and the pigment colour matching with the skin is tried by the investigator and the result is satisfactory.	1 Months

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2.	2003-04	Database for ADIP Scheme	Shri Atul Gupta, New Delhi	70,000/-	95,000/-	At final Stage		4 Months
3.	2003-04	Teaching of Disability Studies in Indian Universities and Academic Institutions. A study of trends and issues.	Society for Disability and Rehabilitation Studies, New Delhi, Prof. G.N. Karna	3,80,900/-	3,47,708/-	Yes	The study reveals that there are 34 Universities/Institutes offering disability courses. Out of which, 22 Universities offer course on 'Disability' at Under Graduate level and 25 Universities offer at the Post Graduate level. The main recommendations include creation of fledged Universities focusing on growth of disability studies, qualitative vocational and professional training programmes and enhancement of professional skills through continuing rehabilitation programmes.	Not Applicable
4.	2003-04	An Impact Assessment of National Bridge Course for Disabled.	Santek Consultants Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, Shri Sanjay Jain	7,09,970/-	7,09,970/-	Yes	The study reveals that the National Bridge Course has been useful in providing knowledge and concepts, and exposure to field works for the trainers in the disability sector. The future strategies suggested for continuation of the course include that only persons having experience in rehabilitation	Not Applicable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7.	8	9
							programmes should be enrolled for training; more focus on practical classes to provide practical knowledge for operating different gadgets/equipment in the disability sector; and provision of training manual in regional language.	
5.	2003-04	Evaluation of National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation	Indian Institute of Public opinion, New Delhi. Shri V.P. Madhok	4,20,800/-	4,20,800/-	Yes	The study provides an extent to which the National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporations' Credit Schemes and Micro Financing Schemes have actually promoted self-employment of persons with disability. The main recommendations of the study include the strengthening of technical and field staff; computerization of data of state Channelising Agencies; and the demand for funds for NHFDC should be made by the State Channelising Agencies after realistic assessment of requirements for disbursement.	Not Applicable
6.	2003-04	Evaluation of Voluntary Organisations implementing the programmes under	Haryali centre for Rural Development,	6,07,450/-	6,07,450/-	Yes	The study was based on 120 projects sanctioned by the Ministry from 2000-01 to 2002-03.	Not Applicable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		the scheme to promote voluntary action for persons with disabilities in the states of Punjab, Chandigarh, Uttaranchal, Bihar and West Bengal.	New Delhi. Ashri Mushtaq Ahmad				It provides an assessment of the infrastructure facilities and expertise available with the organizations, and review of the performance of the programmes undertaken by them. The shortcomings observed and recommendations/suggestions made are being utilized to improve effecting implementation of the programmes.	
7.	2004-05	Study on efficacy of Viklang Bandhu Training Programme in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, U.P., Madhya Pradesh, Chandigarh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Delhi	Santek Consultants Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, Shri Sanjay Jain	13,03,850/-	4,00,479/-	No	Does not arise.	As reported by Project Director in July 2006, the study is in final phase.
8.	2004-05	An assessment study of success of NGOs communities engaged in the CBR approach to rehabilitation of disabled community in the states of Maharashtra, Gujaat and Madhya Pradesh.	Unik Solutions New Delhi. Shri Anup Mukhopadhyay	3,87,450/-	3,48,705/-	Yes	The study provides an assessment of the available infrastructure and the extent to which the disabled respondents received educational, medical and economic assistance through CBR approach in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra States. The recommendations include State specific suggestions to improve rehabilitation services/ CBR Schemes with full involvement of all concerned to make the CBR approach more effective and result oriented.	Not Applicable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9.	2004-05	Study of NGOs working for Disabled without Govt. Assistance with special reference to find disbursement, utilization and monitoring and procedures in the states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi.	Society for Empowering the Youth and Development, New Delhi, Dr. P.C. Singh	2,38,900/-	2,14,515/-	No	Does not arise.	October, 2006
10.	2004-05	Occupational stress professional Burnout and Job Satisfaction among Special Education Teachers In Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu	Pertiyar University Salem. Dr. Lokanadha Reddy	2,28,900/-	2,06,010/-	No	Does not arise.	August, 2006
11.	2005-06	Psycho-Social Problems faced by school going children with disabilities in the states of Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh	Institute of Social Action Mehrauli, New Delhi. Dr. J.D. Bakshi	5,17,400/-	4,73,970/-	No	Does not arise.	September 2006
12.	2005-06	Microcontroller based graphical/sound based daily scheduler and alarm for children with Autism and Mental Disability.	Netica Solution P. Ltd., Science and Technology Entrepreneurs Park (STEP) JSSATE, C-20/1, Sector-62, Noida-201307	2,43,000/-	Not finalised	Recently Started in May 2006		12 months May 2007

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13. 2005-06	Development of Hybrid Technology using sand casting system for socket fabrication and Jaipur foot/ Limb Technology	Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti, New Delhi	3,27,000/-	Not finalised	Recently started in June 2006			12 months June 2007
14. 2005-06	Development of Advanced Jaipur Foot	Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti, Jaipur	33,92,000/-	20,00,000/-	Recently started in May 2006			12 months March 2008
15. 2005-06	Projection of Human Resource Requirement in the field of Disability Rehabilitation (The project would be monitored by Rehabilitation Council of India, (RCI), Hence amount has been disbursed to RCI)	Institute of Applied Manpower Research (IAMR), New Delhi will conduct the Research	6,86,000/-	-	Recently started in April 2006			6 months September 2006

*[English]***Airport at Jeypore**

3275. SHRI PARSURAM MAJHI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is considering to set up an airport at Jeypore in Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the decision is likely to be taken in the matter; and.

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There are various requirements like traffic potential, demand from airlines operators, availability of adequate land, financial resources etc. to decide for construction of a Greenfield airport. At present, there is no proposal to set up an airport at Jeypore in Orissa.

Sale of 5 Kg. Cylinders through PDS

3276. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is planning to sell 5 (five) Kg. L.P.G. Cylinders for B.P.L. family and low income family through Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which this facility is likely to be started?

The MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) to (c) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are marketing 5 Kg. domestic LPG cylinders through their own distribution network with effect from

August, 2002 in order to meet the demand of low-income group customers and to extend the reach of LPG to the hilly terrain and interior areas. As on 1.8.2006, there are about 3.27 lakh registered customers of 5 Kg. cylinders with OMCs. There is no plan to sell these cylinders through the Public Distribution System.

Complaints against Air Deccan

3277. SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has received complaints against Air Deccan for not maintaining flight schedules, safety standards, etc.; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) Complaint against airlines including Air Deccan, are received from time to time regarding delay/cancellation of flights and deficient services etc. No complaints on safety standards of Air Deccan have been received.

(b) The complaints which mostly relate to delays, cancellation, ticket refunds etc. are duly investigated and replied to. Airlines have been asked to host all facilities provided to passengers on their website. The need for prompt response to complaints has been regularly emphasised by this Ministry and DGCA in meetings held with domestic airline operators.

*[Translation]***Misuse of AC Coach**

3278. MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether some railway officials have converted the AC Coach into guest house for their personal use at Haridwar Station as appearing in the 'Dainik Jagran' (Deharadun Edition) dated June 17, 2006;

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

(c) the action taken by the Railways in the matter?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[English]

Airport at Greater Noida

3279. SHRI D. NARBULA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to Unstarred Question No.733 dated February 23, 2006 regarding an 'Airport at Greater Noida' and to state :

(a) whether the Government has taken a decision to set up an International Airport at Greater Noida;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the work is likely to be started at the said airport?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Non-Completion of Railway Projects

3280. PROF. M. RAMADASS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether some railway projects after making huge investment were left out without completion and new projects were taken up;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether such actions caused spreading of scarce resources very thinly without any return for high investment;

(d) if so, whether the Railways would reverse this process by making the prioritization of the projects or strengthen high density network so that quick remuneration starts flowing; and

(e) if so, the steps taken by the Railways to mobilize additional resources for its expansion schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) No, Sir. However, taking up of new projects is a continuous exercise on operational and other considerations.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. However, prioritization of projects has already been done for gauge conversion and new line projects in which priority has been accorded to completion of last mile projects and other operationally required projects. The projects related with high density network are also being accorded higher priority.

(e) A number of initiatives have been taken by Ministry of Railways for generating additional resources like funding through public Private Partnership, Cost-Sharing by State Government, funding through Ministry of Defence and National Projects.

Revamping of AAI

3281. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to revamp the Airports Authority of India (AAI) in order to meet the long term goals in the civil aviation sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. There is no such proposal at present.

*[Translation]***Military Schools**

3282. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of Military Schools functioning in the country at present;

(b) whether in 1952, the Ghosh Committee had made recommendation that mother tongue Hindi would be the main subject alongwith English medium on the pattern of military schools;

(c) if so, whether as per the recommendation of the Ghosh Committee courses of Hindi subject in Class XI and XII alongwith Arts in military schools are continuing;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) There are five Military Schools in the country which are located at Ajmer and Dholpur (Rajasthan), Bangalore and Belgaum (Karnataka) and Chail (Himachal Pradesh).

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) to (e) Hindi is not taught as a subject in classes XI and XII. Science and Commerce (with Maths) are taught.

*[English]***Classical Language Status to Kannada**

3283. SHRI MANJUNATH KUNNUR :
SHRI M. SHIVANNA :

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 3141 dated December 14, 2005 regarding classical language status to Kannada and state :

(a) whether the Government has taken decision to declare Kannada as a classical language;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons the delay and the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Representations have been received to declare Kannada as Classical language. The requests have been referred to the Committee of Linguistic Experts constituted for examining such requests.

Reservation for Muslims

3284. SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN : Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether some sections of muslims are recognized for reservation in employment and other avenues as per the Mandal Commission;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the sections (sub-castes/communities) among muslims which are scheduled as OBCs/MOBCs;

(c) the percentage of reservation given to muslim OBCs within the 27 per cent reservation of OBCs;

(d) whether all the State Governments have identified muslim communities which fall under the category of OBCs;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY) : (a) to (f) As per the information received from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, some communities of Muslims are included in the list of other

backward classes. The list of OBCs is available on the website www.ncbc.nic.in. Separate percentage of reservation has not been prescribed for Muslim OBCs. Respective State Governments notify inclusion of OBCs in their respective lists.

[Translation]

**Infiltration by Pakistani Army
Officers/Soldiers**

3285. PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether some instances of infiltration by Pakistani Army Officers/Soldiers along the Line of Control at the Jammu-Kashmir border have come to the notice of the Government during the current year;

(b) if so, details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) There is an overall multi-tiered counter infiltration strategy in place, and infiltration attempts across the Line of Control are being effectively neutralized in Jammu and Kashmir.

[English]

Lurement of Officials Serving in PSUs

3286. SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN : Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that most of the officials serving in the Public Sector Undertakings are, lured by their private sector counterparts offering attractive emoluments, with a view to utilize the work knowledge and expertise gained by them in the public sector;

(b) if so, whether the Government is considering any punitive measures to curb this trend by imposing certain restrictions on financial gains earned by them from their mother organizations by way of pension or other benefits; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) :

(a) to (c) Personnel matters like recruitment, promotion, resignation, etc., of below Board level employees/executives of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) are decided by the management of the respective CPSEs. Some CPSEs in sectors like Petroleum, Power, Steel and Telecommunications have been given higher pay scales than model scales laid down by the Department of Public Enterprises. In addition, various perquisites and allowances and performance linked incentives are also allowed to employees of CPSEs.

Functional Director/Chief Executive of a CPSE requires prior approval of Government before he accepts any appointment/post in any firm with which the CPSE has/had business relation, within two years from the date of his retirement/resignation.

[Translation]

Hostels for SCs

3287. SHRI KRISHNA MURARI MOGHE : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government provides financial assistance for construction of hostel buildings for Scheduled Castes at present but does not provide any amount for maintenance thereof;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government is contemplating to share the expenditure incurred on annual maintenance of hostels keeping in view the limited financial resources of the State Governments; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

**New Railway Line from Ujjain and
Jhalawad**

3288.SHRI THAWARCHAND GEHLOT : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of new railway routes being constructed in the country alongwith the latest status in this regard;

(b) whether any survey has also been conducted recently for Ujjain-Agar-Soyat-Jhalawad route of Ratlam Division under Western Railway;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) At present, there are 91 New Line projects with a throwforward of Rs.28,727 crore as on 01.04.2006 in the country, details of which are given in the Budget Documents. The projects are in various stages of progress. It has been proposed to complete 550 kms. of new railway lines during 2006-07.

(b) to (d) A survey had been conducted for a new railway line between Ujjain and Ramganjmandi via Agar, Sunser and Jhalawar in 2000-01 as per which the cost of the 190 kms. long line was assessed as Rs.273 crore. In view of huge throwforward of ongoing project unremunerative nature and scarcity of resources, the project has not been taken up. However, based on demands, an updating survey has been taken up.

[English]

**Stoppage of Trains at Barabanki
Railway Station**

3289.SHRI BHUPENDRASINH SOLANKI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have withdrawn stoppage of some superfast or express trains at Barabanki Railway Station;

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

(c) whether the Railways have received representations for restoration of stoppage of these trains at Barabanki Railway Station; and

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

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

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[Translation]

**New Trains from Katihar to
Patna/Delhi**

3290.SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR CHOUDHARY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal for introducing any new trains from Katihar to Patna, Katihar to Delhi and increase the frequency of Katihar-Patna Intercity Express; and

(b) if so, the measures taken by the Railways for implementation of said proposals?

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

(b) Does not arise.

Railway Projects of Rajasthan

3291. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a number of railway projects are lying with the Railways for approval;

(b) if so, the details of those projects alongwith the reasons for delay particularly Rajasthan; and

(c) the time by which these projects are likely to be approved?

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

(b) and (c) The details of the surveys completed in Rajasthan during the last three years, their status and reasons for delay, if any, are given as under:-

S.No.	Name of project	Km.	Status/reasons for delay, if any
1.	Dahod-Banswara new line	120	Surveys had been completed. In view of large throwforward of ongoing projects, acute constraint of resources and unremunerative nature of the lines, it was not considered feasible to take up these works.
2.	Ratlam-Banswara via Dungarpur new line	176	
3.	Gauge conversion of Udaipur City-Himmatnagar-Ahmadabad Section.	342	These surveys have been completed recently. Further consideration of the projects would depend upon finalization of the results of the surveys and as such, no time limit can be fixed.
4.	Gauge conversion of Sadulpur-Ratangarh-Bikaner and Ratangarh-Degana Sections.	364	

[English]

GAIL-Tel Project

3292. SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the GAIL (India) Ltd. has commenced the GAIL-Tel Project without conducting any Detailed Project Report (DPR) resulting in a huge loss of revenue;

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

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

PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) and (b) GAIL had taken a detailed business report from M/s. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)—Ovum before entering into Telecom Business. Taking a note of the report, GAIL Board approved the appointment of M/s. Telecommunication Consultant India Limited (TCIL) for technical implementation and M/s. KPMG for planning the detailed network rollout and pricing strategy. There was no loss of revenue on this account.

(c) GAIL is one of the Navratna companies and the Board of GAIL is empowered to take investment decisions.

Alleged Misappropriation of Funds

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

3293. SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has received any complaint dated February 20, 2006 from the All India ITDC Employees Union regarding alleged misappropriation of huge funds by the officials of Ashok Hotel, New Delhi;

(b) if so, whether the Government has conducted any investigation in this regard;

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

(d) the action taken against the officials found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The matter was examined and one case of embezzlement to the tune of Rs. 8.75 lakh by an Ex-Manager (Telephones), Ashok Hotel came to the notice of the ITDC management. It pertained to payment of telephone bills of Ashok Hotel. The money alongwith interest thereon has been recovered.

Denial of Wages Hike to Casual Employees

3294.DR. K.S. MANOJ : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it has come to the notice of the Government that the Casual Employees under Indian Airlines in ground handling services in Cochin International Airport Ltd. (CIAL) are denied of the wages hiked by the Indian Airlines;

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

(c) whether CIAL is outsourcing the ground handling services inspite of the direction from Industrial Dispute Tribunal that the ground handling services should be conducted by the Casual Employees of the Indian Airlines only; and

(d) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (d) The ground handling of all flights at Cochin Airport are carried out by M/s. Air India, the only ground handling agency authorised to handle flights at Cochin Airport. Hence, Casual employees have not been engaged by Indian Airlines for ground handling services at Cochin Airport.

Production of Imported Processed Items

3295. DR. M. JAGANNATH : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to start the production of those processed food items in the country itself which are being imported presently;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken in this regard so far ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY) (a) to (c) The Government does not set up Food Processing Industries on its own. Approval of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries is also not required for starting a new FPI unit. The Government implements several Plan Schemes for promotion of food processing industries. Financial assistance in the form of grant-in-aid Technology Upgradation/Establishment/Modernization of food processing units is given at the rate of 25% and 33.33% of the total cost of plant and machinery and technical civil works subject to a maximum of Rs. 50 lakh in general areas and Rs. 75 lakh in difficult areas like North East, Jammu and Kashmir Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep and ITDP areas. Other schemes for assistance are also being operated for facilitating food processing industries.

National Handicapped Welfare Funds

3296. SHRI HITEN BARMAN : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the funds of National Handicapped Welfare Funds (NHWFs) have been invested in various deposit schemes rather utilizing them on the welfare of handicapped persons in the country;

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

(c) the remedial measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for proper utilization of funds of NHWFs for the welfare of handicapped persons in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) to (c) Funds of the National Handicapped Welfare Fund are being utilised for implementation of 'Scheme of National Scholarship for Welfare of Persons with Disabilities'. The funds, which are not required within a period of six months, are invested in term deposits of Nationalized Banks and Post Office offering maximum returns.

India's Share in World Tourism

3297. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether India's share in the world tourism is very low;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken to increase India's share in world tourism?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) and (b) As per the estimated figures, India's share in the world tourist arrivals

and international tourism receipts was 0.49% and 0.84% respectively in the year 2005.

(c) A number of steps have been taken by the Ministry of Tourism for promoting India tourism in overseas markets as also development of infrastructure etc. to increase its share in the world tourism. These include :-

- Direct approach to the consumers through Electronic and Print media through the "Incredible India" Campaign;
- Creation of World Class Collaterals;
- Centralized Electronic Media Campaign;
- Direct co-operative marketing with the Airlines, tour operators and wholesalers overseas;
- Greater focus in the emerging markets particularly in the region of China, North East Asia and South East Asia;
- Participation in Trade Fairs and Exhibitions;
- Optimize Editorial PR and Publicity;
- Use of Internet and web marketing;
- Generating Tourist Publications;
- Re-inforced hospitality programmes including grant of air passages to invite the media personnel, tour operators on familiarization tour to India to get first hand knowledge on various tourism products;
- Enhancing connectivity and augmentation of air seat capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions;
- Development of tourist spots under its various schemes of infrastructure development for tourist circuits and destinations; and

- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure particularly budget hotels.

[Translation]

Discovery of Gas Reserves in Krishna-Godavari Basin

3298. SHRI CHENGARA SURENDRAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC) has discovered huge gas reserves in Krishna-Godavari Basin last year;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government proposes to extend financial assistance to GSPC to enable the company to expedite the exploration there from; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and steps taken by the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) A consortium of Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC), Geo Global Resources and Jubilant Enpro has discovered gas in Krishna Godavari Basin in the block KG-OSN-2001/3 during 2005-06.

(b) and (c) The Production Sharing Contract (PSC) signed by the Union Government with the consortium does not provide for any financial assistance by the Central Government to any company.

Policy for Rural Tourism

3299. SHRI RASHEED MASOOD : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government has formulated a new policy for rural tourism;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Union Government to implement the said policy?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) to (c) The creation of infrastructure in Rural areas having potential for tourism is being supported under the existing scheme of Destination Development, while community participation and capacity building, including skill up-gradation in such rural areas, are being supported through GOI-UNDP Endogenous Tourism Project. The objective is to showcase rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations and in villages, which have core competency in terms of crafts/handloom/textiles/culture etc.

Under the scheme funds are sanctioned and released to the State/UT Governments. Based on proposals received from State Government during 10th Five Year Plan, the details of Central Financial Assistance extended for development of each such village for infrastructure creation is enclosed as Statement-I and central assistance extended for capacity building etc. under UNDP project is enclosed as Statement-II.

Statement-I

List of statewise Tourism Projects sanctioned during the 10th Plan Under Rural Tourism Scheme (Hardware)

(Rs. in lakh)

State	Sl. No.	Name of the Project	Year of Sanction	Amount Sanctioned	Amount Released
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Andhra Pradesh	1.	Development of Rural Tourism at Pochampalli, Nalgonda Distt.	2003-04	50.00	40.00

1	2	3	4	5	6
	2.	Rural Tourism at Konaseema Village, East Godavari Distt.	2003-04	50.00	50.00
	3.	Development of Rural Tourism at Puttaparthi, Ananthpur Distt.	2004-05	49.50	49.50
	4.	Development of Rural Tourism at Chinchinada, East Godavari Distt.	2004-05	50.00	40.00
	5.	Development of Rural Tourism at Srikalahasti, Chittor Distt.	2004-05	50.00	40.00
2. Arunachal Pradesh	6.	Development of Rural Tourism at Village Rengo, Distt. East Siang.	2005-06	49.62	39.69
3. Assam	7.	Development of Rural Tourism at Durgapur, Distt. Golaghat	2002-03	46.83	14.04
	8.	Rural Tourism Dehing-Patakai Kshetra, Distt. Tinsukia	2004-05	44.33	35.46
	9.	Rural Tourism at Sualkuchi in Kamrup Distt.	2004-05	50.00	40.00
	10.	Rural Tourism Project at Village Asharikandi, Distt. Dhubri	2005-06	48.97	39.17
4. Bihar	11.	Rural Tourism Project at Nepura Village, Distt. Nalanda	2003-04	50.00	40.00
5. Chhattisgarh	12.	Development of Rural Tourism at Village Chitrakote, Distt. Bastar	2003-04	50.00	40.00
	13.	Development of Rural Tourism at Chitrokote, Distt. Bastar	2003-04	50.00	40.00
	14.	Development of Rural Tourism at Champaran, Distt. Raipur	2003-04	50.00	15.00
	15.	Rural Tourism at Nagamar, Distt. Bastar	2003-04	48.00	38.40
	16.	Rural Tourism at Village Kondagaon, Distt. Bastar	2005-06	50.00	40.00
6. Delhi	17.	Rural Tourism at Kotla Mubarakpur	2003-04	09.78	09.78
	18.	Rural Tourism at Nangli, Razapur, Delhi	2003-04	36.30	36.30

1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Gujarat	19. Development of heritage village at Tera, Distt. Kachchh		2003-04	50.00	40.00
	20. Rural Tourism at Hodka, Distt. Kachchh		2003-04	50.00	40.00
	21. Development of Navagaon and Malegaon rural tourism, Distt. Dang		2003-04	92.70	27.81
8. Haryana	22. Rural Tourism at Jyotisar, Distt. Kurukshetra		2003-04	50.00	40.00
9. Himachal Pradesh	23. Rural Tourism at Nagar, Distt. Kullu		2003-04	50.00	40.00
	24. Rural Tourism Paragpur, Distt. Kangra Valley		2003-04	50.00	40.00
10. Jammu and Kashmir	25. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Drung, Distt. Baramula		2005-06	50.00	40.00
	26. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Surinsar, Distt. Jammu		2005-06	50.00	40.00
	27. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Gagangir, Distt. Srinagar		2005-06	50.00	40.00
	28. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Pahalgam, Distt. Anantnag		2005-06	50.00	40.00
	29. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Jheri, Distt. Jammu		2005-06	50.00	40.00
11. Karnataka	30. Rural tourism Project at Kokkare Bellur, Distt. Bellur		2002-03	50.00	15.00
	31. Development of Attiveri Bird Sanctuary as a rural tourism project, Distt. Uttar Kannada		2003-04	60.00	18.00
	32. Rural Tourism at Banavasi Distt., Uttar Kannada		2003-04	50.00	40.00
	33. Rural Tourism project in Anegundi, Distt. Koppal		2003-04	50.00	40.00
	34. Rural Tourism project in Coorg, Distt. Kodagu		2003-04	50.00	40.00
12. Kerala	35. Development of Kumbalangi as Rural Tourism Destination, Distt. Ernakulam		2003-04	50.00	50.00
	36. Development of rural tourism at Amamula, Distt. Pathanamthitta		2003-04	20.00	16.00

1	2	3	4	5	6
	37. Development of Village Balrampur in Thiruvananthapuram Distt.		2004-05	50.00	40.00
	38. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Kalady, Distt. Ernakulam for Spice Circuit		2006-07	47.20	37.76
	39. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Anakara, Distt. Idukki for Spice Circuit		2006-07	50.00	40.00
13. Madhya Pradesh	40. Rural tourism in Hatwa village, Distt. Siddhi		2002-03	44.00	13.20
	41. Rural tourism at Chaugan, Distt. Mandla		2003-04	50.00	40.00
	42. Rural tourism project at Pranpur, Distt. Ashoknagar		2003-04	48.00	38.00
	43. Rural Tourism Project at Orchha, Distt. Tikamgarh		2005-06	50.00	40.00
14. Maharashtra	44. Rural Tourism at Sulbhanjan-Khultabad Distt. Aurangabad		2003-04	50.00	40.00
15. Nagaland	45. Rural Tourism at Mopunchupket, Distt. Mokokchung		2002-03	50.00	40.00
16. Orissa	46. Rural Tourism project at Raghurajpur, Distt. Puri		2002-03	50.00	40.00
	47. Development of village Pipli in Puri Distt.		2004-05	50.00	40.00
	48. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Khiching, Distt. Mayurbhanj		2005-06	50.00	40.00
	49. Development of Rural at Village Barpali, Distt. Bargarh		2006-07	50.00	40.00
	50. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Hirapur, Distt. Khurda		2006-07	50.00	40.00
	51. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Padmanavpur, Distt. Ganjam		2006-07	50.00	40.00
17. Rajasthan	52. Rural tourism at Neemrana, Distt. Alwar		2003-04	50.00	50.00
	53. Rural tourism project Samode Village, Distt. Jaipur		2003-04	50.00	40.00
18. Sikkim	54. Development of village Lachen in North Distt.		2004-05	50.00	40.00
19. Tamil Nadu	55. Development of Kazhugumalai Under rural tourism Distt. Thoothukudi		2003-04	48.66	38.94

1	2	3	4	5	6
	56. Development of Theerthamalai, Distt. Dharmapuri		2003-04	50.00	40.00
	57. Rural tourism at Karaikudi, Chettinadu, Distt. Sivaganga		2003-04	50.00	40.00
	58. Development of Devipattinam Navbhashnam in Ramnathpuram Distt.		2005-06	50.00	40.00
	59. Thirukurugudi, Distt. Tirunelveli		2005-06	50.00	40.00
	60. Thirupudaimaaurthur, Distt. Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu		2005-06	49.55	36.64
	61. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Kombai, Distt. Theni, for Spice Circuit		2006-07	50.00	40.00
	62. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Thadiyankudissai, Distt. Dindigul, for Spice Circuit		2006-07	50.00	40.00
20. Tripura	63. Rural tourism at Kamlasagar, Distt. West Tripura		2002-03	42.92	13.48
	64. Rural tourism at Jampui Hills, Distt. North Tripura		2003-04	50.00	15.00
	65. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Joychandrapur, Distt. South Tripura		2005-06	50.00	40.00
21. Uttaranchal	66. Rural tourism project at Jageshwar, Distt. Almora		2002-03	50.00	50.00
	67. Rural tourism project in Agora Village (Dodital) Uttar Kashi Distt.		2005-06	48.50	38.80
	68. Development of Hub Village at Mottad and its satellite station		2005-06	48.05	38.44
	69. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Chekhoni Bora, Distt. Champawat.		2005-06	44.20	35.28
	70. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Koti, Indroli		2005-06	47.10	37.68
	71. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Mana, Distt. Chamoli		2005-06	50.00	40.00
	72. Development of Rural Tourism (Eco-Tourism) in Devriyatal at Village Sari, Distt. Rudraprayag		2005-06	45.14	36.00

1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Uttar Pradesh	73. Development of Rural Tourism at Bhitari Gram, Distt. Raebareilly		2005-06	49.52	39.62
	74. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Mukhrai, Distt. Mathura		2005-06	45.89	36.00
23. West Bengal	75. Development of Rural Tourism Centre at Ballabhpur Danga, Distt. Birbhum		2003-04	50.00	15.00
	76. Development of village Sonada, Distt. Darjeeling		2004-05	50.00	40.00
	77. Development of Rural Tourism at Village Mukutmonipur, Distt. Bankura		2006-07	50.00	40.00
Total				3764.76	2826.99

Statement-II

List of Statewise Projects sanctioned during 10th Plan under GOI-UNDP Endogenous Tourism

(Rs. in lakh)

State	Name of the Project	Name of Distt.	Year of Sanction	Amount Sanctioned	Amount Released
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Andhra Pradesh	1. Pochampalli	Nalgonda	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	2. Srikalahasti	Chittoor	2004-05	20.00	16.00
2. Assam	3. Durgapur	Golaghat	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	4. Sualkuchi	Kamrup	2004-05	19.95	15.96
3. Bihar	5. Nepura	Nalanda	2004-05	20.00	16.00
4. Chhattisgarh	6. Chitrakote	Bastar	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	7. Nagamar	Bastar	2004-05	20.00	16.00
5. Gujarat	8. Hodka	Kachchh	2004-05	20.00	16.00
6. Haryana	9. Jyotisa	Kurukshetra	2004-05	20.00	16.00

1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Himachal Pradesh	10. Naggur	Kullu	2004-05	20.00	16.00
8. Karnataka	11. Banavasi	Uttara Kannada	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	12. Anegundi	Koppal	2005-06	20.00	16.00
9. Kerala	13. Kumbalangi	Ernakulam	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	14. Arnamura	Pathanamthitta	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	15. Kalady (Spice Circuit)	Ernakulam	2005-06	10.00	08.00
	16. Anakkara (Spice Circuit)	Idukki	2005-06	10.00	08.00
10. Madhya Pradesh	17. Pranpur	Ashok Nagar	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	18. Chaugan	Mandla	2004-05	20.00	16.00
11. Maharashtra	19. Sulibhanjan- Khultabad	Aurangabad	2004-05	20.00	16.00
12. Orissa	20. Raghurajpur	Puri	2004-05	20.00	17.60
	21. Pipli	Puri	2004-05	20.00	16.00
13. Punjab	22. Rajasansi	Amritsar	2004-05	20.00	16.00
14. Rajasthan	23. Neemrana	Alwar	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	24. Samode	Jaipur	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	25. Haldighati	Rajsamand	2004-05	19.32	15.45
15. Sikkim	26. Lachen	North Distt.	2004-05	20.00	16.00
16. Tamil Nadu	27. Kazhugumalai	Thoothukudi	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	28. Karaikudi	Sivaganga	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	29. Kombai (Spice Circuit)	Theni	2005-06	10.00	08.00
	30. Thadiyankudisai (Spice Circuit)	Dindigul	2005-06	10.00	08.00

1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Tripura	31. Kamlasagar	West Tripura	2004-05	20.00	16.00
18. Uttaranchal	32. Jageshwar	Almora	2005-06	20.00	16.00
	33. Mana	Chamoli	2004-05	20.00	16.00
19. Uttar Pradesh	34. Bhaguwala	Saharanpur	2004-05	19.75	15.50
20. West Bengal	35. Ballabhpur Danga	Birbhum	2004-05	20.00	16.00
	36. Mukutmonipur	Bankura	2004-05	20.00	16.00
Total				679.02	544.51

Commercial Activities at Airports

3300. SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA :

SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO :

SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has taken any steps to start commercial activities at the loss making airports in order to mitigate their losses;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent to which these steps have helped in reducing the losses of these Airports?

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

(b) The following steps have been taken up to start commercial activities at the loss making airports:-

(i) Licensing of the airside and city side advertisement rights at some of the airports, (ii) Induction of innovative commercial facilities such as fast food outlets, advertisement on balloon, Wi-Fi Services, licensing of Plasma TV display, (iii) Realization of

royalty 11% of the gross turnover from the parties providing ground handling/aircraft maintenance services at all the airports, (iv) Setting up of Duty Free Shops by way of global tenders at the non-metro airports, (v) Privatisation of money exchange counters at non-metro airports and domestic airports and (vi) Baggage wrapping service at the international airports.

(c) The increase in the non-traffic revenue has helped in reducing the losses at these airports to the tune of 10% to 15% approximately.

Unauthorised Occupation of Retiring Rooms by RPF

3301. SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the unauthorised occupation of retiring rooms by Railway Protection Force personnel at various stations in the Railways particularly under the Mughalsarai-Danapur-Quel Division of East Central Railway have come to the notice of the Railways;

(b) if so, the details of such incidents reported;

(c) whether the Railways propose to vacate the

said retiring rooms and make alternate arrangements for RPF Jawans to restore normalcy;

- (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) No, Sir.

- (b) to (e) Do not arise.

[English]

Train Service between Pune-Nasik Road

3302. SHRI DEVIDAS PINGLE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Railways have rejected the proposal of train service between Pune-Nasik Road via Kalyan;
- (b) if so, the reason therefor;
- (c) whether there is any fresh proposal for introduction of said train service; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Introduction of a train between Pune-Nasik Road via Kalyan has not been found feasible due to operational and resource constraints.

- (c) No, Sir.
- (d) Does not arise.

Orientation of Armed Forces

3303. SHRI FRANCIS FANTHOME : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government has initiated any steps to orient the vision and training in the Armed

Forces towards the current and future needs of the country; and

- (b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The training in the Armed Forces has been oriented with a view to maintain a high state of operational readiness at all times. In order to meet the current and future needs of the country, the training methodology and curriculum has been refined. The aspects of tri-services co-operation and jointmanship, enhancement of leadership and combat skills of Junior Commissioned and Non-Commissioned Officers, technological skills upgradation, exposure to state-of-the-art weapons and equipments, war gaming and simulation, real time surveillance and reaction, specialized training for sub-conventional warfare, and to civil authorities in disaster situations and joint exercises with friendly foreign countries have been included as an integral part of training in the Armed Forces.

Bio-diesel Production

3304. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

- (a) the programmes set bio-diesel production in the country showing the reasons for delay in full commissioning of production;
- (b) the details of collection and processing points and the methodology adopted to associate people to adopt it as a source of income, State-wise;
- (c) the time by which the actual commission is likely to be effected showing the organisational network finalised;
- (d) whether the Brazil model of producing petroleum from sugarcane is being implemented in India; 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) The Ministry of Rural Development is the Nodal Ministry for the proposed National Mission on Bio-diesel, being set up with a focus on large-scale cultivation of *Jatropha*. A Detailed Project Report (DPR) on the National Mission on Bio-diesel has been submitted to the Planning Commission, which, *inter-alia*, envisages a Demonstration Project involving plantation of *Jatropha* in 4 lakh hectares of degraded forest and non-forest lands for production of bio-diesel. The Planning Commission has given 'in principle' approval to the DPR for the demonstration phase, estimated to cost Rs. 1286 crores over a period of 5 years. The Planning Commission has approved the utilization of Rs. 50 crore available in the budget of 2005-06. The Ministry of Rural Development has released Rs. 49 Crores to the specified nine States, namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan for raising *Jatropha* seedlings in nurseries.

With a view to encourage production of bio-diesel in the country, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas announced a Bio-diesel Purchase Policy, in October 2005, effective 1.1.2006. The policy has identified 20 purchase centres of the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) all over the country where these companies would purchase bio-diesel which meets the standards prescribed by the bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), from those bio-diesel manufacturers who register with them after satisfying the technical specifications, at a specified delivered price.

(d) and (e) At present, production of ethanol in India is from Molasses, which is a by product of sugar industry. In Brazil ethanol is produced both from Molasses as well as directly from sugarcane juice. Where as in India, 5% ethanol blended programme is being implemented in certain States, in Brazil vehicles use 22% ethanol blended petrol. They also have flexi fuel vehicles which could run even on 100% ethanol.

Fruit Processing Industries in Kerala

3305. SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has provided financial assistance to the fruit based industries in Kerala particularly Muvattupuzha and Vazhakkulam areas in the State;

(b) if so, the financial assistance provided during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the Government proposes to make a study regarding the scope of fruit processing in areas where fruits like apple, pineapple, mango, banana and other seasonal fruits are grown, plenty in India; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY) : (a) and (b) Ministry of Food Processing Industries has approved financial assistance of Rs. 1030.60 lakhs to 39 units for food processing units in Kerala under its Plan Schemes in the form of grant in aid @ 25% of the cost of Plant and Machinery and technical civil works subject to maximum of Rs. 50.00 lakhs in General areas for Technical Upgradation/establishment/modernization of existing units.

Ministry of Food Processing Industries has provided financial assistance for setting up of two fruit based industries in Kerala. One proposal has been received from Muvattupuzha, which has been examined and certain information has been asked for from the firm.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Food Processing Industries has made an assessment of the potential for Food Processing Industries under its document titled Vision 2015, Strategies and Action Plan for Food Processing Industries in India in which Fruits and Vegetables are also included. The same has been released in the year 2005. States have also been advised to conduct studies on Food

Processing Sector, for which assistance shall be provided by this ministry.

Tourism Schemes

3306. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether only a few State have been able to tap the immense tourism potential in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has announced new tourism schemes to attract domestic/foreign tourists during 2006;

(d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to raise the standard of tourism to world class?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) and (b) As per the data on domestic and foreign tourist visits to States, as received from the State/UT Governments, tourist visits in a few States are very high as compared to few other States/UTs. However, it is felt that with India's vast bounties of nature; its great treasures of art, architecture and philosophical thought; its rich cultural heritage; its rural countryside and wildlife, and practices of Yoga, Siddha, etc. spread among different States, there is immense tourism potential to tap in almost all the State. State-wise details of domestic and foreign tourist visits for the years 2003, 2004 and 2005 are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) and (d) In order to develop tourist infrastructure in the country during the 10th Plan 2002-07, and to promote India as a tourist destination, at present the Government is mainly implementing the schemes of (i) Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations & Circuits; (ii) Assistance for Large Revenue Generating Projects, (iii) Domestic Promotion & Publicity including Hospitality and (iv) Restructured Scheme of Overseas

Promotion & Publicity. There are no State-wise schemes implemented by the Ministry. However the Ministry provides Central Financial Assistance to States/UTs for development of tourism infrastructure at Circuits/Destination etc.

(e) In order to raise the standard of tourism and to attract foreign and domestic tourists, a number of steps have been taken by the Government, which include:-

- Development of tourist spots under its various schemes of infrastructure development for tourist circuits and destinations;
- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure particularly budget hotels;
- Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions;
- Direct approach to the consumers through Electronic and print media through the "Incredible India" Campaign;
- Creation of World Class Collaterals;
- Centralized Electronic Media Campaign;
- Direct co-operative marketing with tour operators and wholesalers overseas;
- Greater focus in the emerging markets, particularly in the region of China, North East Asia and South East Asia;
- Participation in Trade Fairs & Exhibitions;
- Optimizing Editorial PR and Publicity;
- Use of Internet and web marketing;
- Generating Tourist Publications;
- Re-inforced hospitality programmes including grant of air passages to invite the media

personnel and tour operators on familiarization tours to India to get first hand knowledge on various tourism products; and

- Launching of Road Shows in key source markets of Europe.

Statement

State-wise Total Domestic and Foreign Tourist Visits

S.No.	State/U.T.	2003	2004	2005 [⊙]
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	74618047	89941291	94089578
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	2318	5009	3294
3.	Assam	2163285	2295378	2478434
4.	Bihar	6105530	8135574	8750541
5.	Goa	2039497	2448959	2156474
6.	Gujarat	7678013	7769550	8474000
7.	Haryana	5988177	5465252	5972747
8.	Himachal Pradesh	5711316	6549413	7144630
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	5773176	6921715	7283826
10.	Karnataka	11425200	27724403	25243468
11.	Kerala	6165849	6317728	6292922
12.	Madhya Pradesh	6060997	8764821	7251784
13.	Maharashtra*	12259450	14610594	15452045
14.	Manipur	93180	93725	94615
15.	Meghalaya	378257	445902	381000
16.	Mizoram	35408	38924	44988
17.	Nagaland	6348	11140	18353

1	2	3	4	5
18.	Orissa	3726265	4154353	4666286
19.	Punjab	1154604	368880	435389
20.	Rajasthan	13173695	17005668	19918462
21.	Sikkim	191627	245365	268267
22.	Tamil Nadu	41114564	43337850	44392444
23.	Tripure	260527	264078	219007
24.	Uttaranchal	10890469	11783455	14291565
25.	Uttar Pradesh	80837000	89334000	94093988
26.	Chhattisgarh	1257557	1900200	325407
27.	Jharkhand	401565	465861	2048758
28.	West Bengal	12006220	13156083	14462550
29.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	89968	109582	32372
30.	Chandigarh	584316	615585	637460
31.	Daman and Diu	451099	403911	401078
32.	Delhi*	2124373	2706126	3573675
33.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	447961	532184	560946
34.	Lakshadweep	5286	5174	7849
35.	Pondicherry	525670	590498	610020
Total		315746814	374518231	392078222

Source: State/UT Governments

* : Estimated

⊙ : Provisional

Non-Stop Flights

3307. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to introduce long haul non-stop flights from Delhi and other airports in the country to the foreign countries before 2010 Commonwealth Games;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the sectors proposed to be connected with long haul non-stop flights, sector-wise; and

(d) the other arrangements proposed to be made at the airports in the country keeping in view the Commonwealth Games 2010?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (c) Traffic rights for operation of international air services are specified in our bilateral Air Services Agreements with various countries and are reviewed from time to time as part of an on-going process depending on traffic demand, balance of benefit to our carriers, overall interest of national economy and diplomatic/political consideration. The airlines of foreign countries and our own carriers are utilizing these traffic rights according to their commercial judgement. Air India propose to introduce long haul flights to New York, Chicago, Frankfurt and Beijing between 2007-2010.

(d) The Government has taken significant steps for the restructuring of Delhi and Mumbai airport and work on development of greenfield airports at Bangalore and Hyderabad. Also, upgradation/expansion/developments of airports is undertaken depending upon traffic potential, requirement of airline operators, and need of travelling people. Some of the activities contemplated to be completed at Delhi Airport prior to Commonwealth Games are as under:-

(i) Construction of a new terminal (common for domestic and international) by March, 2010.

(ii) Completion of new parallel runway 10-28 by March, 2008.

(iii) Traffic rights have been significantly liberalized over past few years and connectivity to/from Delhi on international routes has also improved and is likely to further improve as per the exchange of bilateral traffic rights.

Railway Line between Bangalore City and Devanahally Airport

3308. SHRI M. SHIVANNA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal to construct railway line between Bangalore city and Devanahally airport;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the work on the project is likely to be started?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management

3309. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the courses offered by the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management;

(b) whether these courses and syllabus are recognized and affiliated to any University;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government is planning to bring Tourism and Travel Management Courses through Distance Education;

- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
 (f) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) ; (a) At present, Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) is offering following courses :-

- (i) One year full-time Post Graduate Diploma in Tourism Management with intake capacity of 60 at Gwalior and 50 at Regional Centre Bhubaneswar.
- (ii) Two years full-time Master of Business Administration (MBA)/Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management (PGDBM) with intake capacity of 60 at Gwalior.
- (iii) Three years full-time Bachelor in Tourism Management (BTM) (Hons.) Programme with intake capacity of 50 at Gwalior and 30 at Bhubaneswar Centre.
- (iv) One year part-time PG Diploma in Tourism and Travel Management through the chapters of IITTM.

(b) and (c) The degree courses i.e. MBA and BTM (Hons.) are being offered in collaboration with MP Bhoj Open University, Bhopal as per the approved syllabus of the above university.

(d) to (f) The IITTM has no plan to offer tourism courses through distance education till it gets the deemed university status.

(Translation)

Norms/Guidelines to Curb Adulteration

3310. SHRI V.K. THUMMAR :
 SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD :

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

(a) whether the Government has issued any new norms and guidelines to the Petrol/Diesel dealers to curb adulteration;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent to which new norms/guidelines differ from the earlier ones; and

(d) the extent to which the new norms/guidelines will be helpful in checking adulteration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) to (d) Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG) 2005 replacing MDG 2001 providing relatively more stringent punitive action against erring dealers were issued and made effective from 01.08.2005. MDG, 2005 inter-alia provides termination in the 1st instance itself for serious malpractices like adulteration, tampering of seals, unauthorized fittings/gears in dispensing units, unauthorized storage facilities within the premises of Retail Outlets (ROs), unauthorized sales/purchase/exchange of Petrol/Diesel (MS/HSD) and selling of normal MS/HSD as branded fuel etc. It also provides for appeal within 30 days of the date of termination. Company Owned and Company Operated (COCO) ROs and CNG and Auto LPG stations have also to comply with MDG 2005. Some additional malpractices have also been brought under the purview of MDG 2005 which were not covered under MDG 2001. These are namely, totaliser seals found tampered, additional/unauthorized fitting/gears found in the dispensing unit, detection of storage facility outside licensed premises with interconnection into the RO premises, selling of normal MS/HSD as branded fuels, refusal by dealer to allow drawal of sample and/or carrying out of inspection etc. With the enforcement of the stringent MDG 2005, it is expected that the same will help in controlling of adulteration of Petrol/Diesel at ROs.

[English]

Flights between Imphal and Guwahati

3311. DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Airlines flights between Imphal and Guwahati has been withdrawn on the days except on Wednesday and Sunday;

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

(c) whether the Government is considering to restore these flights keeping in view the heavy demands;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) Indian Airlines' subsidiary, Alliance Air was operating a twice weekly frequency between Imphal and Guwahati with ATR-42 aircraft which has been withdrawn effective 10th July, 2006 due to shortage of operating crew and with an objective to ensure timely and regular operation of services. However, there are operations by other airlines on this route to meet the traffic requirements.

(c) to (e) Restoring of the above flights is dependent upon availability of operating crew and no definite time frame can be indicated at this point of time. However, an endeavour is being made to hire crew at the earliest.

Utilization of Services of Senior Citizens

3312. SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has chalked out any plan for making use of the services of the senior citizens;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to implement the said plan?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Security of Oil and Gas Installations

3313. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA :
SHRI GANESH PRASAD SINGH :
SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT :
SHRI SHISHUPAL PATLE :
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR :
SHRI MOHD. TAHIR :

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

(a) whether all the oil and gas installations/ reserves in the country are safe in the wake of increasing terrorist threats;

(b) if so, whether some private channel personnel have visited some public sector refineries;

(c) if so, whether the Government has received any information with regard to the sting operation carried out by these T.V. Channels;

(d) if so, the details thereof and whether the said T.V. Channels have exposed the poor security arrangements in such installations;

(e) if so, whether the Government has conducted any enquiry in this regard; and

(f) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) Yes, Sir. Security of oil and gas installations

have been strengthened by reinforcing access control measures, intensive patrolling of security personnel and anti-sabotage checks of men materials in the wake of increasing terrorist threats.

(b) to (f) BPCL intimated that CNN IBN, a TV news channel transmitted a video clipping showing security lapse at their Panipat installation which is a marketing terminal. An enquiry revealed that the incident as televised might have taken place sometime in winter of 2005. The news channel team revisited the installation on 17th July, 2006 for shooting inside the installation. The team was denied permission since the oil installation is a prohibited place. No other untoward incident has been reported from the oil and gas installations of oil companies.

[Translation]

Prices of Ethanol Blended Petrol

3314. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN" : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether many countries have reduced the selling price of petrol for consumers by using ethanol mixed petrol;

(b) if so, the maximum percentage of ethanol mixed petrol being used by these countries; and

(c) the percentage of prices of ethanol mixed petrol estimated to be reduced in the country during 2006-07?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) to (c) As per information gathered Brazil uses ethanol blended petrol to the extent of 22%, United States of America and Australia use 10% ethanol blended petrol. Sweden, France, Spain, Canada, Mexico and Thailand are also reported to use ethanol blended petrol at varying levels. The price of ethanol blended petrol is market

determined. In India ethanol blending is permitted to the extent of 5%. The retail selling price of petrol and ethanol are same and as such no reduction in the price of ethanol blended petrol is envisaged during 2006-07.

[English]

Project for Holistic Approach

3315. SHRI RANEN BARMAN : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received any request/proposal for opening a project for Holistic Approach to Cerebral Palsy Management in West Bengal and North-Eastern States;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Tender for Advertisements on Train Coaches

3316. SHRI RAKESH SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways propose to rent out the outer surface of the train coaches for advertisement purposes in Jabalpur Division through open tender so as to boost the earnings in the Western Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the estimated earning through such advertisements to the Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) There is no such proposal at present.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[English]

**Pipeline from Krishna-Godavari Basin
to Hyderabad**

3317. SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to construct pipeline network from Krishna-Godavari basin to supply Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) to Hyderabad so as to reduce vehicular pollution in the twin cities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the GAIL has conducted any techno-economic feasibility study in this regard;

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

(e) the follow-up action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) to (e) Reliance Gas Pipeline Limited (RGPL) has plans to lay Kakinada-Hyderabad-Uran-Ahmedabad, gas pipeline.

GAIL (India) Limited and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited have incorporated a Joint Venture company namely, M/s. Bhagyanager Gas Limited for implementation of City Gas Projects in Andhra Pradesh. The setting up of CNG network in Hyderabad would depend upon the techno-economic feasibility and tying-up of gas for the project. GAIL has not carried out any techno-economic feasibility in this regard.

**Food Processing Educational Institution
In NE Region**

3318. SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is planning to set up food processing relating professional educational institution in the North-Eastern region;

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

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY) : (a) to (c) At present there is no proposal to set up a food processing related professional educational institution in the North Eastern region by this ministry. However, for capacity building the ministry assists in setting up of Food Processing and Training Centres, Entrepreneurship Development Programmes, and creation of infrastructure for taking up Degree/Diploma courses for the Food Processing sector.

**Maintenance and Operation of
High Speed Goods Trains**

3319. SHRI P. MOHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Anwar Hoda Committee on Maintenance and Operation of High Speed Goods Trains with private sector investment has submitted its report to the Railways;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) whether the recommendations of the said committee have been examined by the Railways; and

(d) if so, the further action taken by the Railways thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) No, Sir. However, a Task Force under Shri Anwar-ul-Hoda was set upto prepare concept paper on Dedicated Freight Corridor Project. No recommendation pertains to maintenance and operation of high-speed goods trains.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[Translation]

**Gauge Conversion of Hathua and
Katni Railway Line**

3320. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR KHANDELWAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the gauge conversion of Hathua and Katni railway line under Gorakhpur Division was approved without conducting any prior survey;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons for which other important projects than this were ignored and this project was approved and budget allocation was made for it?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Shortage of Labourers for Booking of Goods

3321. SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD :

SHRI JIVABHAI AMBALAL PATEL :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a shortage of labourers for the purpose of booking of goods and ferrying them to the railway wagons in the Railways;

(b) if so, the average number of ferries a labourer completes in a day alongwith the quantity of goods he loads on the wagons; and

(c) the steps taken by the Railways to meet the shortage of labourers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Booking of goods is done by railway staff and not labourers. Moreover, loading of goods is the responsibility of the customers and labourers are engaged by them.

(b) Such information is not maintained by Railways.

(c) Does not arise.

[English]

Additional Gas to Maharashtra

3322. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL :
SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE :
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD :
SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO :

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

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra has requested the Union Government for supply of additional Natural Gas/LNG;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the decision is likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Chief Minister of Maharashtra in January, 2006, had interalia requested for :-

1. Enhancing gas supplies in Uran so as to enable full capacity utilization of Maha Genco power plant.
2. 13 million standard cubic metre per day

(MMSCMD) of gas is required for expansion plans of Maha Genco at Uran and Telgaon.

3. Expeditious construction of Dahej Uran pipeline.

(c) As against an allocation of around 17.5 MMSCMD gas Uran region, the availability is around 10 MMSCMD. However, to tide over power shortage during summer, as per Government of Maharashtra's request for additional supply of gas to MSEB around 0.33 MMSCMD gas was diverted from M/s. RCF, Trombay to GTPS Uran (MSEB) during the period 15.4.2006 to 15.6.2006. Therefore there was an increased supply of gas to GTPS Uran (MSEB) during the 1st Quarter of 2006-07.

With a view to facilitating transportation of gas to Maharashtra region, GAIL is in the process of laying Dahej-Uran pipeline and Dabhol-Panvel pipeline. The consumers would, however, need to tie-up their gas requirements with the gas suppliers. The steps taken to increase the gas availability in the country include efforts to augment domestic gas availability under the New Exploration Licensing Policy, imports of liquefied natural gas and initiatives to import gas through transnational pipelines.

[Transiation]

**Survey for Gauge Conversion
in Rajasthan**

3323. SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA :

SHRI RAM SINGH KASWAN :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Rajasthan High Court has issued instructions to Ministry of Railways for gauge conversion of Rewari-Bikaner, Sadulpur-Hissar and Ratangarh-Degana railway lines;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Ministry in this regard;

(c) the time limit fixed for the survey for gauge conversion in Rajasthan;

(d) the criteria fixed for giving approval to gauge conversion work after the completion of the survey; and

(e) the time by which gauge conversion of these railway lines is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Hon'ble High Court. Jodhpur has directed the Railways for gauge conversion of Rewari-Degana via Sadulpur.

(b) and (c) Gauge conversion of Rewari-Sadulpur section is a sanctioned work. An updating survey for gauge conversion of Sadulpur-Ratangarh-Degana and Ratangarh-Bikaner has been completed recently.

(d) The policy followed for selection of routes for gauge conversion under Project Unigauge has been as under:-

- (i) To take up conversion of lines to develop alternative Broad Gauge (BG) routes obviating the need for Doubling existing BG lines on these routes.
- (ii) To establish new BG links between stations connected by other BG lines.
- (iii) To establish BG connection to ports, industrial centres and locations having potential for growth.
- (iv) To take up conversion of lines required on strategic considerations.
- (v) To minimize transshipment and to improve wagon turn-around by avoiding delays at transshipment points.
- (vi) To carryout the conversion of lines as per the above policy at least cost yet providing a

standard of service not lower than what the rail users were getting on the Metre Gauge.

Apart from the above, projects have been taken up on socio-economic consideration for improvement of rail infrastructure in the under developed area.

(e) No target date has been fixed.

[English]

Corruption in ITDC

3324. SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the instances of mismanagement and corruption cases in ITDC as reported in *Punjab Kesari*

dated April 8, 2006 have come to the notice of the Government;

(b) if so, whether any investigation has been made in this regard;

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

(d) the action taken against the officials found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) Yes, Sir, Some instances of mismanagement and corruption cases in ITDC as reported in *Punjab Kesari* dated April 8, 2006, have come to the notice of this Ministry.

(b) to (d) The position of the cases are as under :-

S.No.	Text of the issues raised	Status
1.	Non settlement of dues of Hotel Ashok by Shri Aneil Mathrani	Case was examined by the Central Vigilance Commission in 2000 and was recommended for closure.
2.	Non realization of dues from M/s. JVG Company	The case was examined and the investigation report was sent to the Central Vigilance Commission. The Commission have advised the closure of the case.
3.	Waiving off license fee in respect of M/s. Mohini Knitwear	The case was examined and the investigation report was sent to the Central Vigilance Commission. The Commission have advised the closure of the case.
4.	Installation of Effluent Treatment Plant in Ashok Hotel, New Delhi	The matter was investigated and the allegation was not substantiated.
5.	Leasing out of Tennis Court near Hotel Qutab (since disinvested)	The case was examined in detail and the investigation report was furnished to the Central Vigilance Commission. The Commission have advised the closure of the case.
6.	Agreement between Ashok Hotel and M/s. Exclusive Motors (Bentley Showroom)	The case was investigated and no allegation was proved against any official.

**Review of Recruitment Process
in Army**

3325. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government proposes to revamp the recruitment process in army; and
- (b) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) The recruitment process in the Army is reviewed from time to time depending upon the requirement and to make the process more candidate friendly and transparent. However, at present, there is no proposal under consideration to revamp the recruitment process in the Army.

[Translation]

**Doubling of Railway Line from Jammu
to Jalandhar**

3326. SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the work for doubling of railway line from Jammu to Jalandhar has been taken up by the Railways;
- (b) if so, the details of works done in this regard so far;
- (c) the cost of the project and the funds allocated and spent so far on this project; and
- (d) the time by which the said work is likely to be completed?

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

(b) and (d) The overall progress on the project is about 60%. In all about 57 kms. has been completed and 81 kms. is targeted for completion during 2006-07.

The entire project is targeted for completion during 2007-08.

(c) An anticipated cost of the project is Rs. 461.23 crore, expenditure incurred upto March, 2006 is Rs. 257.08 crore and an outlay of Rs. 120 crore has been provided in Budget 2006-07.

[English]

Budget Allocation for SCs

3327. SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Planning Commission has issued guidelines to the States to provide budget allocation for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) proportionate to their population;
- (b) if so, the States who have followed the guidelines in this regard;
- (c) the names of those States who have not provided budget allocation in proportion to the population of SCs in their States; and
- (d) the measures taken by the Union Government to ensure budgetary allocation for the welfare of SCs on the basis of their population in all the States and Union Territories?

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

(b) The guidelines have been discussed in detail in the Working Group Meeting on Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP) for Scheduled Castes for Annual Plan 2006-07. Most of the States have followed the guidelines and number of States have also submitted Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP) documents to the Planning Commission.

(c) The States are Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi and Pondicherry.

(d) The Planning Commission has given conditional approval for Annual Plan 2006-07. Approved Outlay subject to the condition that the State Governments will provide budget Allocation in proportion to the population of Scheduled Castes in their State. State Governments have also been requested to ensure strict adherence to the guidelines.

Rural Tourism in Andhra Pradesh

3328. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the details of projects in Andhra Pradesh identified under Rural Tourism Scheme during the Tenth Five Year Plan;

(b) whether some of the above projects have been given sanction only in the year 2003-04 i.e. in the middle of the Tenth Plan:

(c) if so, the reasons for delay; and

(d) the action taken by the Government to get these projects completed within the fixed time frame?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) Based on proposals received from the State Government the Rural Tourism Projects have been sanctioned for following destinations of Andhra Pradesh:-

- (i) Pochampalli;
- (ii) Konaseema;
- (iii) Puttaparthi;
- (iv) Srikalahasti; and
- (v) Chinchinada.

(b) to (d) The creation of infrastructure in Rural areas

having potential for tourism is being supported under the existing Scheme of Destination Development. The funds are sanctioned and released based on the proposals received from the State/UT Governments. Thus, there has been no delay in identifying the projects. The implementation of the projects sanctioned is the responsibility of the State Government concerned. However, the monitoring of the implementation of sanctioned projects is done regularly to ensure timely completion.

Construction of Railway Bridges

3329. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the various State Governments have requested the Railways for cent percent funding for the construction of railway bridges;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Railways thereto?

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

(b) Requests from Punjab, Kerala and West Bengal States were received sometime ago.

(c) The issue has been considered by the Ministry of Railways and Central Government was requested to enhance allocation of funds from Central Road Fund for taking these works entirely at Railway's cost and also to exempt Railways from paying the cess on diesel consumed by Railways so that the funds so saved can also be utilized on construction of Road Over/Under bridges. But the proposal has not been approved by the Government.

[Translation]

Construction of Railway Overbridge at NH No. 93

3330. SHRI KISHAN LAL DILER : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the construction of a railway overbridge National Highway No. 93 near Mathura-Kasganj railway line/Hathras city is being demanded by the people for the last few years;

(b) if so, whether a proposal from the Government of Uttar Pradesh for the construction of said overbridge has been received by the Railways;

(c) if so, the time by which the said proposal is likely to be approved; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (d) No, Sir. No formal demand has been received from the State Government for construction of Road Over bridge (ROB) at the said location.

However, a Level Crossing (LC) No. 309 Special on Hathras City-Mursan section exists with traffic density of 1,52,096 Train Vehicle Units (TVUs), qualifying for replacement by ROB on cost sharing basis but no proposal has yet been received from the State Government for ROB in lieu of it.

Railways undertake construction of ROB/RUBs (Road Under Bridge) in lieu of existing busy LCs on cost sharing basis if the traffic density at the LC is one lakh or more TVUs (TVU-A unit obtained by multiplying the number of trains with the number of road vehicles passing over the level crossing in 24 hours), otherwise on deposit terms. Proposals in both cases have to be sponsored by State Government duty fulfilling certain preliminary pre-requisites required under extant rules.

ATM Facility at Stations

3331. SHRI KAILASH NATH SINGH YADAV :

SHRI SHISHUPAL PATLE :

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR :

SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT :

SHRI MOHD. TAHIR :

SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to reply given to Unstarred Question No. 704 dated February 23, 2006 regarding setting up of ATMs at stations and state :

(a) whether the required information has since been collected;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the time by which the required information is likely to be collected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) have been installed at various stations of Indian Railways. Zone-wise details are as under :-

Zonal Railway	No. of ATMs installed as on 31-07-2006
1	2
Central	8
Eastern	1
East Central	3
East Coast	2
Northern	4
North Central	3
North Eastern	1
Northeast Frontier	NIL
North Western	NIL

1	2
Southern	13
South Central	3
South Eastern	1
South East Central	2
South Western	3
Western	36
West Central	6

Installation of ATMs at various locations over zonal Railways is a continuous process.

The broad terms and conditions for installation of ATMs are as under :-

- (i) Zonal Railways are authorised to take a decision regarding installation of ATMs at a station subject to availability of bank and demand pattern.
- (ii) The bank is selected by two packet tender system containing technical and financial bid.
- (iii) The selected bank has to pay licence fee as per bid and other prescribed charges.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Subsidy on Kerosene

3332. SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT :
 PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR :
 SHRI MOHD. TAHIR :
 SHRI KAILASH NATH SINGH YADAV :

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

(a) the amount of subsidy provided on kerosene during each of the last three years;

(b) whether the Government has made any assessment about the amount of subsidy during the current financial year;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the amount of subsidy provided on kerosene during the first quarter of the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) The amount of subsidy paid to PSU Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) on PDS Kerosene during the last 3 years is as under :-

Year	Amount (Rs. in crore)
2003-04	Rs. 2657
2004-05	Rs. 1147
2005-06	Rs. 1057

(b) and (c) The amount of subsidy on PDS Kerosene and Domestic LPG as per the Budget Estimates approved by the Government of the financial year 2006-07 is Rs.2900 crore. It is estimated that the subsidy outgo during 2006-07 for PDS Kerosene would be around Rs. 1100 crore out of the total subsidy estimate of Rs. 2900 crore.

(d) Based on data received from the OMCs, the subsidy on PDS Kerosene during the first quarter of the current year (April 06 to June 06) is estimated at Rs. 241 crore.

[English]

Expansion Plan of IOC

3333. SHRI B. MAHTAB :
 SHRI PARSURAM MAJHI :

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

(a) whether the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has unveiled its expansion plan;

(b) if so, the States where IOC proposed to expand its programmes;

(c) whether any specific project is being implemented by IOC in Orissa; 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. In keeping with the strategic imperatives and other macro-economic factors, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) has drawn up expansion plans covering the activities in the areas of refineries, pipelines, marketing, gas and exploration and production in different States in the country.

(c) and (d) IOC is implementing a 11-MMTPA (Million Metric Tonne Per Annum) capacity project, 'Paradeep-Haldia Crude Oil Pipeline System', at an estimated cost of Rs.1,178 crore, in the State of Orissa. The project is likely to be completed in December, 2006.

In addition, IOC has plan to implement a 15-MMTPA capacity project, 'Paradeep Refinery Project', at an estimated cost of Rs. 25,646 crore in the State. This project is expected to be completed by October, 2011.

[Translation]

Bio-diesel Procurement Policies

3334. SHRI SHISHUPAL PATLE :

SHRI KAILASH NATH SINGH YADAV :

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR :

SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT :

SHRI MOHD. TAHIR :

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

(a) whether the Government has made any assess-

ment regarding the failure of bio-diesel procurement policy announced by the Government as reported in 'Dainik Jagaran' dated August 6, 2006;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether not a single litre of bio-diesel has been purchased by the public sector oil companies during the last 10 months;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) the total amount so far spent by the Union Government on the said project;

(f) whether the Government proposes to provide financial assistance to the farmers to bring down the price of bio-diesel;

(g) if so, the details thereof; and

(h) the corrective measures being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) to (h) The Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Exploration of Gas in K.G. and P.M.T. Oilfields

3335. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH :

SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL :

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

(a) whether the government has signed any field contract with various companies exploring gas in Krishna-Godavari and Panna-Mukta-Tapti oilfields;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the terms and conditions thereof; and

(c) the steps/action taken by the Government to ensure compliance of field contract signed by these companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) The Government has signed contracts with several companies for exploration of oil and gas in Krishna Godavari Basin, which has resulted in gas discoveries. The Government had also signed contracts for development and production of Panna-Mukta and Tapti fields in 1994.

(b) The Production Sharing Contracts for exploration blocks in Krishna-Godavari provide for payment of royalty and profit petroleum share to the Government. Under Panna - Mukta and Tapti field contracts, the Contractor is required to pay royalty and cess on crude oil and royalty on gas. They also pay profit petroleum to the Government as provided in the contracts.

In addition to above, the contractors are allowed duty free imports of items required for petroleum operations. They have the freedom to sell oil and gas in India and are subject to the laws of India.

(c) Government, through Directorate General of Hydrocarbons, monitors the progress in terms of provisions of respective Production Sharing Contracts.

Construction of Railway Line between Talcher and Gopalpur

3336. SHRI JUAL ORAM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the proposal to construct a railway line between Talcher and Gopalpur in Orissa has been pending since long;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken to expedite the clearance of the said railway line?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAY (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) An updating survey for construction of a new broad gauge railway line from Talcher to Gopalpur (293 Kms.) was completed during 2003-04. As per survey, the cost of the line was assessed as Rs. 863.98 crore. In view of heavy throw-forward of ongoing projects and acute constraint of resources, it has not been considered feasible to take up the project for the present.

Shifting of the Nanded Railway Division

3337. SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD :
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra has requested to the Railways for shifting of the Nanded Railway Division from the South Central Railway to the Central Railway;

(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) Yes, Sir.

(b) Demand has been received from various Very Important Persons (VIPs) including Chief Minister of Maharashtra for shifting the Nanded Railway Division from South Central Railway to Central Railway.

(c) The decision to place a particular division under a particular zone is taken based on the operational/administrative requirements without any regional considerations. The proposal, when seen in the light of the above criterion has not been found feasible.

Multi-Model Transport System (MMTS) in Metros

3338. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPIPARAI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have any proposal to start Multi-Model Transport System like the Kolkata Airport-railway link in all Metros;

(b) if so, details thereof alongwith the target set for implementing the same; and

(c) the funds earmarked for the said purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) No, Sir. Multi-Model Transport System basically relates to urban transport. The subject of urban transport is dealt with by the Ministry of Urban Development and respective State Governments. The Ministry of Railways has extended its Circular Railway System from Dum Dum Cantt. to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Airport at Kolkata, recently. Ministry of Railways have no such proposal in any of the other cities.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Hydrocarbon Vision 2025

3339. SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of India's Hydrocarbon Vision 2025;

(b) the reasons for a tardy progress in networking with R&D centres around the world by the public sector oil companies to make this Hydrocarbon Vision a success;

(c) the details of the R&D centres around the world with whom the oil PSUs have established network; and

(d) the concrete steps taken by the Government to make Hydrocarbon Vision 2025 a success?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA

PATEL) : (a) The details of India's Hydrocarbon Vision 2025 is given in the enclosed statement.

(b) and (c) The knowledge base of the various R&D facilities already existing in the Government and the public sector oil companies are being networked with state of the art R&D Centres around the world. In this regard, MOUs have been signed between these institutes and institutions in Russia, Romania, Canada, Norway and the Republic of Korea, and talks are underway for finalization of such MOUs with institutions in United Kingdom, United States of America, China and Japan. Besides, Government to Government MOUs in this regard have been concluded with Turkey, Romania, United Kingdom, Republic of Korea and Venezuela. The Ministry has undertaken various measures to collaborate with the private sector through the industry organization of Petrofed.

(d) India is self-sufficient in the Refining sector and has also developed the requisite marketing infrastructure to meet the indigenous demand of petroleum products. The refining capacity is in excess of indigenous demand and surplus quantity is being exported. The indigenous production of crude oil has not kept pace with the growth in demand of petroleum products. However, the following measures have been taken to accelerate hydrocarbon exploration and production activities in the country to meet the growing demand:-

1. Accelerate exploration activities through New Exploration Licensing Policy.
2. Enhancement of domestic production through Improved Oil Recovery (IOR)/Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) techniques.
3. Fast track development of discoveries/reserves for early commencement of production.
4. Use of stimulation techniques for increasing production from existing fields.
5. Acquisition of exploration acreages and producing properties abroad to bring equity oil.

6. Arresting decline from ageing fields.
7. Substitution of oil through use non-conventional sources of energy such as biodiesel, ethanol, etc.

Statement

- (i) Focus on oil security through intensification of exploration efforts and to enhance domestic availability of oil and gas.
- (ii) Secure acreages in identified countries having high attractiveness for ensuring sustainable long term supplies.
- (iii) Pursue projects to meet the deficit in demand and supply of natural gas and facilitate availability of LNG.
- (iv) Maintain adequate levels of self-sufficiency in refining.
- (v) Establish adequate strategic storage of crude and petroleum products in different locations.
- (vi) Create additional infrastructure for distribution and marketing of oil and gas.
- (vii) Create hydrocarbon market for free and fair competition between public sector enterprises, private companies and other international players.
- (viii) Create a policy framework for cleaner and greener fuels.
- (ix) Rationale tariff and pricing policy to ensure qualitative and un-adulterated petroleum products to the consumers at reasonable prices.
- (x) Long-term fiscal policy to attract required investments in the hydrocarbon sector.

(xi) Restructure the oil sector PSUs with the objective of enhancing shareholder value and disinvest in a phased manner in all the oil sector PSUs.

(xii) Regulatory and legislative framework for providing oil/gas security for the country.

[Translation]

**Provision of Stoppage and
Railway Crossing**

3340. SHRI GANESH SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a long standing demand for providing a stoppage of Kamayani Express at Jaitwara Railway Station under the Jabalpur Division and providing a railway crossing near Marhat Morh (turn), Lagargavo Railway Station; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Railways thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Stoppage of 1071/1072 Lokmanya Tilak (Terminus)-Varanasi Kamayani Express at Jaitwar station has not been found commercially justified.

As per existing rules, provision of level crossing is made in consultation with the State Government at the time of laying a new line or within 10 years from the date of its commissioning to traffic. Thereafter, any accommodation work such as new manned level crossing can be provided at a technically suitable location on deposit terms. If such a proposal is sponsored by the State Government/Local bodies duly agreeing to bear the initial cost of construction of the level crossing and one time capitalized cost of recurring maintenance and operational charges. Further, as per extant rules, construction of new unmanned level crossing on existing lines is not permissible.

No such proposal has so far been received from the State Government.

[English]

Recovery of Outstanding Dues

3341. SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the outstanding dues receivable by ITDC from the sundry debtors before disinvestment of ITDC hotels during 2002;

(b) how much dues have since been realised by ITDC annually from the sundry debtors and the amount not realised so far, unit/hotel-wise;

(c) the details of the outstanding dues for the years 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05 and for non-recovery of said dues, hotel-wise;

(d) whether any responsibility has since been fixed for non-recovery of dues on the officials who allowed the credits or otherwise but failed to recover the same; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) The outstanding dues receivable by ITDC from sundry debtors at the close of the financial year 2000-2001 i.e. before the disinvestment of hotels were Rs. 4684.07 lakh. This includes Rs. 1676.11 lakh in respect of disinvested hotel units which were transferred to buyers with all assets and liabilities, including sundry debtors, and balance amount of Rs. 3007.96 lakh was in respect of remaining units.

(b) to (e) In the hospitality industry, credit allowed to clients and its realisation is an ongoing process. A statement showing the credit allowed and credit realised hotelwise and divisionwise during 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05 and the outstanding dues as on 31.3.2002, 31.3.2003, 31.3.2004 and 31.3.2005 is enclosed. It will be seen from the statement that the outstanding dues have been around 13-14% of the turnover of the company which is within the norms of the industry. Infact, the percentage of outstanding dues to turnover has reduced from 16.51% as on 31.3.2002 to 14.30% as on 31.3.2005. However, the outstandings are periodically reviewed by the Management of ITDC and wherever required corrective measures are taken.

Statement

Details of Outstanding Dues of ITDC Hotels during 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05

(Rs. in lakh)

Unit/Division	Balance	Credit	Credit	Balance	Credit	Credit	Balance	Credit	Credit	Balance	
	as on 31.03.02	allowed	Realised	as on 31.03.03	allowed	Realised	as on 31.03.04	allowed	Realised	as on 31.03.05	
	2002-03			2003-04			2004-05				
Hotels and Catering Units	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Ashok Hotel	1003.95	5730.57	5716.40	1018.12	5356.01	5233.12	1141.01	7116.90	6569.86	1688.05	
Samrat Hotel	110.58	1534.36	1500.21	144.73	1786.79	1756.91	174.61	2194.45	2092.96	276.10	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Janpath Hotel	195.51	85.45	61.85	219.11	163.56	74.31	308.36	252.55	131.58	429.33
LMPH, Mysore	45.80	386.18	367.42	64.56	519.00	520.83	62.73	564.95	592.20	35.48
Patliputra Ashok	69.78	138.43	142.25	65.96	127.10	120.80	72.26	128.66	121.07	79.85
Jaipur Ashok	5.44	57.83	59.44	3.83	62.96	60.80	5.99	80.07	79.19	6.87
Jammu Ashok	1.68	18.91	18.96	1.63	33.72	33.49	1.86	46.10	46.23	1.73
Kalinga Ashok	10.01	48.50	49.57	8.94	30.66	31.12	8.48	43.74	44.14	8.08
Taj Restt.	1.19	2.00	1.68	1.51	2.20	1.93	1.78	2.25	2.34	1.69
IGIAR	26.47	167.13	139.68	53.92	197.84	206.66	45.10	213.10	209.05	49.15
Vigyan Bhawan	21.78	303.84	299.51	26.11	289.90	296.49	19.52	356.00	350.83	24.69
National Media Centre	9.84	14.06	12.84	11.06	14.98	14.07	11.97	23.13	21.91	13.19
Western Court	0.04	0.03	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.02	0.05
Bharatpur Forest Lodge	7.72	36.20	37.27	6.65	38.14	38.09	6.70	37.50	38.25	5.95
Kosi Restt.	1.85	0.09	0.00	1.94	0.00	0.25	1.69	0.08	0.00	1.77
Ashok Creative	72.36	291.06	289.90	73.52	1409.37	1113.25	369.64	1686.35	1484.35	571.64
ATT Divn.	1027.08	1596.67	1674.96	948.79	2045.94	2036.53	958.20	2484.66	2370.41	1072.45
ARMS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	681.30	423.11	258.19	573.42	342.74	488.87
AITD	124.37	1099.14	1082.10	141.41	1250.14	1257.88	133.67	1817.49	1878.30	72.86
ATSS	57.25	411.28	407.59	60.94	448.19	450.35	58.78	485.17	483.21	60.74
MPDC	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	41.53	15.90	25.63	42.90	59.58	6.95
SEL	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.09			0.09			0.09
Head quarter	251.67	84.58	24.52	311.73	44.82	68.28	288.27	38.47	26.25	300.49
Total	3044.46	12006.31	11886.15	3164.62	14544.15	13754.17	3954.60	18187.94	16944.47	5198.07
Turnover	18444.19			23728.33			29065.05			36349.45
% of turnover	16.51			13.34			13.61			14.30

National Train Enquiry System

3342. SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have established National Train Enquiry System; and

(b) if so, the details and salient features thereof?

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

(b) National Train Enquiry System has provision for updation of train running information from terminals provided at important stations and control offices. This information is made available to passengers through enquiry offices, display boards and announcement system at stations and through Interactive Voice Response System on telephone.

Extension of Airstrips in Karnataka

3343. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY :
SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Karnataka has sent any proposal to the Union Government for extension of airstrips and to make them operational for regular air services;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government of Karnataka had proposed for upgradation of Mysore airport which has been agreed to and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed

between Airports Authority of India (AAI) and Government of Karnataka for the purpose.

(c) The upgradation plans have been finalized and tender process has been initiated to award the work. The work is likely to be commenced after the required additional land is handed over to AAI by the Government of Karnataka.

New Train from Durgapur to Howrah

3344. SHRI SUNIL KHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal introduction of new train from Durgapur to Howrah;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any proposal for making Durgapur as a model station; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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) and (d) Yes, Sir. Durgapur Railway station was selected as model station in May-2000 for the purpose of providing upgraded passenger amenities. 19 works (enclosed as statement) have been completed at Durgapur station and 6 works (enclosed as statement) have been sanctioned for further development of this station.

Statement

(i) Works already done :

1. Improvement of Platform surface and drain.
2. Pay and Use toilet provided.
3. UTS provided in booking office.

4. Signage provided.
5. Train indication board provided.
6. NTES provided.
7. PA system provided with computerized announcement system.
8. Upgrading of booking of Enquiry counter.
9. Sufficient drinking water with adequate water taps provided.
10. Telephone booths provided.
11. Abbreviated dialing system provided.
12. IVRS provided.
13. Circulating area improved including lights.
14. Touch screen NTES provided.
15. High-level platform provided to accommodate 24 coaches.
16. Modular catering stall provided.
17. Computerisation of complaints provided.
18. Mechanised cleaning provided.
19. Electro-Chlorination provided for clean drinking water.

(ii) The following works have been sanctioned :

1. Upgradation of lighting.
2. Provision of toilets and urinals both at Howrah end Kalka end of platform No. 1, toilet at Howrah end at platform No. 2 & 3 and toilet at platforms No. 4 & 5.
3. Improvement of platform surface.
4. Renovation of water booth.

5. Improvement of station name board using retro reflective sheets.
6. Provision of ATM.

Unauthorised Meat Food Products

3345. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Ministry has made any efforts to bring the large number of unauthorized Meat Food Products Units in its fold;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to increase the frequency of inspections in the retail markets located in the remote areas of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Meat Food Products Order (MFPO)-1973 lays down the conditions for grant of license for processing of meat, the procedure for inspections and punishment for violation. Ministry is continuously making efforts to bring unauthorized meat food products manufacturers into the fold of MFPO-1973 by frequently conducting market out let checks to detect the sale of unauthorized meat food products, to ensure the compliance of labeling requirements and for ensuring that the meat food products sold are hygienic and are fit for human consumption. Wherever contravention of the provisions of MFPO is observed necessary legal action/prosecution stipulated under the Order is taken. 469 inspections were conducted under MFPO during 2005-2006, and 50 market outlet checks were carried out.

(d) The Ministry has issued guidelines to the inspecting officers to ensure inspection and drawal of

market samples from retail outlets/markets for at least four such checks per month. Further, directions have been issued to the inspecting officers to spend at least 10 clear days of inspection in out station units giving more attention to check market outlet in the areas under their jurisdiction. A review of the order is being carried out based on the feedback from industry, scientists and other stakeholders.

Laying of Pipelines by IOC

3346. SHRI E.G. SUGAVANAM : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Oil Corporation has started laying pipeline in various parts of the Southern region in

the country;

(b) if so, the present status the estimated cost and the areas likely to be benefited; and

(c) the time by which the work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The details regarding present status, estimated cost, completion schedule and areas likely to be benefited in respect of petroleum pipelines commissioned/under execution by Indian Oil Corporation Limited in Southern Region are enclosed as statement.

Statement

S. No.	Name of the Project	Estimated cost (Rs. in crore)	Areas likely to be benefited	Status	Completion Schedule
1.	Chennai-Trichy-Madurai Pipeline and Branchline to Sankari	363.0	Tamil Nadu	Commissioned. Dedicated to nation on 26.6.2006	Completed
2.	ATF Pipeline from CPCL, Manali to AFS, Chennai	48.0	Tamil Nadu	Tendering for award of various works and purchase orders in progress.	November, 2007

Sale of Inferior Quality Water

3347. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have received several complaints regarding the sale of inferior quality water in the name of mineral water at railway stations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways have formulated any

concrete scheme to check the sale of inferior quality water in the name of mineral water; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) A few complaints of sale of inferior quality of mineral water have been received and suitable action has been taken thereon.

(c) and (d) With a view to ensure that only good

quality packaged drinking water is sold on railway premises and in trains, it has been decided that "Rail Neer" will be manufactured by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) which will set up plants in a phased manner throughout the country. So far, two plants, one at Nangloi (Delhi) and the other at Danapur (Bihar) have been set up. Wherever "Rail Neer" is not available, zonal railways are free to procure supply from available Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) approved brands of packaged drinking water as notified by BIS. Regular checks/inspections at various levels are conducted, and action is taken if deficiencies/irregularities are noticed.

Drilling to Tap Underground Fresh Water by ONGC

3348. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) is drilling deserts to tap underground fresh water;

(b) if so, the areas identified, amount earmarked for the same and the present status thereof;

(c) the mode of transport of water tapped through the project to scarcity areas; and

(d) the steps taken by the oil companies to tap more water in addition to oil resources?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) Yes, Sir. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme, has embarked upon a project entitled "Project Saraswati", which is an initiative to contribute to the welfare of people in drought-prone areas of the country. The project is focused on identification of deeper aquifers, otherwise not tapped by agencies such as state

groundwater departments and central ground water bodies.

(b) The electrical resistivity survey has been completed in three pilot areas in Jaisalmer, Barmer and Bikaner districts and one well near Jaisalmer town is under drilling.

(c) The mode of transport of water will be looked into in consultation with the State Government after the deeper groundwater resources are located and established.

(d) ONGC under "Project Saraswati" is making focused efforts for identification of deeper aquifers upto depths of 1000 to 1200 metres in drought-prone arid/semi-arid regions of north-western Rajasthan.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed on 24.1.2005, between ONGC and Central Ground Water Board for sharing of data for exploration of deeper aquifers in Ganga Basin.

[Translation]

Revision of Salary of Instrumentation Limited

3349. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL : Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the salary of employees/workers working in Instrumentation Limited, Kota has not been increased for a long period;

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

(c) whether the Government is considering to hike the salaries of the employees of the said company; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) and (b) The employees

of Instrumentation Limited, Kota are drawing salaries as per 1992 pay scale since 01.01.1999. Any revision in pay scales has to be done in accordance with the laid down norms of the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) which inter-alia prescribes the criterion of ability of company to meet additional expenditure on this account. The Instrumentation Limited, Kota being a loss making company under reference to the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) is at present not in a position to bear the additional burden of any salary and wage hike through internal resource generation.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Inspection of AC Coaches

3350. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have a continued system of keeping some first-AC coaches for inspection travelling of GMs, DRMs and other higher level Officers;

(b) if so, the details of such spare coaches kept in waiting during the last two years, Zone-wise;

(c) the unproductive cost of maintenance of such coaches yearly;

(d) whether the Railways are considering the proposal of doing away with such system with the intention of using the same coaches for increasing the number of new trains;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reaction of the Railways thereto?

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

(b) to (f) Do not arise.

Guidelines for Operation of Small Aircraft and Helicopters

3351. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether due to death of many prominent leaders of the country while travelling in small aircraft, the Government has issued guidelines for operating small aircraft and helicopters being used by the VVIPs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Directorate General of Civil Aviation has invited comments on Civil Aviation requirement; and

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

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

(b) The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had issued guidelines in the form of Air Safety Circular No. 02 of 1981 and a circular dated 13.09.1996 for operating small aircraft and helicopters used by VVIPs.

(c) and (d) A draft Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) on use of Private/State Government owned aircraft/helicopter for carriage of State/Central Ministers, SPG Protectees has been circulated by DGCA for comments of the operators and concerned agencies. These reaction/comments would be considered by DGCA while finalising the CAR.

[Translation]

Setting up of R&D Center by GAIL

3352. SHRI MILIND DEORA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether GAIL (India) Limited is considering for setting up an Research and Development Centre for Air

Pollution related diseases as reported in 'The Asian Age' dated May 31, 2006;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the role and functions of GAIL;

(c) the cities in which these centres will be set up; and

(d) the investment likely to be required on setting up of these centres?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) and (b) The proposal for setting up an Research and Development Centre for Air Pollution related diseases is at preliminary stage.

(c) GAIL is establishing Air Pollution Related Disease Diagnostic Centres (APRD-DCs) in 23 cities. In the first instance, only one APRD-DC centre is proposed to be utilized for research and data analysis.

(d) As proposal is at initial stage, investments requirements have not been worked out.

Expansion of Platforms at Kachiguda Railway Station

3353. SHRI G. NIZAMUDDIN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the works related to expansion of platforms at Kachiguda Railway Station Hyderabad (SCR) has been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Railways have any plans for improving the facilities for the passengers at the Kachiguda Railway Station;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Railways in this regard?

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

(b) All the three platforms at Kachiguda station can accommodate all the trains passing through this station.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) to (f) All the 'Desirable Amenities' as per prescribed norms for model station are already available at this station. However, various works like Reinforcement Cement Concrete (RCC) cover over platform, Face lift of RCC Cover over platform columns by providing granite cladding, Improvements to general waiting hall including relocating of canteen for increasing the floor area of the waiting hall, Relocating and upgrading of pay and use toilets, Facelift of frontage of station building, Improvements to circulating area including provision of additional parking space near Janana siding, Restoration of external walls and architectural features, Extension of Foot Over Bridge, Modern improved washable apron and Improvement to platform surface No. 1 by providing dewatered concrete and providing designer tiles on the edge of the platform have taken up.

Accidents/Derailments at Dehradun Railway Station

3354. MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether frequent accidents/derailments are taking place at Dehradun Railway Station as reported in the 'Dainik Jagran (Dehradun)' dated June 26, 2006 and June 28, 2006;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways have issued any guidelines to prevent such incidents/derailments; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. There were two cases of shunting engine derailments in Dehradun yard on 27.4.2006 and 25.6.2006. There had been no casualty reported to have taken place in these accidents. The Railway staff held responsible for their negligent working have been taken up under Discipline and Appeal rules.

Safety is the prime concern of Indian Railways and all possible steps are undertaken on a continuing basis to prevent accidents, which include safety drives and inspections at regular intervals to monitor and educate staff for observance of safe practices.

[English]

Concessions to Industrial Units

3355. PROF. M. RAMADASS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have appointed a professional agency, CTRAM to consider the extent of concession which can be given to the industrial units on investment for installing mechanical devices for loading and un-loading arrangement in the industrial sidings;

(b) if so, whether the agency has completed its study;

(c) if so, details of its findings thereof; and

(d) the action contemplated by the Railways to implement the findings of the study?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Yes, Sir. M/s. Centre Transportation Research and Management (CTRAM) has been appointed for conducting a study on feasibility of Terminal Incentive cum Engine on load Scheme (TIELS).

(b) No, Sir. The agency is still conducting their study. Final report of the study is awaited.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Use of Bio-Fuel on Commercial Scale

3356. SHRI SUBODH MOHITE : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has formulated any plan to make bio-fuel use on commercial scale;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether any feasibility study of using bio-diesel by Railways and other industries has been undertaken;

(e) if so, the results thereof; and

(f) the pilot plants for production of bio-diesel set up by the Government so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) to (f) The Ministry of Rural Development is the Nodal Ministry for the proposed National Mission on Bio-diesel, being set up with a focus on large-scale cultivation of Jatropha. A Detailed Project Report (DPR) on the National Mission on Bio-diesel has been submitted to the Planning Commission, which, *inter-alia*, envisages a Demonstration Project involving plantation of Jatropha in 4 lakh hectares of degraded forest and non-forest lands for production of bio-diesel. The Planning Commission has given 'in principle' approval to the DPR for the demonstration phase, estimated to cost Rs. 1286 crores over a period of 5 years. The Planning Commission has approved the utilization of Rs. 50 crore available in the budget of 2005-06. The Ministry of Rural Development has released Rs. 49 Crores to the specified nine States, namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat,

Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan for raising *Jatropha* seedlings in nurseries, specified nine States, namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan for raising *Jatropha* seedlings in nurseries.

With a view to encourage production of bio-diesel in the country, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas announced a Bio-diesel Purchase Policy, in October 2005, effective 1.1.2006. The policy has identified 20 purchase centres of the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) all over the country where these companies would purchase bio-diesel which meets the standards prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), from those bio-diesel manufacturers who register with them after satisfying the technical specifications, at a specified delivered price.

The feasibility study on using Bio-diesel is going on by Railways Roadways and by Original Equipments Manufacturers (OEM's) like Tata Motors, Mahindra and Mahindra etc. Indian Oil Corporation has informed that 10-15% reduction in smoke has been noticed during their trials on Haryana Roadways Buses.

[Translation]

LPG Facility to Project Area

3357. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to extend the operational area of distribution of LPG meant for domestic use for the common people;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to provide LPG connections of the Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. to the common people on the demand made by the Coal Mines Workers Credit Cooperative

Society, Patansavangi, Tehsil-Sananer, Distt Nagpur (Maharashtra);

(d) whether the Government proposes to formulate a new policy to provide LPG cylinders to all the people of project area keeping in view the problems being faced by the local residents of the project area and safety risk associated with carrying the gas cylinders; and

(e) 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) distribute domestic LPG through their authorized LPG distributors. The trading area of LPG distributors is defined in their Distributorship Agreement signed by the company with them. This area depends on the class of market where a LPG distributor is operating.

(c) to (e) M/s. Coal Mines Workers Credit Cooperative Society, Patansavangi, Tehsil-Sananer, District-Nagpur, Maharashtra is an Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL's) project distributorship catering to the LPG demand for employees of Western Coal Fields Limited. As regards the request for permitting this distributorship to supply LPG to non project people of the area is concerned, the same is not possible as the operational area of this distributorship, being a project distributorship, is restricted to the clearly demarcated colonies/areas' of the project only. LPG distributorship of the OMCs are already operating in the surrounding areas of the project, which are catering to the demand of the common man of the area.

[English]

Investment in Capital Goods Industry

3358. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the capital goods industry needs bigger investment to meet the domestic needs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Capital Goods Industry is importing 70 per cent of its machine requirements;

(d) if so, the facts thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to reduce the import dependence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) and (b) The Capital Goods industry has been considered as the mother industry of all the manufacturing units and is very crucial for the growth of the manufacturing sector which accounts for about 80% of the index of industrial production in the country.

To sustain the projected 9% growth of GDP, the Capital Goods industry would be required to grow @ 16-18% per annum for which investments are required.

(c) It is true that there is substantial import of capital goods in the country.

(d) The CII's recent study on Capital Goods has indicated that the production and import trends for capital goods between September, 2004 to August, 2005 show that the imports are varying between 40% to 55% during this period.

(e) Indian Capital Goods industry is well established in the areas of Industrial Machinery, Process Equipment, Heavy Electrical Equipment, Machine Tools etc. and is able to meet most of the requirement of the manufacturing sector.

To provide a continuing forum of policy dialogue to energise and sustain the growth of manufacturing industry and thereby the growth of CG sector, the Government has already set up the National Manufacturing Competitive-

ness Council (NMCC), which has worked out a detailed National Programme for enhancing the competitiveness in the manufacturing sector.

Population of Backward Classes

3359. SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the data regarding total population of other backward classes and the number of OBC persons living below the poverty line in the country is available with the Government;

(b) if not, whether in the absence of vital data, the Government is able to fix targets for its various welfare schemes for OBC; and

(c) if not, the reaction of the Government thereto?

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

(b) and (c) The targets for the various welfare schemes are fixed in accordance with the budgetary allocations.

CNG Based Taxi-Transport

3360. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the GAIL (India) Limited has launched Joint Venture with the British Gas Co. of UK to promote CNG based taxi-transport in Mumbai;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the further steps contemplated to promote CNG based taxi-transport in Mumbai and other metro cities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. GAIL has formed Joint Venture Company with British Gas in the name of M/s. Mahanagar Gas Limited (MGL) for City Gas Distribution in Mumbai. The company was incorporated on the 8th May, 1995. At present GAIL and British Gas are holding 49.75% equity each and the Govt. of Maharashtra is holding 0.5% equity in the company.

(c) MGL has plans to expand its area of operation in the adjoining areas of Mumbai covering Mira Bhayander, Thane, Navi Mumbai, Belapur, Taloja, Kalyan Dombivili, Ambamath, Badlapur, Reha and Tarapur.

CNG facility is already available in Delhi. As regards other metro cities, the availability of CNG would depend upon the gas availability, development of pipeline infrastructure and economic viability.

[Translation]

Literacy among Scavengers

3361. SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV :
SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO :

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

(a) whether literacy among the people engaged in scavenging/cleaning works has been suffered from apathy as no study has ever been conducted in several States in this regard;

(b) if so, the reasons for not conducting any study in this regard; and

(c) the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) and (b) No study on literacy amongst scavengers has been conducted separately. Most of the persons engaged in scavenging

belong to Scheduled Castes and literacy rate among Scheduled Castes has improved from 37.41% in 1991 to 54.69% in 2001, as per Census figures.

(c) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Pre Matric Scholarship to the children of those engaged in unclean occupations, the children of persons engaged in scavenging, tanning, flaying etc. are provided scholarship for pursuing school education upto class X. The scavengers also get benefits under the programmes being run for the welfare and development of Scheduled Castes, as majority of them belong to Scheduled Castes.

[English]

Gauge Conversion between Madurai and Dindigul Railway Line

3362. SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have any proposal to convert the existing metre gauge railway line to broad gauge railway line between Madurai and Dindigul;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the cost of the project; and

(c) the time by which the construction work is likely to be started and completed?

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

(b) and (c) Doubling of Madurai-Dindigul (including Ambadaturai-Kodaikannal Road) section by gauge conversion of the existing metre gauge line has already been included in the Budget and the work has been taken up. Anticipated cost of the work is Rs. 97.81 crore.

The work has already started on bridges. No target date has been fixed for completion of the doubling.

[Translation]

Import/Export Prices of Petroleum Products

3363. DR. CHINTA MOHAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether with the increase in export of petroleum products, the import of crude oil and other petroleum products have also gone up during the years 2003-2004, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) whether difference between import and export of prices of crude oil and other petroleum products also

gone up continuously due to increase in export and import of crude oil and other petroleum products during the said period;

(d) if so, the deference between export and import prices of crude oil and other petroleum products during each of the said years; and

(e) the estimated extent of difference between the said prices during 2006-2007?

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

(b) to (e) The requisite information is enclosed.

Statement

The details of crude oil import and export and import of petroleum product for the period 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06 and estimated extent of difference between the said prices during April-June of 2006-07 are as under

Petroleum Product	2003-04			2004-05			2005-06 (P)			
	Qty.	Value	Rate	Qty.	Value	Rate	Qty.	Value	Rate	
	TMT	Rs.Crore	Rs./MT	TMT	Rs.Crore	Rs./MT	TMT	Rs.Crore	Rs./MT	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
CRUDE										
Public Sector	60,294	56,790	9,419	64,508	81,864	12,691	69,013	123,530	17,899	
Joint Sector										
Private Sector	30,140	26,738	8,871	31,353	35,139	11,208	30,395	48,172	15,848	
TOTAL CRUDE IMPORTS	90,434	83,528	9,236	95,861	117,003	12,206	99,409	171,702	17,272	
PRODUCT IMPORTS										
PUBLIC SECTOR										
LPG	1,492	2,246	15,054	2,068	3,942	19,057	2,449.5	5,923	24,181	
Petrol				233	501	21,491	485	1,283	26,445	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Aviation Petrol	2	9	45,000	3	14	44,905	2.0	10.7	54,160
Kerosene				210	429	20,403	876.1	2203.4	25,150
Diesel				703	1,422	20,220	700	1,654	23,615
Naphtha	93	147	15,806	252	470	18,681	298	699	23,488
Fuel Oil	295	252	8,542	314	304	9,678	277	360	12,974
Lubes	1	4	40,000						
MTBE				22	43	19,471	40	130	32,121
Others									
PUBLIC SECTOR	1,883	2,658		3,806	7,126	18,720	5,128	12,262	23,911
PRIVATE SECTOR									
LPG	216	312	14,444	265	472	17,770	269.1	656	24,376
Propane	450	592	13,156	588	987	16,785	357	787	22,066
Naphtha	2,278	2,737	12,015	1,962	3,559	18,141	2,175	5,036	23,152
Aviation Petrol							0	0	49,916
Kerosene	804	890	11,070				4	11	25,584
Diesel	100	116	11,600	111	181	16,356	32.5	70	21,506
Fuel Oil	658	558	8,480	426	388	9,097	511	739	14,462
Lubes	611	978	16,007	557	963	17,305	1,220	3,148	25,803
Others							161	203	12,593
CBFS	148	128	8,649	191	158	8,246	29	48	16,572
RPO	11	9	8,182	11	10	8,831			
LSWR	775	740	9,548	845	1,012	11,982	601	954	15,887
Bitumen	6	5	8,333	21	17	7,915	15	19	13,120
Coke				44	15	3,432	912	1,289	14,133

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Wax							170	228	13,432
P.Wax	61	0.19	31	0.2	0.3	13,810	92.4	124.3	13,447
PRIVATE SECTOR	6,118	7,065	11,548	5,021	7,762	15,458	6,549	13,313	20,329
TOTAL PRODUCT IMPORTS	8,001	9,723	12,152	8,828	14,887	16,864	11,677	25,575	21,902
TOTAL IMPORTS	96,435	93,251	9,473	10,4689	131,891	12,598	111,086	197,278	17,759
EXPORTS									
Petrol	2,979	4,021	13,498	2,697	5,625	19,419	2,273	5,579	24,542
Naphtha	2,176	2,653	12,192	2,926	5,030	17,193	4,996	10,674	21,367
SKO				207	460	22,212	121	371	30,616
ATF	1,660	1,950	11,747	2,480	4,448	17,931	2,781	6,983	25,108
Diesel	6,181	6,763	10,942	7,286	11,782	16,172	8,464	18,798	22,210
Fuel Oil	1,310	928	7,084	1,792	1,517	8,467	1,801	2,246	12,468
LDO				0.03	0.05	16,667	0.2	0.5	21,834
Lubes	17	36	21,176	5	23	48,122	5	20	40,568
Coke							42	58	13,848
Tame	83	117	14,096				10	25	24,250
VGO				98	114	11,721	696	1,185	17,039
Reformate	210	309	14,714	321	551	17,179	233	590	25,300
Bitumen	4	4	10,000	47	31	6,631	31	23	7,378
White Oil/Jetty	0.04	0.37	92,500	9	40	44,778	1	5	32,661
LPG				145	306	21,152	53	164	31,177
Others				0.2	0.7	36,000			
TOTAL EXPORTS	14,620	16,781	11,478	18,211	29,928	16,434	21,507	46,720	21,723

Petroleum Product	April-June 2006-07 (Prov.)		
	Quantity TMT	Value Rs. Crores	Rate Rs. MT
1	2	3	4
IMPORT			
CRUDE			
PSU	19120.5	41925.0	21927
Private	7684.8	14805.1	19265
Total Crude	26805.4	56730.1	21164
PRODUCTS			
PSU			
LPG	207.2	467.6	22572
Petrol	139.2	486.6	34956
Naphtha	134.9	384.2	28473
Avia. Petrol	0.8	6.1	75814
Kerosene	299.6	963.5	32160
Diesel	261.4	823.3	31501
Fuel Oil	98.1	155.6	15864
Sub Total	1141.1	3286.8	28804
PRIVATE/DIRECT			
Propane	145.6	301.9	20734
LPG	82.5	195.1	23649
Naphtha	1069.0	3063.1	28654
LOBS	160.3	637.3	39771
Fuel Oil/LSHS	133.9	226.8	16937

	1	2	3	4
LSWR (RIL)		424.8	878.3	20675
Sub Total		2016.1	5302.5	26301
Total Products		2157.2	8589.4	27206
Total Import		29962.6	65319.5	21800
EXPORT				
LPG		35.1	84.0	23946
MS		820.5	2595.9	31640
Naphtha		1404.4	3814.1	27158
HSD		1901.2	5437.7	28602
Fuel Oil/CBFS		878.7	1312.5	14937
ATF		806.2	2456.8	30475
SKO		23.4	85.6	36557
Reformate		26.2	89.8	34266
Bitumen		0.1	0.2	12810
Total Export		5895.8	15876.7	26929

Procurement of Simulators

3364. SHRI TUFANI SAROJ : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to procure simulators for better flight training; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) The Government constantly review the requirement for flight training and accordingly decide to induct simulators for various aircraft. The procurement of simulators required for the Air Force is

made in accordance with the established Defence Procurement Procedure.

[English]

Release of Central Assistance under PMS Scheme

3365. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO :
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL :
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD :
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE :
SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD :

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

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra has sent a proposal to sanction and release an amount of Rs. 17183.35 lakhs during 1997-98 to 2002-03 for central assistance;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the amount released by the Union Government;

(d) the balance amount pending with the Union Government and the reasons therefor; and

(e) the time by which the balanced amount is likely to be released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) and (b) The Central Government had received a proposal from Government of Maharashtra for reimbursement of Rs. 12068.24 lakhs for the amount already incurred by them during the year 1997-98 to 2001-02 and also a proposal for Rs. 26.96 crore for the year 2001-02 under post Matric Scholarship for Other Backward Classes.

(c) An amount of Rs. 4,39,13,645/- was released on 30th March, 2002.

(d) and (e) Govt. of Maharashtra further requested

for release of funds to the tune of Rs.200.00 crore during the year 2004-05 but no funds could be released due to non-availability of Utilisation Certificate of the funds released earlier to State Govt., Audited Accounts for the year 2002-03 onwards and number of persons benefited, by the State Govt. Union Government releases these funds under the Scheme to States/UTs on receipt of proposals from them on year-to-year basis.

Recruitment Scam in Navy

3366. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY :
SHRI UDAY SINGH :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether recently any recruitment scam has been unearthed in the Navy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether similar recruitment scam was held in Army a few years ago;

(d) whether any inquiry has been conducted in the matter;

(e) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken against the officials/persons found guilty; and

(f) the concrete steps being taken by the Government to check such recruitment in defence forces?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) One of impersonation was detected during the recruitment of sailors in the Navy at New Delhi in July 2006. The impersonator was promptly handed over to the civil police for investigation.

(c) to (e) Isolated cases of malpractices in recruitment to the Army like activities by touts and impersonation were detected earlier. All such complaints were investigated immediately and the unlawful activities were reported to the Civil Police/CBI for necessary action.

(f) Constant vigilance is maintained by the three Services during the selection process to check any fraudulent recruitment.

Utilization of Funds under SC Schemes

3367. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government has failed to ensure total utilization of funds under coaching and allied scheme for Scheduled Castes students;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of allocation and utilisation of funds under the scheme during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(d) the action taken against those States which

have not utilised the funds; and

(e) the measures taken by the Union Government for proper utilisation of funds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) to (e) Central assistance to States under the scheme of coaching and allied assistance for weaker sections including SCs, OBCs and Minorities during a particular year depends on the proposals received from eligible Field Implementing Agencies (FIAs) i.e. State Governments, Universities and NGOs. Funds released to the FIAs under the scheme in last three years are given in the enclosed statement.

The Ministry impresses upon the State Govts. for proper utilization of funds through State Secretaries meetings and through periodic letters to them.

Statement

(Rs. in lakh)

S. No.	States/ UTs	2003-04				2004-05				2005-06			
		States/ UTs	Univer- sities	NGOs	Total	States/ UTs	Univer- sities	NGOs	Total	States/ UTs	Univer- sities	NGOs	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1.	Andhra Pradesh	34.05	5.13	38.44	77.62	25.99	33.37	17.01	76.37	16.09	20.13	27.8	64.02
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3.	Assam	0	0	4.92	4.92	0	12.25	1.3	13.55	0	0	3.64	3.64
4.	Bihar	0	0	8.02	8.02	0	21.3	0	21.3	0	0	0	0
5.	Chhattisgarh	0	0	6.27	6.27	0	0	5.04	5.04	0	0	1.94	1.94

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
6.	Goa	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7.	Gujarat	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8.	Haryana	0	0	0	0.00	20.00	0	0	20	15.56	0	0	15.56
9.	Himachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.53	2.53
10.	Jammu and Kashmir	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	1.86	1.86	0	0	1.85	1.85
11.	Jharkhand	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.12	3.12
12.	Karnataka	14.33	0	5.59	19.92	0	4.5	4.94	9.44	0	0	5.38	5.38
13.	Kerala	20.54	0	0	20.54	0.00	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0
14.	Madhya Pradesh	25.63	10.85	15.36	51.84	82.89	35.62	7.31	125.82	0	7.14	11.43	18.57
15.	Maharashtra	0	3.4	25.99	29.39	0	12.59	23.3	35.89	0	11.8	6.81	18.61
16.	Manipur	0	0	21.87	21.87	0	0	14.48	14.48	0	0	15.83	15.83
17.	Meghalaya	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.	Mizoram	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.35	1.35
19.	Nagaland	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	Orissa	0	0	3.41	3.41	0	0	4.88	4.88	0	0	0	0
21.	Punjab	0	23.78	0	23.78	5.91	22.12	0	28.03	3.62	2.22	0	5.84
22.	Rajasthan	0	0	10.79	10.79	0	0	9.68	9.68	0	0	27.72	27.72
23.	Sikkim	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24.	Tamil Nadu	0	0	9.24	9.24	0	8.44	4.94	13.38	0	0	6.26	6.26
25.	Tripura	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26.	Uttar Pradesh	0	39.76	23.76	63.52	0	46.4	12.16	58.56	0	12.36	15.93	28.29
27.	Uttaranchal	5.45	3.82	0	9.27	0	6.45	0	6.45	0	5.41	0	5.41

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
28.	West Bengal	0	4.73	0	4.73	0	0	4.94	4.94	0	0	0	0
29.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30.	Chandigarh	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.53	2.53
31.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
32.	Daman and Diu	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
33.	Delhi	0	7.14	6.39	13.53	5.25	5.7	11.61	22.56	10.00	0	15.97	25.97
34.	Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
35.	Pondicherry	0	0	0	0.00	0	23.36	0	23.36	0	0	0	0
Total		100.00	98.62	180.08	378.70	140.04	232.16	123.45	495.645	45.27	59.05	150.12	254.44

**National Monitoring Committee for
Minority Education**

3368. SHRI K.S. RAO : Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the main recommendation given by the National Monitoring Committee for minorities education;

(b) the steps taken to implement the recommendations and streamlining the procedure for Inter-State affiliation of minority institutions;

(c) whether the Government proposes relaxation in percentage of marks for minority students enabling them to get admission in technical institutions; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY) : (a) to (d) According to the information received from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the

National Monitoring Committee for Minorities Education has given so far two Reports which contain several recommendations. The recommendations have been conveyed to the concerned authorities for appropriate action. Many of these have already been implemented. At present there is no proposal under consideration for streamlining the procedure for inter-state affiliation of minority institutions. There is also no proposal at present under consideration for relaxation in the percentage of marks for minority students.

**Train Service between Dehradun-
Thiruvananthapuram/Cochin**

3369. SHRI S. AJAYA KUMAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways are contemplating to run a train service directly between Dehradun and Thiruvananthapuram/Cochin;

(b) if so, whether any memorandum in this regard

has also been received from Doon Malayalee Samajam; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Railways thereto?

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

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Examined but not found feasible due to operational and resource constraints.

[Translation]

Railway Reservation Facilities at Dehradun Railway Station

3370. DR. RAJESH MISHRA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways are aware that due to non-availability of proper computerised railway reservation facilities at Dehradun Railway Station, common people and tourists are facing a lot of difficulties particularly in summer;

(b) if so, whether the Railways are considering to provide adequate computerised reservation facilities at the Dehradun Railway Station; and

(c) if so, the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) A full fledged Computerised Passenger Reservation Office with six counters (in two shifts) is already functional at Dehradun Railway Station. The same is considered sufficient to deal with present workload.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Development of Jodhpur Airport

3371. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any plan to develop Jodhpur Airport;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the cost of the project;

(c) the progress made so far in this regard; and

(d) the time schedule for completion of the project?

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

(b) Jodhpur airport belongs to Indian Air Force (IAF) and Airports Authority of India (AAI) maintains Civil Enclave consisting of a passenger terminal building, apron, link taxiway, car park etc. To facilitate operation of Airbus type of aircraft, AAI has taken up developmental works like extension and strengthening of civil apron to accommodate 3 numbers of AB 320 type of aircraft and widening and strengthening of existing link taxiway and construction of a new link taxiway with a cost of Rs. 13.15 crores.

(c) Physical progress made till July, 2006 is 36%.

(d) December, 2006.

Laying of Railway Line under North-Western Railway

3372. SHRI RAM SINGH KASWAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have conducted any survey for laying of new railway lines between Sikar-Nokha, Sardarshahar-Hanumangarh, Churu-Nohar, Bhiwani-Pilani-Churu under the North-Western Railway;

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

(c) the follow-up action taken by the Railways thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) The details of the surveys and the status thereof are given as under:-

S.No.	Name of project	Status
1.	Sikar-Nokha	A survey for new broad gauge line between Sikar-Nokha via Sujangarh and Bidasar (189 kms.) was completed in November, 2001. As per survey report the cost of construction of 189 kms. long line had been assessed at Rs. 431 crore with a rate of return at (-) 23.30%. Due to constraint of resources and unremunerative nature of the line, it was not considered feasible to take up the work.
2.	Sardarshahar-Hanumungarh	A survey for new broad gauge line between Hanumungarh to Ratangarh via Sadarshahar (198 kms.) was completed in February, 2000. As per survey report, the cost of construction of 198 kms. long line had been assessed at Rs. 287 crore with a rate of return at (-) 25.88%. Due to constraint of resources and unremunerative nature of the line, it was not considered feasible to take up the work.
3.	Bhiwani-Pilani-Churu	A survey for new broad gauge line between Bhiwani-Loharu (65 kms.) which is a part of Bhiwani-Pilani-Churu section has been included in the Budget 2006-07. Further consideration of the project would depend upon the results of the survey, once the survey report becomes available.
4.	Churu-Nohar	Survey for Churu-Nohar new line has not been taken up.

[English]

Renewal of Railway Tracks

3373. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the length of railway tracks in Kms. renewed during Eighth and Ninth Five Year plans in the country;

(b) the funds earmarked for the purpose;

(c) whether any target has been fixed by the Railways and for renewal of track during the Tenth Five Year Plan;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the progress made so far in this regard; and

(e) the steps taken by the Railways to complete the remaining work within the stipulated period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) The length of track renewal work done and expenditure incurred during Eighth and Ninth Five Year Plans are as under :

Plan	Track Renewal done (in Track km.)	Expenditure incurred (Rs. in crore)
Eighth Plan	14205	7217.35
Ninth Plan	15793	10357.86

(c) and (d) It is planned to renew 23000 KM of track during Tenth Five Year Plan.

During the first four years of Tenth Plan the track renewal done is as under :-

Year	Track Renewal done (Track km.)
2002-03	4776
2003-04	4986
2004-05	5566
2005-06	4725
Total	20053

(e) Planning for current year is as under :-

Year	Target
2006-07	4000 (Planned)

[Translation]

Railway Network

3374. SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of railway network in the country and the comparative status of Rajasthan to other States in that network, State-wise;

(b) the details of expenditure incurred in Rajasthan for laying new railway lines, gauge conversion and improvement in the conditions of railway stations during the Tenth Five Year Plan so far, item-wise; and

(c) the details of the surveys being conducted in Rajasthan by the Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Details of Statewise

Route Kms. of Railway lines in various States/Union Territories at the end of 2004-05 is given in Year Book 2004-05.

(b) An approximate amount of Rs. 161 crore for new line and Rs. 635 crore for gauge conversion has been incurred during first four years of the Tenth Five Year Plan. As regards improvements in the conditions of railway stations, it is mentioned that works are mainly carried out under Planhead 'Passenger Amenities'. The allocation and expenditure incurred under this Planhead are not maintained Statewise. Jurisdiction of North Central, Northern, North Western, West Central and Western Railways fall in the State of Rajasthan. The expenditure incurred under these railways under Planhead Passenger Amenities during the first four years of Plan period has been about Rs. 238 crores.

(c) At present, seventeen surveys are in progress covering 11 New Lines, 4 Gauge Conversions and 2 doublings.

Demand and Production of Petroleum Products

3375. SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN :
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN" :
SHRI BANSAGOPAL CHOUDHURY :

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

(a) the gap between demand and production of petroleum products in the country;

(b) whether demand for petrol, diesel, naphtha and furnace oil has been increasing in the country constantly for the last years;

(c) if so, the percentage of average annual increase in the demand of the said products during the period from 2003-04 to 2005-06;

(d) the percentage of annual increase in the production of crude oil in the country during the said period;

(e) whether the rate of annual increase in the production is less than that of its demand;

(f) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government to meet the demand of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) The production of petroleum products in the country is more than the demand. As such there is no shortage of petroleum products, except LPG which is imported. However, over 75% of the crude processed within the country is imported.

(b) and (c) The percentage of increase/decrease of growth in the demand of petrol, diesel, naphtha and furnace oil for the last three years i.e. 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 are given below :-

Figure in (TMT)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06 (Provisional)
Petrol % Growth	4.3	4.5	4.8
Diesel % Growth	1.2	6.9	1.3
Naphtha % Growth	(-)0.8	17.9	(-)12.4
Furnace Oil % Growth	1.6	4.6	(-)6.0

(d) The percentage of annual increase in production of crude oil in the country for the last three years i.e. 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 are given below :-

Figure in (TMT)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06 (Provisional)
Production % Growth	0.9	2.3	(-)5.7

(e) to (g) India is self-sufficient in the Refining sector and has also developed and requisite marketing infrastructure to meet the indigenous demand of petroleum products. The refining capacity is in excess of indigenous demand and the surplus quantity is being exported. The indigenous production of crude oil has not kept pace with the growth in demand of petroleum products. However, the following measures have been taken to accelerate hydrocarbon exploration and production activities in the country to meet the growing demand:-

- (i) Accelerate exploration activities through New Exploration Licensing Policy.
- (ii) Enhancement of domestic production through Improved Oil Recovery (IOR)/enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) techniques.
- (iii) Fast track development of discoveries/reserves for early commencement of production.
- (iv) Use of stimulation techniques for increasing production from existing fields.
- (v) Acquisition of exploration acreages and producing properties abroad to bring equity oil.
- (vi) Arresting decline from ageing fields.
- (vii) Substitution of oil through use of non-conventional sources of energy such as bio diesel, ethanol, etc.

Facilities for Handicapped Passengers at Airports

3376. SHRI RASHEED MASOOD : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the handicapped passengers are facing difficulties at the airports;

(b) if so, whether any policy has been formulated to provide special facilities to the handicapped passengers;

- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps 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) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Facilities are provided to handicapped passengers by Airports Authority of India as per ICAO recommendations. Facilities provided at Airports inter-alia include specially designed security check enclosures, toilets, elevators, a separate ramp and a loading dock on the air side, free wheel chair availability in Medical Inspection room, Ramps in terminal and kerb side, allocation of manned PCO booths, parking slots in the Car parking areas, ambulifts placed on chargeable basis at Chennai, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Guwahati, Coimbatore, Calicut, Jaipur, Amritsar, Nagpur, Goa, Patna, Bhubarishwar, Agartala and Dibrugarh airports.

Gauge Conversion Project in M.P.

3377. SHRI KRISHNA MURARI MOGHE :
SHRI VIJAY KUMAR KHANDELWAL :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have received any proposal from the Government of Madhya Pradesh for changing narrow gauge railway line into broad gauge between Indore-Ratlam, Ratlam-Khandwa, Indore-Ujjain and Indore-Khandwa;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken by the Railways on these proposals;

(c) whether the Railways propose to start the work of gauge conversion of these railway lines; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by the Railways in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) As per available records, request from the Hon'ble Chief Minister and Minister for Forest and Transport, Government of Madhya Pradesh have been received. Updating survey for gauge conversion of Ratlam-Akola via Indore and Khandwa including Fatehabad Chandravatiganj-Ujjain branch line has been taken up.

(c) Work is not sanctioned.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Sainik Schools for Girls

3378. SHRI FRANCIS FANTHOME : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is considering any proposal to establish Sainik Schools for girls with a view to increase their participation in all wings of the Armed Forces;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise in view of reply at (a) above.

[Translation]

Services of Goods Train Drivers in Mail/Express Trains

3379. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether mail and express trains are being driven by the goods train drivers for the last few years;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it had led to increase in the occurrence of accidents and derailment;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether various railway employees unions have also brought this aspect to the notice of the Railways; and

(f) if so, the action taken by the Railways in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Mail and Express trains are not routinely run by goods train driver, the need for which may arise only in exceptional situations. Should such a contingency arise, then only a suitable goods driver is deployed.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) and (f) Issue like filling up of vacancies, monetary compensation has been brought to the notice of some of the Railways by employees unions which are suitably addressed as per the extant rule. However, the aspect of increase in train accidents due to goods drivers utilised on mail and express trains per se is not reported to have been raised.

(English)

Modernisation of Petrol Pumps

In Assam

3380 DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) the names of cities and towns in Assam where extensive pollution control measures like introduction of CNG and distribution of purified petroleum products are ensured along with modernization of petrol pumps;

(b) whether any specific action plan has been contemplated for Guwahati and some other towns also in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the number of petrol pumps in Assam showing the number already modernized and proposed for subsequent years, company-wise; and

(e) the target set for modernization of all Petrol pumps in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) to (c) Various cities in India are in the process of switching over to alternate fuel options like CNG. CNG has not been introduced in Assam due to its non-availability. However, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) have a plan to introduce Auto LPG in four Retail Outlets (ROs). As per the Auto Fuel policy of the Government, Petrol and Diesel having quality and specifications commensurate to that of Euro-II or Bharat Stage-II requirements are supplied in Assam with effect from 01.04.2005. Gas Authority of India Ltd. (GAIL) has undertaken the demand assessment in domestic, commercial and automobile sectors for preparing the detailed feasibility report for implementation of City Gas Project in the City of Silchar in Assam State.

(d) and (e) Modernisation of Retail Outlets is a continuous process. The company-wise details of retail outlets modernized by public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) during the year 2004-05 and 2005-06 and plans for modernization during the year 2006-07 in the State of Assam are as under :

	No of ROs modernized during		No of ROs planned for modernization during
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
IOC	0	1	3
HPC	8	8	13
IBP	2	4	7

**Acquisition of Land for Angamaly-
Sabarimala Railway Line**

3381. SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have decided for laying a railway line from Angamaly to Sabarimala via Muvattupuzha;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways have taken any steps for acquisition of land for the said project;

(d) if so, the progress made so far in this regard;

(e) whether the Railways have paid any compensation to the landholders whose lands have been acquired; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Angamaly-Sabarimala (Azhutha) new line work was included in the Budget 1997-98 which will terminate at Azhutha, short of Reserve Forest area.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Necessary requisition for acquisition of land to the extent of 470 hectare coming in Ernakulam, Idukki and Kottayam Districts have been sent to Government of Kerala.

(e) and (f) Rs. 3.55 crore has been deposited by the Railway with the Government of Kerala for payment of compensation. However, no land has been handed over to Railways so far.

Cultural Resources and Training Centres

3382. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has set up Cultural Resources and Training Centres for foreign teachers;

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

(c) the achievements made by them during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

City Gas Distribution Network Policy

3383. SHRI SURESH KALMADI :
SHRI GANESH PRASAD SINGH :

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

(a) whether the Government is preparing the City Gas Distribution Network Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether certain companies are insisting on exclusive rights of distribution whereas the Planning Commission is opposed to granting exclusive rights;

(d) if so, the present status thereof;

(e) whether the Government will reserve the construction of gas pipelines network in a city for single operator under the PNGRB Act;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government to safeguard the interest of consumers from monopolistic pricing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The policy has not been finalized yet.

(c) to (g) As per the provisions under the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006, the Board may inter alia decide on the period of exclusivity to lay, build, operate or expand a city or local natural gas distribution network for such number of year as it may by order determine in accordance with the principles laid down by the regulations made by it in a transparent manner while fully protecting the consumer interests.

The draft policy, including the issue of providing exclusivity to the entities for city or local natural gas distribution networks, was discussed with the industry in meeting where Planning Commission was also represented. No final view in the matter has been taken as yet.

Training Programmes in CCRT

3384. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of training programmes conducted for in-service teachers through Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT);

(b) the number of in-service teachers trained by CCRT during each of the last three years;

(c) whether there is any plan under the consideration of the Government to increase the number of Training Programmes and the number of participations by CCRT; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) 215 training programmes

have been conducted by CCRT for in-service teachers during the last three years.

(b) During the last three years the number of in-service teachers trained are as follows :

Year	Trained
2003-2004	4300
2004-2005	4635
2005-2006	5642

(c) and (d) The Society of the Council of CCRT has constituted a Review Committee to review the course content as well as to suggest increasing the number of in-service school teachers' participation.

Increase in Height of Platforms

3385. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways are planning to increase the height of platforms like platforms of the Delhi Metro Rail;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. Indian Railways have more than 8000 railway stations. The stations have been divided into seven categories i.e. 'A1', 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', & 'F' based on earnings from passenger traffic at the station(s). Level of platforms are decided based on category of station. As per norms of Minimum Essential Amenities, 'High Level' platform is provided at 'A1', 'A' & 'C' category station, 'Medium Level' platform at 'B' & 'D' category station and 'Rail Level' platform is provided at 'E' & 'F' category stations. Further raising of height of Medium/Rail Level platforms is done based on traffic growth, type of trains handled etc.

Setting up of Units of NCC

3386. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government proposes to set up units of National Cadet Corps (NCC) in all the high school of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis

3387. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA :
SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK :

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

- (a) whether the Union Government has formulated any scheme for the welfare and rehabilitation of safai karamcharis in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith funds earmarked under the said scheme;
- (c) the steps taken to abolish untouchability with safai karamcharis under Bhangri Andolan;
- (d) whether a matter related to discrimination against safai karamcharis on Mining Sector Development Authority in Jharkhand has come to the notice of the Union Government; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Union Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) and (b) The National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) was incorporated during 1997 for

the socio-economic development of Safai Karamcharis in the country. NSKFDC provides loans at low rates to the Safai Karamcharis for viable self employment projects. The authorized share capital of the Corporation is Rs. 200 crore.

(c) Article 17 of the Constitution has abolished practice of untouchability in any form and its practice is punishable under the provisions of Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. No State Government has sought assistance for such Andolan during 2005-06 and 2006-07 under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Implementation of ROR Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

World Heritage Sites in India

3388. SHRI RAKESH SINGH :

SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA :
SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN :

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

- (a) the details of world heritage sites in India, State-wise;
- (b) whether the Government has submitted some cultural sites for inclusion in the list of UNESCO world heritage sites; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) State-wise list of cultural and natural sites from India inscribed on the World Heritage list is given in the enclosed statement.

(b) and (c) A nomination dossier for Red Fort, Delhi has been submitted to the World Heritage center for considering its inscription on the World Heritage list. The

evaluation of the nomination will be carried out by an expert of advisory body to UNESCO and the report will be placed before World Heritage Committee for decision.

Statement

List of Cultural and Natural Sites from India inscribed on the World Heritage List

CULTURAL SITES

S.No.	Name of Monument/Site	State
1	2	3
1.	Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhgaya (2002)	Bihar
2.	Humayun's Tomb (1993)	Delhi
3.	Qutb Minar Complex (1993)	Delhi
4.	Churches and Convents at Goa (1986)	Goa
5.	Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park (2004)	Gujarat
6.	Group of Monuments at Hampi (1986)	Karnataka
7.	Group of Temple at Pattadakal (1987)	Karnataka
8.	Group of Monuments, Khajuraho (1986)	Madhya Pradesh
9.	Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi (1989)	Madhya Pradesh
10.	Prehistoric Rockshelters of Bhimbetka (2003)	Madhya Pradesh
11.	Ajanta Caves (1983)	Maharashtra
12.	Ellora Caves (1983)	Maharashtra
13.	Elephanta Caves (1987)	Maharashtra
14.	Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) Mumbai (2004)	Maharashtra
15.	Sun Temple, Konark (1984)	Orissa
16.	Group of Monuments, Mahabalipuram (1984)	Tamil Nadu

1	2	3
17.	Great Living Chola Temples at Thanjavur, Gangaikondacholapuram and Darasuram (1987 and 2004)	Tamil Nadu
18.	Agra Fort (1983)	Uttar Pradesh
19.	Taj Mahal (1983)	Uttar Pradesh
20.	Fatehpur Sikri (1986)	Uttar Pradesh
21.	Mountain Railways of India (1999 and 2005)	West Bengal and Tamil Nadu

NATURAL SITES

1.	Kaziranga National Park (1985)	Assam
2.	Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (1985)	Assam
3.	Keoladeo National Park (1985)	Rajasthan
4.	Sunderban National Park (1987)	West Bengal
5.	Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks (1988, 2005)	Uttaranchal

[English]

Implementation of Auto Fuel Policy

3389. SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has formulated a "National Auto Fuel Policy"; and

(b) if so, the latest status with regard to its implementation?

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

(b) In line with the road map laid in the Auto Fuel Policy approved by the Government in October, 2003, the quality of fuel has been upgraded all over the country as follows:-

Fuel quality	States/cities	Date of introduction
1	2	3
Euro-III Petrol and Diesel	13 cities (Delhi/National Capital Region, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Surat, Kanpur, Agra, Solapur and Lucknow)	1.04.2005
BS-II Petrol	All over country	1.04.2005
BS-II Diesel	All States except Rajasthan, West U.P., Uttaranchal, M.P., Punjab, H.P. and Jammu and Kashmir	1.04.2005

1	2	3
	Rajasthan	1.06.2005
	West UP and Uttaranchal	1.07.2005
	Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh	1.09.2005
	Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir	1.10.2005

[Translation]

New Trains from Bhopal

3390. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR KHANDELWAL :
SHRI KRISHNA MURARI MOGHE :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any proposal has been received from the Government of Madhya Pradesh for starting new trains from Bhopal to Guwahati, Bhopal to Bhubaneswar and also from Bhopal to other major cities of the States; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Railways thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Introduction of trains from Bhopal to Guwahati, Bhubaneswar etc. has been examined but not found feasible at present due to operational and resource constraints. However, as announced in Railway Budget 2006-2007, the following train facilities serving Bhopal are being provided during 2006-2007.

New trains :

- 2611/2612 Nizamuddin-Chennai Garib Rath Express (weekly).
- 9053/9054 Valsad-Udhna-Kanpur Udyog Karmi Express (weekly).

3. 2103/2104 Pune-Lucknow Express (weekly).

4. 9323/9324 Indore-Bhopal Intercity Express (daily) (Introduced from 1.7.2006).

Extension :

- 2181/2182 Jabalpur-Kota Express upto Jaipur (extended from 1.7.2006).
- 1271/1272 Itarsi-Bina Vindhyaachal Express upto Bhopal (extended from 1.7.2006).
- 8473/8474 Puri-Jaipur Express (weekly) upto Jodhpur (extended from 5.7.2006).
- 2967/2968 Jaipur-Chennai Express (bi-weekly) upto Coimbatore (extended from 25.7.2006).

Frequency :

- 2715/2716 Amritsar-Nanded Sachkhand Express from 5 days to 7 days (increased from 2.8.2006).

[English]

Review of Schemes for SC and OBC Communities

3391. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL :
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA :
SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO :
SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO :

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

(a) whether a large proportion of the Scheduled Caste and Other Backward Class communities population still lives below the poverty line;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether the Government has reviewed the

impact of schemes implemented for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes;

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

(e) whether the Government is aware that in spite of various welfare schemes, no significant improvement has been noticed in economic conditions of people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes living below the poverty line;

(f) if so, the facts thereof; and

(g) the effective steps being taken or proposed to be taken to review these schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) and (b) The percentage of Scheduled Caste population below the poverty line, declined during 1993-1994 to 1999-2000, from 48.11% to 36.25% in rural areas and from 49.48% to 38.47% in Urban Areas. As regards Other Backward Classes, since there has been no census, therefore the data in respect of their number living below the poverty line is not available.

(c) to (g) The evaluation studies are got conducted to assess the impact of the Schemes of this Ministry. The decline in percentage of Scheduled Caste population below the poverty line during the period 1993-1994 to 1999-2000 is itself indicative of affirmative effect of the Schemes.

Appointment of RTSAs and RTAs

3392. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU :
SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the criteria being followed by the Railways for appointment of Rail Travellers' Service Agents (RTSAs) and Rail Tourist Agents (RTAs);

(b) whether RTSAs and RTAs are appointed for a fixed tenure;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the number of RTSAs and RTAs appointed by the Railways during each of the last three years;

(e) whether the Railways are aware that unauthorized private agencies are indulging in illegal trade of railway ticketing; and

(f) if so, the corrective steps taken by the Railways to curb such activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Rail Travellers' Service Agents (RTSAs) and Rail Tourist Agents (RTAs) are appointed as per provisions of authorisation of Rail Travellers' Service Agents Rules, 1985 and Rail Tourist Agents Rules 1980 alongwith their amendments and the instructions issued by Ministry of Railways from time to time.

(b) and (c) RTSAs and RTAs are appointed for a period of three years and five years respectively. The licences of these agents are renewed after expiry of the tenure as per extant rules.

(d) The details of RTSAs and RTAs appointed during the last three financial years is given below :-

Financial Year	RTSAs	RTAs
2003-2004	24	NIL
2004-2005	56	02
2005-2006	NIL	NIL

(e) Some such cases come to notice.

(f) To curb such activities checks are conducted by the Commercial and Vigilance Department from time to time in association with police in and around reservation offices.

regularly used **Funds for Handicapped**

3393. SHRI M. SHIVANNA : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Karnataka has urged to the Union Government to release funds for the centrally sponsored scheme of employment for the physically challenged persons at Mysore, Gulbarg and Hubli;

(b) if so, whether the State has also urged the Union Government to release financial assistance for setting up a special cell for the physically challenged in the district Employment Exchange, Mangalore; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

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

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the employment of the handicapped has been transferred to the State sector w.e.f. 01.04.2005 and hence no fund is sanctioned by the Central Government under the scheme.

[Translation]

Railway Bridges on Ganga River in Bihar

3394. SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether railway bridges are being constructed under a mega project in Patna and Monghyr respectively on the river Ganga in Bihar;

(b) if so, whether the pace of construction of both

the railway bridges is very slow and the possibilities of completion of the construction work within the stipulated period are very bleak;

(c) if so, the funds sanctioned for these bridges so far; and

(d) the time by which these bridges are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Rail-cum-Road bridges at Patna and at Monghyr are under construction.

(b) to (d) : On both these rail-cum-road bridges various activities related to land acquisition, earthwork, bridges on the approaches etc. have been taken up. The sub-structure works of the main bridge have also been taken up. However, the progress is lagging behind with respect to the original time schedule due to various reasons. An expenditure of Rs. 131.10 crore has been incurred upto 31.3.2006 on Monghyr bridge and an outlay of Rs. 120 crore has been provided for the work during 2006-07. On bridge near Patna, an expenditure of Rs. 235.29 crore has been incurred upto 31.3.2006 and an outlay of Rs. 120 crore has been provided for the work during 2006-07. These bridges may get completed in a period of about 4 years depending upon overall availability of resources.

[English]

Development of Puri-Konark Beach

3395. SHRI B. MAHTAB : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to develop Puri-Konark beach in Orissa;

(b) if so, the funds earmarked for the said project;

(c) the progress made so far on the project; and

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

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) and (b) Development and promotion of tourism is undertaken primarily by the State Governments/UT Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, extends financial assistance to the State Governments/UT Administrations for tourism related projects which are identified in consultation and interaction with them under schemes for Integrated Development of Tourist Circuits, Product/Infrastructure Development of Destinations and Assistance to Large Revenue Generating Projects. Project proposals for prioritized projects that are complete in all respect are examined under scheme guidelines and approved on the basis of inter-se priority and funds released subject to availability under respective head.

A total amount of Rs. 394.55 lakh has been sanctioned for development of Puri as a tourist destination during the year 2003-04. Another project for Integrated Development of Tourist Circuit Bhubaneswar-Dhaulti-Puri-Konark has been sanctioned in the year 2005-06 for Rs. 720.09 lakh.

A statement showing year-wise details of projects sanctioned during the Tenth Plan period for the State of Orissa is enclosed.

(c) and (d) Implementation and completion of projects sanctioned under various schemes of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is the responsibility of the State Government. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India monitors the progress of projects and status of utilization of funds through review meetings from time to time.

Statement

Projects Sanctioned to the State of Orissa during the Tenth Plan

(Rs. in lakh)

S.No.	Name of project	Amount sanctioned
1	2	3
2002-03		
1.	Rural Tourism Project at Raghurajpur	50.00
2.	Computerisation of office and its Groups	7.50
	Total	57.50
2003-04		
1.	Development of Puri as a Tourist destination	394.55
2.	Konark Festival, 2002	5.00
3.	Folk Dance Festival, 2003-04	5.00
4.	Rajrani Music Festival, 2003-04	5.00

1	2	3
5.	Buddha Mahotsav	10.00
	Total	419.55
	2004-05	
1.	Development of Peace Park and Amphitheatre at Dhauli (Distt. Khurda) under Dest. Development	488.51
2.	Integrated Development of Buddhist Circuit in Orissa—Development of facilities at Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri, Udaigiri and Langudi under Tourist Circuit	740.67
3.	Shreekshetra Vasant Festival at Puri	15.00
4.	Kharvela Festival, 2004-05	5.00
5.	GOI-UNDP Endogenous Tourism Project at Village Pipli in Puri Distt. (Software)	20.00
6.	GOI-UNDP Endogenous Tourism Project at Village Raghurajpur in Puri Distt. (Software)	20.00
7.	Development of Village Pipli in Puri Distt. (Software)	50.00
	Total	1339.18
	2005-06	
1.	Development of Gopalpur-on-Sea (Distt. Ganjam)	331.43
2.	Development of Sakhi Gopal (Distt. Puri)	294.04
3.	Development of Taptapani in Distt. Ganjam as Tourist Destination	500.00
4.	Integrated Development of Tourist Circuit Bhubaneswar-Dhaulti-Puri-Konark	720.09
5.	Development of Chilka Lake (Distt. Puri and Ganjam) as Tourist Destination	389.05
6.	Development of Rural Tourism at Village Khiching, Distt. Mayurbhanj	50.00
7.	Shreekshetra Festival at Puri	15.00
8.	Puri Beach Festival, 2005	4.00
9.	Konark Festival, 2005	3.00
10.	Rajrani Festival, 2005 at Bhubaneswar	3.00
	Total	2309.61

Heritage Zone at Bhubaneswar

3396. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to set up a Heritage Zone at Bhubaneswar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be set-up?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) No, Sir. There is no such provision under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 and Rules, 1959 to set up a Heritage Zone.

(b) and (c) Questions do not arise.

[Translation]

Divya Drishti Project

3397. SHRI SHISHUPAL PATLE :

SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT :

SHRI MOHD. TAHIR :

SHRI KAILASH NATH SINGH YADAV :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Divya Drishti Project for surveillance of enemy fighter planes is not likely to complete as per its schedule as reported in the *Dainik Jagran* dated August 6, 2006;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether the private parties which have been awarded contracts for procuring instruments for the project have committed some irregularities in supplying instruments;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether contracts with such companies have

been scrapped and the cost of the said project has escalated due to time over-run therein; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (f) "Divya Drishti" is a joint project of DRDO and Signal Intelligence Directorate. Electronic Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) was a prime production agency responsible for procurement of sub-systems. A contract was placed by ECIL to a private firm for procurement of some sub-systems which could not materialize as dealings with the firm have ceased. No payment was made to the firm. Alternative arrangements are being evolved for meeting the technical requirements and objectives of the projects.

[English]

Setting up of Refineries

3398. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH :

SHRI JUAL ORAM :

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

(a) whether the Public Sector Oil Companies have proposed to set up some new oil refineries;

(b) if so, the progress made so far in setting up of the proposed new refineries;

(c) whether any target has been fixed for setting up of these refineries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof along with the estimated cost of each project, refinery wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) Yes, Sir. Indian Oil Corporation Limited

(IOCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) are setting up the following new refineries :-

S. No.	Name of the Company	Location of the refinery
1.	IOCL	Paradip, Orissa
2.	HPCL	Bathinda, Punjab
3.	BPCL	Bina, Madhya Pradesh

In addition to above, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), through its subsidiary Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL), is exploring the possibility of setting up an export-oriented refinery in the coastal belt of Andhra Pradesh near Kakinada, a well-head refinery at Barmer, Rajasthan and an export-oriented refinery at Mangalore, Karnataka.

(b) to (d) The details regarding progress, completion targets and estimated cost of the Paradip, Bathinda and Bina projects are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Name of the project	Installed capacity (million metric tonnes per annum)	Anticipated cost of the project (Rs. in crores)	Completion target	Progress made
1	2	3	4	5
Paradip Refinery, IOCL	15.00	25,000	April, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 7 Km. (approx.) approach road from NH-5A to refinery site including bridges over railway line and Santra creek has been completed and is already in operation. — Over 3,300 acres of land for the project has been acquired. — Work on the boundary wall on southern side of Santra creek is in progress. — Work for 6 KM (approx.) coastal road and Jetty construction in Paradip port has been awarded to Paradip Port. — Work for development of Green Belt has been awarded to Orissa Forest Development Corporation Limited.

1	2	3	4	5
Bathinda Refinery, HPCL	9.00	9,806	2010-11	— The basic infrastructure activities which include site grading internal and external roads, drains and culverts, raw water channel, area lighting etc. have been completed.
Bina Refinery, BPCL	6.00	6,354	December, 2009	— Land for the project has been obtained. — All Government approvals have been received. — Project Management Consultant has been appointed.

Compensation to Farmers

3399. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA :
SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD NISHAD :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Air Force has acquired land in Kanpur for construction of airport;

(b) if so, whether the Indian Air Force has not paid compensation to the farmers whose land have been acquired;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) the number of compensation cases pending with the Indian Air Force;

(e) whether the Government has received any representations from the public representatives in this regard;

(f) if so, the decision taken by the Government thereon; and

(g) the time by which the pending compensation cases are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Full compensation has been paid for major portion of the land that was acquired for Air Force Station, Chakeri, Kanpur. Besides, with respect to acquisition of some additional land, part compensation has also been paid. However, the Government has challenged the award of compensation with respect to seven persons involved in the aforesaid acquisition of additional land in the High Court at Allahabad. Hence, the matter is sub-judice.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) and (g) The matter is pending before the High Court at Allahabad, and is sub-judice.

Transfer of Railway Land to Maharashtra

3400. SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD :
SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra has requested the Railways for immediate transfer of railway land on the abandoned narrow gauge railway land between Latur-Harangual to the State without waiting for the selection of alternative land from the State Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Necessary instructions have been issued to Central Railway on 01-02-2006 to transfer the land in question in exchange of suitable land of equal monetary value to the State Government as per extant policy.

(c) It is likely to take about 3 more months depending upon completion of joint measurement of railway land by State Government and the Railway Administration, evaluation of railway land by the State Government and issue of an undertaking by the State Government that in case land of equitable value belonging to the State Government is not available immediately for transfer to Railway, the Government of Maharashtra undertakes to hand over to Central Railway a suitable land of equitable monetary value identified mutually by Railway and the Government of Maharashtra.

Railway Linkage between Assam and Bangladesh

3401. SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the S.P. Sukla Commission had recommended for establishing Railway Linkage from Assam with Bangladesh;

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal to establish railway linkage from Dhubri, the Western Indo-Bangladesh Border;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which the said railway linkage is likely to be established?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Partly correct. S.P. Shukla Commission has recommended linking of Indian and Bangladesh Railways particularly in Karimganj and Agartala sectors.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Recruitment of Women through SSC

3402. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to recruit the women in the Armed Forces through Staff Selection Commission alongwith men;

(b) if so, whether any special rules are going to be framed for this purpose; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. Selection of women officers in the Armed Forces is through Services Selection Board (SSB).

[Translation]

Unmanning of Manned Level Crossings

3403. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether some of the manned railway crossings are made unmanned;

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

(c) whether railway crossing at Khareta Anandpur Sahib, Punjab is not opened for common man and people have to travel 15 Km. distance to reach the place which is just one Km. away;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the action taken by the Railways for opening of the said level crossing for public?

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

the period 2001-02 to 2005-06 Railways have converted 27 manned level crossings into unmanned. In another 9 cases State Governments have been requested to give their consent for conversion of manned level crossings into unmanned. The consent of the State Govt. in these cases has not been received so far.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The said canal crossing (Level Crossing) is not open for general public. The level crossing at Khareta Anandpur Sahib, Punjab is a canal crossing and is provided for inspection of Nangal-Hydel channel near Bharatgarh-Kharota on the road constructed on one of the banks. This canal crossing is utilized and controlled by Bhakra Beas Management Board. The canal crossing normally kept closed by the Bhakra Beas Management Board and is opened only when required by them.

(e) The canal crossing controlled by Bhakra Beas Management Board Authorities is used by them for access for service and routine maintenance. Railway may man the level crossing gate on deposit terms if the State Govt. of Punjab approaches the Bhakra Beas Management Board for opening of the level crossing for public use and the Bhakra Beas Management Board agrees to such a proposal and proposes to deposit the entire capitalized cost of manning of the level crossing.

[English]

Financial Assistance for Promotion of Tribal Culture

3404. DR. M. JAGANNATH : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government provide financial assistance to voluntary organizations engaged in preservation and promotion of tribal culture in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the financial assistance provided to the voluntary organizations during 2005-06, State-wise; and

(c) the number of such organizations functioning in States State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Culture is operating a specific Scheme for preservation and promotion of Tribal/Folk Art Culture. Under this Scheme, voluntary organizations, institutions and individuals both tribal and non-tribal, who are engaged in the preservation of Tribal/Folk Art and Culture are provided financial assistance upto a maximum extent of Rs. 2.00 lakh per project.

(b) The details of the financial assistance given to various agencies/NGOs/Individuals during 2005-2006 under the Scheme for Preservation and Promotion of Tribal/Folk Art and Culture are as under :

Financial Year	Amount Released
2005-06	Rs. 1,85,00,000/-

(State-wise Statement enclosed)

(c) This information is not being centrally maintained.

Statement

Amount sanctioned State-wise under the Scheme for Preservation and Promotion of Tribal/Folk Art and Culture

S. No.	Name of the State	Amount Released 2005-06	Amount Released 2004-05	Amount Released 2003-04
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Rs. 12,77,000/-	Rs. 6,75,000/-	Rs. 5,59,500/-

1	2	3	4	5
2.	Assam	Rs. 4,65,000/-	Rs. 10,50,000/-	Rs. 2,37,000/-
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	Rs. 50,000/-	Rs. 2,00,000/-	—
4.	Bihar	Rs. 8,90,000/-	Rs. 5,02,000/-	Rs. 2,30,000/-
5.	Chhattisgarh	Rs. 30,000/-	—	—
6.	Chandigarh	Rs. 1,00,000/-	Rs. 2,30,000/-	Rs. 75,000/-
7.	Delhi	Rs. 6,77,000/-	Rs. 6,45,000/-	Rs. 4,19,000/-
8.	Gujarat	Rs. 1,55,000/-	Rs. 3,50,000/-	Rs. 1,80,000/-
9.	Haryana	Rs. 6,25,000/-	—	—
10.	Himachal Pradesh	Rs. 7,95,000/-	Rs. 7,30,000/-	Rs. 2,75,000/-
11.	Jharkhand	Rs. 60,000/-	Rs. 50,000/-	—
12.	Jammu and Kashmir	Rs. 1,50,000/-	Rs. 1,50,000/-	—
13.	Karnataka	Rs. 30,09,000/-	Rs. 19,85,000/-	Rs. 9,31,000/-
14.	Kerala	Rs. 50,000/-	Rs. 3,35,000/-	Rs. 50,000/-
15.	Manipur	Rs. 13,30,000/-	Rs. 9,40,000/-	Rs. 5,71,000/-
16.	Madhya Pradesh	Rs. 6,35,000/-	Rs. 4,45,000/-	Rs. 75,000/-
17.	Maharashtra	Rs. 5,70,000/-	Rs. 3,80,000/-	Rs. 86,000/-
18.	Mizoram	Rs. 30,000/-	—	—
19.	Nagaland	Rs. 4,85,000/-	Rs. 1,20,000/-	Rs. 1,00,000/-
20.	Orissa	Rs. 26,87,000/-	Rs. 9,10,000/-	Rs. 3,57,000/-
21.	Punjab	Rs. 25,000/-	—	—
22.	Pondicherry	Rs. 60,000/-	—	—
23.	Rajasthan	Rs. 7,80,000/-	Rs. 7,50,000/-	Rs. 3,75,000/-
24.	Sikkim	Rs. 1,30,000/-	—	—
25.	Tamil Nadu	Rs. 1,90,000/-	Rs. 3,15,000/-	Rs. 75,000/-

1	2	3	4	5
26.	Tripura	Rs. 60,000/-	Rs. 1,50,000/-	Rs. 32,500/-
27.	Uttar Pradesh	Rs. 13,40,000/-	Rs. 4,45,000/-	Rs. 7,15,228/-
28.	Uttaranchal	Rs. 5,70,000/-	Rs. 4,00,000/-	—
29.	West Bengal	Rs. 12,75,000/-	Rs. 7,70,000/-	Rs. 6,31,000/-
30.	Goa	—	Rs. 75,000/-	—
Total		Rs. 1,85,00,000/-	Rs. 1,26,02,000/-	Rs. 59,74,228/-

Overseas Tourism Offices

3405. SHRI HITEN BARMAN : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the expenditure incurred on the maintenance of various overseas tourism offices during 2005-2006, country-wise;

(b) whether the Government has decided to shift some of these overseas field offices in a bid to tap emerging markets; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) The details of expenditure incurred on maintenance of overseas tourism offices during 2005-2006 are given as under :-

Sl. No.	Country-wise name of overseas India Tourism Office (ITO)	Expenditure (Rs. in Lakh)
1	2	3
1.	ITO Amsterdam, Netherlands	88.36
2.	ITO Dubai, UAE	99.87
3.	ITO Frankfurt, Germany	232.11

1	2	3
4.	ITO Johannesburg, South Africa	57.50
5.	ITO New York, USA	221.79
6.	ITO Los Angeles, USA	69.01
7.	ITO London, UK	251.05
8.	ITO Milan, Italy	82.75
9.	ITO Paris, France	138.85
10.	ITO Sydney, Australia	172.87
11.	ITO Singapore, Singapore	83.90
12.	ITO Toronto, Canada	98.71
13.	ITO Tokyo, Japan	219.95
Total		1816.72

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Merger of Vayudoot with Indian Airlines

3406. SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

- (a) the amount of compensation paid so far on the merger of Vayudoot with the Indian Airlines;
- (b) whether there is any proposal to extend the moratorium on payment of compensation to Vayudoot;
- (c) if so, the details and the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps taken for timely payment of compensation and for the settlement of all the dues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) Out of a total dues of Rs. 138.31 crores of Vayudoot Limited, a sum of Rs. 135.20 crore has already been paid to the creditors.

(b) to (d) At present there is a moratorium on the payment of dues upto 30th September, 2006. Details are awaited from some creditors for making the payment of balance amount and it is expected that all dues would be cleared by 30th September, 2006.

Health and Education Loan Schemes

3407. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government proposes to launch health and educational loan schemes specially for those ex-servicemen and their wards living in the rural areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU) : (a) to (c) No such proposal is under consideration of the Government.

Electrification of Chennai-Howrah Trunk Railway Line

3408. SHRI E.G. SUGAVANAM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) the present status of electrification of Chennai-Howrah Trunk railway line;
- (b) the estimated cost of the project; and
- (c) the time by which the project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Electrification of Chennai-Howrah Trunk Rail Route has already been completed.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Facilities in Railway Hospitals in West Central Railway

3409. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) the details of the capacity of each railway hospital under the West Central Railway; and
- (b) the expenditure incurred on modernization/upgradation on each hospital under the said Zone during last three years, year-wise?

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

S. No.	Name of Hospital	Capacity (No. of Beds)
1	2	3
1.	Central Hospital/Jabalpur	125
2.	Divisional Hospital/Kota	104
3.	Divisional Hospital/Bhopal	60
4.	Sub Divisional Hospital/Gangapur city	50

1	2	3
5. Sub Divisional Hospital/Bina		37
6. Sub Divisional Hospital/Itarasi		25
7. Sub Divisional Hospital/New Katni Jn.		25

(b) The expenditure incurred on modernization/upgradation on each hospital under West Central Railway during the last three years, year-wise:-

Name of Hospital	Expenditure incurred on modernization/upgradation of Hospitals under West Central Railway (in lakhs Rs.)		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Hospitals/Year			
Central Hospital/Jabalpur	48.46	42.15	184.18
Divisional Hospital/Kota	1.82	15.38	18.26
Divisional Hospital/Bhopal	17.93	9.47	11.78
Sub Divisional Hospital/Gangapur city	0.18	0	0
Sub Divisional Hospital/Bina	0	0	0
Sub Divisional Hospital/Itarasi	0	0	0
Sub Divisional hospital/New Katni Jn.	0	0	0
Total	68.39	67.00	214.22

[English]

NCC Movement

3410. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Cadet Corps (NCC) movement in the country is gradually getting thinned down going by its present status; and

(b) if so, the steps taken/being taken to bring the NCC Movement back on its original glory and popularity?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. The National Cadet Corps (NCC) movement in the country has grown from a sanctioned strength of 1.675 lakh cadets in July, 1948 to the present sanctioned strength of 13 lakh cadets.

Protest by AAI Employees

3411. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has consulted the union leaders of the employees while going in privatisation of Delhi and Mumbai Airports;

(b) if not, whether the employees of Airports Authority of India (AAI) have now threatened to go on strike against the arbitrary decisions taken in privatisation of these airports without holding the meeting of the tripartite committee, which was formed as a part of the privatisation process;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken or being taken by the Government to solve the apprehensions of the AAI Employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Wide consultations were held before the Union

Cabinet took a final decision regarding modernization and restructuring of Mumbai and Delhi airports. The Airports Authority Employees Union had served a notice for Mass leave on 17.8.06 and 18.8.06 which was withdrawn as a result of the appeal made by the management of Airports Authority of India. All channels of communication are always kept open to solve any apprehensions of employees of Airports Authority of India.

[Translation]

Operation Marham

3412. SHRI MILIND DEORA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether India had launched a Operation Marham (Operation Balm) under which its rushed Naval ships and IAF planes loaded with relief supplies to the quake-hit Indonesia; and

(b) if so, the quantum of relief provided in terms of food, medicines etc. for the affected people of Indonesia?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) The Government of India announced relief assistance of US\$2 million to the Government of Indonesia in the aftermath of the earthquake in Indonesia on 27th May, 2006. Under Operation Rahat, 40 tonnes of relief material including tents, cover water proof, plastic jerricans and medicines were sent by two IL-76 aircrafts and 142 tonnes of medicines, rice, oil hydro, milk powder, blankets, hygiene chemicals and aqua tablets were sent by two Indian Naval Ships to Indonesia by the Armed Forces. The Government of Indonesia thanked Government of India for extending timely assistance to the victims.

Platforms at Secunderabad Railway Station

3413. SHRI G. NIZAMUDDIN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of platforms in operation at the Secunderabad (SCR) Railway Station;

(b) whether any new platforms are likely to come up in the near future at the said station;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the measures taken to overcome the problems of increasing the number of passengers at the said station?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) 10 platforms are in operation at Secunderabad Railway Station.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) A feasibility study has been sanctioned by General Manager, South Central Railway for augmentation of existing facilities at Secunderabad/Hyderabad and Kacheguda Coaching Terminus.

[English]

Prices of ATF

3414. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has hiked the prices of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) in the last few years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, year-wise and its likely impact on the air travel; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to improve the productivity of aviation turbine fuel and to reduce the increasing trend of price of aviation turbine fuel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) and (c) The prices of ATF have been

deregulated by Government with effect from 1st April, 2001. Consequent to such deregulation, the prices of ATF are fixed by oil marketing companies based on import parity pricing mechanism.

for four metros, i.e. Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai from January 2005 to August 2006 are furnished in the enclosed statement. ATF cost constitutes around 30% of total operating cost of the domestic airlines in India and as such any volatility in ATF price does affect air travel adversely.

(b) The prices of ATF for domestic airlines (Rs./KL)

Statement

ATF Prices

Metro Prices of ATF: Domestic (Rs./KL)

Rupees/KL

Year	Months	Delhi	Kolkata	Mumbai	Chennai
1	2	3	4	5	6
2005	Jan.	25859.04	29939.9	26414.03	28381.34
2005	Feb.	25923.94	30115.65	26535.7	28548.76
2005	Mar.	25833.08	29929.51	26414.03	28367.38
2005	Apr.	30608.39	34811.8	31388.03	33458.69
2005	May	33035.51	37258.93	33889.24	35984.12
2005	Jun.	29920.5	34000.6	30644.44	32635.49
2005	Jul.	31750.56	35907.87	32550.75	34602.81
2005	Aug.	32321.65	36516.28	33145.64	35230.69
2005	Sep.	34748.76	39085.07	35687.39	37867.73
2005	Oct.	36410.1	40764.4	37417.95	39611.81
2005	Nov.	35761.14	40020.8	36714.91	38863.85
2005	Dec.	31750.56	35978.32	32564.27	34664.1
2006	Jan.	34099.80	38628.24	35065.47	37349.10
2006	Feb.	35228.99	39736.88	36214.67	38493.22
2006	Mar.	34995.36	39458.84	35957.79	38214.16

1	2	3	4	5	6
2006	Apr.	35826.36	40465.16	36863.63	39232.71
2006	May	39642.24	44940.28	41027.79	43209.21
2006	Jun.	40408.02	45616.28	41784.91	43940.32
2006	Jul.	41303.58	46564.46	42731.31	44905.05
2006	Aug.	42367.51	47691.07	43826.43	46063.12

Railway Projects

3415. PROF. M. RAMADASS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether some of the railway projects have been started without much justification and background work;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Railways to avoid such activities in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. However in the past, projects have been included in the Budget without completion of surveys and necessary clearances. However, work on these projects were taken up only after completion of surveys and taking necessary clearances.

(c) Since 2002-03 onwards, projects have been included in the Budget only after taking necessary clearances.

[Translation]

Funds for Development of Brahmos Missile

3416. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR :
SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Indo-Russia Joint project for development of Brahmos missile is facing problem of shortage of funds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the corrective steps taken by the Government in the matter; and

(d) the time by which the Brahmos missile is likely to be inducted into the Army?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Indo-Russia Joint Venture Brahmos is fully supported by both Indian and Russian Governments, with necessary funds.

(d) The Indian Army has already placed orders for the production of Brahmos missile system and the induction will commence in 2007.

Passengers' Facilities

3417. SHRI GANESH SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the facilities for passengers at various railway stations under the Jabalpur Division have deteriorated; and

(b) if so, the action being taken to improve these

facilities at Satna, Manikpur, Maihar, Katni and Jabalpur railway station?

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

(b) Improvement to passenger facilities at stations is a continuous process. At Jabalpur, Katni, Satna and Maihar stations a work pertaining to development of circulating area, extension of cover over platform, renovation of waiting room and refiring rooms and toilets block (including Pay and Use) etc. has been sanctioned during 2006-07 at a cost of Rs. 9.63 crore and at Manikpur a work of extension of platform No. 3 has been completed.

**Separate Cadre for Director General
of Hydrocarbons**

3418.SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV :
DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL :

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

(a) whether there is no separate cadre for the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) which provides technical consultancy services and reviews exploration programmes with regard to exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons and the entire staff is on deputation basis;

(b) if so, the reasons for not forming a separate cadre for the said Directorate;

(c) if so, whether the Government proposes to create a separate cadre for the said Directorate;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) and (b) The Directorate General of

Hydrocarbons was set up through a Government resolution, dated 8th April, 1993. As per the resolution the staff will be drawn from the Oil Industry on deputation/tenure basis.

(c) to (e) No decision has yet been taken.

[English]

**Lack of Facilities at Dindigul and
Thirumangiam Railway Stations**

3419.SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to enhance passenger amenities/facilities at Dindigul and Thirumangalam Railway Stations;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the said proposal is likely to be implemented?

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

(b) and (c) Dindigul stations has been declared as a model station. The amenities proposed to be provided include construction of foot-over-bridge connecting all platforms and circulating areas, remodeling of station building, improvements to booking and enquiry office, provision of standard signages, coach guidance system on platform numbers 1 to 4, National Train Enquiry System/ Interactive Voice Response System and touch screens. The provision of the above facilities is expected within one year.

Thirumangalam is a "E" category station where Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) – cum - Passenger Reservation System (PRS) has been planned in the current year.

[Translation]

Profit earned by ONGC

3420.DR. CHINTA MOHAN :

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN" :

(In Rs. Crore)

SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY :

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

(a) the profit earned by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) during 2004-05 and 2005-06;

(b) the quantity of crude oil produced by ONGC during the above period;

(c) whether trade of the company has increased during the said period; and

(d) if so, the quantum thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) The net profit, after tax, earned by ONGC during Financial Year 2004-05 and 2005-06 is as under:-

Year	Net Profit (Rs. Crore)
2004-05	12,983
2005-06	14,431

(b) The quantity of crude oil produced by ONGC during the years 2004-05 and 2005-06 are as under:-

Year	Oil Production (MMT)*
2004-05	26.484
2005-06	24.404

*Including condensate.

(c) Yes, Sir. The total sales of ONGC have increased during 2004-05 and 2005-06.

(d) The sales of ONGC during 2004-05 and 2005-06 were as under:-

Year	Sales	Increase
2003-04	32,524	—
2004-05	46,711	14,187
2005-06	48,244	1,533

[English]

Review of Public-Private Projects

3421. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have decided to review its public-private projects;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways also have proposed to run such projects on their own rather than Public-Private Partnership;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether any impact on its earning would be affected; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) Does not arise

(c) No, Sir.

(d) to (f) Do not arise.

Central Assistance to PSUs

3422. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI :

DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL :

SHRI TUKARAM GANPATRAO RENGE PATIL :

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state :

(a) whether several Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) are facing acute financial crisis;

(b) if so, whether these PSUs are not having working capital;

(c) if so, the details thereof, PSU-wise; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to provide Central assistance to such PSUs to make them commercially viable?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) :

(a) to (c) As per Public Enterprises Survey (PE Survey) for the year 2004-05, there were 237 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) in the country as on 31.3.2005. Out of these 227 were in operation and 10 were under construction. 143 CPSEs had posted profit and 73 had incurred losses and one CPSE had shown No Profit/Loss. 47 CPSEs were facing difficulties in getting their working capital (defined as net current assets) during the last three years. A list of these CPSEs is given in the enclosed statement.

(d) Government had constituted Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE) in December, 2004 to undertake task of strengthening, modernizing, reviving, and restructuring of public sector enterprises. BRPSE has given its recommendation in respect of 32 cases of CPSEs. Based on the same Government has approved revival plans of 19 CPSEs and closure of one CPSE.

Statement

List of CPSEs which were facing difficulties in getting their working capital during the last three years

1. Airline Allied Services Ltd.
2. Andaman and Nicobar Islands Forest and Plant. Dev. Corp. Ltd
3. Assam Ashok Hotel Corpn. Ltd.
4. Bharat Coking Coal Ltd.
5. Bharat Leather Corpn. Ltd.
6. Bharat Ophthalmic Glass Ltd.
7. Bharat Wagon and Engg. Co. Ltd.
8. Birds Jute and Exports Ltd.
9. Braithwaite and Co. Ltd.
10. Brushware Ltd.
11. Burn Standard Company Ltd.
12. Cement Corpn. of India Ltd.
13. Central Inland Water Transport Corpn. Ltd.
14. Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Ltd.
15. Eastern Coalfields Ltd.
16. Fertilizer Corpn. of India Ltd.
17. Heavy Engineering Corpn. Ltd.
18. Hindustan Cables Ltd.
19. Hindustan Fertilizer Corpn. Ltd.
20. Hindustan Photo Films Manufacturing Co. Ltd.
21. Hindustan Prefab Ltd.
22. Hindustan Shipyard Ltd.
23. HMT Chinar Watches Ltd.
24. HMT Machine Tools Ltd.
25. HMT Watches Ltd.
26. Hooghly Dock and Port Engineers Ltd.

27. Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd.
28. J and K Mineral Development Corpn. Ltd.
29. Madhya Pradesh Ashok Hotel Corpn. Ltd.
30. Mecon Ltd.
31. Nagaland Pulp and Paper Company Ltd.
32. National Jute Manufacturers Corporation Ltd.
33. National Projects Construction Corpn. Ltd.
34. Nepa Ltd.
35. NTC (Delhi, Punjab and Rajasthan) Ltd.
36. NTC (Gujarat) Ltd.
37. NTC (Madhya Pradesh) Ltd.
38. NTC (Maharashtra North) Ltd.
39. NTC (Uttar Pradesh) Ltd.
40. NTC (West Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Orissa) Ltd.
41. Orissa Drugs and Chemicals Ltd.
42. Pondicherry Ashok Hotel Corpn. Ltd.
43. Praga Tools Ltd.
44. Pyrites, Phosphates and Chemicals Ltd.
45. Ranchi Ashok Bihar Hotel Corpn. Ltd.
46. Triveni Structurals Ltd.
47. Utkal Ashok Hotel Corpn. Ltd.

[Translation]

Streamlining of Landing System

3423. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government has made any assessment of extra oil consumption in case landing does not take place in time;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is contemplating to streamline landing system; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) Reliable estimate with regard to loss in terms of fuel is not available.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Action taken to streamline landing systems at Delhi and Mumbai airports inter-alia include construction of new high speed exit taxiways; a parallel taxi-track and additional parking stands at Delhi airport; implementation of procedures for simultaneous use of both runways; implementation of improved ATC procedures; implementation of a dedicated Clearance Delivery Position during peak hours; imposition of ban on general aviation aircraft during peak hours; upgradation of ATC automation systems and implementation of Advanced Surface Movement guidance and Control System at Delhi airport.

[English]

Non-Availability of Railway Time Table

3424. SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the latest Railway Time Table is not available at many railway stations and the passengers are facing great difficulties as a result thereof;
- (b) if so, the reasons for its non-availability; and
- (c) the corrective measures taken by the Railways in this regard?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Items Stolen from IDS, Kashmir House

3425. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH :
SHRI UDAY SINGH :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether some items have been stolen from the Integrated Defence Services (IDS) at Kashmir House as reported in *The Times of India* dated July 30, 2006;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any inquiry in this regard;

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

(e) the concrete steps taken by the Government to prevent such thefts which are posing threat to the security of the country?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. On the morning of July 24, 2006, thirteen Computer printer ink cartridges were found missing from the storekeeper's table drawer in room No. 49, South Hutments of the headquarters of the Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS) at Kashmir House. A First Information Report was lodged at the Chanakypuri Police Station by the Headquarters of the Integrated Defence Staff in July 25, 2006. The Police investigation is in progress. The Headquarters of the Integrated Defence Staff has also ordered a Court of Inquiry. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Court of Inquiry, a Board of Officers headed by a Major General has been detailed to review all security aspects related to the Headquarters of the Integrated Defence Staff. No aspect of the national security has been compromised in this case.

Genetically Modified Food

3426. SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has decided norms for labeling/marketing of genetically modified foods and organic food products;

(b) if so, whether the Government has also fixed norms for local certification of organic agricultural products to make it available in the local markets, in the interest of small farmers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY) : (a) to (c) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued a draft notification for fixing norms for labeling/marketing of genetically modified foods under provision of Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 and Rules made thereunder. Ministry of Commerce and Industry has developed an institutional mechanism for the implementation of national standards for organic production through a National Accreditation Policy and Programme. This programme includes standards for organic production and processes as well as the regulations for use of the National Organic Certification Mark. The aims of the National Programme for Organic Production, inter alia, include the following:-

(a) To provide the means of evaluation of certification programmes for organic agriculture and products as per the approved criteria.

(b) To accredit certification programmes.

(c) to facilitate certificate of organic products in conformity to the National Standards for Organic Products.

(d) To encourage the development of organic farming and organic processing.

[Translation]

**Procurement of Food Items for
Defence Forces**

3427. SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO :
SHRI TUKARAM GANPATRAO RENGE PATIL :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the supply of food and other agriculture based items for the defence forces deployed in Leh has been supplied from Delhi and other cities instead of the local farmers and producers;

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

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

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) All items of agriculture based dry supplies namely, rice, wheat, pulses, tea and processed food items for defence services are centrally procured from Public Sector Undertakings and State Level Federations. The central procurement of above said items are being carried out as they are not produced locally and also to achieve economy due to bulk purchase. Procurement of fresh/perishable items is made locally through negotiated contracts. Only those items which are not available locally are transported from other regions.

(c) In case of Ladakh sector Government sanction has already been issued on 8th February 2006 for conclusion of negotiated contracts with Cooperative Marketing Societies Limited at Leh (Ladakh), Karu, Nimu, Nubra, Turtuki, Dah and Kargil for supply of fresh vegetable, fresh fruit, potatoes, onion, bread and Lucerne hay to the troops located in Ladakh. Milk fresh for troops located in Ladakh Sector is procured by Military farms from the Cooperative Societies of Ladakh region.

[English]

Disability Benefit to Heart Patients

3428. SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the High Court of Delhi gave a ruling that persons suffering from heart ailments are entitled to the benefits of the Disabilities Act for the purpose of employment in the Government, etc. by giving a wider meaning to the term 'disability'; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government to give disability benefits to the persons suffering from heart ailments?

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

(b) Does not arise.

Leasing of Railway Lines

3429. SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways propose to lease out some of the railway lines having commercial importance;

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

(c) the details of railway lines identified for the purpose;

(d) the expected amount to be earned by the Railways therefrom; and

(e) the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

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

with a view to exploit the potential of the Hill Railways it has been decided to give their marketing concessioning rights to the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC).

Promotion of Heritage and Eco-Tourism

3430. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has formulated any policy to promote Heritage and Eco-tourism in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of projects submitted by each State Government to the Union Government for approval during 2006-07; and

(d) the time by which these projects are likely to be accorded approval?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE

(SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) and (b) The development and promotion of tourism including Heritage and Eco-Tourism is primarily the responsibility of the State/UT Governments. The Ministry of Tourism extends Central Financial Assistance to the State/UT Governments for implementation of the tourism projects, including heritage and Eco-Tourism projects, prioritized in consultation with them. Ministry of Tourism has formulated an Eco-Tourism Policy with the aim to preserve, retain and enrich natural resources to ensure regulated growth of Tourism and for achieving sustainable tourism development in the country. It has also a scheme for promotion of heritage hotels. The approved heritage hotels are also provided subsidy upto Rs. 75 lakhs under the Incentives to Accommodation Infrastructure scheme of Ministry of Tourism.

(c) and (d) The details of the tourism projects prioritized in consultation with the State/UT Governments for sanction during 2006-07, subject to inter-se priorities and availability of funds is given in the enclosed statement. The projects are sanctioned on getting project proposals complete in all respects.

Statement

List of Prioritised Projects to be Implemented during the year 2006-07

Sl.No.	State	Destination	Circuit
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1. Hyderabad including Charminar & Golconda 2. Warangal	1. Beach circuit Vizag 2. Buddhist circuit
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1. Amenities at Parsuramkund Lohit District. 2. Restoration & Preservation of Heritage Site (Stone Rampart) at Dambuk.	1. Tinsukia (Assam)-Namsai-Tezu-Walong-Dongi
3.	Assam	1. Kamakhya and Satellite Pilgrimage Township of Hazo. 2. Sivasagar Convention Centre & Wellness Centre at Hotel Brahmaputra Ashoka, Guwahati.	Orang-Tespur-Nameri-Bhalukpong-Tawang Tourist Circuit.
4.	Bihar	1. Mandeshwari Temple	1. Bodhgaya-Nalanda-Rajgir

1	2	3	4
5. Chhattisgarh	1. Chitrakote fall 2. Rajim		1. Jagdalpur circuit
6. Delhi	Development of Infrastructure as per Master Plan for Commonwealth Games		—
7. Goa		—	1. North Goa Circuit 2. South Goa Circuit
8. Gujarat	1. Champaner 2. Gir 3. Dwarka		1. Junagarh-Veraval-Porbandar
9. Haryana	1. Surajkund 2. Sonapat-Ethnic India 3. Badhkal		1. Kurukshetra
10. Himachal Pradesh	Dharamshala		1. Eco tourism in Tribal Areas 2. Pilgrim Circuit
11. Jammu and Kashmir	(a) Specific tourism infrastructure projects for Tourism Development Authorities of Bhandarwah, Kishtwar, Poonch, Rajouri, Lakahnpur-Sarthal, Kokemag, Leh and Kargil @ Rs. 2 crore per Tourism Development Authority. (b) Specific tourism infrastructure projects for Tourism Development Authorities of Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Sonamarg and Patnitop @ Rs. 3 crore per Tourism Development Authority. (c) Restoration of Heritage building at Mubarak Mandi, Phase-I—Rs. 3.00 crore (d) Golf Course at Jammu — Rs.2.00 crore (e) Reconstruction of gutted TRC at Srinagar — Rs. 4.00 crore		Development of Tourist Circuit at Kargil—Rs. 3.00 crore
12. Jharkhand	1. Rajmahal 2. Parasnath		1. Ranchi-Ramgarh-Rajarappa-Tenughat-Hazaribagh-Padma-Itkhor
13. Karnataka	1. Hampi 2. Lingamakki		1. Bijapur-Biddar-Gulbarga

1	2	3	4
14. Kerala	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vagamon 2. Kumarkom 3. Padnabhapuram Palace 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Southern Eco-Tourism
15. Madhya Pradesh	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Panna 2. Mandu 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amarkantak-Mandla-Dindoi 2. Hasangabad-Maheswar-Onkareshwar-Barwani
16. Maharashtra	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kunkeshwar 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buddhist Circuit including Elephanta 2. Fort Circuit
17. Manipur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nongmaiching (Eco park with Golf course) 2. Imphal 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Imphal, Bishnupur, Sendra, Churachandpur
18. Meghalaya	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protection and development of caves around Jowai 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Williamnagar-Jakrem-Jowai 2. Shillong-Cherrapunji-Jowai Mawplong
19. Mizoram	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chaltiang 2. Chalfih 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Southern-Hrangchawkawn, Tawipui'S', Lawngtlai, Saiha, Vawmbuk, Sangau, S. Vanlaiphai. 2. Eastern-Keitum, N. Vanlaiphai, East Lungdar, Khawbung, Farkawn, Zokhawthar, Hnahlan.
20. Nagaland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tourist Travel Destination Toupheima, Kohima District. 2. Aizuto, Zunheboto District. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Zunheboto-Tuensang-Kiphiri 2. Governor's camp (Wokha)-Nui Land Area (Dimapur)-Jalukie (Peren).
21. Orissa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chilka 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bhubaneswar-Puri-Konark 2. Simlipal-Chandipur-Talsari-Panchalingeshwar 3. Aralku valley-Sunabeda-Koraput-Malkangiri
22. Punjab	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ropar 2. Fatehgarh Sahib (Including Aam Khas Bagh with SEL show) 3. Kapurthala 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Freedom Struggle Circuit Delhi-Amritsar 2. Pilgrim Circuit

1	2	3	4
23. Rajasthan	1. Ajmer Sharif 2. Jaisalmer		1. Eco-Tourism circuit 2. Floodlighting of monuments
24. Sikkim	1. Development of Amusement Park at Samsa.		1. Pilgrim Circuit at Sorang. 2. Development of Tourist Centers at Aritar, Phodang and Mangan in East & West in Sikkim.
25. Tamil Nadu	1. Madurai 2. Thanjavur 3. Kaniyakumari		Chennai-Kanchipuram-Mahabalipuram
26. Tripura	1. Chaturdashi Devta Bari		1. Development of North West Tripura Circuit
27. Uttar Pradesh	1. Aligarh		1. Agra-Fatehpur Sikri-Mathura 2. Varanasi-Samath 3. Brajbhoomi-Vrindavan
28. Uttaranchal	1. Yammotri 2. Tehri		1. Rishikesh-Haridwar (Mega Project) 2. Bindsar-Bairnath-Manesar
29. West Bengal	1. Goke 2. Kalimpong 3. Plassey		1. Freedom Circuit 2. Tea Tourism 3. Beach circuit

**Gauge Conversion of Kanpur-Agra
Railway Line**

3431. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether some part of Kanpur-Agra metre gauge railway line has been converted into broad gauge railway line;

(b) if so, the details of converted section as well as the sections which are yet to be completed;

(c) whether any time frame has been fixed for completion of the remaining portion of the said railway line; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Kanpur-Agra Cantt via Shikohabad, Tundia is already a broad gauge line. However, work of gauge conversion of Kanpur-Kasganj-Mathura-Achnera has been taken up and Kanpur-Farrukhabad has already been converted.

(c) and (d) Farrukhabad-Kasganj is planned for completion during 2006-07 and balance portion is likely to be completed in the coming years depending upon availability of resources.

Joint Time Table of Airlines

3432. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is planning to release Joint Time Table of public and private airlines;

(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) All airlines, including public sector airlines, decide their flight schedule in their own commercial judgement and publish such schedules individually. Since the Government does not control such schedules, there is no proposal to publish a Joint Time Table of all airlines by the Government.

Expenditure Incurred by National Museum

3433. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Museum had incurred a huge expenditure in connection with an international exhibition that never took place as reported in the 'Indian Express' dated July 29, 2006;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the action taken against the officers found guilty?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In April, 2003 on the suggestion of Ambassador of India in Brazil, Government of India decided to organise an exhibition entitled "Eternal India" in Brazil in collaboration with the BRAZIL CONNECT, a private non-profit organisation of Brazil. National Museum, as a nodal agency spent an approximate amount of Rs. 6,02,576/- for inspection of venue, selection of objects, convening of meetings of National Screening and Evaluation Committee. In addition to this, an amount of Rs. 18.62 lakhs has also been incurred towards the fabrication of boxes for transportation of objects within India and from India to Brazil. Thus approximately a total amount of Rs. 24,64,576/- was incurred by National Museum for this exhibition.

Meanwhile on the advice from Indian Ambassador in Brazil, the proposed exhibition was called off as no agreement was signed.

(c) to (e) A preliminary enquiry has revealed certain irregularities regarding fabrication of boxes/crates without the approval of the competent authority. Officials found responsible, prima facie, have been issued show cause notices.

National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions

3434. SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR : Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions has been set upto grant direct affiliation to minority educational institutions to a Scheduled University; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. According to the information received from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, educational institutions are affiliated by the

universities and not by the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions. The Commission has been empowered to decide on disputes between any University and Minority Educational Institutions.

**Joint Working Group for Identification of
Railway Projects**

3435. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPAPARAI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Italy for forming a joint working group that will identify railway projects of mutual interest;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways have any proposal to make joint bidding with Italy in construction and consultancy projects in other countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Indian Railways and Ferrovie Dello Stato (Italian Railways) to promote cooperation in the rail sector between the two countries. The MoU was signed on 3.7.2006 at Rome on the occasion of the recent visit of a High Level Delegation, headed by the Hon'ble Minister of Railways. A Joint Working Group would be set up to finalise the details of cooperation projects between the two Railways and their implementation arrangements.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

**Swarnima Scheme for Women
by NBCFDC**

3436. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL :

SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA :

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

(a) whether the National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) has implemented the new Swarnima Scheme for women belonging to backward classes living below the poverty line;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the women belonging to backward classes living below the poverty line are unable to pay the interest on the loan taken by them at the prescribed rate resulting deprived of the benefits of the scheme;

(d) if so, whether the Government has ever examined this aspect of the scheme;

(e) if so, the steps taken by the Government to reduce the interest on loan given to the backward women living below the poverty line to enable them to get the benefits of the new scheme; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor alongwith the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) and (b) New Swarnima Scheme is one of the Term Loan schemes being implemented by National Backward Classes Finance and Development (NBCFDC) through State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) in various States for the women living below the poverty line. The details of the scheme are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) The loan is provided to the beneficiaries by SCAs @ 4% p.a. and no such information has been reported that the beneficiaries are unable to pay the interest on the loan taken by them at the prescribed rate.

(d) to (f) Does not arise.

Statement

"NEW SWARNIMA"

*for
Inculcating the spirit of self-dependence among the
women of Backward Classes living below the
poverty line*

- The target group of the "New Swarnima" scheme of NBCFDC is the women belonging to Backward Classes living below the poverty line.
- Salient feature of New Swarnima Scheme.
- The beneficiary women is not required to invest any amount of her own on the projects upto cost of Rs.50,000/- whereas the beneficiary has to invest 5 per cent amount of the total cost of the project on his own in the general loan schemes of the corporation.
- The period of repayment of loan is more than 2 years as compared to general scheme.
- The rate of interest on the amount of loan is less as compared to the general loan scheme of the Corporation.

ELIGIBILITY

- The women belonging to Backward Classes as notified by the Central/State Governments from time to time shall be eligible for loan under this scheme.
- The annual family income of the rural applicant should be below Rs.20,000/-. The annual family income of the urban applicant should be below Rs. 27,500/-.

MAXIMUM LOAN AMOUNT 50,000/- per beneficiary

PATTERN OF FINANCING

NBCFDC Loan 95%

SCA Contribution 5%

RATE OF INTEREST

From NBCFDC to SCA 1%p.a.

SCA to beneficiary 4%p.a.

REPAYMENT PERIOD

- Depends upon nature of scheme however the maximum period of repayment is two years more than the general scheme.

[Translation]

Broad Gauge Projects

3437.SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of metre gauge routes converted into broad gauge during the year 2005-06; and

(b) the details of those railway lines which have been converted into broad gauge till now and estimated expenditure likely to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Metre Gauge sections on 11 projects have been converted to Broad Gauge during 2005-06. These cover 744 kms.

(b) Since 01.04.1992, 12,200 kms. of Metre Gauge/ Narrow Gauge lines have been converted into Broad Gauge under 'Unigauge Policy'. An investment of about Rs.13,800 crore have been made under 'Gauge Conversion' plan head during this period.

[English]

Nomination of Majuli Island for Inclusion in World Heritage List

3438.DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the India's nomination for inclusion of Majuli Island in Assam in the World Heritage List in the year 2006 has been cleared by the World Heritage Committee;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the major deficiencies pointed out in the nomination;

(d) whether the Government has analyzed the major deficiencies which prevented the nomination of Majuli Island to get through in the first attempt;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the concrete steps taken or being taken by the Government for nomination of Majuli Island in the World Heritage List?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) to (f) Archaeological Survey of India submitted a nomination dossier on Majuli Island in Jorhat district of Assam for consideration of the World Heritage Committee for its inscription on the World Heritage List in its 30th session held at Vilnius, Lithuania between 8-16th July 2006. The Committee after examining the proposal has referred the proposal back with the directions to submit following additional information viz:-

(a) to assemble more information on the Sattras remaining on the island and the way they have influenced and continue to influence landscape patterns and the overall interaction between people and nature in Majuli and further a field;

(b) create an inventory of architecture and spatial patterns in the landscape associated with the Sattras and their movable heritage;

(c) put in place legal protection;

(d) amplify the Management Plan to take account

of specific nature of Sattra landscapes and buildings, the interrelationship between people and nature, the potential for traditional farming practices to sustain biodiversity, the need to codify traditional knowledge, the conservation and development of traditional architecture, a cultural tourism strategy and approaches to sustainable development;

(e) undertake an appraisal of the overall river basin in which Majuli lies, and the potential impact of climate change, in order to ascertain the chances of the island surviving in the medium term;

(f) develop and implement a Risk Preparedness Strategy;

(g) carefully consider the impact of the proposed bridges on the special characteristics of the Majuli cultural landscape; and

(h) to produce an inventory of flora and fauna of the site with particular emphasis on threatened and endangered species that may be protected as result of local management practices.

The matter has been discussed with senior official of Govt. of Assam on 20.7.2006 and it is decided to form a core group comprising of senior officials of Govt. of Assam, experts from universities and other agencies and conservation architects to collect the information as sought by the World Heritage Committee and to resubmit the nomination dossier alongwith the additional information to the World Heritage Committee for its consideration.

Fruit based Food Processing Industries

3439.SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is taking any steps to promote Fruit based Food Processing Industries in the Northern States;

(b) if so, the details of the promotional measures undertaken in those States during the last three years; and

(c) the financial assistance provided to set up fruits based units in Rajasthan during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY) : (a) to (c) The Ministry of Food Processing Industries, under its plan schemes, provides financial assistance @ 25% of the cost of plant & machinery and technical civil works upto Rs.50 lakhs in general areas and @ 33.33% upto Rs. 75 lakhs in difficult areas for setting up/upgradation/modernization of food processing industries including fruit and vegetable processing industries.

The Government has initiated several policy and fiscal measures to promote growth and development of fruit and vegetable processing in general. These include:-

- (i) Processed fruit and vegetable products are exempt from excise duty.
- (ii) Under Income Tax act a deduction of 100% profit for five years and 25% profit for the next five years is available incase of new agro processing industries set upto process, preserve and package fruits and vegetables as announced in budget of 2004-05.
- (iii) Customs duty on refrigerated vans has been reduced from 20% to 10%.

In addition, under the plan schemes, assistance is provided for promotional activities, Human resource Development, Research and Development and Infrastructure Development.

During last three years (2003-04 to 2005-06), the Ministry has provided financial assistance to 17 food processing projects in Rajasthan with a total approved assistance of Rs.264.09 lakhs. Fruit processing units have not been assisted during this period. An Investor's meet is proposed to be organized soon in Rajasthan.

Use of Language on Railway Information Boards

3440.SHRI M. SHIVANNA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Karnataka Rakshan Vedike has been demanding for giving preference to 'Kannada' Language over English and Hindi for writing on the Railway Information Boards;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Railways thereto?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Oil and Gas Plants Damaged Due to Flood

3441.SHRI SHISHUPAL N. PATLE :
SHRI KAILASH NATH SINGH YADAV :

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

(a) the details of the oil and gas plants of the public sector oil companies damaged due to recent flood in some States;

(b) whether the Government has assessed the losses suffered as a result thereof;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for repairing of those plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : (a) The details of oil and gas plants of IOC, BPC,

HPC, GAIL & ONGC damaged due to recent floods in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh are given in enclosed statement.

(b) and (c) As reported by IOC, BPC, HPC and GAIL the total losses are estimated at Rs.50.1 crore. The gas processing plant of ONGC at Hazira is insured with M/s. National Insurance Co. Ltd. The details of the damage are being surveyed by the Insurance Company.

(d) The repairing work of the oil & gas installations has been done on priority basis. Some of them have become/are being made operational.

Statement

IOCL	Hazira Terminal
	Dumad Terminal
	Asoj Terminal
	Dehri Depot
	Nishatpura Depot
	Hazira LPG Plant
HPCL	Hazira Depot
	Nishatpura Depot
BPCL	Hazira POL Depot
GAIL	Hazira Compressor Station of HVJ Pipeline
	Gujarat Region Pipeline, Baroda
	A.P. Region Pipeline, Rajah-mundry
ONGC	Gas Processing Plant, Hazira

Besides, 17 retail outlets of BPCL and 15 retail outlets of IOCL in Surat City and the Bottling plant of BPCL at Hazira were also affected due to recent floods.

[English]

New Railway Line from Puri to Konark

3442. SHRI B. MAHTAB : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have any proposal to connect the golden triangle of Orissa namely Bhubaneswar, Konark and Puri by railway;

(b) if so, whether new railway lines are proposed to be constructed to implement the said project;

(c) if so, whether the railways propose to construct a railway line from Puri to Konark in the first phase; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

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

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Frequency of Bhubaneswar-Bangalore Express

3443. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a demand from the Rail users to increase the frequency of Bhubaneswar-Bangalore Express; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Railways thereto?

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

(b) Increase in the frequency of 2845/2846 Bhubaneswar-Yesvantpur Express has been examined but not found feasible at present due to operational and resource constraints. However, it has been announced in the Railway Budget 2006-2007 to extend 8563/8564

Bangalore-Visakhapatnam Prashanti Express upto Bhubaneswar.

Arjun Tank

3444. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA :
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Arjun, main-battle tank is not ready even after 32 years of development work as reported in *The Times of India*, dated August 08, 2006;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons;

(c) whether the DRDO has offered another "experimental" tank ("Tank-Ex") to the Army for user evaluation;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to encourage the DRDO to make user-friendly weapons indigenously?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) The Arjun, Main Battle Tank is ready. The project "Main Battle Tank, Arjun" was sanctioned in May 1974. General Staff Qualitative Requirement (GSQR) was finalized in October 1985 and project was completed in March 1995. The indent for 124 tanks was placed by users in March 2000. These are currently under production at Heavy Vehicles Factory, Avadi.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Tank-Ex has been built by DRDO to demonstrate a possible method to upgrade T-72 tanks, with a modular turret as a proactive step.

(e) DRDO is involved in development of weapons and platforms as per the requirements of the users. To make the weapons user-friendly, users are involved in the project right from the developmental stage.

Air Brake System in Coaches

3445. SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have any plan to introduce air brake system in coaches to ensure passenger safety;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) As on date, all the coaches running in passenger train rakes are equipped with Air brake system.

[Translation]

Production in Defence Factories, Jabalpur

3446. SHRI RAKESH SINGH : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether due to shortage of employees in the Ordnance Factories located in Jabalpur, the production in these factories has come down;

(b) if so, the details of production during each of the last three years;

(c) if not, the reasons for shortage, if any;

(d) whether the Government proposes to recruit trade apprentices waiting for years to deal with this;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the comparative details of trade apprentices appointed in defence establishments located in Jabalpur and those unemployed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Value of production during the last three years is as under:-

(Rs. in crores)

Factory	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Vehicle Factory	1073.57	959.35	1148.87
Ordnance Factory, Khamaria	805.07	537.56	540.03
Gun Carriage Factory	206.55	180.91	182.18
Grey Iron Factory	28.73	45.30	43.26

(c) The workload in Vehicle Factory and Grey Iron Factory at Jabalpur is less due to reduction in Army's requirement of vehicles.

(d) Does not arise in view of the reply at (a) above.

(e) Does not arise.

(f) Details of Trade apprentices:-

Factory	Trade Apprentices Trained	Appointment given	Not appointed
Ordnance Factory, Khamaria	335	255	80
Gun Carriage Factory	238	10	228
Vehicle Factory	300	117	183
Grey Iron Factory	68	2	66

[English]

Achievement of Target

3447. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways are behind the schedule in achieving the targets, set for the first four years of the

Tenth Five Year Plan, in respect of new lines, doubling and acquisition of Electrical Multiple Unit (EMU) coaches;

(b) if so, the targets set for the Tenth Five Year Plan in respect of new lines doubling and acquisition of EMU;

(c) the extent to which it has been achieved during the first four years of the Tenth Five Year Plan period;

(d) whether the Railways will be in a position to achieve the targets during the remaining period of the Tenth Five Year Plan;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Railways in this regard?

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

(b) and (c) Against targets of 1310 kms. of new lines and 1500 kms. of doubling for the Tenth Plan period, the achievements have been 670 kms. and 913 kms. respectively during the first four years of the Plan. 582 numbers of Electrical Multiple Units (EMUs) have been acquired during the first four years against the target of 1965 for the Tenth Plan period.

(d) to (f) The targets for New Line and Doublings for 2006-07 have been fixed as 550 kms. and 450 kms. respectively and there will be some shortfall with respect to the Xth Plan targets. As regards to acquisition of EMUs, the target for 2006-07 is 289 numbers. As such, there is likely to be a shortfall in achieving the targets during the Plan period. Works have been sanctioned to augment the production capacity to make good the shortfall of EMUs from 2007-08 onwards.

[Translation]

Development of Areas Near Raj Ghat

3448. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has prepared any scheme to develop the areas near Raj Ghat, Vijay Ghat and Vir Bhumi as green belt and to beautify them; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the funds earmarked for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Railway Projects

3449. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY : Will the

Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of major railway projects alongwith the expenditure incurred on each project completed during the last three years, zone-wise;

(b) the details of major projects likely to be completed during 2006-07, zone-wise; and

(c) the details of new major railway projects to be taken up during 2006-07, zone-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) The details of major railway projects alongwith the expenditure incurred on each project fully completed during the last three years, zone-wise are as under:-

(Rs. in crore)

S. No.	Project	Railway	Plan head	Expenditure upto March 2006
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Panvel-Karjat	Central	New Line	130.58
2.	Nergundi-Cuttack-Raghunathpur	East Coast	Doubling	164.31
3.	Laxmikantapur-Namkhana	Eastern	New Line	118.5
4.	Calcutta Circular Railway : Princepghat to Majerhat	Eastern	Metropolitan Transport Project	153.72
5.	Jammu Tawi-Udhampur	Northern	New Line	511.48
6.	Agra-Bandikui	North Western	Gauge Conversion	192.5
7.	Luni-Barmer-Munabao	North Western	Gauge Conversion	302.7
8.	Kakinada-Kothapalli	South Central	New Line	97.45
9.	Secunderabad-Mudkhed and Jankhampet-Bodhan	South Central	Gauge Conversion	341.15

1	2	3	4	5
10.	Gudur-Renigunta-Tirpuati	South Central	Doubling	174.49
11.	Tamluk-Digha	South Eastern	New Line	289.53
12.	Arakonnarn-Chengalpattu	Southern	Gauge Conversion	709.39
13.	Chennai Beach-Tambaram-Chengalpattu sub-urban Gauge Conversion	Southern	Metropolitan Transport Project	304.22
14.	Arasikere-Hassan-Mangalore	South Western	Gauge Conversion	326
15.	Udhna-Jalgaon	Western	Railway Electrification	137.35
16.	Ludhiana-Amritsar	Northern	Railway Electrification	113.38

(b) The details of major projects likely to be completed during 2006-07, zone-wise are as under:-

S.No.	Project	Railway	Plan head	Kms.
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi	East Central	New Line	64.5
2.	Kumarghat-Agartala	Northeast Frontier	New Line	109
3.	Arah-Sasaram	East Central	New Line	98
4.	Kolayat-Phalodi	North West	New Line	111.39
5.	Daitari-Banspani	East Coast	New Line	155
6.	Neemuch-Ratlam	Western	Gauge Conversion	135
7.	Samastipur-Khagaria and Mansi-Khagaria	East Central	Gauge Conversion	94
8.	Ajmer-Udaipur-Chittaurgarh	North West	Gauge Conversion	297
9.	Mudkhed-Adilabad	South Central	Gauge Conversion	162
10.	Gandhidham-Palanpur	Western	Gauge Conversion	313
11.	Hapur-Kankather	Northern	Doubling	42.71
12.	Hospet-Guntakal	South Central	Doubling	115.4

1	2	3	4	5
13.	Shoranur-Calicut	Southern	Doubling	86
14.	Titlagarh-Lanjigarh	East Coast	Doubling	47

(c) The details of new major railway projects taken up during 2006-07, zone-wise, are as under:-

Project included in the Budget 2006-07 having cost more than Rs. 100 crore.

S.No.	Railway	Plan head	Project	Kms.
1.	East Coast	Doubling	Vizianagram-Kottavalasa	34.7
2.	East Coast	Doubling	Sambalpur-Titlagarh	182
3.	East Central	New Line	Chhapra-Muzzafarpur	84.65
4.	Northern	Doubling	Balance section of Utratia-Sultanpur-Zafrabad	148
5.	Northern	Railway Electrification	Utratia-Sultanpur-Mughalsarai	288
6.	South Central	New Line	Obulavaripalle-Krishnapatnam	113
7.	South Central	New Line	Manoharabad-Kothapalli	148.9
8.	Southeast Central	Doubling	Khodri-Anuppur	61.6
9.	Southern	Gauge Conversion	Dindigul-Pollachi-Palghat and Pollachi-Coimbatore	224.88
10.	Southern	Metropolitan Transport Project	Extention of Metropolitan Rail Transport System from Velachary to St. Thomas Mount	5
11.	West Central	Railway Electrification	Bina-Kota	303
12.	Western	Gauge Conversion	Bharuch-Samni-Dahej	62.36

Introduction of Locomotives on CNG Fuel

3450.SHRI E.G. SUGAVANAM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways proposed to run locomotives on green CNG fuel;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the estimated cost

savings on the introduction of locomotives on CNG fuel; and

(c) the time by which the CNG locomotives will be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, trials are being conducted to run one Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) with Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) on Northern Railway. Operating cost of CNG based diesel Multiple Unit is expected to be 25% less in financial terms, than diesel based DMUs with a salutary effect on exhaust gas emission.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Golden Quadrilateral Schemes

3451. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have implemented the Golden Quadrilateral Scheme;

(b) if so, the progress made so far in this regard;

(c) the amount spent on various projects under the above scheme during each of the last three years and the current year;

(d) whether the Railways have made any arrangements for timely completion of these projects under the above scheme; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (e) As on date, there are 33 projects as Golden Quadrilateral Projects within National Rail Vikas Yojana. Out of 33 projects, 4 projects are yet to be sanctioned. Out of 29 sanctioned projects,

6 projects have been completed and balance 23 are at various stages of progress. Expenditure incurred on the above projects during 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 is Rs.220.23 crore, Rs. 191.7 crore and Rs. 182.87 crore respectively. An outlay of Rs. 796.3 crore has been provided for these projects during 2006-07. Railways have taken non-budgetary initiatives through Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) to complete these projects in a period of about 3 years.

Assured Decent Last Rites Scheme

3452. SHRI MILIND DEORA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Army has launched the 'Assured Decent Last Rites Scheme' for its former servicemen;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) the amount of financial assistance to be given to the deceased family;

(d) the States which are likely to be covered; and

(e) the budgetary allocation for this scheme during 2006-2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The scheme envisages supporting the next of Kin to carry out the last rites of the late ex-serviceman in a decent and dignified manner befitting his status as a soldier and veteran. The scheme will be financed from the Welfare Fund generated out of Canteen profits.

(c) A grant of upto Rs. 2,500/- can be provided to the deceased family.

(d) The entire country.

(e) Nil, as the scheme will be financed from Welfare Fund generated out of Canteen profits.

[English]

Train Service between Madurai and Chennai

3453. SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal for providing another train service between Madurai and Chennai since all the existing trains are over-crowded;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. At present, there is no proposal to introduce a new train between Madurai-Chennai due to severe line capacity constraints. However, as announced in Railway Budget 2006-2007, 2667/2668 Chennai Egmore-Nagercoil Express (weekly) via Madurai being introduced during 2006-2007 will also serve Chennai Egmore-Madurai passengers.

Supply of Ethanol Blended Petrol

3454. SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether oil marketing companies and the Indian Sugar Mills Association have signed any agreement for supply of ethanol-blended petrol in some States;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the States to which ethanol-blended petrol will be supplied;

(c) whether Andhra Pradesh is included in the selected States for supply of ethanol-blended petrol;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA

PATEL) : (a) to (e) IOC, on behalf of the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies, had signed an MoU on 4.8.05 for a period of one year with Indian Sugar Mills Association for sustained supply of ethanol.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoP&NG) had introduced the scheme of mandatorily supplying 5% ethanol blended petrol in major sugar producing States and contiguous Union Territories w.e.f. 1.1.2003. MoP&NG issued an amending Notification dated 27.10.2004 making sale of Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) mandatory in 10 States and 3 UTs if the price of sourcing indigenous ethanol for supply of ethanol-blended petrol is comparable to the price of indigenous ethanol for alternative uses; the delivery price of ethanol at the location is comparable to the import parity price of petrol at that location; and the indigenous ethanol industry is able to maintain uninterrupted supply of ethanol for ethanol-blended petrol programmes at such prices. In terms of this amended notification, the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are procuring ethanol to meet their requirements through tender process. At present, OMCs are implementing the programme in the areas of UP, Uttaranchal, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra states as per the availability of ethanol. The entire State of Andhra Pradesh is envisaged to be covered under the EBP programme except two districts viz, Chittoor and Nellore.

Financial Assistance by Asian Development Bank

3455. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Asian Development Bank has provided financial/technical assistance for the tourism sector during 2004-05 and 2005-06;

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

(c) the States where the financial/technical assistance has been utilized?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Evacuation of Indian Nationals from Lebanon

3456. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the India has launched an operation 'Sukoon' to evacuate the Indian Nationals from Lebanon;

(b) if so, the number of ships put into operation by Indian Navy;

(c) the total Indian population in Lebanon at present and the number of persons evacuated by Indian Navy so far;

(d) the number of persons of Indian origin killed in recent Israel attack on Lebanon; and

(e) the steps taken or being taken by the Government for the safe return of Indian Nationals from Lebanon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Four ships of the Indian Navy were deployed.

(c) At the outbreak of recent hostilities between Israel and Lebanon, about 12,000 Indian were residing in Lebanon. Indian Navy evacuated 2280 persons, who desired to leave, from Beirut between 20-29 July 2006. The evacuated persons included 69 Nepalese, 436 Sri Lankan and 7 Lebanese Nationals.

(d) 1 Indian National was killed.

(e) After assessing the security situation in the area, the Indian authorities acted expeditiously and made immediate arrangements for the safe evacuation of Indian Nationals from Lebanon. The Indian Mission in Beirut is

in contact with the Indian Nationals from Lebanon through various Indian organizations and is making necessary arrangements for the Indian Nationals desiring to leave Lebanon.

Fresh Survey for Palia-Nighasan-Tikunia Railway Line

3457. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a railway line namely Bareilly-Pilibhit-Dudhawa-Sitapur-Lucknow passing through the Dudhawa National Park, Uttar Pradesh is causing danger to the life of wild animals;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways have received complaints regarding cutting of wild animals by the trains passing through Dudhawa National Park in Uttar Pradesh;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether there is an urgent need to conduct fresh survey for laying of Palia-Nighasan-Tikunia railway line to avoid the entry of trains into Dudhawa National Park; and

(f) if so, the steps taken by the Railways to conduct fresh survey for laying of Palia-Nighasan-Tikunia railway line?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

Ethnic Identity of Lambadis

3458. SHRI G. NIZAMUDDIN : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Anthropological Survey of India has collected several cultural artifacts of Lambadis for preservation;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to preserve the 'ethnic identity' of the tribal culture among the Lambadis a Tribal Group in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) The Anthropological Survey of India has collected several cultural artifacts of Lambadis and preserved and displayed them in the Zonal Museum at Mysore. The Anthropological Survey of India has organized two exhibitions of 'Human Origins, Genome and People of India' and 'Celebrating Cultural Diversity', where the Lambadi Culture is also displayed. Ethnographic reports on Lambadi community are prepared and published in 'People of India, Andhra Pradesh state volume' and 'The Scheduled Tribes', People of India, National series of Anthropological Survey of India. The Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS), Bhopal has a good collection of cultural objects including material culture, arts and crafts relating to Lambadis. The IGRMS has also organized presentation of performing arts relating to the Lambadis.

Destination Development Schemes

3459. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the details of various destination development schemes for developing tourist centres in the country;

(b) whether the Government has set any time limit

for approving such projects submitted by the respective State Governments;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government of Karnataka has submitted any proposal for approval of destination development projects relating to Lakkundi, Gadag, Dumbal and Lakshmeshwara places of historic importance;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the time by which these project are likely to be approved?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) The Ministry of Tourism under its existing scheme of "Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits" extends central financial assistance to State/UT Governments for developing tourist centres in the country. Under this scheme, a maximum amount of Rs.5.00 crore is sanctioned for project relating to development of tourist destination and a maximum of Rs.8.00 crore for development of tourist circuit.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) to (f) A project for construction of wayside amenities at Lakkundi, Gadag for an amount of Rs.30.00 lakh was sanctioned to Government of Karnataka during the year 1999-2000. This project has been completed. No other project proposal has been prioritized/received from the State Government of Karnataka for development of Dumbal and Lakshmeshwara since then.

[Translation]

Compensation to Rice Traders

3460. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways are aware of the losses suffered by the traders due to drenching of rice in the rain water during transit from Mul to Mumbai through the container of 'CONCOR' on 22 and 23 June as reported in the 'Navbharat' of Nagpur Edition dated July 11, 2006;

(b) if so, whether the Rice Traders have demanded compensation from the Railways for the losses suffered by them;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by the Railways thereon?

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

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Compensation claims of the parties would be examined by CONCOR as per their rules.

[English]

Digital Library

3461. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to establish a digital library in the country;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the objectives therefo; and

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

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) and (b) The Department of Information Technology proposes to establish a National Digital Library which will be repository of digital content that will facilitate easy access.

(c) The project has been extended upto March, 2007.

Performance of Air India

3462. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Air India could not adhere to its flying schedules in 3.05 to 12.40 per cent cases during Summer 2002 to Winter 2004;

(b) if so, whether Air India cancel the flights in 0.029 to 1.95 per cent cases, reschedule the flights in 3.02 to 10.19 per cent cases and delayed flights by more than 20 minutes in a large number of cases ranging from 17.35 to 21.87 per cent to total flights;

(c) if so, the details and the reasons of poor performance of Air India; and

(d) the measures taken/proposed to be taken to improve the competence and trustworthiness of Air India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (c) Air India constantly endeavours to improve its on time performance. The punctuality of Air India flights including rescheduled flights, network-wise, during Summer 2004-Winter 2004 was 69% whereas the total number of cancellations was 0.41% and 1.20% in 2004 and 2005 respectively. The delays are mainly caused due to technical reasons, ageing fleet, airport congestion and ATC constraints.

(d) Air India and its subsidiary Air India Charters Limited have placed orders for purchase of 68 new aircraft which are due to be delivered in a phased manner from November 2006 which will greatly help in improving the ontime performance in Air India. The infrastructural developments envisaged for Mumbai and Delhi airports will also assist in ironing out the constraints at these airports which will pave the way for smoother operations.

Exclusion of OBC Castes

3463. SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has appointed an Expert Committee to fix the criteria for exclusion of the socially advance persons/sections from the benefit of reservations for other Backward Classes in the Government services;

(b) if so, the recommendations given by the Committee;

(c) whether the Ministry prepared any list of such persons/categories who are working as artisans or engaged in hereditary occupations, callings from whom rule of exclusion will not apply;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, the reasons for not taking any action to prepare the separate list of OBCs for whom rule of exclusion will not apply; and

(f) the time by which the list will be prepared and notified?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Expert Committee was appointed vide Resolution No.12011/16/93-BCC (C) dated 22.02.1993.

(b) The recommendations of the Committee are given in the enclosed statement. The report of the Committee was submitted to the Government on 10.03.1993 and consequent to the consideration of the Expert Committee's recommendations, Department of Personnel and Training issued OM No. 36012/22/93-Ext. (SCT) dated 09.09.1993 regarding exclusion of socially advanced persons/sections from the benefits of reservations for Other Backward Classes in civil posts and services under the Government of India.

(c) to (f) The Chairman and Member-Secretary of National Backward Classes Commission, who were earlier Chairman and Member-Secretary of the Expert Committee on 'Creamy Layer', were entrusted with the work of specifying the list of artisans and occupations and callings. The Chairman clarified that the list of artisans and those engaged in hereditary occupations and callings was not going to be a fresh or additional list but it would only be in respect of persons engaged in such callings but already belonging to the castes in the notified OBCs list. He also opined that there was no legal or any other impediment in implementing the reservation scheme in the Central Government Services even if the list of exemptions from the application of the rule of Creamy Layer in respect of persons working as artisans and persons engaged in hereditary callings was not immediately notified.

Statement

Recommendations of the Expert Committee

1. (i) **Constitutional Posts:** The constitutional posts like President, Vice-President, Judges of Supreme Court etc. which have fixed tenure may be excluded from the benefit of reservation. However, the constitutional posts of Governor, Ministers, Members of Legislature (which presumably includes MPs) etc. which are in the very nature of things, temporary and often transitory, are not be excluded.

(ii) Service Category:

(a) If either of the spouses is a class-I officer, rule of exclusion will apply. Where both spouses are class-I officers and one of them dies the rule of exclusion will still apply. However, exception has been made in respect of those cases where both spouses die or get incapacitated. Even in such a situation where either of the spouses has had the benefit of

employment in any international organization like the UN, IMF, World Bank etc. for a period of not less than 5-years, then exclusion from the benefit of reservation will continue to apply.

Another exception which has been provided is in respect of cases where a lady who has got married to a class-I officer may herself like to apply for a job. If she belongs to SEBC category, she will not be disentitled by the rule of exclusion.

- (b) If both spouses are class-II officers then rule of exclusion will apply to their off-springs. If only one of the spouses is class-II officer it will not apply. Where both spouses are class-II officers and one of them dies, the rule of exclusion will not apply. However, if either of the spouses has had the benefit of employment in any international organization as indicated above, for a period of not less than 5-years then even in the event of death the rule of exclusion would apply. Conversely, if the wife is a class-I officer and the husband is class-II officer and the wife dies, the rule of exclusion will not apply but if the husband dies, the rule of exclusion will apply.
- (c) The criteria enumerated in respect of class I/class II officers will apply mutatis mutandis to officers holding equivalent or comparable posts in public sector undertakings, banks, insurance organizations, universities etc. and also to equivalent or comparable posts and positions under private employment. However, pending evaluation of the posts to see which of the posts can be said to be equivalent or comparable, exclusion

may be made on the basis of the income/wealth test suggested under item (vi) below.

(iii) Armed Forces including Para-Military Forces (excluding persons holding civil posts):

Exclusion rule will apply at the level of colonel and above in the army and two equivalent posts in the Navy and the Air Force and the Para-Military Forces. The rule of clubbing of the ranks of husband and wife has not been made applicable in the case of officers in the Armed Forces and Para-Military Forces keeping in view the peculiar nature of these services and hardship faced by the members of these forces.

(iv) Professional Class and those engaged in Trade, Business and Industry:

This category includes persons not in service employment, either Government or private, but those who are engaged in professions as a Doctor, Lawyer, Chartered Accountants and Income-tax Consultants etc. In their case exclusion will be governed by the income/wealth criterion suggested in item (vi) below. Likewise, persons engaged in Trade, Business and Industry will be governed by the income/wealth criterion.

In a situation where the husband is in some profession and the wife is in a Class-II or a lower grade employment, the income/wealth test will apply only on the basis of husband's income. Conversely, if the wife is in any profession and the husband is in employment in class-II or lower rank, post then the income/wealth criterion will apply only on the basis of wife's income and the husband's income will not be clubbed with it. This has been suggested in order to avoid discouragement of women entering service or professions.

(v) Property Owners:**(a) Agricultural Land Holdings.**

If a person belongs to a family (defined as father, mother and minor children) which owns only irrigated land and the extent of irrigated land is equal to or more than 65% of the statutory ceiling area.

(for that State/UT), then the rule of exclusion will apply. In a situation where a person holds different types of irrigated lands, the aggregate land would be converted into a single type of irrigated land as a common denominator on the basis of the conversion formula existing in the relevant land ceiling law. If the extent of irrigated land so worked out is above a cut off point of 65% the rule of exclusion will apply.

Where the entire land holding of a person is unirrigated, the rule of exclusion will not apply, irrespective of the area of such land.

In the case of a family owning both irrigated and unirrigated land, the rule of exclusion will apply in the following manner:-

- (1) If the total irrigated area brought down to a single type under a common denominator is less than 40% of the statutory ceiling limit for irrigated land, the rule of exclusion shall not apply.
- (2) If the total irrigated land as worked out under (1) above is 40% or more of the statutory ceiling limit for irrigated land then the total un-irrigated land owned by the person shall be converted on the basis of the existing conversion formula into irrigated type.
- (3) The irrigated area so computed from un-irrigated land shall be added to the actual area of irrigated land and if after

such clubbing together the total area in terms of irrigated land is 65% or more of the statutory ceiling limit for irrigated land, then the rule of exclusion will apply.

In the case of States of Nagaland, Mizoram Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa and the Union Territories of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Daman and Diu where no ceiling laws of land exist it has been suggested that the rule of exclusion may not be made applicable on the basis of agricultural land holdings.

(b) Plantations

The Plantations such as Mango, Citrus, Apple Plantations which are recorded as agricultural holdings will be covered by the criterion at (a) above.

Since the Plantations of Coffee, Tea, Rubber are not recorded as agricultural holdings, they are not covered by ceiling laws. In these cases, it has been suggested the criterion of income/wealth under item (vi) may be applied.

(c) Vacant Lands and Old Buildings of Urban Agglomeration.

It has been suggested that the criterion of income/wealth under item no. (vi) will apply

(vi) Income/Wealth Test

Persons having gross annual income of Rs.1 lakh * or above or possessing wealth above the exemption limit as prescribed in the Wealth Tax Act may be excluded from the benefit or reservation. The caveat has been added that this criterion should be applied only if the persons concerned has had such level of income or wealth consistently for a period of three consecutive years.

If in any of the categories mentioned by the Expert Committee any person who is not disentitled to the benefit of reservation has income from other sources of wealth, it will bring him within the criterion under Item no.(vi), then he shall be disentitled to reservation. Income in such cases shall be calculated without clubbing his income from salary or agricultural land.

2. Other Recommendations of the Expert Committee:

(i) Revision of Income Ceiling

The Committee has suggested that in view of change in rupee value the income criterion in terms of rupee as stated above may be suitably modified from time to time. The norms for this purpose may be revised every three years but if the situation so demands the norms may be modified sooner.

3. Exemption in favour of hereditary occupations

Persons engaged in the hereditary occupations such as Washer men, Barbers etc. may be exempted from the rule of exclusion.

4. Exemption of most Backward Classes from the rule of Exclusion:

The Committee has also suggested that in the event the Government takes a decision to categorize the Other Backward Class into two or more categories (Backward, More-Backward and Most-Backward etc.) those who fall in the two lowest strata at the bottom i.e. the strata having the maximum backwardness may be exempted from the rule of exclusion, pending the formation of 'Creamy Layer' in their case.

*Note Gross annual income limit of Rs.1 Lakh has subsequently been raised to Rs.2.5 lacs vide Department of Personnel Training OM No.36033/3/2004-Estt. (Res.) 5 dated 09.03.2004

Airports for Accommodating Super Jumbos Aircraft

3464.SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has identified four major international airports in the country as designated gateways to handle the newly-unveiled 500 plus seat super jumbos, the Airbus A-380s;

(b) if so, the details thereof of the airports identified for the purpose; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for making adequate provision to cater to the long wingspan of the largest passenger jetliner?

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

(b) The international airports at Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai have been identified for the purpose.

(c) For handling A-380 type of aircraft, two aircraft Bays arena proposed at Delhi airport, construction of three aircraft Bays and widening of B-3 taxiway have been taken up at Mumbai airport, one aircraft Bay is proposed at Kolkata airport and one aircraft Bay has been constructed at Chennai airport.

[Translation]

Interest Rate to SC/ST LPG Dealers

3465.SHRI ASHOK ARGAL : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has directed to recover interest at the high rate of 17.75 per cent on the loan sanctioned to the persons belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes who have been allotted the

LPG dealerships whereas at the time of agreement, there was a provision to charge Rs.1/- per cylinder as recovery amount:

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

(c) the corrective steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have a Corpus Fund Scheme to help the LPG distributorships of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) category across the country. As per this Scheme, OMCs provide the necessary infrastructure and working capital loan at the time of the commissioning of the distributorship. This loan is recovered through a licence fee, which was initially Rs.1 per cylinder and subsequently revised to Rs.2 per cylinder in November 1997, to be recovered in perpetuity.

Government have advised OMCs to provide for stopping the recovery of licence fees once the investment made by the OMCs has been fully recovered from the distributor who has availed of the benefits under the Corpus Fund Scheme. The distributor has also been given an option to repay the outstanding amount under the Corpus Fund Scheme by choosing to pay the licence fees through a number of available options or clear the outstanding dues in a lump sum, at any time.

OMCs are presently charging interest at 1% over the Prime Lending Rate, applicable at the time of making the investment for the infrastructural facilities provided and 11% per annum on the working capital loan given to the distributors.

[English]

Merger of HCL with BSNL

3466. SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH : Will the Minister

of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to merge Hindustan Cables Ltd. (HCL) with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL);

(b) if so, whether some Members of Parliament have submitted a Memorandum in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) :

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) In the memorandum, delegation of Hon'ble MPs have proposed merger of HCL with BSNL as viable alternative for revival of HCL. The issue of merger of HCL with BSNL was examined in Department of Telecom and it was considered that there was no scope for merger of two as there was neither functional nor technological synergy between the two.

Defence Projects

3467. SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there have been inordinate delay in completion of some of the defence projects resulting in cost and time over-runs as reported in *Hindustan Times* dated July 24, 2006;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for such an inordinate delay; and

(d) the concrete steps being taken by the Government for completion of these projects expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) DRDO is engaged in

development of combat aircraft, strategic systems, battle tanks, electronic warfare and communication systems, armour and armaments, life support systems, naval systems, missile systems, etc. Some of the DRDO projects have taken more time than estimated due to one or more of the following primary reasons:—

- Technical complexities.
- Technological embargo/sanctions and various control regimes.
- Non-availability of infrastructure within the country.
- Extended and long lasting user trials.
- Revision of systems specifications during development phase.

(d) Government has taken the following concrete steps for timely completion of projects:-

- Ensuring timely review and monitoring for financial and technical progress through multi-tier review mechanisms.
- Adopting technology evaluation and assessment prior to taking up fresh projects.
- Promoting synergy and better coordination among User Services, DRDO and Production Agencies through closer meetings.
- Adopting 'concurrent engineering' and 'joint venture' approach for development production.
- Devising and implementing better project management methods.

[Translation]

**Construction of Railway Station at
Bheem Bethika**

3468. SHRI KRISHNA MURARI MOGHE :

SHRI VIJAY KUMAR KHANDELWAL :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have received any proposal from the Government of Madhya Pradesh for the construction of a new railway station at Bheem Bethika;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the said railway station is likely to be constructed?

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

(b) and (c) The proposal is under examination.

**Appointment of Foreign National in
GMR Fraport**

3469. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the GMR Fraport Consortium which has taken over the management of the IGI Airport from the Airports Authority of India has appointed a foreign national as its head as reported in 'The Economic Times' dated July 26, 2006;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether security clearance has been taken by the Consortium in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the action by the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (d) Delhi Airport is under the control of Joint Venture Company (JVC) viz. Delhi International Airport Private Limited (DIAPL) headed by Shri Srinivas Bommiidala, an Indian National.

Under Shri Srinivas Bommidala, Mr. Ionnis Papastiefanou, a Greek National, has been appointed as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Delhi Airport. Security clearance of Mr. Ionnis Papastiefanou with respect to issue of Airport Entry Pass (AEP)/Photo Identity Card (PIC) was taken from Intelligence Bureau by Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS). Consortium of the JVC of Delhi Airport is security vetted.

(e) Does not arise.

[English]

Seepage in Ajanta Caves

3470. SHRI SURESH ANGADI :

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY :

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the magnificent ancient rock caves at Ajanta are at danger due to seepage of rain water;

(b) if so, whether the rock caves have not been protected from man-made or natural disaster;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action/steps taken by the Union Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) Ajanta caves are not at danger due to seepage of rain water.

(b) to (d) Ajanta caves are excavated in deccan trap which has several natural horizontal and to vertical cooling cracks that allow seepage of rain water. The leakages persist for a few days even after stoppage of rain. Seepage occurs during monsoon in cave Nos. 1, 2, 12, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, and 26. Most of the leakage points are in the verandahs of the caves.

The problem of leakage and surface water management is already referred to Geological Survey of India (GSI), Central Water and Power Research Station, Pune (CWPRS) and Structural Engineering Research

Centre, Chennai (SERC) and studies are in progress. As per recommendations of GSI, the contour drains provided at three different levels have been repaired to control the surface water. Damaged and missing facades and pillars of several caves have been reconstructed which have effectively controlled the entry of rain water in the caves.

A panel of International and Indian experts has been constituted for monitoring the conservation works of Ajanta and Ellora caves under Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) Project and two meetings have taken place in November 2004 and November 2005 during which the problems of conservation of the caves were discussed in detail.

[Translation]

Renovation of Cultural Heritage

3471. SHRI ASHOK ARGAL : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Shaivite temples of seventh century are located at Sihonia, Mitrali, Bateshwar and some other places in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh including unique temple with 108 Shivalings;

(b) if so, whether Archaeological Survey of India proposes to grant special package for their renovation so as to protect these archaeological and cultural heritages; and

(c) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Conservation of the protected monuments is a continuous process. Archaeological Survey of India is undertaking regular conservation works at the protected temples of Bateshwar, Sihonia, Mitrali, Padawali and group of temples at Nareswar in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh, as provided in the Annual Conservation Programme.

The expenditure incurred during the last three years and allocation for the year 2006-07 for conservation and maintenance of above temples is as under:-

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Year	Expenditure
2003-04	1.61
2004-05	9.68
2005-06	35.12
Allocation for 2006-07	64.78

[English]

Travel Packages

3472. SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large number of travel packages are offered to tourists, Indians as well as foreigners, by the travel agencies through newspapers;

(b) if so, whether there is any machinery to ensure that these packages do not take the tourists for a ride because of any fine print in their advertisements and are genuine and quality conscious; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In order to curb cheating and to ensure quality standards and service, the Ministry of Tourism has a voluntary scheme to grant recognition to bonafide Travel agents, Tour Operators, Tourism Transport Operators, Domestic Tour Operators and Adventure Tour Operators. This recognition is granted only after the applicants fulfill the various norms and conditions which are laid down in the guidelines. The initial recognition is granted for a period

of 3 years and thereafter renewals are done for 5 years. In addition the Ministry of Tourism has a Complaints Cell for redressal of tourist complaints.

Construction of Cultural Centre at Leh

3473. SHRI CHHEWANG THUPSTAN : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the present status of construction of cultural centre at Leh and Bathing Ghat at Sindhu River;

(b) the funds allocated for these projects;

(c) whether the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council have requested the Union Government to release adequate funds for the completion of these project;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI) : (a) to (e) As a part of the commemoration of 50th Anniversary of Indian Republic Rs.300.00 lakhs was sanctioned during 2000-2001 and released to the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council for a Multi Purpose Cultural Complex (Sindhu Sanskriti Kendra) at Leh. Subsequently, the scope of the work was expanded by the Council and the project could not be completed. The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council has intimated a revised project cost of Rs.544.80 lakhs for completing the project. Since the Commemoration of 50th Anniversary of Indian Republic is already over, no funds are available for the commemorative events under which the project was sanctioned initially.

Ministry of Tourism had sanctioned and released Rs.98 lakhs for Construction of Sindhu Ghat at Shey, Leh (Phase-I) during 2000-01 and the project has been completed by the State Government of J&K.

Sale of Natural Gas

3474. SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA :
 SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY :
 DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA :
 SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD :

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

(a) whether Panna, Mukta and Tapti (PMT) Joint Venture partners invited the bids for sale of natural gas upto 4 MMSCMD from April 1, 2006;

(b) if so, whether the Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC) offered the highest price for gas amongst the bidders;

(c) if so, the reasons for not allocating the gas to GSPC;

(d) whether the Government of Gujarat represented to the Union Government to follow the rules of Tender Procedures and offer gas to GSPC, since bid of GSPC was the highest; 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 (c) Panna, Mukta and Tapti Joint Venture (PMT JV) has been producing about 10.6 million standard cubic metres per day (MMSCMD) gas since 2004-05. Effective 1.4.2005, the Government allowed the PMT JV to directly sell 4.6 MMSCMD gas, with the remaining about 6 MMSCMD gas continuing to be supplied to the existing power and fertilizer consumers through GAIL for a period of one year, i.e., upto 31.3.2006. It was also decided that the position of the supply of gas through GAIL would be reviewed at the end of the year. In the meantime, perhaps on the understanding that the gas being marketed by GAIL might be released for direct marketing by the JV effective 1.4.2006, PMT JV solicited expression of interest from prospective buyers to purchase gas upto 4 MMSCMD from

1st April, 2006 for a period of two-years with a caveat that the JV reserved the right to decide the quantity to be sold. As informed by PMT JV, GSPC and another buyer offered the highest price for this gas. The matter of continuing the gas supplies to the power and fertilizer sector consumers by GAIL beyond 31.3.2006 was reviewed in the Ministry in March 2006 and it was decided that this arrangement needed to be continued for a further period of 2 years, i.e. upto 31.3.2008, as there are no alternative sources of gas supplies available at present and any disruption in gas supplies would result in idling of the existing assets in these important sectors.

(d) and (e) This Ministry had received through Prime Minister's Office a copy of the letter dated 8.3.06 addressed to the Prime Minister by members of the Parliament. At present there is no increase of gas production by PMT JV. The additional gas is likely to be produced from mid 2007. GSPC may like to get in touch with PMT JV to tie up their requirements.

Modernisation Plan of Army

3475. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Army has started focusing on a modernisation plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to implement the modernisation plan?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) Modernisation of the Army is an on-going process based on imperatives of national security, analysis of threat perception and response thereto. A holistic study for the modernization of the Army has been carried out based on prevailing and anticipated threats to the national security. This has been projected in the form of Army's Long Term Perspective Plan covering a period upto 31.3.2017, which forms the basis for Five Year Plans and Annual Acquisition Plans. Weapons and

equipment for modernization of the Army are included in the Annual Acquisition Plans and procured strictly as per the procedure laid down in the Defence Procurement Procedure.

[Translation]

Corruption Cases against GAIL Officials

3476. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether cases under Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 have been registered against some of the senior officials of the GAIL (India) Ltd. in November, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken against officials found guilty?

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

(b) and (c) S.P., CBI, ACB New Delhi vide FIR No. 0016354 with RC No. DAI-2002-A-0063, dated 14th November, 2002 registered a case against three officials of GAIL. CBI had recommended prosecution against one officer, Shri A.K. Ray, then Executive Director (Business Development). The GAIL management after due consultation with the Central Vigilance Commission, has instead ordered initiation of disciplinary proceedings against the officer. The disciplinary proceedings are underway. No officer has yet been found guilty in this case.

12.00 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

THE MINISTER OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table—

(1) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) issued under sub-section (3) and 25 of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956:—

(i) S.O. 1145 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 19th July, 2006, re-establishing the Commission and appointing the persons mentioned therein as members of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission.

(ii) S.O. 1297 (E) published in Gazette of India dated the 11th August, 2006 making certain amendments in the Notification No. S.O. 1145 (E) dated the 19th July, 2006.

(2) A copy of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Rules, 2006 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 483 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 17th August, 2006, under section 28 of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 4864/06]

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 619 A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

(a) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Assam Ashok Hotel Corporation Limited, Guwahati, for the year 2004-2005.

(ii) Annual Report of the Assam Ashok Hotel Corporation Limited, Guwahati, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of

the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 4865/06]

(b) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Pondicherry Ashok Hotel Corporation Limited, Pondicherry, for the year 2004-2005.

(ii) Annual Report of the Pondicherry Ashok Hotel Corporation Limited, Pondicherry, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(2) Two statements (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 4866/06]

(3) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Khuda Bakksh Oriental Public Library, Patna, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the Khuda Bakksh Oriental Public Library, Patna, for the year 2004-2005.

(4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 4867/06]

(5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the

working of the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.

(6) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 4868/06]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Aircraft (Second Amendment) Rules, 2006 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 307(E) in Gazette of India dated the 24th May, 2006, under section 14A of the Aircraft Act, 1934, together with an Explanatory Note.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 4869/06]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : I beg to lay on the Table—

(1) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under section 199 of the Railways Act, 1989.

(i) The Indian Railways (Open Lines) General Amendment Rules, 2006, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 221(E) in Gazette of India dated the 19th April, 2006.

(ii) The Indian Railways (Open Lines) General (Second Amendment) Rules, 2006, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 476(E) in Gazette of India dated the 11th August, 2006.

(iii) The Indian Railways (Open Lines) General (Third Amendment) Rules, 2006, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 477(E) in Gazette of India dated the 11th August, 2006.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at item No. (i) of (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 4870/06]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions)—

- (1) Evaluation Reports of Tiger Reserves in India.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 4871/06]

- (2) Review of Tiger Reserve Assessment Reports.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 4872/06]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (1) Review by the Government of the working of the GAIL (India) Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.
- (2) Annual Report of the GAIL (India) Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 4873/06]

12.01 hrs.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON OFFICES OF PROFIT

Third Report

SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH (Farrukhabad) : I beg to present the Third Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Joint Committee on Offices of Profit.

12.02 hrs.

STATEMENT CORRECTING REPLY TO UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1892 DATED 10.08.2006 'INVESTIGATION INTO DEFENCE DEALS'

*THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : Sir, I had answered in Part (c) (ii) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.1892 dated 10.08.2006 that some of the provisions in Defence Procurement Procedure 2005 (DPP – 2005) include "signing of Integrity Pact for purchases over Rs.300 crore". The figure of "Rs.300 crore" mentioned in the reply may kindly be read as "Rs.100 crore".

As soon as the error has come to notice, action has been taken to rectify the same.

The correcting Statement is now being laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

12.03 hrs.

- (i) Status of implementation of recommendations contained in the 157th 166th, 170th, 172nd and 174th Reports of the Standing Committee on Industry pertaining to the Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries

**THE MINISTER OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD) : I make this statement on the status of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 157th 166th, 170th, 172nd and 174th reports of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry, at the direction, of the Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha and

*Placed in Library. See No. LT 4874/06.

**Laid on the table and Also (Placed in Library See No. LT. 4875/06).

[Shri Mahabir Prasad]

in pursuance of the provisions of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha contained in the Lok Sabha Bulletin-Part II dated 01 September, 2004.

2. The 157th Report on "Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Committees' 141st Report on the potential and promotion of coir industries in West Bengal and Andaman and Nicobar Islands of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry pertaining to the Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries (ARI) contains 22 recommendations/observations. These recommendations/observations broadly pertain to problems being faced by the coir industry in West Bengal and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. My Ministry has taken action in respect of the recommendations/observations. The Action Taken Notes (ATN) containing details of action taken on each recommendation/observation have been furnished to the Secretariat of the Committee on 12 December, 2005.

3. The 166th Report on "Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Committees' 152nd Report on Demands for Grants (2004-05)" contains 12 recommendations/observations. These recommendations/observations broadly pertain to working out a strategy for improvement in the credit flow to the ARI sector, reforms in the existing labour laws affecting the ARI sector, reducing stock inventories and taking effective steps for payment of arrears of rebates by the State Governments, implementing strategy to set up coir units in non-traditional States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand by sourcing coir fibre from nearest available place, implementation of the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI), impact of globalisation and liberalisation on ARI sector and development of clusters in economically backward States like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Jharkhand. My Ministry has taken necessary action in respect of these recommendations/observations. The Action Taken Note giving details of the action taken

on each of the recommendations/observations have been furnished to the Secretariat of the Committee on 08 February, 2006.

4. The 170th Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry pertaining to the Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries (ARI) contains 59 recommendations. These recommendations/observations broadly pertain to streamlining and strengthening ARI sector by ensuring timely and adequate delivery of credit, technology up-gradation, marketing support in the form of financial support, achieving the targets set for employment generation under REGP and PMRY, making Khadi institutions self-sufficient and competitive, strengthening the scheme for co-operativising coir industries, market promotion of village industry products, fiscal concessions in terms of tax exemption to ARI sector and formulation of a national policy for agro and rural industries for the growth of rural industries. The Action Taken Notes giving details of the action taken on each recommendations/observations have been furnished to the Secretariat of the Committee on 16 January, 2006.

5. The 172nd Report on "Requirement of coir industries for its promotion and proliferation" of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry pertaining to the Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries (ARI) contains 36 recommendations/observations. These recommendations/observations broadly pertain to requirements for promotion, proliferation in traditional and non-traditional zones and market development in the coir sector. My Ministry has taken necessary action in respect of these recommendations/observations. The Action Taken Notes indicating the action taken on each recommendations/observations have been furnished to the Secretariat of the Committee on 9 March, 2006.

6. The 174th Report on "Monitoring and timely and effective implementation of schemes under the ARI sector" contains 17 recommendations/observations. These pertain to steps to be taken for ensuring compliance with the various yardsticks for better functioning of PMRY in Bihar,

Jharkhand, West Bengal and Maharashtra in coordination with the Banking Division of the Ministry of Finance, nationalised banks, Making available adequate funds for improving village industries and aggressive popularisation of Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) in these States. The Action Taken Notes giving details of the action taken on each recommendation/observation have been furnished to the Secretariat of the Committee on 6 February, 2006.

7. The present status of implementation of the major recommendations made by the Committee is detailed in Annexures I to V to this Statement which is placed on the Table of the House. I would not like to take the valuable time of the House to read out the contents of these Annexures and would request that these may be considered as read.

12.03½ hrs.

(ii) Status of Implementation of Recommendations contained the 15th to 18th Reports of the Standing Committee on Railways

*THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : I beg to lay this statement on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th Reports of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways in pursuance of Directive 73A of the hon. Speaker, Lok Sabha issued vide Lok Sabha Bulletin – Part II, dated 1st September, 2004.

The 15th Report of the Committee on "Passenger Amenities" presented to the Lok Sabha on 25.11.2005 contained seven recommendations and Action Taken Notes thereon were furnished to the Committee on 12.04.2006 (English version) and on 15.05.2006 (Hindi version).

*Laid on the Table and Also (Placed in Library. See No. LT. 4876/06).

The 16th Report of the Committee on "Expansion of Railway Network-New Lines, Gauge Conversion, Doubling and Electrification" presented to the Lok Sabha on 09.12.2005 contained eight recommendations and Action Taken Notes thereon have been furnished to the Committee on 18.05.2006 (English version) and on 06.06.2006 (Hindi version).

The 17th Report of the Committee on "Production Units and Railway Workshops and maintenance of Rolling Stock" presented to the Lok Sabha on 03.02.2006 contained 20 recommendations and Action Taken Notes thereon have been furnished to the Committee on 28.04.2006 (English version) and on 15.05.2006 (Hindi version).

The 18th Report of the Committee on "Demands for Grants 2005-06" presented to the Lok Sabha on 22.02.2006 contained 11 recommendations and Action Taken Notes thereon have been furnished to the Committee on 19.07.2006 (English version) and on 02.08.2006 (Hindi version).

Statements showing details of all the recommendations contained in these Reports and implementation status thereof are enclosed. Since the statements are voluminous, I request that the same may be taken as read.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Under the normal procedure, now we have to take up the Calling Attention. I am requesting the hon. Members.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You are not even allowing me to complete a sentence. I have requested the hon. Members— I am thankful to them — in whose name the Calling Attention is listed, to take it up later. I will call them later. Now, there are 3-4 very urgent matters. I promise them — with the knowledge and consent of all the leaders who were present - that I will come back to the Calling Attention

soon after this. The rest of the matters will be taken up today itself.

Now, Shri Dhindsa.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I will call you. I have given my word. I will call you, provided the House runs. Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA (Sangrur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, today I have submitted the notice for suspension of question hour because the incidents which took place during last two-three days have hurt the sentiments of the Sikhs very badly. There have been large-scale protests. I have mentioned two incidents in my notice—first incident is relating to Saudi Arabia and the other one to Jaipur. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have assured. I will call all the hon. Members. We have agreed to that. I will call one by one. All of you cannot speak together; it cannot be recorded. Please allow him to make his submission.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have approved your issue, you may speak.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You too speak. If need arises, you will also be called.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA : A doctor went to Saudi Arabia. There, the company wherein he had sought

*Not recorded.

a job asked him to shave off his hair if he wanted a job with the company. He objected to it and said that I do not want a job with the company and it may send me back. Instead of sending him back the company impounded his passport. The day before yesterday, the President of SGPC received a letter from him. I, too, have written a letter to the Prime Minister alongwith the President of SGPC. So far my letter has not been replied to. I would like to read out a short letter written by the said doctor...

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : That is not permitted. You can refer to the matter. You cannot read out the letter.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA : The Government should take notice of this issue because it has been a long pending one. We want that the doctor should get his passport. If he does not want to stay abroad, he should get permission to return. second issue is of Jaipur ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha) : Sir, he cannot raise two matters at the same time in 'Zero Hour'...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : It is very strange. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA : Second issue is of Jaipur. There some boys were teasing a girl and a Sikh student tried to stop them from doing so. At this those young boys who were four in number, cut the hair of that Sikh student. There was a large-scale protest against this act...*(Interruptions)* Not only myself but the President, Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandhak Committee also visited the place...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : It is a very condemnable act.

[Translation]

SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA : I have also talked to the Chief Minister yesterday that if these boys are not arrested, we will continue this protest. I am happy that these boys have been arrested. But stringout action should be taken against them. Action should be taken against them because this is an insult for the whole Sikh community...(Interruptions)

You can see, how serious these people are about this issue? They are even not ready to accept it as an issue...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You make your point. I will get it or record.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seats.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA : I request the whole House that Sikhs have done a lot for this country, they have made great sacrifices...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Whatever has been done for the country, we all are also associated with that.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA : Wherever such incident occur, it should be condemned.

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta South) : Sir, we condemn it. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : On behalf of all of you, I have condemned it from the Chair.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA : Everyone should condemn this incident. The Government should take both the issues seriously. ...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY : Sir, I have also given the notice. ...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : If you want to speak on this matter, I will call you.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI (Gandhinagar) : You have condemned this incident on behalf of this House; and slightly so because whatever happened was very unfortunate. How it been a routine brawl involving certain individuals, these was nothing much in it. But the way the boys have insulted the Sikh boy by cutting his hair, such type of reaction is only but natural. Our other colleagues also visited the place. Sidhujee has also visited Jaipur yesterday. He met all officers there. The Government have taken the required action. I am mentioning it here because complaint has also been made against the Principia of the Central School. It is a matter of investigation as to whether this complaint is true or false. I don't know about this. The State Government informed me that only the Union Human Resource Development Minister examine the matter and take necessary action. I would like to submit through you that necessary action should be taken after ascertaining the facts.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Let us hear each other.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to condemn the incident which occurred at Jaipur and stirred the whole Sikh Community all over the country. Some hooligans were teasing a girl and a Sikh youth tried to stop them from doing so. Three-four days back, these hooligans have beaten up this Sikh youth and cut his hair. However, the youth has made complaint against them earlier also. This incident has deeply hurt the feelings of the Sikh community in our country. The most shameful thing is that in Rajasthan, earlier also, the minorities, the Muslims were affected. After that, Christians were targeted. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No, no.

(Interruptions)

13.00 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled at Thirteen of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SURENDRA PRAKASH GOYAL (Hapur) : Five people were washed away by the floods in Rajasthan...
(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No. I am not allowing you. Nothing will be recorded. Nothing else, except Shri Prabhunath Singh, will not be recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down. What you are saying is not going on record.

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER : Not one word is being recorded. I am sorry. Please sit down.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : Why are you shouting now? Nothing is being recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : It is 1 p.m. now and we have hardly discussed anything today. Let us utilise the time of the House.

(Interruptions)

DR. KARAN SINGH YADAV (Alwar) : Sir, I am the only Member from Rajasthan...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Your name has been recorded.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I have deleted it.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY : After that muslims were attacked...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I have deleted it.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : What are you saying?

(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER : Please, take your seat.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY : Sir, not only this *they always do such things...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I have deleted it.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Bring it to me, I will see it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY : Sir, if they are allowed to speak, I should also be allowed to speak. They always use such abusing language. I demand that Chief Minister of Rajasthan should leader an apology to the whole sikh community of our country...
(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Dr. Karan Singh Yadav.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Bring it to me, I will see to it.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will be recorded.

*(Interruptions)***

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing is being recorded. I have deleted that.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Srichand Kriplani, you go back to your seat. I will take action against you. You cannot speak from this seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing is being recorded.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have called Dr. Karan Singh Yadav.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. KARAN SINGH YADAV (Alwar) : Mr. Speaker. Sir, I belongs to Rajasthan. Such shameful incident happened there which stirred the whole sikh community and they demonstrated at many places against this. What could be more shameful that last...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Dr. Karan Singh Yadav associated himself with the matter raised by Shri Dhindsa.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Prabhunath Singh to speak.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please control him. His seat is there. I am controlling them. I have not allowed it to be recorded. Mr. Kriplani, you will be in trouble one day. I am giving you advance warning. You are deliberately disturbing the House.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : If you do not want to continue, I will adjourn the House.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : What is this going on? Please be seated.

(Interruptions)

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

**Not recorded.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Only Mr. Prabhunath Singh's statement would be recorded.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I am appealing to all sections of the House to please cooperate. Some hon. Members want to raise some important issues. I want to call my friends from Andhra Pradesh. They want to raise some important issue.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Ram Kripal Yadav, will you take your seat? I will name you.

[Translation]

DR. KARAN SINGH YADAV : Sir, you had called my home. I am a member of Parliament from Rajasthan.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : You may associate your name will be recorded.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Dr. Yadav, your name has been recorded. Please, take your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing has been recorded.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will be recorded without my permission.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : I am trying to pacify them also.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Member, I will name you. I have deleted all the objectionable remarks.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I would like to appeal to the Leader of the House to please control his Members. This is not the way.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : This is very unfortunate.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned to meet again at 1 p.m.

12.17 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till
Thirteen of the Clock.*

13.00 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled at Thirteen
of the Clock.*

[Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair]

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SURENDRA PRAKASH GOYAL (Hapur) : Five people were swept away by floods in Rajasthan ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No. I am not allowing you. Nothing

will be recorded. Nothing else, except Shri Prabhunath Singh, will be recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : You may sit down. Your speech is not being recorded.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Not one word is being recorded. I am sorry. Please sit down.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : Why are you shouting now? Nothing is being recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : It is 1 p.m. now and we have hardly discussed anything today. Let us utilise the time of the House.

(Interruptions)

DR. KARAN SINGH YADAV (Ajwar) : Sir, I am the only Member from Rajasthan...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Your name has been recorded.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajanj, Bihar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this country follows federal system and at present, the situation is thus that the Central Government is unnecessarily interfering in those States where Congress or Congressally parties are not ruling. Its intervention particularly in Bihar is because of the fact that

*Not recorded.

some people who presume to be over towering in Bihar put pressure on the Government and the Government succumbs to it. For example, an incident too place in Surajgarh police station of the State on 6th-7th, and the S.P. himself got the FIR registered. But in the same incident, alleged victim Harijan lady registered another FIR on 13th August in Monghyr Harijan Police Station. Mr. Speaker, Sir, in both the incidents, there is no mention of rape ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Is is a State matter.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I will see to it. If it is a State matter, you cannot raise it here.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : The victimized woman visited residence of the Chief Minister on 22nd. The Chief Minister called the lady police officer and asked her to register FIR and conduct a medical examination. The victimized woman fled from there and did not agree for medical examination...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : It is only a State matter. We cannot do anything from here.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Centre is intervening and the reason of intervention is*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : That will be deleted. Please do not

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

say these things. Do not misuse the opportunity that I have given you.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : That is deleted. That is not permitted.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Sorry, it is deleted.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : People of RJD are involved in such incidents and the Central Government particularly* protects these people.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : It becomes impossible for me to run the House. Not one word is being recorded.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : It has been deleted.

*(Interruptions)***

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : It is best to adjourn the House *sine die*.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I think it is better. I am asking the suggestion of everybody whether the House should be adjourned.

(Interruptions)

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

**Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, go back to your seat and keep quiet.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Prabhunathji, you have said your bit. Now please sit down.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will be recorded. Not one word will be recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Member, please go back to your seat and keep quiet.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Member, I will issue notice against you.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you gave permission to speak on this issue two days ago...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : But do not bring State matters. I did not allow anybody to bring State matters. You wanted to say something.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the same issue was discussed. You had permitted to speak.

*Not recorded.

Today, people of Human Rights Commission are representing the woman...(Interruptions). The woman might face something ill...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You both are speaking at the same time. Whom should we hear?

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please see that your contribution is recorded for the posterity. For that please do not refer to matters which are beyond the scope of this House.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing is being recorded. Why are you shouting? Not one word is being recorded.

(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Sir, I am concluding in two minutes...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down, that has been deleted from the proceedings.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I have to hear them. They are very patiently waiting.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ram Kirpal Yadav, what are you doing?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It is very unfortunate.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Not a single line of yours is being recorded. Why are you speaking?

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Prabhunath Singh, do not refer to any State matters.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Whom will you stop from speaking.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I say it is enough, sit down please. Enough, I have seen it all.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Sir, I will conclude within two minutes.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please do it.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : I would like to say that a similar incident took place in Arrah also. I do not want to say who were behind it, but they are saying openly on Bihar**...(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER : No, no

(Interruptions)

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PSASAD) : *

(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

*Not recorded.

**Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No, I am sorry. This should not have been done. You are misusing the opportunity.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It will be deleted.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : I have deeled that.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Prabhunath Singhji, this is not right.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Prabhunathji, you are saying it quite deliberately.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Madhusudan Reddy, you come in front. This is not correct. I called Shri Madhusudan Reddy.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Prabhunath Singhji, this is very unfair. Please let me speak. You cannot make such allegations against a Member. This is not fair. You are a senior Member. I respect you.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Prabhunath Singh, you wanted to raised a matter of Central discrimination. But you are making personal allegations. Do not do this.

(Interruptions)

*Expunged as ordered by the chair.

MR. SPEAKER : I have said that I have deleted it. I have expressed my disapproval of it.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned till 2 p.m.

13.10 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till
Fourteen of the Clock.*

14.00 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled at Fourteen
of the Clock.*

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Hon. Members, the House stands adjourned to meet again at 3.00 p.m.

14.0½ hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Fifteen
of the Clock.*

15.00 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled at Fifteen
of the Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

OBSERVATION BY THE SPEAKER

Re: Functioning of the House

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, please take your seats.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I will call you. Let the House function normally.

The House was adjourned by me, as you know, just before the recess. After I left, it has been reported to me – because it is not in the television – that some very very condemnable incident took place. From the Chair, I believe that every section of the House will join me in condemning this incident expressing our greatest annoyance, greatest sorrow that Parliament of India could witness such an incident. I am sure, everybody will see that the glory of this House, the image of this House is maintained – not only maintained but also enhanced. Therefore, I am appealing to everybody to please see that this House functions normally. I would request you to cooperate.

The incident that has been reported to me – I am again saying – should not have happened. It is extremely wrong. It has brought bad name to our great institution. I am condemning it from the Chair. I am requesting all the hon. Members to cooperate. Whoever wants to say anything, we are trying our best to accommodate. There are limitations. Everybody is sitting in the Chair. We have no personal interest, no personal issue. We want the House to function. Therefore, my earnest appeal once again to you is this. I also request you to cooperate with me.

There are some words which have gone on record. I will delete those words. I am saying that I have already decided to expunge them. They will be expunged. I am sure, this is no disrespect to the great institution that you want. I am sure about that. Therefore, if there is some mistake, if there is some wrong behaviour, I condemn that also. I am sure, Members will realise that this is not helping you, not helping our great country. We have got such a responsibility and such an honour also to be Members of this House. People have sent us here. Therefore, let us all cooperate.

Please leave it to me. I respect everybody. I will

delete only that portion which is contemptuous, which should not be there. I also strongly disapprove using of words which are not proper. Let us not go further into it. My appeal to you is this. Let us help each other, carry on the business. I appeal to Shri Prabhunath Singh. I also appeal to this side, Shri Lalu Prasad Yadav and everone of you to please see that this great institution functions because our very existence is for this institution. Let us not destroy it ourselves. Therefore, this is my appeal.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, obeying your instructions I would like to say that even most bitter of the feelings can be expressed in decent and guarded language in the parliamentary democracy. You have just made the appeal, but I decided prior to this appeal and as you instructed that if we go on behaving like this in the Parliament of India, then we would have to witness ugly scenes like what happened today and the scene that was created in U.P. Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Please leave it.

SHRI LALU PRASAD : What I am saying is not one sided nor am I issuing a warning. Please listen to me. Two incidents happened in Lakhisarai in Patna and Arrah. I phoned the Chief Minister Nitishji to hear the facts of both the incidents. The Chief Minister did so. These people went to Patna and approached Human Rights Commission, Women Commission. RJD raised this issue yesterday...
(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please leave it ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Lajuji, it is not needed now. We accept this and I believe you will also condemn the incident.

(Interruptions)

SHRI LALU PRASAD : You also listen to me. Today ...*(Interruptions)*.

[English]

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUTPA (Panskura) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, nothing should be done to further complicate the situation. Our appeal is that nothing should be done to complicate the situation.

[Translation]

SHRI LALU PRASAD : Let me put my point. I am not done yet. First listen to me...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' (Begusaraj) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, listen to me also, for just one minute. I have no objection if Laluji speaks on the issue but then I may also be given the opportunity to speak on the same issue. ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : That is not final. That is a State matter.

[Translation]

SHRI LALU PRASAD : Sir, the language used here today, the whole House, all the hon. Members... (Interruptions). The Members of all the parties... (Interruptions)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi) : What you have to say on what happened afterwards? ... (Interruptions)

SHRI LALU PRASAD : Listen to me first please... (Interruptions). Why do you defend? Sir, it has been recorded and the world has seen how Prabhunath Singhji said that... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, he has not said. He spoke afterwards. I have seen Laluji, do not say that. I have seen what has been recorded.

(Interruptions)

SHRI LALU PRASAD : You should see that. The whole House should see that... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I would see. Alright, I would see. What has happened is not right. Leave it to me.

SHRI LALU PRASAD : Sir, you should see the record and the leaders of all the parties should see it. I apologies for the reaction of certain Members of my party and assure the House that no Member of my party would again behave in this manner but if somebody uses abusive language against any Minister or Member then such reaction is bound to take place... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Alright. Please sit down. I am giving them opportunity.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I would see to it.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Let us rise to the occasion. Prabhunathji, [Translation] The time of the House is being wasted entirely. I appeal to all of you [English] Let us all rise to the occasion. After all, we are all concerned. We are all brothers and sisters, we are working in that spirit. [Translation] Let us rise above petty politics. The conflict amongst us within the sphere of politics would be there forever. We should not get personal. I appeal to you. I respect you. I respect you all. Let us take some business. Our friends from Andhra Pradesh are waiting since morning. I would like to give them opportunity to speak.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (Maharajganj, Bihar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to have one minute to say my point... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You are also broad minded. Please understand my point. Everything is alright.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Mr. Speaker whatever I have said is there in your proceedings and you have read it in the Chamber...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Alright, I will decide.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have not said a word which insult anyone. Like you, I have also read it. I have read it in your chamber and it is included in the proceedings. Then people say that if such language is used then soon we would be going U.P. assembly way...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : No, no, now it will not take place. I have said.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has to be decided whether this House is to be made like Uttar Pradesh assembly or something else...*(Interruptions)*. If you talk like this it would not do and I say that the way this incident has taken place in this Lok Sabha, it is condemnable. I feel that I do not deserve to be a member of Lok Sabha. So, I am submitting my resignation to you. Please accept it....*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : No, no, I will do so in front of all...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, if I am guilty then action may be initiated against me...*(Interruptions)* who ever is guilty, the action may be taken against him...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : It's all right.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : He will come back. I will personally get him back.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : All right. Now, I call Shri Madhusudan Reddy.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore) : Sir, please allow me for two minutes...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : What is happening? You sit down please?...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Kharbel, you are a senior member. You are a very respected Member. Please take you seat.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, please allow me for two minutes...*(Interruptions)* Sir, why are you not allowing me to speak?...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : All right. Please say what you want to say.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, I will never use such words, which will further complicate the issue. I have been in this House for the last nine years. I never expected that any time any physical attack could be made on me. I am really frightened today because I think that in future physical attack could be made on any hon. Member of this House.

I would like to put one question here, Sir. You please go through the comments made by Shri Lalu Prasad. He did not apologise. You may go through it. Before just apologising, he stopped. He did not apologise. That is not his intention. He will never apologise. He thinks it is good. I am just putting one question to you Sir. Shall I come to this House...*(Interruptions)* with my bodyguard? Should I be protected physically in this House? I seek this assurance from you, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : You will be fully protected. I think, it is the obligation of all of us. You will be fully protected. Not only you, Shri Swain, but every hon. Member of this House has the right to be protected and I am sure, in future, all of us realise that what has happened is totally condemnable and it should never be repeated. Otherwise, the strongest possible action will be taken. I can assure you that if today's warning is not heeded, then nobody will be spared, whichever side he may belong to. I can assure you this so long as I am here.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, please sit down. Do not go into all these things. I have called Shri Madhusudan Reddy. They are patiently waiting since morning. At my request they have come and have expressed regret for yesterday's thing. You can come in the front. Mr. Reddy.

15.10 hrs.

SUBMISSIONS BY MEMBERS

(I) RE : Need to create a Separate State of Telangana

[English]

SHRI MADHUSUDAN REDDY (Adilabad) : Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for giving me an opportunity to speak from the front rows.

First of all, thank the hon. Speaker for according me permission to speak on my motion for Adjournment on an important issue pertaining to my region Telangana. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the struggle of Telangana originated not out of a whisper, but it is a story of suppression, oppression, discouragement and humiliation for the last 50 years. The people of Telangana are silently bearing all injustice being meted out to them very patiently hoping that there would be a dawn some day and justice may prevail and justice may be done to the people of Telangana.

During the last general election, we contested the election as a pre-poll ally to the Congress Party. The net result was sweeping victory for the Congress and its allies throughout Andhra Pradesh. Our slogan and our simple election manifesto was – a single point – creation of a separate State of Telangana. At that time, hon. Pranabda, who was looking after the election scenario, very categorically assured our leader Shri K. Chandra Shekhar Rao the same in case Telugu Desam Party was routed and Congress Party was elected to power in Andhra Pradesh. If I am not wrong, in Himachal Bhawan, an assurance was given by the Congress High Command that definitely Telangana State would be in our hands. So, with that categorical assurance from the highest level of the Party, we alongwith the Congress, both of us, by wearing *dupatta* said: "Jai Telangana". Even the top leaders like Sonia Gandhiji, Rajshekhkar Reddy and all Congress leaders who are my brothers, who are sitting here, also very enthusiastically said: "Jai Telangana". With the "Jai Telangana" slogan, the people rose to the occasion and voted massively thereby in Telangana region. Only one seat could be won by Telugu Desam Party out of 16 MP seats. All the 15 MP seats were captured by the Congress and TRS combine alongwith the allies like the Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and one MIM.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI (Hyderabad) : I am not aligned to them...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You have made your point. Everybody is so touchy in this House.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHUSUDAN REDDY : So, only one seat has gone to Telugu Desam Party and all the remaining 15 seats were captured by the Congress Party and its friends. Thereafter, in the Assembly also, we contested the elections. There also, we got more than two-third majority in the House. the only slogan at that time from the mouth of the Congress and from the mouth of the TRS was: "Jai

Telangana". So, after this, we have joined the UPA Government with the categorical assurance that Telangana State would be given as per the sentiments and the mandate of the people of Telangana. After arriving at a consensus among the partners of the UPA, the Common Minimum Programme was drafted. The hon. President of India, while addressing both the Houses gave an assurance to this effect. Thereafter a Sub-Committee of the UPA under the chairmanship of hon. Defence Minister and two other allies from RJD and DMK was formed. At that time it was assured that within 15 days a report would be tabled by the UPA in favour of Telangana. These 15 days have gone to 8 weeks. While declaring or announcing the Committee, the hon. President of the Congress Party of India, Madam Sonia Gandhi stated that within 8 weeks the report would be tabled in the House. Sir, eight weeks have gone; 80 weeks also have passed; even till date there is no whisper, there is no talk and there is no gesture from the Congress Party. All pre-poll allies have given letters; majority of the Parties have given their consent for the formation of Telangana State. Even the Parties from the other side also have openly expressed their intention to support the desire of Telangana. Two years have elapsed till this date. The Congress Party is putting one or the other obstacle saying that BJP has not come out openly; when the BJP comes out openly, definitely they will consider Telangana matter. It is on record. At the AICC Session of Hyderabad, the Chairman of the Sub-Committee openly declared that if BJP give their consent, he will not take an hour time to draft his report and submit the same.

Then, the BJP was kind enough to come out with a statement. They have passed a Resolution in their National Executive Committee. We are very much thankful and indebted to them. The people of Telangana are indebted to them. They have come out openly with a statement. All the UPA partners were kind enough and they have openly supported, and we are also indebted to all the partners of UPA for having given their support.

Some three days back, certain development had taken place. A meeting of the UPA Coordination Committee was

called. It was stated that in that meeting there was no consensus among the political parties of UPA, and, therefore, opinion could not be arrived at.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, what is the meaning of 'consensus'? In a democracy, 'consensus' means not the concurrence, and it is the wish of the majority people which would prevail anywhere in a democratic set up. So, in this case also, more than half the parties, including the parties on the other side are openly supporting. I do not know what is the obstacle for the Congress Party to spell out their stand. Now, they say: "It is the Resolution of the Congress Working Committee that a second SRC has to be set up. That is the policy of our CWC." My submission is this. If that is so, why have you not mentioned this fact in the Common Minimum Programme. In that, you have simply mentioned that a separate Telangana State would be considered at an appropriate time. You have never mentioned that a second State Reorganization Commission would be set up. In the setting up of the Sub-Committee also, there was no mention of the second SRC. The Congress Party, for the last two years, never gave any letter to the Sub-Committee saying that this is our official stand. Unfortunately, after all all these happened, now they are saying that the second SRC is to be established. Sir, this is nothing but* the people of Telangana. The Congress Party has purposely...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : That word is unparliamentary.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN REDDY : I withdraw that word. I am sorry. I am a junior Member. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You are a very considerate person and a very respected Member.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN REDDY : Sir, the Congress Party is misleading the people by making different stands of different dimensions at different stations. At Hyderabad some leaders say something and at Delhi some leaders say some other thing, and thereby the people of Telangana are now in confusion.

*Not recorded.

[Shri Madhusudan Reddy]

So, after observing all these things, my leader and the President of TRS, Shri K. Chandrasekhar Rao, and another leader, Shri A. Narendra, both of them have tendered their resignation from the Union Council of Ministers in protest against the attitude of the UPA Government. Thereafter, Shri K. Chandrasekhar Rao is on indefinite fast. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I am again requesting him, through you, to break his fast. At least ten times I have made that request. I am sure that the entire House joins me in requesting him to break his fast. Of course, his issue remains. I am sure, all of you will join me in requesting him to break his fast. Please tell him that this is the unanimous request of this House.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN REDDY : Sir, our Party is very much indebted for the concern shown to my leader by this House. I will definitely convey the sentiment of this House to my leader. ...*(Interruptions)*

Sir, now his condition is also deteriorating. He is a blood pressure patient. He is having hypertension. The doctors are examining him hour by hour. If at all, any untoward thing happens...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : No, it would not.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN REDDY : It is a live volcano in Telangana. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : That should not be allowed to burst.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN REDDY : Let that volcano not be made to burst. I request this House to kindly be sympathetic with our cause, which is a genuine one, which is a reasonable one, and we all would be respectful to the Fourteenth Lok Sabha...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You have spoken very well.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN REDDY : A historical decision

regarding the formation of Telangana State be taken. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ravinder Naik, do you want to join him? You can just associate with him.

SHRI RAVINDER NAIK DHARAVATH (Warangal) : Sir, I would like to speak.

MR. SPEAKER : All right.

[Translation]

SHRI RAVINDER NAIK DHARAVATH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you on behalf of the people of Telangana for showing sympathy towards the problem of Telangana. I pay my regards to the whole of the House for the sympathy shown by the House towards our leaders. I would like to describe the condition of Telangana in the following few lines:—

"Tamam umra mein ek ajanabi ke ghar me raha
Safar na hote hue bhi kisi safar me raha
Honge ve log jinhe hoge khabar sitaron ki
Lekin yeh mera desh to roti ki fikar me raha."

Sir, the condition of Telangana is poor for last 50 years. The demand for Telangana is not a new one. The nation got freedom in 1947 but Telangana got freedom in 1948. It was a separate state from 1948 to 1950 under the name of Hyderabad. There were many resources in Telangana but to get separation from the state of Madras the people of Andhra state demanded for separate state and after that separation Telangana was merged with the state of Andhra.

Sir, I would like to tell a historical fact our first Prime Minister Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru had said, "Innocent Telangana is being merged with smart Andhra. Whether this merger will go on otherwise at any time Telangana may get separated" Despite having a lot of resources in Telangana it's condition is quite pitiable. Today, the state of Andhra is exploiting Telangana. Due to poverty the

tribals kill or sell their infants. Because of that time and again the movement is going on for last 50 years.

Sir, Congress Leader Dr. M. Chenna Reddy started a movement for Telangana state in 1969. At that time out of the 14 Parliamentary seats Telangana Praja Samiti got 11 Parliamentary seats. This movement is going on from that time to till date. A movement was also organised for a separate Andhra state.

Sir, I would like to tell in brief how the Telangana state is being suppressed. In the year 2000, when Mr. Chandrababu Naidu was a powerful leader, at that time the condition of the Congress party was not so good. The Congressmen were desperately looking for a way how to defeat Mr. Chandrababu Naidu. It is a well known to all that at that time Mr. Chandrashekhar Rao voiced for Telangana and in the year 2001 formed the Telangana Rashtra Samiti. At that time Mr. Y.S. Rajsekhar Reddy to Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh was the leader of opposition. At that time he was not in power, but with the support of 41 MLA's of Telangana region of the congress party he met congress Chairperson Mrs. Sonia Gandhi and handed over a memorandum for a separate Telangana state. It was revealed by him recently. We contested election in 2004 with full force and got the mandate. Not only from Telangana region, Andhra region and Rayalseema but in coalition with T.R.S. party demanding for separate Telangana state got the mandate from all the regions of the states.

Sir, Now they ask us time and again that what happened in municipal elections and panchayat elections. I would like to tell them the municipal election and panchayat elections were not contested in the name of Telangana state, these are local body elections. We used to understand that Mrs. Sonia Gandhi is a leader of new era and Chairperson of the Congress Party, so she will agree to the demand of Telangana state and will do justice with us. We showed full confidence in her. In the recent past we have been waiting for a report of U.P.A. Committee constituted in this regard, but the said report have not been

submitted as yet. That is why both of our leaders resigned from the post of minister, the M.L.As of the congress party have to see what is the condition of Telangana for last 50 years and what is going on there. A strategy has to be finalised how to get rid off this situation. At about 90 per cent of the population of Telangana area belongs to O.B.C., SC, ST and minority community whose voices have been suppressed down by the riches, musclemen and leader in power Mrs. Sonia Gandhi is also withdrawing against them, I think so. The congress party should reconsider over it. What more should I speak about the congress party, you all know that...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please conclude, I have given you full opportunity.

[Translation]

SHRI RAVINDER NAIK DHARAVATH : Sir, after the agitation of 1969 whether the UPA Govt. might be ignoring our issue, whether we lost our first struggle of freedom in 1857 but the second time we fought under the leadership of Gandhiji, we got the freedom. In the same way, we are not going to loose our heart but will go to the public with double confidence and we will achieve our demand under the leadership of our leader KCR. Today, injustice is being done to Telangana whether it is issue of water or any other matter. I will give an example. In Andhra Pradesh 43 per cent of total population is from Telangana but there are only 8 employees from Telangana in Andhra Pradesh secretariat. Apart from this not a single person got an opportunity to become Advocate General in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh during last 50 years. For the development of our backward area the constitution of 2 separate Telangana state is very much required. I beg support of all the members of the House for constituting separate state of Telangana. We had full confidence in Sonijai and still show full confidence in her. She will get a lot of fame if she does not bow against the rich and influential persons. Now it is on her. For self respect, self

[SHRI Ravinder Naik Dharavath]

governance constitution of Telangana state is necessary. I thank you and all the members on behalf of the people of Telangana.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Naik, you have presented yourself very well.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Be brief.

[English]

No, it is 3.30 p.m. We are still in matters of urgent public importance. Calling Attention matters will be taken up tomorrow.

15.32 hrs.

(II) Re: Rising prices of essential commodities in the country.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the most burning issue before the country i.e. price rise had been discussed when Lok Sabha session commenced from July 24 and after the discussion, hon'ble Finance Minister had assured the House that the Government will tackle the problems of inflation. The same kind of assurance had been given when Muslims of Demands for Supplement any Grants introduced by hon'ble Finance Minister were discussed. But it is a matter of regret that despite these assurances the prices have increased by 20-25 per cent. The price of wheat has reached upto Rs. 10 per Kg. in Delhi and Rs.14 per Kg. in Mumbai. In some parts of the country, wheat prices have reached upto Rs.20 per Kg. The production of Sugar is more than

the requirement of the consumers in our country, but still sugar prices have reached upto Rs.27 per Kg. The same position is with the pulses. Prices of pulses are sky rocketting.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the government have decided to import wheat in large quantity and according to the Ministry of Food, 2.37 lacs tonnes have already been imported our country. The most important thing is that the quality of wheat is so poor and quantity of pesticides residues in it is so high that many states have refused to accept it.

We appreciate your concerns. Sometimes you get angry. But Lok Sabha is in session and we are responsible to the people. We are here to plead for the people...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : All think like that.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Government is not sensitive towards a serious matter like price rise. The Government have not been able to control the prices. News items published in the news papers today have reported that the Government will not be able to rein in the inflating even in the next five months. Leader of the House is sitting here and through you I would like to request that either he or she. Finance Minister should come and explain in the House as to how he propose to control the prices. It is a very serious matter....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Basu Deb Acharia.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (Srikakulam) : Sir, I wish to associate myself with hon. Member Shri Ramjilal Suman. it is a matter of urgent public importance. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : All hon. Members who wish to associate themselves with the matter, may please send their names. I cannot call everybody. You know that.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ramswaroop Koli, Shri Kiran Rijju, Shri Avinash Rai Khanna, Shri Kishan Singh Sangwan, Shri Virendra Kumar, Shri Dushyant Singh, Shri Subhash Maharia, Shri Srichand Kriplani, Shri Ashok Pradhan, Dr. Satyanarayan Jatiya, Shri Braja Kishore Tripathi, Shri C.K. Chandrappan, Shri Raghunath Jha, Shri Paras Nath Yadav, Shri Ravi Prakash Verma, Shri Usha Verma, Shri Chandra Bhushan Singh, Shri Shailendra Kumar, Shri Rajnarayan Budholia, Shri Jai Prakash, Shri Rajender Kumar, Shri Harikewal Prasad, Shri G. Karunakara Reddy, Shrimati Bhavna Pundalikrao Gawali have been allowed to associate with this issue.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : Hon. Speaker has called me. Please let me speak. I have given notice. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : All your names will be recorded. Please send notice.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, for the last three days I have been giving notice. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Now Shri Abdul Rashid Shaheen to speak.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, you are aware that generally, I do not allow these things. But it is a matter of concern for the people and you have rightly raised it. I have allowed you. I cannot allow everybody to speak.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Therefore, all your names will be recorded with full significance. Shri Abdul Rashid Shaheen to speak now.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, you called my name. ...*(Interruptions)* For the last three days I have been giving notice on this subject. ...*(Interruptions)* You called my name. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I cannot compel any hon. Minister to respond, to say something or not to say something.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Leader of the House is sitting here and he should explain as to what steps they propose to take and tell us about the steps being taken by the Government on this issue? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : What is this. This is a new system.

[English]

This is a new system. I will not allow it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, please allow me to speak...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Are you not willing to run the House. I know that whatever you speak about the House has no substance. It you don't want to run the House then well. I will adjourn the House and go.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Your name is recorded. What more can I do? Only Shri Basu Deb Acharia and Shri Ramji Lal Suman have given notices.

[Translation]

You have not give any notice. Ramji Lal Sumanji has given the notice, he has given the notice.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Basu Deb Acharia to speak for one minute.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, please allow me to speak. ... (Interruptions) Sir, while replying to the debate on rise in prices of essential commodities, the hon. Minister of Finance has assured the House that the Government will take every step to make all the essential commodities available and that too at the affordable prices. We have made several suggestions in this regard. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : What are you rising now? You have raised it already. The hon. Leader of the House is here. Hon. Minister are here.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Naidu, standing in this fashion will not do? [English] You are the leader of an All-India Party and you are standing here.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : We have made several suggestions like withdrawal of true and forward trading and strengthening of the Essential Commodities Act. The Government has failed to contain and control the prices. The prices are rising abnormally and the condition of the people is becoming difficult ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Only Shri Shaheen's speech will be recorded.

(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

[Translation]

SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN (Baramulla) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, unfortunately a natural calamity has be fallen Tangdar and Uri area of my constituency on 8 Oct. 2005 which has caused widespread destruction to life and property.

[English]

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Only Shri Shaheen's statement is recorded henceforth.

(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN : I wanted to raise the voice of those people in this House. But I have reached at this stage after going through a war like situation to get this opportunity to raise the concerns of the hopeless people. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. I would like to tell this House through you, Sir that a natural calamity struck on 8 Oct., 2005 and caused widespread destruction to house and took a away many lives in Tangdar and Uri areas of my constituency. It was the grace of the God that many lives on our side were not lost but properties were damaged, but on the other side of the border, thousands of people were killed. Even then 567 people have been killed on our state and about 66 thousand houses in Kupwara district and 92 thousand houses in Baramula district have been destroyed. Eight thousand houses out of them were completely destroyed in Tangdar, Kupwara with no trace of them left. Forward border line of our country is in Kupwara where helpless people did no get any opportunity to go anywhere. Had the army not provided small wages, they would have been starved. I would like to compliment our Government that when the International Community offered to build houses and rehabilitate these helpless people It declined

*Not recorded.

the offer confidently and stated that the country was capable to build houses for them and to rehabilitate them on its own. But I would like to ask the Government that a year is about to be completed and only a month and fifteen days are remaining but those houses are yet to be built and the children there will continue to suffer in shivering cold in sub Zero temperatures during the coming winter while calling this Government as a non-performing one I would like to say that it should take the responsibility of the victims of this natural calamity. They have already spent the first installment of Rupees forty thousands paid to them and their houses remain in the same condition. I would like to urge the Government to take immediate actions for them before the onset of winter. If you want, I can name a few NGO's who provided us help in the house of need. Some of them are U.N. organizations and some are national organizations who provided immediate help to us and it made the things easier for us. But the work expected from the Government has not been done. On behalf of the people of Uri and Tangdar of Baramulla, and on behalf of these children and women who will have to lives in the open in minus 12° centigrade of temperature in this winter, I appeal to the Government not to act like this and give their share...

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You have expressed your views very smartly.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It is matter of regret.

(Interruptions)

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA (Ujjain) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a very difficult scenario in the country due to natural calamity. A dreadful condition prevails in the country today due to heavy rains and drought. People are facing this problem in many states of the country and the central

assistance required in these circumstances as not being thought of by the Union Government. I urge through you Sir, that life has been thrown out of ears due to heavy rains in many districts of Madhya Pradesh, on the other hand people are facing mistries in Northern and Eastern Madhya Pradesh due to draught. Heavy rains have caused too much damage to life and property, 121 people have died, 8 persons are not traceable, 8819 animals have died and 77080 houses have been damaged by the rain. 5.5 lakh people are affected due to the flood caused by the heavy rain and crops in 3.5 lac acres of land have been damaged. Madhya Pradesh Government have sought rupees 1250 crore from the Union Government in viewn of the critical situation of the State, but the Central Government have not said any thing regarding providing assistance to Madhya Pradesh. I would like to urge upon the hon'ble Prime Minister to provide help to the people in this difficult conditions of Madhya Pradesh by sanctioning rupees 1250 crore. Sir, I would like to make only this request to the Government through you Sir.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Other matters will be taken up later in the evening.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have given the notice.

MR. SPEAKER : You know that we have decided that it will be taken up in parts.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

MR. SPEAKER : Matters under Rule 377 listed for the day are treated as laid on the Table of the House.

*Treated as laid on the Table.

(I) Need to ban the use of paper and plastic material for making National flag

[Translation]

DR. RAJESH MISHRA (Varanasi) : Sir, the national flag of a country is the symbol of its independence and prestige and it is the duty of every citizen to respect the national flag. In India, national festivals are celebrated with great pomp and show and on the occasions of these festivals millions of tricolour flags made of paper and plastic material are used but it is highly regrettable that the very next day these flags are thrown on the roads, and into drains and dustbins, which is a disrespect to the national flag. It is a matter of serious concern because our brave freedom fighters sacrificed their lives while protecting the prestige of national flag and not allowed it to fall down but today the citizens of this country are enjoying this freedom as a legacy of their sacrifices and are not hesitating in showing disrespect to their national flag by moving over these paper and plastic material tricolour national flags. As per to provisions of 'The prevention of insults to national honour Act' there is a provision for punishment. I urge upon the Government that the tricolour national flags made of paper and plastic should be banned and a provision should be made for hosting only Khadi tricolour national flags on the occasion of such festivals.

(II) Need to upgrade Berhampore Doordarshan Relay Centre in West Bengal into a full fledged transmission centre

[English]

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY (Berhampore, West Bengal) : The quality of Bengali news originating from Akashwani, Delhi has been degrading much to the discomfort of the people of West Bengal. The accent and presentation of news including other programmes also do no longer generate enthusiasm among the common people who don't have other alternative but to resort to AIR and DD news to satiate their academic and cultural

needs. Once upon a time, the AIR was abuzz by the voice of no fewer than Iva-Nag, Nilima Sanyal and Bijon Boce who had become the household names in Bengal. Hey days of radio broadcast have been evaporated. Taking advantage of the situation Bangladesh radio had made a bold ingress into the radio loving populists of West Bengal. I shall implore the Ministry to restore the descending glory of AIR Bengal version and FM Band. District Murshidabad consists of 58 lakhs population who predominately reside in rural areas without having any modern communication facilities. The District owns one DD relay centre in Berhampore but the long standing demand of the people in this area that the said relay centre should be transformed into a full fledged transmission centre by absorbing the local talents who are in plenty and in view of the enormous potentialities in terms of the cultural diversities of these district.

(III) Need to take rehabilitation measures in hail-storm affected areas in Godda Parliamentary Constituency, Jharkhand

[Translation]

SHRI FURKAN ANSARI (Godda) : Sir, last months heavy rain and hailstorm in approximately 79 villages on my Parliamentary Constituency, Godda Jharkhand has caused huge loss of lives and property. This sudden hailstorm and rain have caused huge loss of lives and property and have destroyed crops in the district. This is a tribal and Harijan populated area. The main source of their livelihood is agriculture. This natural calamity has caused death of four people and completely destroyed houses of approximately five thousand families and nearly thirteen thousand houses have been partly damaged. Thousands of pet animals have died/washed away by flood. All types of crops have been destroyed. Villages situated near Triveni Dam suffered heavy loss due to breaking of embankment. A number of bridges have been destroyed due to which affected villages have lost their direct contact with district headquarters. The state Government has completely failed on all fronts in bringing things back to normalcy.

Therefore, through you I would like to draw the attention of the Union Government to it and request to take immediate steps for rehabilitation and bringing life back to normalcy in the affected villages and affected farmers and poor villagers should be given financial assistance at the earliest.

(iv) Need to check alleged irregularities in the functioning of South-Eastern Coal Limited

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR DUBEY (Dhanbad) : Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards the loss of crores of rupees to Coal companies because of the collusion between the officers of the Company and private contractors in Coal Companies and would like to tell that the following facts reveal that officers of South Eastern Coal Limited a unit of Coal India Limited's involvement the MOU signed between DGR-CIL and ESM Contractor, are working in collusion with Messer's Aryan under the conspiracy in order to give more and more benefit to the contractor. Followings facts indicate the same:-

1. No provision of unloading plant on way-bridge.
2. Though total capacity is only 7.00 million, still permission of raising 10.71 million ton raw coal is given to M/S Aryan and instead of 'F' grade Coal, D/F grade Coal is given to M/S Aryan, which has caused loss of crore of rupees to the company.
3. To pay 3 to 4 times more for approx distance of 9 to 10 kms. of mine to surface, face to surface ignoring MOU signed between GDR-CIL and ESM contractor.
4. According to the provision of MOU, payment should be made to the contractor on the rate fixed by M/S Water House and Industrial Engineering Department but ignoring this

provision and it is being made on higher rate.

5. To give permission to M/S Aryan for setting up washery on dump land declared by CMPDIL ignoring all legal aspects.
6. Non-observance of Coal India Limited's enquiry report letter No. CIL/Re.J./101/M/1470 dated 5.11.2004, puts a question mark on the working of South-Eastern Coal Limited.

Hence, I demand from the Government that in view of the above facts necessary action may be taken by getting it investigated by the vigilance department. So that loss of crores of rupees to the Coal Companies can be stopped.

(v) Need to upgrade Satrasal T.V. Relay Centre in Dhubri district, Assam into a Production Centre

[English]

SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN (Dhubri) : The Satrasal T.V. Relay Centre in Dhubri District, under my constituency, is situated in the Indo-Bangladesh Border. It is ready for commissioning. People of the area are forced to view the programmes of Bangladesh, as this area has little coverage of Doordarshan programmes. It deserves immediate inauguration.

The undivided Goalpara district has a distinct and unique Loka Sanskriti known as Goalparia Lok-Sanskriti. This is similar to the cultures of part of the North-Bengal and also a considerable portion of present Bangladesh bordering Dhubri District. But due to absence of its proper production and publicity it is dying day by day. Further the Information and Broadcasting Ministry has a special duty to consider it.

In view of the above circumstances, I urge upon the Government to upgrade Satrasal Relay Centre into a Production Centre and to take early necessary action for commissioning it.

(vi) Need to provide B.S.N.L. Mobile Services in Forbisganj, Jogbani and Narpatganj in Araria Parliamentary Constituency, Bihar

[Translation]

SHRI SUKDEO PASWAN (Araria) : Sir, BSNL mobile services in Forbisganj, Jogbani and Narpatganj in my Parliamentary Constituency, Araria, have not been started so far. This area is adjoining Nepal border. Though, we have been demanding for it for a long time but the Government has not given permission for starting mobile services from here so far. Trade takes place between India and Nepal from here. Jogbani is the only alternate way to Nepal. In Bihar, other border places like Madhubani, Raksaul, Siliguri etc. have BSNL mobile services, whereas it is not being started from Forbisganj and Jogbani. DOT, IB and TEC teams have inspected these areas but the matter is pending with the Home Ministry.

Hence, through this House, I would like to request the Hon. Communication and Home Minister to start mobile services from Forbisganj, Jogbani and Narpatganj immediately in this era of information revolution.

(vii) Need to conduct an examination for awarding R.M.P. degree to experienced private practitioners of Rajasthan

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur) : Sir, in Rajasthan, private medical practitioners have their association and approximately 3000 doctors are its members. It is a registered association. Members of this association are well experienced medical practitioners and provide initial medical aid to the rural and helpless people. They are doing practice in every village. These people provide cheap and at few places even free service to the people after rural areas and the poor. If these well experienced private practitioners are awarded RMP degree of conducting an examination, they will also get recognition and they will legally provide their services to the people.

(viii) Need to take adequate measures for preventing female foeticide in the country

SHRIMATI NEETA PATERIYA (Seoni) : Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Central Government towards the atrocities being committed against women in various parts of the states in the country. The cases of female foeticide being reported across the country through media as well as the yawning gap in the male and female population as revealed by the census figures show the gravity of the problem. In certain states and districts, and even in the villages, this gap has so widened so much that the number of girls has rested on a very low count. My request is that the Government should take strict steps with immediate effect to tackle such a big problem in the country and a stringent action should be taken against the private hospitals, found involved in cases of foeticide.

(ix) Need to take steps to check the growing brackishness of water in Ankaleshwar, Hasaut and Nagram in Bharuch Parliamentary Constituency in Gujarat

SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA (Bharuch) : Sir, in the areas of my parliamentary constituency Bharuch like Ankaleshwar, Hasaut, Nagram, brackishness of water is mounting. This brackish water is not fit for drinking. If someone drinks it, he suffers from many kinds of diseases and he becomes physically handicapped. The brackish water is remitting in reduced fertility of the land decreases and gradually the land is turning infertile and barren. I have brought the matter to the notice of authorities in writing several times. But it is regretted that no action has been taken so far in this regard.

It is, therefore, requested from the Government that the immediate survey may be conducted regarding the above mentioned problems and these problems may be tackled.

**(x) Need to revive Cement Plant situated
at Naya Gaon district Neemach,
Madhya Pradesh**

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY (Mandsaur): Sir, there are so many cement plants run by cement corporation of India which have been closed even though they were economically viable and now-a-days their machineries and assets worth crores of rupees are on the verge of destruction for want of any decision. Similarly, there is a cement plant set up at Nayagaon village in Neemach district of Madhya Pradesh which is lying closed for the years only because that it has no power. The Government do not have any plan either to revive such plants or to sell them. Due to such dilly dally approach of the Government, encroachment on the land of such a cement plant is building up and heavy losses are being incurred upon the public property. At the same time, machineries worth crores of rupees in those plants has been rendered useless while lakhs of rupees are being paid to the employees salary.

I, therefore, request the Government that it take immediate decision in this regard so that the valuable machineries could be saved from being destroyed and the land of crores of rupees, which is lying useless and on which encroachment is building up, could be used properly. It is better that the outstanding bill of the power against the cement plant situated at Nayagaon in the district of Neemach should be paid to the Madhya Pradesh Electricity Board and this plant be made operational once again by making it revived. If the Government decide not to make it operational they should take a concrete decision about its land, machineries, assets and the employees so that the assets could be saved from being destroyed.

**(xi) Need to revive Balari bar channel in
West Bengal in order to save Haldia
Dock Complex**

[English]

SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH (Tamluk) : Haldia Dock

Complex which handled about 42 Million MT Cargo last year is now in peril due to closure of balari bar. All Kolkata bound ships had been navigating through balari bar but this channel has been closed because of huge siltation in this area. Now Kolkata bound ships are navigating through Rangapala Channel.

Only Northern guide was constructed by Calcutta Post Trust. But construction of Southern guide wall, River protection training works, shore disposal of dredged soil have been taken up. Only construction of Northern guide wall has made disastrous impact on channel resulting the closure of balaria bar. This unwise decision of the KOPT has sealed the fate of Haldia Dock Complex.

In view of the above I strongly propose the following short-terms and long-terms measures for immediate implementation.

Short-term measures

- (1) Capital Dredging,
- (2) Shore Disposal,
- (3) Construction of Southern Guide wall,
- (4) River Protection,
- (5) River Training,
- (6) Transloading in Sandhead and konika Sand,
- (7) Construction of Concrete pillars for laying pipeline for transportation of crude oil and chemical cargo upto 50 KM towards Sandhead from Contal/Digha in the District of Purba Medinipur.

Long-term measure

Deep Sea Port.

Deep Sea Port is feasible from Contal/Digha shore by constructing a bridge of 50 KM up deep water pocket

[Shri Lakshman Seth]

in an adjoining area of Sand head having 30 metre drafts.

I would request Hon'ble Prime Minister and Minister of Shipping to address these problems in positive manner as to save Haldia Dock Complete from imminent death.

(xii) Need to open Sugar Mills in various parts of Bihar

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah) : Sir, at the time of independence, north Bihar was a leading sugarcane growing area and 25 per cent production of the total sugar production all over the country was from by the sugar mills situated in this area. Now one-third of these mills have been closed and the rest, of them irrespecting of their location are also on the verge of closure due to which farmers of this area producing sugarcanes have to face hardship. Thus, the industrial development in this area is not taking place. Approximately all sugar mills run by Bihar State Sugar Corporation are lying closed for years sending the workers jobless. Outstanding dues of farmers have not been cleared.

The situation is very disappointing, as the outstanding dues are not being cleared either to the workers or to the farmers.

After independence, not a single sugar mill has been set up in Bihar either in public sector or in cooperative and private sector. There were 32 sugar mills at that time. Now-a-days only 6 sugar mills are running in private sector. There is a great potential of sugar industry in Bihar.

My demand is that necessary steps should be taken to set up the sugar mills in Bettiah, Chanpatiah, Nautan, Lauriya, Sugauli, Chakiya, Motihari, Motipur, Sakari and Oraul.

[English]

(xiii) Need to construct a road passing through Kishanpur Sanctuary in Kheeri Parliamentary Constituency, Uttar Pradesh

[Translation]

SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA (Kheri) : Sir, there is a big forest area in my parliamentary constituency which has been turned into Kishanpur sanctuary under the Dam Protection Project. So many villages like Maharajnagar, Kamp, Elanganj, Kishanpur etc. are situated since antiquity in this sanctuary and other forest areas. There is no thorough fare leading to these villages. The Department of Forests restricts the use of the forest roads as a through fare due to which the villagers have always to pay penalty. Due to all these reasons, all the projects of Government of India have been inaccessible to these villages and about 15 thousand population are becoming extremely backward and all development works are pending.

It is, therefore, requested that the Government of India may grant permission for the construction of the pucca roads passing through the Kishanpur sanctuary.

(xiv) Need to provide employment to the local people of Nallathur, district Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu in the new project of Madras Atomic Power Station

[English]

PROF. K.M. KADER MOHIDEEN (Vellore) : The Madras Atomic Power Station at Kalpakkam near Chennai is drawing ground water for the past thirty years using more than 25 giant bore wells for its projects like MAPS, Bhavini, IGCAR, G.So. MDG, etc. and for its Power Station. Due to this excessive drawal of the ground water the neighbouring, villagers have found their fertile agricultural lands and wells becoming dry. The villagers have become jobless and income less.

At this juncture the Madras Atomic Power Station has set up an additional project to draw additional ground water. This has caused much discontent among the villagers and they have resorted to demonstration and road rockas. The officials of Atomic Power Station and the Kanchipuram district officials held a Peace Committee Meeting in which the Directors of the Atomic Power Station assured the Village Panchayat presidents and the villagers of giving jobs to 200 persons, particularly the people from Nallathur Panchayat Union. On this basis of assurance for jobs the villagers have agreed for setting up new projects and new bore wells for drawing ground water from their areas. The villagers have submitted applications for the jobs as assured. But till date the villagers are not given any jobs. At the same time people from outside are getting jobs, the villagers complain.

The villagers, having abandoned the agricultural operations are practically on the verge of starving. They are anxiously waiting for favourable treatment from the Madras Atomic Power Station.

I urge upon the Hon'ble Minister for Power through you, Sir, that the villagers, particularly the Nallathur youths shall be selected for suitable jobs by the Atomic Power Station according to their qualifications. Helping the helpless is the real motto of the welfare State.

**(xv) Need to accord sanction for opening
of a Kendriya Vidyalaya at Bhadrak
district in Orissa**

SHRI ARJUN SETHI (Bhadrak) : It is a matter of great significance that the Government of India have decided to open a large number of Kendriya Vidyalayas all over the country. I being the representative of the people of Bhadrak district of Orissa state; I deem it my responsibility to bring to your kind notice and the notice of the august House as well that Bhadrak has no Kendriya Vidyalaya at present. Many times I have had drawn the attentions of the Government at the centre as well as the personal attention of the Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development. However, in one of his replies to my letter addressed to

his personal self Hon'ble Minister has assured me "that the proposal for opening a Kendriya Vidyalaya at Bhadrak has been included in the list of mature Proposals that fulfill all requisites for setting up a new K.V. and a final decision will be taken soon."

The current year academic session has already begun and admission process to be over soon. Unless the decision to open the Kendriya Vidyalaya at Bhadrak district is taken immediately we shall have to wait for an another year.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government to accord the sanction of opening the much needed Kendriya Vidyalaya at Bhadrak immediately to facilitate admission of students in the current academic year 2006-07, and to solve the long standing demand of the people in my constituency.

**(xvi) Need to Install Doppler Radar System
in Koyana region of district Satara,
Maharashtra**

SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL (Karad) : Koyana region and Mahabaleshwar region in Satara District of Maharashtra are located in the western ghats of India.

The area receives heavy rainfall, due to which flood situation arises in Krishna and Koyana rivers causing damage to life and property for Karad and Sangli cities. Koyana Dam on Koyana River, Dhorn Dam on Krishna River. Kanher Dam on Venna river. Warana Dam on Warana river are some of the major dams in these area. Simultaneous discharge of excess water from these dams causes flood which is experienced in the last two years.

Heavy precipitation at Mahabaleshwar is the main cause of floods. Water takes 8 hours from Mahabaleshwar to reach Koyana Dam. Storage and discharge management in heavy rains become a difficulty and thus unpredictable situations, cause floods.

[Shri Shrinivas Dadasaheb Patil]

Forecasting of heavy rainfall thus would benefit the discharge of water management from these dams, hence a state-of-the-art Doppler Radar System in the Koyana region may be installed on priority.

(xvii) Need to formulate a mechanism for preventing the incidents of fraudulent NRI marriages in Punjab and other parts of the country

SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA (Sangrur) : The incidents of fraudulent NRI marriages are on the rise, but the crime goes largely unpunished. Many desperate women abroad are duped or dumped by their NRI's husbands and thousands of other languishing in their village homes waiting for the call from abroad that never comes. Lying, cheating, false promises, unreasonable dowry demands are just some of the reason behind these unhappy marriages. There are nearly 15000 women deserted by NRI's in Punjab alone. Stranded in a foreign country, often without any financial support, they have no one to turn to except the Indian Government. There is an urgent need for some institutional mechanism of getting authentic information before these long-distance marriages are finalized. India Mission abroad could help in this regard. Government should also consider bringing in a comprehensive regulation/legislation to ensure that all protection be accorded by law to Indian women, with regard to marriage, divorce, maintenance, inheritance and custody of children etc.

(xviii) Need to release the Central Government's share to the North Bengal State Transport Corporation for the current year

SHRI HITEN BARMAN (Cooch Behar) : The North Bengal State Transport Corporation was established on 15th April 1960 under the Road Transport Corporation Act, 1950. At the time of its formation the Government of India had agreed that the contribution by the State and Central Government would be in the ratio of 2:1. Later on 1st April

1983 the contribution to the Corporation was subsequently transferred from the Ministry of Railway to the Ministry of Shipping and Transport. From the year 1960-61 to 1986-87 the capital contribution provided by the Central Government is to the tune of Rs. 4,82,51,500.00. From the year 1987-88 onwards there is irregularity in the contribution of Central Government and further it was fully stopped by the Central Government from the year 1992-93. As per the agreement, Central Government has to give the Central Share but instead it is fully stopped and due to the Corporation is not able to run and it is on the verge of closure. This North Bengal State Transport Corporation is the only industry in North Bengal and the Central Government should save it. Sir, I strongly urge upon the Hon'ble Minister of Surface Transport and request him to take up this very important issue and release the Central Share for the current year to the North Bengal State Transport Corporation immediately and also request him to clear the backlog i.e. the Central Share for the earlier years, at the earliest.

(xix) Need to construct bridges over Rangasadi and Kakol rivers under NLCPR fund for inter-state connectivity between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (Lakhimpur) : I like to draw attention of the government regarding urgent necessity of constructing two bridges required for inter-state connectivity between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh besides providing an alternate route to NH52 bypassing the Lakhimpur Town. A bridge over Rangasadi river connecting either Gendhali-Nowbolcha-G.K. Dutta Road at Gendhali ghat or Panigaon-Kharkati-Ahomoni-Mirigaon Road at Phatasuti ghat is urgently required not only to serve a population of 98,000 mostly from farming ST, SC and minority community but would also serve as an alternate route to NH52 through NLKB Road in case of emergency of the existing bridge which is already outdated and unable to meet the present requirement. Another bridge over river

Kakoi on the Lilabari Siajuli Road linking NH52 with Rajgarh Road of Assam-Arunachal Pradesh Border is urgently required to serve a population of more than 62,000 belonging mostly to Tribal, Tea garden and other backward communities of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh besides providing connectivity to Lilabari Airport, Lakhimpur Civil Hospital, Lakhimpur College of Veterinary Science as well as Siajuli and Chinatolia Tea Estate.

I therefore, urge upon the Government specially the Ministry of DoNER to take up these two important bridge projects of inter-state importance urgently with the Government of Assam for funding under NLCPR as per the estimate already prepared by Assam PWD.

(xx) Need to provide financial package and scientific inputs for the benefits of farmers in Kashmir

SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN (Baramulla) : The income level to genuine farmers in Kashmir has considerably fallen and returns in the smaller land holdings under horticulture cultivation also have come down to the level of no profit, even the input costs are not recovered in many cases. The small farmers on one hand and comparatively bigger farmers on the other are also highly upset because the labour intensive farming with less returns have derailed their management planning of their farms. With the reasonably high demand in the extracts of Kashmir brand aromatic plants and some of the rare species of medicinal plants abroad have created a hope in the farming community. In order to promote the smooth transition to diversification of crops in Kashmir, Agriculture Ministry must come forward with financial package and scientific inputs through its different agencies like CSIR and other scientific bodies so that the success story of crop diversification in Kashmir become a standard bearer for other States.

15.45 hrs.

**PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2006—Contd.**

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, item no. 15 — Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2006 Shri Adhir Chowdhury — not present.

Dr. Sujan Chakraborty.

DR. SUJAN CHAKRABORTY (Jadavpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me the chance to speak on the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2006. Generally and broadly, I agree with the contents of the Bill. In general, I agree to it, but some amendments have been proposed in it that are basically technical in nature. ...*(Interruption)*

15.45½ hrs.

[SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN in the Chair]

But these amendments have an overall impact on the entire functioning of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Therefore, these are very important in its overall activity.

All of us know that it is based on the suggestions and recommendations of Justice Ahmedi Committee, and they have made six or seven important points. Though, I broadly agree to the basic amendment of the Bill, yet I have some four or five points to make on this issue.

Firstly, it intends to replace the ex-Chief Justice by the ex-Justice of either Supreme Court or High Court with some years of experience, may be three years or five years. I feel that this amendment will not be proper in view of the fact that the status of the NHRC will be degraded. Therefore, this amendment should not be made. The ex-Chief Justices are available upto the age of 70 years, and it will be better for the status of Human Rights Commission

[Dr. Sujan Chakraborty]

if they are taken. I am saying this because they can act on a holistic view.

Secondly, the Bill empowers the Commission to visit any jail or detention centre without even informing the State Government. It may not be required to do so in case of exigency, but as a provision it is not a good practice to visit the jail or the detention centre without informing or intimating the State Governments. The States also have their own structure and rights. It is always logical to intimate and inform and then act on the States. Obviously, this provision should not be made in the fashion in which it has been made. It should be made in a manner that whenever there is an exigency like whenever a State is not acting or the State is not interested or does not want to divulge something, then this scope of exigency should be there.

Thirdly, the human rights include the fundamental rights, and it is not the question of individual liberty. We all know that in the western world the question of individual liberty is more important. It is because the type of social inequality that is prevalent in our case is not dominant there. In our case, some type of social inequality and injustice in the society is prevailing over individual liberty. Therefore, social equality or social justice should also be a very important component of any justice, and it is already there. Our NHRC is rated this way, namely, that they are functioning in a better way. Similarly, Right to life, right to education, right to health, etc. are compromised and jeopardized in our country. Should the question of distress and discomfort among the people not come in the arena?

Thousands of farmers have committed suicide. Is it not a question of human rights violation? Why are you not in a position to protect the human rights of the farmers? Why are you not able to help them maintain their lives? I believe that committing suicide is also definitely a violation of the human rights. How is the Commission going to deal with all these fundamental rights? About right of work, right of

employment and right of health, the provision are not at all clear in the entire Bill or in the amendment. That should be clarified, in my opinion.

My next point is very important that the human rights of all should be protected, but it is again ambiguous, particularly on the question of terrorism and the rights of the killer. How will you look into it? How will it be differentiated? Such ambiguity should not be there. That is not clear and is not well defined in the Bill. These points should be taken note of.

In fact, would over, USA is shouting for human rights in other countries, but it is the major violator of human rights, and there is no doubt about it. In the name of searching deadly arms, the way they have invaded Iraq, is it not a total violation of human rights? Look at the way things are happening in Lebanon, the way Israel is being sponsored by USA, and the way Lebanon is being treated. Is it not a case of violation of human rights? I believe, from that central point, history will provide a number of instances where it will be seen that sponsored by USA or by USA itself, violation of Human rights are continuously happening the world over. But they are moving in a manner as if they are the preachers of human rights.

I will not taken much time of the House. I will conclude by saying that some components are obviously there in the amendment, but still, it is not foolproof. The People of Indian Origin who are working and living abroad, should they not be covered by our Human Rights Commission? Should they also not be protected? I would propose that the protection of human rights of all those People of Indian Origin, who may be staying abroad, should be considered by our Human Rights Commission. On the issue of how it can be done, I believe, while replying, the Minister will answer that.

My last point is that there are some provisions for compensation to be awarded by the Human Rights Commission, but there are no provisions for enforcement of it. That should be there and the Commission

should have more teeth so that it can categorically ensure that. Besides, the Chairmen of the SC/ST Commission and OBC Commission are there as members in the Human Rights Commission, and I would propose that the Chairmen of the National Minorities Commission and National Women Commission should also be inducted as *ex-officio* members in the National Human Rights Commission.

With these suggestions, I support the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, I give the floor to Shri Adhir Chowdhury. Before you speak, let me say that you were called earlier, but you were not there. If you apologize to the House, I will allow you to speak. If you want to speak, you make a regret; you apologize to the House, which is a sovereign body.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : I offer my unqualified apologies to the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN : There is nothing wrong in it. The House is supreme. I myself offered apologies, sometimes.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : I was so thirsty that I went out to have a glass of drinking water.

MR. CHAIRMAN : From now onwards, you should be very prompt.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : Sir, I rise to support the legislative document under the nomenclature of Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2006.

Sir, the Bill reflects the sentiments of our society and the inclination of this Government to add more weaponry to the existing human rights arsenal. Before we come to dwell on the tone and tenor of this legislative document, I would like to delve into tangentially into the evolution of human rights in the world.

As we are aware, in the aftermath of the World War II the United Nations proclaimed the Universal Declaration

of Human Rights and various templates were contrived. At that time, the world had in a situation wherein all the basic tenets of human rights had been trampled upon by the deprecation of imperialist forces. In the year 1776, the concept of human rights first surfaced in the US Declaration of Independence. Again, in the year 1789, during the French Revolution, the rights of citizens were again proclaimed. In the year 1984, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed by the United Nations. In the year 1966, the International Covenants of Civil Rights and Political Rights were proclaimed. Other social, cultural and economic rights were also proclaimed in the year 1966.

In Teheran, the United Nation' Declaration was formalised. There are more than 90 pieces of human rights declaration and covenants which are available with us.

As far as India is concerned, we have enacted the Human Rights Act in the year 1993 and after the lapse of 14 years. The Amendment bill has been moved by this Government. Basically the amendment Bill is aimed to restructure the composition of the Human Rights Commission at the national level and in the State level in the name of the State Human Rights Commission and other definitive clauses have been amended.

The salient features of this Bill are that through this amendment the Human Rights Commission is being bestowed upon the additional powers so that the Human Rights Act could be implemented in the right manner. In this legislation, amendments have been proposed by the Advisory Committee led by Justice Ahamed. He observed over the years and it has been pointed out in the Annual Report also that Human Rights Commissions are incapable of implementing the objective which is called the human rights protection.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude. After all there is not much in this Bill. This is only an amendment Bill.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : Sir, I am the first person from my Party to speak on this.

MR. CHAIRMAN : This is not a parent Bill. This is only an amendment.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : In the year 1993, the Human Rights Commission was set up. After 14 years, as per the recommendations of Justice Ahamed Committee, the amendments have been brought forward.

16.00 hrs.

Seventeen Sections of the principal Act have been amended but only Section 40(b) has been inserted. What I would like to propose through you to this Government is, here, in this amendment it is stated that retired Judge of the Supreme Court is eligible to become the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission. The eligibility criteria has been introduced in this amendment. The Judges of the Supreme Court with at least three years experience are said to be eligible to become the Chairman of the NHRC. It has left a scope to misconstruing as a dilution of the authority of the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission, which has been in existence in the principal Act. Here, it is found that instead of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, any Judge can be appointed as the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude. If you continue like this, we will not complete the discussion on this Bill.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : The Chairperson of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the Chairperson of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes shall be deemed to be the Member of NHRC. Here, I must plead for the inclusion of the Member of the Commission for Women and Minorities Commission to be deemed to be a Member of NHRC. Dialectic of law and society of our country have been determined by the long historical experiences with the passage from colonialism to nationalism. Our Constitution has assigned Fundamental Rights. It has guaranteed the individuals of our country free expression and free existence. No law of our country

basically aims to make a resolution of the existing conflict between various sections of our society where the elite sections try to dominate the society by the use of law. And the law itself is intended to moderate the domination of the elite class through the access of people's participation in our democratic society. As we have observed that the incidents of violence against women have been galloping. Only 25 per increase of human violence has been observed by the Human Rights Commission itself. Minorities are being discriminated. They are being stigmatised in our country. In view of the fact, I would like to propose to the Minister also to include one Member of Minorities Commission and one Member from the Commission for Woman to be included as a deemed Member of the Human Rights Commission.

To implement the tone and tenor of this amendment, we should require establishment of Human Rights Commission Courts in each and every district because without the adequate infrastructure, the objective of this amendment as well as the Bill could not be implemented. Throughout the country, atrocities are committed against common people by Police. Atrocities against various sections of people have been reported.

I hail from West Bengal where custodial deaths have been reported to be the highest in the whole of country. Custodial deaths involving not only political workers but also involving those belonging to the opposition parties have been reported. They have been subjected to various kinds of torture, persecution and oppression. Not only that, they have been forced to leave their own houses....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing will go no record.

(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have tried my level best to control you but I have failed. The amendment Bill is a short one.

(Interruptions)

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : Sir, I may be allowed to lay my speech on the Table of the House. ...
(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Kharventhan's speech may be treated as laid on the Table of the House.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Adhir Chowdhury, if you have anything more to say, you can lay it on the Table of the House.

*SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : The Legislative document under the nomenclature of "The Protection of human rights (Amendment) Bill 2006 reflects the inclination of this Government to add more weaponry to the existing human rights arsenal.

The objective of this bill is seemed to have essentially injected a structural reforms in the Composition of human rights commission and its mandate as well.

Before dwelling on the tone and tenor of the said amendment bill, I do prefer to dwell into the evolution of human rights which was formally conceived after world war II as a sequel of depredation perpetrated by Nazi German. Europe had witnessed all the basic tenets of human rights was trampled on in a devilish manner including holocaust unprecedented in the annals of history. In the year 1948 one historical instrument had come into existence by the endeavour of United Nations States under the template "Universal Declaration of human rights". However Human rights which adopted in the 20th Century are believed to derive from of the previous expression known as Natural rights. Every civilization since its birth evolve the concept of natural rights incorporated into the human life.

*The speech was laid on the Table.

Human values and human dignities are an integral part of Indian culture and our civilization since the time immemorial. Even holy "VEDAS" referred the entire world is one family and address the concern of human rights.

In the modern times "Human rights captivated the attention of the people by the US war of independence in the year 1776.

In the year 1789 another landmark revolution in France called French war had given to the declaration of rights of man and citizen.

U.N. also proclaimed the universal declaration of human rights in 1948.

It is evident that the history of human rights is a perpetual phenomenon, a never ending exercise which has been enlightening our society, consolidate the foundation on moral, legal and social fabric.

Indian people had their subjugated by mighty British Colonial power for centuries which virtually torn apart all established institutions. We were ruined economically, culturally, politically and spiritually. Indian people put together all form of resistance to get rid of four-fold disaster which after manifested in the form of demand for fundamental freedoms including civil, political rights for the people. It was vehemently express through the struggle of swaraj.

Human rights as the rights relating to liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Indian Constitution embodied in the fundamental rights and international covenants.

Eventually fundamental rights including social and economic rights acquired wide recognition.

Whatever adds to the dignity of human life whatever strengthen free existence of human life inter-alia free expression free association should be regarded human rights.

[Shri Adhir Chowdhury]

The legislative document has sought to amend 17 sections of the said act while inserting a new section 40B to that act.

The nature of amendments as are observed can be categorized 1. Substantial, 2. Consequential, 3. Clarificatory.

Human rights act in India came into being in 1993 as a signatory of UN declaration of human rights.

The Commission experienced some shortcomings and identified some deficiencies into the instrument and proposed some amendments in their annual report. As a result of which an advisory committee was set up under the Chairmanship of justice. A.H. Ahmedi former Chief Justice of India in order to evaluate the entire spectrum of the act and proposed amendments.

Based upon the recommendations of the Advisory Committee a few amendments are proposed in this act to widen the scope and ambit of this act. Salient features of those amendments pertain to "J. Composition and restructuring of National human rights Commission.

2. State human rights Commission.

3. Amendment to the definition clause for the appointment of Chairman of the N.H.R.C. eligibility criterion has then identified a little departure from the existing one.

Henceforth judges of the Supreme Court with at last three years service as such to be eligible to be appointed as the Chairperson of the N.H.R.C.

This provision may offer scope to construe the dilution of the chair which was meant for Chief Justice of India in the principal act.

May I request the Hon'ble Minister to clarify the inflection in regard to the Chairman.

For State Human Right Commission any judge of the

high courts with at least five years of service as such to be appointed ad Chairperson of the S.H.R.C. and for that matter a district judge with at least seven years of experience in that capacity to be a member of S.H.R.C.

To this said amendments N.H.R.C. has been enabled to inquire into cases of human rights violation and abatement referred by the Court. In addition to the suo-motio inquiry into a complaint lodged by the victim. It is very healthy proposition as it has widened the purview of the Commission to discharge the mandate.

The bill has further bestowed upon the Commission to recommend award of compensation on interim relief to the victims during the pendency of inquiry which was now done after the completion of inquiry.

The bill provides that the Chairperson of the National Commission for the SC and ST respectively shall be deemed to be the members of the N.H.R.C.

The incidences of violence against women have been galloping alarmingly. It has been increased by 25% in the recent year.

Even appointment of women judge for the trial of rape victim it has been actively considered. Our population consists of 49% of female.

Keeping in view of this, May I propose the Minister to include a member from women as deemed member of N.H.R.C. Furthermore in view of the diversity of our country where discrimination against minority community often reported much to the discomfiture of us for example Gujarat Riot. In Dang Anti-Christian violence and in Kashmir anti Kashmiri Pandit and so on. Therefore, I propose member from commission should be included as a deemed member in the composition of NHRC.

The dialectics of law and society in India has been determined by the historical experience during the passage from colonialism to nationalism. In this process both legal and social systems have been evolved.

Constituent Assembly of India had an exhaustive deliberation in order to strike a balance in view of conflicting interest of our society where elite class exercise their influence by the use of law to keep themselves dominant in the society while constitution strives hard to moderate the domination by providing more avenues of participation for the disadvantaged. N.H.R.C. has been empowered to delegate certain powers and function to the Secretary General of N.H.R.C. which smacks of bureaucratic interference into the institutional affairs.

All said and done the fact remains that H.R. still is in a vacant stage in India.

Relevant international covenants are :-

1. Universal declaration of human rights, 1984.
2. International covenant on civil and political rights, 1966.
3. Optional rights in addition to international covenant go other declarations and other relevant documents known as instrument of human rights including Paris Principle which India has ratified subject to notification. Government by notification may specify economic, social and cultural rights are difficult to complement in toto. Approach of U.N. declaration was formalised as Teheran Declaration.

While dwelling on human rights we should remember the contribution of Raja Rammohan Rao in the context of evolving human rights aspiration. He was the exponent for abolition of obnoxious "Sati Culture" in India, he vociferously pleaded for widow marriage advocated for equal rights for women in India.

I do dare to offer few suggestions normally:-

1. Exclusive distinct human rights courts for each district should be established or at least human

rights camps should be organized by Commission.

2. District human rights commission should be set up to realize the spirit of human rights act. The infrastructure of N.H.R.C. is quite inadequate to cover the rural and semi-urban population though N.H.R.C. now can transfer the complaints received by it to S.H.R.C.
3. The incidents of custodian deaths have been increasing in our country due to the resorting to the Third degree method by unscrupulous police officials. As per rules an accused cannot be detained in P.C. more than 24 hours. But this rule is violated in a rampant manner. When relative of the victim approached the court it is often found that the accused shift to other places under police control. Therefore, even if person under custody often visits the detention centre he may be hoaxed by the police.

In this provision commission entrusts the power to visit the detention centre without prior intimation. But what I feel accessibility to the Commission should be made more easier for the victims relatives. Atrocity and physical torture by the police might be referred to the Commissioner but the investigation is held by the police officers who are pretty sympathetic and prefer to exonerate their brothers.
4. Chairman of the concerned S.H.R.C. should be appointed from other state to avoid any political favour and he/she should well conversant with the local language. Last but not the least I will propose to introduce human rights literacy in every educational institution and to create public awareness by waging human rights movement. People are more and more depending on judiciary to get relief and judiciary also through its activism giving shape to the rights.

[Shri Adhir Chowdhury]

The enforcement of human rights by the judiciary has become an integral part of jurisprudence. By virtue of Article 32 and 226 the court greatly extend the ambit of judicial review and devised methods by opening the door for poor and downtrodden through P.I.L.

Status of refugees is still unsettled in spite of 1951 and 1967 U.N. protocol which India has ratified.

The wonder that was India as written by BASAM.

The overall impression is that in no other part of the ancient world the relation of man and man and of man and the state fair and human.

In no other civilization were slaves so few in numbers and in no other ancient law book are their rights so well protected as in Arthashastra no other ancient law given proclaimed such noble ideas of fair play in battle as did "MANU" to us the most striking feature of ancient Indian civilization in the humanity.

I must praise the Government for bringing in such legislation and without any reservation. I support the bill and thus concluding my speech.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support this Amendment Bill. This is a minor Amendment. I welcome the suggestion to change the composition of the Human Rights Commission and change in the qualification to be the judge of the commission. With serious efforts after constituting a committee under the chairmanship of a Retired Judge of the Supreme Court, the recommendations of the committee have been accepted. The standing Committee and the hon'ble Members of Rajya Sabha have forwarded it after a long debate. Therefore, without indulging in any prolonged debate some members during discussion have said that

India got the vision of human rights from United Nations Organisation and inspiration from Conference held in Tehran. Therefore, I am compelled to say something about it. National Movement of India was active about human rights much before the constitution of the United Nations Organisation and Tehran Declaration. In the year, 1925, in Lucknow, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru Organised All India Conference in which Mohd. Ali Jinnah participated despite having difference of opinion with Congress, Pandit Madan Mohan participated and Jawahar Lal Nehru Participated in the conference as Secretary. Rules regarding human rights included in our document with the National Movement and all the leaders accepted the Human Right Charter in the name of Lucknow Declaration which later on became the main issue of our National Movement. After that, in the year 1929 the Session of Congress was held in Calcutta and Pandit Moti Lal Nehru became the President of the Congress. During the session comprehensive document regarding Human Rights which was prepared by the Lucknow All Parties Conference was accepted by the Congress Party. In Lahore Session of 1930 which was presided by Jawahar Lal Nehru, Congress Party accepted the same charter of Human Rights. In 1931 Karachi Session, where Sardar Patel became the President of the Congress Party, the same charter was accepted as a Resolution.

Sir, therefore, when we initiated the process for writing the constitution, the proposal regarding the same Human Rights were put before the Constituent Assembly which were presented by Sardar Patel. Our nation builders had accepted that the spirit of Human Rights prevailing in Modern India is a product of National Movement. We have not borrowed the chapter of Human Rights from UNO nor have we accepted their charter, instead UNO have adopted the Charterd prepared by us. Therefore we have to view this fact of history in our Parliament in the right perspective.

The power to interpret the fundamental rights

enshrined in our Constitution has been with the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts. Baba· Bhimrao Ambedkar had said that there is no provision in the constitution of any other country to directly approach the Supreme Court or the High Court in the case of violation of Human Rights by any person. Recognition and Provisions of Habeas Corpus Petition is also one of the salient feature of the Constitution of India. Hence, we want to submit that our national leaders have given more attention towards human rights and they become integral part of our constitution and the power to judge and oversee the violation of human rights has been vested in the Supreme Court and the High Courts. We can say from our experience that there was the Civil Criminal Amendment Act of the British period and section 109, 110 of the Criminal Act, then why not POTA? Why do not we have draconian law which violate civil liberty in our country. When Rollact Act was introduced in our country, which we can describe as the precursor of POTA or TADA, which came into existence because of Rollact Act which caused Jalianwala Bagh tragedy. At that time Mahatma Gandhi advised Indian Parliament specifically Pt. Motilal Nehru that the draconian Rollact Act should be strongly opposed in Parliament of India.

Most of the anti Civil rights laws in our country had been introduced during British rule. It is unfortunate that even after independence and being fully aware about human rights we are still adhering to some of laws which directly effects our civil liberty. We can say it by our experience. At that time we were imprisoned in Tihar Jail with Madhu Limye. He asked us to conduct a survey in order to find out the number of boys who had come from Bihar for job and were arrested at Delhi railway station. There were total 147 boys who were detained in Tihar Jail under Section 109 and they were assigned the job of sweeping Jail. Madhu Limyeji wrote a letter from Jail and thereupon after 1½ year the Supreme Court issued a notice. As a result thereof the boys arrested under section 117, 151 of the Civil Criminal Law amendment act were released.

The system prevailing in our country which is called bureaucracy has shown no regard for civil liberty. The Supreme Court and the High Courts are insufficient for the surveillance of civil liberty, hence Human Rights Commission has been constituted. But Human Right Commission has not proved to be effective in implementing the Human Rights because retired judges of the Supreme Court are appointed in the commission who are not listened by the subordinate bureaucracy. It is very good proposal that active judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts be made the designated officer as everyone will listen to them possibly because of the threat of contempt of court. Therefore, the suggestion has come and we welcome it. There is a suggestion to include the commissioners of SC and ST's in it also. It may have been suggested because of its statutory status but, beside this, I want to suggest that it is very good to include the members of minorities Commission and Women Commission in it, This is a new concept in the country in the time when naxalite movement is breeding, terrorism is growing, terrorist elements are raising their heads in the country and are killing the common and innocent people which is a violation of human rights. So, I only want to suggest that we are greatly in favour of protection of human rights as I myself remained in Bareilly Central Jail for 21 months under the draconian law like MISA during emergency without any litigation. I myself had been a victim of the effects of draconian laws on personal liberty. Therefore I am strongly supporting it.

Alongwith this those who resort to terrorism kill the people in the communal violence and wage armed strongly on certain issue should not have the right to claim civil rights in a democratic country. This should also be a law.

With these words, I strongly support the human rights claim while supporting this bill. Those who violate the human rights with arms should have no right to claim human right. I conclude with this suggestion. I thank you for giving me time to speak.

[English]

*SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (Palani) : Sir, the Protection of Human Rights Act 1993 came into force on 24-9-93. The above Act concentrates three areas viz.,

- (i) Formation of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC);
- (ii) Formation of State Human Rights Commission (SHRC); and
- (iii) Constitution of Human Rights Courts in each District throughout the country.

National Human Rights Commission set up an Advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of Justice Shri A.M. Ahmadi, Former Chief Justice of India to further amend the above Act. Based on the recommendations of Justice Ahmadi Committee and upon the recommendations Inter-Ministerial Committee comprising Ministries of Home Affairs, Defence, External Affairs and Law, the amendments are put forth by the Hon'ble Home Minister. I am congratulating the Home Minister for bringing this Amendment Bill to amend The Protection of Human Rights Act 1993.

This Amendment Bill 2005 seeks to amend 17 sections of The Protection of Human Rights Act 1993 and introduced new Sec. 40B.

The proposed Amendment in Sec. 3(2)(a) proposes modification in the eligibility criteria for the appointment of Chairperson of NHRC. As per Existing Act, Retired Chief Justice of India is eligible to become Chairperson of NHRC. Now the present Amendment authorise the Union of India to consider a retired Judge of Supreme Court having a minimum of three years of experience to appoint as the Chairman of NHRC. This is a welcomable amendment in the Act. This Amendment is trying to avoid the delay of appointment of Chairman due to non-availability of Retired Chief Justice of Supreme Court of

India. As per Sec. 3(3) deemed members of NHRC is increased from 3 to 4 in view of bifurcation of National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes into two separate Commissions, one for Scheduled Castes and the other for Scheduled Tribes.

One of the salient features in this Bill is that the NHRC is authorised to make surprise visits to jails and other institutions under the control of the State Government where persons are detailed or lodged for purpose of treatment, reformation or protection, for the study of the living conditions of inmates thereof and make recommendations to the Government.

A new sub-section is proposed in Section 13 to enable the NHRC to transfer cases to SHRC when NHRC feels that the complaint falls within the jurisdiction of SHRC.

Another welcomable amendment in this Bill is the NHRC is authorized to recommend award of compensation (or) interim relief to the victims even during the inquiry which at present can be done only after the completion of inquiry. But it is a recommendatory nature. It must be altered as a mandatory one. Most of the Government agencies are not considering the recommendation of NHRC or SHRC.

Sec. 21(2) of the Amendment Bill 2005 pave way to the appointment of Chairperson and members of SHRC. In the present Act only Retired Chief Justice of the High Court is eligible to be appointed as Chairperson of SHRC. So many States are not able to appoint Chairpersons due to language problem. Based on the proposed amendment a retired Judge of High Court having minimum five years experience is eligible to become the Chairman of the SHC. Hence, this is also a welcome amendment.

Furthermore, Sec. 21(2) is proposed to reduce the strength of the members in SHRC from five to three. It will reduce the expenses of the State Governments. Another salient feature of Sec. 21 is authorising the Government

*The speech was laid on the Table.

to appoint Common Chairperson—Common Member of SHRC for two or more States. This amendment is welcomable for small States like seven sisters in North Eastern States.

As per Sec. 21 of The Protection of Human Rights Act 1993, the State-Governments are authorised to constitute of State Human Rights Commission and Sec. 30 of Chapter VI authorise State Government to Constitute Human Rights Courts with the concurrence of the Chief Justice of the High Court by notification specify for each District.

In this juncture, I am sorry to mention that most of the States failed to constitute State Human Rights Commission. On 19-8-2006 there was a conference held at Vigyan Bhawan organised by NALSAS. During the discussion, Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, Y.K. Sabharwal who presided over the Conference has regretted that "even after 13 years of the coming into force of The Protection of Human Rights Act, only 14 States had set up State Human Rights Commissions and four of them become defunct. Among those functional only we were operating in letter and spirit of law". This is the situation all over the country. Government of India has to take effective steps to constitute State Human Rights Commissions throughout the country.

I want to mention certain facts about Human Right Courts in District Level. District Judges are designated as Judges to deal complaints with respect to the violation of Human Rights in the respective Districts. Throughout the country, name of the courts are functioning properly. Most of the District Courts are not having any infrastructural facilities to conduct their cases, how will they conduct the cases under this Act? Our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh also emphasised in the 19th Conference as "The rule of law can become a reality for millions and millions of our people only if the rights of Law-abiding citizens are protected". Only if justice is seen to be delivered. Only if the rights of the weak and the dispossessed are protected. For this, we need a more efficient and effective judiciary.

In this juncture, I am emphasising the Union Government to allocate necessary funds for providing necessary facilities to SHRC and District Level Human Rights Courts. Then only we can provide speedy and effective justice to poor victims.

Once again I want to congratulate and thank the Hon'ble Home Minister, Shri Shivraj Patilji for bringing suitable and necessary amendments in Protection of Human Rights Act 1993.

With these words, I am supporting the Bill.

[Translation]

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR (Aurangabad, Bihar) : Sir, I would like to appreciate the speech of Shri Mohan Singhji. For giving such an accurate account and background of history. I support the amendment to this bill from the core of my heart.

SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA (Barh) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, Hon'ble Mohan Singhji has put forth his ideas in the context of history with regards to this bill and has given the historical account since freedom movement to date. An effort has been made to make it more powerful through Human Rights (Amendment) Bill and as a first step in this direction it is proposed to include a sitting judge or the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to ensure proper implementation of the provisions of the Preservation Act, it has also been proposed to include the member and the Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes. Membership shall also be provided to the representatives of the National Commission for Minorities and the National Commission for Women and I think that it will be a very positive step. Presently, the world is facing the challenge of terrorism, America is gaining more and more clout through its imperialistic policies and Israel is carrying out killings at a large scale in Lebanon. In this way terrorism is rearing its ugly head in the entire world. On the one hand America makes hue and cry for the civil rights and on the other hand it is violating them. At such a crucial period India needs to take a firm stand. In view

[Shri Vijoy Krishna]

of the historical context and national perspective this amendment bill assumes lot of importance. This bill will strengthen the hands of the activists of civil liberty.

I strongly support the suggestions given by Shri Mohan Singhji regarding the killings taking place under the cover of naxalite movement and terrorism. I believe that these day to day incidents of killings especially the custodial deaths are not natural deaths. More than forty persons have lost their lives in custody in Jammu-Kashmir only. Highest number of custodial deaths have taken place in Uttar Pradesh during the last two year. This is the present situation. Hence, it is being proposed that to check the incidents of custodial deaths the persons of Commission can directly visit the Jail without taking any permission. A provision has also been made in this bill which stipulates that the Commission will have the power to decide the amount of compensation. I think it is a historical step and everybody should support it.

[English]

SHRIMATI V. RADHIKA SELVI (Tiruchendur) : Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on this Bill and I thank our beloved leader Doctor Kalaingar Karunanidhi and Tamil Talapathy, Shri M.K. Stalin without whom I would not have been here today.

The amendment of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 comes into effect after a period of 12 years. Even though the PHR (Amendment) Bill is mentioned as PHRA, 2005, it comes into effect only from 2008. Under the PHRA Bill, the National Human Rights Commission can visit jail or other institutions under the control of the State Government. They cannot visit detention and interrogation centres used by the Army and paramilitary forces across the country.

I welcome the increase of deemed members of NHRC from three to four and a separate Commission can be formed for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

About 70,000 complaints of HR violation are received every year. Is there any plan of the Government to solve these problems quickly?

I want to mention my own experience in this august House. My husband was a backward community leader. In 2003, Jayalalitha Government killed my husband in the name of an encounter but it was a well-planned and not an encounter. It was 100 per cent politically motivated by the then Jayalalitha Government and it was a violation of human rights. I had given a complaint for human rights violation during 2003 and I am still awaiting its result. Till date, there is no inquiry and action taken. Will my complaint be examined?

At least now, I request the Home Minister to bring up a fast track Commission to examine the complaints pending before the National Human Rights Commission. I also request him to direct the HR Commission to take up my complaint on priority.

Sir, whenever such human rights violation take place, usually women and children are affected very badly as women lose their husbands. Most of them suffer in bringing up their children. Most of the children do not even make any complaint of human rights violation due to fear or other reasons. Such children get into depression for various reasons. Due to the injustice caused to them, they become anti-social elements when they reach their teenage.

Therefore, I humbly request the Government to make suitable amendments so that one of the members of the Commission should be a person having good knowledge of childhood problems.

Further, the members of the HR Commission are all men. When we speak of 33 per cent women participation, why not we have at least one woman in the HR Commission itself? Previously, the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission used to be a retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Whereas now, he is a retired Supreme Court judge. Even in the States, it is

amended as the retired High Court judge instead of Chief Justice of High Courts. It is a welcome step.

Earlier, the victims of the violation used to get their compensation after the inquiry gets completed. Whereas now, the National Human Rights Commission has got the power to recommend compensation during the course of inquiry which is a very welcome action. The Commission should determine the percentage of amount that should be distributed during the course of inquiry. This will help the victims' family. In our country, maximum human rights violations happen in police stations.

The Tamil Nadu Government, under the Chief Ministership of Dr. Kalaingar, is strictly following the Supreme Court ruling that no women should be inquired after 6 p.m. The Tamil Nadu Government has also abolished child and bonded labour in the State to protect human rights.

Only sixteen States have set up Human Rights Commission whereas other States do not have Human Rights Commission. As there is an increase in the number of complaints in regard to human rights violations, every State should have a Human Rights Commission.

I hope the Government will take positive steps to curb human rights violations in this country.

With these words, I conclude my speech and support this Bill on behalf of the DMK Party.

16.26 hrs.

[SHRI MOHAN SINGH *in the Chair*]

SHRIMATI ARCHANA NAYAK (Kendrapara) : Hon. Chairman, Sir, thank you for giving me an opportunity to participate in the discussion on the Bill to amend the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. On behalf of the Biju Janata Dal, while supporting the move to amend the Act, I would like to give some suggestions which the Government may consider.

In the field of human rights, the last thirteen years have been a very challenging period for this country. For a majority of Indians, some of the rights got further strengthened and additional protection and guarantee came to our citizens.

While inaugurating the All India Inter Departmental Cooperation, Dialogue and Meeting on Social Justice, the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, on 19th August, 2006 expressed concern over the denial of human rights to the weaker sections of the society and called upon the judiciary to be more sensitive to the needs of the poor.

Hon. Chief Justice of India, Justice Y.K. Sabharwal, who presided over the above function, regretted that even after thirteen years of the coming into force of the Protection of Human Rights Act, only fourteen States have set up State Human Rights Commission and even among them four are defunct. He stated that among those functional, only a few were operating in the letter and spirit of the law.

Now, I would like to come to the points on the move to amend the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. The proposed amendment to clause 3 in Section 3 of the Principal Act is dubious. The original Act stipulates that the National Human Rights Commission shall be headed by a former Chief Justice of India. The present amendment proposes that Judges of the Supreme Court with at least three years of service to be eligible for appointment as Chairperson of the NHRC. Similarly, it makes eligible a Judge of the High Court with at least five years of service for appointment as Chairperson of the State Human Rights Commission. The reason suggested for such an amendment is to have wider choice while recommending a suitable person for the post of Chairperson.

Normally, a former Chief Justice would be a person who has, between the High Court and the Supreme Court tenure, a judicial experience of more than two decades. His seniority, his experience, his stature, and his vision are

[Shrimati Archana Nayak]

unique. Therefore, if the amendment is made, the value and the credibility of the reports of the NHRC and SHRC will come down. The stature and royalty of the Commission will be downgraded by this amendment.

As per the new amendment, Human Rights Commission has been empowered to visit any jail or other institution without prior intimation to the State concerned. This will enable the Commission to make surprise visits. This is a welcome move. But, at the same time, if an order made by the National Human Rights or State Human Rights Commission is not obeyed by the concerned Department or the Government, what is the remedy for it? Therefore, a powerless Commission is of no use.

The next amendment is to bring the Chairperson of SC and ST Commission as *ex-officio* member of the Human Rights Commission. I do not understand why they have left out the Chairpersons of Minorities Commission and the National Commission for Women into this Human Rights Commission. They should be included as member of the Human Rights Commission.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude. You have already taken six minutes.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI ARCHANA NAYAK: Sir, I am the only speaker from my Party. So, please allow me some more time.....(Interruptions)

The reports of Human Rights Commission should be made public; this should be made available to every person. The Commission sends some more reports to the State Government, and if these reports are not made known to the people, if these reports are not published, then what purpose will they serve? The Human Rights Commission has neither men nor the required infrastructure nor required powers to enforce the law. Without giving

the required teeth to implement the legislation, the very purpose of constituting the Human Rights Commission, will remain only on paper. Therefore, would I request the Government to see that the required infrastructure is given and the required money is provided to the Commission to make it more functional and more effective. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please lay your rest of the speech on the Table of the House.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI ARCHANA NAYAK : Sir, I will complete my speech within two minutes.

Amendment to clause 8 in Section 10 of the principal Act proposes power to any Munsiff court to refer cases to the NHRC. It may not serve the purpose it is intended to. It will only dilute the status and authority of the NHRC. It may also open the floodgates for a large number of cases, which will become unmanageable for the NHRC. Hence, I oppose the move for such an amendment.

Section 18 (c) of the Act deals with interim relief to the affected parties. Interim relief could be given by the NHRC earlier also. There is no change which is good. However, earlier the compensation could not be specifically given. Now, we have provided that compensation can be awarded. It seems to be a good move.

Sir, another provision, which has been brought forward, is one member of State Human Rights Commission of a particular State can be member of State Human Rights Commission of another State. I do not think this can be workable if the States have a large number of cases pending with them. Most of the States had no Chairpersons and in some States, there are vacancies.

Now, no court would interfere in case of exploitation of a poor man; only the National Human Rights

Commission can intervene; only the National Human Rights Commission can work effectively. The rule of law can become a reality for millions and millions of our country only if the rights of law-abiding citizens, the rights of the weak and the oppressed are protected.

Sir, once again, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the discussion.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY (Basirhat) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very much proud that today I will speak in my mother tongue 'Bangla'. ...*(Interruptions)* The language of Jana Gana Mana Adhinayako and the language of Vande Mataram are Bangla.

*Hon. Chairman, Sir, I am very proud that today I will speak in my mother tongue Bengali. The language in which Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore wrote Jan Gan Mana; the language in which Bankim C. Chatterjee wrote Vande Mataram; 'Oh my dear Bengali language' — In this language I will briefly speak on Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2006 that has been introduced.

Sir, today, the question arises that the Bill which has been introduced—whether it is a farce or whether it is a genuine attempt to protect human rights. In our country and outside, as my colleague said that in USA, Lebanon, Iraq, human rights are being violated. If we look at India, there is a National Human Rights Commission—time and again recommendations have been made by the Commission. But who will implement those recommendations? The State Governments and their agencies. Firstly, the Police Department is expected to protect human rights — but are they performing their duties properly? Whenever a person is arrested, he is detained for more than five days. He is not produced before the law courts. Suppose a boy commits a crime—his father is arrested and detained until the boy surrenders. They just refuse to function logically.

Law and order should be protected by the police but they are the major violators of the same. What steps are taken to curb this menace? I don't want to name any State Government here, otherwise there will be misunderstanding. But there are certain States where the Human Rights Commissions are non-existent or defunct. We have seen that in the name of suppressing the Naxalbari Movement, police used to arrest young people. They were our batch-mates; we used to study together. They were brilliant students of colleges and universities. They have been arrested, detained and brutally tortured, physically assaulted.

Let us talk about prisons or jails. Now-a-days they are termed as reformatories. Sir, I don't know whether you have ever visited a prison or not. I have been detained in prisons many a times, not as a criminal but as a political activist. Under various Acts, I have been booked and arrested when I was a student. I have witnessed how brutally the inmates are tortured everyday. The jail wardens and jail police torture the convicted prisoners day in and day out. The food which is supplied to the inmates are not fit for human consumption.

Boarder Security Force (BSF) is there who are not covered by the Human Rights Commission—I do not want to malign the BSF but I am compelled to say that since my constituency is in the border areas and I am a resident of Indo-Bangladesh border. I have seen in what manner human rights are violated there by the BSF. Only people residing in that area know it. A lady was coming with her family by boat, the BSF personnel drowned the boat, abducted the woman and gang raped her in the BSF camp. BSF officers committed rape upon that lady and that Commander was identified by the lady. I have written a letter to Hon. Home Minister, Shri Shivraj Patil, but there was no reply for 6 months. After 6 months he replied that the matter is under the jurisdiction of the High Court. The Govt. of India kept mum as a student of deaf and dumb school when a lady was gang raped in the BSF camp. Her husband and children were drowned—a very sensitive

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Bengali.

[Shri Ajoy Chakraborty]

issue and Hon. Home Minister took such a long time to reply.

Without the help of the common people, it is not possible to combat the enemies. No steps are taken to punish the violators of human rights. Human Rights Commission is nothing but a force. The State Govts. and their agencies like the police department have to sincerely perform their duties, otherwise there will be no positive outcome.

The child labourers, who are working in the restaurants, hotels, tea stalls till night, washing the plates, cups and dishes, boys of 10 years or 12 years of age, they suffer from anything and everything. We can make laws—as many laws as possible—but that will not serve the purpose. The socio-economic condition of the country should be improved first; or else the human rights will continue to be violated.

The children who are orphans, who are kept in the orphanages, they are also deprived. Maximum number of orphans are not getting chance for admission in the orphanages. Most of the orphans are not getting seats. But those who are getting admission, they know what is the situation like. We compare children with flowers of the garden, they are very much neglected in the orphan homes. Thus, I would like to request the Government to ask the State Governments and their various departments to protect human rights. The recommendations of the Human Rights Commission should not be ignored in any manner. This work will be undertaken by the Central Government in right earnest — this is what I expect from you. With these words I conclude.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN : There is no doubt that Bangla is a very good language. All the languages of the country are good but all the languages cannot be spoken

simultaneously. Only one language can be spoken at a time.

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN (Indore) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, today we are discussing the motion moved for amendment in the Human Rights Act to further protect the human rights. Human Rights have been protected over the years sometimes under Magna Carta and sometimes under petition of Right or Bill of Right. In India we have a different perspective about human beings and consider him an independent entity. Our philosophy has been that "Aahar nindra Bhay Maithein Chai" Since we are human being we have got some rights as well as some duties. If we go through the constitution we find that apart from fundamental rights bestowed on us, some duties have also been enshrined in it for us. Both the things should go hand in hand, only then we can protect the rights of each others. If this bill has its own importance from the perspective of our duties.

Sir, through this house I would like to draw your kind attention and that of the Government towards two-three minor issues. The amendment moved in the house today that a judge of either the Supreme Court or the High Court should be the Chairperson of it seems to me that probably our dependence on judiciary is increasing. Though, I am not opposing this. We have to tackle it as a social problem and it is more a social problem than a legal problem. This is not a legal problem. This is a social problem. This subject is associated with the sentiments of the society. Therefore, I think why that person cannot be the Chairman of Human Rights Commission who is in constant touch with the society and who tries to feel the pulse of the society and is constantly working for the interest of the society and is an active social activist.

Sir, we always presume and accept that since the judges have to deliver justice in an impartial manner, they slightly remains cutoff from the rest of the society. The Judges do not intermingle much in the society. They

maintain a distance from the society. Hence, we have to see whether by making a judge the Chairperson we are increasing our dependence on the judiciary or not. The judges are competent in delivering justice and they should be, but this is a social matter so we should choose such a person for this post who is in constant touch with the society.

Sir, today we observe that if Anna Hazare fights for the Right to information in Maharashtra, the attention of entire society is immediately drawn towards issue and his words leave an impact on society. The people think that he has fought constantly for a cause. Why an eminent social activist, a professor of sociology, an ex-member of Parliament or Legislator cannot become the Chairman of this Commission? The member of Parliament and M.L.As should not only indulge in politics only but they can also be appointed as Chairman of this Commission. Therefore, I request that this factor should also be considered. I believe that we should seriously consider these aspects because it is a social problem.

There is one more point. One new thing has been added in the Bill as amendment that the Commission should have the authority to visit the jails. But, we should also consider that the purpose of the bill which is providing for the constitution of Human Rights Commission is not only to bring reforms in jails. Reforms in jails are necessary but we should also think of removing the criminal tendencies from the minds of the Prisoners.

Sir, I would also like to add that Human Rights Commission should sensitize the society wherever social crimes are committed instead of incriminating the innocents. They should also know their limits I am not pointing out anyone in particular but at time certain things are done to check crime, the intentions is not bad but the steps taken are harsh, for example to check terrorism in Punjab some hard steps were taken. Once, an officer of BSF was

discussing with me. We were having a formal discussion. During discussion I asked him what is the reason that terrorism is on rise in Kashmir. Terrorists kill people and just vanish into thin air. The security forces seems to be quite helpless. It is beyond comprehension. He told me that terrorists take aim from amidst the public. They target either the security personnel or any leader or a building. They are among the public when they carry out attacks. If we target and some innocent person is hit then we have to face the actions of human rights commission. It is quite true. This issue has been discussed many a times. I would like to say that intention should be kept in the mind while taking action in such cases. Many a times the tongue comes between the teeth but we don't uproot our teeth. Therefore, it is necessary that those who are working with Human Rights Commission should be sensitive to the society. Many a times it appears that the Commission has taken to enquiring into the riots. Wherever riots take place they reach there.

[Translation]

It's also very necessary to prevent it from being used to serve political ends. It is very important to keep in mind that Human Rights Commission does not work to protect the interests of the Government, rather it is meant for ordinary people.

It's necessary to keep in mind one more thing that the incidents should not recur. After the incident has occurred, investigate into it, and point out as to who has violated the human rights. There's a need to go a little further. The Human Rights Commission should also give some suggestions for not letting the incidents recur, through the experiences it gains.

It has been observed quite often that the public itself is not aware of the rights. From the incident mentioned here and watched wholly by me on the T.V., I really felt that it is some-what a violation of our rights too. Suppose my son happens to watch it as other younger boys were

[Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan]

watching it, I observed that some of them were laughing while some were getting surprised, some were eagerly watching it. How this incident is going to effect to those presented there? They are not born to grasp such types of samskaras. For them, I'd just say that they haven't got such good samskaras as they should have had there in that crowd, their rights have also been violated. It's a different thing that crime has been committed, but the content which we are watching, a discussion should be held in this regard. I'd like the Commission to take up the awareness programme because people are not aware of their rights. It's common trend about women. Crimes are mostly committed against the women or the illiterate as they are not aware of their rights. They just do their duty. On the other hand, a few people only are aware of their rights but they forget their duty. It's my suggestion that such disparity prevailing in society, should also be done away with by the Human Rights Commission. While constituting a commission instead of depending on judges, we should also seek other prominent persons of society as its members. It's my request to involve more and more the persons of social field in it.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, may I make a request, through you, to this House? Today, after passing the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, we have to pass the Pondicherry (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2006 and also Wild Life (protection) Amendment Bill, 2006. Thereafter, there is discussion on farmers. appeal through you, Sir, to this House that after this Bill is passed, then we can pass the Pondicherry Bill. We can taken up the Wife Life (Protection) Amendment Bill tomorrow as there is no Private Members' Business tomorrow. Today, after passing these two Bills, we can take up the Discussion under Rule 193 regarding widespread distress

among the farmers in the country and Shri Sharad Pawar can conclude his reply today as this discussion is languishing for a long time.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN : This is a right suggestion, and the House agrees over it. Shri Kirip Chaliha, you please be brief.

[English]

SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA (Guwahati) : Sir, I shall try to be as brief as possible. I rise to support the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2006. I shall be short because this has been extensively dealt with in the Rajya Sabha. This Bill has passed through the Standing Committee. It has been discussed in the other House quite thoroughly. The only reason I would like to say a few words is because one of my previous speakers, who is now occupying the Chair, has brought certain very significant matters to light, and I thought that I must also discuss in general briefly the subject of human rights and its history before coming to the details of the amendments proposed in this Bill.

Sir, I entirely agree with Shri Mohan Singh when he said that India does not need any certificate about its commitment to human rights from anyone. Rights of an individual, rights for an individual, and steps needed to protect human rights are ingrained in the very civilization ethos of our country since time immemorial, since the time civilization dawned in this country. In this country, Sir, as you have very rightly pointed out, we worship animals. We talk of *nara* as *Narayana* and we consider human beings to be part manifestations of God. This is the land where some of the humanist of religions like Jainism and Buddhism got established. In these, Sir, we do not any teaching from anyone.

Sir, as you have rightly pointed out, long before Magna Carta was born, India knew what human rights are.

Long before the United Nations was born, India debated and talked about human rights. Sir, you have rightly pointed out about the Karachi Resolution, in 1931, of the Indian National Congress. I just looked at the history. I was just reading those Resolutions. I have got the Congress Resolution, which talked about Swaraj at that time. It says:

"Swaraj, as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them and it is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understood by them. In order to end the exploitation of masses, political freedom, political freedom must include real economic freedom for the starving millions of Indian populace."

[Translation]

You have rightly said, at that time when the Charter of Rights was framed which was declared in the Resolution of the Congress.

17.00 hrs.

Freedom of Association and Combination, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Conscience, Freedom of Profession, Practice of Religion, Protection and Culture of Language, Scripts of Minorities—all these rights were included in the Congress Resolution taken long back, before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was taken up in the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you had very correctly placed the things in a right perspective. Rightly so, the main emphasis has been laid on various human rights today. All these various human rights, which has been taken up in various international covenants and conventions were in fact debated and discussed by the Indian people in various Congress Sessions long before Independence. These have been expressed in our independent Constitution in the form of Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy, and in our very legal system, in the CrPC, IPC, in various provisions of writs in the High Courts and in various other provisions. Everything has

been covered as to what should be done how it should be done.

Sir, about the Human Rights, I would say that it was already a part of the Indian law. That is a fact. Moreover, we have, after Independence, chosen a democratic system of governance. In this democratic system, there was a strict separation of powers between the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. India always had an independent Judiciary whom nobody could influence.

Sir, we have been committed to the freedom of Press. We have such a vibrant Press today. In fact, I think, today's Press in India is more independent than in any other parts of the world. Violation of any type in this country can be taken up by the Press in India today, be it the electronic media or the print media. In fact, their freedom—we sometime feel—is more than that is necessary. But it is a tribute to our commitment to the Human Rights and to the fact that we want every institutional practice to be the watchdog of any aberration that may take place.

Sir, India's respect for Human Rights emanates from our civilisational allegiance to tolerance and harmony. This has been enhanced by our democratic system, and this foundation has been strengthened with the establishment of the Human Rights Commission both at the national level and at the State level.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, if you remember correctly, both of us were the Members of this august House in 1993, and both of us were witness to the Human Rights Bill that was passed in the Lok Sabha in 1993. At that time, we had said that this Bill should be passed to remove certain apprehensions of certain quarters. Since 1933, the credentials of our National Human Rights Commission and the State Human Rights Commission have been greatly acknowledged and recognised not only within the country but also outside the country.

[Shri Krip Chaliha]

Sir, India had hosted the Asia Pacific Forum of Human Rights in 2002. You would agree that the concept of the Human Rights, as it existed at that time, and that was discussed in 1993 has changed today.

Sir, the incident of 9/11 when terrorism started growing into US and other western countries have changed the connotation of many of the Foreign Policy Objective Terms of those days including the Human Rights. Is it not a fact? Is it not a fact that those Western countries and the US which had been blaming India about the violation of the Human Rights at one point of time have today agreed that terrorism is a very dangerous element to all civilisations; and there must be a proper balance between tackling terrorism and maintaining Human Rights. India has been the worst victim of terrorism right from the beginning. You must agree that due evolution has started taking place only in the recent years. It is in this context, as you also rightly pointed, that we must understand it and we must ensure to remove the feelings that the Human Rights relief is given only to organisations supporting or perhaps taking up the cause of terrorist/law breakers. The biggest violators of Human Rights are the terrorists. But how many of them have been taken to task by the Human Rights Commission? This question would be asked, if not today, 10 years from now.

Without going into further details, I would only say this. Now, I come to the specific points regarding clauses. Under clause 12(c)—the Minister will take note of this—I am sure, one can visit other institutions under the control of the State Government. There will be a demand for amending this clause. People will demand that one must be allowed to visit army detention and paramilitary detention centres because you cannot exclude them. You allow people to visit jails. But in the extremist-infested areas, what about visit to those places where the captives are taken? That might come.

I have no objection to the other clauses. But there is one point to which, through you, I would like to draw the serious attention of the Minister. Many of the States do not have Human Rights Commission. You must know that it is a very praiseworthy clause that the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission must understand the local language and the local conditions.

In North-East, where human right violations are quite in abundance because of the peculiar political situation, it is very difficult to have a Chief Justice who will understand the local language. Many other States do not have Chief Justices because we have only the High Court as the combined court of legal head of the entire seven or eight North-Eastern States. It will be very difficult to find Chief Justices. Retired Chief Justices may not be there. Even now the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission in my State, Assam, is a retired Supreme Court Judge and not a retired Chief Justice. Many other retired Chief Justices have come from outside. They do not know the local language. They remain there for a term and then they go back. So, there will be problem in finding out retired Chief Justices in the case of North-Eastern States.

Sir, I went through the proceedings of Rajya Sabha. I found that nobody from North-East participated. That is why, most probably this difficulty of North-Eastern States in finding Chief Justices as the Head of the State Human Rights Commission was not focussed upon. I appeal to the Minister that at least in the case of State Human Rights Commission, there should be a provision or there should be some sort of leniency or some ground so that not only the retired Chief Justices but also the retired Justices of the Supreme Court with three years experience or retired justices of High Court with five years experience should be kept because otherwise many of the State Human Rights Commissions will remain headless or defunct, and we will not get Human Rights Commissions in the States where the Human Rights Commissions are very much needed.

Sir, through you, I would like to make this fervent appeal and I would request the House to accept this amendment so that we have a little more choice than what is available. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Not yet. There is no time there now.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Your point is not going on record. You please give the notice and get the discussion held tomorrow, nothing is being written today.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have made your speech. You are not telling the other hon'ble members speak. Please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have spoken on this subject and are not telling other hon'ble members to speak. None of your point is going on record.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please take your seat.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (Srikakulam) : Sir, the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2006 is further to amend the principal Act of 1993. After 13 years of our experience, the Government is bringing some amendments to the principal Act.

I rise to support all the amendments but I want to make some suggestions. Most of the human right violations that take place are against women, children, weaker and poorer sections. Women constitute more than 50 per cent of the population. There is no mandatory provision for the

woman member in the National Human Rights Commission in the proposed amendment Bill. You are including the Chairmen of the SC and ST Commissions as *ex officio* members but the Government has not included the Women or Minority Commissions.

The minorities are 14 per cent of the population in this country. That is why my humble request through you to this Government is that you have to include the chairpersons of the National Women's Commission and the National Minorities Commission. More atrocities are against women and children. They will also take care of these. They know the ground realities and all these things. We are receiving around 70,000 of the complaints every year. Naturally, even the promotion and protection of the Human Rights Act depends upon the Government of the day. If the Government is so honest and they are interested to implement the principles of the Human Rights Commission in letter and spirit, the complaints will reduce. Otherwise, if you bring so many amendments, if the Governments are not very particular then these atrocities and violation of human rights and everything will continue.

For example, in Andhra Pradesh, in the tribal areas more than 2,000 people died due to malaria, dengue and other diseases. We have represented this issue to the National Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Commission asked for the information from the Government of Andhra Pradesh. For so many months they did not send the information. This is the state of affairs in the country. There is no mandatory provision in this Act like it is in the case of State Election Commission. Like in the State Election Commission, we have to give mandatory provisions to the National Human Rights Commission so that they could control the State administration also. Now, they cannot do anything. The reports of the National Human Rights Commission should be made public. The people will also read as to what type of reports they are giving. If they have full knowledge, they can use the provisions of the National Human Rights Commission and everything to their advantage.

[Shri Kinjarapu Yerrannaidu]

There is no financial independence. Even for the State Human Rights Commissions we have to make it mandatory. By this time all the States have to establish State Human Rights Commissions. Why are they delaying it? It is because there are no mandatory provisions. After the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments it is said that there shall be an Election Authority. Every State shall hold elections every five years. In this case there are no such provisions. That is why if any State wants to establish its State Human Rights Commission they will establish; if they do not want, they will delay. But there is no specific provision in this. There is no time-bound programme. Even now some States have not established the State Human Rights Commissions.

In Andhra Pradesh political murders, detentions, lockup deaths and everything are taking place. The Government is not taking any action. If they are approaching the National Human Rights Commission and if they ask for information and if they go for enquiry, they are not being supplied with the records. What the National Human Rights Commission can do?

Now, by bringing this amendment, we have given powers to the Secretary-General of the National Human Rights Commission. Who is being appointed as the Secretary-General of the National Human Rights Commission? He is a civil servant from the Government of India. Even the staff also are on deputation from various Governments. Where is the independence? Where is the autonomy for the National Human Rights Commission? Where is the autonomy for the State Human Rights Commissions?

Like in the case of Election Commission of India, there should be independent recruitment. You have to frame rules etc. for the National Human Rights Commission, for the State Human Rights Commissions so that according to their needs they could recruit the officers. That

should be an independent Commission. Now, other than the Chairman and Members, everybody is taken on deputation from particular State Governments as well as the Central Government. These are all the loopholes in this Bill.

With these experiences, we have to rectify all these things. Otherwise the purpose will not be served. Sir, you are a senior member. You know all these things. You are also arguing on the civil liberties side. Everywhere this problem is there. That is why the Government should control it. The National Human Rights Commission should be given more powers, even autonomy and even the financial powers also. We have to give it a lot of infrastructure. Otherwise it would be difficult to take all the complaints.

Thirdly, we have given powers to any court to refer any petition to the National Human Rights Commission. In our country, thousands of courts are there. So, they are directly sending petitions to the National Human Rights Commission. If you specify that only District Court, High Court or even the Supreme Court can refer the matter to it, it is okay, but you have not specified which court refer the matter to it. Even the 1st Class Magistrate's court is also a court. They can also refer the matter to it. Like this, hundreds and thousands of representations will come to the National Human Rights Commission. Considering the machinery available with them, they cannot dispose of all these petitions and they cannot do justice to all these complaints.

Finally, it should also be applicable to the Army. They may be given the power to inspect and verify their detention centres and other centres like they do for jails and other State Government institutions. Why should we leave the Army? A violation of human rights is a violation of human rights irrespective of where it happens in the country and in which Department it happens. That is why, you have to include the Army also.

With these words, I conclude.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta South) : Sir, I rise to support this Bill. This Bill is an amendment Bill on some technical points and nothing else is there. So many Members have spoken before me and they have covered different types of points. They have expressed their views and sentiments.

I think, my favourite subject is human rights. We love human rights because we are the members of the human family. If we were not the members of the human family, we would not know what the human rights are and what the human cause is. I feel that 'human right' is our third eye. We have our two eyes because we are not God or Goddess; we are human beings. I think, our third eye is the eye of creativity and that is the eye by which we see the human rights and realise how human beings should be treated in a very good manner.

Article 1 of the international covenant Universal Declaration on Human Rights states that all human beings are free, equal in dignity and rights. They are really born free. It is a fact. Of course, India's role is very good in this regard because of the NAM and all the leaders who have born in India.

The fact is that we set up our National Human Rights Commission in the year 1993. In 1995, I sat on a dhama for about 21 days on the road in order to protect the human rights because I used to see everyday the poor people being killed inside the lock-ups. In protest of this, I sat on a dhama on the road. At that time, I had written a book *Manvik*. Till date, my 32 books have already been published. I am not saying that. What I am saying is that in the field of human rights, we have the scope to work, but we are lagging behind because of lack of infrastructure, lack of publicity and lack of co-ordination also.

National Human Rights Commission is a separate body. Of course, we support this amending Bill. I am happy that they have said in the Bill that the Chairman of the National Scheduled Caste Commission and Chairman of the National Scheduled Tribe Commission will be included as *ex officio* Members of the National Human Rights

Commission. But they have not mentioned so about the National Minority Commission and the Nation Women Commission. I think, there must be included minority and women. We can also have Chairman from the OBC and the linguistic minority. I am saying this because I may be the majority in one particular State, but I may be the minority in the other State. This is specially the case of linguistic minority because the Christian people are mostly the linguistic minority in different States. I am not telling about change of their linguistic status from one State to another State. Of course, in my State, they are the linguistic minority. Similarly, if I stay in Gujarat, of course, we are the linguistic minority there. Like this, everywhere such a provision is there. I think, to protect the interest of the minority and women – you have covered everything about the employees – linguistic minority has also to be covered by this Bill.

Sir, we feel that the rights of humans are suffering, and it is because of. . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I'd like to give some clarification as several hon'ble members have sought it. A few more Members may speak. Here, it has been said that the Member of the Minority Commission and the Member of the National Commission for Women have not been involved. I'd like to tell the House that if they go through the rule, you'll find that the Chairperson of the Minority Commission and Chairperson of the National Commission for Women are already involved in it. So, there should be no doubt about it. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : It is all right if it is there. We are happy, and we have nothing more to say about it.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : If it is there, then we are very happy, and we have no problem with it.

[Translation]

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : Provision has been made regarding S.C. and S.T, but they already exist. I've clarified it as several hon'ble Members have sought clarification in this regard.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Your clarification come very late, you should've given it earlier.

[English]

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : But it is not there in the Bill.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are there in it. All right. It may be in your Act because you did not mention it here. Hence, we all have been mentioning about it. Perhaps, it is included in the Act. It is good that you have clarified about this issue. I would appeal for the inclusion of linguistic minorities also in it, as it is also an important factor.

I am not going to discuss this issue in detail because we all know what all are the human rights. If I have to speak on this issue, then I will have to speak about Mahabharata, Ramayana, Quran, Bible, etc., and I will not be able to conclude. . . .(Interruptions) I would have to say about everything because human rights have no certain boundary. It crosses all the boundaries, and there is no specific boundary for the human rights. It touches issues like the girl child, children, male, female, farmers, labours, etc. This is a very broad-based issue.

I feel that they have some lacunae because they can only recommend the case. I am saying this because we have seen these things. There is no mandatory power for them to take any action. If you do not give them the mandatory powers, then they cannot act on the cases that are registered. There is only name, but no fame. It is very nice to hear the name of human rights, but I am sorry to say that there is no fame. Please give them some fame by giving them some infrastructure. I am saying this because the cases of human rights are suffering as a result of shortage of manpower, infrastructural constraints and

procedural delays also. Therefore, I will request you to please go into the details of this matter. I cannot say that you decide about it right now, as you cannot do it. Perhaps, you have to consult your officials and other agencies also on this matter.

We have set up so many *Lok Adalats* to sort out the local issues. Our country has set up some human right *adalats* in different districts of the States. We feel that there should be coordination between the judiciary and the human right *adalats* also because we are fed up with our system. I am saying this because thousands and thousands of cases are pending since long, and as there is no result or implementation to be seen. Therefore, I would request you to review the situation, and set up some, human right *adalats*.

The Chairman of the Human Rights Commission and its Members can only make requests. Placing a request or giving recommendations is something, but taking action on the same is another thing. If there is no action, then there will be no reaction and that will ultimately result in no action. We were speaking, we are speaking and we will continue to speak, but ultimately the result will be zero. Therefore, I would request you to please take care of this issue because this is a very serious matter.

I would also like to place one more point before all of you. We may accept some suggestions and we may reject some of the other suggestions. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Madam, please conclude your speech.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, I am speaking only for the past four minutes or so. Kindly give me a couple of minutes more to speak on this issue.

Sir, I have some specific suggestions. I may belong to a political party, and somebody else may not belong to any political party. The attitude of one political party may be something, and in case of others, it may be something else. This is obvious in a democratic system. There may be farmers' movement, there may be workers' movement, or there may be some other democratic movements. What

is happening today? The students might be protesting against something. You may or may not accept their demands, but you cannot push them away by using tear-gas, bullets or by using *lathis*. It is the same case with doctors and children. They have something in their minds. Why do you not talk to them? Why do you not take them into confidence so that they can give you some information? . . . (Interruptions)

PROF. M. RAMADASS (Pondicherry) : You are diverting.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : It is very much related to the issue of human rights. I said that human rights have no specific boundaries, and I stick to that. The issue may be different, but we should not act in an inhuman way as it will not protect the life, but only proves to be the darkest day. In this regard, please send a message to all the State Governments also.

In regard to appointments, there is a problem. In a State, it is the Chief Minister, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the Leader of Opposition who recommend the names of the members who constitute the Human Rights Commission. Out of these three, if the Chief Minister and the Speaker recommend the names, obviously, it means two out of three are in favour of it and, therefore, there is a majority. But what is your intention? Your intention is to see that the Chairman of the Human Rights is very impartial. In that regard, do not lay stress on the majority, but lay stress on credentials and sincerity.

With these words, I would request the hon. Minister to bring in a comprehensive Bill to cover all the aspects so as to protect the lives, property and everything else belonging to the people of this country, and to also show to the world that our mind is without fear, and our head is held high.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil) : I support the amendment in many ways. It is not complete by itself. We all know that in a democratic society, human rights will have a vital role to play. Without human rights, there can be no democracy. So, it is a wide term covering all aspects of a day-to-day human life. I am not going into those details: Here is a case where we have decided to appoint a

Committee at the State level as well as at the national level. The appointment is made by the Prime Minister alongwith the Leader of the Opposition and the Speaker, and they appoint the Committee. The National Committee will have a Chairperson, who is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India. So, there cannot be a Committee higher than this, and it is admitted. In the States also, the Chief Minister alongwith the Leader of the Opposition and the Speaker of the Assembly constitute this Committee, and there also the Chief Justice of the High Court or a Judge of the High Court with five years experience, that is the provision here, will be the Chairperson of that Committee. We are giving the job of protecting the human rights to the Committees so constituted. Basically, the Human Rights Commission remained an advisory body. That position has not been changed.

I will refer to some of the provisions in this Bill. When we appoint such a very high-level Committee, why should they not be given some teeth to implement their decisions? They must be provided with sharp teeth to implement their decisions, whenever it is found necessary.

Fortunately, the Government has already accepted one thing and that is they have given the power to initiate prosecution proceedings. The Commission is given the power to initiate proceedings whenever there is any violation.

I am referring to Clause 18. Clause 18(a)(ii) says, "to initiate proceedings for prosecution or such other suitable actions as the Commission may deem fit..." This is all right. But, why should not this Commission be given the right to take some remedial action also? Clause 18(a)(i) says, "to make payment of compensation or damages to the complainant or to the victim or to the members of his family as the Constitution may consider necessary;". Why should not the Commission be given the right to award compensation also? It is a Committee headed by a retired Chief Justice and Chief Justice is taking a decision. Should that recommendation go to the bureaucracy, to the IAS officer to scrutinise and then take a final decision? This is not just. At the same time, it is uncalled for in the nature of the case.

[Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan]

Since you have given the power of initiating prosecution, I would suggest that you should give the power of awarding compensation or relief as an incurring measure. It should not be left for the National Commission just to recommend to the Government. That is why I am very much aggrieved, if I may put it that way.

The words used are, "recommend to the concerned Government". The concerned Government here means an IAS officer who will have to take a decision. Clause 18(c) says, "recommend to the concerned Government or authority at any stage of the inquiry for the grant of such immediate interim relief to the victim or the members of his family as the Commission may consider necessary". Why cannot the Commission be given that power? Will the heavens fall if that power is given to the Commission itself?

You have given *suo motu* the power for prosecution. Why do you not give the power to the Commission for awarding the interim relief also? Should the recommendation go to an IAS officer? Or should it go to the State Secretariat, or the Central Secretariat, or to the Ministry concerned? The Chief Justice and another judge of the High Court whose age has to be between 65 to 70 are men of experience. They are men who have adorned high offices of the Supreme Court. It is they who are taking a decision. Should it be taken as just a recommendation?

I would request the Government to give statutory powers to the Commission to award compensation whenever it is found necessary. Otherwise, the victim may not get any compensation. It can only shed tears. The recommendation has to go to a Secretary of the Government for his consideration and again a final order will have to be issued. That will take months and years. Who knows if it will be awarded? Interim relief is meant for immediate release. That is not provided for in the Act. So, the amendment should be made in such a way that the Commission must be given the power to award interim relief or compensation in any case whenever it is found.

I do not want to go into all the details. But these are some of the things which I have to point out to the persons

who are concerned. Coming to recommendations regarding the rights, Clause 18(a) says, "where the inquiry discloses the commission of violation of human rights or negligence in the prevention of violation of human rights or abetment thereof by a public servant, it may recommend to the concerned Government or authority:-". Here again, why cannot the Commission take a decision? Why cannot the Government take a decision and give the power to the Commission?

It is chaired by the Supreme Court Judge of three years experience or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the State Commission, it is presided over by the Chief Justice or a Judge with five years experience. They are men of experience. They must be given the power to resolve these things by themselves. You have given the power of *suo motu* prosecution. That is good. I fully agree, appreciate and applause. Why not give that power to other Members also? When the enquiry is conducted, in regard to interim relief or many other things, the power of final order should be given to the Commission. It is the highest body in the imagination that the Government can constitute. The appointing authority is the Chief Minister or the Leader of the Opposition or the Speaker. Can any other committee be constituted in such a way? So, when that committee is constituted, it should not be made a recommendatory body or an advisory body when it comes to the basic issue of human rights. Moreover, a lot of custodial deaths and lock-up deaths are prevalent in our country. In those cases, immediate relief will have to be given by the Commission. We can do so if we amend this provision.

I would request the Government to give the Commission the statutory power of doing something. Otherwise, it would be a futile exercise, pending representation. Hence, I would request the Government to give more powers to the Commission because it involves protection of human rights. With these words, I support the Bill and conclude.

*PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Sir, I rise to support the Human Rights Protection Amendment Bill, 2006. Sir, man is the best creation of God. Veda says - Manurbhav i.e. Be a human being. In the Mahabharata,

* The Speech was laid on the Table.

it has been said that Na hi manushat hi shre-shthhntaram kinchit, i.e. nothing is superior to a human being. The rights of the human beings should be protected. Sir, the protection of human rights is not a new thing for India. Our culture says that Sarvebhavantu Sukhina Sarvesantu Niramaya. Sarvebhadrani Pashyantu Makashchid Dukhbhagvet i.e. May all be happy. May all be healthy! May all prosper! May nobody have any sorrow!

Sir, I rise to support all the provisions of the Human Rights Protection Bill. Sir, the Human Rights Commission should be constituted soon in all the states. Presently, these are in 16 states only. The National Human Rights Commission needs to be made stronger and efficient. At national level, the National Human Rights Commission should be chaired by the retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court whereas at state level, these commissions should be chaired by the retired chief justices of the High Courts.

Its composition should also comprise of the Heads of the national Commission for Women, National Commission for the Backward Classes and National Minority Commission. The Members of the Human Rights Commissions should be sensible to other's feelings. The number of women should be more therein. Sir, today the Human Rights Commission is toothless. It should have the right to make punitive provisions. It has the right to investigate but not the right to take any action.

Sir, the terrorists in Kashmir save themselves in the name of Human Rights and thus misuse these rights. Lacs of Kashmiri Pandits are suffering in the places like Delhi, Chandigarh and Jammu after leaving all their belongings in Kashmir. Where are their human rights? Why don't the human rights activists raise their voices in favour of them?

To bring social equality and social justice, to check dalits and women harassment, to check the practice of child labour/drudgery, and the cases regarding the plight of the prisoners, inspection of jails, care of the aged persons, the disabled should also be brought under the jurisdiction of the Human Rights Commission. Cases pertaining to providing basic amenities, right to live,

removing social disparity should also be brought under its jurisdiction. Sir, the increase in number of persons dying in jails under police custody is alarming. Stringent action should be taken against those persons violating the Human Rights. Rights and duties are complimentary to each other. Duties should also be discharged alongwith the rights.

[English]

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU (Rajapur) : The Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, in fact, emanates from the recommendations of the former Chief Justice of India, Justice Ahmedi Committee Report.

My general point is that whenever we are framing the legislation based on the recommendation of the Report, it is really required that the same Report should be circulated to all the Members of Parliament. When we are considering the Bill, the Report should be circulated to us to understand which are the recommendations have been incorporated and which are not. If they are not recommended, it should be mentioned these are not incorporated and as to what are the reasons for the same. I think, generally, I would like to request the Secretariat that in future whenever we are framing the law based on the recommendations of the Committee, the Report should be circulated. When it is specifically mentioned and it is also stated in the object that you are framing this law on the recommendations of Justice Ahmedi Committee Report, it would have been proper if you have circulated it. I am sure, the Minister would be able to tell us which recommendations have been accepted and which have not been accepted and the reasons for the same.

Generally, human rights are very important because human beings together as a part of the society, to protect the interests and rights, create a State. It is expected of the State to treat all the human beings equally and will not cause any injustice to them. But as we have seen over a period of time, the strong arm of the State is in the violation of human rights. That is why, we actually need human rights protection law to protect the citizens from the atrocities of the State. In fact, the human right is treating

[Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu]

a fellow human being, giving him the same treatment that we feel should be given to us. Mahatma Gandhi himself has said that you treat others in a manner that you expect yourself to be treated by him and this has been part of our ethos and culture. But over a period of time, the hon. Minister has been responding in Parliament time and again about increasing incidents of atrocities of some individuals causing damage to the self and the fellow citizens is also a form of terrorism and the same needs to be taken into account. I am sure, law would be able to capture the new growing phenomenon which is emerging and will be able to deal with this as effectively as we expect the State to treat the citizens

At the same time you must ensure that no group of citizen will be able to take the other citizen for a ride and also cause damage to the State. That is a challenge, I am sure you will be able to deal with it.

I would now come specifically to some of the provisions of the Bill. Clause 16 states that the salaries paid to the Central Human Rights Commission should be at par with the State Human Rights Commission. If you make a provision like this, some of the States may not have the capacity to do so. Your intention is good, noble, that is, all should get similar salaries so that they will have some independence. If that is what you really want to attain, the salary should be provided from the Central pool because it is not going to cost much. Otherwise, you might be burdening the States to pay such salaries as may be required.

High Court judges are to be appointed on the State Human Rights Commission. Normally, we follow a system whereby the Chief Justice of a High Court in a particular State is not from his home State. A Gujarat citizen will be appointed as a High Court judge probably in Karnataka or Tamil Nadu. Therefore, we should also follow a system that the High Court judges, to be appointed as the Chairmen of the State Human Rights Commission, should be appointed in a manner that they should not be from the home State so as to ensure that they can exercise

better control over the State Government whose authority they are going to examine.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN : All these points have been covered in the Bill.

[English]

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU : The third point is on the Selection Committee. Shri Varkala Radhkrishnan has also pointed out that there are three members who are going to constitute the Selection Committee. It says that absence of one member should not vitiate the proceeding of selection. The point is, probably all the three members may not come together. But basically it vitiates the spirit of creating three persons. Three persons have been put into ensure that there is no partisan attitude. Suppose, for some reason one person is not present, that means the proceeding will not be vitiated but it will vitiate the spirit of the law. Probably, you are putting a condition that if for some reason one of the three members is not present, it should not vitiate the proceeding but you must make sure and make all precautions that two are present, otherwise it will vitiate the spirit of the law and the purpose will really get defeated.

The other point is about the visit of the jail. The Central Commission has to visit certain jails. It is specifically mentioned now that it can be done without intimation to the State Government. I can appreciate that point because, otherwise the States who have committed certain crime against an individual, may not allow the Central Commission to come in. That is why this provision is required. At the same time you should make sure that there should be some enabling provision in the law which will make State Governments to cooperate. Otherwise, you might land up there without intimation but may not be able to see them. You may go without intimation but having gone there, how does the Central Commission be able to visit and inspect the jail in the absence of this enabling provision. Therefore, this provision also should be made properly.

The Action Taken Report on the recommendations of the Human Rights Commission should be filed before the Parliament and there should be a specific time limit, otherwise it will be a mockery. We will just be making one more law.

In the Bill, it is stated that the Chairmen of the Minorities Commission, Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Women Commission will be the ex-officio members. We have recently passed a law against domestic violence. That is a very peculiar case. I welcome that Act and in fact I support such legislation. If you really want to bring about synergy of operation then it is also important that the domestic violence related issues also should be dealt with by this Commission.

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI (Hyderabad) : At the outset, I stand to support the Bill. I have a few points and I would like the hon. Minister to clarify those.

The first point is, in July 2006 a Conference took place in Bhopal wherein all the State Human Rights Commissions assembled. Particularly in relation to this Bill, all of them were unanimous that when it comes to the Chairman of the Commission, he has to be a retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or of the High Court.

The second point is that they were of the opinion that what this Bill does is that it reduces the number from five to three wherein a District Magistrate is being denied the right to become a member of the State Human Rights Commission. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is going to give any weightage or consideration to the State Human Rights Conference which took place in July in Bhopal.

As far as the National Human Rights Act is concerned, the biggest human rights violation that takes place is in relation to child labour. Now as far as this Act is concerned, it relates only to public servants. Will the hon. Minister or this Government consider bringing in such a legislation or amending this particular Act wherein the NHRC can go into the violations in relation to child labour also? Many reports have come out in this regard. Various international organisations have submitted reports in recent days

wherein it has been shown that the highest number of child labour is there in our country. It is very important and I hope the hon. Minister will respond to.

The third point is in relation to having ex-officio members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission. Unfortunately, the National Minorities Commission has not been mentioned. Will the Minister agree to it?

Fourthly, as far as the recommendatory nature of compensation is concerned, I can understand about the problems of giving an interim order because you cannot have what is called in legal terminology, the dual remedy and dual damages in the same court of action. But as far as compensation is concerned, you make it mandatory. What is the point when NHRC or SHRC comes to a conclusion that the rights of 'x' or 'y' or 'z' have been violated and he deserves a compensation but the compensation is not given. The compensation does not bring back one's self esteem or integrity. But at the same time it goes a long way in sending a strong message to the violators of human rights. So, at least make the compensation aspect mandatory.

Fifthly, I would like to know from the hon. Minister when it comes to the removal section what is the difference between a person of unsound mind and infirmity of mind. Though I am not very good in my English but I really do not see any difference between infirmity of mind and an unsound mind.

Will the hon. Minister be kind enough to enlighten all of us why is it that various State Governments have established the State Human Rights Commissions, but the Gujarat State has not yet established a Human Rights Commission? What steps is the Central Government going to take to ensure that the Gujarat State establishes a Human Rights Commission? When you talk about transparency and that everybody is equal before law, unfortunately, the State Human Rights Commission is not working in Gujarat?

Finally, taking from what the hon. Member from Shiv Sena has said, what happened in Mumbai is condemnable

[Shri Asaduddin Owaisi]

but what is happening now is also condemnable. There are many people from Muslim community who are being kept in illegal confinement in Mumbai from 25 days or 30 days or 40 days. They are not being released. The State Government says that they are being released but there is a difference between the Maharashtra Government releasing people and Tripura Government releasing people. When the Government of Tripura arrested six to seven Muslims, they apologized publicly that they are sorry that they arrested wrong people. But what is happening in Maharashtra? Illegal confinement is taking place. Yesterday, we had brought this to the notice of the hon. Prime Minister also. A 68 year old man was kept in illegal confinement for 20 days. He was stripped. His daughter-in-law was forced to take off her *burkha* and she was threatened that if she does accept a particular crime in regard to Mumbai blasts, then she would also be stripped. So, these are very important things. As has been said just now by my senior colleague, unless and until you give teeth to NHRC, all our exercise will be of no use.

With these comments, I thank you for giving me this opportunity and I support this Bill.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN : I regret that there are a number of items in the agenda and it seems that we will have to sit late to take up all of them. Some of the hon'ble Members have given their names to speak on this subject. Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat, Shri T.K. Hamja, Shri Shailendra Kumar and Shri Brahmaanand Panda – all the hon'ble Members may table their speeches, it shall be deemed as a part of the proceedings. Concluding this discussion, I urge upon the hon'ble Minister to give his reply in this regard.

[English]

*SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA (Jagatsinghpur) : Hon'ble Sir, The Protection of Human Rights Amendment Bill, 2006 seeks to amend the Protection of Human Rights

Act, 1993 (PHRA), which had led to the establishment of the Internationally revered institution like National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC). It is beyond doubt that the change in the time, the PHRA need some amendment. However, the proposed amendment in the Act as expressed in the Bill - 2006 has been reportedly criticised by independent NGOs and the NHRC itself for the limitations it places on the NHRC's powers, independence and effectiveness. This shows that the Amendment Bill fails to address to concerns expressed by civil society and by the NHRC itself during the past 13 years of the existence of PHRA. In fact, apart from attempts to improve the monitoring powers of NHRC, the Amendment Bill in reality contains a few regressive provisions that may undermine independence and functioning of the NHRC. Some of which are discussed below :

Visits to Prison

The Amendment Bill proposes to do away with the requirement of prior intimation to prison authorities [Section 12 (c) of PHRA, 1993] ahead of prison visits, thereby enabling surprise visits to jails or other institutions under the control of State Governments and empowering the NHRC to form an opinion on the actual conditions inside prisons. This is a commendable proposition as the amended PHRA, could facilitate in obtaining accurate picture in these institutions. This amendment, however, will give a very limited power to the NHRC to conduct inspections only in jails and other institutions under the control of State Governments. The amendment should have empowered the NHRC to inspect without advance warning jails and institutions under the State Government, detention and interrogation centres used by the Army and paramilitary forces across the Country. Sufficient provisions should also be made to empower the NHRC to effectively investigate the existence of illegal detention centres in States like Jammu and Kashmir.

International Conventions

Under the PHRA, the definition of 'International Covenants' is restricted to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the on Economic,

* The speech was laid on the Table.

Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). This provision in the PHRA falls short of the conditions prescribed by the United Nations 'Principles relating to the status and functioning of national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights', ('the Paris Principles'). The Paris Principles calls for harmonisation of national legislation with the international instruments to which the State is party.

The Amendment Bill which seeks to expand on the PHRA by extending the definition to cover "such other Covenant or Convention adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations as the Central Government may, by notification, specify" should fulfill the Paris Principles.

Empowerment of Secretary General

One of the amendments empowering the Chairperson to delegate functions to the Secretary-General of the NHRC, generally a serving civil servant and appointed directly by the Central Government may prove as detrimental to the protection of human rights concerns. This may also challenge the independence and credibility of the NHRC since an overwhelming proportion of its staff is on deputation from other government departments, including, notably, from the Intelligence Bureau.

Inquiries

While there is a provision enabling the NHRC and the State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs) to make interim recommendations during an inquiry of a Human Rights Case is welcome, it is of restricted utility as the Commissions can only play recommendatory role which are largely persuasive in nature. Thus, the amendment should make an attempt to make the Human Rights Commissions' recommendations legally binding by the concerned authorities.

Empowerment of NHRC

We are proud that the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 in conformity with 'Paris Principles' has resulted in the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India as an autonomous institution to ensure protection of Human Rights of the people of the

country. The popularity of the NHRC is on the rise. In the first year of its establishment, the Commission has estimated to have received only 496 complaints of violation of Human Rights which rose to 74,444 during the year 2005-06. Further, the complaints to the Commission are on the rise. The receipt of huge number of complaints is generally carried forward from earlier years. Under these circumstances, provisions should also be made to prepare a road map for quick disposal of large number of pending cases relating to human rights in the country.

Apart from the recorded and published human rights violation issues, it is reported that a large number of such issues are either suppressed or hidden. The lack of general awareness about fundamental rights and the ignorance about the prowess of rights protective institutions like NHRCs and SHRCs have led to under-reporting of the human rights violation cases in building mechanism so that the common people are well-aware of their constitutional and legal rights.

The NHRC, over the years since its formation, has underlined the weaknesses in the PHRA, 1993 to the Central Government in its various issues of annual reports. The amendment provisions of the PHRA Bill-2006 should be seen alongwith the suggestions of Hon'ble Justice A.M. Ahmadi constituted by NHRC to review the PHRA, 1993.

The Amendment Bill should empower the NHRC to independently inquire into human rights violations by the armed forces. Considering the credibility of the NHRC efforts to be made to empower the Commission to initiate proceedings for prosecution and grant interim compensation as it may deem necessary.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Massive inequalities exist in developing countries like India which restrain the citizen from enjoying their rights as enshrined by the Constitution through fundamental rights. At the time when more than 26% of the country's population are reeling under poverty and mass destitution, effective and purposeful implementation of acts and rules related to protection of human rights should realize that

[Shri Brahmananda Panda]

freedom in its true sense would not be achieved unless economic, social and cultural rights are assured to these people. Thus intense, purposeful and solemn efforts should be ensured through the protection of Human Rights towards realization of citizens' economic, social and cultural rights.

Any amendment to the Human Rights Act should keep in mind the provisions as enshrined in Part-III and Part-IV of our Constitution. Civil and Political Rights ensured in Part-III and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights listed in the Part-IV of our constitution constitute the conscience of the Indian Constitution. While amending the provisions a detailed study has to be undertaken to assure right to life and right to live with human dignity. In this context let us hope that our effort to amend the PHRA, 1993 will preserve and protect the human rights in its true letter and spirit.

*SHRI T.K. HAMZA (Manjeri) : Sir, In fact the human rights are nothing but the fundamental rights of the citizen, guaranteed by the Constitution of India.

We have got many rights guaranteed by the Constitution such as right to live, earn livelihood, possess wealth, conduct business, move throughout the country, speech and expression etc. When the rights given by our Constitution, are infringed by violating by anybody, any authority or Government, the question of protection of rights come into operation. Violation of rights of persons can be brought to light and discussed for remedy in three ways.

First of all, we can bring to the notice of the Government by way of discussion either in the Parliament or in the Assembly of States. We have utilized these opportunities in several occasion for many years.

Secondly, we go to the court of law, fight against any infringement or violation. But this cannot be availed by all people due to financial stringency and other reasons.

Thirdly, when we could not utilize the two above said ways, a poor man can bring to light, his grievances, to public opinion. Fortunately we got many strong media, the newspapers as well as the visual media. They are playing very important role in this field now-a-days.

The infringement of human rights or violation of rights any kind, is a very serious and heinous crime, no doubt. In our country, there are number of authorities and laws to check the violation and protect the human rights. But, the situation is not improved so far. That is why we were compelled to think of having these human rights commissions in the Centre as well as in the States. Even then we are not satisfied by the existing law and the functioning of the Commissions. Therefore, we have, to think of the amendments for the powerful and smooth running of the commissions.

The amendments now moved are three important aspects. One is the eligibility criteria for appointing the chairperson of NHRC and SHRC may be the Retired. Chief Justice of Supreme Court and the High Courts, I agree with the suggestions in the amendment, any judge having 3 years service in SC/HC as the case may.

Second important amendment is that the Commission can inspect the jail or place of suspected retention without the previous intimation to the concerned. This amendment is highly appreciated.

An important amendment was that the chairperson is empowered to delegate some of the powers and functions of NHRC to its Secretary General. This is something serious according to me. Because the Secretary General is an employee appointed by the concern governments. If this amendment is approved, Government can influence in any case so delegated. Then the independent nature of the judicial function of the commission will be affected.

When Government have such powers in certain cases the rights of the people cannot be protected independently. For example, I say one case:-

In Coimbatore Central Jail in Tamil Nadu, a person Abdul Nazer Mahdani is tribal prisoner for the last 8

*The speech was laid on the Table.

years. Our Constitution as well as the well settled law of the land says "that person cannot be put in jail without trial". So far, his case, trial is not over. For the last 8 years, he apply bail several times but rejected as the State opposed.

Another instance Y. Gopalswami (YKO) in Tamil Nadu was put in jail for 3 years without trial. After three years he was realized and himself and his party were taken to the ruling party alliance.

After all, these are infringement and violation of human rights. Therefore, the amendment that the delegation of the power of the chairperson of the Human Rights Commission cannot be agreed to.

Anyway, after 60 years of independence, the human rights of our citizen could not be protected. Therefore, the need of strengthening the Commission are highly appreciated and I stop my words.

[Translation]

*SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail) : Sir, most of the cases regarding violation of human rights have been reported from the States of Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Bihar. They will have the freedom to conduct investigation without giving prior information to the Members; in the past investigations used to be conducted by taking the State Governments in confidence. The Chairman at the national as well as state level and the members of state level are appointed on the basis of merit and experience. It will make the commission powerful. The Commission is deeply concerned about custodial deaths. The number of custodial deaths was 199 in Uttar Pradesh, 148 in Maharashtra, 134 in Bihar and 20 in Gujarat. Very bad condition of jails is an open violation of human rights. While the total capacity of jails in the country is to accommodate 2,34,462 prisoners, 3,24,852 prisoners are being accommodated there. The Commission has received 1,18,502 cases till date, out of which 57,694 cases have been disposed of. From the time of its constitution in October, 1993, an amount of Rs. 8,84,10,634 has been disbursed as

*The speech was laid on the Table.

compensation till date. Gujarat holds top position in the report of Amnesty International. No review of the cases of the persons arrested under POTA was done even one year after repeal of the Act. Such cases took place in great numbers during Godhra riots and in Jammu and Kashmir. The annual report of Amnesty International was submitted recently. In it the government has been congratulated for repealing Protection Act. The continuing incidents of discriminations against the women, dalits, and tribals people reflect the failure of the government. That commission will become powerful if the report of Justice A.P. Ahmadi Committee is implemented. The Chairman of Minority Commission, National Commission for Women, National Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will become the Members of that Commission. It will stop violations and provide relief to the people from the rights of those persons who visit jails and others institutions.

With these words, I support this bill.

[English]

*SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL (Vijayawada) : Sir, this Bill that has been brought before this House by the hon. Home Minister with laudable aims and objectives. And, one of them is to quicken the process of disposal of cases before the NHRC and SHRCs. Sir, India is one of the major countries in the world where a large number of human rights violations are taking place. In spite of having a provision and power with the NHRC to make *suo motu* inquiries into the human rights violations, there are more than 70,000 cases of human rights violations reported every year. It is because that in spite of enacting the Protection of Human Rights Act in 1993, there are as many as 16 States which have failed to set up the SHRC. But, this Bill has a good solution to both the problems i.e. to reduce the number of cases and setting up of SHRCs. Sir, Clause 12(6) of the Bill says, "Two or more State Governments may, with the consent of a Chairperson or Member of a State Commission, appoint such Chairperson or, as the case may be, such Member of another State Commission

*The speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri L. Rajagopal]

simultaneously if such Chairperson or Member consents to such appointment.' This is a very good move which, I am sure, will lessen not only the number of cases, but also reduces huge expenditure which otherwise has to be incurred by States in setting up of SHRC. Since the Government, through this Bill, is allowing two or three or four States to set up one Commission, I suggest for consideration of the hon. Minister that SHRCs and NHRC should also be mandated to inquire into violations on the directions or orders of the respective courts i.e. SHRC will look into the violations pertaining to matters within the State and the NHRC will look into the violations which come within the purview of the SC.

Now, Sir, now, I come to Clause 3(a) which deals with the constitution of the NHRC. It is good that the Minister has made a provision for giving representation to SC Commission and the ST Commission in view of having a separate Commission for both SC and ST, alongwith the National Commission for Women and the National Commission for Minorities. But, I fail to understand the rationale behind not giving any representation to the backward classes in the Commission. Sir, we have the National Commission for Backward Classes which looks after the welfare and well-being of the backward class people who constitute a major chunk in the country. Hence, I request that the Chairperson of the National Commission for Backward Classes also be made as a Member of the NHRC. The other point I wish to make is, if I recollect correctly, only one woman, in the last 13 years, has become a member of the Commission. The Government is giving so many opportunities to women in various fields. But, it is disappointing that no woman is represented on the NHRC, except the Chairperson of the National Commission for Women who is a *de facto* Member of the Commission. Hence, I request that one member of the Commission be reserved for woman, apart from NCW.

Then, Sir, I welcome Clause 9(c) which makes a provision and allows the Commission to visit any jail without any intimation to the respective State Government. Earlier, if the Commission wish to visit any jail, it is

mandatory to give intimation to the respective State Government. And. By the time the Commission reaches there, everything would have been 'managed' by the local jail authorities. The new provision really helps to find out as to how the human rights violations are taking place in our jails. It also helps to study the living conditions of the inmates. I welcome this move of the Government. This move, I am confident, will definitely have improvement in the living conditions of the inmates.

Sir, now, I come to Clause 11 which proposes to amend Section 18 of the parent Act. The laudable feature of this Clause is that the Commission, even during the course of inquiry or investigation, will have the right to direct the respective Government to pay compensation or damages where the inquiry discloses the commission of violation of human rights or negligence or abatement to the complainant or the Victim or the members of the family. This provision was never there before and I congratulate the Government to bring this amendment to Section 18 of the Protection of Human Rights Act. This facilitates the victims, or, at least, will have some solace against the violation of human rights, unlike earlier system where compensation, etc. would be given only after the process was completed, which is quite often after so many years.

Sir, there is also apprehension that the State Governments, while so opting for Chairperson or Members of the Commission under Clause 12 of the Bill, may bypass the Selection Committee under Clause 22(1) of the Bill. This loophole has been kept open in the Bill which was introduced in the Rajya Sabha. The point I wish to make is that if you give any elbow room for the States they will exploit that loophole and ultimately the purpose of protecting the human rights in the country is defeated. The Standing Committee has gone into this issue thread-bare and recommended that the appointment of Chairperson or the Members of the SHRC should be on the basis of the recommendation made by the Selection Committee. And rightly so, the Government has accepted this recommendation and incorporated the same in the Bill before us.

The next point is with regard to delay in submitting information by various departments to the Commission.

There is nothing about this, either in the Bilor in the parent Act to penalize them. Even the Pakistan Human Rights Commission Bill, which was passed recently, contains a provisions to penalize any official who fails to produce required documents before the Commission within a prescribed period. But, in our Act, we do not have any such provisions. In the absence of such a penal provision, it gives an elbow room for our officials to delay in submitting the necessary documents to the Commission and also get away from the delay. Due to this, the work of the Commission hampers. So, I request the Hon. Minister to make it mandatory that information should be submitted within two or three months or as he deems fit. If anybody fails to submit the same within the prescribed period, the Commission should have the power to punish the official concern for his lapse.

The next point I wish to make is that after working so hard the Commission submit its Report to the Government. But, as per this Act, the recommendations made by the Commission are not binding on the Government. They are only recommendatory or persuasive in nature. And, it is upto the Government either to accept or reject the recommendations of the Commission. So, I request the hon. Minister for his consideration to see that the recommendations of the Commission be made binding on the Government, rather than leaving it to the free will of the Government of the day.

Sir, nation has no meaning without its people. The worth of a nation is the worth of individuals constituting the nation. This is the emphasis laid in our Constitution which holds out promise to secure both simultaneously – just as there can be no peace without justice; there cannot be any freedom without human rights.

But, these human rights have been hit for a six in Godhra riots by the local Government there. Hundreds of people have been massacred, burnt to death in Gujarat. The human rights have been stifled. Even recently, the NHRC has issued a notice to CBI to submit a Report, because there is a plot to tamper with the evidence recovered from the mass graveyard on the Panam

riverbed. The relatives in this case are frantically looking for the remains of their family members all these years so that they could perform the last rites and give them a decent burial. This basic human right is not being given to the riot victims by the Government of Gujarat.

We are also seeing how human rights violations are taking place in Uttar Pradesh. Just to give an example, recently, an under trial was burnt to death in Banda district jail in Uttar Pradesh. He was not even given a proper healthcare and the NHRC has expressed its anguish at the utter lack of sensitivity towards his basic minimum human rights by jail authorities. Now, with the inclusion of a provision that the NHRC and SHRC visit jails without any intimation, I hope the situation would improve.

We have also seen how some of the mentally retarded people in Tamil Nadu were shackled, I think in 2004 and charred to death due to fire accident in a thatch shelter where they have been kept. This clearly shows that even in some of our States do not have human rights for mentally retarded people, leave alone sane.

We had also seen how Graham Staines were burnt to death in Orissa and the human rights violations that are taking place, day-in-and-day-out, in Madhya Pradesh, etc.

So, finally, I would urge this House that there is no better religion than protection of human rights of a human being by a human being. There is no better service to mankind than respecting the human rights of a human being. Therefore, let us all pledge today that we will endeavour to educate our people to honour and respect each other's human rights without any violation.

With these few words, I once again support this Bill.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am glad to note that many hon. Members have expressed their views on protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2006. Although the time allotted for discussion on this bill was one hour, as this amendment

[Shri Shripakash Jaiswal]

was not a big one, but I am pleased to say that our hon. Members are very conscious about human rights and it seems that the future of our country and the situation prevailing in it will get better and better. I think that the atrocities being witnessed in connection with human rights will be non-existent in our country in future.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to initiate my discussion with the point raised by you. It was revealed during your statement in the House and during the views expressed by other hon. Members that the issue of human rights was discussed in U.N.O. and also that a proposal in this regard was passed by the Congress party in the year 1929 when it was in the forefront of freedom struggle under the leadership of Pt. Motilal Nehru. This proposal was passed in the year 1930 and 1936 also. Your statement has given us the proof that the track record of our country in initiating discussion on the issue of human rights is better than other developed nations of the world. The reference to the human right resolution passed in the year 1929 and 1930 in a poor, backward country which was not even independent proves the fact that we were sensitive to protection of human rights for a very long time. It is another thing that we got independence in the year 1947. We witnessed helplessly the violation of human rights even when we were aware of the need for preservation. This process began with the introduction of this proposal in 1929 itself in our country. It is also a fact that in the year 2006 the incidents of violation of human rights occur more frequently in our country in comparison to other developed countries. We should remain optimistic about the future of protection of human rights in our country as our country has that culture and it was in the forefront of the struggle for protection of human rights in the past. All of us should believe in that philosophy in all its facet.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Shri B.K. Dev had initiated the discussion on this bill. I think that most of the hon. Members support this bill whole-heartedly.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, all the hon. Members have supported it.

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : Yes, Sir, indeed it was supported by all the Members. Some of the hon. Members expressed their views about some technical aspects. Shri Dev had told yesterday that so far only 16 states have constituted the commission. The real point is that seeing the urgency of constituting Human Rights Commission in every state of the country, the Union Government was striving for that in the past and it will do so in future also, and I hope that every state will have a commission of its own in future. The small states which have budget problem in constituting a commission in their own state have been given liberty through this bill to associate themselves with their neighbouring state in this matter. As the cases of violation of human rights in small states are a few, so seeing the practical problem of raising their own infrastructure, they can attach their commission with that of their neighbouring state. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let the hon. Minister express his views.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEV (Kalahandi) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has told just now that the cases of violation of human rights are far less in small states in comparison to large states. I would like the Minister to present data for that. I think the cases of such violations in small states like North-East states are quite high.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Deo ji, please put a question on this issue.

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : The figures quoted by me may be somewhat different. The point which I want to emphasize is that the small states with low resources can solve this problem by associating themselves with the same commission in other states. The incidents may vary from state to state but the hon. Member has rightly pointed out that the incidents of violation of human rights even in small states are not insignificant.

While supporting the bill strongly, Shri Sujan Chakraborty had said that it was not proper to visit jails without giving prior information to the State Government, as it would create many problems. I would like to clarify

that there is a provision in the bill that Human Rights Commission cannot visit jails without prior permission from the State Government-authorities, but it has not been banned totally.

[Translation]

It is not mandatory to intimate the state Government. If it desires or thinks it appropriate to visit jail by keeping the state Government under intimation it can do that. This will enable their officers tell us about the existing loopholes, and we may ask them as to why this arrangement has not been made. They may visit jails by keeping the state government under intimation, it is upto their will and pleasure. However, there is provision that members of the Commission may visit a jail without intimating the state governments concerned.

KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE : The provision you have prescribed is right.

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : The same will be followed, even then the commission wants to visit under our intimation, it may do so.

KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE : That should be madatory.

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : Shri Adhir Choudhary said that the members of the Commission for Women and the Commission for Minorities should also be included in this. I have already made that clear. As per rule both the Chairpersons of the Commission for Women and Commission for Minorities will be members of this Commission. Hon'ble member laid stress sn the constitution of Human Rights Commission in each and every district. In this regard I would like to draw the attention to the fact that till date the Human Right Commission could not have been constituted even in all the states.

[English]

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri) : All hon. Members have unanimously requested to include women members in the Commission. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN : He has already said that, He has already clarified. Such provision is there in the rules.

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : That is enumerated in the rules. I hope that the day is not far away when each district will have Human Rights Commission.

18.00 hrs.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It will be better, if it happens in your term.

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : I hope that such day will certainly come as long as the people like you and me are here. I have already mentioned what you said. I have clarified about the commission for Minorities and for Women. Shrimati Radhika Selvi has requested for the constitution of a separate commission for SCs and STs. Shri Vijay Krishna said that a separate commission for human rights violation should be constituted in respect of SCs and STs but at this juncture it is not possible in our country. Shrimati Archana Nayakji said that infrastructure should be created and women should also be included as members of the commission but all these things are already incorporated therein. Shri Ajay Chakraborty has supported this amendment. All the minute things have been pointed out such as proper arrangements should be made for food in the jails and the same will be taken into account in future by the Government and all possible measures will be taken in this regard. The problem of child labours was pointed out. Chakrabortyji said about the atrocious and brutal act being committed by the BSF officers in the border areas of Bangaladesh. Perhaps he is not present at this moment. Since he is the representative of Bengal, he would have seen the atrocious and brutal act of BSF in the border area of Bangaladesh. . . .(Interruptions)

If you receive such a complaint, please forward the same to us. The same will certainly be redressed Shrimati Sumitra has given a very good suggestion. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Minister, please conclude now.

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : Sir, let me cite the names of all the members, otherwise hon. Members would complain that their names have not been mentioned. Shri Kirip Chalihaaji offered a numbers of good suggestions. Shri K. Yerrannaaidu has provided guidance to us, now he is not present here. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please cite the names of only those members, who are present here.

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : Kumari Mamata Banerjee is our elder sister and she has been guiding us since long, not only today. Force should not be used against students movement, farmers movement and political movement.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you want that this Bill should be passed immediately. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : The entire House wants the same.

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : I request all the members to accept all these amendments. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing is raised after the reply of the hon. Minister you are a senior member and you better know that nothing further is raise on the issue concerned after the reply of the minister. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, please allow me to speak just for a minute. Shrimati Radhika Selviji has raised a matter of gross injustice. I request her to submit her representation personally to me. I will look into the case minutely and I will try to get the justice done to her.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That the Bill further to amend the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, the House will take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is :

"That clauses 2 to 19 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 to 19 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL : I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

18.05 hrs.

PONDICHERRY (ALTERATION OF NAME)
BILL, 2006

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, the House will take up Item No. 16 – Pondicherry (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2006.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY) : Sir, I may be permitted to move that the Bill to alter the name of the Union Territory of Pondicherry, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration. At the same time, I want to say a few words.

Pondicherry became a Union territory on 16th August, 1962. The Union Territory of Pondicherry has been named in Schedule I Part II of the Constitution as 'Pondicherry'. But it is a long pending issue and the people of Pondicherry have been demanding renaming of Pondicherry to Puducherry as the territory was known in ancient times. It came to be pronounced as Pondicherry by foreign rulers.

The Legislative Assembly of Pondicherry passed an official resolution in its meeting held on 15th October, 1980 to request the Government of India to pass necessary legislation for altering the name of Pondicherry. The proposal was also approved by the then Council of Ministers of the Union Territory of Pondicherry. The Council of Ministers of the Government of Pondicherry in their meeting held on 30th July, 1996 reiterated their request for changing the name of Pondicherry as Puducherry and forwarded that proposal to the Government of India for approval. The Chief Minister of Pondicherry in his letter dated 29.4.1999 again reiterated the proposal.

The name of a State/UT can be changed by an Act of Parliament under Article 3 of the Constitution. In the case of States, the President of India obtains views of the State Legislature before recommending any Bill for change of name of the State to be introduced in Parliament. However, in the case of Union Territories, such consultation is not necessary due to Explanation I to the Article 3 of the Constitution. However, the Legislative Assembly of UT of Pondicherry also passed a Resolution requesting for change of name.

Sir, with these few words, I commend this Bill to this august House for approval.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Motion moved :

"That the Bill to alter the name of the Union Territory of Pondicherry, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

MR. CHAIRMAN : Prof. M. Ramadass. You can speak for five minutes.

(Interruptions)

PROF. M. RAMADASS (Pondicherry) : Sir, I am the lone Lok Sabha from Pondicherry. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : I know that.

(Interruptions)

PROF. M. RAMADASS : Sir, I should explain the rationale as to why we are asking for the change in the

name. . . .*(Interruptions)* One hour has been allotted for this Bill. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (Sriperumbudur) : Sir, in the BAC, one hour was allotted to this Bill. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : I know it. The Minister has already taken three minutes.

(Interruptions)

PROF. M. RAMADASS : Sir, then, why are you saying that I have to speak for five minutes?. . . .*(Interruptions)*

*PROF. M. RAMADASS : Hon. Chairman, Sir, let me express my views on this Bill that is before this august House to alter the name of Pondicherry as 'Puducherry' sound echoing the sentiments of Tamils enjoining itself with our ancient language Tamil and its culture. When I am to speak about 'Puducherry' and 'Tamil' I cannot but recall the great son of our soil, Revolutionary poet Bharathidasan. He sang,

"Engal Vazhvum Engal Valamum
Mangatha Thamizh Endru Sangey Muzhangu"

[Let the conch shell declare that never waning
Thamizh is our life and prosperity.]

I would also like to recall what that emperor like great poet has to say about Thamizh. He wrote,

"Karumbu Thantha Theencharey
Kazhi Thantha Narunchulaiyey
Kavin Sei Mullai Arumbu Thantha Vennagaiyey
Ani Thantha Senthamizhey, Anbey"

[Thamizh is like the sweet juice of the sugarcane, pleasurable treat of jack fruit, white innocent smile of the just blossoming Mullai flower and that Thamizh stands for love and affection.]

I am happy to speak in Thamizh that stands for glory and grandeur, love and affection. I also feel happy that it has been accorded the classical language status.

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

[Prof. M. Ramadass]

To-day our land of birth gets its history rewritten. It is a golden lettered day. From being called as 'Pondicherry' our territory is being renamed as 'Puducherry' to regain its glory. It is a victory for Thamizh, the Thamizhs and the Thamizh culture. It is a day for rejoicing.

This has been given as a pleasant gift to the people of Puducherry by our beloved Chairperson Madam Sonia Gandhi the President of UFA and the world renowned economist and our able and dynamic Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. I thank both of them on behalf of the people of Tamil Nadu. At the same time I would like to thank heartily our Hon. Minister of State of Home Affairs Thiru Raghupathy for piloting this Bill.

At this juncture I would like to bestow our grateful acknowledgments to Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi, the great world renowned versatile thamizh scholar. It is the DMK under his leadership and the then Congress Party which is now under the leadership of Madam Sonia Gandhi that forged an alliance in 1980 to form a Government then and passed a resolution for the first time in their legislative Assembly to rename 'Pondicherry' as 'Puducherry'.

Again in 1996, when there was DMK Government with Thiru R.V. Janakiraman as its Chief Minister a resolution to alter the name Pondicherry as Puducherry was passed in the Pondicherry Legislative Assembly and sent to the Centre. Let me thank on behalf of the people of Pondicherry and on my own behalf, the leader of DMK and the Hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi for initiating this move in right earnest. It is needless to mention about our PMK founder-leader and the Chairperson of Social Justice and the cause of Thamizh and Thamizh culture Dr. Ramadoss 'Ayya'. as the President of Tamil Protection Forum he has been ceaselessly serving to preserve the glory of Thamizh and he has also appealed to the Governments to rename Pondicherry as Puducherry. It is he who has sent me as lone representative of Pondicherry and instructed me to take efforts towards the alteration of the name of Pondicherry as Puducherry. I took his order. Papers that

were pending for the past 25 years were taken up again when I took it up with the officials. I have met the officials and the Minister in the Home Ministry in this regard many times in the last two years. As for me I am a contented man to-day. I have been able to fulfil the wishes of the public and our popular leader. Our founder-leader Dr. Ramadoss Ayya was a guiding spirit to accomplish this and I extend my heartfelt thanks to him for he had been a catalyst to bring about this change. I welcome the Bill introduced by the Hon. Minister of State of Home Affairs to effect this change which remained as a long pending demand. The aims and objects of this Bill are commendable. This has been evolved properly. Through this Bill, Pondicherry Union Territory is sought to be renamed as Puducherry Union Territory, wherever we find the word Pondicherry in the Indian Constitution it would henceforth be changed to Puducherry, the word 'Pondicherry' appearing in the second part of the first Schedule of the constitution will be changed to Puducherry, the word 'Pondicherry' will be changed to Puducherry in clause 30 of 4th schedule of the constitution, in the sub clause V in clause 2 Territory Act 1961, of Pondicherry Union the name pondicherry will be changed to Puducherry, similarly all the Acts will have name Puducherry incorporated within an year and nothing shall come in their way in enacting suitable laws, Judicial Courts and Tribunals shall carry out these alternatives, in whichever ease or hearing before any court of law the word 'Pondicherry' appears it will be changed to Puducherry.

Now, this Bill with these eight features seeks to remove from history the name Pondicherry that was given to it by the Britishers. Henceforth, Pondicherry will be its legally approved legitimate name. There are two important reasons for my supporting this Bill.

Number one, we are taking corrective measures to a mistake committed in the history. It would be appropriate to point out what was that.

It is said that Pondicherry came into existence some 12000 years ago. What is found to be a coastal town was once a small village of fishermen. This is what historians

have to say. During the ancient times, it was called 'Vedapuram' or 'Vedipuri'. The great sage 'Agastya' came to this place to contribute to its glorious values. Pondicherry was denoted as Agastheeswaram. We can divide this 12,000 years history of Pondicherry into four parts. The first one was ancient period, the second one was the kings' age, the third was the colonial era and the fourth was freedom struggle period. The ancient people of Pondicherry had trade links with the ancient Romans. The archaeological excavations found in Arickamedu near Ariyan Kuppam provides some evidence in this regard. Then Pondicherry came under the Pallava Dynasty, Chola Empire and then Pandya Kingdom. The age of kings gave place to the colonial era. The Portuguese, the Danish, the Dutch, the French and the Britishers ruled Pondicherry continuously. The French rule extended for a longer period precisely to 138 years, one month and five days. The Pondicherry got its freedom on 1st of November, 1954. It was annexed to the Indian Union in 1963 to become a Union Territory.

Periphetes, the Greek Scholar, referred to Pondicherry as 'Pauduke' in 16 A.D. In a map that was drawn by another Greek Scholar Thalame in 200 A.D., Pondicherry is referred to as 'Pauduke' or 'Puducherry'. In the Portuguese records, when they point to their business houses in the Coramandel Coast, their effort to 'Puducherry' as 'Pudushaira'.

Pauduke in Roman references and Pudushaira in Portuguese records are similar to its ancient name Puducherry.

Ancient Tamils called a place 'Cherry' which used to have people of same race living together. The place where 'Pallar' lived was called 'Patcherry'. The places where 'Aayars' (shepherds) lived were called 'Aayacherry'. The places where 'Brahamins' lived were called 'Parppanacherry'.

Similarly, the fishermen who lived in this part taking up fishing and export and import of goods as their occupation formed a new 'Cherry' called 'Puducherry' because 'Pudu' in Thamizh means 'new'. This is what the Thamizh historian R. Thirumurugan has got to say. Pudu

as an adjective has given rise to Pudupattinam, Pudukkottai, Pudupettai, Puddakaram, Pudur are some of the names of places available in the Tamil land.

18.13 hrs.

[SHRI GIRIDHAR GAMANG *in the Chair*]

The Danish called Pondicherry 'Polosharay', the Dutch called 'Poleycherry', the French called it 'Pudaishaira', then 'Pudishairee' and then 'Poudicheri'. It is this 'Poudicheri' that became Pondicheri in due course. At the hands of the Britishers Pondicherry came into existence.

The reference to the name 'Puduvai' is found in Tamil literature too. Coimbatore is called 'Kovai'. Similarly, 'Tirunelveli' is called 'Nellai'. Thanjavur is called 'Thanjai'. Similarly, 'Puducherry' was being referred to as 'Puduvai'. During the period of 'Kambar' he was patronized by Sadayappa Vallal. The benefactor Sadayappa's father had his business in the coastal town 'Puducherry'. He had shipping business that is why 'Kambar' in his Kamba Ramayanam refers to his benefactor as 'Puduvai Sadayan', 'Puduvai Kodaiyan', 'Puduvai Trikartan'.

In Perunthokai, Puducherry is referred to as 'Tharu Uyamthaidu Puduvai Ampathi'.

Ananda Rangar who added glory to Puduvai refers to Puducherry as Puduvai in many places of his famous social history diary.

The second reason for which I support this Bill lies in the spirit of this Bill to respect the sentiments of the people of the territory. Many Tamil Scholars have been making this request for a long period of time. Pondicherry Legislative Assembly, the Representative House of the People of Pondicherry has passed Resolution in this regard not once, but thrice. After 26 years, now we find that aspiration is being fulfilled. The aspirations of the people of Pondicherry takes shape now when the United Progressive Alliance (UFA) Government at the Centre. This proves a point that this is a popular Government that translates its action, the will of the people and the Governance is for the people.

[Prof. M. Ramadass]

Puducherry is an inalienable part of French culture and is a cherished place of intellectuals. The world renowned philosopher Aurobindo lived here spreading the message of world unity and peace and social harmony. Only yesterday his statue was unveiled in our Parliament complex. It is fitting a tribute to alter the name Pondicherry as Puducherry the very next day after unveiling the statue. Remarkable freedom fighters like Mahakavi Subramaniam Bharti had their conclaves in this soil evolving strategies for uprisings against the British regime. The revolutionary poet Bharathi Dasan was born here and he lived and wrote his poems here in this soil. The souls of those great men will be rejoicing on seeing our move to change the name as Puducherry to ensure its ancient glory is brought back again.

While welcoming this Bill, I would like to put forth certain points for the consideration of the Hon. Minister.

- (i) Instead of one year a period of 6 months would be enough to effect the change in names available in the records of the Government and elsewhere.
- (ii) There are many central institutions and undertakings functioning in Pondicherry. For instance, Pondicherry Railway Station, Pondicherry Station of All India Radio must have their names changed to Puducherry.
- (iii) Thamizh must be made official language in Puducherry both in Puduvai and Karaikkal.
- (iv) Thamizh must be made medium of instructions as it is available in Tamil Nadu.
- (v) Those who have studied Thamizh and learnt the language must get priority in job opportunities and employment.
- (vi) In order to give a pick to all round development of Puducherry, Puducherry must get special State hoot. The Centre must also consider

extending B-2 status to Puducherry. Identifying and extending due recognition to the tribal people in this territory must be taken up by the Centre.

- (vii) Karaikkal that come under the Puducherry Union Territory must be declared as a backward district and a special package must be worked out to ensure economic development in that backward region.

Having expressed my heartfelt thanks and suggestions, let me conclude my speech.

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN (Dindigul) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I wish to thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Sir, I rise to support the Pondicherry (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2006. The Pondicherry State was comprising of parts like Pondicherry and Karaikkal in Tamil Nadu, Enam near Andhra Pradesh, Mahe near Kerala and Chandranagar near West Bengal. These pockets were under French domination, but later Chandranagar was merged with West Bengal and the remaining pockets form part of Pondicherry State.

The State of Pondicherry has got a rich and historical background. Long ago, it was ruled by the great Chola Kings and Pandiya Kings who were known for their bravery, culture and best administration. So many beautiful temples were built in Tamil Nadu during their regime. Then came Kallapiran. They were followed by Pallavas and then it came under Dutch domination, followed by the French people.

In 1954, it was liberated from French domination. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru used to call Pondicherry as the window of French culture. Even today, there are more than 10,000 French people in Pondicherry. They have got very good relationship with the French Government.

One may think that there is nothing of importance or significance in changing the name of Pondicherry into Puducherry. I wish to cite certain examples. Bombay has now been renamed as Mumbai. Likewise, the name of

Calcutta has been changed to Kolkata. The name of Madras city has been changed to Chennai. In the world level also, Peking has been changed to Beijing; Burma has become Myanmar. Only to maintain the tradition and heritage of the city or the country, the above-mentioned names have been changed. Therefore, there is every reason and justification to change the name of Pondicherry to Puducherry. Even today the name 'Pondicherry' is popularly known as 'Puduvai' denoting Pondicherry.

Sir, I recall with pride our great national Tamil poet Shri Subramania Bharathi who by his patriotic and emotional songs inculcated the thirst for freedom to escape from the clutches of British law, flew to Pondicherry which was under the French domination. So also, another patriot Shri Subramania Siva also took his asylum to Pondicherry when he was charged by the Britishers. The great Aurobindo who waged war against Britishers during freedom struggle started his Ashram at Pondicherry. Even today, the presence of Ashram is remembered not only by our countrymen but also it has got universal reputation. Hundreds of pilgrims are pouring in the Ashram to get mental solace and tranquillity. During the freedom struggle, the State of Pondicherry was used as a place of protection and security for the freedom fighters.

Sir, Pondicherry is a small and beautiful State which is known for its uniqueness, greatness and culture. The Government of India has got very soft corner for this tiny State and a number of institutions have started in the State. I am proud to state that Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research, which is known as JIPMER, is doing yeoman's service to mankind.

If I am correct, when Morarji Desai was the Prime Minister, there was a proposal to merge Pondicherry with Tamil Nadu. The people of Pondicherry rose to the occasion and fought for the maintenance of their special identity. In the year 1980 also, the Pondicherry Assembly passed a resolution for renaming and again in the year 1997 a similar resolution was passed by the Assembly. I am very happy now that the Rajya Sabha has passed the Bill. On this historic day, under the able guidance of

Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson of UPA, this historical Bill is brought. I feel proud and happy to support the Bill renaming Pondicherry as Puducherry.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have got a long list, therefore, kindly restrict your speech to two or three minutes.

*SHRI P. MOHAN (Madurai) : Sir, on behalf of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), I would like to welcome and support this Bill that has been introduced in this august House to legislate and change the name of Pondicherry to its ancient glory name Puducherry. Let me congratulate all those who have taken serious and sincere efforts in this regard.

The colonial regimes in India have destroyed many proud heritage treasures. Several ancient towns and cities have got their names changed in a defacing manner.

For instance, we find still all over the country several towns and cities that have lost their face because of the change of names brought about by the colonial rulers. Recently, the trend is that those old glorious names are again brought to the fore. Madras has become Chennai, Trivandrum has Thiruvananthapuram, Calcutta has become Kolkata, Bombay has become Mumbai. In making efforts to retain the earlier names in lieu of the colonial names that remain as colonial hang over Kerala has done a splendid job. They have changed the names of many towns bringing back to coinage the ancient names. I would like to appreciate the spirit of the people of Kerala who have changed Quailon to Kollam and Calicut to Kozhicode. Thus, they have changed many names of towns in their State.

Still we find the colonial hang over. For instance, we seek to change the name Pondicherry (the name given by the colonial rulers) to Puducherry in the independent India. Puducherry can now regain its ancient glory. As far as Puducherry Union Territory is concerned, it has got many things to boast of. But, I would like to point out just two of them.

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

[Shri P. Mohan]

In my opinion, no other State in India has got such a recorded social history as it is found in Pondicherry in the form of Anandarangam Pillai Diary. That influential and scholarly Anandarangam Pillai was a 'dubashi' with the French colonial rulers. He was both an Interpreter and an Accountant. He has given several minute details of social life available in the erstwhile Puducherry.

Secondly, I would like to refer to the dual citizenship which we have granted in the recent times about which we have been deliberating for the past two-three years. Whereas in Puducherry we find this dual citizenship and right to vote for the Parliaments of both the countries are with a considerable number of erstwhile citizens of France who are living there still. This dual citizenship is there in Pondicherry/Puducherry for the past 40 years and more.

It is only in 1962, Puducherry Union Territory was annexed to the Indian Union. The erstwhile French colony thereby missed the benefits of the first three Five Year Plans. Now, the people of that territory would like to have a full-fledged statehood alongwith this alteration of name. Hence, I urge upon the Union Government take into consideration the aspirations and the sentiments of the people of Puducherry.

Since, the benefits of first three Five Year Plans did not reach them and also since they were not being given the status of a full-fledged State, the Union Government must immediately grant a special statehood and allocate enough funds for the next five years to ensure proper development of State of that territory.

I also urge upon (the Union Government to confer the territory the B-2 gradation which will benefit both the Government employees and the teachers. Let me again welcome the alteration of the name Pondicherry to Puducherry on behalf of CPI(M).

With this I conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI GANESH PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad) : Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, I strongly support the Bill brought for the change of name of Pondicherry. I am supporting the Bill because the present U.P.A. Government has fulfilled the aspirations and wishes of the people of Pondicherry for the last several decades. In this Bill the name Puducherry has been annexed in place of Pondicherry.

Mr. Chairman, I express my thank to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

*SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMI (Sripertumbudur) : Sir, on behalf of DMK, let me welcome this piece of legislation which brings about a historic change of name to the Union Territory of Pondicherry which will henceforth be called as Union Territory of Puducherry. It is one of the ancient towns of India and it was rightly explained in detail by the Prof. Ramadass who spoke ahead of me. As a Member of Parliament from that constituency, he was ably illustrating its greatness tracing its history even from the puranic age.

This legislation is pertaining to a territory, a State in the Indian Union. But, unfortunately, we are being directed to complete this discussion in a short space of time. I am pained to point out that there are certain Members belonging to certain parties like BJP are bringing in totally unrelated matters before this House in the form of issues related to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and waste the time of the House. When so many hours continuously for so many days are wasted, it is unfair that we are not even permitted to avail of the minimum one hour duration allotted for this Bill. My question is why and how the time constrained is imposed on us? Change of the name Pondicherry to Puducherry might appear innocuous. But, the spirit behind is a moment of celebration for the people belonging to Tamil language and culture, who would like to dwell at length the long cherished tradition and history now. It is paining to note that we are as to wind up the moment we begin.

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please adjust with Chair, please conclude within a minute.

*SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMI : We would like to put on record explaining to others the greatness of our place that finds place in the annals of history and we would like to explain that proudly in our mother tongue Tamil but, unfortunately, there is time constraint. I would like to point out that we Members from the Tamil Nadu take less time while participating in the deliberations. We do not resort to verbal wranglings and confrontations. We do not go for quarrelly arguments but we merely advance our arguments.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You please come to the point.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY : I said that the Members from North India are consuming a lot of time to do some hullabaloo here but we are not doing like that. . . .
(Interruptions)

SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN (Deogarh) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, he has taken the name of BJP. How can he take the name of BJP? . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY : Whatever parties they may be, they are taking so much of time. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Dr. Krishnan, please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Members, please take your seats.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Krishnaswamy, you may please continue your speech.

(Interruptions)

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR (Bangalore South) : Sir, I want to submit that the entire House is with our brethren from Puducherry. We support it. There is no opposition from the entire House on this issue. Therefore, let the debate be non-partisan; we are all supporting this Bill because we also wanted Bangalore to be renamed as Bangaluru, like Madras has been renamed as Chennai and Bombay has been renamed as Mumbai. Therefore, Pondicherry should also be renamed as Puducherry. . . .(Interruptions)

Therefore, we are with you.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY : Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, Mr. Krishnaswamy, please come to your point and try to conclude soon.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMI : Yes, BJP Members often rush to the well of the House and interrupt the proceedings on many occasions consuming the valuable time of the House. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Krishnaswamy, you please continue and you also conclude now because it will take two three minutes.

*SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMI : Our request to Chair is that bear with us. As far as this change of name Puducherry is concerned, it is a culmination of effort that commenced in the year 1980 when late lamented Smt. Indira Gandhi forged alliance with Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi our Leader of DMK, who is now the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. That demand passed as Resolution in that Legislative Assembly has now taken the shape of the Bill to be passed in this House as a historical legislation. This is a red letter day, because we are fulfilling what we promised after so many years of wait when we have the UFA Government at the Centre guided by the Chairperson of the UFA, Madame Sonia Gandhi. I wish the Puducherry Union Territory is conferred with statehood and carve its name in history. It is historically important because the great poets like Subramania Bharathi and Bharathi Dasan lived there. I

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

[Shri A. Krishnaswami]

welcome and support this Bill wholeheartedly and thank the UFA Government for this historical move. With these words I conclude.

*SHRI M. APPADURAI (Tenkasi) : Hon. Chairman, Sir, let me thank you for giving me an opportunity to participate in this discussion on a Bill to alter Pondicherry Union Territory as Puducherry Union Territory. I welcome and support this move on behalf of my party Communist Party of India.

Puducherry is a historically important town down the ages and it is rightly explained by my esteemed colleagues who spoke ahead of me.

"Aaduvome Pallupaduvome
Anandha Suthanthiram
Adainthu Vittomendru".

(Lets rejoice sing and dance that we have won our freedom)

So sang the great national poet Mahakavi Subramaniam Bharthi long before we could really been independence. And that poet lived there in Pondicherry when he was exiled from the British Territory for his freedom movement activities.

If there is any poet who insisted on minimum wages and eight hours of work time as maximum time of work in whole of India, it is only the great revolutionary poet Bharathi Dasan. As a pioneer, it was Pondicherry Territory that introduced it for the first time in the country.

Our comrade Subbiah was known as the Nehru of Pondicherry and he had effectively participated in the proceedings of French Parliament. Such historical glorious legacy are there among the people of Pondicherry.

The long pending demand of the Pondicherry to change the name to Puducherry is being headed to now.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

I recall the glorious days when our comrade Subbiah walked tall in that Union Territory and he was fondly called as the Prime Minister of Puducherry.

Now, the Government at the Centre supported by the Communist Party has sought to change the name Pondicherry as Puducherry accepting the demands of the people understanding their sentiments. I welcome this move by this UPA Government which has earlier accorded classical language status to our ancient language Tamil.

The Centre must not rest with changing the name of this Union Territory, but it must also come forward to confer full-fledged statehood to Puducherry Territory. Only then, we would have really honoured the sentiments of the people and the accord we have signed with the colonial rulers when we annexed this territory as part of the Indian Union. I urge upon the Union Home Ministry through the Hon. Minister of State of Home Affairs to confer the rights to the people of Puducherry to have their own State. Let me conclude my speech welcoming and supporting this Legislation to evolve Puducherry.

*SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN (Vandavasi) : Hon. Chairman, Sir, on this occasion of changing the name of Pondicherry to its ancient name Puducherry through a Bill in this august House, you have given me an opportunity to speak, let me thank you for that.

After about 53 years, the change of name is being effected. It is a long pending demand that sees the light of the day now. In 1980, an Assembly Resolution was passed in this regard by the Legislative Assembly at Union Territory at Pondicherry. We are rewriting history now giving back to Puducherry its original name. The sentiments of the Tamil people living there has been respected through this move. I would like to thank the UPA Government on behalf of our party Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and on behalf of our General Secretary Revolutionary Storm VAIKO and also on behalf of the people of Pondicherry.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

Puducherry used to be a part of Tamil homeland. Because of several invasions and the colonial occupations, it remained a separate territory and continues to remain so. Because of the machinations of the colonial rulers, who went about to their suppurations and oppressions, our ancient glory was lost. It took so many years for Puducherry to be named as Pondicherry one after the other by the colonial rulers of different origins. In this independent India to which Pondicherry is a part now, it again took so many years to alter the name again to Puducherry. However, we have done it now. It is also called as 'Pondy'. I would like to point out that we got from the Puducherry soil, the seeds for the great Indian freedom. The impact of French Revolution was felt there in that soil. One of our great freedom poets Mahakavi Subramania Bharthi and the revolutionary poet Bharthi Dasan lived there. Subramania Bharthi along with his compatriot freedom fighters evolved strategies to rise against the British Regime hiding there in the then French Territory. Through the adoption of this Bill, the ancient Tamil name Puducherry is being restored. Following the commendable move to declare Tamil as a classical language, this UFA Government has commendably done again to restore Pondicherry its ancient Tamil name Puducherry. I welcome and support this Bill.

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly) : Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, our country is well known for its rich cultural heritage and history. Our traditions are centuries old. We should be proud of it but unfortunately we could not bring the changes gradually that were needed to be made. We are changing the name of Pondicherry under that very heritage. Whether it is Adi-Shankaracharya or as has been mentioned the name of Subramaniam just now, they had played an important role in the process of uniting the country.

I agree what my colleagues have said. There are many cities which need alteration in their names. I welcome this Bill and hope that this work would be done soon.

The word Puducherry has its own importance. As a representative of Bhartiya Janata Party I would also like to say that the Government should once decide to make alterations in the names of the cities because we are changing the names of cities one by one for example, we did Mumbai and now we are changing that name of Pondicherry, we have to change the names of Bangalore. Therefore, the names of such cities which are a part of our cultural heritage should be presented in the same form and work towards making our own identity.

I would like to say to my Tamilian friends that it is not a matter of dispute. Whatever is done in the House, is done cordially. I feel that my Tamil friends in their legislative assembly, which they represent and whatever affection they express, is not full necessary here. This House has its own importance. The way we conduct this House has its own view point and method.

I welcome this Bill with this hope that the names of such cities which need to be altered would be altered soon.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur) : Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, I support the Bill introduced by Hon'ble Raghupatiji to alter the name of Pondicherry to Puducherry. This demand was made in 1980 and the proposal was passed in 1996 in the assembly. We welcome the altered name. It would have been good if it had been done during the regime of N.D.A. Government. Now the Government of yours has done it. We support it. Only changing the name will not do. Therefore the Central Government should provide more funds for its economic and social development. We too share the happiness of our Tamil colleagues. We had agitated for sixteen years to change the name of Marathwada University on the name of Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar. This name had been given during the chief Minister ship of Shri Pawar but you have got this name without agitation. Go ahead we are with you.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail) : Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, the House is changing the name of Pondicherry

[Shri Sailendra Kumar]

to Puducherry. I, on behalf of my party, support it and welcome it whole heartedly.

[English]

*SHRI S. REGUPATHY : Hon. Chairman, Sir, we all feel proud to introduce and pass this historic Bill that seeks to change the name Pondicherry to Puducherry thereby renaming the soil of the valiant and worthy man like the great revolutionary poet Bharathi Dasan who sang,

"Sambodhaum Thamizh Padithu Sahavundum - En Sambalum Thamizh Manandhu Vega Vendum".

(Let me learn Thamizh till my last breath - and let my ashes bear the fervour of Thamizh in it).

All the Members who participated in this discussion have welcome the move of the Government to have introduced this Bill to alter the name 'Pondicherry' to 'Puducherry'.

Prof. Ramadass pointed out that the first Legislative Assembly Resolution was passed in Pondicherry as early as in 1980 when there was a Coalition Government led by DMK in Pondicherry. Now, after 26 years that is being translated into action in the form of this Legislation in this august House. We all feel elated and find it appropriate to effect this change now as a fitting tribute to our great Leader Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi, the President of DMK and the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, who is also known all over the world as a great Tamil scholar who is to be conferred soon with 'Tholkappiar' award for his contribution to Tamil for more than 75 years.

Cutting across the party lines, all the Members who participated in the discussion welcomed wholeheartedly the move of this UPA Government to change the name of Pondicherry to Puducherry. The aspirations of the people of Pondicherry who will now be known as people of Puducherry is being fulfilled now and their sentiments have

"English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

been rightly shared, respected and honoured by this august House, the House of the People.

Pondicherry is a name that came much after its being called Puducherry right from the beginning. When it was under the French colonial rulers, its name got changed. It was all due to the conclusion arising out of language and pronunciation skills.

Puducherry which was lost in the name of Pondicherry during the colonial regime, has been restored again in this independent era as part of our free country.

While welcoming the suggestions from the Members to develop Puducherry further, let me request this august House to pass this Bill unanimously.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That the Bill to alter the name of the Union territory of Pondicherry, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House will now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is :

"That clauses 2 to 10 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 to 10 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI S. REGUPATHY : Sir, I beg to move :

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

18.51 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

[English]

Widespread distress among the farmers in the country

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, we will take Item No. 18, further discussion regarding widespread distress among the farmers in the country, raised by Shri Mohan Singh on the 17th August, 2006.

There are more than 45 hon. Members to participate in this discussion. Therefore, I would request all the hon. Members to be brief, and those who want to lay their speeches are requested to lay them on the Table of the House.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR (Bangalore South) : Sir, at the outset, I want to request you that the plight of farmers has received the delayed attention. Actually, we started the debate one week before, but various other political issues like Indo-US nuclear deal and Pathak Authority Report got the precedence which the suffering millions of Indian farmers did not get. Therefore, I want to request you, Sir, that though the number of speakers is more, you give enough time for the debate.

It is also a matter of considerable satisfaction that Shri Sharad Pawar, who is well versed with the problems of the farmers, is the hon. Minister of Agriculture and he is going to respond to the debate. He himself has said that in the last ten years, especially from 1993 to 2003, more than 1,00,248 farmers have committed suicides in the country and numbers are adding up from 2003 to 2006 and as this debate is proceeding, the number of suicides is also creeping.

This is only a symptom of a very severe agrarian crisis the country is facing. This agrarian crisis is because of the wrong policies, wrong approach and lack of a holistic approach to solve the problems of the farmers. Hon. Minister has been often telling the major reasons for this

agrarian crisis. According to him the major reasons for the problems of the farmers are natural calamities causing high indebtedness, failure of crops, uncertainty of monsoon, non-availability of term loan, high rate of interest charged by the private moneylenders, deviation of loan for marriage, sickness and education, mono-crop, no supplementary income than from agriculture and too much of pressure on land-holdings.

Recently, the hon. Prime Minister visited Vidarbha, and he has announced a Vidarbha package. I was just going through the details of the Vidarbha package. Shri Sharad Pawar is also very well versed with this issue. In districts like Wardha, Akola, Amravati, Yavatmal of Maharashtra, 1,069 suicides by the farmers have taken place in the last 10 years. Therefore, the Government of India has taken 6 districts of Maharashtra, 6 districts of Karnataka, 16 districts of Andhra Pradesh and 3 districts of Kerala, that is, total 31 districts in which 8,000 suicides by the farmers have taken place since 2001, and they have come out with a Vidarbha package. It is a paradoxical thing.

Unfortunately, the National Commission on Farmers has recommended that this year is to be observed as the 'Year of the Farmers'. It is in this year – as the 'Year of the Farmers' – that we are encountering the maximum number of suicides. We cannot thank; we cannot appreciate; and we cannot say anything good about the deaths and suicides in a graveyard.

I want to go back to the pre-Independence days. The leaders of the farmers met Shri Sharad Pawar, and they have indicated that :

" . . . Had the Government implemented a simple formula of Sir Chhotu Ram, the Agriculture Minister in the undivided Punjab that farmers would not be asked to pay interest more than the principal amount, thousands of lives would have been saved. . . "

Sir, there was a legendary administrator, namely, Sir Chhotu Ram. He came out with two enactments, namely, Punjab Relief Indebtedness Act, 1934 and Punjab Debtors' Protection Act, 1936, which stipulated this principle that

[Shri Ananth Kumar]
compound interest should not be exceeding the principal amount. I want the hon. Agriculture Minister to take serious note of this, and this should be implemented across the country.

18.58 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

The Chairman of National Farmers Commission, Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, has also recommended an interest rate of only 4 per cent. During Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's period, the interest on crop loan and farm loan was reduced to 9 per cent. Now, it has been reduced to 7 per cent, and I am very happy to mention that in the State of Karnataka, our Deputy Chief Minister Shri B.S. Yediyurappa, who is also the Finance Minister has reduced the interest on farm loan to 4 per cent. Dr. Swaminathan's recommendation was also to reduce the interest to 4 per cent.

19.00 hrs.

Sir, I want to refer to your own speech. You have also said that Government of India is intending that the interest rate should be reduced to four per cent, and you are on that path. It should happen fast.

As you know, out of the total commercial and cooperative banks' loans given to the farmers, according to our Finance Minister Shri P. Chidambaram, only four crore farming households out of ten crore farming households have access to the institutional finance. Then, what happens to the remaining six crore farming households? They have to go back to the same *sahukari* system where they have to pay compound interest varying from 25 per cent to 40 per cent. If the crops fail because of the vagaries of monsoon, they will not get adequate returns.

There is a huge problem regarding the Minimum Support Price, which even the hon. Agriculture Minister knows. Therefore, whatever the Union Government and

various State Governments are announcing as the Minimum Support Price is inadequate. Even if it is adequate also, there is a lack of marketing intervention. Therefore, announcing the Minimum Support Price is not sufficient, and the Government has to do market intervention to buy the produce. It has to buy the produce, be it wheat, paddy or other farm produce. Since it is not happening, farmers are suffering in this vicious circle and committing suicides.

I am not here to criticise, but there has been a criticism of the Vidarbha Package also. "PM's sop disappoints the Vidarbha Farmers: Free Press Journal, Mumbai". It says, "However, closer scrutiny reveals that a major chunk of the amount is part of the routine budgetary provision. The allocation of Rs. 2,177 crore for irrigation is a regular provision under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme which would have come the region's way nevertheless. Besides, the allocation is a combination of loan to the State Government and subsidy. Although it is not yet clear what the loan component will be, the allocation will increase the burden on the Maharashtra exchequer." This is the case.

Therefore, Sir, the only solution, which I have been continuously proposing in this august House, is that the Union Government should come out with an Agriculture Budget. Just as we have a separate Railway Budget, the Government of India should also have an Agriculture Budget. The hon. Agriculture Minister has said that irrigation is a major component to come out of this crisis. But what is happening to the irrigation? While replying to the debate, he himself has said :

[Translation]

"Because the total amount of budget which goes for irrigation,

[English]

That amount is only 0.35 per cent. It is not even half a per cent. This is not good.

[Translation]

Government of India took the whole responsibility after the drought and irrigation was needed to check the drought therefore Government of India is required to pay attention to it."

[English]

That means, the hon. Agriculture Minister, first of all, agrees that whatever credit net is there, it is only for 40 per cent of the farmers, and that the small and marginal farmers, who constitute the remaining 60 per cent, do not get this credit facility. On irrigation, only 0.35 per cent is being spent.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : There are about 20 speakers from you. Party who are yet to speak. Please conclude now.

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly) : Sir, do not worry. Even half of the members will not speak. Only five to seven are to speak, let him speak for five minutes more.

[English]

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : During the NDA regime, we started the grand plan of Interlinking of River Waters. We all are aware that a Task Force was appointed under the Chairmanship of my dear colleague Shri Suresh Prabhu. This project was to be implemented in two stages – Himalayan links and Peninsular links – providing thirty links to connect Ganga, Brahmaputra, Mahanadi, Narmada, Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery. I would like to bring to the notice of this august House. . . . (Interruptions) I am going to conclude, Sir. I know that in this august House Justice R.S. Pathak Enquiry Authority's Report and Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Agreement take precedence over farmers' issues. I would request that farmers should be given due weightage.

I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister and the Government that in 1960s and 1970s in California, USA, Tennessee Valley Authority was formed. Because of that Tennessee Valley Authority, California became the

fastest growing economy in the world as it provided irrigation and power generation. It is a well-known fact. The same course was taken by China when it started the Yangtze River Valley project. There is a huge dam called the Three Gorges Dam coming up on the Yangtze river there. That dam alone is going to produce 34,000 MW of power.

Why I am referring to the Interlinking of Rivers project now is because once that project is completed – as directed by the hon. Supreme Court, as visualised by Dr. Visvesvaraya, Dr. Ambedkar, late Rajiv Gandhi, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee including Dr. K.L. Rao – it would irrigate about nine crore acres of land in the country and generate 35,000 MW of power. That power would be clean, cheap and environment-friendly.

If the UFA Government is serious in its approach to address the farmers' problems, there could be two approaches that it could take. One is the symptomatic approach in which you provide credit, loan waiver, provide Vidarbha-like packages, bring down the four stages of cooperative banking from NABARD to primary banks at the villages; and increase the interest rates on loans. It starts from seven per cent and goes upto 12 per cent. These are all elements of symptomatic approach and these are required. This has to be done. At the same time, what is the long-term curative measure? The long-term curative measure could be providing irrigation facilities, providing power, providing markets, providing scientific know-how, and providing remunerative prices to the farmers.

I do not want to quote extensively from the speeches of the hon. Agriculture Minister made in this very House. Though he intends to work for farmers welfare, it does not seem to be happening. In one of his speeches he said that he had to persuade very strongly the hon. Finance Minister to get the bonus for wheat MSP. However, in the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA, it is very clearly laid down that *Kisan* and *Aam Aadmi* are their priority. When *Kisan* and *Aam Aadmi* are the priority of the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA Government, the entire Government should take note of it.

[Shri Ananth Kumar]

Therefore, I urge upon the Agriculture Minister regarding the suicide farmers that he should propose a Joint Parliamentary Committee to be constituted to go into the matter and come out with a national package not a notional package like Vidharba package.

Secondly, the rate of interest on the farm crop and crop loan should be reduced in the entire country to four per cent on the role model fashion of Karnataka.

Thirdly, regarding providing remunerative prices, he has to come out with a holistic policy.

Finally, as a long-term solution, the two reports of the Task Force regarding inter-linking of rivers have to be implemented. It should not be kept in the backburner. It should be the priority activity of the Government of India.

I think, these actions would provide some succour and some relief to the suffering farmers and pave for a new Green Revolution and help the farmers of the country. I think, it is the responsibility of not only the Government and this House but also the entire country to take this seriously and move forward.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Hon. Members, I would like to inform that I have a list of more than 40 Members. Therefore, I would request those hon. Members who would like to lay their speeches on the Table of the House as that would also form part of the proceedings, they can do so. They are also requested to be very brief and give suggestions only so that we may be able to finish it easily and early.

[Translation]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH (Hisar) : Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like—to thank Shri Mohan Singhji and am grateful to him that he has raised an important issue for discussion in the House. India is an agricultural country. People say so inside and outside of the House but it pains me to say that the economic condition of the farmers is getting bad to worse day by day after independence of

the country. I would therefore like to suggest some points to the agriculture Minister because he himself is a farmers' leader and understands their problems.

Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the U.P.A. Government has come to power, farmers have got much relief but personally I am not fully satisfied with this situation. Recently the price for paddy was fixed. The Chief Minister of Haryana Chaudhary Bhupinder Singh Hooda, all members of parliament from Haryana and Punjab have said that this minimum price is very less. In this regard, the Chief Minister of Haryana has written a letter to agriculture Minister that an increase of Rs. 100/- per quintal be made in the price because the situation is different in every state. I would not like to go in depth but I would certainly say that there are two different types of quality of paddy namely fine and superfine in Haryana. IRA and TRA are two different types of paddy. Superfine rice is exported to foreign countries in a large quantity from our country. In this regard I urge that the minimum price should be increased so that the farmers may be benefited. I would also like to say that this price may be increased between Rs. 100/- and Rs. 150/-.

Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, many of our colleagues were saying as to why the wheat was imported. I would say that when Hon'ble Agriculture Minister imported wheat, the market price of wheat in the country was Rs. 850/- per quintal and it was purchased from abroad at the price of Rs. 700/- per quintal. We had not imported wheat from abroad if the farmers would have been paid the price of wheat at the rate of Rs. 850/- per quintal. My colleagues have said that the quality of that wheat also is not good. It is inferior quality-wise and variety-wise. I would like to urge the Hon'ble agricultural Minister that he should increase M.S.P. of wheat. The farmers of this country are happy that they have been given the suitable price for paddy by the Agricultural Minister.

At the time of wheat sowing government should declare support price so that the farmers can decide which crop they should sow. I would also suggest that alongwith paddy, government should also fix its price Rs. 700 that

includes its price Rs. 6.50 and bonus of Rs. 50. By fixing the price Rs. 700, including bonus in M.S.P., if the price is increased upto Rs. 850 with an increase of Rs. 150 by the Union Government the production of wheat in Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan will be in abundance and all the vacant godowns would be filled up. So, you announce it immediately.

Anant Kumarji told that the Commission on Agriculture talks about interest rate at four per cent. I suggest to reduce the rate of interest on loan but until the farmers are given the remunerative price, he will not make any progress, there will be no improvement in economic conditions of the farmers. Thousands of farmers have committed suicide. The main reason behind it is that the representatives of farmers and eminent agricultural scientists are not included in the committee that decides M.S.P. I demand that they should be included in the committee that decides minimum support price. There is no more problem in it. Give 20 per cent profit to the farmers, over the production cost on any crop in Agricultural University Ludhiana, Agricultural University, Hisar and Agricultural University Pantnagar. Once again there will be green revolution in the country and the farmers of this country will produce so much paddy, wheat, pulses, oil-seeds and sugar that there will be a requirement to export these. At the time of fixing price profit for farmers should be included in that. Besides this there are four-five things that should be kept in mind while fixing the price. The prices of diesel are increasing day by day. When the question of giving subsidy to the farmers arise, many people feel pain. I suggest that the farmers need diesel for sowing, for irrigation and for getting water from tube wells. Many states of the country are facing the problem of electricity. When the supply of electricity is not sufficient, the farmers have to start diesel engine for getting water and the cost on it of diesel is very expensive. I suggest that the farmers who are owner of tube wells and tractors, who are owner of diesel generator should be given subsidy for this. Once you had suggested this and I had also suggested and, would like to suggest today. I want to say about water in canals. As provision in the budget to connect canals was made. I would like to request

hon'ble Minister for Agriculture that after making a reservoir on the Yamuna, if three dams are constructed on the Renuka, Kesso and Laxar Kosi this will make possible supply of water through canals to the agriculture fields in Haryana and Rajasthan and the problem of drinking water in Delhi will be solved. This will not incur much expenses. The electricity in a large quantity will be produced there. A promise regarding this was made to Delhi by Himachal Pradesh. Through you, I would like to request the Minister of Agriculture to construct a dam over the river Yamuna under Yamuna Action Plan as presently more than 70 per cent water of the river Yamuna is flowing into sea. There is a shortage of water here and the Yamuna creates havoc after passing out of Delhi and many parts of the India are submerged in water.

I would like to make suggestion regarding power. Last days it was reported that power in Andhra Pradesh was surplus but there is shortage of power in Haryana and Delhi but we cannot get power from there. Single transmission system should be there in the entire country as a scheme has been formulated to connect the rivers. Today, there are four grids in the country, the work should be done to connect these four grids so that the excess and surplus power of any State may be supplied to other regions and farmer's crops could be saved from damage caused by flood.

Sir, through you, I would like to submit that if it does not rain in Haryana and Punjab, within four or five days there will be a situation of famine as these states are already on the verge of famine. The farmers of these states may be given more and more power after making arrangement of power from somewhere else. There is an issue of fertilizers also, we are throwing chemical fertilizers in the fields and the fertility of the land is decreasing because there are many people who throw four bags full of fertilizers in their fields. Therefore, I suggest that at the time of fixing M.S.P. it should be announced that the people growing crops with use of dung will be given Rs. 150 per quintal more to the price fixed and the people growing crops using fertilizers will get fixed price, because crops grew with dung manure will increase land fertility

[Shri Jai Prakash]

and we shall get quality wheat to eat. This has been experimented in China. For this the price should be fixed separately.

Sir, at last I would like to say that the name of Sir Chhotu Ram, a Jat leader from Haryana has been mentioned just now. He born on this land and today the farmers remember him at their well-wisher. I request the Minister for Agriculture that the concessions given to the farmers by the Chief Minister of Haryana Shri Bhupendra Singh Hooda should be implemented in the entire country. The farmers do not have money so they are arrested and put behind the bars due to non-payment to Cooperative Banks. They are in very poor condition; they do not get bail since the court does not grant bail to them. The State Governments release them before completion of the period of 40 day because there is a rule that prescribes that after if they are put behind bars for 40 day their loan will be written off, hence keeping them in jails for 39 days the Government releases them one day before. Hence the condition of the poor farmers becomes miserable. Commenting on recovery of loans from the farmers, the Chief Minister of Haryana said that he will not put any farmer behind the bars. We shall make recovery after making them financial sound. I have to give a suggestion on Crop Insurance Scheme. Every government says that it has been implemented by N.D.A. Government. Even today we say that another three or four points should added in that. Sir, you also hail from that area. Few days back tomato crop was damaged there due to extreme cold. After that mustard crop was destroyed by the frost, therefore, their crops should also be included in Crop Insurance Scheme. There is a separate budget for Railways and Defence also, get a lot of budget allocation but I am not against them, let them get. Everyone says India is a pre dominant agricultural country but there is no separate budget for this. Therefore, it should be passed with voice vote by all the Members of Parliament. There should be a separate budget for the agriculture and canal and power dispute should be included in it so that farmers could be given remunerative price.

Sir, I give thank to you and Shri Mohan Singh. I hope you will increase M.S.P.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Betiah) : Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also want to speak on this subject. . . .(Interruptions)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Jhaji, I know that I have to accommodate you also. But, lest I call you and you may not be present here.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA : I shall be present here.

[English]

*SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH (Jhalawar) : Sir, it is true to say that approximately 70% of our population are involved in the agricultural sector. The Union Government calls themselves as Government of "Aam Admi". Even the Hon'ble Finance Minister has tried to emphasis towards the agricultural sector. But this not so. The farmers are facing serious issues and problems. I belong to the State of Rajasthan. The State has less than 1% of water reserves and water resources at present moment.

But how does one remove the basis problem of farmers lets analysis it :

Firstly, the farmers are not getting the required minimum support price for their agriculture produce. The farmers toils hard on the farm to produce agriculture goods. For example, I represent the constituency of Jhalawar. Jhalawar parliamentary area is located on the southern eastern border of Rajasthan. The farmers are growing Soybean during the Kharif period and growing Dhan. Mustard during the Rabi Season.

The farmers work hard in extreme hard weather condition during the Monsoon Season. But they work hard and produce large amount of Soybeans and other product material above. But after producing agricultural goods what will be the MSP (minimum support price) for the crops

*The speech was laid on the Table.

growth in the two different seasons within our Country. The farmers must get remunerative prices for their goods. The prices of diesel, Urea, and even seeds have gone up. Therefore the price on the raw material used in the production of the goods have gone high. Therefore, the farmers reach to get corresponding prices for its goods for Soybean, Mustard and Dhania etc.

Secondly, around the world especially in the western countries subsidies have been given. But in the developed nations are trying to make the emerging market reduce their subsidy to the agricultural farmers. Why are we having double Standards is this a U.S. intervention in India's backbone.

Sir, when our Hon'ble Prime Minister visited United States there was a much hype of Agriculture initiative which was created between the two countries.

Sir, I must inform the August House that during the meeting with Hon'ble Prime Minister with the US Counterpart, Heads of two largest seed companies sat in the meeting and drafted the agricultural initiatives to help their companies. Are we working for poor farmers on trying to open the entire seed market to the American Supported Industry.

Sir, we need to take a stringent view and must stop the United States on slaughter of the developing nations.

Secondly, Sir we need to create suitable water bodies. If Panchayat and local bodies are not assisted in setting up anicuts and small water bodies the agricultural production cannot be carried out. Sir, we need to innovate our irrigation process. We need to take advantage of irrigation scheme in Israel. Such as dried irrigation. I belong to a desert State it will assist our farmers to optimize production. So we must create water bodies and preserve the rain water through water harvesting.

Thirdly, we need better transport facilities for our farmers goods. If agriculture goods such potatoes, onion or tomatoes are not set to the right market (Mandis) the farmers goods will not be able reach the consumers and

thus assist the middlemen to increase prices of goods due to shortage of goods. The prime example in the onion crisis in Delhi in the 1990's.

Sir, the farmers goods should be stored in cold storages and in areas such as warehouses where they can be preserved. These goods can be value added after it is processed. The value addition of foods should be done and through SHG group and the owners the SHG groups should be farmers. The best example is seen in Karnataka such as SIRI.

Sir, the farmers should get assistance from the local Government to create regional marketing hubs to increase the revenue earned by the farmers. The marketing hubs should be linked to KVK can research agricultural goods which is in demand and inform the farmers on the technical no how to produce the goods.

Fourthly, Sir, we need to look towards diversification of cropping pattern and to take advantage of national horticultural mission. This mission will assist farmers to produce horticultural produce. Sir in Jhalawar area their a lot of produce of oranges. But oranges could be processed to value added. The linkage would assign the farmers.

Lastly, I would like to say that India is a agricultural producing nation we need to advantage of it and use modern agriculture technique such mechanised farming, contract farming etc. to assist the farmers.

Sir, I also must mention the Regional Rural Banks (RRB's) need to lend farmers loan at lower rate of interest. These RRB's are leasing the farmers so we need to strict action against the RRB's whenever the situation arises.

Sir, India is huge Country. We at time face calamity such as floods. They destroy crops we need to have a comprehensive insurance policy where village is considered the point of consideration of not the tehsil as before. Sir, our Hon'ble Agriculture Minister is a farmer and has always assisted our State of Rajasthan. We thank fear his assistance. Once again I would like to thank you for letting

[Shri Dushyant Singh]

me speak on this very important topic which effects are daily life. Lets all come together to uplift are farmers and make India a agriculturally rich country and thus help our GDP to rise.

Sir, and I hope my considerations will be considered by the Union Government and help the farmers of India and the farmers of Hadoti region.

*SHRI M. APPADURAI (Tenkasi) : Sir, it is unfortunate that the basic problems of farmers that have given rise to great distress among them is yet to be addressed to even after 60 years of Independence. Timely credit facility is not available to farmers, especially the small and marginal farmers among them. Agriculturists are also not able to get quality seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and other essential inputs in a proper way. When they are very much need of them, there is either scarcity or delayed arrival of such inputs. Their distress, which commence with the commencement of cultivation, goes on till they go for harvesting the crops and storing the grains. Most of the small and poor farmers live their lives almost dying everyday.

When crop is under cultivation, excessive rains or scarcity of rain drastically affect the growth and the yield. If they escape rains, then comes the pestering insects and pests. Natural disasters, monsoon failures, non-availability of agricultural extension services in some place, the hard grip of private money lenders have been posing great threat to the lives and livelihood of the poor farmers in this country. If they come out of the clutches of all these things and when they go to the market to sell their produce, they do not get remunerative prices. Thousand of dreams are there in the eyes of an agriculturist that his family will meet with prosperity but they all end up as tears in their eyes. When the growth is in plenty that is also a great danger to farmers in the absence of a viable marketing and distribution mechanism. Both the Central and the State agencies in many places in the country are found to be

*English translation of the speech originally laid on the Table in Tamil.

failing in their duty of procuring agricultural produce in time, especially the essential commodities like rice and wheat. This results in the farmers being pushed to distress sales, i.e., selling of their produce at throw away prices. Thereby making their occupation, a non-gainful employment chosen by themselves leading to dismay and distress.

The cost of labour of the farmers and their family members and also the cost of manure, especially natural manure are not normally taken into consideration at the stage of determining prices for the agricultural produce. Unfortunately, this is found only in the Indian context. I urge upon the Union Government to evolve a suitable strategy to give the right to the farmers to determine prices for their agricultural produce. Only then, farmers can be really liberated from the turmoil in a free country like ours which seeks to enjoin itself with free economy in the process of globalization. Hence, I urge upon the Government to evolve alternative strategy, plan and schemes to improve the lot of farmers of the country that is dependent on agriculture. Let the Government come before this House to deliberate on the comprehensive plan they may have to evolve in this regard. With this I conclude.

[Translation]

*SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail) : Sir, the population of our country is 1.08 billion. 60 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture. Today quality of seeds, proper irrigation, loans at lower rate of interest and agriculture insurance is an unmediate need of the farmers. Our country is predominantly an agricultural country and still conditions of farmers is pitiable and they are being compelled to commit suicide. They are not getting fair prices for their agriculture produce. The banking process is so complicated that they find it easier to take loan from moneylenders at higher rate of interest. Farmers are taking loans from the traditional lands at high interest. The future of the country doomed due to neglect of agriculture sector.

*The speech was laid in the Table.

Today 27 farmers out of 100 are taking loan from the banks or other financial institutions. Their crops are damaged by flood, drought and hailstorm. Farmers are even unable to recover their cost. The future of farmers is in jeopardy. Farmers are committing suicides as they have taken a loan of 25 crore. The Prime Minister has given an assistance of Rs. 3750 crore to 6 districts of Vidharba. The Prime Minister had met 530 farmers families but still he is unable to ameliorate them from despondency. Maximum farmers committing suicides are in the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. 4261 farmers of 16 districts in Andhra Pradesh, 5912 farmers in 6 districts of Karnataka, 201 farmers in 3 districts of Kerala have committed suicides during the last 3 years. In view of the situation prevalent in all the said states a rehabilitation package is needed. The Government should announce a special package for farmers of the entire country. According to the report of the National Sample Survey, 40 per cent farmers are willing to quit farming. This situation is nowhere satisfactory and encouraging and remaining 60 per cent farmers have adopted agriculture out of compulsion. 27 per cent farmers believe that agriculture is a non profitable profession. According to the 5 per cent farmers, agriculture is not a profession associated with social prestige. Small and medium farmers have taken to other professions due the meagre profitability. This will definitely affect the economy of our country. Agriculture land is shrinking continuously due to ever increasing population of our country is adversely effecting agriculture. Electricity, water and seeds have become costlier after the arrival of multinational companies. The number of marginal farmers has crossed 3 crore during the last 10 years. Developed countries are providing grants of 5 thousand crore rupees to their farmers per day and the Government of India provides that much amount of grant in a year. If you compare India with other countries of the world, you may find India leading in the foodgrain production in Fruits, vegetable we are at the second place. Still we are not providing any facility to the farmers. The picture and destiny of our country can change only if an Indian farmer's Commission is constituted.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, a very important subject is being discussed here and it has been discussed here earlier also. We expected that some positive and concrete efforts will be made to improve the condition of farmers but the work in this direction has not done as it should be. The population of our country is increasing, as a result the agricultural land is shrinking. I would definitely like to state that except providing protection to agriculture there is no other way to solve the basic problems of our country whether it is unemployment or food crisis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, you cannot make the country self-reliant without strengthening the agriculture sector. Our experience tells us that the efforts made in several areas identified for the all round development of our country and to remove unemployment have not been successful. The percentage of unemployment in the country was 0.21 in 1951 which has now increased upto 13 per cent. 72.4 percent people of our country are dependent on agriculture and people are migrating from villages to cities due to pitiable condition of agriculture. To stop this, there is a need to strengthen the agriculture sector.

Sir, it was publicized that information technology has alleviated the unemployment from our country. I would like to tell you about its results. An agency of United Nations Organization called ESCAPE, has conducted a survey according to which I.T. sector has provided employment to less than one per cent of the unemployed people. It means that it has provided employment to only 10 lakh people out of 45 crore unemployed people in our country.

Sir, I would like to draw the attention of Shri Sharad Pawarji towards the draft of the 11th Five Year Plan. I thought that discussion in this regard would take place during this session, but it could not take place. Shri Montek Singh Ahluwalia is the Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission. He said that we are fixing a target of 9.5 per cent growth rate but it could not be fulfilled unless special attention is paid to the agriculture sector. I want to ask him that who stops them from doing so. It cannot be done by lip service only.

[Shri Ramji Lai Suman]

Sir, I would request the Minister of Agriculture, through you, to pay special attention towards it when this draft will be finalised. I would particularly request you to pay special attention for the development of agriculture sector. Irrigation is essential for agriculture. Irrigation is the life line of agriculture. Our country has 64 million hectares of fallow land which means that a large land is dying unproductive. By providing irrigation facilities we can convert this unproductive land into productive land. The Planning Commission is talking about converting 88 million hectares of land of our country into productive land. I would request the honourable Minister that during the reply on this issue he should please give details about the irrigation target under achieved during the 9th Five Year Plan when we switched over from 9th plan to 10th plan. Besides he should also specify the reasons as to why we are unable to provide irrigation facility to agriculture in the country through our irrigation schemes.

Sir, I would like to state that out of 494 irrigation projects started in Tenth Five Year Plan we have completed only 38 projects till March, 2006. This is our water management. The Kanupur integrated irrigation project of Andhra Pradesh and major canal irrigation project of Gurgaon were started during the third five year plan and they are still incomplete at the end of tenth five year plan. If this is the situation, then till when we will depend on rain gods and nature. I think there is a need to ponder over this issue. If you do not give importance to irrigation and do not arrange water for our farm land, then you can not achieve desired growth rate.

Sir, due to the neglect of irrigation out of 33 million hectares tillage land only 53 million hectares of land has been provided irrigation facility. I think there is hardly any need to tell the difference in agriculture production in irrigated and unirrigated land. Honourable minister himself knows that there is a difference of 70 to 120 per cent in agriculture production between irrigated and unirrigated land.

According to the draft being prepared for the 11th five year plan as per the news items published in newspapers, it has been mentioned that the Advisor of the Planning Commission. Shri Gajendra Hallah has said that an allocation of Rs. 320 lakh crore is being made for the development of infrastructure during the 11th five year plan. Where this amount will be spent Rupees 40 thousand crore provided to be spent on the development of airports, Rupees 60 thousand crore on the development of ports, rupees 2,20,000 crore provided to be spent on the development of National Highways.

These funds should be spent on the National Highways, ports and airports but this should not be done at the cost of neglecting agriculture. It seems his view point is commercial. I would firmly say that as long as agriculture is not the primary motive for spending the funds it would never yield good results.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, besides irrigation system we have discussed to promote agriculture in non-irrigated land as well as dry land farming. During the last few decades a number of technical missions have been formed to grow pulses and oil seeds as dry land crop but the production of the same could not be increased in the country. I would like to ask as to what are the reasons that despite every possible effort made by the Government for raising the production of pulses and oil seeds, the efforts have not yielded any fruitful results? Further, there is a issue of subsidy regarding agricultural machinery, pesticides, seed producing companies and chemical fertilizer companies. This subsidy is provided in the name of farmers. Subsidy to the tune of Rs. 17,253 crore was granted in the year 2005-06. This subsidy is being given to the fertilizer producers but still the cost of fertilizers has been rising constantly. Therefore, what is the use of giving this subsidy?

We follow the world in almost all the matters. Through you, I would like to say that America grants a direct subsidy of 180 Billion dollars to its agricultural producers, European Countries grant a subsidy of 320 billion dollars and this subsidy is given to the farmers directly. We have never deliberated on these possibilities.

Sir, as per a survey conducted, the Minister of Finance has himself admitted this. In a statement published on 3rd July in Coimbatore, hon'ble Minister of Finance had himself admitted that only 27 per cent farmers are able to get loan from financial institutions. The rest of the farmers have to bank upon private money lenders and we cannot even think of the rate of interest charged by them. There is an urgent need to arrange for more loans through the financial institutions.

As my esteemed colleagues have stated that arrangement should be made for a separate budget for agriculture on the lines of railway budget. The minister of Agriculture in the present government Shri Sharadji is sitting here, I would like to request him that he should draft a separate budget for agriculture in the eleventh five year plan or make the eleventh five year plan agriculture based. I would like to request him not to be a part of the sin being committed by the Government. It is not important as to who becomes a minister and for how long. If he withdraws from the Government then at least his name would be written in the pages of history that he did not associate himself with this Government in the name of exploiting the farmers. I would urge upon him that, if the country has to be saved then agriculture must be saved first. To save agriculture it is important that utilization of funds should be focused on villages, poor people and agriculture as this is the only option available to save this nation.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Shri Raghunath Jha, time allotted to speak to your party is over, but yet I am allowing you another 5-7 minutes to speak.

*SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (Palani) : Our country is a agrarian country. 70% our population is depending on the farm sector. Farmers of this country mainly cultivating Onion, Cotton, Chillies, Sugarcane, Paddy and Wheat. Main problems of the farmers are (1) Flood, (2) Non availability of sufficient water (3) Fair price for products (4) Lack of financial assistance for cultivation. (5) Not able to get good seeds, pesticides and fertilizers. (6) Changing policies of Government.

If we go down south farmers are suffering for want of water for irrigation due to failure of Monsoon. The farmers in north are suffering due to heavy rain and flood. Continuously for number of years farmers are not able get water for transplantation. All of a sudden if heavy rain comes and able to get water they have to start cultivation. They are searching for money to purchase seeds, fertilizers and other cultivation instruments. Immediately farmers are going to get loan from the private money lenders. Private money lenders are giving loan to farmers for higher interest. After that the farmers are provided with spurious seeds, adulterated pesticides and fertilizers. Due to these problems the farmers are not able to get good yields. Moreover, the cost of production being much higher than the prices, most farmers are running up huge losses and have to borrow heavily. Since most of them have defaulted on loan repayments the banks are unwilling to extend fresh loans. Their only recourse is to borrow from the trader-monelender at 30 to 50% interest this had ensured that the farmers are trapped in debt.

Moreover, the farmers not provided with necessary loans by Nationalised and Schedule Rural Banks. For giving Rs. 10,000/- to a farmer the Co-operative banks are getting number of documents. Before getting loan of Rs. 10,000/- farmers have to spend minimum Rs. 2,500/-. The Co-operative banks are collecting more interest, penal interest and costs for the loan of Rs. 10,000/-. If a farmer is not able to pay the loan to the co-operative societies, they are initiating attachment proceedings. The co-operative societies are attaching even "Mangalya Sutra" for arrears of loan. After seeing this pathetic situation our Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. Kalaingar Kamnanithy waived the entire co-operative loan to the tune of Rs. 6,826 crores borrowed by the farmers in Tamil Nadu. In this juncture I urge upon the union Government to direct the all Nationalised Banks to waive atleast interest for the loans borrowed by farmers.

Furthermore, throughout the country farmers are cheated by seed companies, Pesticide Companies are Fertilizers Companies. I request the Hon'ble Prime Minister

* The speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri S.K. Kharventhan]

to order to take stringent action against all these fraudulent agencies.

To solve the problem of monsoon failure all the rivers in this country have to be linked. Atleast the perennial rivers in southern states to be linked. For that Union of India has to be allocated sufficient fund for linking of rivers.

Particularly the farmers growing vegetables are not able to get fair price. Union of India has to direct all the State Government to open Co-operative Marketing Agencies in District Level.

Due to Farmers suicides in this country widespread distress is prevailing every where. Farmers suicides cannot be de-linked from indebtedness and the economic distress small farmers are facing. Indebtedness is not new. Farmers have always organized for freedom from debt. In the nineteenth century the so called "Deccan Riots" were farmers protest against the debt trap into which they had been pushed to supply cheap cotton to the textile mills in Britain. In the eighties for the farmers in Tamil Nadu staged agitation for free electricity, for waiving of arrears loans. The above agitation was headed by Late Farmer's leader Sri C. Narayanasamy Naidu. The Congress Party totally supported the demands of Farmers. In the year 1989 Tamil Nadu Government by the then Chief Minister Dr. Kalam Karunanithy provided free electricity to all farmers. I request the Hon'ble Agricultural Minister union of India to direct all the state Governments to provide free electricity to all farmers.

Hence I urge upon the Government to take all necessary steps to provide loan facilities to farmers through Nationalised Banks without delay and further direct the authorities concerned to help the farmers by providing good seeds, good pesticides and good fertilizers then only the problems of the farmers will be solved.

*SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR (Sagar) : Sir, our country

is known as predominantly an agrarian country. The very basis of our economy depends upon agriculture in rural areas. If the crop is good, the farmer spend with a free hand on shopping, marriages, construction of house and to repay any loan taken during the previous years. A farmer gets disappointed if his crop gets destroyed due to floods or drought and if the crop continues to get damaged for 2-3 years, then the farmer is forced to live in a miserable condition. This is a reason for increase in the cases of suicides by farmers in many states during the previous years.

Farmers of our country are very brave and courageous. If they are provided with adequate resources for irrigation, quality of seeds and power in time then they can produce good and large quantity of crop with the help of which he can repay his loans as well as help the country in repaying its loans because if the crop is good then they spend that money in the country which results in increase in demand and as well as increase in production in the industries ultimately leading to increase in business. The industries work fastly and the wheel of entire economy of the country gets strengthened. If we import food grains from foreign countries at higher rates despite of having large stocks of foodgrain in godown of our country, then it would certainly disappoint the farmers and alongwith this the out flow of our money to foreign countries would have a serious impact on the economy. Therefore, to make the farmer self dependent and strong, they should not only be provided with Kisan Credit Cards or the loans and rather a provision should be made in the budget for providing grant to these farmers in order to pull them out of the loan cycle and the scheme of inter linking of rivers should also be implement in all the states expeditiously.

Alongwith this, special training programmes should be run in order to encourage the farmers towards growing vegetables, floriculture and dairy farming. To allow the benefits of crop insurance scheme to farmers. Patwari halka should be considered as a unit in place of Tehsil. If we perstate these efforts into action, we can save the farmers from getting disappointed.

* The speech was laid on the Table.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Betiah) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak on such an important subject inspite of my party's time is over.

Sir, I am very happy that today such a person is the Minister of Agriculture, who is a farmer and is fully aware of the problems. Farmers have to face so many problems. Today what is the position of the country and in the 70's decade when we brought Green Revolution and we became self dependent in foodgrains, inspite of that out of total underweight children in the world, 35% of them are only in India. This is a matter of concern because we are celebrating the 60th year of Independence now, but we could not succeed in this field. According to the figures of UNICEF, 5.70 crores children are malnourished, while in China, whose population is more than us, only 70 lacs of children are malnourished. Today there are 1.10 billions of people in the world, whose daily income is less than one US dollar and out of them 26 crores are Indian.

Today, we want to compete with the world and we all say that two-third of our population are farmers who depend on agriculture and labourers are also engaged in this activity. Today, we want to say to the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, as other Hon'ble Members have said here, that funds are being invested in other sectors and money is being spent there. Now it has been discussed in this House that during the last 10 years more than 1 lakh farmers have committed suicide and we are ignoring farmers. Farmers should get their due, they should get their proper due but even today we are not paying attention on that. Our success in the case of producing foodgrains depends on the labourers working in rural areas. There are no arrangements of food security for the poor. There is no increase in the source of income and the situation remains unchanged there. A report has been published in the name of 'Silence Emergency of World Hunger Series 2006' and it has been said in it that the number of people dying every year now is more than the persons died in the famine of Bengal and the incidents of deaths occurred

due to famine in Bengal but still we are not expressing any concern on that.

I want to ask that does it not shows that even now we have not achieved success in providing food and nutrition security, which we call access to food-to the common man. As all have said that in India even now two-third of our population belongs to farmers. National Sample Survey Organisation have conducted a survey recently in which concern has been indicated. It has said in that report that 60 per cent of farmers are willing to leave the job of farming. Why do they want to leave farming, when they have no other alternatives, it is because there is a lack of input, for agriculture they need the things like fertilizer seeds, diesel, water and there is lack of all these things, their prices have also been increased. You are not offering them proper price at the same pace. As my friend Shri Jai Prakash has also said and you have declared MSP, I would like to say to the Minister of Agriculture that he is going to provide the increased price of paddy by Rs. 6 to Rs. 10, while other people succeeded in purchasing wheat from the market when the wheat was priced less. In this way, he has provided more prices to the foreign farmers as compared to the Indian farmers. I would like to say to the Hon'ble Minister that he should fix the price of paddy at least Rs. 600 or Rs. 700. He should fix the price of wheat more than Rs. 800 per quintal. Today, farmers invest more and prices of diesel have increased a lot? He is himself a farmer and he himself dues and he farming knows about all this. Therefore, we want that you increase it. Our largest problem is about seeds. Even today farmers do not get certified seeds on time. During the time of sowing seeds, farmers do not get certified seeds. We want that a seed policy should be framed by changing all these. I am a Member of Standing Committee on Agriculture. We have recommended by inviting Agricultural workers in the country for 3-4 days. We want that work should be done according to the recommendations. There is a need to give more emphasis on agricultural related alternatives also so that our farmers could turn the direction of sources towards market. As far as alternatives regarding agricultural sources is concerned, I mean to say that farms, cattle,

[Shri Raghunath Jha]

horticulture, fishing, poultry and piggery, if these all joint system will be activated then all things can be set right. Even earlier also as a skill our mothers-sisters used to do work by purchasing goats, cows, sheep buffaloes etc. Today all these things are nowhere. Therefore, there is need to bring change in agriculture. All essential facilities for farming, especially the farmers lacks of agricultural related information for their own produce. Today the biggest hurdle for the farmers is the search of market. They do not get information as to where they should go, where they can get seed and manure. For all this, they should be aware. In our country all these things are lacking.

Sir, it is obvious that there is lack of employment opportunities in rural sector. On the one hand, the contribution of agricultural sector in the whole economy is decreasing, while on the other hand, dependency of the people on farming is also decreasing. Therefore, it is necessary that the problem of disguised employment be addressed through the creation of employment opportunities in non-agricultural activities parliamentary rural industries. This is worth keeping in mind that merely addressing the problem of employment in a cosmetic manner will not suffice and will not remove poverty. Today, the need of the hour is to increase the quality of productivity and employment. This still lacks in agricultural sector. For this, there is need to increase the working skill of the people. As far as the agricultural policy is concerned, we would like to say to the Minister of Agriculture that he should evaluate all this and consider it again. A national agricultural policy must be formed. This could be managed properly only through national agricultural policy. As for example, I want to say that mango, lichi, makhana, parwal and other vegetables are produced in our Bihar, but due to lack of proper up keep and cold storage facilities 60% of agricultural produce is destroyed. Therefore, we want that a proper care should be given towards all these things. Hon'ble Anant Kumarji was talking about agricultural loan. Today, the interest rate of motor-car is less than rate of loan given to the farmers. You should reduce the rate upto

4 per cent of the farmers and we are requesting you for this. Agriculture should be protected from the risk of open market. How much the commodity market is stable? Future market is a right step in this direction, but its bad impact such as risk, hoarding and unnaturally increase in prices must be checked, which is not in the interest of common man. For this, there is need to strengthen the future market and it must be regulated properly. Today brokers are benefitted more from the future market. There could not be direct relation of the farmers and producers. A direct link is possible through the above contract farming and this way risk of market from agriculture could be curtailed. We are unfortunate that there is not any proper management of floods, droughts and irrigation. . . .(Interruptions) Today, the separated state of Bihar is entirely suffering from drought. Standing crops have been damaged. Crops of paddy and wheat have been destroyed. There is after logging problem in almost 10 lakh hectares of land in Bihar. We will be benefitted, if the water logging problem is solved.

Thousands of acres of land is being submerged every year in Ganges from Buxer to Farakka (Bengal). Because of that well settled farmers have become labourers. Something must be done to protect from this havoc.

Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture is well aware of the problems of sugarcane farmers. There were 32 sugar factories. At the time of Independence of the country, we were producing 25 per cent sugar.

Today, out of 32 Sugar mills only 6 sugar mills are operational and the remaining mills have been closed down. After Independence, sugar mills were opened in different states whether it is co-operative sector, public sector or private sector but not a single sugar mill was opened in our state Bihar which had a population of over 10 crores at the time of its bifurcation from Jharkhand. We had about a dozen of good jute factories. All agricultural based operations alongwith paper mills have come to an end. I would like to urge upon the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture to revive the sugar mill which used to a procure cash crop for the farmers of Bihar.

At last, I would like to emphasize. He need for making more investment in the field of agriculture. This is essential for public as well as private sector both. The investment in agriculture in public sector is either stagnant or declining year by year. The participation of public sector is still low. . . .(Interruptions) The companies like Reliance are now entering into this field and the direct contact with the farmers can prove fruitful for them. But it should be taken care of that the interests of the farmers should not be over looked and the exploitation of our natural resources should not be restricted to self-interest. It should also be taken care of that they are not stuck in any new vicious circle. Minister of Agriculture should give specific attention to it.

With these words, I conclude my speech.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Shri O.K. Chandrappan. You can speak for five minutes.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN (Trichur): Sir, I will cooperate with you.

We are discussing the biggest sector of our Indian economy, a sector of economy that provides maximum employment to people, food security and also industrial raw material. Sixty per cent of population depends on agriculture and its contribution to GDP is slightly over 23 per cent. So, this is a very important sector of our economy. But if you see the other side, it is infested with suicides of peasantry about which this House has discussed so many times.

Sir, there is another alarming feature. The latest report of the National Sample Survey says that 40 per cent of population in agriculture, that means 40 per cent of the people engaged in agriculture, say almost good riddance to this agriculture. They say that they cannot remain any more in agriculture. They are so frustrated and desperate. So, it is in this condition we should discuss as to how we could overcome this problem.

Sir, the hon. Minister is here. He himself is a good

agriculturist, a friend of *Kisan* and he is very sensitive to these problems.

He has been offering packages. Packages are good. In a desperate condition, probably the packages will help as a measure of rehabilitation and even these packages are like a miser opening his purse.

Sir, the Minister knows the problem of Kerala very well. We are requesting him that, for Heaven's sake, he should give some relief package to Alleppey and Idukki districts because these are the districts which are ruined by the crisis. In Idukki district, there is a crisis in the plantation industry and in Alleppey district, the crisis is that of Kuttanad area which mainly has rice cultivation. We plead with the Minister to consider the problems faced by the farmers of these two districts of Kerala and announce some relief package.

Apart from relief packages, certain basic things need to be done and I think the hon. Minister will consider them. More capital investment, both public as well as private, is required in agriculture if it is to be saved from this crisis. The Planning Commission should plan accordingly and more budget allocation should be made for agriculture. The Minister himself was telling us the other day that the amount that is earmarked for irrigation is less than one per cent of the Budget and it is the same case everywhere. If we have to overcome this crisis, very big policy changes are required in this field which will bring about far-reaching effect on the life of peasants of our country.

As far as post-harvest technology is concerned, the less said is better. There is hardly anything in this area. The peasant may cultivate anything, but there is no support of post-harvest technology by which he can add value to his produce and sell it in the market. There is no market support for the peasant. He is always called upon to sell his produce in a distress sale.

So, these are the areas where some important measures have to be taken. Then, we have to provide supplementary income to our farmers. Another area where the farmer is very much concerned is animal husbandry

[Shri C.K. Chandrappan]

and dairy farming. India was the topmost milk producing country in the world in the past, but we do not have a planned approach in this area now. Similarly, poultry and sericulture are also suffering due to lack of proper planning and attention. Then, the Agriculture Minister is in-charge of fisheries also. This is a big Ministry because it deals with a big sector of our economy. But it does not the kind of support that it should get from the Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry. So, this House always extends its full support to the Minister in this regard.

Sir, what happens due to lack of adequate financial support to the Ministry of Agriculture? What happens is, the farmers are getting less and less interested in continuing in this occupation. If we have to have the guarantee that farmers will remain in this field, then we will have to support them in a big way. We have to support them in terms of cheaper inputs and those inputs include capital also about which everybody is pleading here for a rate of interest of 4 per cent on loans provided to farmers. This is the recommendation of the Commission on Agriculture headed by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan. The Minister himself appointed that Commission. In this connection, I would like to remind the Minister as to what the Prime Minister had said. The Prime Minister had said that if agriculture does not grow at the rate of 4 per cent, then 8 per cent growth rate in our economy would remain a dream.

It will not be materialised. Why are we failing in this sector? It is because, even today, we largely depend upon the vagaries of monsoon. That is where the importance of irrigation, importance of more money spending, so that you will get better results and all that, come.

Imagine a situation where our farmer, that is 60 per cent of the Indians, has a little more spare money to buy one more sari for his wife, to buy one more *lungi* or a shirt for himself. This will give employment to thousands of workers in the textile mills if he buys one sari, one shirt, one *lungi*, one *chappal* and all that. It will produce

immensely a lot of employment and that will solve the unemployment problem. But he cannot do that. Why can he not do that? He does not have spare money. He is always in debt.

It was the Royal Commission on Agriculture constituted by the Britishers in those days said that the Indian peasant is born in debt, living in debt, dying in debt, bequeathing debt to his inheritance. That situation is there even today. We have to find means by which he is given support that he produces enough to sustain himself and a little more spare money so that he can buy other things and by which the economy will get a big boost. If that has to be done, we will have to take certain measures in right direction.

Why not the Government thinks in terms of providing loan at zero per cent interest rate or interest free loan to small and marginal peasants? This is done in China and its result in Chinese economy was a big boost in the production because the man who gets the support, he will not think in terms of committing suicide. He will remain, he will sustain in agriculture. He will work hard and produce well and with that he will push forward the economy.

I hope, Shri Sharad Pawar, being a very imaginative tall leader of the UFA Government and also an agriculturist himself, very sensitive to the problems of the agriculture, would give due consideration to all these problems and make a break to the past and take the peasant for a bright future.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (Srikakulam) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, the farmer is the backbone of the country. Our Indian agriculture is the largest in the world and also it contributes 24 per cent to 25 per cent to the GDP. It provides employment to 65 per cent of the workforce. But the farmer is suffering a lot.

As per the reports, Indian agriculture ranks first in the world in milk production. It ranks second in the world in the production of wheat and rice. It ranks second in the

world in the production of vegetables. It ranks third in the world in the production of cotton, groundnut and fruit. It ranks fourth in the world in the production of sugarcane and potato.

But what is the state of the Indian farmer? The farming community is neglected, unhappy, shattered and committing suicide. In the past five years, 10,000 farmers have committed suicide throughout the country, particularly in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta South) : In other parts of the country also.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Yes, even in other parts of the country also. I was mentioning the major States where more number of farmers have committed suicide.

In the last two years, in Andhra Pradesh alone, 3,200 farmers have committed suicide.

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL (Vijayawada) : That was in 1994-95.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Whatever it may be. The figures are there with the hon. Agriculture Minister.

But ultimately, recently, the hon. Prime Minister has announced a package for Vidarbha on 18 July 2006.

20.00 hrs.

So, we are very happy for that. Even in Andhra Pradesh, nearly 16 districts are in distress and farmers are committing suicides. The Andhra Pradesh Government has submitted a package of nearly Rs. 51,826 crore but so far the Government of India has not taken any action. On the floor of the House, the hon. Agriculture Minister said that it is under process and it will be sanctioned very soon. The farmers of Andhra Pradesh are eagerly waiting for that.

Ultimately, what we have to do is waiver of loans, otherwise the farmers will not get any benefit. My humble request to the Agriculture Minister is for total waiver of

loans. Then only the farmers will be happy. Due to indebtedness, the farmers are borrowing money from the private moneylenders at huge rate of interest ranging from 25 per cent to 50 per cent which they are unable to pay. As per the Prime Minister's statement, the farmers are not getting remunerative price for their produce. That is why there is indebtedness; that is why the farmers are committing suicides. The whole country, all the political parties, even the Chief Ministers, and even the farming community have represented several times to the Government of India to decrease the interest rate to 4 per cent. From this season, from the kharif season, the Government of India has announced interest rate of 7 per cent only for kharif season, only for the crop loans, and not for the entire agriculture. If a farmer takes loan for the Kharif crop, then only the 7 per cent interest rate will be applicable to him.

The farmers are not getting Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their produce. Recently the Government of India has increased it by Rs. 10 per quintal for paddy. How is it possible? The input price has increased alarmingly. The cost of labour, the cost of fertilizer, water, and the price of diesel have increased six times in the last two years. How will the farmer get remunerative price? That is why my demand to the Agriculture Minister is that the price per quintal should be increased to Rs. 700.

For the Scheduled Castes Commission, we are appointing Scheduled Castes; for the Commission for Women, we are appointing women representatives; but for the Agricultural Price Fixation Commission there is no farmers representative.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The time of the House was extended upto 8, whereas, I have a long list of Members who want to speak on the issue. I would again reiterate that the hon. Member who want to lay their speech can do so. Their speech would be treated as a part of the proceeding. If the House agrees the time of the House may be extended till the debate is over.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : All right.

[English]

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : For so many years, on the floor of the House, cutting across the party lines, all have requested the Government of India but the successive Governments have totally failed to include farmers' representative in the Agricultural Price Fixation Commission. In Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh *dharmas* have taken place in front of the Government offices for increasing the MSP. That is why my request to the Agriculture Minister is that hereafter we have to select them throughout the country, from Andhra Pradesh, from Karnataka and so on. You can divide them into zones. You include some experts, farmers' representatives and some NGOs in the Agricultural Price Fixation Commission. Then, they will know the ground reality. Then only the farmers will get MSP to which they are legally entitled. You take the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA; the priority is for the farming community. According to the Standing Committee's Report for 2005-06, the investment in agriculture as per GDP at constant prices was 2.0 per cent in the year 2003-04. In 2004-05, it decreased to 1.7 per cent.

So, we are talking one thing but we are showing only lip sympathy. Without providing money, how will it be possible for the Agriculture Ministry to cater to the needs and demands of the farmers? In the Ninth Plan, the Agriculture Ministry requested the Planning Commission to allocate Rs. 18,253 crore but the allotment was Rs. 9,293 crore only. Even in the Tenth Plan, the Agriculture Ministry has proposed Rs. 25,001 crore but the allotment from the Planning Commission is only Rs. 13,300 crore. So, how is it possible for the Agriculture Ministry to meet the demands of the farmers?

Sir, we formed NABARD initially to give credit to the farming community. Ultimately, they have now shifted to provide loans to the State Governments for construction of roads, bridges and other things. Now, they are not providing any credit to the farmers. So, we have to rethink

and ensure that the initial objective of NABARD, when it was started, to give credit to the farming community is achieved.

The most important vital thing is inter-linking of rivers. Repeatedly I am mentioning it on the floor of this House. If we do this, then it will solve all the problems. It will provide employment, it will provide water to the farmers, and it will provide cheap electricity to the farmers. . . .
(Interruptions)

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL : You tell what the Andhra Government has done in the last two years. . . .
(Interruptions)

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : The proposals are going. In the name of projects, everybody knows, and the whole country knows what they are doing. They have given an assurance that within three years they would provide water to 16 lakh hectares of land but after two years and four months they are not able to provide water even to a single acre of land. That is the position in respect of construction of projects in Andhra Pradesh. Sir, I do not want to go into that controversy. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Silence please.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Sir, under the Employment Guarantee Scheme, we have provided Rs. 17,000 crore to Rs. 20,000 crore to provide employment to unemployed people. For inter-linking of rivers, if you spend Rs. 20,000 crore or Rs. 30,000 crore, then in turn you can provide employment to people, you can generate power, and you can provide drinking water in many villages.

Sir, a number of projects are pending completion in various States. Nearly, 300 projects in various States are nearing completion. Under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme, you have provided only Rs. 6,000 crore, which is not at all sufficient for all these projects. Once you complete the irrigation projects, then the farmers will get water and they will be happy, and they will have an assured crop.

Finally, there should be a mechanism throughout the country. For Railways, we have a separate Budget. There should be a separate Budget for Agriculture also. Nearly 65 per cent of our population depends on agriculture. The country needs a separate Agriculture Budget. The subject of agriculture is in the State List and it should be brought from the State List to the Concurrent List. Now, agriculture is in the State List, and the Government of India is providing scientific inputs and some financial co-operation to the States. If you bring it into the Concurrent List, then the Government of India will have some powers and they can also do something to agriculture.

Sir, these are my suggestions. I would like to make a request to the Agriculture Minister to accept my suggestions.

*SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR (Calicut) : Sir, I am pained to make these observations on agriculture, which even today is the livelihood of 70% of our population. Agriculture in India is expiring as her farmers and their dependents are committing suicide. 25,000 farm suicides in 2005, up from 10,000 in 2002, out of the rural population of 750 million gives an average of 33 farmer suicides per 10 lakh rural residents. In the tiny district of Wayanad in Kerala, which I represent, 529 persons have committed suicide from 1999 onwards till date.

Hopes were high after the visit to Wayanad of the Central Planning Commission team in June. Unfortunately, the announcement came that only Rs. 698 crore was allocated for 31 districts (including Wayanad, Kasargode and Palakkad districts of Kerala) over a period of 3 years. There is nothing in this measure to alleviate farmer distress. It was for this reason that a delegation of MPs from Kerala, irrespective of party affiliation met the PM on 22nd August. We communicated the magnitude of the disaster facing our farmers and requested for immediate remedial steps. Suicides continue, with one more person taking his life yesterday.

This shocking apathy in the face of mass suicides by farmers due to agricultural distress also mocks the mandate that brought the UPA formation at the centre, a rejection of urban-oriented planning. That such lopsided view of development is being pursued even now is exemplified by the ungrudging allocation of almost Rs. 1 lakh crore (through public sector equity and borrowing) by the PMO, to make a Shanghai out of Mumbai, while ignoring agrarian devastation.

I would like to quote P. Sainath: "DUMP THE packages, give us a price. It's the price of cotton we're worried about," says 'Kaka' Manohar Motiramji Tadas. "With a fair deal on that, we can manage for now." Tadas knows something about farming. He has been at it for close to 45 years. He does have other demands, like a debt waiver and access to credit. But the price of cotton tops his list just now." Rustic wisdom has identified an immediate remedy, beyond the vision of our policy makers. For the latter knows that behind the whole agrarian crisis looms the shadow of WTO-engendered economic liberalisation. Market liberalisation means one-sided market penetration benefiting multinational corporations, backed by their governments, to ensure cheap access to third world domestic economies. With the removal of all Quantitative Restrictions on agricultural imports, impending corporatisation, subsidies and introduction of Bt cultivation, the culture of growing crops will die. We are choosing these easy options because we do not care for agriculture any more. Over the years the importance of agriculture has declined relatively. Now it accounts for only 25 per cent of the GDP, though 75 per cent of the rural population depends on it for livelihood. Public development expenditure on rural sector which was 14.5% of GDP in 1990 fell to 5.9% in 2001. This is a tragic decline.

Sir, what is happening in the agricultural sector now is unprecedented. Prices of almost all crops have slumped. Not only of pepper, coffee, cardamom, vanilla, arecanut, ginger and other cash crops of my state alone. Duty-free import of low grade pepper through Sri Lanka under the SAARC Free Trade Agreement, and mixing with our finest

* The speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri M.P. Veerendra Kumar]

quality of Malabar pepper has resulted in our losing the International market, as well as spoiling the internal market. Because of this prices have plummeted. To save the Wayanad pepper grower, this policy has to be reversed. In the case of cardamom similar imports are happening from Nepal.

From being one of the largest exporters of cotton, we have not only become the third largest importer but tragically suicide among growers has assumed epidemic proportions. Malwa mustard growers have been hit by imports of cheap palm oil and soya oil. Coconut farming the livelihood of 6 million plus households in Kerala, with 46% of acreage devoted to it, is in deep crisis. Price has plummeted from the average price of Rs. 6638 for 1000 nuts (without husk) in 2005, to Rs. 4100/- this month and coconut oil has crashed from Rs. 7286 to Rs. 4850. Aggravating this disaster is the implementation of FTAs like SAFTA, effective as of July 1, 2006 and ASEAN to be in effect as of Jan 1, 2007. Experience shows how detrimental imports facilitated by such trade agreements can be to the unsuspecting farmer. The exim-policy of 2000 resulted in price of coconut plunging from Rs. 5050/1000 in Jan 2000 to Rs. 2446/1000 in Jan 2001 and of coconut oil from Rs. 5339/quintal to Rs. 2836/quintal. Surprisingly the average applied rate of import tariff in 2004-05 is almost 65% lower than the average applied rate in 1990-91. Some of the key agricultural goods have the minimum applied tariff rate in India, which include pulses 10%, maize 15%, milk powder 15% etc.

The decision to import wheat at a much higher price compared to local procurement price is absurd. Wheat production rose to 17 million tonnes in 1968, an increase of 5 million tonnes over the highest of 12 million tonnes harvested in 1964. Government recorded impressive strides in agriculture by releasing a special stamp entitled 'Wheat Revolution' in July 1968. This success was later replicated in rice, and similar increases were recorded in cotton, sugarcane, millets and in oilseeds. Today, at a time when food production struggles to barely keep pace with

the burgeoning population growth, farmers are being asked to diversify, produce crops that are suitable for export and to compete in the international market. With promise of cheap food available off the shelf in the global market, the focus has shifted from agriculture to industry, trade and commerce, and agri-processing companies. Procurement has drastically dropped from 20.63 mn tonnes in 2001-02 to 14.79 mn tonnes in 2005-06. Worse, we have imported 3.5 mn tonnes of wheat so far this year. The crisis erupted after the Government allowed corporates like Cargill, Continental, Reliance, ITC and Hindustan Lever to buy directly from the farmers. The import decision as well the depleted central pool estimated at 62 lakh tonnes, as against buffer stock norm of 84 lakh tonnes, has enormous implications for the food security regime of our country. Shocking is the fact that agricultural imports have gone up by 300% in the last decade, including edible oils, sugar, fruits and vegetables. Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, Chairman of National Commission on Farmers has termed it a 'wake-up' call to the nation. Incidentally, a hazard of these imports from America and Australia is the risk of the entry of alien wild plants. One single example will suffice. Parthenium weed which now has overrun 15% of our geographical area, came alongwith PL 480.

Pulses have stagnated at 12-13 mn tonnes over many years, requiring imports worth Rs. 2,261 crore in 2004-05. Both Urad and Moong dais are to be imported from Myanmar at zero duty. Countries like Canada, Australia, Turkey and Mexico have increased acreage of pulses, offering challenge to local growers. In the dairy sector, following liberalisation, milk powder which was on the restricted list for imports, was put on the open general licence.

Agriculture is a state subject. But the Centre signs international agreements without discussing with the states whose people are devastated by such agreements. This goes against the principle of our federal structure.

Farmers in Wayanad in particular are vulnerable on account of small holdings – 92% less than two hectares.

Hence they are totally dependent on getting decent prices. Take the instance of coffee of which Wayanad grows 80%, that too the best quality in the world. Coffee retails for many hundred-fold over the price got by the producer. The profits are bagged by MNCs like Nestle, Unilever and Starbucks. This is one of the reasons that we demanded the Commodity Boards to be strengthened, support price be given, and processing and marketing infrastructure be implemented immediately for all cash crops.

Sir, the proposed seed bill being discussed, will further strengthen global seeds vending corporations like Cargill, Monsanto, Sygenta, etc. The amendment of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Society Act in 14 states and the introduction of an integrated food bill has made corporate India to eye agriculture. Contract farming actively promoted through change of law will mean that the farmer loses his independence and rights over the land. TNCs like Cargill and Monsanto are increasingly involved in all the stages of agriculture - seed, pesticide, procurement and processing. Indian companies Reliance (Medicinal and aromatic plants in Gujarat) Hindustan Lever (Tomato) in Karnataka, Birla vegetables in Rajasthan and Haryana are already in the field. Recently Delhi experienced one of the consequences of this system. Prices of tomato went up because Pepsi Co. which started the contract farming trend in India through tomato farming in 1989, in Hoshiarpur in Punjab, mopped up even the remaining produce from the market. Now they are into Basmati as well. Sir, the Food Safety and Standards Bill 2005 is there to ensure the health of the corporates at the expense of the expendable lives of farmers.

How expendable it is, is proven by the lower intake of foodgrains per capita from 175 kilos to 155 kilos now, a shameful statistic, post-liberalisation. Amartya Sen says that despite recurring famines, "Africa still manages to ensure a higher level of regular nourishment than does India" and that a larger proportion of our children are undernourished than in Africa.

On subsidies, Sir I will submit certain revealing figures. Trade restrictions by the developed nations, which if the Third World practises is called 'protectionism', cost

developing countries \$100 bn a year, \$20 bn more than they receive as aid. Current estimates are that subsidies in the West amount to \$350 bn a year as against \$276 bn before 1994. In the Uruguay round EU and US successfully protected their subsidies under 'Green' and 'Blue' boxes, for which there were no reduction commitments. I will mention only the case of coffee, to draw a distinction between us and a fellow third world country like Brazil. Coffee prices have crashed due to the volatile international market. The highest quality of Robusta coffee grown in Wayanad has no protection from the vagaries of this situation, unlike in Brazil, where the Coffee Development Fund (Funcase) apart from earmarking \$1.67 bn for financing coffee harvest and storage costs of small growers, is further trying to secure another \$392 mn from the Government.

The growth of India's agricultural imports was 152% during post-WTO period as compared to 90.7% in case of exports. While WTO agreements were expected to increase exports in sectors like agriculture, leather, textiles and garments, these categories have in fact declined.

Sir, I may be permitted to touch upon PDS. With a network of about 4,51,000 Fair Price Shops (FPS) distributing commodities worth over Rs. 150 billion to about 1.8 crore households through out the country, our PDS has perhaps the largest distribution network of its type in the world. PDS is a rationing mechanism, entitling households to essential commodities such as rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene and edible oils at subsidised rates. In India, the per capita grain availability has been seriously declining since 1995, when WTO's rules started being implemented. In fact, National Sample Survey (NSS) starting from the 38th round have documented the decline in cereal consumption since 1992. An estimated 63% of Indian Children go to bed hungry, and not surprisingly 53% of all Indian children suffer from chronic malnutrition. A majority of farmers in most states across the country spend almost all their money on food, leaving a pittance for education and healthcare. Hence as a welfare measure, the PDS has to be maintained and all efforts to dismantle it fought.

[Shri M.P. Veerendra Kumar]

To compound the situation is the decision to introduce Bt brinjal, on which subject have written an open letter to the PM. However, would like to point out two recent instances of the dangers posed by these crops. The Indian Express today has reported on the quarantine imposed by the West Bengal government on the hilly areas of North Bengal and Purulia, where the Atlantic variety of potato is grown by Pepsi. There (is a possibility that it can spread disease. These are processed into chips. We have to address the issue of whether this is fit for human consumption. 'Environment groups yesterday urged the European commission to follow Japan and restrict imports of American rice after the US government admitted that an illegal and untested genetically modified strain had contaminated the food chain. The contamination source is apparently a trial GM rice called LLRICE601, produced by the German-based biotechnology company Bayer' — The Guardian August 22, 2006

Banks lend to farmers non-agricultural loans for agricultural purposes. When crops fail, it leads to default. Experience has proved that except in times of distress, farmers do not default. The compound interest levied on such rescheduled loans, become extortionate. Since the farmer is in an absolute state of indigence, all such loans have to be written off. For this purpose close co-ordination among the Central and State governments, NABARD, Public and Private sector banks and Co-operative banks is mandatory. Farmers who have taken loans from unscrupulous money lenders at exorbitant rates of interest must also be protected. Moreover the recommendation of the National Commission on Farmers to lend to farmers at 4% interest should immediately be implemented.

I would like to summarise with a plea on behalf of farmers. Till the late 1990s, Wayanad was a cornucopia earning invaluable foreign exchange. Currently, the total loan outstandings of farmers in Wayanad is around Rs. 800 crore, which is hardly a fraction of the present foreign exchange balance of Rs. 7,77,435 crore (\$160.67 bn) as on this April 28th, and NPA of Rs. 90,000 crore for all banks

as on March 31, 2004. Is it not just to come to the aid of the farmers in their time of distress, against the above financial scenario, with a humanitarian package?

I would like to conclude by asserting that our farmers are losing their rights over land, water and seed, all in the name of technology and liberalisation mantra. Moreover, these policies are implemented stealthily without adequate discussion in public and parliamentary fora. Do we want to convert our farm lands into mass graveyards?

[Translation]

*SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR (Chandrapur) Sir, the reason behind the discussion on wide spread depression among the farmers is that no concrete policy has been formulated by the Government even after 60 years of independence in the interest of the farmers. As a result, they are in a state of distress and compelled to commit suicide.

I would like to recall you that Late Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India had said that it would take sometime to formulate policy for all sectors. But the foremost thing is to formulate a policy for the farmers and I will make it. Despite this no pro-farmer policy has been made even today which is one of the reason for suicides by the farmers.

Everybody is tormented with the gruesome state of the farmers, their reluctance to the agriculture and the suicides by them in this agriculture dominated country. The Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture have also expressed their grief several times.

There may be several reasons behind suicides. We won't be able to solve their problems instantly. Some members expressed their views here. All were concerned about this so I was. I am one of them. I agree that farmers do not get remunerative prices for their crops. They do not get loans and their loans are not being waived off. When the Minister of Agriculture and Dr. Swaminathan the

*The speech was laid on the Table.

chairman of Commission on Agriculture visited vidharbha, they said and it was also published in the press that the reason behind suicides by the farmers were non-payment of remunerative price for crops and high interest rates of loan etc. Due to suicides by the farmers less area has been covered under irrigation. I would like to draw the attention of the house to these three facts.

I do agree that we won't be able to build big dams and irrigation projects immediately. A lot of difficulties will come in our way. There has been delay on account of money, Ministry of Environment and Forests and some other reasons. But the Government should help those who can get irrigation facility on personal level. The Government should provide them facility of irrigation through wells, canals and rivers. It should also give as much power connection to the farmers as much they want. Power should not be given to them free of cost. But it should provide them power connection immediately with its good policy. About 6 lakh farmers of Maharashtra have applied for energising connection. Now, you can imagine as to how many farmers will be in the waiting list for energising the connection. They have to be energised the connections. It will be in the interest of the country as well as our farmers. Irrigation projects are lying pending for want of clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests. All efforts should be made to complete these projects so that farmers can get more irrigation facilities in the near future.

Neither any party nor the farmers of any state are happy with the support price being given to the farmers for their crops. They are not being paid according to the cost incurred on the crops. In Maharashtra, the production cost of paddy is Rs. 950 per quintal. They are being given Rs. 6107/- in the form of support price. When a farmer has to bear a loss of Rs. 3407/- per quintal as to how he will survive.

When the prices go up in the market, the Government make efforts to put a check on it. Government of Delhi provided subsidy recently to reduce the prices of pulses and Tomatoes. All efforts were made to provide remunera-

tive price to the farmers for their produce. But no effort was made to reduce the increasing prices of Cement, Iron, Petrol, Diesel, Fertilizer, Seeds and other items. No subsidy was provided which reflects the policy of Congress Government towards farmers.

Sir, several problems are coming in way due to increase in the prices of agricultural produce in the market and as a result it, the foodgrains to be given to the workers under 'Food for Work' scheme and National Rural Employment Scheme being run by the Rural Development Ministry are being sold in the blackmarket. The foodgrains through black market is sold on lower prices which allow the prices to go up. Apart from it, during elections, the political parties make an announcement that if they come in power they will provide rice and wheat at the rate of Rs. 21/- per Kg. This wheat and rice is sold in the black market which propels the market towards slump. It should be taken into consideration and this type of announcement alongwith the schemes like 'Food for Work' should be discontinued.

The State Government is responsible for the suicides by the farmers. To provide remunerative prices to the farmers for paddy, cotton, wheat and pulses is the only solution preventing them from getting disappointed and committing suicide.

We should encourage the farmers for growing traditional crops alongwith other produces. Efforts should be made to grow palm tree like. Jatropha, Karan Mahaua and other oil seed trees by improving oilseeds so that farmer can get produce from these regularly. As they do not get affected with floods and drought. These suggestions should be taken into account so that foreign expenditure on edible oil and other petroleum products could be checked and income of farmers could be enhanced.

I want that effective steps should be taken for giving them justice, doing away with their disappointment. Preventing them from committing suicide and making them affluent in this agricultural dominated country.

[Translation]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta-South) : Deputy Speaker, Sir. I want to say one thing that late Lai Bahadur Shastri gave a slogan to the country "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" but we forgot that slogan. Today we say,

[English]

we are self-sufficient, and we want to be self-sufficient."

[Translation]

We have to give much importance to farmers but it is a fact that whether it may be Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnatak or Kerala,

[English]

Everywhere the farmers became the victims of the circumstances. I do not know why.

[Translation]

I would like to draw the attention of Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Shri Sharad Pawar, who is a very senior leader, towards two-three points. I would like to ask him to review as to.

[English]

What was the amount of agricultural land?

[Translation]

Under cultivation after independence and after 59 years of independence. The green revolution took place in our country, but presently what is the area of non-agricultural land and agricultural land separately?

[English]

A huge area of land have been given for non-agricultural purposes. Please transfer back the same agricultural land. I am not speaking against anybody. I am not against industries. But the Government must formulate certain policy for the agricultural land.

[Translation]

This land should not be given to anybody. If we give the agricultural land, how will the farmers do farming?

[English]

You would appreciate. Unemployment problem is too high in our country. So, here I would stress for the full review of the policy on agriculture. Today, what is the situation of the agriculture labour, the landless labour and poor farmers?

[Translation]

It is quite necessary to review it. Swaminathan Committee was constituted if it is done, there will be food crisis in the country. This is the fact. Here, my colleagues are present and they will also put their points, I would like to give an example.

Production in my state was good. Cultivation in my state was carried out in 1 crore 60 lakh hectare of land which has been reduced to 1 crore 50 lakh hectare presently. Production in 10000 hectare of land has come down. The target during the year 2007-08 is 1 crore 80 lakh hectare but production will be in 1 crore 10 lakh hectare of land. What will be happened to the whole country? There are many such places. We talk of farmers at the time of election but when election is over, nowhere nobody talks about farmers. In case such talk is held it starts at 10 p.m. when all the Members are engaged in other works and Press is also engaged somewhere else.

[English]

They have got the deadline. The message should not got to people.

[Translation]

Why does this happen. I think that the most important issue is of farmers. We do not have time to discuss the issue of farmers. I suggest that the government may review the matter regarding agricultural land.

[English]

The Government must set up a land bank.

[Translation]

There should also be land map in that Land Bank. We are not against industrialisation. But for God's sake, please realise the pathetic situation of our agricultural labour, about the agricultural land. We are not against industries. Let the industries grow, but at the same time let the sufficient agricultural land remain for the agricultural use. We cannot sow anything without agricultural land.

[Translation]

If food is not available, what will happen? If clothes are not available, bread is not available, how will the other essential commodities be available for livelihood. Agricultural land map should be prepared for every state.

[English]

So, there is a need to have an Agricultural Land Bank. Another things is to have the agricultural mapping.

[Translation]

I have one another suggestion also that there should be a bank exclusively for farmers from where only farmers can get the loans.

[English]

Agricultural labours and the farmers should get the loans.

[English]

Agricultural labours and the farmers should get the loans.

[Translation]

There, farmers will come to know that this bank has been set up exclusively for them and if their crops get damaged, they will have the knowledge that this bank

would give them loan. The farmer can deposit money in that bank. Can we not even do this for our farmers.

[English]

Sixty per cent of our population is dependent on agriculture. We can, and we should set up some Land Bank for the agricultural labour.

[Translation]

Presently such a situation has arisen that initiative is taken to sell the agricultural land of farmers. What will happen? Shopping Malls and Beauty Parlours will be built on agricultural land. Shopping Malls should be built, but where will our farmers go? If we give agricultural land for Shopping Malls, for Housing and to multinational companies for constructing any market, where will the farmers go?

[English]

We are proud of our farmers. We are proud of our industry also. We do not want any difference between industrial land and agricultural land. Only thing is that there should be some restriction.

[Translation]

Which land is agricultural land? Livelihood of the family of a farmer depends on the agricultural land on which he cultivates. What is the number of landless labourers in the country? In the past it was 39 lakhs but during last three-four years it has become 79 lakhs. Why this is so? We give 50 thousand acres of land for promoting. This reduces the area of agricultural land.

[English]

Sir, you find out whether this fact is true or not. More than six lakh acres of agricultural land is given for non-agricultural purpose.

[Translation]

I don't have any objection for setting up Shopping Malls. None should have objection on it but firstly it is

[Kumari Mamata Banerjee]

necessary to keep the farmers alive. If one does not get bread then what is the use of a living corpse.

[English]

At the same time, I am not having this opinion that I not interested in agricultural labour.

[Translation]

We should pay attention to the problems of agricultural labourers.

[English]

They are not getting water for irrigation. They are not getting the support price. They are not getting fertilizer at a cheaper price.

[Translation]

Presently, rates of electricity have gone up. In the past, the farmers had to pay rupees one thousand in a month to operate one electric motor. In a state, its rate has become rupees ten thousand. How will the farmers pay the same? The Government itself has said so. More than four thousand farmers have committed suicides. Farmers from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and also from our state, West Bengal have committed suicides. No farmer from West Bengal committed suicide before. More than one thousand workers lost their lives in Tea Gardens. They hailed from Bihar. Be it Bihar or Orissa everywhere they are loosing their lives. Be it Donkal, Jalangi, Rajarhat, Bhangor, Singur. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please conclude.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Kindly give me two minutes. I would not take much of the time. I know there are so many Members to speak.

[Translation]

Notification has been issued now. Today, rates of fertilizer are very high. They say let the land be allotted.

Why should it be allotted. It should be allotted on the mere ground that they like it. If some one likes something and if he says that parliament should be handed over him as to whether the same can be handed over him. It can never be handed over. You can never handover it. It may be some one's liking. There is much non-agricultural land, you can allotted such land. There will be no problem. The Government was ready to acquire 9 thousand acres of land in Rajarhat. They were ready to acquire two thousand acres of land in Singur and four thousand acres of land in Haldiya. They were ready to acquire 40 thousand acres of land in Bhangor, Raichowk and Kulf. Workers are unable to get food. Anybody from outside comes and says to allot him the land. He is allotted the land, This is the reason that compels the farmers to commit suicide. I am not talking of any political party. If there is any such situation, the Central Government must see this matter. There should be a policy. There should not be different policy for anybody else.

With these words, I request you that there should be social security scheme for agricultural labourers. Landless labourers are in largest number in the country, but there is no social security scheme for them. It is good for the country to have a social security scheme. Remunerative price should be fixed for their products and a national policy should be made to save the farmers. Schemes like 'Save Farmers Scheme', 'Save Farmers Save Country' should be there in the country. I hope that our Minister for Agriculture will certainly do something for the farmers. I would like to say that we should stop oppressing the farmers. If agricultural production comes to an end the country will destroy. So, I request you to do something in this regard. If you do not do something we shall continue our fight and the people of India will think that our fight is meant for the citizens of India. We will fight always for the public.

Deputy Speaker, Sir, I conclude my speech and thank you for giving me opportunity to speak.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Shri Suresh Prabhu to speak now. Please be brief.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU (Rajapur) : Sir, I will not take more time than my sister.

*PROF. M. RAMADASS (Pondicherry) : Sir, it is quite unfortunate and agonising that even after 10th five year plan and 50 years of development experience we are again and again discussing the distress of farmers. In the last 2½ years this House has devoted enough attention to discuss the problems of farmers, suicides of farmers and difficulties of farmers. But every time we discuss the woes of farmers, we end up with more and more evidences of sufferings and miseries of farmers.

We know that, and proudly so, India is growing at 8 per cent per annum. But at the same time the rate at which the Indian farmers are committing suicides is also increasing. If one can construct an index of miseries, one index of destitution, one can find that the rate of economic growth and the index of misery is increasing over the years. This is grave paradoxical because growth is also expected to induce income generation, purchasing power growth and hence happiness. This apparent contradiction only shows that we have adopted a model which is not congenial to agricultural growth. Indian agriculture refuses to cross what is called Hindu rate of growth, namely, 3% which leave a large number of farmers getting marginalised.

Why is this unfortunate scenario? What is wrong with our policies? What is ailing our farmers? Is this Government responsible for the distress of the farmers? Are our farmers responsible? Is the nature responsible?

In my view all the above three variables are to be blamed. Nature has been playing a destructive role. The alternative occurrence of either a flood or drought causes untold miseries. Nature has been niggardly as far as India is concerned which creates considerable uncertainties and risks in agricultural operations.

Coming to farmers, the vicious circle of poverty with which they subsist, low productivity, small size of holdings and their beliefs in social customs and conundrums account for their sufferings.

*The speech was laid on the Table.

On the Governmental side, the decline in investment in agriculture, increased input costs due to slashing of subsidies, crash in output prices due to lifting of quantitative restrictions and reckless import substitution, increasing penetration of MNCs, inadequate and untimely credit base accentuated the problems of farmers. Under this emerging circumstance we need to do the following:

Increasing public investment, provincial land reforms and distribution of surplus land to the tillers of the soil as is done Tamil Nadu, increasing subsidies, social control and equitable distribution of water resources, strengthening of cooperative banking, extension of minimum support price to all crops and procurement to all parts of the country, self-sufficiency in foodgrains production, introduction of a scientific and sustainable land use policy and the protection of the environment. We should also pay great attention to agricultural resources, devolution of funds for Panchayati Raj and allocate adequate funds for drought, flood and erosion control.

We should psychologically motivate the farmers that they can improve and the Government should adopt a farmer friendly approach.

[Translation]

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU (Rajapur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, now-a-days we are observing that the discussion on agriculture in every session takes place as presently as Question Hour which is taken up with the start business of the House. We discuss it in every session one after another. My submission is that the time limit should be fixed for discussion on the problems related to farmer's suicide and agriculture, so that it may not be discussed in haste. Two or three days should be allotted for this subject. In every session we discuss that farmers are committing suicide and there is a problem of agriculture in the country. I think that there is a need to take action to bring changes at the grass root level. But unfortunately, we have not reached at that point. We have seen that every time we mentioned in our statements that farmers have been provided maximum loans by the Government to sort out the bigger problems of the agricultural sector. But the

[Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu]

reason of farmer's suicide is the loan for which they have no money to repay.

20.22 hrs.

[SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN *in the Chair*]

I fail to understand how the incidents of the farmer committing suicide would stop if we continue to provide them loans. The observation of National Sample Survey has also clearly shown that more than 51 per cent people are not being provided loans from the Banking Sector. They have taken loan from the informal sector. It is because people in need are not getting loan because it is outside the banking sector and there is a need to consider about the people who have been provided loan by the Bank, have no credit problems and there is another dimension for that.

Another point I would like to mention that today farmers are in need of relief. I would like to say about Hon'ble Agriculture Minister of our country Shri Sharad Pawar that no body knows better than him about the history, present and future situation of the agriculture. He has improved the condition of farmers at Baramati in such a way that perhaps every farmer of this country would like to live the life like the peasants of Baramati. I know that 83 per cent ground water is used in this agriculture. An article published in The Economist wherein it has been stated as to how much is being used. It is being used equalent to the two and half annual inflow of yangtsy river of China. From where we will get the ground water in such a huge quantity. If we are not going to link the crisis of water with the problems of farmers. Then our condition will be worsened in the coming days. I think this is a challenge to us and another challenge is a fragmentation of land. If our population continues to rise in such a manner then our population will be increased 60 per cent by 2050, it means our population will be 160 crore. It should be kept in our mind that what will be the effect of it on our fragmentation.

My third point is about soil where there has been a Green Revolution it has been there on the right track. But where there has been a Green Revolution, the condition of those states are the worst today because soil fertility is wanning. It is a challenge to us to how a Green Revolution can be brought about there where there has been no Green Revolution so far, namely the states of West Bengal, Orissa, Poorvanchal etc.

[English]

Fourth, public investment in agriculture since 1991 has constituency gone down as percentage of GDP.

[Translation]

I do not think the way we had started reforms in the industrial and trade sector, we had started them while keeping in view the industries and trade when the reforms were initiated. In China in 1978 we had started them from agriculture. But we started it wrongly . For example, if we want to construct a building and we start its construction from its top, we cannot construct any building. Hence, at first there is a need to pay attention to public investment in our sector.

Secondly, you might be aware that Government has stated in the survey conducted by Central Statistical Organisation that 45 per cent of the peasants have said that they are not willing to do agriculture due to the lack of social states. So, they should be provided social statue. This is the condition today, if peasant says that he is a farmer then perhaps no body will be ready to give his daughter to marry him. This is a big challenge that their social status is declining. During the last years, we have seen that there has been growth trend in GDP.

[English]

But as a percentage of GDP, agriculture's share has fallen while the population dependent on agriculture has not fallen. That means per capita income of farmers has fallen at macro level. There is enough evidence available on how it has fallen at micro level also.

Sir, I will come to the solutions in my own way to co-operate with you so that I do not take more time. First, I think we should give away this pre-conceived notion that farmers' problems are related only to agricultural credit. That is one of the problems but not the only problem. Therefore, we should think about many other solutions also which are required. The first one is how we can provide more value added products to the farmers. There are examples in UP and Maharashtra. The other day when Shri Mohan Singh was speaking, he mentioned about it. He told that the farmers who were planting sugarcane, if they are now doing sugar production through co-operatives, their incomes have increased. So, we must bring more and more farmers who can have value added products and take them into not the private sector but among the farmers themselves so that their incomes can go up.

Secondly, we really need to have a market support system for farmers. We cannot have in India a system wherein we leave everything to the market forces. Markets are always dependent when the markets are perfect, but we have not reached the stage wherein there are markets operating in a manner in which they should be. Therefore, we must have a market intervention programme from the Government and market support system available to all farmers in India. That is very important.

Third, we should reduce their input cost. I think, the Government must think a little bit differently than before. Power is very important because farmers depend 83 per cent on ground water. You cannot draw ground water without electricity and electricity is expensive now. So, we have decided to give free electricity, but free electricity means no electricity to the farmers. They only get an assurance of free electricity, but they do not get free electricity.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU : Sir, I am concluding. . . (Interruptions) You are an ideal person for me to follow. What you do when you speak from here, I will do. . . (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Then, there is no end.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yesterday also, the same thing happened. I was here till 9 p.m. Today also, the same thing has happened. Nobody will be prepared to do this job. I will be here till 9 p.m.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU : Sir, I will give you one example on power.

Sir, can you think about Central Government generating cheap source of energy, particularly using coal at pit-heads and use that energy through feeder to be supplied to farmers only? Can you think about something like this whereby free electricity menace will go and utilisation of water will also be proper? At the same time, farmers will also get assured electricity at affordable prices. I have personally talked to all the farmers' organisations. Nobody says that they want free power. They said 'give us only assured quality power.' Therefore, can you think about it? We really need to think about it.

The next thing is insurance. We need to provide a comprehensive insurance cover so that farmers' risks are covered. You are trying to tell them everything, but not give them a proper insurance cover. So, we need a proper insurance programme. The insurance cover which is available today is very misleading. So, we really need to work on that.

Water is a very important issue. I think, Shri Sharad Pawar will agree that we have got only four per cent of the water resource of the world and already 17 per cent of global population is utilising that water. Water cannot be expanded because natural capital cannot get expanded because population increases. How do you deal with that problem? The Government must come out with a concrete policy on that.

Agriculture Ministry is only one of the Ministries. It is the Ministry to take blame but not the only Ministry which

[Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu]

is responsible to solve the several problems that this sector is facing. That is one thing to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Prabhu, please conclude your speech.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU : Sir, I would only like to make two more points, and I would conclude my speech. Firstly, I would like to talk about population control. I think that we cannot deal with the agriculture problem without thinking about population control.

I was reading a statement by the Prime Minister today, who said that population is not a problem. This is a fallacy. The demographic dividend theory that we are becoming a young nation, as if we are going to remain here for life. We are going to remain a young nation for sometime, and that population cannot be supported by agriculture because there is a problem. Therefore, population control also must be linked to the agriculture problem.

Lastly, I would like to talk about science. There are a lot of fallacies about use of science in agriculture. There are a lot of issues raised like ethical, environmental and others wherever we use biotechnology. I think this is the time that the Government must call all concerned people, and address these issues. They should settle this issue once and for all. How do we address the problem relating to science and technology?

[*Translation*].

*SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA (Kheri) : Sir, today when rate of economic growth in the country is 8 per cent and more, it is very surprising that thousands of peasants are committing suicide. It is a bitter truth that there is no impact of economic growth on agricultural sector. Indeed, the growth rate in agricultural sector has stagnated at mere 2.4 per cent. Increasing unemployment in the rural areas depicts the clear picture of it. Due to economic stagnation in the rural areas, peasants and labourers in large number

*The speech was laid on the Table.

are migrating towards cities in search of better living and due to this the situation of social struggle is arising in the rural areas. And this situation directly affects the political stability of the country. Government of India is giving statement that today constant 14 per cent growth rate is needed for India in which contribution of agricultural area should be around 8 per cent. But unfortunately, farmer's purchasing power is not increasing. They are reeling under the burden of debts and families are disintegrating.

It is a worth knowing fact that more than 66 per cent of the population in India is dependent mainly on agriculture. Agriculture is the traditional source of livelihood in India. It has been the livelihood of the human being here. But these farmers have come a long way from subsistence agriculture to commercial crop and India has succeeded in becoming self reliant in the food sector.

Process of globalisation is going on and Indian agriculture sector is lagging behind in the area of market based economy and farmers are getting disappointed. Myopic policies of Government pertaining to agriculture sector are responsible for the same.

India is a country of diversified geographical resources which may work as a seed-hub for the whole world but due to the lack of investment in the field of research, farmers are not getting benefit of bio-technology. The score of Human Development Indicator is very low in rural areas.

Failures of the Government can clearly be observed in rural areas every where whether be it primary education, higher education, condition of health services, availability of employment, plight of women or the construction of infrastructure. The Government has not been able to make available power in all the villages so far.

Due to large scale corruption, the situation is going from bad to worse. The Government has not been able to provide irrigation facilities to all the arable land. A number of big irrigation projects remain incomplete. Price of Diesel is increasing every day, which has increased the cost of production for farmers and their standard of living is declining.

Ministry of Agriculture of the Government of India has failed to take right decisions on right time. It has been stated by the Ministry of Finance that the availability of finance to farmers would be trebled but due to corruption small farmers are not getting benefit from banks and are helpless to get plundered by money lenders.

The Government wants to implement economic reforms, but in my opinion the government should implement administrative and judicial reforms first so that responsibility of the government machinery can be made clear and productivity of farmers and labourers be increased. But it has not happened so.

Population is increasing and there should be constitutional obligation on the state Governments and central Government to ensure that economic growth at the rate of around 8 per cent in the rural areas particularly in agriculture sector is achieved by the Panning Department and government machinery so that economic development can become an important political agenda and the nation gets rid of other unnecessary programmes.

It is also essential that agricultural processing be given fillip and every Gram Sabha be developed as a production and processing unit so that the income of every village can increase at a certain rate.

Panchayat law has been implemented in the country through 73rd Constitution Amendment, but Panchayats have not so far benefitted by decentralisation of planning. It requires special capacity building and this should be done by the Government of India. Farmers can be empowered by adopting proper economic policies through Gram Panchayats and this experiment has been successfully carried out in Uttar Pradesh.

India is evolving as a big consumer market for which outsourcing can easily be done through these rural areas. Government should create a conducive environment for the export of agricultural products on large scale and this can be gainfully done through appointment of agriculture counsellors in the Indian embassies abroad.

In view of the example of China, it has become essential to develop low cost labour intensive manufacturing sector in the fields of agriculture so that income in rural areas can be increased through value addition on large scale.

It is unfortunate to India that development of co-operatives could not make much headway. The government should come forward and take special steps so that the farmers can unite economically and face the circumstances.

There is very much need of technology and skill up-gradation in the field of agriculture and particularly and particularly Lab-to-Land programme to be given boost. New highly technical devices, high productivity and more milk producing cows and buffaloes can certainly become the cornerstone of rural advancement and well-being. Special efforts should be made for mechanisation of agriculture and skill development of labourers so that their productivity can be increased.

A major chunk of the of the rural population is moving towards cities for searching employment. They are facing insecurity. It has become necessary to formulate an Exit Policy for the people deserting agriculture and moving in cities, so that farmers and their families can be rescued from getting ruined and facilities for education, health and employment be made available to them in a planned manner.

Agriculture is an area of immense potentials and participation of agricultural sector in the national economic development can certainly be increased by adopting proper policies. But due to lack of it the agriculture sector is deteriorating and farmers also are in distress. In the prevailing circumstances it has become mandatory for the Government to help the farmers by making specific efforts so that they are not forced to commit suicides.

With these words I would like to thank you for the opportunity you have given to me to speak on this subject.

SHRIMATI RUPATAI D. PATIL (Latur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, today the House is discussing the problems of farmers of this country. The problems of farmers have been discussed in this House on a number of occasions. But discussion is held here, the Government gives assurance and it does nothing outside the House. Today the condition of farmers is very serious all over the country. As I am elected from Maharashtra, I would like to bring to light the plight of farmers in Maharashtra through you.

During the last 5-6 years, 2300 farmers have committed suicide in Maharashtra. Crop failure, rising indebtedness and continuous neglect from Central and State Governments have forced farmers to commit suicide. Hon. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh had given a package of 3750 crore to the farmers during his Vidarbha Visit, but suicides are still continued. This is very sad and unfortunate to the country. Even on the day of visit of the Prime Minister farmers were committing suicide there and even after the visit, around 80-90 farmers have committed suicide. There are four major reasons behind the suicide being committed by farmers. These are non-fulfilment of assurances given to farmers by the State Government, loadshedding from 16 to 18 hours in the state, charging very high rate of interest from farmers by the banks and cotton price mechanism. These four matters are being neglected by the Central and State Governments. If irrigation facility for one acre of land is made available to the farmer, he gets two and a half times more yield. The increase in yield improves the economic condition. The development of rural area is linked with water. Even after constitutional instruction issued by the hon. Governor of Maharashtra, the State Government has not paid attention to the need of removing irrigation backlog. The amount available for backlog has not been allocated by the State Government. Therefore irrigation projects could not be completed and farmers had to commit suicide.

There is loadshedding of 16-18 hours in Maharashtra. 6.60 lakh application for electrical pump water connection are pending in files. Farmers have taken loans for well tanks. On the one hand interest is increasing and on the

other hand water is not available for farming due to loadshedding. As a result thereof farmers are facing double whammy and they are getting forced to take steps like committing suicide.

The Congress party had promised in its manifesto to provide electricity free of cost. The then Chief Minister and now power minister Mr. Shinde took such a decision in the cabinet to send electricity bill of Zero amount to the farmers. By showing belief on the promise of false hopes of free electricity, the Congress party was re-elected but the Congress Government moved away from the promises made by it. After constituting the Government after the elections, it was stated without any hesitation that the assurances are not meant to be fulfilled. Mr. Shinde also accepted the fact that the promise of providing free electricity was a part of election strategy. The present Government did not keep its words given to the farmers. The farmers are to take loan for purchasing agricultural implements and seeds at the interest rate of 13 to 14 per cent in Maharashtra whereas in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh the nationalised banks are providing loans to the farmers at the interest rate of 7 to 8 per cent.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Madam, if it is a lengthy statement, you can place it on the Table of the House for record.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI RUPATAI D. PATIL : I am yielding just in two minutes.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : If it is a maiden speech, you can continue, Madam.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI RUPATAI D. PATIL : In Maharashtra co-operative banks get loan from NABARD at the interest rate of 5 per cent. On that loan 3 per cent interest is charged by the state Co-operative bank, 3 per cent interest is

charged by the district Co-operative bank and 3 per cent interest is charged by service Cooperative society. Therefore, at last it becomes 13-14 per cent. This is way the under which a farmer is victimised. If a farmer in Maharashtra takes a loan of Rs. 10,000/- he has to repay Rs. 40,000/-.

When the NDA Government was in power at the centre, then the cotton was procured from cotton growers at the rate of Rs. 3000 per quintal and Soyabean was procured from Soyabean growers at the Rs. 1900 per quintal. Majority of farmers in Maharashtra are engaged in the cultivation of cotton and soyabean. This year the Government have procured cotton and soyabean at the rate of Rs. 1500 and Rs. 1200 per quintal respectively. Due to decline in production and decrease in the prices of their produces, the farmers have been landed in pitiable conditions. How can he survive? Why it is not possible for the UPA Government whatever the NDA Government did for the farmers?

The farmers are forced to commit suicide because of wrong policies of the Union and State Government. These incidents have nothing to do with caste, creed-religion or state but these are linked to the policies of the state. For the incidents of suicides by the farmers in Maharashtra, the union Government wastes. invaluable time by way of constituting committee. The farmers need irrigation projects and not the committees. Therefore I would like to demand from the Government that the loans of the farmers of Maharashtra must be waived off by the union and state Government. The whole of their loans must be waived off. Fresh loans may be made available to them at the rate of five per cent and seeds must be made available to them at cheaper cost. The areas of Maharashtra where the incidents of suicides are more and whose land is unirrigated and the farmers who have repaid the amount of interest, their loans to that extent must be waived off. I would like to demand that the custom duty on cotton must be reduced and there must be partial ban on import of it. So that the demand and price of cotton produced in the country may increase.

I would like to demand from the Government to set up a separate irrigation department to fulfil backlog irrigation projects and the expenditure to be incurred must come out equally by the union and the state Government.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, I will make a request that those who have written speeches, it will be helpful if they place them on the Table. She has been given permission because it is her maiden speech. We have only one more day, that is, tomorrow when we will be closing the Session. So, please try to be brief. Please help me because I cannot remain here till midnight.

DR. RAJESH MISHRA (Varanasi) : I will request you to please help the farmers also.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I seek your help. Yesterday also, we sat upto nine o'clock. Everybody has left, and I will be here throughout.

[Translation]

DR. RAJESH MISHRA (Varanasi) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak. When India got independence, its 80 per cent population was dependant on agriculture. Now after 59 years of independence the condition is that as per the report of sample survey, 40 per cent of people engaged in agriculture want to leave this profession and 60 per cent people are also not willing to take agriculture. This tells the condition of agriculture in the country. We are discussing the condition of last 10 years that about 1,40,000 farmers have committed suicide in India. Out of that majority of suicide incidents are taking place in South India and Maharashtra. Through you, I would like tell this august house that the farmers of south India and other states of India have committed suicides but the farmers of Utter Pradesh and Bihar are not committing suicides, they are dying in inches. Some one is committing suicide but today the condition of the farmers of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar that these farmers are inching towards death and they are compelled to die.

[Dr. Rajesh Mishra]

Sir, we understand the problems of the farmers. India is a federal state and all the responsibilities are on the union Government. We have seen in Uttar Pradesh that for the last 15-16 years, the farmers do not get electricity for more than four or five hours. For last 15 years no new tube wells have been set up and the old tube wells are gradually getting out of order. Now condition is that the farmers do not get fertilisers for their farmer-land and if there is any natural calamity, I remember that 42-43 districts of Uttar Pradesh were facing draught and I also asked a question in this august, House and the Minister of Agriculture replied to that question saying that when they are informed by the Government than they will conduct a survey and thereafter they will take action on it. It is true that the State Government should write about the number of districts facing drought situation in the state. The condition of the State Government is that they are not been able to do this small work and ask the Union Government for conducting a survey and declare the particular districts as drought affected. Today this has become the biggest responsibility. On the one hand the farmers of the various states of India have different problems. We are talking of Uttar Pradesh. There used to be a fertilizer factory at Sahupuri in my home district Varanasi. It has been closed down for the last 12 years. There used to be a biggest factory of eastern U.P. at Gorakhpur and that is also lying closed for the last ten or twelve years. The state Government has sold all the sugar mills one by one and today these mills have been taken over by the private sector.

Now situation is such that the people who had purchased these sugar mills are earning more money by constructing building on the land and thus closing these mills. The present state of farmers make it difficult as to who should be blamed more and who less.

Sir, we feel that today the utmost responsibility lies on the Central government. The Government have given packages to the 31 districts of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. We would like to congratulate the hon'ble Minister

of Agriculture for taking necessary action in the interest of farmers. In today's situation if we do not boost the morale of our farmers then our economy would shatter because Indian economy is basically dependent upon our farmers and in the absence of that our country will be weaken and whatever we dream of the future of India will not be fulfilled. I would like to give one suggestion. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : You can speak for hours with passion because the topic is such. But we do not have time. Please conclude.

[Translation]

DR. RAJESH MISHRA : Sir, I would like to implore you to give me two more minutes to speak. I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture to kindly accord agriculture, the status of industry and give all the facilities that is enjoyed by the Industries. Industry sectors have a one window clearance system. And all the leading banks of India provide maximum credits to industrialist. No one ever heard that any raids has been conducted to recover the loans from any leading industrialists. On the contrary if any farmer failed to repay loan of Rs. Ten thousand then Tehsildar and Nayab Tehsildar in person go to apprehend them and he is sent to the jail.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, my request to the Government is that industrial status should be given to the agriculture. The way all the facilities are provided to the industrialists, same should be given to the farmers of this country. The people of this country, who is solely dependent upon agriculture should be given facilities at par with industrialists, then only the morale of the farmers will be raised and there occupation will become profitable and the economy of India will be strengthened.

With these words, I would like to thank you for the opportunity given to me to speak.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : I would have given you more time but the time is very short.

*SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN (Nagercoil) : The distress engulfing the farming community all over the country is beyond anybody's imaginable limit. It is an appalling phenomenon in certain States upon agriculture both in land and in sea owing to torrential and incessant rain. While associating myself with the views of Dr. Sujan Chakraborty, who spoke earlier, I would like to make a few points concerning my district.

I hail from one such State, Tamil Nadu, particularly from a district Kanyakumari which is being lashed by continuous, torrential rains. The damage caused to the agriculture crops like banana plantations, rubber, paddy and other cash crops like pepper, cardamom, glove, etc. in the hilly region is in unmeasurable scale. In the matter of banana plantations and rubber plantations the devastation caused to them has driven the farmers concerned to the verge of abysmal poverty and indebtedness. The compensation of Rs. 1,000 per hectore for banana plantations announced by the Government will be Rs. 1 per tree whereas the cost of inputs and labour involved by the farmers will work out to Rs. 150 per tree. Similarly, for the rubber plantations the input cost for each plant will come to Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 25,000 till the yield starts. It is much more in the case of paddy. Thus, to the inland farmers and agriculturists, the loss sustained due to natural calamities is not being compensated by the Government, thereby putting them in debt trap and driving them to the verge of suicide.

Likewise, the plight of fishermen, who depend upon the sea for their livelihood, is appalling. The fishermen are prevented to go in for fishing operations for two months from May every year, which is supposed to be the breeding season of fish. Usually, during four months, particularly with monsoon season, the sea will be rough and not worthy for fishing. Thus, they are deprived of their livelihood for six months every year. They should also be adequately compensated by granting some relief. Equally deprived are the inland fishermen who are dependent on fishing harvest.

*The speech was laid on the Table.

Every time we go on discussing about suicides and distress of farmers in the House but what we need is that the Government should act; the Government should come with proposals considering the suggestions and explanations of our renowned scientists to save and protect the farmers all over the country. Adequate compensation for the damages caused should be ordered immediately in the absence of adequate insurance coverage.

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA (Mavelikara) : The country has witnessed the worst ever agrarian crisis in recent years. The situation compelled thousands of our farmers to commit suicide unable to bear the financial burden.

Agriculture sector which has been the mainstay of our economy started waning since the introduction of liberalised economic policies in the country from early 1990s. The withdrawal of public sector investment in agriculture sector, the opening up of our internal market, the lifting of restrictions in imports of products, particularly, agricultural produces, crop diversification, entry of corporate players and promotion of contract farming placed havoc with the farming sector in the country. The continuous fall of prices and the overall increase in the production cost as a result of the withdrawal of subsidies has made agriculture unsustainable and the recurring natural calamities added to the woes of the farmers especially the small and medium sized peasantry.

To revive the vital sector, there should be a fundamental change in the policies. Government must initiate adequate level of public sector investments in the infrastructure development and the promotion of allied industries enhancing the employment generation in the rural areas. Funds should be made available to the rural peasantry at affordable interest rates to help the peasants from falling prey to the unscrupulous private moneylenders. It is also imperative that steps should be taken for strengthening and widening of the price support system, creation of a Price Stabilization Fund for agricultural commodities and universalising crop insurance.

I take this opportunity to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister that Kerala is one of the States in the country

[Shrimati C.S. Sujatha]

which is hard hit by the present agrarian crisis. The crisis has already taken the lives of hundreds of farmers in the State. Five districts of the State, namely, Wayanad, Kasargod, Palakkad, Idukki and Alapuzha are worst hit by the crisis. But the Central Government has identified only three districts — Wayanad, Palakkad and Kasargode as distressed for providing relief. The State Government of Kerala and the Members of Parliament have been demanding the inclusion of the other two districts too in the distressed and provide relief of the farmers. It should be done and relief packages like the one the Government declared for Vidarbha region should be provided urgently. The State's agriculture sector is different from that of the other State. The main agriculture produces in the States are cash crops and perennial crops, and hence, these aspects have to be taken into consideration for the relief package.

[Translation]

*SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Mumbai South Central) : Sir, 60 per cent of the population of our country is dependent upon agriculture. Due to improper allocation for agriculture today, farmers are committing suicide. The inputs cost for agriculture has increased by 15-20 per cent. Due to the fluid like in the field of technology including the invention of new seeds varieties and improper arrangement of the sale of produce has driven the farmers on the verge of ruin. Today farmers are not getting remunerative prices for their produce inspite of taking loan due to which his debt burden keeps on increasing continuously. To clear his debt he has to approach the money lenders for further loan and when he fails to repay the loans he choose to commit suicide. I urge upon you that if we have to promote agriculture industry then we must save the farmers. Late Shri Lai Bahadur Shastri had given the slogan of 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan'. Thus saving farmers should be our first goal.

The farmers that are committing suicide in Maharashtra have taken only Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1,00,000 loan. My

*The Speech was laid on the Table.

request is that these loan should be waived off immediately. They should also be given subsidies on the lines of what is given in America, China and other countries. Their purchasing power get exhausted while purchasing good quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Therefore, the cost of inputs which increases by 15-20 per cent should also be stopped. The farmers should be given guidance to improve the fertility of the soil. The duration of the 'Krishi Dharshan' programme which as telecast on Doordarshan for 30 minutes, should be extended to at least one hour and should be telecast twice in a day so that farmers should gain knowledge of the latest developments in the field of agriculture. The interest rate charged by the moneylender is excess which put undue pressure upon the farmers to repay, failing which, he is compelled to commit suicide. Such moneylenders should be locked up under the preventive laws and along- with this an insurance scheme should be introduced for farmers and their crops so that they could get security guarantee.

Loan worth crores of rupees are taken from the banks in the name of Industries and in case of insolvency, these people manipulate with banks to get away with loans. Can the Government give any information regarding any instance of suicide committed by these industrialists? But the banks deal with the farmers strictly to recover even the minimum amount of loan such as Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1,00,000 from the poor farmers. Due to inability to repay the loan, the farmers tends towards suicide. The agriculture sector is highly sensitive and it needs protection at every steps from sowing to selling crops and that should be given.

Cooperative and Rural Banks needs to be strengthened. Recently National Commission for Agriculture has recommended that farmers should be provided loan at the interest of 4 per cent. My suggestion is that the interest rates should be reduced to 2 per cent from 4 per cent.

The input cost of agriculture at present is very high in comparison with its production cost. In view of this farmers debt burden keeps on increasing and in addition to this, he has to face the brunt of natural calamities. That

is why farmers need proper guidance because they are low educated farmers must be educated about the soil, selection of crop according to the climate and soil, and proper sale of the crop. Only after that he will get remunerative price for his crops.

If the Government purchase the product on time at Support Price from the farmers and pay them at once then the market price will be stable and farmers could be saved from losses. A security fund could be created to compensate the failure of crops due to natural calamities so as the farmers could be provided help at the time of losses.

Prime Minister has announced a package for the farmers after the visit to Vidarbha. In spite of that, according to TV reports, on 17-18 August 6 farmers committed suicide. Such incidents are still continuing. So my request is that along with water and electricity bill, their debt ranging from Rs. 80,000 to Rs. 1,00,000 should be waived off. This system should be implemented at once only then the suicides of farmers will be stopped and they will get relief.

Biodiesel can be made from *Jatropha* plants if it is planted along the sea in Konkan in Maharashtra, Goa, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat on its production start within three years. With the steps, oil can be conserved and we will be self sufficient in the production of oil. Farmers will get immense help from this and my suggestion in this regard is that a corporation should be established to provide help to farmers.

My suggestion for this is that a corporation should be established and farmers can be motivated to pursue this task on the cooperative basis this would help farmers. Farmers of Maharashtra have experienced that the money earned from one hectare of floriculture is many times higher than the Jawar produced in same area. I would like to urge upon that farmers should be encouraged to take this yield country-wide.

The tools used in farming should be provided at cheaper rates to the farmers. Arrangements should be

made to provide appropriate price to their crops. They should be paid in cash. Besides this, the essential commodities needed for day to day living should be made available through cooperatives so that faith in life can be inculcated in them, so that they can live with confidence with the hope that the Government are concerned about them.

SHRI GANESH SINGH (Satna) : Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank Hon'ble Mohan Singhji for raising issue regarding farmers. I am saying it today with heavy heart that there is a just one section in the country which is feeling helpless and that is the farmers. If we see the figures regarding the subsidies given to farmers after independence, it is clear that the farmers are among the most disappointed and objected section of our society.

Mr. Chairman, farmers in India live and die in debt. This is a proven fact. Even today farming is considered a loss making occupation. The efforts made till date are not in right direction. More than seventy per cent people in this country are engaged in the agriculture related activities and the farmer is facing objection due to the various problems related to farming whether it is loans from money lenders, lack of irrigation, shortage of electricity, natural calamity or any other reason, 48 to 60 per cent farmers are reeling under debt. Small farmers are feeling that there is no work left in farming. As per a survey there is a loan of Rs. 12585 per farmer. The Committee constituted in the Chairmanship of Swaminathanji had felt that farming is a loss making occupation. The area of agricultural fields are also decreasing. The conditions for giving loan is becoming more stringent and costlier, the returns from the crop is not proper, lack of storage capacity, lack of processing and marketing facilities and decreasing opportunity of employment. However he had said that an overall National Agricultural Policy should be formulated. I request Hon'ble Minister to explain the initiatives taken by the Government.

Sir, there are three types of farmers—one, who are not doing farming work himself but 75 per cent of land is with them. The second type of farmers are middle level farmers

[Shri Ganesh Singh]

who do farming themselves and the third type of farmers are share croppers and landless who do farming on other's land. I think that the number of cases of suicide is over one lakh. This number may be more. This is true that most of suicides are identified among the farmers who are landless and share croppers. I would like to say that when we were allowing entry to foreign multinational companies in our country, agricultural scientists of our country cautioned us that at least they should not be allowed in the field of agriculture but we allowed them in the field of agriculture also. Presently, the Government advocates in favour of liberal economy. Our Prime Minister says that they are in complete favour of open economy. You may be in favour of liberalization but the outcome of it is that the rich are becoming more rich and the poor are becoming poorer. After all we must have to fill this gap. We are going to face WTO but in foreign countries farmers are getting more than hundred percent subsidy, but what is the condition of farmers in our country? We have not been able to bridge the debt. The main reason for suicide of farmers is that they were debt ridden. I would like to submit that the reason behind this is that we are not paying a proper price for their crops. We have imported wheat from Australia at the rate of Rs. 1100 per quintal. It contains more than five hundred percent residues of insecticides. I was reading in a newspaper that farmers of our country are not giving their grains at the rate of six hundred per quintal, therefore, the Government owned warehouses are vacant. Farmers have said that they will not give their grains. The farmers sale their crops in the chaupal organized in front of mandis. Who provided them this chaupal? We have given this work also to the multinational companies. We have left our mandis to their fate into favour multinational companies. I would like to know what is going on? A survey was conducted in our country in the year 1987-88 and as per the survey the percentage of landless farmers was 35.5 percent and marginal farmers was 19.1 percent. In the year 1999-2000 the percentage of landless farmers increased to 40.9 percent and the marginal farmers 22.3 percent. After all, when this will stop?

The average area under cultivation is also decreasing. In 1985-86 this was 1.69 hectare which comes down to 1.41 in ten years. In the year 2003 a survey was conducted in 51777 houses of 6638 villages and forty percent farmers have said that they are not ready to do farming. Hon'ble Minister is saying that we have to ensure that the load of population on the agriculture should be decreased and they should be transferred to other occupations. I welcome his statement but would like to ask that in which sector you will transfer them? Today crores of persons became unemployed. You have said that the farmers who had cow, ox or cattle in the House are not committing suicide but the farmers living without cattles have committed suicide. I want to say that the Government have waived off 70 thousand crores of NPA but the loans of farmers are not being waived off. I would like to say that until we strengthen the farmers economically, the farmers cannot be benefitted.

Before I conclude, I would like to submit that everyone is aware of the situation of the country. Recently the Hon'ble Prime Minister has visited the Vidarbha region and I welcome that he has announced a handsome package for all the farmers of this region. This package should be provided to all the farmers of such regions all over the country where they are committing suicide. Thirty districts have been identified all over the country and package should be provided in all 30 districts, other areas should also be included where the farmers are really in problem. I belong to Satna Parliamentary constituency of Madhya Pradesh and average area of cultivation land in this region is very less. I want that the Minister for Agriculture should request Prime Minister to provide financial package for the farmers of this region so that area of irrigated field in this region can be increased. Since Madhya Pradesh is an underdeveloped state and is more than half of the districts, 22 to be precise are affected from this flood, whereas 20 districts are affected by drought. I want to submit that irrigation schemes in the State are incomplete, funds should be provided to the farmers of this area to complete these schemes and financial help should be provided to the farmers of this area. There is shortage of electricity in the State, Government should also provide financial help

to overcome this shortage. The State Government have done a lot at its level. New areas of irrigation have been developed on more than 1,500 acres of land. RVCF Act has been amended to provide more help to farmers during natural calamity. Only in Madhya Pradesh Patwar Halkas have been made a unit for Crop Insurance Scheme. No other State in India has done so.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is already 9 o'clock. Please conclude.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing, except the speech of Shri Karan Singh Yadav, will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

DR. KARAN SINGH YADAV (Alwar) : Hon. Mr. Chairman, Sir, while speaking about the problems of farmers, I would like to associate with what hon. Member Ms. Mamta Bannerjee has said that today the biggest problem of the farmer's is that they are not being allowed to till the farming on their farm land.

In the name of industrialization and development, major land mafias and prominent traders usurp the fertile land of the farmers with the help of the Government. When this kind of statements are figured in the newspapers by the government that this tract land will be acquired for industrialization, on this the traders go to farmers saying that Government will not give them good price for it. But we will give you good price for it. The farmer who has spent his whole life in debt and eked out a living and got it ancestrally, sells his land at throwaway prices. At that moment an amount of Rs. one or two lac seems to him a hefty amount. If he has about five bighas of land, he begins to dream that he will manage a good wedding for his daughter, provide good education to his child and start some business in this ten twenty lac of rupees. Thus the result is that he loses the land from his hands. He gets

evicted from his own land. Mr. Minister, more or less this is the situation with all the National Highways today. When we come towards Jaipur through National Highway via Gurgaon from Delhi my parliamentary constituency, Alwar falls under therein. They can be seen while haggling with the farmers over their tracts of land falling on both sides of the road with their big and long cars parked on four sides. They are letting go their land. Big corporates are so ruthless in their approach that they want the land of their choice at any cost. I would like to give example of a place namely Kotputli near my constituency in Rajasthan.

21.00 hrs.

The biggest cement factory in Asia is being set up here by the name of Grasim Industries. Farmers there are pleading before the Government with the tears in their eyes. They are saying that their land is very fertile and it has good water and they have been living in this land for generations. They are requesting to set up the factory at distance of two or four kilometers from the site where there is barren and hilly land. Neither the Government nor the traders are paying any heed to them. They are being evicted from their land. I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Agriculture what Ms. Mamta Bannerjee has said that some rules should be formulated so that fertile land of farmers cannot be sold at any cost. Such rule should be formulated by Agriculture Department or Government. I am constrained to say with heavy heart that a lot of allegations have been made against the present state government of Rajasthan. There the present state Government handed over the thousands of acres bigha of land of the farmers to Mahindra and Mahindra near Jaipur in the name of Special Economic Zone. There are the biggest woes and pains of the farmers.

Sir, Rajasthan is the biggest producer of mustard. Due to intervention of hon. Minister of Agriculture, their has been a purchase of crops and mustard in the gone by years from time to time. But desired purchase is not being made. Nafed or Government Agencies are doing the job of purchasing but they are not doing it completely. Our area produces ten to fifteen maund mustard per bigha and this

*Not recorded.

[Dr. Karan Singh Yadav]

Government says that it will purchase according to only six maund per bigha. After this purchase mustard remains in godowns. I would like to thank the hon. Minister of Agriculture for understanding and analysing the problem connected with the oils and oilseed industry and he himself admitted in the House that Free Trade Agreement signed with Srilanka in 2003 had resulted in loss to our domestic oil and ghee producing industries because the sad agreement had made possible the free flow of vegetable oils from Srilanka. Ever since you have made nated an analysing agency there has been improvement in the prices of mustard. There has been a jump in the local industry and it has become alive, many oil mills in my constituency have started functioning gradually. But, I would like to request that this free flow should be stopped and some quality restrictions are required for this. I would like to say the hon. Minister of Finance that we hope (that) he is going to increase the support price. There are several cluster crops like motu, millets, cooriander, fenugreek, cluster bean in Rajasthan. The crops are produced in the state in plenty. I request the hon. Minister of Agriculture to increase the support price of millets, motu, mustard being produced here.

With these words I conclude. I am very grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

*DR. ARVIND SHARMA (Karnal) : Sir, President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has emphasised on agricultural and foodgrains production in his address to the nation on 14 August, 2006 on the eve of Independence Day. He has emphasised on agriculture through TIFEC Mission and emphasised on water harvesting system for the same so that foodgrain production could be increased to 360 million tonnes per year in 2020 from the present production of 200 million tonnes per year.

The hon. Prime Minister of country and well wisher of the poor people and farmers, Dr. Manmohan Singh also expressed his deep concern with a heavy heart on the

deplorable condition of farmers on the occasion on Independence Day on 15 August, 2006 after hoisting the national flag from the ramparts of Red Fort. The whole country is constrained to think about the deplorable condition of the farmers after the address of the hon. Prime Minister that today the farmer, who is feeding the world is forced to commit suicide. The Prime Minister of the country and Shrimati Sonia Gandhi visited three major flood affected states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat some 5-6 days before the Independence Day. Floods destroyed everything there, farmers, agricultural, labourers, businessmen, employees, entrepreneurs and traders are on the verge of bankruptcy Our hon. Prime Minister has allocated Rs. 1150 crore to the relief of farmers and flood affected families of the three states and on 15 August, he reiterated that interest on loans given to the farmers should be waived off. This is true compassion of our Prime Minister and UPA Government.

Landless farmers, agricultural labourers work strenuously for the production of grains, wheat, pulses, rice, grain, millets, cotton and oilseeds and they contribute to the prosperity and development of the country. Produce of Indian farmers also fulfills the requirement of foodgrains and pulses of several other developing and poor countries and this results in generation of Foreign Exchange. Despite this, Indian agriculture is in weaker position in comparison to developed and western countries because Indian agriculture is based on old methods. Even today agriculture is craving for rain water and when it is more rain, flood situation becomes imminent and when it is no rain, farmers are left with thereby facing the wrath of draught.

Even today Indian Agriculture continues to lag behind due to lack of modern technology in comparison to China, America, Australia and many other developing countries which leads to lesser production in agriculture. Farmers, labourers, farm labourers dependent fully on agriculture continue to be in a pitiable and miserable conditions. Presently Indian agriculture has relegated to the lowest pedestal in the job market. The Government of India (U.P.A.

*The speech was laid on the Table.

Government) have made vigorous efforts from time to time to ameliorate the lot of farmers and the situation of the agro industries so that people dependent on agriculture can modernize their livelihood.

The Government of India should create awareness among farmers towards agricultural policies and schemes. In order to make agriculture and farmers equipped with modern techniques the Government should from time to time come out with Five Year plans for the agricultural sector under which modern and scientific methods should be adopted. The Farmers should be imparted training to raise numerous new crops so as to increase agricultural production. Indian farmers should be sent for training not only in the country but abroad also in order to learn new techniques.

Policies regarding sharing of river waters and management of Flood waters should be framed so as to ensure timely availability of water for agriculture equally to all the small and big states of the country. The scheme of interlinking of rivers and management of flood waters should be implemented at the earliest.

The Government should make proper provision of electricity and water, ensure availability of electricity at concessional rates and should also give some concessions in the electricity bills to the farmers. The Government should make water available to the last tail of each and every small and big farmer's fields through ponds, wells, submersible pumps, solar pumps, dams, Rivers, Canals so to avoid damage to the crops.

The Government should provide loans to farmers at lower rates of interest. High Quality Seeds, modern agricultural machinery should be provided for agriculture at concessional prices. There should not be any incident of high handedness while tackling the farmers at the time of loan recovery. For example The Chief Minister of Haryana Choudhary Bhupinder Singh Hooda has directed the co-operative Societies not to take strict action against farmers who fail to repay their debts in time.

To prevent the suicides being committed by the farmers, they should be provided support price at par with the loss of their produce by the Government of India. Prices of their crops should be enhanced in keeping with the support price and the costs involved in production and insurance schemes for farmers and their crops should be introduced.

Sir, I would like to request the U.P.A. Government to materialise the dreams of Late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajiv Gandhi who were true friends of farmers and submit that promotion of agriculture will ultimately promote progress and development of the country.

[English]

*SHRI M. SHIVANNA (Chamarajanagara) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, first of all Sir I would like to thank Mr. Mohan Singhji for bringing such a vital issue for discussion in this House.

Farmer is the backbone of our Indian Economy. But unfortunately to day his backbone is breaking. All his dreams are shattered. As per the statement of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Sharad Pawarji 100248 farmers have committed suicide between 1993 and 2003. This is the pathetic condition of farmers even after 59 years of Independence.

Just few days ago (Thursday) six farmers of Hata village in Akola district of Maharashtra attempted suicide by drinking insecticide after they were allegedly denied cash compensation under a flood relief schemes. This situation will continue if we do not take care of the interest of farmers. The support price which is being announced periodically should be substantial. It may be sugarcane, coconut, ragi, paddy or any other crop but the price announced by the Central Government should be a substantial amount.

Tomato growers in Kolar were struggling to get Rs. 2/- per kilo. Many of them were throwing tomatoes on

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada.

[Shri M. Shivanna]

the road desperately. Some of them took loan of Rs. 50 thousand and ultimately they got only Rs. 5000/- after selling their produce.

Similarly coconut growers are also facing lot of problems. The plants are falling one after another. Many of the trees are falling because of NUSI disease. They are not getting proper compensation. Coffee growers particularly small growers are facing crisis.

It is the farmers who brought green revolution and white revolution in this country. But what is the price of milk? The milk produced by farmer gets about eight rupees per litre where as Bisleri company collects fifteen rupees per litre of water. This is the pathetic condition of the farmers.

It is our late lamented leader and former Prime Minister who gave the slogan "JAI JAWAN JAI KISAN". To day after 59 years of independence where does the farmer stand? It is high time for us to take corrective measures in this regard. Both State and Central Governments should consider this matter very seriously. The farmers in the country particularly in my constituency Chamarajanagara do not have crop insurance. They completely depend upon rain God and every two years the crop will fail. Hence it is very essential to provide insurance cover to all the crops.

Recently the Finance Minister has reduced the interest rate of agriculture loan and made it 7%. In China it is zero per cent. Tamil Nadu has reduced the interest and they are providing free electricity. A person who takes car loan pays less interest. In Karnataka the interest rate is only 4%. In fact, this should be only one per cent and that is my demand to the Centre.

Now the union Government should come out with some revolutionary measures for the benefit of the farmers. Linking of rivers is lingering on for the last several decades. V.K.R.V. Rao gave his plan to link rivers. Nothing has been along in this regard. There are other options also before the Government in this matter. They have to take up linking of rivers very seriously and provide sufficient water to

farmers of this country. This will solve most of the problems of our country.

Sir, I thank you and with these words I conclude my speech.

[Translation]

SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO (Jamshedpur) : Mr Chairman, Sir, it feels very good to participate in the discussion going on over the plight of farmers as I hail from a farmer family of Jharkhand. Earlier the whole of Jharkhand was a part of Bihar. A number of policies have been made, a number of acts have been enacted and schemes chalked out in the country for the upliftment and development of farmers but the farmers of Jharkhand did not get even one percent of the benefit in Bihar when Jharkhand was a part of it. Gradually resentment among farmers of Jharkhand led to the separation from Bihar. The situation of the State of Jharkhand ever since it has been carved out of Bihar is that its terrain is uneven and hilly. The farmer of that state has always been dependent on Nature. The farmers get good crops if there are good rains. If there are no rains the farmers have to subsist on wild fruits and vegetables. Most of the farmers there migrate to other states. They go to every state like Bengal, Punjab, etc. for employment to support their families.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon'ble Minister of Agriculture of the U.P.A. is a very experienced person. I am hopeful and fully confident that the Minister would frame such a policy under which future of the farmers of Jharkhand will become bright. The lands of farmers in Jharkhand has not been endowed by anyone. They have been living there for three generations after making the land even by cutting forests. They make the land arable for step farming. That land is endowed with natural gifts. There is abundance of mineral wealth in the state. If at one place there is iron ore, there are numerous mineral wealth on the other.

The capitalists of the Multi National companies are eyeing that wealth greedily. The people of the world are coming there to acquire that land. Big industries are coming up there. But the fact remains that the farmers there

are not getting proper value of their lands. All earlier speakers and our friend has stated that they hold out very attractive temptations. Good packages are announced there. Their agents try to persuade the farmers that futures of their wards will be secured they are given employment in big companies but they are removed from their jobs under the E.S.L. and the V.R.S. in the name of modernization. Today, the farmer has become redundant and he belongs to nowhere.

In such a scenario I would like to submit to the hon'ble Minister that most of the Members of Parliament have come from the rural background. India is predominantly an agricultural country. India can become strong only if its villages are strengthened. Today, we are required to take resolve and make policies so as to bring an improvement in living conditions of farmers. We require such a policy which may enable them to provide good education and a conducive atmosphere so that they can support their families in a better way.

Today, we are not able to supply water to the villages. No agro-products are introduced in the market there. There are 22 districts in that state. The emerging state has been newly formed. The farmers there are very much anguished. When a son of a farmer starves he takes up rifle in his hands. At present, 19 districts are affected by militancy. The whole of Jharkhand is affected by militancy as mines are closing down. The Public Sector Undertaking Companies are at the verge of closure there. If we are to maintain piece and provide employment to the farmer we are required to make water and electricity available in the villages. In Jharkhand 70 to 80% of its population have not even seen electricity. Jamshedpur is a small town. Water level at Tola in Ranchi, Hazaribag and Dhanbad has declined considerably. Earlier farmers used to irrigate their lands through digging of wells but nowadays the way urbanization is taking place, entrepreneurs are setting up industries, they are consuming water of this area upto the maximum level. In such a situation we shall have to provide water to farmers. Today, the funds which the Government are spending on industries should be spent on farmers.

Ensuring availability of water and electricity to the farmers is need of the hour and then only we can combat militancy and check the growing resentment in youth.

Sir, with these words I would like to request hon'ble Minister of Agriculture to give particular attention to the State of Jharkhand and we want to see such an initiative in the agricultural sector on your part.

SHRI KISHAN SINGH SANGWAN (Sonepat) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to participate in discussion about the farmers under rule 193.

Today a discussion is being held about the problems and despair of farmers. Almost 80 per cent of representatives sitting here are either the farmers or elected by the farmers. Ever since this country has become independent, this House has come into existence, democracy has taken its place, almost during every session discussion about the problems of the farmers have been held.

Sir, hon'ble Minister of Agriculture himself is a farmer. We are glad that he is concerned about the farmers. There is a need of five things: water, power, fertilizers, seeds, pesticides like inputs and remunerative prices for agro-products of the farmers and redemption of debt. If these five things are granted to them, the farmers can be prosperous. Suicides are being committed due to compulsion. I can tell about my own State Haryana, Punjab and to some extent about Western UP that when country became independent the farmer had an average land holding of 18 to 20 acre per family. After 59 years of independence, three generations have passed and the land holding is restricted to two to three acre per farmer today. At that time a family consisted of 10 persons and today that number has gone upto 100. Land is shrinking and duress has escalated on it. This is the major reason for pitiable condition of the farmers.

Sir, when we talk of water, there is flood somewhere, there is drought somewhere. It all happens due to geographical condition of our country. Every year thousands of crores of rupees are being squandered on

[Shri Kishan Singh Sangwan]

account of drought and flood but despite all that the farmers are not getting water. A scheme for interlinking of all rivers was formulated during Atalji's regime and if the same was implemented properly, this water crisis could have been over come to a great extent. This should be experimented upon, though rain is a natural phenomenon. Today Haryana is reeling under drought whereas many other States of the country are facing grave flood situation. Some parts of Rajasthan are witnessing flood whereas Haryana is under dry spell. We have been asking for it but so far Haryana has not been declared drought-hit. Haryana and Punjab, which are called as prosperous States from agriculture point of view, the farmers of those States are now out of pocket. They do not have bags of money now as their economic condition has worsened.

All the figures are reflecting as to what the condition of the farmers is. The farmers are committing suicides in Punjab and Haryana today because they are so much burdened with debt that they do not have any way out. Therefore, Minister of Agriculture and the Government should formulate a rule to make the farmers free from debt.

We talk of insurance scheme; Atalji had also launched it in 20 States on trial basis. But this could continue. Therefore, the farmers are losing hopes. According to National Sample Survey, 48 per cent farmers of the country are not in a situation to pay back their loans at all. It shows what will happen to farmers.

As far as the Planning Commission is concerned, it is ready to provide Rs. 1,40,000 crore in the next ten years, as per data available with me, to promote agriculture based industry and food processing industry. It is a form of subsidy, subsidy to these industries is acceptable to the Planning Commission but when a point comes to providing compensation or other relief to the farmers the Planning Commission denies it on the pretext of having no budget for that. Who are the people who make such anti-farmer policies, are the one's who make policies about farmers sitting in A.C. room and decide the prices of crops and

the very people has thus increased the prices of paddy by Rs. 10 only per quintal. I want to know from the Minister of Agriculture as to who are the people who have fixed this price. There is no criterion for fixing prices whereas prices of inputs are increasing and prices of common commodities are going through roof but rate is being increased by Rs. 10 only per quintal.

If you have a balanced view about the farmers, they should get remunerative prices. We are not in a favour of giving them just minimum support price. The farmers toil day in day out, therefore, they deserve remunerative prices; minimum support price was needed earlier, not today. Thus, Minister of Agriculture should take note of it.

As far as providing loans to the farmers on interest are concerned, they are neck deep in loan today. Two-three years back farmers were getting loan at 18-19 per cent interest rate. Atalji's Government brought it down to nine per cent. This Government has further reduced it to seven per cent. I want to thank their Government for this. I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture whether farmer, indeed are getting loan at the interest rate of seven per cent. You have not issued any guidelines to the banks in this regard. You have put a limit of Rs. three lakh for seeds, fertilizers etc. for farmers and they will get it at the rate of seven per cent. But you give a single instance where a farmer has borrowed Rs. 3 lakh and his limit is not more than Rs. 50,000. When he goes to the bank even for that amount he is told that no such direction has been given to the banks, thus these directions should be issued.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will take two minutes more. It has become a trend of the Government. We saw last time that the Minister of Finance had told that we were giving loans to the farmers worth more than one lakh crore. That means this loan amount is being talked of for repayment of loan amounts. Taking loans to repay loan amount is not a way out. Unless they are made economically viable, remunerative prices are given for their crops, provision for fertilizers, seeds, power and water is made it will be like their living deaths-lurked within the loan given with a view to repayment.

Power crisis is a very serious matter. Many hon'ble Members have spoken about power. Right now, it is time for 'Jeeree' crop. I claim that if the Minister of Agriculture gets a survey conducted today he will find that about 25 percent farmers have uprooted their paddy crop. There is no water, monsoon has failed, there is no electricity, tube-wells are not working, then farmers are left with no other choice. Therefore, provision of power is a must. It may or may not rain, is in the hands of nature but the Government should make provision of electricity. You are setting target for procurement of Jeeree'. You have seen what has happened in case of wheat. You fixed the price of Rs. 650 per quintal, owing to which traders purchased that wheat and it never reached you. After that you made an announcement of Rs. 50 as bonus but by that time farmers had no wheat with them. Traders took advantage of that bonus. You are not offering fair price to the farmers so you will be off-target in 'Jeeree' crops as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI KISHAN SINGH SANGWAN : I will conclude by adding one more thing. As many of our colleagues have said just now that it has become a trend of State Government that acquiring lands from farmers and selling it off to big dealers. Big companies are coming in and acquiring lands, they are acquiring good lands. Special Economic Zones, markets are being created. Their taxes are waived off. My constituency Sonapat is near Delhi and Delhi is surrounded by Haryana from three sides. Its land is fertile and costly but that land has been given to industrialists on cheap rate. 2200-acre land in my constituency pricing Rs. one to One and a half crore is being acquired by the Government from farmers in Rs. 18 to 19 lakhs. We are not against Economic Zones but they should be set up at such places where rates are low and land is not fertile.

Presently, Gurgaon has become Hongkong. They are acquiring land there. If you proceed to Sirsa or Mahendragarh to create a Special Economic Zone, it will bring much better prices for the farmers. But, now-a-days, the Government is playing the role of a property dealer.

And this is confined not only to my state; but the same state of affairs is prevalent almost in all the States. Land is acquired at lower rates and then it is sold at higher rates. This is the way to show development.

I want to make another request to the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture that this Ministry should follow the Ministry of Railways in formulating its budget. The departments of irrigation, power and rural development should be merged into it. It will serve no purpose to keep them as separate entities. All these departments should be merged into the Ministry of Agriculture and it should present its own budget like the Ministry of Railways. Only then, development of villages can be ensured.

[English]

MR CHAIRMAN : Now, I have to make an announcement. Still we have more than 10 Members to speak. After that, the hon. Minister will have to reply. It will be very late. So, I do not think it will be possible to take up 'Zero Hour' matters today.

[Translation]

SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN (Deogarh) : We are waiting for that.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : You please wait. I will consider. If the other Members cooperate and speak briefly, then I can do that.

[Translation]

SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN : Sir, it is all right.

*SHRI HITEN BARMAN (Cooch Behar) : Sir, after independence so many Budget was passed. Many scheme took up to save the farmers. But the condition of farmers was not improved. But why there are so many causes for distress among the farmers in the country. Farmers are not

*The speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri Hiten Barman]

getting their reasonable price for the productive commodities. There is no irrigation facility for all the farmers. Subsidy of fertilizers and other equipments of the farmer slowly decreased. Want of rainfall so many state were drought and farmers are bound to commit suicide. Only special package is not solve the problem. After the announcing the special package of Bidava Area there are 70 farmers have suicide.

In this discussion, I want to draw attention to the Agriculture Minister that North Bengal i.e. Part of West Bengal. There is no irrigation facility. Only Teesta Project for irrigation running scheme. But last 30 years the scheme was not completed due to lack of sanction money from the Government.

Sir, I also draw attention to the Hon'ble Minister Sharad Pawarji. In this year in the area of Cooch Bihar District of West Bengal and also nearer the district also due to short rainfall the farmers are not able to cultivate about 40% of the land which are being cultivated had dried up due to shortage of rainfall. The only economic crop "Jute" due to shortage rainfall were not being decomposed. Serious problem arises in this area West Bengal Government declare drought area some moujas. In this circumstances, I wrote a letter to the Hon'ble Minister but not yet response from the Ministry. I humble request to Shard Pawarji to send a central team to observe the area and sanction more money for the drought area.

SHRI DEEPENDER SINGH HOODA (Rohtak): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak on this very important debate. Like it has been pointed out by a multitude of speakers, we are on the threshold of a precarious agrarian crisis. Today, farming is both a way of life and the principal means of livelihood for about 65 per cent of our population and yet it only contributes about 20 per cent to our GDP. Truly, this is a story of our lost millions.

Sir, our farm population is increasing at a rate of about 1.8 per cent annually. In this regard, we are very different

from some of the other Western industrial economies where the farm population has rapidly come down with the advent of industrialisation and other sectors becoming more prevalent. As a result of this, the size of our landholdings is going down at a rapid rate and all this is accounting for a very precarious cost-risk-return structure for our farmers. A recent NSSO Survey revealed that given a choice, about 40 to 50 per cent of our farmers would like to quit farming and join some other profession. This is really alarming for a country, which calls itself a *Krishi Pradhan Desh*.

Another recent insight article, written by Harish Damodaran, concludes that three-fourths of Indian farms take home a salary less than Rs. 3,000 a month, which is less than 60 per cent of the starting salary for a Government peon. This is another point with regard to what kind of situation we are looking at.

Sir, agriculture, in India, is a non-remunerative and generally losing proposition and I think, it is very well debated in this House. I would not like to dwell on this subject, but I would straightaway get to the point. The main point of my debate will be the role of MSP regime itself. While, I will support most of the hon. Members, including Shri Kishan Singh Sangwan, that MSP for kharif needs to be steeply high, I would also comment on some other drawbacks of the MSP regime that we see today.

[Translation]

Sir, I used to hear a Hindi song when I was a young man.

SHRI KISHAN SINGH SANGWAN (Sonapat) : You are still a young man.

SHRI DEEPENDER SINGH HOODA : I used to hear a song when I was a child. "Mere Desh kee dharti sona ugle, ugle hire moti, mere desh kee dharti. The message of the song is quite true even now when I grew into a young man. I would like to say the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture that attempts should not be made to buy this precious land at throw-away prices. It has been pointed

out that MSP of kharif has been increased by 0.15 per cent.

[English]

This does not even cover the inflation rate. It is actually 50 times less than the annual inflation rate.

Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Agriculture Minister, why has the Government of India fixed the MSP with total disregard to the suggestions and recommendations by the States. For example, in the case of the two most kharif producing States of Punjab and Haryana, in case of paddy, have recommended a hike of Rs. 150 and Rs. 173 each, but that has been totally ignored.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You can lay it on the Table.

SHRI DEEPENDER SINGH HOODA : Sir, I will conclude in two-three minutes.

Sir, another thing is the recommendation of the CACP. This is really serious. Not only are we looking at farmers getting less prices but we are also looking at the threat to food security of our nation. Just like the case with wheat, we can also face the similar situation to paddy. Now an argument has been brought forward, in case of paddy, our current reserves, the buffer stocks, are in much better situation than wheat. But we have to remember that wheat crisis started two-three years back, when the then Government took a sort of a decision to limit the hikes in MSP to very meagre amount. So, I think, we are looking at that kind of inflection point for paddy also. So, we have to take corrective measures from the beginning.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI DEEPENDER SINGH HOODA : Another point which I want to make is that we are farmers, not beggars. NDA Government was in power prior to the year 2002. They used to fix lesser prices in the beginning and increase it afterwards. Then, it was decided by the Chief

Minister of Punjab and all our leaders of Haryana to stage a dharna in front of the residence of the Prime Minister. Only then, the prices were increased. An increase of 50 rupees was made during rabi season. Will the farmers of the country be always compelled to make a demand for increase in prices and only then these will be increased? I want to know the basis on which MSP is calculated by CACP and SSP and why are the prices increased only after making such demand, although they know the reality?

[English]

I agree with the fact that we need to steeply hike the MSP. But I would also like to point out a few flaws with the methods of calculation of MSP.

[Translation]

I used to hear another song 'sab golmal hai, sab golmal hai'. In the present scenario, the farmer is unable to get remunerative prices for his crops, but on the other hand the consumer has to pay a lot for the same food-grains.

[English]

A recent study by McKinsey and CII pointed out that Indian farmer gets much less than his counter-part in America and European Union, while Indian consumer pays much more than his counter-part in America and European Union.

So, we have to point out this middleman stigma that we have in our whole scheme.

[Translation]

Another point which I want to raise is the faulty method of calculation of MSP by CACP. It is calculated on cumulative average basis. But, the right method is to fix MSP on the basis of a state.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri P. Karunakaran.

SHRI DEEPENDER SINGH HOODA : We have to go for State-specific MSP because cost of production for any agricultural product is widely different from State to State. It is a very simple fact that some States are rich in electricity.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can lay it on the table.

SHRI DEEPENDER SINGH HOODA : Please, Sir, there are two or three important points that I would like to raise.

A few States are rich in electricity and some other States are deficient in electricity. The cost of electricity in the deficient States is much higher so the farmers eventually have to pay much more. Similar is the case with the cost of land.

[Translation]

The cost of land in NCR region is more in comparison with other areas. Naturally, the expenditure is incurred by the farmer in the same proportion. There is a mandate in our constitution that MSP should be declared by CACP much before the sowing of crops. But, it is not so in practice. I would like to know the action to be taken against the bureaucrats who cause delay in declaring MSP. The farmers are committing suicide in the country due to it. Whether the Government intend to take action against those persons?

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri P. Karunakaran, you can speak.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing will go on record. There is a limit to everything.

(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : You, are a young man; you can understand the difficulty. Please conclude.

(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

[Translation]

SHRI DEEPENDER SINGH HOODA : There is a big lacuna in CACP calculation. There is no mention about the rate of interest. They spend the required sum, but...

[English]

They do not take into consideration the rate of interest that the farmer pays in that particular investment. Today, our farmer is a borrowing farmer.

21.37 hrs.

[SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV *in the Chair*]

He spends a certain amount of money on a particular produce but, at the same time, on that money he is also paying a huge interest which ranges from two to five per cent on a monthly basis in some cases. So, we have to take into consideration that any calculation of MSP should be with the calculation of the interest rate.

My last point is this. The desired two stakeholders of MSP were our farmers so that the farmers get good price, and the consumers so that the consumers do not have to pay too much. But, today, what we have seen in the last five or six years, rather during the last decade? This MSP regime has not been able to protect the interest of either farmers or the consumers. So, we have to look at delinking the food security and relief from procurement from support price operations. This is my prime recommendation.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude, Mr. Hooda.

SHRI DEEPENDER SINGH HOODA : My second recommendation is that we have to also look at dual MSP. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah) : There is no arrangement of dinner for the staff. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please do not interrupt.

SHRI DEEPENDER SINGH HOODA : We have to look at dual MSP pricing so that we do not have the basic MSP but there is some flexibility available with FCI who will ensure the procurement is very good.

[Translation]

I have already said that my discussion will remain focused on MSP. Another important point is that along with MPS. We should focus our attention to the issues concerning animal husbandry. I congratulate the Minister of Agriculture for paying so much attention for the first time to the issues concerning animal husbandry. The matter of special mention is that the biggest amount of grant has been given to my state for developing 'Murrah' breed of buffalo. It is fact that the people of the whole world take the milk of Jersey or Bosten breed of cow. But, I have a vision that if Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture continues to extend his cooperation, the people of the entire world be they Americans, Chinese or Japanese will take the milk of 'Murrah' breed of buffalo of Haryana in the 21st Century. With these words, I conclude and take my seat.

SHRI SRICHAND KRIPLANI (Chittorgarh) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to make a request that they were allotted time during Zero-Hour; so, it would be better if they are allowed to speak just now.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, we cannot allow that as a very important subject like the problems of farmers is being discussed. The entire House is taking that discussion very seriously so you should also take it seriously.

Now Shri P. Karunakaran.

[English]

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (Kasarod) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have been discussing the issues of the farmers in this House now and also discussed them in the other Sessions of the 14th Lok Sabha. We know it well. When we compare the issues today and two years back, no doubt, all the Members of this House have the same view that the situation is deteriorating.

Sir, I do understand that the Government has spent a lot of money in the Budget for the farming society. At the same time, even though the growth rate is eight per cent as claimed by the Finance Minister and also the inflation rate is only four per cent as claimed by our Finance Minister, this theoretical concept is not reflected in the day-to-day life of the farmers or the agricultural society. So, the first point that I would like to make clear is that the Government has to consider the policy that we are following at the national level and also some of the effects of the policy that we take at the international level. Though we spend more in the agricultural sector, we are not able to improve the situation of the farmers. That has become a truth now. So, we have to find and we have to reconsider the policies that we have taken at the national level.

The second point which I would like to make it clear is that in the recent time, the Government has declared a special package policy for 31 districts including three districts in Kerala. Sir, it is only Rs. 639 crore. There is a widespread apprehension in Kerala that this is the special package that the Government has declared. I want to make it clear whether it is correct or not. Almost in all the newspapers it appeared about this special package, and it is insufficient to meet the demands. If it is true, then it is insufficient to meet the demands of the people. The Kerala Government has already submitted a detailed representation at the time of UDF Government and also at the time of UDF Government. We, the Members from Kerala, met the Prime Minister, met the Agriculture Minister, met the Finance Minister and have given a detailed report. I think, three study teams have already gone to Kerala. Four or five districts in Kerala have been hit very badly by the recent monsoon. So, we, the Members from Kerala and also the Kerala Government, have demanded that this special package has to be declared very soon because justice delayed is justice denied. If you do it after two months or three months, it would not be helpful. Still there are reports of suicides of farmers in Wayanad. Three days back, there was a report that one farmer has committed suicide, and it is continuing. So, something has to be done.

[Shri P. Karunakaran]

It is true, as stated by some other Members, that it is only a temporary measure. When we take the special package, it is a temporary measure. Even though it is a temporary measure, this has to be done as soon as possible.

Sir, we have full faith on the Agriculture Minister especially on agricultural matters. With regard to the issues pertaining to Kerala, this special package has to be declared in this House itself, and I would request the hon. Agriculture Minister to do that.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA (Jalaun) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me time to speak on the frustration and problems of farmers. I have heard from the elderly people, who used to say "Uttam Kheti, Madhyam Van, Kare Naukri Bheekh Saman." But today it has now been transposed. Today business is the best, government service has become better but the farmers who were placed at the top are now-a-days, committing suicides due to their pathetic condition. According to National Sample Survey, forty per cent farmers want to leave farming. It may be possible that the incumbent government is not aware of the basic problems of agriculture sector or it is not concerned about the farmers. Agricultural sector has been ruined totally as a result of economic liberalization and privatization. Prices of diesel, fertilizers and seeds have increased. Farmers do not get water for irrigation. Minimum prices for agricultural produce have come down. Production cost has gone up.

When our farmer sows the seeds cannot foresee the problems that may befall his crops. If anyhow, he succeeds in harvesting the crops he locks resources to store it and thus is completed to sale his foodgrains at lower prices. The middleman in the mandi takes his grains on one or two months credit.

The Union government has introduced a Kisan Credit Card scheme. But one may go to any bank and see that the farmer who intends to get credit card does not get it

without giving commission. I can talk about my parliamentary constituency Jalaun. There is no bank in Jalaun where credit card had been issued without paying commission.

There is one submission of mine. We are talking about the problems of farmers. One of them is that the Government usually acquires the land of farmers. Sometimes it is acquired for construction of roads; sometimes it is acquired to give to others. In the city of Kounch from where I hail, farmers land had been acquired for construction of four-kilometer long Kelia bypass. One of my friends, Shri Kanhaiya Lai Yadav son of Shri Ram Sevak Yadav, had been dispossessed of his land by the Government some 15-20 years ago but so far he has not been given compensation. Had he taken loan, the Lekhpal or SDM would have pursued and put him behind prison. If even after twenty years, compensation is not being given to them, how the condition of farmers would be strengthened and they would become prosperous. As long as we do not ponder on all these things their condition will not ameliorate. The price due to them is not made available on time. The scheme being run under the National Insurance scheme. . . .(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA : Sir, the Government of Uttar Pradesh had declared the previous year as a drought year. After getting the plot-wise and village-wise survey conducted by the revenue officials, the affected villages were given agricultural investment subsidy. Secondly, deductions were made from the insurance scheme against those farmers who had taken loan or purchased fertilizer from the cooperative banks. Rs. 1025 were deducted but they were not given the benefit of insurance scheme. Through General Manager of the bank about 95-100 cases of insurance amount were sent to national insurance company. Only 43 farmers got the benefit of insurance. Not only that, insurance amount has been disbursed in two 'Nyaya Panchayats' of the Tehsil while in other two 'Nyaya Panchayats' this has not been disbursed. A Nyaya Panchayat, located across the road, has not received the insurance amount and in the

neighbourhood of the next village, which is barely 100-200 meters away, insurance amount has been disbursed. I would like to request the Hon. Minister that the Gram Sabha covered under Nyaya Panchayat should be given insurance amount.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, until the Gram Sabha is not considered as a unit, it will not get insurance amount. . . .(Interruptions) This is a very important matter. If it is not considered as a unit, farmers will not get the money of National Insurance Scheme. Farming of pepper is being done in my constituency. National Horticulture Board, Government of India has been making investments. At present some files have been prepared. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : If you will make such a lengthy speech, it will not serve the purpose. Whatever you have spoken so far is appropriate. Now you conclude your speech.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA : Mr. Chairman, Sir, National Horticulture Board, Lucknow has sanctioned amount for my constituency and work is being carried out.

On dated 7.7.2000. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now you please sit down. Your speech will be deemed concluded. You have raised all the points. Members from other parties are also waiting to speak. You take your seat.

Shrimati Tejaswini Seeramesh.

[English]

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH (Kanakapura) : Sir, first of all I would like to thank the Chair.

I would like to register my official respectful appreciation to our Agriculture Minister who has spent almost more than five to six hours to listen to the problems of the farmers being raised in this House. It will be a memorable day for me as a first timer. They are very impressive speeches. It really comes from the heart of every leader who spoke here for the farmers. I see an iota of hope in this House

that our Agriculture Minister will respond to the problems of the farmers and he will even address the shortcomings in some decisions of the UFA Government. Even though I belong to the ruling party, when we are speaking about the farmers' issue, I will never compromise. That is why, my farmers sent me here to speak for themselves. Sir, I thank you once again.

Sir, in India, we have two India. One is virtual India and another is real India. That real India is very poor but powerful, that is, the rural India. It is very powerful where 65 per cent of the people are depending on agriculture. Agriculture's contribution to our GDP is 22 per cent. It is coming down. Why? It is the time to debate on it.

The total number of farmers who committed suicide between 1998 and 2003 is one lakh. It is time that this country should bow its head in pain and shame for that. I do not mind bowing my head in pain and shame. Our farmers have committed suicide in this land of Gandhi.

The UNHD Report in 2005 makes clear that our progress on poverty reduction front is poor. India ranked at 127th place among 177 countries. Do you not think that rural India deserves more attention and more funds from this Government?

It is not the privilege that we are giving to our farmers. It is not the privilege they are seeking from us. It is their right. They feed the countrymen as *annadatha*. But today they prefer poison to humiliation. Why?

It is only to save their dignity as farmers. Just because they are farmers, they will die, they prefer death rather than humiliation and insult.

Agriculture cannot grow in an isolated way. Agriculture is the core of Indian economic strength. While 70 per cent of farmers depend upon agriculture, what is our allocation to this sector? It is only two per cent. While 65 per cent of the population belongs to rural India we are allocating only two per cent to them in our Budget. How much are we giving to irrigation? It is only 0.35 per cent. In this allocation of 0.35 per cent, the hon. Minister should

[Shrimati Tejaswini Seeramesh]

accommodate drinking water facility to this biggest country also. How will he allocate from this limited resource? How will he meet these requirements? Who makes this type of policies? Is it by the bureaucrats and the technocrats who have not seen the ground realities in the villages? Do you not think that in decision-making bodies we must involve our farmers, our agricultural scholars and our scientists to formulate the pro-farmer policies?

We talk so much for the farmers with sympathy. Will it help them? Will these sympathies help them? Agriculture is not an earning profession but it helps to serve the mankind. While the mankind lives on agriculture, why are there suicides of the farmers in this country? It is a clear indication of lack of coordination between virtual India and real India. Virtual India is prosperous and commands the Indian economy but true efforts to bring up the rural India is a big question mark in front of us.

Sir, our UPA Government definitely deserves an appreciation from the farming community. As a representative of them, representing 27 lakh voters in my constituency Kanakapura, I can say that this is a drought-prone area. There is no irrigation. There are no rivers. The underground water level is going thousand feet below. What sort of future can I see for my farmers unless there is dryland development and unless there is reserve renovation of the tanks and the water bodies? I cannot see it. Unless we help the sericulture sector, unless we help the animal husbandry, poultry and fishery areas where they can live as an added profession to agriculture, it would be difficult.

My Government, that is the UPA Government, reduced the rate of interest on agricultural loan to seven per cent. During the NDA Government, of course, they reduced it from 11 to 8 per cent. But their loan margin was upto Rs. 55,000 whereas the UPA Government raised it to Rs. three lakh at the rate of interest of seven per cent. It is definitely a biggest help to the farming community. Of course, Dr.

Manmohan Singh's Government also extended two per cent rate of interest to the agricultural loans by the banks in 2005 also. Wherefrom these farmers are getting this loan money? One is the scheduled banks like the national banks and the second is the regional banks or commercial banks like Canara Bank, Bank of Baroda, Allahabad Bank etc. and the third is the district cooperative banks which lends money to the village cooperative societies from where the farmers borrow the loans.

Here there is one lapse. I do not mind, I do not hesitate to apprise my Government about this lapse and request them to rectify it. When they were extending help to the regional banks and the national banks, the district cooperative banks were deprived from this facility. The commercial banks can earn the profits by giving loan to the traders and industrialists. But these poor cooperative banks are depending only on the farmers and there is no avenue to earn profits.

My personal opinion is that the hon. Minister Shri Sharad Pawar is really an elderly statesman. He is having his own value for his voice in the UPA Government. I urge upon him, as a representative of the farmers, to give that benefit to the district cooperative banks also. Otherwise, this decision is going to affect you badly. I do not mince the words while I am saying so.

At the same time, my State of Karnataka suffered drought for four years. It is these banks which came to the rescue of the farmers in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu etc. The commercial banks were asking for collateral security. When there is no value for the life of the farmers, what collateral security that they can offer to the banks? That is why, these district cooperative banks were the lifeline of the farmers. These banks should be strengthened in all possible manner. I urge upon the Government to take steps in this regard.

22.00 hrs.

While preparing the Budget, how much do we allocate to the agriculture and irrigation? It is 2.35 per cent only.

So, I would like to ask Shri Sharad Pawar how he will pay for their crop insurance. He is committed to the cause of farmers. I know that he is the champion of farmers' cause. He is having concern for them. I met him personally. He is having a lot of love for the farming community. Shri Sharad Pawar, please convince me that with this meagre allocation of 2.35 per cent, how are you going to pay for their crop insurance, how will you upgrade the technology, how will you do the research and development at agricultural universities, how will you construct dams, how will you rejuvenate water bodies like lakes and tanks, how will you help Upper Krishna Project of Karnataka? On this project, we have spent Rs. 8,700 crore to store water, but unless you extend Rs. 1,000 crore more, it will be of no use and we cannot use that water.

Where is the money in rural India? So, I urge upon him that he should come to our rescue. Do you not think that it is a matter of shame that while we can give 11 to 12 per cent to create telephone facility, we give only 2 per cent to agriculture which comprises 56 per cent work force? I think, attitude should change.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You can lay rest of your speech. Shri Suresh Waghmare.

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH : Sir, I will conclude. The NDA failed to provide even this 2.35 per cent. So, I appreciate my Government.

What is happening in China? China is spending 10 to 12 per cent on agriculture. We are having equal potential and we are having equal potential to challenge China. I feel that India's agriculture sector deserves an allocation of 10 to 12 per cent.

What has happened in recent times? Southern India has heavily suffered due to floods, tsunami and drought. Do you not think that it is time to inter-link the inter-State rivers? Population has increased from 35 lakhs to 100 crores whereas the agricultural land remains the same. That is why, due to urbanisation and industrialisation, farmers were having lack of land.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Suresh Waghmare. Now, nothing will go on record except the speech of Shri Suresh Waghmare.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH : Sir, I urge upon the Agriculture Minister to educate farmers on water management. Due to their illiteracy and innocence, they do not know how to manage water. Farmers need education on rainwater harvesting and all these things. There should be created marketing facilities, demand, cold storage facilities and such other facilities.

Let us all together try to wipe out the tears of the farmers. With these words, I would like to thank the Chair for giving me this opportunity to speak.

*When we were liberated from Britishers in 1947, our population was 35 lakhs. Only today we crossed 100 crore. Whether our Agri land extended? No. Impact it reduced due to the urbanization and industrialization.

Today more than 85% agriculturist is not interested in farming. It is nor viable.

In my view as a farmer, our farmers are the more self-respected people. They do not want anybody's sympathy. They need right policies. They do not want to live like beggars, but they determine to be the backbone of this country. Cant we give them quality seeds, power, stable prices crop insurance and rural weightage to the children of farmers.

To help them – we must adopt long term measures rather than short term measures like subsidy, crop insurance – flood relief, time being they needed.

We must ensure remunerative prices to their produce. Ex cement rates increased to 150-250 Rs. Producers can't farmers fix their process to their produce.

Great – Marketing, demand, increase in cold storage, processing units. Encourage and support to grow export

*Not recorded.

*... *This part of the speech was laid on the Table.

[Shrimati Tejaswini Seeramesh]

oriented items. Add value addition to the farmers. Here it is only 4%. It is 15 to 20% value addition in foreign countries.

Technology and R and D should reach the farmers fields through extension. Agri-university must use as a consultancy to educate farmers about soil test crop pattern, etc.

Water – Our farmers do not know the value of the water. Due to their illiteracy and ignorance, they fail to understand the scarcity of water. They fail to understand the importance of water. So they need more education on water management and rain water harvesting and to recharge the underground water and to adopt the drip irrigation.

[Translation]

SHRI SURESH WAGHMARE (Wardha) : Mr. Chairman, thank you. Here discussion is going on regarding agriculture. In the last 60 years the conditions of the farmers has deteriorated and today it is the subject of our deliberation. Whenever we talk about the present plight of the farmers, the main reason which strikes up is that the farmers are not getting their due according to the cost incurred by them. They are not getting the assistance which they require; and this is the reason for the present plight of the farmers. Today, the economy of the country is dependent on the agriculture, and more than 50% of the GDP of the country is contributed by agriculture. Despite that such is the state of our agriculture that farmers are compelled to commit suicides in Vidarbha region of our State, Maharashtra. And it is due to insensitiveness shown by the people who had been in the government for several years. If we had provided irrigation facilities for agriculture, connected the villages with pucca roads and given electricity for irrigation, then this situation would not have arisen.

Hon. Mr. Chairman, these things are required to be done immediately. Our several friends have discussed

about it. The efforts made by this government for economic development of our rural areas, were not right. That is why we are seeing this imbalance in our country. This is the imbalance that causes drought at one place and flood at another.

Sir, when N.D.A. Government was in the power it had launched two schemes. First was, to interconnect the rivers of the country and second was to provide connectivity to the villages of country. After N.D.A. Government lost the power the incumbent Government has stopped both these schemes. Wherever roads are being constructed to connect villages, the work is going on very slow pace and the villages remain backward. Through you, I request the Hon. Minister to expedite the work going on to connect the villages with roads, because it will help save the farmers.

Sir, agriculture's contribution in the development of the country is upto fifty per cent, but insufficient provision is made for that in the budget. I, through you, seek from the Government the enhancement of the share of agriculture in the budget. My second demand is that a separate Budget for agriculture be presented as it is done in the case of railways. My third demand is that agriculture should be linked with industry. With these words I conclude my speech.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Next Speaker is Shri Madhusudan Mistry.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please do not indulge in cross talk in the House.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha) : Sir, I have only a few suggestions to make, and I do not want to make a lengthy speech on this issue. First of all, I would like to talk about the State of Gujarat. There are incidents of bursting of ponds as well as release of water from the dams, which are damaging the land of the farmers throughout the State.

I believe that your Ministry is the nodal agency for the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), and the National Contingency Calamity Fund (NCCF). I would suggest that the farmers – whose land has been damaged due to release of water from the dams and as a result of bursting of the ponds – should be given full compensation for damages from the CRF or NCCF. It should be earmarked, and it could be either 30 per cent or 40 per cent.

Actually, the farmers do not get adequate compensation once the land has been damaged due to release of water from the dams. This is a manmade disaster. In fact, the Irrigation Department is creating a lot of misery for the farmers. Even though, you and your Ministry are not at all responsible for it, yet the blame comes on the Ministry of Agriculture.

Secondly, I have come to know that there has been a lot of irregularity in the purchases made by NAFED in the last two years. In my constituency and others, when they start to purchase the mustard seeds, the traders buy mustard seeds first; obtain the 7:12 certificate for the farmers; and then sell them. Their own products are purchased at very low prices for NAFED itself in the name of the farmers. This tendency has to be rectified, but I do not know how you can do it.

Thirdly, I would like to mention about the issue of insurance for the farmers. I am given to understand that the State also has to give 25 per cent of the contribution. The money from the Centre goes to the State, but this money – which has been released by the Central Government for the farmers – is not distributed because of non-availability of the State's share.

There is a very big problem of bioseeds including BT cottonseeds. A lot of farmers have turned to plant BT cottonseeds. In fact, we have not yet ascertained about the side effects of BT cottonseeds on land or its side effects on the cattle, which eat them. We also do not have the data regarding its side effects in case people consume the cottonseeds, and the Health Ministry seems to be ignorant about it. I am saying this because there is no study that

has been carried out by the Health Ministry. What kind of side effects will occur in your body or in the blood if you consume the oil of the BT cottonseeds? That has to be carried out. Coming to the issue of lending by NABARD, I regularly attend the District-level Review Committee meetings in my District. In the last meeting, I asked them as to how much money they have given to the farmers, especially those farmers who do not have irrigation facilities and also to the tribals because tribals are also farmers. Besides, there are also other small farmers who are from the backward community and who do not have irrigation facilities and so on. Even though we are providing credit cards, these people have not at all been involved. Most of the lending is given to the big farmers for buying tractors and other implements, and these poor farmers are always left out. There should be a thorough review of the lending being done by NABARD without which, I do not think credit would reach the poor farmers as such.

Coming to electricity, I think, your Ministry should also coordinate with the Power Ministry and we should all represent to the Prime Minister on this issue because there is a shortage of electricity in the States. In my own State, there is a demand of 10,000 MW of electricity, but the State can only generate 5,600 MW of electricity. In the last five years, they were able to add another 660 MW of electricity. There is a shortfall of 3,500 MW of electricity. Electricity is the key to the success of the farmers. I think, we should request the Ministry concerned to look into this.

Finally, I agree with all my friends and support them on the issue that we must enhance the Budget of the Agriculture Ministry so that farmers of this country can flourish.

SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI (Dharwad North) : I will make two or three suggestions and then lay the rest of my speech on the Table of the House.

Sir, we are celebrating 60th Year of our Independence. Seventy per cent of the population is still dependent on agriculture, but investment in agriculture has reduced from 14.9 per cent in the First Plan to 5.2 per cent now. Recently,

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the Tata Institute of Social Sciences has made an extensive survey, I am sure, hon. Sharad Pawar knows it very well, wherein they have attributed one important cause, major reason, for the suicides/distress of farmers, which is manipulation by the middlemen in regard to the cost of agricultural produce. If hon. Sharad Pawar can see to it that this middlemen system is eliminated, then he will be worshipped like anything in the future, and he will create history. Please make a plan or bring out a mechanism whereby you can avoid these middlemen.

Last December, when the Winter Session was going on, there was a discussion in this House regarding hike in onion prices. After the Session was over, when I went to Hubli, my Constituency, farmers were agitating there for want of better prices for their onions.

Secondly, I would like to bring to the kind notice of the hon. Minister that crop relief insurance pertaining to 2003 has not been paid in my Dharwad District, and 642 names have been left out. I have sent a memorandum to you in this regard. We are now in 2006, three years have already passed since then, but these 642 farmers have not received any official communication. It has not been done till now. Moreover, you have not released any insurance relief for the year 2004-05. There is another problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You can lay your speech on the Table.

SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI : I will make only one or two points. Compulsory insurance has been done in respect of some commercial crops, which amounts to 13 per cent to 14 per cent. This is creating more problems. Another point is about the loan which is being given for the Kharif Season at the rate of 7 per cent. That has to be made applicable for all the agricultural loans.

Another very important point is about the non-availability of fertilisers.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You can lay your speech on the Table. The non-availability of fertiliser is a big problem. You should take this up with the Indian Railways. Recently the Indian Railways have changed the classification of fertiliser as a result of which there has been an increase of 30 per cent to 40 per cent in the prices of fertiliser. The State Bank of India is charging Rs.150 to issue No Dues Certificate to the farmers. Other Banks are also charging high fees for this purpose. This should be examined.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI : Sir, I would like to lay the rest of my speech on the Table.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do that.

*SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI : I rise to speak about the problems rather distresses of the farming class. It is quite ironical even after six decades of independence the distress of the farming class in the country is not overcome. It is also quite ironical even after the country having celebrated its Golden Jubilee of independence a decade ago the Indian farmers is to harvest profusely only hunger, indebtedness crop loss, humiliation, exploitation by middlemen and finally and most devastating is the ample of distress forcing him for suicide. At the very outset, I cannot desist from saying the crisis and the problems facing the farmers and other agrarian problems and crisis are only attributable to the policies followed by the Governments in Centre over the years.

The first and foremost is the decrease in investment in this sector is huge over the plan period of five decades despite having 70 percent of population depending on this sector and sectors 25 percent contribution to GDP. Despite this the investment in this sector has come down to a meager 5.2 percent from 14.9 during the first plan. Despite many schemes for irrigation the Indian agriculture still suffers from shortage of water, leaving the farmers to his fate to depend on uncertain monsoons.

* . . . This part of the speech was laid on the Table.

There is one more aspect which this august house to note that the effectiveness in providing required information by Government agencies as regard to crop patterns, best manure, declining productivity of land, lack of timely warning by these agencies with regard to supply of spacious seeds by manufacturers etc. Due to lack of technical update by Government agencies to the farmers a substantial portion of the land in Karnataka suffer from infertility by excess use of chemical fertilizers. Therefore, the Government should take all possible measures for providing well orchestrated advice provided to the farmers with regard to use of fertilizers to the lands and maintain the fertility.

GENESIS IN GLOBAL ECONOMICAL ORIENTED POLICES

It is rightly pointed by some agrarian economists that most of the farmers distress can be traced to the introduction of technology led capital intensive farming in the hey day of green revolution. Cases of the farmers suicide especially among cotton growers reported mainly in high-tech belt such as Andhra, Karnataka, Maharashtra especially in Vidarbha and Tamil Nadu. One more important aspect we cannot miss noticing is that slashing of investments and expenditure on rural development and agriculture said to be mainly under the guidance of IMF and World Bank.

MISMATCH BETWEEN THE INPUT COST AND SELLING PRICE

The farming community is all the time suffering from price manipulations by traders and speculators. There is always a serious mismatch between actual cost of production and realization from sale of agri-products. This is a single major issue affecting the entire farming community for more than five decades making Indian agriculture constantly unsustainable, even with frequent minimum support price packages given by Government. It is also known fact how the farmers with their quality produce grown timely are exploited by the middlemen and farmer is deprived of getting a good remunerative price.

I would like to bring to the notice of this Government how it all happened in Karnataka last year with regard to onion produce. The onion price had touched its record high last year and people were even not able to get onion in the market. At some point of time the onion were sold even Rs.100 per kg. But at the same time onion growers in northern part of Karnataka came on the streets hesitating for getting good remunerative price for their produce, which was abundant. This incidents itself indicates how neither the farmer nor the consumer get benefited and middlemen always walk away with the smiles.

There is no denying that the Prime Minister tried to focus about the concern of the Government by visiting personally the Vidarbha region in Maharashtra shaken by the spate of suicides of farmers. I request him to visit other States also like Karnataka. I believe this visit must have given him real insight into the 'charkayuh' that the Indian farmers have been relentlessly pushed into over the past few decades.

With almost 10,00,000 farmers already dead and with suicides showing no signs of ending this Government has utterly failed to address the problems of farmers. In the last two budgets the focus of the bailout package has been on enhancing institutional credit flow to the farm sector. But what is not being realised is the growing indebtedness is the genesis of the crises and mere debt relief package will not pull the farmers from the deep well of distress. What farmers need desperately is assured income and this is where this UPA Government fails miserably. What the farming class need is a remunerative price for their produce. But this Government instead of looking at this radically has been on fast track approach to reduce import tariff on food allowing cheaper imports. It is farming class that is hard hit by these policies of Government as importing food is like importing unemployment, which the Hon'ble Prime Minister being himself an eminent economist is quite aware.

So Sir, it is now high time for all and this Government in particular to look at farmers crisis and suicides from this angle and urge for some measures. With all packages of

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lending policies the total lending including all banks is still 27% which should be enlarged with rational institutional lending policy.

Kamaraka is a Sate with 60 lakh agricultural families and 65 lakh agricultural labours a point is to be noted is that only 14 lakhs farmers are covered by institutional financial assistance i.e. banks and co-operative societies and remaining are naturally left with the inevitable fate of getting exploited by money-lenders. It is not enough that the Government is announcing doubling and tripling of amount of loan to the farmers what is to be ensured is more number of farmers are brought under the flow of institutional finance so that the exploration by the moneylenders is stopped.

Minimum support price package should be extended to red chilly growers in Kamataka where the world farmer's quality red chilly known 'Byadagi Chilly' in the northern parts is grown. But during the last ten years the red chilly growers in Kamataka are in crisis as they are not getting substantial price of the produce.

A separate red chilly board to be established which will go a long way in addressing the problems of red chilly growers. Red Chilly Research Institute should be provided with required technical aid and financial backup for after effective functioning in Kamatraka. I also urge a well-equipped storage facility and cold storage facility for vegetables and other perishable produce grown by farmers to be provided in all taluks of the Karnataka.

Finally a Vidarbha like package should also be extended to Kamataka particularly in Dharwad distt. Where frequent crop failure occurs in large-scale farmers took extreme steps of suicide and are in no less critical conditions. I also urge this Government to provide central assistance from Central assistance from Central Calamity Relief Fund or from Prime Minister National Releif Fund to the formers of the Kalaghatagi Tq. Dharwad Dist. Where the crop loss is occurred due excess rains."

[Translation]

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD (Yavatmal) : Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, today we are holding comprehensive discussion in this House, the issue of suicides being committed by farmers. We have to make all possible efforts to save the farmer. Our annadata (food provider). There is need to save the farmers from taking resort to suicides but if we do not know the real reasons behind it, we cannot solve this problem. No doctor will be able to treat any disease if he cannot diagnose it properly. On the one hand, farmers are taking resort to committing suicides, and on the other hand they do not give up farming. It is their helplessness because they have no other alternative. They have no other alternative except farming to earn their livelihood. On the other hand we see that the basic needs of bread, clothing and shelter of the common man are being fulfilled by the farmer itself.

Just now my colleague has told that farming is the best, business better and service is the worse source of livelihood but now this adage has been transposed. I felt that the economic policy of this Government is responsible for this. During the last 60 years of independence, Congress was in power for 50 years. The policies of Congress are responsible for it all. Most of the suicides by the farmers have been committed in my constituency Yavatmal in Vidarbha in Maharashtra. The Prime Minister visited that area. Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture Minister Shri Sharad Pawar had also accompanied him. Only one percent of agriculture land is under irrigation in Vidarbha whereas in West Maharashtra i.e. the constituency of Shri Sharad Pawar cent percent agriculture land is under irrigation. That is why when a provision had been made in the constitution by amending Article 371 through seventh amendment, an apprehension was expressed that in future there would be imbalance.

[English]

With respect to Maharashtra, provide for any special responsibility to the Governor for the establishment of a separate Development Board for Vidarbha.

[Translation]

Further it has been stated:

[English]

Equitable allocation of funds for development of watershed areas subject to the requirement of the State as a whole.

[Translation]

So far we have seen it clearly and it happened. We have seen this in Andhra Pradesh in Telengana. . . .
(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : If you do have a written speech. Kindly lay it on the Table.

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD : Just a minute... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : One minute means one minute.

SHRI HARIBHAU RAHTOD : Most of the suicides have been committed in Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh and in Vidarbha region. Therefore, a demand for separate Telengana state has been raised. We have been making demand for Telengana not from today but for the last several years. This TRS has been formed in the year 2001. We had earlier demanded that there should be separate state of Telengana. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are talking of Telengana. You are deviating from the subject. We do not have that much of time. Please cooperate with the Chair.

SHRI HARI BHAU RATHOD : Vidarbha Package of Rs. 3750 crores have been provided out of this Rs. 712 crore have been given to cooperative banks. This money was not given to the farmers. This was exchanged hands between the Leaders of the Nationalist Congress Party and the Congress Party. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now I call another name. Your speech concludes now.

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD : The farmers have met with the same fate till date. That's why the farmers are committing suicide.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Your time is over now.

(Interruptions)

SHRI HARIBHAU RAHTOD : My point is that when there is no electricity for sixteen hours and lower shedding is there as to how the farmer would come up from this situation. . . .(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing from your speech is going on record. Please sit down. You may lay remaining part of your speech on the table of the House.

SHRI ASHOK ARGAL (Morena) : Sir, participating in the Discussion Under Rule 193, at the outset, I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on the issue of frustration prevailing among the farmers of the country raised by the hon'ble Member Mohan Singhji. Fifty nine years have passed since India got its independence. Agriculture is the main profession of India. About 22 crores farmers are agricultural labourers who earn their livelihood from agriculture. The farmers of India is born in debt, live in debt and at last die in debt. Around one lakh farmers in the country have resorted to commit suicide. The Largest number of farmers from Andhra Pradehs, Vidarbha, Karnataka, Kerala and Punjab etc. have committed suicides. Hon'ble Prime Minsiter has given a special package of Rs. 3750 crores for Vidarbha. I am thankful to the Hon'ble Prime Minister that he took care of the farmers.

Sir, it has been stated in a survey that 356 farmers out of one thousand farmers take loan from banks and 309 farmers take loan from traders and money-lenders. The crops of many farmers get ruined due to flood, drought and hailstorm. Due to indebtedness, farmers sells out their land and when they are unable to pay off their debt, then they resort to commit suicide. The farmers do not get remunerative price for their crops. This is one of the

*Not recorded.

[Shri Ashok Argal]

reasons of suicides committed by them. Sir, farming today is an unprofitable business. The farmer does not get the return of even the cost of farming. Hon'ble Agriculture Minister is actually farmer. He is down to earth man and associated with cooperatives.

Four month ago a lot of crop had been ruined due to hailstorm in Madhya Pradesh. At present there is situation of flood in twenty to twenty two districts of the State. The area of Chambal in my constituency is facing the problem of drought. I would like to draw the attention of Agriculture Minister towards the ravines of Chambal which are known as dacoits affected areas. Thousands acres of land of this area is getting converted into ravines every year. Kindly look into this problem and provide a special package for Chambal area. I would like to say that there are many small rivers in this area and small dams should be constructed on these rivers. By doing so the water level will increase and the farmers will be benefited. I would like that the Government should conduct a survey in regard to small rivers of this area. By constructing dams on small rivers the water bodies water will be recharged and the farmers will also get water.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Lay the remaining part of your speech on the Table of the House.

*SHRI ASHOK ARGAL : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table of the House, remaining part of my speech.

Sir, ravines are expanding each year in Chambal region and due to erosion of these ravines several villages of Morena district. The Government should take some steps to stop this. Alongwith this the Government should bring a scheme or package to stop the conversion of agricultural land into ravines.

There is record production of mustard in Chambal area of Madhya Pradesh in the country. Industries should be set up in this area so that children of farmers can get

*This part of the speech was laid on the Table.

employment. Agricultural fairs should be organized to create awareness in farmers of Chambal area under the aegis of Council of Agricultural Research so that the farmers can get information regarding innovations in research. More economic assistance should be given to the states to enable them to supply sufficient electricity and water to the farmers. The electricity due is outstanding against the farmers of Chambal area because of their crop failure due to drought and hailstorm. They should be provided assistance after conducting survey so that they might not be forced to resort to suicide.

The raining water moves forward through the rivers of Chambal area. An assistance should be provided to construct small dams on Kwari, Kuno, Sone, Thak and Asan rivers to utilize this water. It will not only benefit farmers but also increase the water table and ensure availability of sufficient water in wells and tube wells for the farmers.

The information regarding animal husbandry, piggery and poultry should be given to the farmers. The budget allocation for the Ministry of Agriculture is required to be increased as has been done in the case of Ministry of Railways.

THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think that all the hon. Members of Parliament were serious to the problems of the farmers, therefore, a serious discussion was held on this important subject for nine to ten hours. This subject has two parts—one suicide committed by farmers and another remunerative price.

These are two subjects, on the basis of which there is a need to think seriously about agricultural policy and the state of agriculture. I am thankful to all the hon. Members who participated in this discussion because views expressed there and suggestions given by them will help me to take new steps. All the hon. Members said that a large part of the population of the country depends on agriculture. India has a different picture. 16 to 17 per cent

of world population lives in India while our country has, 4.2 per cent of total water resources of the world. The area of India is 2.4 per cent of total area of the world. 65 per cent population of the country depends on agriculture, the farmers and agricultural labours of the country contribute 21 per cent of G.D.P., and agriculture sector contribute 11 per cent to the export of the country. Looking at the production of foodgrains during last 4 or 5 year we see that we could produce 208, 209 and 210 million tonnes of foodgrains in these years. The total value of the production of farmers from agriculture is Rs. 517 lakh crore each year. Undoubtedly the farmers of this country bear a great responsibility. But, today, this entire sector is facing a crisis. I had also mentioned this earlier also. Shri Suresh Prabhu is not present here. He had given very good suggestions, many other members has also given good suggestions that there was a lot of burden on the land of the country.

In 1947 when we got independence the population of the country was 35 crore and today it is 106 crore. 70 to 80 per cent of that population of 35 crore were engaged in agriculture then but today 69 per cent of population of 106 crore is engaged in agriculture. It means ratio of the land has decreased. What was Delhi in 1947 and what is it today. The adjoining areas to Delhi where farming was done now have been urbanized. There is not even any district, any block or any village where agricultural land has not been converted for non-agricultural activities or where it has not been urbanized. Big buildings were constructed, industrial estates were developed, educational institutions were opened, schools were opened in the villages and agricultural land was converted for non-agricultural uses, it means the area of land under agriculture has reduced out dependence on agriculture has increased. Alongwith this there has been a division of land in the family as a result of which fragmentation of land holdings occurred due to which agriculture is becoming uneconomic.

The hon. Members has given all these suggestion. According to survey 40 per cent people does not want to

do farming. It does not mean that they are not interested in farming. Their families are not able to do farming. Their farming and its area has reduced so much that it has become insufficient for their families. It can be seen anywhere. All the hon. Members of the House know that those families are in better position in which one member is in service and other member is doing farming in village. They have a better house. Perhaps, they may have a motorcycle. But the families whose one, two or all members are doing farming are facing serious problems. You may see their land record. This record shows a lot of loan against them. They have borrowed money from bank, Land Development Society and others because their earning from farming does not meet their requirement. That is why people are thinking about alternative to agriculture. What can we do for this sector?

There was a mention about suicides being committed by the farmers. I had given detailed information about suicides committed by the farmers in the House. The incidence of suicide committed by the people is not a new phenomenon. I have data regarding suicide committed since 1950. And the process of collecting separate information regarding suicides committed by the farmers was initiated since 1995 in the country. About one lakh of people have committed suicide since 1995. Out of them 12 to 14 per cent are farmers. Remaining people are from other families but 12 to 15, 16 per cent of people committing suicide belong to farmer families. It means 10 thousand to 12 thousand persons commit suicide per year.

Number of incidences of suicide has increased during the last five years: But a discussion on it has been going on for two years. Last time I myself, had spoken on the issue of suicide. I would like to say humbly that the present government is more sensitive to this sector. Therefore, discussion on the issue of suicide was initiated in the House. We want to solve this problem. Any member belonging to either side is not happy on committing suicide by the farmers. They feel agony on it. Many of them are disturbed by it. It is not a matter of happiness at all for you and me that the families who have the responsibility of providing food security to the country are taking resort to committing suicide.

[Shri Sharad Pawar]

We need to find a way out of this as to why do they commit suicide? A detailed inquiry was made to look into this issue and help from NGO was also taken. Help was sought from well known institutes like Tata Institute. Help was, also taken from Indira Gandhi Development Institute and Managing Institute of Government of India, working in Andhra Pradesh. In this enquiry, matters relating to all the families were investigated. The enquiry have revealed number of things which have been mentioned by many hon'ble Members in the House. One reason is non-availability of assured water, it is only 40 per cent of the agriculture which is irrigated whereas the rest of the agriculture depends upon monsoon.

If there is good monsoon then the things are good otherwise, the situation becomes serious. If states like Bihar are given proper attention then the people of Bihar alone are enough to resolve the problem of foodgrain of the entire country. But today, a situation of drought is prevailing in the state. If this condition continues then the entire nation may get effected. We will have to find a way out of. This sometimes drought and sometimes flood kind of situation. Uncertainty of monsoon is a major problem. Second reason is that the productivity of land is decreasing and this is effecting the families of farmers. The situation becomes further serious when they do not get appropriate price for their produce, which is also the third reason. Our efforts for providing loan to farmers have proved to be fruitful but inspite of that more than 40 percent people are unable to get loan through the formal channel. Even now, upto 60 percent farmers approach private money-lenders for loan and at some places they have to pay as much as from 25-30 to 60 percent interest. In such a situation they become incapable of repaying their loan and this develops a tendency in their minds to commit suicide. There is a need to improve the overall view with which agriculture is seen in the entire banking system. Now, some ways have been found regarding crop loan, but farmers do not just need money for their crops. Things like Marriages, education for their children, treatment of

an unwell person in the family is also to be taken care of.

In the Banking system there is no provision for them to get loan for things like marriages in their families, education for their children and treatment of an unwell person in the family. In such a situation when they take loan in the name of agriculture and that money is diverted and spent on other things, then the farmer does not remain capable of repaying the loan amount. In such a situation when they take loan in the name of agriculture and that money is diverted and spent on other things, then the farmer does not remain. In such a situation he becomes a defaulter and once he becomes defaulter his doors to the bank are closed forever. The farmer then goes to the money-lender and is caught in his net and is never able to come out of that again. Similar reasons have been observed behind many suicide instances of farmers. Attention is required to be paid to all these things. I am not saying that this situation has developed in just four days or four years. We got freedom under the leadership of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru. Panditji gave maximum attention to agriculture in five year plans. At one place Panditji had stated that, "Everything can wait but not agriculture". This was his total approach towards agriculture, which is why a number of effective measures were taken during that time in the field of agriculture for laying basic infrastructure. Many hon'ble Members of the House must be aware that whenever we take the name of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar, we are reminded of his contribution for the protection of rights of Dalit Community in the society and also his contribution in framing of the constitution. There is another side of the personality of Baba Saheb Ambedkarji. He was the Minister of Water Resources before independence. At that time, he viewed the future position in his vision and took some brilliant steps some of which include decision of Bhakra Nangal Dam, Damodar Valley, setting up of electricity board and inter-state grid etc. Today a number of his supporters are unaware of this contribution made by Shri Baba Saheb Ambedkar. Panditji had dreamt of a Scientific temple and had worked on it. He took their support for this. In the first, Second and third five year plans

of our country much attention was paid towards strengthening the infrastructure.

The problem of foodgrain became quiet grave when Shrimati Indira Gandhi came to power in the country. Fortunately, the nation got an Agriculture Minister like Shri C. Subramaniam to find a way out of that. Thereafter, Babu Jagjivan Ramji took over the responsibility of Minister of Agriculture. The most important thing that took place during their tenure was that science and technology was brought into the field of agriculture.

During the ongoing discussion in the House on this topic, some hon'ble Members raised the problem of seeds. It is true that if we want to increase the production then good quality seeds are required. Many hon'ble Members have raised their concern in the House regarding the declining quality of seeds. They have said that our traditional seeds are good. It is true that some traditional seeds could prove useful for us. In that also there is a need to bring some changes. There is a history of the Green revolution which took place in our country. In view of shortage of wheat Shri C. Subramaniamji had imported its seed from foreign countries which came here via a Mexican ship. Nobel Prize Winner, Mr. Norman Borlaug, had conducted a research in this field and he was a friend of our country. Today he is more than 90 years old. About six months back he came to Delhi. He visited all such places in our country where research is conducted on Agriculture and developed a bond with those specialists and scientists. He had developed a variety which was brought to India by ship. Subramaniamji had called a meeting of all the Agriculture Commissioners of the country and discussed this issue. You would be surprised to know that besides the Minister of Commissioner of Punjab no other Minister or Commissioner from any other state was prepared to conduct a trial of that seeds. Punjab took that seed. In the first year itself so much wheat was produced in Punjab that, it became a difficult task to store the same and as a result school buildings were used as godowns for storage purpose. Green Revolution took place at that time and we found a way out of this problem.

I had stated in the beginning that we have been successful in achieving the target of upto 208 million tonnes. But the situation has changed after the sixth five year plan. This change led to a day to day decline in the total investment required to be made in agricultural sector. In the plan of 1985-1986.

[English]

During 1980-95, that is during the sixth plan, the all India situation indicates that the gross fixed capital in agriculture, as proportion to GDP has declined from 3.1 per cent to 1.6 per cent. Between the sixth to Ninth Plan, that is during the period of 15 years, our total investment, which went upto three percent, as proportion to GDP, has come down to 1.6 per cent. Our amount has reduced. Investment in agriculture, as percentage share of GDP at current prices, had decreased from 2.56 percent to 1.6 percent during 1990-2004.

[Translation]

Further, a more serious situation emerged that the total public and private investment started declining day by day and the private investment that took place was not made by Tata-Birlas. Private investment means all the private investment made by farmers for different purposes be it for well, boring and tractor etc. This private investment has increased the burden of farmers. Remaining problems also cropped up and are still continuing. As I have said that rise of Land's holding has decreased immensely after fragment action and the agriculture has become non-profitable. Alongwith this, there is a need to take some more steps in this regard and as I have mentioned, one cannot cultivate crop without irrigation. As hon'ble Tejaswaniji had stated that we have also taken in the total investment required in the field of irrigation as on date there are 232 major projects; 929 medium projects and the projects which are under execution and required since long and needed to be revamped and they number 1238 or 1240. Such projects have been going on for many years now. Some were started 30 years back and are yet to be completed. Earlier, when a project was started, it needed

[Shri Sharad Pawar]

an investment of Rs. 50 crores which has now increased upto more than Rs. 700 crores as result of the cost over-run and even now the projects have not been completed because we have not paid adequate attention towards them.

As well as the fertility of our land is also declining and we should take care of this also. All these problems have come before us and we have to find out a solution to this. We have to see that how we find a solution. How the burden on land can be lessened, we have to see this also. A son of a farmer should be in agriculture only. What changes can be made in this. Can we guide him in adopting different fields by imparting him higher education. There is a need to take care of this. We have to see that how we can encourage children of farmers' family in getting into fields other than agriculture. There is a need to lessen the burden on land and we have to take care of this. We should pay attention in solving the problem of irrigation.

I am happy to see that during the last two years we have taken steps and made certain provisions in the last 8-10 years. There is a need to work upon watershed development in the areas where there is a problem of water. In this country, four-five agencies were working in this direction. Forest department, Rural department, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources and the Planning Commission were working for this. There is a need of better coordination in this regard. Therefore, the Government has decided to get it done by Rainfed Authority and the decision has been finalized three weeks back. Rainfed Authority will work for water conservation in this country under the guidance of Ministry of Agriculture and a very big decision has been taken in this regard. Many members opined here that seeds should be distributed in a well manner. Shri Manmohan Singh has started a discussion on this. ICAR asked to scientists to develop this country in two years and the scientist community of the country has become active.

I have collected information that during the last two years our scientific community has succeeded in develop-

ing 240 new varieties of various crops, but still there is a need to work on this. Different viewpoints came across in this House about seeds. A controversy has come before the world which is called genetically modified seeds BT Cotton. Many Members have expressed their views about BT Cotton. It is true that number and percentage of suicides has been more in the cotton areas. This percentage is higher because except in Punjab and few areas of Madhya Pradesh. All the cotton yielding areas are rainfed crop areas where it is not sure that water can be got or otherwise. More investment is needed for cotton seeds for cotton and fertilizers. If the production is not good enough and better price cannot be got then farmers have to suffer losses. A few farmers could not bear the loss and they chose the path of suicide.

One or two members said here that BT cotton is responsible for this. Three countries of the world namely – China, U.S.A. and Mexico are the great users of BT cotton. These three countries have taken steps for the 80-90 percent production of BT cotton. Gujarat has benefited from BT cotton. Permission was not granted till last year for BT cotton in Punjab, but farmers did not bother about it and somehow they got seeds and yielded BT cotton in their region and succeeded. But one thing is true that where there is rainfed cotton, it is risky to produce BT cotton there because in case of unavailability of water, crop will get destroyed. The seeds of BT cotton are costly and after making so many investments, if their crop will get destroyed, then farmers are more burdened. Where there is not proper arrangement of water it is better to think ten times before producing such crops. But it is not true that seeds are not good. It has been said that what can be the impact of this. When any new type of production is done in this country then trials are done for about 6 years and also for its impact on environment, health and soil is observed from time to time. No compromise is done on this. It is the responsibility of our scientific community to observe it seriously. This is a good variety, after getting this report, the permission is granted for BT cotton. The permission of its production was given two years before UPA Government took charge. Whatever steps were taken

by previous Government were all right. I am confident that it will surely accrue us benefits. There is a need of more investment in the agriculture sector; there is a need to pay more for the production. There is a need for arrangement of marketing and processing also. How the farmers can get supplementary income, it should also be taken care of and steps have been taken in all these areas. Earlier also I have said that within 15 days of taking charge of Government, we took decision that we want to double the agriculture credit in 3 years and we also succeeded in this area. We have got success in achieving the target of more than 110 per cent every year. After coming into power in 2004-05, we had set a target of granting agricultural loan of Rs. 1 lakh 5 thousand crore while Rs. 1,25,309 cores has been spent.

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD: I have checked yesterday, a day before yesterday. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : I have not yielded.

[Translation]

A total of Rs. 86 thousand crore of loan had been given earlier. In the first year we reached the target of about one lakh 25 thousand crore rupees. In one year 2005-06, the target was set of Rs. 1 lakh 44 thousand crore rupees whereas actually 1 lakh 57 thousand 479 were achieved. We have succeeded in completing 111.69 per cent target. There is a need to further improve the situation. After admitting this, steps were taken by us. I know that today scheduled banks have supplied 57 per cent funds as credit. Cooperative institutions have supplied only 27 per cent and certainly there is a need to improve this.

It is true that co-operative institutions of the country are in bad condition. To improve their health, UPA Government took a step and a committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Vaidyanathan. They have submitted their report. They said that the condition of the cooperative institutions can be improved after investing Rs.14 thousand crore. They have submitted their proposal before us. The Prime Minister called upon a meeting of

all the Chief Minister of the country and discussed it in detail and prepared to follow this after obtaining comments of States. There is a need to improve the health of banks after making a total investment of Rs. 14 thousand crore. Rs. 12 thousand crore will be given by the Government of India and only two thousand crore rupees will be given by State Governments. The Government has taken a big step for improving the health of all three banks viz. District Central Co-operative Bank, State Co-operative Bank and Village Societies in two years. We are moving towards this path.

Many other steps have been taken like this. One thing has been said that we increase the burden by giving loan. I want to ask a question from my such colleagues. Until and unless we make any arrangement for capital and other investments, how will they do agricultural work, from where they will get money. Will they get money from the money lenders or Sahukar ? It is necessary to provide them easy money and steps should be taken to cut down the interest rates. First time NDA Government took the step to bring the interest rate around 9 percent upto 50 thousand rupees and it was a welcome step. There is a need of improvement on this Court. Our Government did 7 per cent interest rate and increased the limit upto Rs. three lakhs. We have started following this. The problem raised by Tejaswaniji is persistent. There is a need of improvement in NABARD to provide total help to co-operative institutions. The decision taken by NABARD will ensure profit to farmers through co-operative banks.

They got ready to give 40 percent crop loan. The rest depends on cooperative banks. But at present their condition is not so sound. It will affect them adversely. Therefore, some reforms are needed in it. We have convened a meeting of Chief Minister on 1st October so that we can find out a way and also contemplate about steps to be taken by discussing in this regard. State Governments will have to take some responsibility or the Union Government will bear the same. Some decision in this regard will be taken in this meeting. I assure that we shall solve this problem within the next 15 days and thus help the farmers.

[Shri Sharad Pawar]

23.00 hrs.

The suicide cases of farmers are high in four states. Here, much discussion has taken place in regard to the four states. We conducted study and found that in all the states of the country more or less suicide cases have taken place and the number of such suicide cases are high in Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. There also, some districts have witnessed high rate of suicide cases. The Government of Maharashtra informed us that the situation into six districts of Vidarbha is very serious. Karnataka also informed about six districts. Andhra Pradesh informed that the situation in 16 district is serious and the previous Government of Kerala submitted a proposal regarding three districts. We conducted an enquiry in depth and thought that what can be done in this regard. We found that some steps to be taken to bail out all the districts from this situation. Keeping in view the fact, we prepared to pay attention to it in some areas.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, many things have been said here regarding package. In the beginning we paid attention on two-three points as to how can we help the farmers having loan burden and those who are loan defaulters. We took steps to help them. We decided to make them pay loan in seven instalments and gave moratorium for two years. It was also decided that money should not be recovered during the first two years so that new loan amount even to the defaulters can be released and also be ensured that the State Government and the Government of India pay hundred percent of the interest burden to the banks. Hon'ble Member, Shri Rathore said here that no benefit reached the farmers. I would like to ask him that if the Government of India has paid the banks some part of the loan burden of the farmers who became defaulters after taking loan amount from the banks as to who will take advantage of it; undoubtedly the farmers. It is easy to say that its benefit will go to a political party but it needs to be understood properly as it is a serious matter. When we found that they were in need of help so we helped them.

Secondly, we took steps to increase the flow of agriculture credit in that district. Thirdly, assured irrigation is not the main reason of suicide there. This point come to light when it came to know that there was no problem in getting forest and environmental clearance in connection with all projects from all districts covering under therein. It was determined by Government of India to take 100% financial responsibility of such projects from AIBP and asked to complete them in three years. A package for total projects for irrigation is 3753 crore rupees therein. Whether it is about Maharashtra or Vidarbha or about money allotted to Maharashtra for its total project. A provision of only Rs. 2177 crore has been made therein. These 2177 crore rupees will be allocated within three years and a responsibility to complete these all projects within three years has been handed over the State Governments as the water can be the most important for agriculture. There was a need to chalk out a programme on war footing there for tackling that problem. So we did there that kind of work. We have not ceased there. We gave financial support for Assured Irrigation, Micro-Irrigation, Watershed Development, Water Harvesting Scheme and Check Dams etc. Today, seeds need to be changed. Steps were taken by the Government while taking fifty percent cost of these projects in their favour by providing them quality seeds and passing orders for giving the remaining fifty percent through banks. Besides the programme of National Horticulture Mission in that district was launched. The families of the farmers should get supplementary income. Therefore, a programme has chalked out to give one thousand cross breeding cows every year in every district and the steps will be taken to give three thousand cross breeding cows or buffaloes in three years and fifty percent of the cost will be afforded by the Government of India as subsidy and the remaining fifty percent will be given as loan through banks. This will make farmers free from financial burden in the beginning. We have also chalked out a programme to make a provision of such supplementary income.

Thus, these packages were prepared. Similarly, the proposals in this regard have been received from Andhra

Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala and they have been prepared. I believe that the Government of India will announce its decision in regard to Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala within the next 15 days but the provision for Kerala is different. The total concentration of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka is on irrigation. But so far as Kerala is concerned, the situation of Kerala is different. We have taken these districts of Kerala which have been recommended by the Government of Kerala. The Government of Kerala has also recommended two districts—Edduki and Elapula. They have given the name of these two new districts. The situation prevailing in all these five districts is quite different from that of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. A problem in total plantation crop has come up in Kerala. You may take the example of Pepper, Cardamom. Earlier some of the districts of the country were very progressive in the production of these all products. But we signed agreement with SAARC countries and we signed this agreement with a purpose to improve relations with our neighbouring countries. It was done to bring here some of their agricultural projects and we removed taxes imposed on such projects. Our observation shows that be it pepper, cardamom or coffee, all these items are brought here by our neighbouring countries after purchasing the items from other countries. There is no tax on these items and therefore, our farmers from Kerala are not in a position to compete with them. During the last two-three years, they had to suffer a heavy loss. The cultivation of these items require much capital investment. Now, income has come down and loss has increased, thus this has resulted in heavy burden on the farmers. Therefore, if we want to do something for Kerala, much attention should be paid to plantation crops. Much attention should be paid to Kerala because the problem of the state is different. I would like to assure the Hon'ble Members from Kerala through this House that the Government of India will help Kerala and specially its three districts proposed by the Government of Kerala – though we shall put up final proposal in this regard and after formalisation of these proposals concerned action will be taken – and will act to take decision to include the other two districts as demanded by all the Hon'ble Members from

Kerala who presume that the condition of these two districts is similar to that of the proposed three districts. It has been said here that the Prime Minister went to Vidarbha, package was announced but why did the cases of suicide not stop? You should see as to what points were specifically focused in this package. It was irrigation project and irrigation project does not complete in a day. The Prime Minister went there in the first week of July and announced the package. He announced rupees 2000 crores for irrigation. Not a single work was started. We cannot overlook it that it is the month of monsoon. During monsoon, irrigation project can not be started. This work can be started only after monsoon period and the state Government is to carry out this work. So, it is not proper to say that today, he announced the project there, next day work would be started and third day water for irrigation would be available, fourth day the farmers would harvest good crops and thus compelling situation for committing suicide will wane. In such a situation, we shall have to complete this work in the next two-four years, the time limit is three years. We are glad with the progress of work and I believe that the total problem will be solved in near future. The House may agree to it. These suicide cases should not occur and some steps should be taken in this regard. It is a fact.

Few things have been said about Globalisation also. Globalisation has benefited us in some areas it has adversely affected in some others. It has been said in this House that Indian farmers have progressed in many fields in farming sector, like

[English]

India is one of the largest milk producers in the world; India is one of the largest fruits and vegetable producers in the world; India is one of the largest banana producers in the world; and India is the second largest producer of sugar in the world.

[Translation]

We have succeeded in the production of many agricultural produce. In our country various products are

[Shri Sharad Pawar]

in surplus after meeting out the needs of the country. We have surplus cotton for which we have to go into the international market for sale but, we cannot do that with bitter relations with all countries of the world. During the past two years you might have seen that all the agricultural items have been imported. This year 17 to 20 agricultural items have been exported. Last year export of agricultural items worth Rupees 32 thousand crore have been made whereas this year export has been made worth rupees 40 thousand crore. There has been low yield this year, inspite of that we have been able to export items worth rupees 40 thousand crore. We have exported 35 thousand lakh cotton bales. But we did not have long staple cotton. This type of cotton was needed for our textile industries, that is why 8-9 thousand cottons bales have been imported. Despite that we have been able to export the cotton. Hence, this is not correct to say that globalisation has not benefited us.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, this issue has been raised many a times in this House that why we have imported wheat? It has to be admitted that farmers have no right to sell their produce to anyone prior to the amendment made in the Agriculture Producer Market Act, they got the rights later. Initially it was their responsibility to carry their wheat and paddy to the market and it was the responsibility of licence traders of the market to give them prices of their produce. Earlier FCI has been purchasing in the market and nobody except them can buy the produce. It was Government's responsibility to fix the price for yields of farmers and farmers were paid according to that prices. MSP is fixed by the Government in which State Governments advice is taken. It is also a fact that there are variations in prices between the states. Some States used to give more price and some states used to give low price. After that such system has been accepted. It is not correct that farmers have not been given representation in the body which is responsible for fixing M.S.P.. Farmers have been given representation in that body. Knowledgeable farmers have been given representation in this body. Whatever price it

fixes, purchase is being done on that price in this country for many years. This year also purchase has been made in this manner. It is a fact that Government has fixed the MSP of Rupees 650 per quintal for wheat. We have less quantity of buffer stock and market sentiments were against us. Last year, farmers have no right to sell their wheat but this year instead of farmers going to the market, traders and certain companies have visited their door step. Since Government rate was Rupees 650, so they were ready to pay at the rate of Rupees 670. Consequent of that farmers continued to sell their produce to them. In this way they were benefited. This has resulted in a saving transportation cost to be incurred in transportation if produce to the market and that is why they sold their produce willingly. First time they have got more price. In Gujarat, farmers were benefited and for the wheat of good variety that is produced in Madhya Pradesh farmers got Rupees 800-850 per quintal. Being Food Minister we needed 16 lakh metric tonnes but we got only 9 lakh metric tonnes. Then we started giving bonus to them but despite that we did not get farmer's response. When we tried to give Rupees 650 to Rupees 700 to farmers then the traders offered Rupees 735-750 per quintal increasing it from Rupees 700 to the farmers. This resulted in remunerative prices to the farmers.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have to ponder upon the suggestions given by our young Member of Parliament Shri Hooda. This suggestion seems to be good. We have to fix two types of prices. One should be Minimum Support Price. If the situation reaches the level of distress sale for the farmers then the Government have to purchase it and save the farmers. Secondly, Government cannot shy away from the responsibility of PDS. But we will have to change the system of purchasing items on low prices from the farmers to meet the responsibility of Public Distribution and implementation of social schemes run by Government by fetching money from the farmer's profit. We will have to give prevailing market rate to the farmers and we will have to purchase wheat, rice at the prevailing market rate, provide them subsidy and problem of food security will have to be

sorted out. This is the only way-out and we will try to improve this.

This has been said by Mr. Jha, Mr. Jai Prakash, Mr. Hooda, Mr. Yerrannaidu and many other colleagues that people have resentments against the price fixed for paddy. We have got the recommendation of Rupees 600 from the CACP. We have fixed it at Rupees 610 by increasing it by Rupees 10. It is a fact that after the oil crisis, cost of farming has increased. There is a need to correct it. It is not easy to accept the suggestions given by many of my colleagues totally but there is a need to take action on the suggestions given by the Chief Minister of Punjab and other colleagues regarding the decision taken by the Government to increase the price of Rupees 600 by increasing it by Rupees 10. Today I announce the increase of Rs. 50 per quintal in the rate instead of Rs. 10 and there we will give Rupees 650. While fixing the USP for wheat, taking into the account the total cost of wheat farming particularly the increased prices of petroleum products will be kept in mind because there is a power shortage in the country and farmers are reeling under the diesel crisis. Keeping these things in the mind we will do this at appropriate time regarding the wheat pricing. There is time left for wheat sowing and I want assure the farmers of this country through this House that after getting the report, we will pay attention towards this also.

Moreover, I would like to say that agriculture is a subject matter of State. Government of India should take responsibility of it but here is need to pay attention towards it by the State Governments also. Today there is such a condition prevailing in India that production of wheat is mainly done by Punjab, Haryana and Western U.P. These three states have taken the task to meet the requirement of whole nation. Remaining States should also have to take certain responsibilities. Whatever be the region, be it paddy, wheat, soyabean, oil seed states have to take responsibilities. I will put this point before Chief Ministers of all the States and tell them that Government of India is ready to take the full responsibility of PDS but States should also contribute certain amount in the PDS. It is not

good to raise the problem by transferring the whole burden in Haryana. Remaining States should also give their contribution.

Some thing was said about some other problems. I have tried to put the main points before you. One thing was said here that we have signed certain agreements with USA in which big companies will be benefited, it was apprehended. It is a fact that our Prime Minister has raised the issue of co-operation in agriculture sector in the MDU with President Bush. India has entered into the US Knowledge Initiative. In this Indo-US agriculture knowledge initiative, we will work in the field of education, learning resources, curriculum development and training. We will jointly work in the field of food processing, use of bio-products and bio fuel, biotechnology and water management. In these four fields, research work in US is much more advanced. So such an agreement has been signed for the benefit of the farmers of the country in these fields and I would like to assure this House that the process in this regard will be started this year only.

Sir, the revelation of the import of wheat at higher prices than what we give to our farmers is partially correct. When we procure wheat from Punjab and Haryana and send it to the rest of the country and while determining its cost we have to take total cost in account. After calculating the procurement charges i.e. the amount paid to the farmers, transport charges, charges of godown, storing charges and interest on them the economic cost of domestic wheat comes down to Rs. 11276 per ton. That is the final cost to the Government of India for the wheat procured in the country. The cost of the first lot we have purchased is Rs. 9978 per ton and the cost of second lot is Rs. 12261 per ton and that is Rs. 15 lesser than the cost of wheat procured within the country. The third lot which is yet to be imported, its cost will be higher because the world will come to know that India imports such a huge quantity and as a result the price of wheat rises and we have to pay it. If there is a shortage of three or four million tonnes of wheat under Public Distribution System and in such circumstances if we do not import wheat to maintain

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our buffer stock properly then we may face problem of public distribution and food security. Irrespective of any situation, comes our failure to provide foodgrains to our poor people under Public Distribution System, is in tolerable it and that is why I am totally against the import. When it was decided to import wheat I could not sleep properly. My reservations about import was before me. The problem of hunger of the large number of people living below poverty line in the country was before me and if we want to solve this problem then we have to import foodgrains. As we import edible oil, the same way we need to import wheat this year, it came to our knowledge and we took this decision. But I would like to assure the hon. members that in the coming one or two years we will pay much more attention towards it, how the production of wheat is to be increased and how the requirement of the country can be fulfilled and the wheat producers can get remunerative prices. I would like to assure hon. Members that we will take such steps in this country.

Sir, alongwith agriculture more allocation was made to horticulture. Certain steps have been taken for strengthening dairy sector and fisheries sector. The way National Dairy Development Organization was set up during the regime of Shri Lai Bahadur Shastri, in the same way Fisheries Development Board is set up. There are seven to eight headquarters in Hyderabad and next month there also the process will be started. We will pay attention how can we help the fishermen of that area and by way of fisheries how we can help the farmers. So, first of all we have to pay attention to increase the production and we have to arrange for its proper processing, better marketing and making loans available to the farmer at lower interest rates, increasing investment for water management to increase its production. Secondly, we will have to pay attention how can we arrange for supplementary income for the farmer whether it is through dairy, or poultry or piggeries. This way by chalking out programmes we are going ahead.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I believe that the circumstances will improve in the coming two years and we will get rid off the incidents of suicides being committed by the farmers for the success of food security.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : There will be no clarification. It is too late. So special mentions will also not possible. The Members who wish to raise the issues during zero hour are requested to lay them on the table of the House. It will go on record.

*SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA (Jalaun) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the whole of the Bundelkhand area is facing the problem of drought for want of rain in Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh because there have been 25 percent less rainfall as per the standard of Bundelkhand. In that area the water table has also depleted owing to which the hand pumps are not working, the wells have dried out and there is no water in the ponds. In such a situation the standing crops of the farmers are drying out.

Sir, there have been heavy rains in Madhya Pradesh. Patila dam and Mata Tila dam are overflowing. Arrangement must be made to make this water available for farmers through canals. I would like to request the Government to provide special package for Bundelkhand area of Uttar Pradesh like Vidarbha region.

*SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD (Yavatmal) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, so far neither the procedure of appointment of the victims of 1984 riots have been started nor any action have been taken against culprits of the riots. Neither the houses given to the riots victims have been made free hold nor its prices have been waived off. The Government machinery is taking arbitrary decision with regard to disbursement of compensation amount and neither any information is being passed on to frontal organization which has laid the demands nor they are being made the

*The speech was laid on the Table.

part of the committee. Pension for elderly people have not been started.

[English]

*SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPIPARAI (Sivakasi) : I would like to draw the following issues before the House.

This year's UPSC (Civil Services) Prelims, 2006 result has generated strong resentment among a huge number of candidates and the credential of UPSC has been brought under doubt in the minds of the students. There is a widespread feeling that, many candidates, despite having a higher possible scores as compared to their successful counterparts have found their names missing from the list of successful candidates published on 10th August, 2006.

So far, hundreds of students have applied for the following information under RTI Act 2005. The key issues raised by them are:-

1. Cut-off marks in each subjects and GS in each category (Gen, SC, ST, OBCs) in the preliminary exam, are announced after the examination.
2. Details of marks of candidates (Prelims) should be intimated to the candidates.
3. Authentic answer for each series of questions should also be made known to the candidates.
4. Reasons for re-examination of Public Administration paper on 18th June, 2006 are to be publicised.

The Government should intervene in this regard for the early redressal of the genuine grievances of the candidates.

*SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (Kasargod) : I invite the attention of the Government especially the Finance Minister with regard to some problems of the cooperative banks

*The speech was laid on the Table.

The Finance Act 2006 has withdrawn the benefits of section 80 (P) for cooperative banks. Now all the cooperative banks have to pay income tax. It is only cooperative banks that can directly promote large-scale participation of poor people in the financial inclusion process. Co-operative banks are the only grass root level financial institutions that can facilitate the process.

Cooperative banks plough back most of their surplus in the form of resources. Being small institutions, they make very small profits. It is very likely that after providing for income tax, many banks may not have enough surplus to make NPA provisions and may go into losses. Cooperative Banks have no avenue to raise capital or access, capital markets. The aggregate amount of income tax likely to be collected from cooperative banks may not be commensurate with the efforts required for the tax Department nor will the taxation make the banks any healthier.

All the 1875 urban cooperative banks 31 State cooperative banks and 365 Central Cooperative Banks which are accepted by RBI as banks and constitute a part of the payment system of the country have been brought under the tax net. Finance Minister's statement in the house and CBDT's assertion that only 2 per cent of the banks have been included for taxation is factually incorrect. It is not correct to include 1,05,735 PACs as 'banking institutions' to arrive at the conclusion that 98 per cent of cooperative banking institutions are exempted.

It is also submitted that cooperative banks do not have access to capital markets. They rely heavily on creation of reserves in raising own funds for the purposes of capital adequacy. The Government should tax the profits of Cooperative banks only if the banks are in a position to raise capital from the market otherwise they should be helped to create their reserves by not imposing income tax and restoring the earlier position.

Cooperative banks are really functioning and surviving with the full support of the people. Unlike National Banks and Commercial Banks, the Cooperative sector has a very

[Shri P. Karunakaran]

good mass base and has to compete with the private sector hence this sector has to be promoted. So, Government should promote such public investment oriented schemes and institutions and in order to assist them Government should exempt Cooperative banks from paying income tax as envisaged in the Finance Act 2006.

[Translation]

*SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHALE (Bilaspur) : Sir, the amount annually being given under various schemes for development of Scheduled Castes and Tribes by the office of Tribal affairs and Nomadic Tribes Scheduled Caste Development Department under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India is not being given at present. As a result of that various schemes are under consideration since 2004 and owing their non-sanction there have been resentment amongst the people of the said sections and they are indifferent towards the Government. The developmental works have been stopped for want of funds. In the majority of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe areas of Chhattisgarh are not getting the amount of Rs. 1,31,564 for educational institutes under Vocational Education Scheme. There have been schemes of the cost of Rs. 7,28,870 for 100 per cent grant scheme for providing houses equipped with facilities to the special backward Tribes, Rs. 162 lakh for Vocational Training Centre, Rs. 6,54,281 for setting up of a Tribal Museum in Kaker District of Chhattisgarh, Rs. 1,531 lakhs for coaching and allied and Rs. 3,282 lakhs for finance scheme of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. These schemes are pending since 2004 and these are under consideration of the said ministries and these have not been sanctioned.

Union Government should sanction above schemes without any delay. The Government should sanction around rupees 2 thousand crore for social, educational, housing,

*The speech was laid on the Table.

museum, vocational training, coaching for IAS, IPS and technology examinations and for several others schemes like facility of water, de-addiction schemes for every type of addiction, grants for marriages of girls and for the development works meant for said sections.

[English]

*SHRI LONAPPAN NAMBADAN (Mukundapuram) : Hon. Speaker, Sir, I want to highlight the tourism potential of Iringalakuda area in Kerala. The one and only temple in India, dedicated to Bharata, is the Kudal Manikyam Temple situated in Iringala Kuda, Kerala. Iringala Kuda also happens to be the birth place of Shri Unnai Warrior, the great poet and author of the famous Kathakali play "Nala Charitam". Nearby Iringala Kuda is Kodungallur, where the first known mosque in India, the Cheraman Juman masjid is situated.

Kodungallur is also the place where St. Thomas, the disciple of Christ first set his holy feet on the soil of India. And nearby is, Malayattur which has also been sanctified by the presence of St. Thomas. The birth place of Shri Shankara, Kaladi, is near Iringala Kuda. Mala was one of the centres of Jew culture and we have preserved their synagogue and the Jew cemetery. The biggest Church in India is in Ankamali. Kodanadd is the chief centre where elephants are trained in Kerala; and Attira Palli waterfall is one of the most beautiful waterfalls in our country. The International Airport at Cochin is also situated at Nedumpasheri, which too is in Mukunda Puram Constituency. It is well connected with the rest of the country, by National Highway No. 47 and 17 that pass through the Mukunda Puram constituency.

Iringala Kuda, Chalakkudi and Ankamali for Kaladi are the important railway stations in the area. So, Mukunda Puram which spreads from mountains to the sea, is abundantly blessed with the varied scenic beauties

* English translation of the speech originally laid on the Table in Malayalam.

of nature and also has the resources for water transportation.

Therefore, Mukunda Puram has a rich heritage of being a sacred land for various religious faiths and is a place of historical importance. Further, the area is blessed with natural beauty and should be developed into an International tourist centre. I earnestly hope that the Central Government will take immediate steps towards this end. Kerala is a land of water sports and cultural pageants. Let us make this Gods own country; accessible to the tourists from all over the world.

*SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH (Kanakapura) :

Kengal Hanumanthaihya is the symbol of Mysore peta and Karnataka's pride. This greatest visionary and statesman was a close associate of Nehruji. He was born in 1908, later he plunged into freedom struggle as a student. He was one of the founder members of Mysore Congress in 1937, and president of Bangalore Congress. From 1950 to 1952, he was the leader of Mysore Legislative and president of Mysore Pradesh Congress. From 1952 to 1956 he was elected as the Chief Minister. He introduced education reforms and established literary and cultural departments in the State.

His efficient administration and achievement brought Bangalore on the world map. In this period, highest number of world dignitaries visited the capital. His greatest contribution to Karnataka is the magnificent, fabulous, and eternal monument called 'Vidhana Soudha' which houses the State Assembly and Council. It was his dream; he realised this dream and gifted to the people of Karnataka the 'Vidhana Soudha' which is our pride and the pride of every domestic and foreign tourist who visits it. He used the prisoners as work force to build 'Vidhana Soudha'. Thus, he was keen to save the taxpayers' money. In the year 2003, inspired by Vidhana Soudha, Chief Minister Shri S.M. Krishna built 'Vikasa Soudha' next to it, like Vidhana Soudha model.

*The speech was laid on the Table.

He was instrumental in bringing together all the Kannada speaking areas and unification of the State, and he renamed it as Karnataka. As the Union Railway Minister, he brought punctuality in running of the trains. As the Chairman of the Administrative Reforms Committee of the Government of India, he produced very valuable report. His policies were marked with fervour and conviction. His honesty and integrity was well known. 'Kengal' is the personality which reflected the qualities of 'mass' and 'class'.

Today, I am fortunate to represent the 'Kanakapura' constituency in which the birthplace of 'Kengal' falls in my Channapatna Assembly Segment.

I urge upon the Government of India to take full interest to organise the preparation of centenary celebrations of this greatest soul. In this background, I would request the Government of India to develop the place of 'Kengal' as a national tourist spot. I would also request the Government of India to introduce a toy train on Darjeeling Model from Kengal to Ramanagar Hill areas, and name it as the 'Kengal' train, and to construct an international-level Convention Hall at Bangalore in his name.

*SHRI P.S. GADHAVI (Kutch) : Respected Sir, I may kindly be allowed to raise the following important issue concerning my constituency, namely, Kutch District in Gujarat as well as large parts of Northern States of India.

Subject : Unbearable delay in Gauge Conversion work of Bhiladi-Samdari Railway Line

Bhiladi-Samdari Railway Line is the shortest and alternate route to reach Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and many other parts of Northern States from Ports of Gujarat Viz. Kandla, Mundra, etc.

Bhiladi-Samdari-Jodhpur-Bikaner-Bhatinda Railway line is 160 kilometres shorter than the existing Palanpur-Ajmer-Rewari-Bhatinda Railway Line.

*The speech was laid on the Table.

[Shri P.S. Gadhavi]

Thus, Bhiladi-Samdari is very important line for gauge conversion.

Gauge conversion work of Palanpur-Gandhidham Railway line is already completed by Kutch Railway Joint Venture Company.

It was decided that the work of gauge conversion of Bhiladi-Samdari Railway Line would be taken up by Kutch Railway Company.

The combined cost for both the projects was Rs. 797 crore. The equity contribution of the Government of Gujarat was Rs. 14.88 crore. The amendment to share agreement was approved by the Government of Gujarat on 22.5.06. But, this work is getting inordinately delayed which is causing immense inconvenience to public.

I, therefore, urge upon the Minister of Railway to kindly see that this work should start and be completed without any further delay.

[Translation]

*SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah) : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister of Power, Government of India towards a very important subject in zero hour.

Government of India undertaking NTPC has sanctioned the extension of Kahalgaoon Power Project and a power project of 2000 megawatt has been sanctioned in Barh area of Patna district. Sanction has also been granted for the extension of Kanti Thermal Power Plant in Muzaffernagar and Barauni Thermal Power Plant. Central Electricity Authority had decided many years ago and given sanction for setting up of additional capacity of 2x250 megawatt plant in Muzaffernagar Thermal Power Plant and Barauni Thermal Power Plant. I don't know why such discrimination is being taking place for Bihar. No effective measures has been taken in the

*The speech was laid on the Table.

direction of proposed project of 500 megawatt capacity in Navinagar.

If all the above schemes are implemented and completed on time, then Bihar could have 10,000 megawatt capacity of power generation and it could lead to its all round development. In addition, collapsed distribution system in rural electrification area could be corrected by strengthening present transmission and distribution system and by installing new transmission and distribution networks.

[English]

SHRI PRAHLAD JOSHI (Dharwad North) : I would like to mention the following matter of urgent public importance in the zero hour today. I may kindly be permitted to make the statement as under.

Sir, a very unpalatable situation has come for those in the country who had raised the home loans and built their dream house. About three or four years back, the banks, all nationalised, scheduled and new generation banks lowered the rate of interest to such a low that lured the gullible especially middle and lower middle class salary earning people to go for housing loans only to repent now for their unwise decision. The reason this Government is aware irrational fixation of home loan interest by these same banks and other financial institutions. This Government is also aware about two years ago how these some banks vociferously went for high profile campaigns with competitive rates of interest door to door to the customers offering housing loans. People dreaming of own house readily bit the bait now are being persecuted by these banks with frequent hike in the interest rates. The rates of interest which was just in between 7 per cent and 7.5 per cent has now touched its ever high of 11.5 per cent. The premier Housing Finance institute of the country, HDFC, has hiked its rate of interest thrice in the present year. Almost all the nationalised banks are following the suit. People who have borrowed housing loans are cursing the Government policy and questioning the very rationale behind this frequent increase in the

interest rate while rejecting the demand for hike in the rate of interest on PF and other savings schemes. The Finance Minister owes an explanation for the tenets of economy behind this frequent variation of the interest rates on bank loans.

What prompts the Government for frequent changes in the lending policy? The credibility of these banks and other major lending institutions is at stake. I urge upon this Government to take this matter seriously before the borrowers get further panic in view of the prices of consumer goods and other commodities also rising and the price index constantly changing.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR (Sagar) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, youths and farmers are facing many difficulties in taking no dues from the Banks to avail the benefits of various schemes of the Government. Educated unemployed youths belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and farmers are issued No Dues Certificate after paying Rs. 100-150 as Service charge to banks for availing benefits under Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Yojana, Pratishtha Yojana, Kisan credit card, to get licence for arms, to get finance for tractor, to get loan handbook and for availing loan under other schemes.

The poor farmers, who have 2-5 acres of land also have to go through the same process. As a result, poor farmer have to spent Rs. 1000-1500 even before getting Kisan Credit Card. Similarly, ever since 'CBS' Core Banking System has been implemented in the Banks, an amount of Rs. 300 is deducted as service charge from the account of account holder by the banks without prior intimation to them in the cases where there is less than Rs. 500 in their account, irrespective of whether the account holder is receiving dependent pension or government pension or he or she is the employee of any government agency.

Therefore, I request to the Union Government to provide assistance in issuing No Dues from the banks

and to done away with the deduction of Rs. 300 on minimum balance keeping in view the difficulties of poor farmers, educated unemployed youths and other pension holders.

*PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Sir, 70 percent population of Rajasthan should be saved from drinking water contaminated with floride without any delay. Rajasthan is the biggest state geographically having population of around five and a half crores, but only 1.9 percent of total ground water resources of the country is in Rajasthan. According to experts, only 7 to 8 percent water, meant for drinking is left in Rajasthan. In the last two decades the quantity of floride, nitrate and other unwanted elements in water has crossed the danger limit in all the districts of the state due to excessive exploitation of groundwater to meet the demands of agriculture and drinking water. The pace at which water is being exploited from the ground, unwanted elements are being mixed with water at the same pace. According to a criterion, 1.5 miligram floride should be there in one litre drinking water, but in a recent survey, the quantity of floride is found more than 1.5 per litre in 23 thousand villages and hamlets. In the last one decade, problem of floride has increased in around five thousand villages in the state due to excessive exploitation of ground water. Similarly, Nitrate should be 45 miligram per liter, but quantity of nitrate is found to be more than hundred miligram in the 7500 villages in the state. Floride and Nitrate affected districts are Tonk, Churu, Banner, Jalaur, Jaiselmer, Rajsamand, Ajmer, Dausa, Jaipur, Nagaur, Pali, Sirohi, Jodhpur, Sikar, Dholpur, Dungarpur, Banawada, Boondi, Baanra, Shri Ganganagar, Karauli, Jhalawad, Kota, Bhitwara, Bikaner, Hanumangarh, Savaimadhapur, Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Jhunjhunu, Alwar and Bharatpur in Rajasthan. Due to the increase in quantity of floride and nitrate in the groundwater, various dangerous diseases like flososis are spreading their wings and lakhs of affected people are compelled to live as handicapped and incapable life. 10 percent of the world's floride affected population reside in

*The speech was laid on the Table.

[Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat]

Rajasthan. About 70 percent people in the state are getting affected by various diseases due to the use of fluoride contaminated water. Fluoride in some places in the state is so much that people's teeth are becoming yellowish, bones are weakening, people are suffering from hunchback and other bone diseases. Similarly, Nitrate is causing damage to the digestive system and there are problems in breathing also. Although, Government of Rajasthan is trying its best through its limited resources to provide clean drinking water to residents of affected areas but limited resources are not enough to get over this gigantic problem.

Therefore, it is requested to the Government of India to make special Central Scheme for providing clean

potable water to crores of people of Rajasthan and to save them from drinking fluoride and nitrate mixed water and adequate financial assistance should be provided for this purpose.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow, the 25th August, 2006, at 11 a.m.

23.25 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the
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