

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(English Version)

Sixth Session
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)



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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, December 15, 2005/Agrahayana 24, 1927
(Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Q.No. 322.

Yogi Aditya Nath — Not present.

Shri J.M. Aaron Rashid — Not present.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Model Stations

*323. SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the names of the railway stations which have

been identified as model stations in the country, particularly in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether the works on these stations have started;

(c) if so, the progress made so far in this regard; and

(d) the time by which the works are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) : With a view to provide upgraded passenger amenities, 327 stations in the country have been identified as model stations out of which 13 stations are located in Andhra Pradesh. A list of these 327 stations alongwith present status of 13 stations in Andhra Pradesh is enclosed as annexure.

(d) Works at all the 327 model stations are likely to be completed by March 2008.

Annexure

List of 327 stations identified as Model Stations

Railway	Name of station
1	2
Central (17)	Akola, Bhusaval, Chandrapur, Chatrapati Shahu Maharaj Terminus (Kolhapur), Dadar, Gulbarga, Jalgaon, Kalyan, Kuria (Lokmanya Tilak Terminus), Malkapur, Mumbai CST, Nagpur, Nasik Road, Pune, Solapur, Thane, Wardha.
Eastern (41)	Andal Jn., Asansol, Baidyanathdham, Bandel, Barasat, Bardhaman, Baruiapur Jn., Basirhat, Bhagalpur, Bidhannagar Road, Bolpur, Bongaon, Budge Budge, Canning, Dankuni, Dhakuria, Dum Dum, Durgapur, Garia, Ghutiari Sharif, Howrah, Jamalpur Jn., Jasidih, Krishnagar Road, Kulti, Labpur, Madhupur, Madhyamgram, Malda Town, Murshidabad, Nabadwip Dham, New Farakka, Ranaghat Jn., Raniganj, Sainthia, Sealdah, Sonarpur, Sultanganj, Tarakeswar, Tollyganj, Ultadanga.

1

2

East Central (32)

Akshayawat Rai Nagar, Ara, Buxar, Barauni Jn., Begusarai, Bettiah, Daltonganj, Danapur, Darbhanga, Dhanbad, Dehri-on-Sone, Gaya, Hajipur Jn., Janakpur Road, Khagaria, Koderma, Mokama, Motihari, Mughalsarai, Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, Nayagaon, Narkatiaganj Jn., Nawadah, Parasnath, Patna Jn., Sagauli Jn., Sasaram, Samastipur, Sheikhpura, Sitamarhi, Sonapur Jn.

East Coast (17)

Badakhandita, Bhadrak, Bhubaneswar, Brahmapur, Byree, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Golantra, Jajpur-Keonjhar Road, Kapilas Road, Khurda Road, Puri, Rahama, Sambalpur, Suria Road, Titlagarh, Visakhapatnam.

Northern (40)

Ambala Cantt, Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib, Ayodhya, Baghpat Road, Baraut, Bareilly, Bhatinda, Beas, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Delhi, Delhi Cantt, Delhi Sarai Rohilla, Dhuri Jn., Faizabad, Faridabad, Firozpur, Garhmukteshwar, Ghaziabad, Haridwar, H. Nizamuddin, Jullundur City, Jammu Tawi, Kalka, Kathua, Lucknow, Ludhiana, Merrut City, Moradabad, Nangloi, New Delhi, Panipat Jn., Pathankot, Patiala, Prayag, Rae-Bareilly Jn., Saharanpur, Shimla, Varanasi.

North Central (10)

Agra Cantt., Agra Fort, Aligarh, Allahabad Jn., Etawah, Gwalior, Jhansi, Kanpur Central, Mathura Jn., Tundla.

North Eastern (16)

Badshah Nagar, Ballia, Basti, Chhapra Jn., Deoria Sadar, Gonda Jn., Gorakhpur, Izzatnagar Jn., Kathgodam, Katra, Lucknow Jn, Manduadh, Mau Jn., Pilibhit, Rawatpur, Siwan Jn.

Northeast Frontier (32)

Alipurduar Jn., Alubari Road, Araria Court, Coochbehar, Dalkolha, Dharmanagar, Dibrugarh, Dimapur, Ghum, Gosaigaonhat, Guwahati, Harishchandrapur, Jalpaiguri, Jorhat Town, Kamakhya, Katihar, Kishanganj, Kokrajhar, Lumding, Maal Bazar, New Alipurduar, New Bongaigaon, New Coochbehar, New Jalpaiguri, New Mal Jn., New Tinsukia, Purnea Jn, Raiganj, Rangia Jn., Silchar, Siliguri Town, Srirampur.

North Western (9)

Abu Road, Ajmer, Bikaner, Hissar, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Rewari, Sri Ganga Nagar, Udaipur.

Southern (31)

Alwaye, Arakkonam Jn, Calicut, Cannanore, Chengannaur, Chengalpattu, Chennai Beach, Chennai Central, Chennai Egmore, Coimbatore, Ernakulam Jn., Erode Jn., Kanniyakumari, Katpadi, Kayankulam, Kottayam, Madurai, Mambalam, Mangalore Jn, Palghat Jn, Pondicherry, Quilon, Rameswaram, Salem Jn, Tiruchchirappalli Jn, Tirunelveli, Tiruttani, Trichur, Trivandrum Central, Tuticorin, Varkala.

South Central (14)

Dhamavaram Jn., Guntakal, Guntur, Hyderabad, Kacheguda, Kakinada Town, Nanded, Nellore, Raichur, Rajahmundry, Secunderabad, Tirupati, Vijayawada, Warangal.

South Eastern (21)

Adra, Bagnan, Balasore, Bishnupur, Bokaro Steel City, Chakradharpur, Contai Road Garbeta, Hatia, Jhargram, Jharsuguda, Kharagpur, Kolaghat, Mecheda, Midnapore, Ranchi Rourkela, Santragachi Jn., Tamluk, Tatanager, Ulubaria.

1

2

S.E. Central (3)	Bilaspur, Durg, Raipur.
South Western (8)	Bangalore Cantt, Bijapur, Hospet, Hubli, Mysore, Shimoga Town, Toranagallu, Vasco-de-gama.
Western (24)	Ahmedabad, Anand Jn., Barmna, Bandra Terminus, Bharuch, Bhavnagar, Chittaurgarh, Dadar, Dharangaon, Dwarka, Gandhidham, Gandhigram, Indore, Mumbai Central, Navsari, Nimbahera, Okha, Rajkot, Ratlam, Surat, Ujjain, Vadodara, Valsad, Vapi.
West Central (11)	Bhopal, Damoh, Hablbganj, Guna, Hoshangabad, Jabalpur, Kantni jn., Kota, Pipariya, Satna, Sawai Madhopur.
KRCL (1)	Madgaon.

**II. Number of Model Stations in Andhra Pradesh
alongwith their status**

S. No.	Name of Model Station	Railway Zone	Status
1.	Visakhapatnam	East Coast	Completed
2.	Dharmavaram Jn.	South Central	Work in progress
3.	Guntur	South Central	Completed
4.	Guntakal	South Central	Work in progress
5.	Hyderabad	South Central	Completed
6.	Kacheguda	South Central	Completed
7.	Kakinada	South Central	Completed
8.	Nellore	South Central	Completed
9.	Rajahmundry	South Central	Completed
10.	Secunderabad	South Central	Completed
11.	Tirupati	South Central	Completed
12.	Vijayawada	South Central	Completed
13.	Warangal	South Central	Completed

SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY : Hon. Speaker, Sir, the Government has identified about 327 stations all over the Indian Railways to be developed as model stations. Only 13 stations have been identified in Andhra Pradesh an 14 stations in the entire South Central Railway Zone, which are far less in number as compared to some other Zonal Railways, whereas South Central Railway has six full-fledged Divisions and 748 stations covering five States with goods, passenger and freight traffic. This Zone is one of the top revenue earning Zones.

Hence, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the criterion laid down for selecting model stations. What additional facilities are proposed to be provided besides usual passenger facilities? I would also like to know whether any more station on South Central Railway has since been identified thereafter. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You cannot go on asking all the details. How can he answer?

Is there a pressure from Members of Parliament?

SHRI R. VELU : Besides that pressure, normally, what we are now following in the Indian Railways is that we take into account tourist importance, and then, if it is a junction, it is identified where the volume of transaction is more. We also take into account historical and religious

importance, where it requires more amenities in terms of volume of traffic of that station. These are some of the parameters that we adopt.

About the next question, I would like to tell that we have already selected 327 stations. During the 1999-2000 Budget, the then hon. Minister had announced that being a passenger Year, to select one station for each Division as Model station on a selective basis. Accordingly, 61 stations were selected for them 61 Divisions. Subsequently, 67 Divisions have come to stay.

As the hon. Speaker put it, more pressures have come. Eventually, we have enlarged this list to 327 stations. There is no hard and fast rule as to why a State has been given more, or less. It depends on the kind of situation obtaining in each station. As the hon. Member said, I would like to tell that he should be happy that 13 stations have been given to Andhra Pradesh, out of which 11 have been completed and only 2 remains. That will also be completed before the end of the year.

MR. SPEAKER: I have got two in this list. Nothing has been done for years.

SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY : Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is true that the revenue from passenger traffic is only taken into consideration for categorising the stations into 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', and 'F'. At some of the stations, revenue from passenger traffic will be less whereas the revenue from the freight traffic will be more. So if only the revenue from passenger traffic is considered for categorising the stations, the stations where the revenue from freight is more will be disadvantaged, Sir. Hence, I would like to know whether the Government will take both the revenues into consideration for categorising the stations and whether the Government has any proposal to review the minimum essential amenity norms which were formulated long back because it is not up to the expectations of the present day travelling public.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, too long a question. I would not allow.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, this is more passenger oriented. The amenities is only for passengers. I quite understand the anxiety of the Member because Railways is more freight oriented giving more income to the Railways. I understand that. But, more freight would mean that we are not dealing with passengers. So, that is the criteria. 'A' category means stations which earn Rs. 6 crore and more, 'B' category means between Rs. 3 crore and Rs. 6 crore, 'C' category means all suburban stations, 'D' means between Rs. 1 crore and Rs. 3 crore and 'E' category means less than Rs. 1 crore. This is the kind of passenger earning we are taking into consideration. Anyway, with regard to the point mentioned by the hon. Member about freight earning, we will try to examine that aspect whether some portion or what could be taken into consideration for classification of the stations.

The other point was the minimum essential amenities, which he mentioned. To the happiness of the Hon'ble Member or to the information of this august body, I would like to say in the Indian Railways, by 31.03.2005 we have completed all 8,055 stations with minimum essential amenities. Whereas what he means is provision of the minimum essential amenities like providing better toilet facilities, clean drinking water, platform roofings and also the furniture in the rest rooms etc. We may consider how to improve some more amenities which are in our stations. We will take note of that.

SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY : Sir, in the reply hon. Minister mentioned that in South-West zone, Hospet and Toranagallu have been selected for making model stations. I would like to know from the Minister what is the amount allotted for these two stations and when the work would be completed. Is there is any proposal for selecting Bellary city railway station as a model station?

MR. SPEAKER : How can he reply about individual stations?

SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY : Sir, it is a question regarding model stations.

MR. SPEAKER : He says by March, 2008 it will be completed. He wants a re-iteration.

SHRI R. VELU : Whatever stations we have taken up, we will be able to complete by March, 2006.

MR. SPEAKER : Subject to extension!

SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY : I am asking about Bellary.

SHRI R. VELU : Right now I cannot say about Bellary because once we select it we are trying to provide at least minimum facilities to start with. We will improve upon because we have got 23 items to provide if it is A category station. Like that we have planned to go about it.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are several such railway stations in Bihar which are not in proper condition. The hon. Minister has stated in his reply that the Government would develop some stations into model stations. Through you, I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Railways about the number of such stations in Bihar not having basic amenities and board and alight from trains are proposed to be developed as model stations? A large number of passengers at the Patna junction, but its condition is still not good. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government have got any plan to provide special facilities at the Patna junction and the adjoining stations.

[English]

SHRI R. VELU : Sir as regards the first question is concerned, about 36 stations in Bihar State have been selected out of which we have done this modelling in two stations, namely, Chhapra and Patna. Many more stations will be taken up. We will complete ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : For good reasons.

SHRI R. VELU : We will do it, Sir.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, but the Patna Sahib Station is important as the birth place of

Guru Govind Singh and also from the religious point of view...*

MR. SPEAKER : This will not go on record....*

MR. SPEAKER : We know why Chhapra was taken up and we also know why Patna was selected.

[English]

SHRI B. MAHTAB : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is gratifying to note that around 327 railway stations have been identified as model stations throughout the country and in my constituency 2 railway stations have been identified as model stations. Cuttack Railway Station has completed 100th year of its existence and in the last two years more than Rs. 2 crore have been provided for a second opening towards Paradip. But I am sorry to bring to the attention of the Minister that despite allocation of funds for having a second opening of Cuttack Railway Station, the work has not yet started. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what is the reason for not starting the work when it has been declared a model station.

SHRI R. VELU : Sir I am sure the hon. Member would feel glad that in Orissa, 19 railway stations have been declared as model stations of which work has been completed in 9 stations. This work is carried out under the Amenities Fund. We have allotted Rs. 215.05 crore in the last Budget and this year we have enhanced it to Rs. 222.15 crore. The allocation for the zonal railway from where the hon. Member is coming has also increased. The hon. Member has asked a pointed question about Cuttack Railway Station. I am not aware as to why the work is pending. However, I will see that it is done in the shortest possible time.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Kayankulam and Chengnur stations are located in my Parliamentary Constituency and both of these stations had been declared as model stations. Through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the funds

*Not recorded.

allocated for the construction works in these stations after these two stations were declared as model stations and the amount spent so out of that fund.

[English]

SHRI R. VELU : Sir, I could also follow the footsteps of Shrimati Sujatha.

[Translation]

SHRI AVTAR SINGH BHADANA : Hon'ble Minister should speak in Hindi.

SHRI R. VELU : I shall learn Hindi.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Okay, now you come to English.

SHRI R. VELU : Sir, Kerala has been sanctioned 12 model stations of which work has been completed in 4 stations. The hon. Member has asked about Chengannur and Kayamkulam. She should be happy that out of 12 model stations in Kerala, she has got 2 model stations in her constituency. This year, we have allotted Rs. 17.63 crore to Southern Railway for these amenities, but I do not know how much has been allotted to each station. However, I will see that the work in Kayamkulam and Chengannur stations is completed to the satisfaction of the hon. Member.

[Translation]

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated in his reply the number of stations which have been identified as model stations in the whole country. Through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the norms laid down for declaring a station as a model station. Whether the hon. Minister would be kind enough to declare the Unnao station in my Parliamentary Constituency as a model station.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No, he has already answered the first part. For every supplementary, he cannot explain the policy.

Mr. Minister you need not reply to the first part. But as regards Unnao, you will look into it.

SHRI R. VELU : Yes, Sir. I will look into it and I will send the details to him.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister about the Aurangabad station in my constituency Sambhaji Nagar, foundation stone for which was laid with much fanfare in Oct., 2003 by the then Railway Minister, Shri Nitish Kumar ji for making it a model station. At that time, the Chairman, Railways, the G.M. of the South Central Railway, Director (Traffic) and other person were present. But so far nothing has been done for the Aurangabad station, Sambhaji Nagar which is under the South Central Railway and falls in my constituency. This station was identified to be developed as a model station due to the tourist sites like Ajanta and Elora. A large number of tourists visit that area and from there they move on to Nanded and other places. This has also been the capital of Marathvada.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : That is why, they have been declared model stations.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE : Through you, I would like to submit to the hon. Minister that till date nothing has been done over these. The then Railway Minister Nitish Kumar ji had inaugurated it in Oct. 2003.....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : That is why he has come to Patna.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE : But so far nothing has been done there.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : He has noted your suggestions. Hon. Members, supplementaries can not be asked only to find out about you own stations. Sorry.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE : But, what happened to that?

MR. SPEAKER : That I have told and the Minister has noted it.

Supply of Unprocessed Gas by IOC

*324. SHRI CHANDRABHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Oil Corporation (North Zone) had supplied cheap and unprocessed gas of GAIL (India) Limited in place of LPG:

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

(c) whether the Government has conducted any inquiry in this regard:

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

(e) the action taken against the erring officials?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) have reported that they are taking LPG from Vijaipur and Auraiya fractionators of GAIL for meeting the requirements of their bottling plants in the North Zone. LPG taken from these

fractionators is as per Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) specifications, viz., BS 4576.

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

(c) No, Sir..

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

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRABHAN SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the context of the reply given by the hon. Minister, I would like to ask about the norms laid down of the B.S. 4576 specification.

[English]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : Sir, I am just about to say that the specifications under IS 4576 relate to vapour pressure at 40 degrees centigrade: composition liquid mould percentage of C2, C3, C4 and C5 as well as unsaturated hydrocarbons, volatility and the total volatile sulphur, copper strip corrosion, hydrogen sulphide and free water content. You will see that it is not very easy to give a detailed answer orally. I will be very happy to send the hon. Member the specifications for IS 4576 of 1990.

MR.. SPEAKER : You have written BS and not IS.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : It says IS.

MR. SPEAKER : In the written reply, it is BS. Anyway, it is all right.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRABHAN SINGH : The second point I would like to know from the hon. Minister is that whether any site in Madhya Pradesh is proposed to be included for this purpose? If so, whether the govt. have got a survey done for that?

[English]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : Sir, I am not quite sure

what the question aims at answering. But I presume that he wishes to inquire about locations of fractionators and refineries. I would be happy to provide that information to him, if that is what he desires.

The information is that the ONGC produces LPG at their fractionators at Ankaleswar, Hazira, Gandhar and Uran. OIL produces their LPG at their fractionator at Duliajon. GAIL's fractionators are located at Auriya in Uttar Pradesh, Lakhuwa in Assam, Gandhar in Gujarat, Vaghodia in Gujarat, Vijapur in Madhya Pradesh and Ussar in Maharashtra.

Competition between Public and Private Airlines

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*325. SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT :
SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA
DESHMUKH :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that some private airlines have announced some lucrative schemes/concessions in their domestic and international flights to attract the customers;

(b) if so, whether the Air India (AI) and Indian Airlines (IA) also propose to announce similar lucrative schemes/concessions in the domestic and international flights to compete with the private airlines;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the manner in which AI and IA propose to meet the challenges posed by the private operators?

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

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) In order to remain competitive Indian Airlines and Air India also introduce market driven schemes from time to time to attract customers. Some of these schemes are Lean sector promotional Fares, Excursion fares, through fares, round trip fares, easy fares, premium traveller programme, companion free scheme, online contest, on line auction etc.

(e) Air India and Indian Airlines continuously take steps to improve the utilization of their capacity by way of marketing initiatives, in-flight initiatives, improvement in cabin ambience etc. Both airlines are also in the process of augmenting their fleet to meet the competition and increase market shares.

[Translation]

SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT : Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the loss incurred by the Govt. due to the competition prevailing between the Govt. and the private airlines and the amount of profit earned by the private airlines. What are the attractive schemes proposed to be implemented by the Govt. to turn Govt. airlines into profit making entity.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : It is a broad question which will require a full discussion.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : It is a very broad question. It is not quantifiable as to what is the loss that is occurring to the public carriers on account of the advent of private carriers. However, all of us do realise that air services are the need of the day and are increasing at a very rapid pace. In fact all the hon. Members - and you have also observed many a time - are keen that there should be more air services.

MR. SPEAKER : Yes.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Only the public carriers would not, in their own right, be able to serve the needs of the large and growing population and their aspirations. However, both the public carriers - Air India

and Indian Airlines - in spite of increased competition have maintained their standards and have been able to face the competition head-on. I would appreciate if the hon. Member also understands that the larger ramification of more air services would mean that there would be public sector and private sector both competing and both having a space for themselves in the growing market place.

[Translation]

SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT : Sir, whether I can ask the second question because this is a joint question.

MR. SPEAKER : What is meant by a joint question? You ask a brief question.

SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon'ble Minister as to what benefits and losses have been accrued by launching of various schemes by the Government namely lean sector, promotional fares, excursion fares, through fares, round trip fares, easy fares, premium travel programme, companion free scheme on-line-contest. on-line auction etc. I would also like to ask the hon'ble Minister as to how much benefits have been availed of by the private services through these schemes.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : I request the hon'ble Members to kindly understand my points. I will not be able to provide the data of profits and losses in this regard. The question is that in this age of competition, all the government and private companies launch several schemes and provide various facilities to attract the passengers. In a way, the travellers are benefited by this competition. So we should welcome this development and we should not have any objection in this regard.

SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has stated that a number of schemes have been launched to attract the passengers. I extend my thanks to him for this. The Airlines play the same important role as the roads and railways play in the development of the nation. There are

a number of people who want to travel by air due to shortage of time. Through you, I would like to ask the hon'ble Minister whether there is any proposal to start air services to inter connect Sholapur, Hyderabad and Mumbai under the scheme to connect major cities to small cities. I appreciate the efforts made by the hon'ble Minister and Shri Sharad Pawar to start air services between Pune and Dubai. I would like to know whether the hon'ble Minister will start the Pune-Sholapur-Hyderabad service.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This is the problem. Only individual areas are mentioned. All reasonable routes should be considered.

[Translation]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : I agree with the feeling of the hon'ble Member that smaller cities should be connected to each other more and more and this can be done through small aircrafts. As I have already told the hon'ble Members that we have tried to make it a point that if each State Government enters into an agreement with the Indian Airlines to connect the internal services of the respective States as has been done by the North-East Council which provides some subsidy to the Indian Airlines to enable the latter to launch some more services in North-East. Thus, the cities in different States in the country, be it Sholapur, Nanded or whichever else, can be benefited by this agreement. I seek the co-operation of all the Members in insisting upon their respective State Governments to sign the agreement.

[English]

SHRI DEEPENDER SINGH HOODA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the last part of the question enquires about the manner in which Air India and Indian Airlines are preparing to face the competition by some of the new entrants.

Now, one of the major phenomena which is sweeping the airlines industry across the world is the phenomena of formation of global alliances. I am not talking about code

sharing or frequent fly up programme partnerships. I am talking about multi-dimensional agreements at multi-dimensional level. Now, these airlines after airlines across the world are finding it strategically and financially imperative and even necessary to be a part of one of these alliances, be it Star World or One World or Sky Team.

To give you an example, there is a pseudo waiting list of new emerging market. For example, China Air is expected to join Star World. China Eastern is expected to join One World South African Airline is expected to join the Sky Team in 2006-07. My question to the hon. Minister, through your esteemed presence, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is this. In an industry where there is such a razor thin profit margins, there is always constant upward pressure on the operating cost part of the balance sheet because of the oil prices and Union negotiations, and constant downward pressure on the top line of the revenue part of the balance sheet because of the new thrust or low cost comparisons, etc. Is the hon. Minister considering Air India of Indian Airlines to be part of one of these alliances?

MR. SPEAKER : Well, I compliment you for your supplementary. You have very well put. I am very happy.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Sir, I share the same sentiments that you have expressed. The hon. Member, though a first time Member and a very young Member, has actually thrown light on a very important aspect of aviation and the trends in aviation. I would compliment him also for his deep knowledge and understanding of the subject.

MR. SPEAKER : Yes, we are happy of the acquisition.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Sir, it is true the Air India and Indian Airlines are flying carriers. In a changing global scenario, they will have to undergo a lot of changes and a lot of new initiatives will have to be taken. As a first step, I appreciate the sentiments of the Member that yes, we must go into major alliances. There are three major alliances operating in the world. As he rightly pointed out,

they are Sky Team, One World and Star Alliance. I am sure that both the airlines are seized of this issue. They are working on these. They are in talks with one of these alliances.

However, there is one fundamental issue, which, I think, all of us do appreciate, and it is that both the carriers have not had a fleet acquisition for a long, long time. The Government, after many years, has cleared the fleet acquisition of the Indian Airlines. As a result, their fleet will start getting upgraded from the middle of next year. So with Air India where, I hope, the process is coming to a finality in the next few days. Once that process is over, I am sure Air India and Indian Airlines as a joint entity and also in terms of synergy would be able to be at a level to talk to any of these Star alliance members or One World or Sky Team. Therefore, we must appreciate that they are in the process. We will, as Government, also encourage them in this endeavour because we know that this is very important for their long-term survival.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to bring it to the notice of the hon'ble Minister of State of the Ministry of Civil Aviation that we should welcome the facilities provided by the Private Airlines to the passengers. These Airlines have lowered their fares which is a welcome step. For example, Deccan Airlines or Kingfisher Airlines charge Rs. 3500/- or Rs. 2500/- for their flights from Delhi to Mumbai or vice versa. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether he is likely to consider upon reducing the fare of the Indian Airlines.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I have another question which is connected to it....(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER : No. No other question.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also agree with the feelings of the hon'ble Member that every Airlines whether it is a private or a Government one, should extend facilities to its customers as well as its fliers through various schemes. However, I do not agree with the view that only

private Airlines companies are providing attractive schemes. Probably the hon'ble Member does not utilize the services of the Indian Airlines more often. Therefore, he does not know much about the facilities being provided by the Indian Airlines. Possibly the Members of our Parliament do not have to use the services of the Indian Airlines. The Indian Airlines also has various such schemes. We have apex fares to attract the increasing number of passengers in the country. We have several such fares which are quite competitive. We have two types of Airlines - one, which is of a very low cost and which provides nil service while another type includes the carriers which provide full services. This distinction will always be there because you will ask for all the facilities in every respect and that, too, in cheap rates. The concept of low cost carriers is a new one for the last some years but the concept of full services carriers still exists in the world. So you will see in our country....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing more will be recorded.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You do not reply to this question. This interruption need not be answered.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Thank you, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : We should recognize and I believe all of us share the view that Indian Airlines are doing an excellent service.

[Translation]

Some people use the service of kingfisher.

(Interruptions)

SHRI CHHEWANG THUPSTAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I extend my thanks to you. In his reply, the hon'ble Minister has mentioned a number of such schemes which the Indian Airlines or the other Private Airlines... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : There is no Indian Airlines now.

SHRI CHHEWANG THUPSTAN : There is Air India and also Indian Airlines....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Now the name has changed to Indian.

SHRI CHHEWANG THUPSTAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has mentioned many such schemes which are available in other sectors. The hon'ble Minister is very much aware that my constituency Laddakh remains cut off from the country for six to seven months. If some one wants to go there or come back from there, he can travel by air only. Sir, I feel very much sorry to state that none of these schemes has been introduced in Leh sector. I would like to know as to what criteria has been fixed for introducing such types of incentive schemes. Moreover, I also want to know whether the hon'ble Minister is likely to introduce these schemes in Laddakh in India and whether he will compel the Private Airlines also to introduce these schemes there.

[English]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Hon. Member is right that Leh area in Ladakh and the entire region needs more connectivity by air because that is probably the only way for at least six months in a year. In fact, at one time, only Government carrier, Indian Airlines used to operate to Leh. Now, private carriers have also started operating and increasingly it will happen that with more connectivity and more Airlines start operating, things will lead to more services even to areas where there are less services today. And more services will lead to better pricing and fares for the customers. As a matter of clarification, though it is Indian, the company remains to be Indian Airlines.

MR. SPEAKER : I see. Okay.

[Translation]

SHRI CHHEWANG THUPSTAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has not replied to my question.

[English]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : I will personally look into that more services start....(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI CHHEWANG THUPSTAN : I would like to ask the hon'ble Minister that in a sector where no services other than aeroplanes can be operated.....(Interruptions). The poor also travel through it.

[English]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : I do appreciate your sentiments.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Veerendra Kumar, did you want to put a question?

SHRI M.P. VEERENDER KUMAR : Yes. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether the fare between Kerala and Gulf countries would be reduced. Now, the fares are high. The bulk of the traffic is from Kerala and because of high fares, the Haj pilgrims are put in trouble. Will you reduce the fares? And the second question is...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No second question. The first one will not be answered.

(Interruptions)

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR : Kozhikode Airport is the main Airport. Will it be conferred the status of an international airport?...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It does not arise here.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : I do not have information about Kozhikode. At the same time, as far as the Huj fares are concerned, we must respect that the Government has a scheme. This year, they have increased the Hajies from 82,000 to 1 lakh. Last year, it increased from 72,000 to 82,000. As far as Hajies going under the Government scheme, the fares remain unchanged since 1994. I do not really see any reason as to why we should be critical on that score.

On Kozhikode, immediately I do not have information.

DR. SUJAN CHAKRABORTY : A number of lucrative

and concessional schemes are now being availed by private companies. The Indian Airlines and Air India are also doing the same. My question is slightly different.

It is seen that fares of private airlines from Mumbai to Kolkata and from Dehi to Mumbai are available at Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 3,000 while the entire cost in this sector including the cost of oil is increasing. So, how is this affordable for them? Is it by compromising on safety?

MR. SPEAKER : This Question is on competition.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : I would answer the second part first. As far as safety is concerned, let me assure the House that we follow the highest safety standards the Directorate General of Civil Aviation has stipulated in accordance with the international guidelines. Any aircraft flying, whether it is a private carrier, low cost carrier, or a public carrier, cannot fly without adhering to the highest safety standards. Our track record, in our country, has been quite good and comparable to anywhere else in the world.

On the other issue, I would say that a carrier could give a lower fare or higher fare. In today's free market competition, let them price the fares and if they could survive at low costs and are able to give a better deal to the passengers, why should we come in the way? ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, please. We are going to have a discussion on this under rule 193.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : I cannot determine at what price the company wants to sell its product. As long as it benefits the customers, why should we come in the way?

MR. SPEAKER : Yes, you are right.

Installation of CAT-3B at Airports

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*326. SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI :

SHRI L. GANESAN :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is now planning to make it mandatory for all domestic airlines to get their pilots trained to operate flights during dense fog using the CAT-3B landing assistance system;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the instructions issued to the domestic airlines;

(c) the response of the domestic airlines thereto;

(d) the names of the airports where CAT-3B system has been installed so far;

(e) the time by which this system is likely to be installed at all airports which are affected heavily by fog; and

(f) the expenditure incurred/proposed to be incurred for upgradation to the CAT-3B system and training of pilots in this regard?

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

Statement

(a) to (c) Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has been asked to examine the technical and legal aspects in this regard. However, various scheduled airlines are asked from time to time to train their pilots for using the ILS CAT-II/III system. It is also insisted upon airlines to have their Training Captains authorized/trained for CAT-II/III operations so that they, in turn, can train maximum number of pilots for CAT-II/III operations to improve operational efficiency during poor visibility conditions. So far, 61 pilots of Air India and 87 pilots of Indian Airlines have been trained and approved by DGCA for Cat-III-A and B operations.

(d) and (e) There is no proposal for installation of CAT III-B ILS at any airport except Delhi. While CAT-III-A system is already operational at Delhi airport, equipment for upgrading to CAT-III-B system has been installed. Testing and trial operations of the system are in progress, following which it will be made operational.

(f) The expected expenditure in installation of the system at Delhi airport is Rs. 11.89 crores. The cost of ILS

Cat-II and Cat-III-B training is approximately Rs.2.52 lakhs per head.

SHRIMATI D PURANDESWARI : In view of the high cost involved in training pilots to use the CAT-3B instrument which facilitates the take off and landing at fog hit airports, most of the private airlines shy away and opt for cheaper options like rescheduling or delaying flights. So, I would seek to know from the hon. Minister through you if the Government would consider any incentives or subsidies regarding training programmes at least at the initial stage, until a considerable number of private airlines' pilots are trained in this aspect.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : The hon. Member has raised a very important question. First, let me assure the House that CAT-3B is the highest level of instrumentation for landing available under foggy conditions anywhere in the world and that is virtually operational now in our Delhi Airport. So, on that count, I think, the Airports Authority has taken it technologically to the level which is required.

Coming to pilot training, pilots have to be trained by the airlines. We have not made it mandatory. However, Indian Airlines has *suo motu* taken up a major exercise of training its pilots to CAT-3B conditions in a big way. Some private airlines are thinking on those lines. There are some technical and legal issues also. We have asked the DGCA to examine how best we could ask all airlines and all pilots to be trained under CAT-3B conditions.

I can inform the hon. Member that even in my written answer, I have stated that the Director-General, Civil Aviation, has been asked to examine the technical and legal aspects in this regard. That is a larger issue. Just for the hon. Member's knowledge, even if on a clear day the pilot does not feel confident to land, there is no rule which could force him to land if he is not comfortable because it is dependent on his skill and judgement. So, we are also examining the legal and other aspects as to how to make training mandatory. But there is no need or reason to offer subsidy for training of pilots because it is a commercial activity. If the airlines are flying, it is their duty also to train the pilots for all possible conditions.

SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI : But if the private airlines opt for cheaper options like rescheduling or delaying flights, it would definitely cause a lot of inconvenience to the passengers. So, in view of that, I had asked him if the Government was considering any incentive or subsidy.

MR. SPEAKER : It is the same question.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : We do not give either subsidy even to our Government carrier. They manage on their own resources. The same applies to all carriers. We find that delays due to fog, especially in Delhi and north Indian airports and also in Kolkata are increasing. So, we are thinking of upgrading the systems and trying to make it mandatory but at the moment the DGCA is examining all the aspects.

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, as you know, I have allowed a discussion under rule 193 on this, which is coming up on the 22nd. Therefore, please be brief.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI : Sir, I would request your indulgence for this question because this is not strictly on foggy conditions.

I would like to know whether there is a move that the training of pilots has been reduced from 250 hours to 180 hours.

MR. SPEAKER : It does not arise out of the main Question.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : I would endeavour to answer it.

MR. SPEAKER : You can say, 'Yes' or 'No'.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : First and foremost, the training hours from the right side to the left side command under international guidelines, the guidelines of ICAO, is 200. That is what we have now stipulated. We cannot go beyond the internationally accepted norms. They had 250 hours earlier. For many years, we have not changed a lot of our rules and regulations. We are absolutely within the

framework of the IATA and the ICAO guidelines. We do not deviate from them. ...*(Interruptions)* It is not 180 hours but it is 200 hours.

SHRI ALAKESH DAS : The expenditure to be incurred for installation of CAT-3B system is Rs. 11.89 crore according to the statement of the hon. Minister, and for the training programme of the pilot it is Rs. 2.5 lakh. This is not a big amount. I would like to know why that should be adopted only in Delhi but not in all other airports. Why has this project been delayed? The passengers have the bitter experience of flying in winters. We have faced this situation. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister why there is a delay.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : The CAT-3B system was installed with some delay earlier but now this year we have upgraded it even from CAT-3A to CAT-3B well on time. In fact, the testing of that equipment is already underway so that if at all fog sets in, in a few days, we could manage it. That is exactly the endeavour. As I said, the fog issue is increasingly felt. We have to look at many other places in future, not just Delhi alone, because in north Indian airports and in Kolkata we are finding this issue. We are examining how to deal with this effectively in the future.

SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL : Thank you, hon. Speaker, Sir.

First of all, would like to compliment the hon. Minister for his dynamism and for the revolution that has taken place in the civil aviation industry. It has also led to a lot of airlines coming in. There is a serious shortage of pilots in the country and as a result hundreds of pilots from abroad are coming in and flying in the country.

MR. SPEAKER : This Question is on CAT-3B.

SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL : There is also a serious shortage of ATC controllers. There are also inordinate delays in flights coming into Delhi. They would circle around for hours together sometimes. I was to land at Delhi at 11.30 p.m. but I landed at one o'clock last night. I would

just like to ask the hon. Minister through you whether the Government is planning to do something on a war footing to sort out all these issues.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : It is a very larger question but I can answer it in brief.

MR. SPEAKER : This question does not arise out of the main Question but we can be a little accommodative.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : We have not taken in ATC staff since almost 1999. We have now inducted a whole new staff. They are undergoing training to ease the pressure on the ATC controllers.

On the other issue of pilots, there is a shortage of pilots because the aviation industry has boomed within a very short time. To temporarily bridge that gap, we have allowed foreign pilots to come in for a limited period of time. Simultaneously, for our own commanders, we have increased the age of service in two phases—first from 60 to 61, and now from 61 to 65.

MR. SPEAKER : This is not the kind of detailed answer to be given now.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : This has been done to be able to make optimum use of these commanders. If one commander of the age of 65 years is on the left side, it is ensured that the age of the other commander is less than 60 so that we do not have any safety issues of any kind in this regard.

MR. SPEAKER : These issues could be raised on the 22nd.

[Translation]

JV Companies with Foreign Airlines

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*327. SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE :

SHRIMATI NIVENDITA MANE :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that some domestic airlines are tying up with the foreign airlines and setting up Joint Venture companies abroad to start international operations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these airlines have sought permission from the Government to start international operations;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken by the Government thereon?

[English]

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

Statement

(a) and (b) According to information available with the Government, Deccan Aviation Ltd. have established a Company in Sri Lanka known as Deccan Lanka, in which majority share holding is of Sri Lanka nationals. However, this is an independent Company and not an Air Deccan venture.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, it is your day today.

[Translation]

SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have not got full reply to my question. I would like to know whether the Government will promote any domestic company which will make efforts in the direction.

MR. SPEAKER : The Government will promote what?

[English]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Sir, I have not been able to grasp the entire question.

MR. SPEAKER : He is asking whether you are permitting this.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Sir, as I said earlier, in the entire industry we have now allowed both private and public sectors to compete. If anybody is interested in coming forward and starting an airline, then considering all the criteria the Government really does not have any serious objection for any new players to come in.

MR. SPEAKER : I think it is enough. I do not think you have a second supplementary.

SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE : No, Sir. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER : Shrimati Nivedita Mane — Not present.

MR. SPEAKER : Q. 328 - Prof. Mahadeorao Shiwankar — present.

Q. 329 - Shri Uday Singh — Not present.

They feel that so many questions will not be taken up.

Q. 330 - Shri Basu Deb Acharia — Not present.

Q. 331 - Shri Sita Ram Yadav — Not present.

Shri Bhuvaneshwar Prasad Mehta — thank you very much.

[Translation]

Rehabilitation of Ex-Servicemen Centre

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*331. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA :
SHRI SITA RAM YADAV :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the laid down policy by the Government for rehabilitation of ex-servicemen in the Government Departments/Corporations, particularly as security guards;

(b) whether the Government is aware that rehabilitation of ex-servicemen, particularly as security personnel,

is not being pursued seriously in several Government Departments/Corporations and where ex-servicemen have been rehabilitated as security personnel, they are being exploited;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the corrective measures being taken by the Government for better rehabilitation of ex-servicemen?

[English]

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

Statement

The Government has various schemes for rehabilitation of ex-servicemen for employment and self employment of which one important scheme is for their engagement as security guards. Directorate General of Resettlement (DGR), under the Ministry of Defence, oversees the functioning of security agencies. Government keenly pursues the rehabilitation of ex-servicemen in all its schemes including the schemes relating to security personnel. All Central public sector undertakings (PSUs) are required to contract security services from ex-servicemen security agencies. State Ex-servicemen Corporations can apply directly to a PSU or its units located in their states. Private ex-servicemen security agencies have to be sponsored by DGR. There are various safeguards built in to ensure that security personnel are not exploited.

[Translation]

SHRI BHUVANESHWAR MEHTA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has given a very vague reply. We are not satisfied with the reply. The reply to all the four parts viz. (a), (b), (c), (d) has been given in one paragraph. He has only mentioned that such and such work is being undertaken for the ex-servicemen. The hon'ble Minister is a very able and efficient Minister. I feel that full reply to the question has not been given. Would the hon'ble

Minister like to state as to what measures have been taken by the Ministry of Defence to ensure accommodation, employment and self-employment for the ex-servicemen in connection with all the four parts viz. (a), (b), (c), (d) of the question?

[English]

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : Sir, all this information is given in the annual statement of the Ministry because these are the very general questions starting from the employment in the security duties, allocation of land, formation of the cooperatives to promote their cause, all these facilities are being available including lateral employment in certain other security organisations after the retirement from the services. In respect of Air Force and in respect of Navy, movement after retirement to private civil aviation and merchant navy etc. - all this information is already available in detail in our reports.

MR. SPEAKER : These are general types of facilities.

[Translation]

SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA : Will the hon'ble Minister give reply in detail?

MR. SPEAKER : The hon'ble Minister has said that Annual Report of the Ministry of Defence can be referred. Would you like to ask him anything else?

SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA : Yes, Sir, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has stated that the Public Sector Companies have been instructed to appoint the ex-servicemen in their undertakings. Does the hon'ble Minister know that in a number of public sector companies, people belonging to private security agencies are also kept in staff strength apart from the ex-servicemen?

[English]

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : Sir, as and when such complaints come we take action. So far as the Central public sector enterprises are concerned, we are

regularly monitoring them through the organisation of the Director General of Resettlement. Most of the Central public sector enterprises are complying with the requirements and they recruit the security personnel through the security agencies recommended and monitored by the Director General of Resettlement. The State corporations can also directly make their offer. So far as the private agencies are concerned, they can also make their offer. But sometimes, some complaints come that these are not being complied with. Whenever such complaints come, the organisation of the Director General of Resettlement looks into it.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell the Minister of Defence, through you, that when a dependent of a servicemen, who has lost his life while on duty, applies for job, faces many hurdles created by the service recruitment board, owing to which they do not get jobs on time. Many such dependents are becoming overage. I want to know from the Minister as to whether the Service Recruitment Board will make any provision to provide jobs to these persons by giving relaxation in age limit?

[English]

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : To some extent the problem that the hon. Member is referring to is genuine. But we also have the constraints because the number of vacancies available to be filled on compassionate ground is just five per cent. The hon. Member will appreciate that the number of casualties is more compared to that of the civilians due to the very nature of the service. In addition to that, the number is huge. Today, right now, there are more than 19 lakh ex-servicemen. Every year about 55,000 new retirees are added.

I am aware of the problem. It is not because of the negligence of the Service Board but because of the demand and availability that there is a huge gap. As I mentioned, just only five per cent of the total vacancies available are being used for the appointment

on compassionate grounds. So, many genuine cases are not being looked into. If we increase it, then in that case the regular employment will be affected. These are the contradictory problems which we have to manage.

SHRI K.S. RAO : Sir, defence personnel are normally popular for their discipline, commitment, devotion etc. A lot of thefts are going on in the museums and also encroachment of their valuable properties. Instead of leaving it as an option to them, will the Government think in terms of making it compulsory to such public sector undertakings to recruit these people in the museums for this purpose?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : Sir, so far as the Defence museum is concerned, surely we have them from the ex-service personnel.

SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL : Sir, to avoid the exploitation of the ex-servicemen while employing them in the corporations, one of the methods could be this. Every District Magistrate is associated with the DSSA Board - District Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen Board. I want to know whether the tenders could be floated and wide publicity is given regarding the re-employment of such ex-servicemen and that machinery through the District Magistrates and through this District Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen Board be used to rehabilitate the ex-servicemen. I want to know whether the Government of India can consider trying this.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : So far as the rehabilitation is concerned, the Rajya Sainik Boards and the District Sainik Boards have a role in this. The question is many of these District Sainik Boards or some Rajya Sainik Boards are not very effective. If they could be made effective, surely they can make their valuable contribution in the resettlement programme.

[Translation]

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question is about providing job to exservicemen. I want to ask the Minister that whether jobs will be given on priority basis

to the widows of the soldiers who had lost their line during Kargil war?

[English]

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : Sir, as I mentioned, for the Kargil widows we made some provisions. In reply to a supplementary question the other day, I pointed out the problems which we are facing.

After all, death is equal, whether a person dies in the normal duty or other duty. When certain persons died in the Kargil operations because of the raised emotions, the monetary compensation was substantially higher in respect of the Kargil casualties. Now the demands start from the normal security casualties, including those in the anti-terrorist operations, that the same amount of compensation may be given to them. Certain facilities were provided in the initial years, but if we have to continue them for a very longer period of time, naturally the quota will be reduced for the other categories.

MR. SPEAKER : Q. No. 332. Shrimati Manorama Madhavraj - not present. Q.No. 333. Shri Dhanuskodi R. Athithan - not present. Shri Shishupal N. Patle - not present.

[Translation]

Railway Hospitals

*334. DR. RAJESH MISHRA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the Railway Hospitals functioning in the country at present;

(b) whether the facilities presently available in the Railway Hospitals are comparatively lesser than those at the Central Government Hospitals;

(c) if so, whether the Government proposes to enhance the facilities in Railway Hospitals;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to set up new Railway Hospitals in the country; and

(f) If so, the details thereof?

[English]

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

Statement

(a) There are 121 Railway Hospitals all over the Indian Railways with details as under :

Central Railway-11; Eastern Railway-9; East Central Railway-8; East Coast Railway-4; Northern Railway-12; North Central Railway-4; Northern Eastern Railway-7; North-east Frontier Railway-11; North Western Railway-8; Southern Railway-11; South Western Railway-4; South Central Railway-5; South East Central Railway-4; South Eastern Railway-6; Western Railway-10; West Central Railway-7; (Total-121)

(b) No, Sir. The facilities in the Railway Hospitals are at par with other Central Government Hospitals.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

(e) Yes Sir, There are proposals for setting up new Railway Hospitals.

(f) The details are as under :

(i) Central (Zonal) hospital at East Central Railway, Rajendra Nagar (Patna).

(ii) Divisional Hospital at South Central Railway, Nanded.

(iii) Divisional Hospital at North Central Railway, Agra.

(iv) Divisional Hospital at South East Central Railway, Raipur.

[Translation]

DR. RAJESH MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Ministry of Railway of the Government of India is a mammoth body. The Hon'ble Minister in his reply to this question has given a list of 121 railway hospitals. In part (b) it has been stated that the facilities available in the Railway Hospitals are at par with other Central Government Hospitals. I want to know, through you, from the hon'ble Minister that a major accident took place a few days back in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh, it was a major rail accident in which large number of people were killed and injured. Some of the injured passengers were shifted to Varanasi, where although the Railways has a hospital, those injured were shifted to Banaras Hindu University Hospital, just because the Railway Hospital was ill equipped as compared to the other Central Government Hospital. Neither it had doctors nor the instruments. Therefore, through you, I want to ask the Hon'ble Minister as to whether the Government will consider to upgrade such Hospitals which are not at par with other Central Government Hospitals?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Will you upgrade the Banaras Hospital?

SHRI R. VELU : Sir, Varanasi Hospital is already a super-speciality hospital where they are specialising on cancer. The hospital is equipped with such kind of facilities as of a big super-speciality hospital.

Now, the hon. Member wants to know whether it could be on par with the Central Government hospitals. It is, but maybe certain aspects will have to be upgraded. It is already a super-speciality hospital for cancer as for orthopaedics and heart surgery, we have Perambur Hospital, Chennai. This is one of the super-speciality hospitals.

He has raised the point that accident victims have not been taken care of and diverted. I will get this point examined. Otherwise, it is a very upgraded and super-speciality hospital.

[Translation]

DR. RAJESH MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had given the example of an accident whereas the hon'ble Minister is talking about cancer.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Be fair. He says that it is a super-speciality hospital for cancer. That is what he mentioned.

[Translation]

DR. RAJESH MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I want to ask another supplementary question. The hon'ble Minister in his reply has stated that four new Hospitals are to be set up in addition to the already existing 121 hospitals. I would like to tell that keeping-in view the large number of passengers, introduction of new trains, occurrences of accidents, I am not going into the reasons for these accidents, the passengers are not getting any relief. I want to know from the Government as to whether these four Hospitals will be set up at those places from where maximum number of trains originates. Whether the Government have identified those places which are accident prone and whether the Government will consider to open more Hospitals at these places in near future?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Apart from four, are you going to open more?

12.00 hrs.

SHRI R. VELU : Sir, there are four hospitals, namely, the Central (Zonal) Hospital at East-Central Railway, Rajendra Nagar, Patna; Divisional Hospital at South-Central Railway, Nanded; Divisional Hospital at North-Central Railway, Agra; and Divisional Hospital at South-East Central Railway, Raipur.

MR. SPEAKER: You have already mentioned it.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the hon. Member further asked if we have identified the hospitals that are accident-prone.

The accidents do happen, and I cannot anticipate at which place the accidents will occur.

MR. SPEAKER : Okay, let us hope that there will be no accidents in the future.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Beena is also a big Junction in Western Railway. Earlier, it's Railway Hospital was renowned for providing better services but right now it has a shortage of doctors. I want to know, through you, whether the Government has any plan to improve the services by appointing a heart specialist and providing night shift services?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Member wants to know about heart patients.

SHRI R. VELU : Sir, the shortage of Doctors is there. but we are also borrowing additional capacity from the open market on contract basis. As regards this particular case, I will look into it.

MR. SPEAKER : All right.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Construction of Overbridges at Level Crossings

*322. YOGI ADITYA NATH :

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government has received some proposals for the construction of overbridges at railway level crossings from various States, particularly in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken by the Union Government thereon; and

(d) the places where overbridges are proposed to be constructed in various States?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD) :

(a) to (d) Railway takes up works for Road Over/Under Bridges (ROB/RUB) in lieu of existing busy level crossings on cost sharing basis where traffic density is more than 1 lakh Train Vehicle Units (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). These works are considered by Railway based on the proposals sponsored by State Govt./local bodies duly fulfilling certain preliminary requisites. In case of level crossing where traffic density is less than 1 lakh TVUs proposals are considered on deposit basis for which initial cost of construction and recurring maintenance charges are borne by sponsoring authority. At present, there are total 443 ROB/RUB works sanctioned on cost sharing basis in the country, the list of which is provided in the Works, Machinery and Rolling Stock Programme of Railways presented to Parliament alongwith Railway Budget documents. Out of these 29 works fall in Uttar Pradesh. The list of works in Uttar Pradesh is enclosed as statement.

As far as action of Railway on the proposals sent by various States is concerned, standard procedure is followed in all such cases. State Govt. is required to submit undertaking viz., closure of level crossing on commissioning of ROB/RUB, advance action for acquisition of land for approaches, joint inspection of site, preparation and approval of General Arrangement Drawings, estimate for approaches etc. The proposals are checked by Railway for ascertaining feasibility of construction at site. The progress of ongoing sanctioned works and their throw-forward etc. is also taken into account and based on the above, an overall view is taken for sanction of new proposals for inclusion in Railway Budget/Supplementary Demand for Grants. Every year a number of proposals are received by Railway from different State Govts. for including the works in Railway Budget. The process is already on for finalization of Railway's Works Programme 2006-07.

Statement

List of sanctioned Road Over/Under Bridge works in State of Uttar Pradesh.

S. No.	Name of work	Year of Sanction
1	2	3
1.	Kanpur-Widening of ROB near Tat Mill crossing at Km 1017/31-35.	2003-04
2.	Lucknow ROB in lieu of LC No. 215/3T at Km 1071/371.35 between Lucknow-Rai Bareilly station.	2002-03
3.	Akbarpur ROB in lieu of LC No 83/A at Km 907/2-3 between Lucknow-Faizabad section.	2002-03
4.	Iradatganj -ROB in lieu of Lxing No. 340/A @1341/4 on Kantni-Allahabad section.	1998-99
5.	ROB in lieu of LC No 8ML at Km 773/11-12 between Badshanagar-daliganj station in Lucknow-Malhour section.	2003-04
6.	ROB in lieu of LC No 3A (T) between Lucknow Junction and Ashbagh station.	2002-03
7.	ROB at Rampur (NH 24) in lieu of level crossing No. 1.	1995-96
8.	Ghaziabad-Tundla section ROB in lieu of LC No. 112-C/3 at Km. 1329/19-21 near Aligarh.	2002-03
9.	Bijnor-Najibabad section ROB in lieu of LC No. 484-A at Km. 1498/13-14 on Bijnor-Najibabad Road.	2002-03
10.	ROB in lieu of LC no. 1/B CNB Crossing at km. 2/31-3 and 218-A (hardoi crossing) at Km. 1076/3-4 on Lucknow-Alamnager & Lucknow-Kanpur main railway lines respectively at Lukcnw.	2004-05

1	2	3
11.	Manduadih Station yard-on of ROB in lieu of LC No. 4/A on western end.	2004-05
12.	Etawah ROB in lieu of LC No. 27	2005-06
13.	Gazizbad-Moradabad section ROB in lieu of LC No. 26-A at Km. 30/20 near Amroha.	2002-03
14.	ROB in lieu of Lc No. 129 between Deoria Sadar-Nunkhar.	1996-99
15.	ROB between Izatnagar-Bareilly city stations in lieu of Lc No. 244, at Km 314/4-5 on Izatnagar-Bareilly section.	2003-04
16.	Delhi-Saharanpur (Sakoti)-ROB in lieu of LC No. 40-B at Km. 91/7-8 on Gaziabad-Saranpur section.	1996-97
17.	Hathras-ROB in lieu of LC No. 95-A at Km. 1296/29-31 on CNB-GZB section.	1996-97
18.	Kanpur-ROB in lieu of L-xing No. 79-D GT Road at Km. 1016/5-12 on ALD-CNB sec.	1998-99
19.	Meja Road-ROB in lieu of LC No. 25-B at Km. 788/11-13 Mugalsharai-Alahabad section near Meja Road.	1998-99
20.	Chaupala-ROB in lieu of LC No. 356-Spl, and 250/A on Muradabad-Lucknow section.	1999-00
21.	Badshahnagar-Daliganj Road over bridge in lieu of Lc No 6-ML.	2003-04
22.	Fatehpur-ROB alongwith subway in lieu of LC No. 50 at Km. 943/3-5 on Allahabad-Kanpur section.	1999-00
23.	ROB at Lucknow City in Lieu of LC No. 6 between Daliganj & Mahibulhampur.	1998-99

1	2	3
24.	Rampur-ROB in lieu of LC No. 403-A on muradabad-Lucknow section.	1999-00
25.	ROB between Mahrauli and Dasna stations in lieu of Lc No 95 at Km 131/12-13 on Muradabad-Gaziabad section.	2003-04
26.	ROB in lieu of LC no. 86-B at Km 181/10-11 on Saranpur-UMB at Sharda Nager.	2005-06
27.	Regirdering of RUB (Bridge No. 38) between Naini-Alahabad section.	2005-06
28.	Hamirpur subway Regirding of Br. No. 1176/1 alongwith replacement of bearing and bed blocks.	2005-06
29.	Regirdering of ROB between Idgah-Agra Fort including rebuilding of new abutment.	2005-06

**International Military Exercise Base at
Kalaikunda**

*328. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA :
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to make Kalaikunda in West Bengal as the international Military exercises base as reported in the *Rashtriya Sahara* dated November 19, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to provide the above base to the Singapore Government for carrying out military exercises on payment basis;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether any agreement has been signed between the Indian Air Force and the Singapore Air Force for carrying out joint exercises; and

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

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (f) The Air Force Station Kalaikunda has been prepared as the air base for facilitating joint air exercises, entailing a total expenditure of Rs. 12.16 crores.

A joint exercise between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) has been planned during January 2006. According to agreement reached during the previous air exercises between the IAF and the RSAF, the RSAF will be paying for the boarding, lodging, consumables like petroleum products and other miscellaneous expenditure.

A Defence Cooperation Agreement has also been signed between India and Singapore on the 13th October 2003 for conduct of joint exercises. However, a Base Support Agreement for the forthcoming joint exercise would be signed before commencement of the exercise.

[English]

Allotment of Time Slots to International Flights

*329. SHRI UDAY SINGH : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) the criteria adopted in allotting time slots to international flights;

(b) whether any irregularity in allotting time slots to international flights has come to the notice of the Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government has ordered a review of time slots given to new international flights; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the further action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) The criterion of airport capacity is adopted in allotting slots to international flights. The airport capacity consists of runway, parking stand, and terminal building capacity.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Computerised Railway Reservation Offices

*330. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Will the Minister of RAILWAY be pleased to state :

(a) the details of Computerized Railway Reservation Offices functioning in the country, Zone-wise;

(b) whether the Government is aware that many of the Computerized Railway Reservation Offices are functioning without Chief Reservation Supervisors and their functions are being additionally discharged by junior officers;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for making the functioning of these offices effective?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD) :

(a) There are 1278 computerised railway reservation offices situated at railway stations and other places. The Zone-wise list is enclosed as Statement.

(b) and (c) All the Computerised Reservation offices operated by railways are manned by adequate reservation staff as per the actual requirements. Chief Reservation Supervisors are posted only in big reservation offices where reservation workload is heavy. The vacant posts of Chief Reservation Supervisors are in the process of getting

filled up as the selections are in progress on various zonal railways.

(d) Some of the important steps taken to make the working of reservation offices effective include provision of latest gadgets like Touch-screen kiosks, display boards indicating the position of availability of accommodation, opening of additional (Passenger Reservation Systems) PRSs etc.

Statement

List of Computerised Railway Reservation Offices available Zone-Wise

As on 08.12.2005

S. No.	Name of Zonal Railway	No. of Railway Reservation Offices working
1	2	3
1.	Central Railway	90
2.	East Central Railway	116
3.	East Coast Railway	45
4.	Eastern Railway	91
5.	Konkan Railway	9
6.	North Central Railway	47
7.	Northeast Frontier Railway	69
8.	North Eastern Railway	74
9.	Northern Railway	184
10.	North Western Railway	59
11.	South Central Railway	94
12.	Southeast Central Railway	35
13.	South Eastern Railway	50

1	2	3
14.	Southern Railway	140
15.	South Western Railway	48
16.	West Central Railway	40
17.	Western Railway	87
Total		1278

[English]

Overloading of Wagons

*332. SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVRAJ : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have received some complaints regarding overloading of wagons;

(b) if so, whether the Railways have permitted such overloading;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Railways have obtained clearance from the Commission of Railway Safety in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(g) the steps taken by the Railways to check such overloading?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD) :
(a) No, Sir, However, cases of overloading beyond permissible limits have been detected during regular preventive as well as vigilance checks.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Does not arise.

(f) Does not arise.

(g) To check overloading of wagons, regular weighment of rake is conducted and punitive charges are levied as per extant rules. Additional weighbridge have been/are being installed.

Agreement between India and Turkey

*333. SHRI DHANUSKODI R. ATHITHAN :
SHRI SHISHUPAL N. PATLE :

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

(a) whether any agreement has been signed recently between India and Turkey in the field of oil and gas;

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

(c) the extent to which this agreement would be helpful to India?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas with the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of the Republic of Turkey on November 24, 2005 to establish the basis for an institutionalized cooperative relationship between the two countries in the hydrocarbon sector. The MOU provides for cooperation in the following areas :-

1. promote links between Indian and Turkish companies in undertaking E&P initiatives in Turkey and India;
2. undertake joint studies and partnerships to secure oil and gas assets in third countries;
3. encourage joint execution of engineering contracts, including oil and gas pipeline projects in Turkey, India and third countries;

4. encourage taking up of LNG and refinery projects in Turkey, India and third countries;

5. undertake basic and applied research and development in the oil and natural gas sector;

6. cooperate in the manufacture, upgrading and supply of drilling rigs and petrochemical processing units;

7. cooperate in regard to environmental issues, including the development of energy policies to pursue energy efficiency, energy research and development, and expansion of the regional energy infrastructure network;

8. promote training of specialists;

9. pursue oil and gas market development; and

10. cooperate in the area of environmental protection, including oil spill emergency response systems.

The MOU will serve to augment the capabilities of Indian organisations in the hydrocarbon sector, while cooperation with Turkish companies will strengthen their efforts in the pursuit of projects in third countries, particularly in Central Asia and the Caspian Region.

Railway Projects

*335. SHRI GANESH SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have received proposals from various States for setting up of new railway projects during the last three years;

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

(c) the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Details of each and every demand regarding taking up new railway projects is not maintained.

However, the details of some of the proposals received from various State Governments for construction of new

lines, gauge conversions and doublings in the last three years and action taken thereon is as under :

State	No. of proposals received for projects	Action Taken
Andhra Pradesh	4 new lines	Surveys have been completed for all the 4 new lines and 1 proposal has been processed for necessary approval.
Assam & NE Region	1 new line and 1 gauge conversion	Survey completed for new line. Gauge conversion proposal is under process of sanction.
Gujarat	6 new lines, 7 gauge conversions and 4 doublings	Surveys have been completed for 6 proposals and taken up for another 9 proposal.
Haryana	3 new lines	Survey has been taken up for 1 proposal.
Himachal Pradesh	5 new lines	Surveys have been completed for 2 proposals and taken up for another 1 proposal.
Karnataka	1 gauge conversion and 1 doubling	Gauge conversion proposal processed for necessary approval, doubling survey taken up.
Kerala	5 new lines and 2 doublings	Survey has been completed for 1 proposal and taken up for another 4 proposals.
Maharashtra	18 new lines, 3 gauge conversions and 4 doublings	Surveys have been completed for 10 proposals and taken up for another 1 proposal.
Orissa	10 new lines and 4 doublings	Surveys have been completed for 3 proposals and taken up for another 5 proposals.
Rajasthan	11 new lines, 3 gauge conversions and 1 doubling	Surveys have been completed for 2 proposals and taken up for another 9 proposals.
Tamil Nadu	3 new lines	Surveys have been taken up for all 3 proposals.
Uttar Pradesh	3 new lines	Survey has been completed for 1 proposal.
Uttaranchal	1 new line, 1 gauge conversion and 1 doubling	Survey has been completed for 1 proposal.
West Bengal	4 new lines	Survey has been completed for 1 proposal and taken up for another 3 proposals.

As regards Railway Electrification, the details of proposals received in the last three years with action taken is as under :-

Andhra Pradesh	Three proposals	One work taken up.
Karnataka	One proposal	Survey taken up.

Rajasthan	Three proposals	One processed for necessary approval.
Haryana	One proposal	Not agreed to.
Uttar Pradesh	Two proposals	One work taken up.
Uttaranchal	One proposal	Not agreed to.
Tamil Nadu/ Pondicherry	One proposal	Work taken up.
Kerala	Two proposals	One work taken up.

Diversion of Funds by NGOs/VOs

*336. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :
SHRI P.S. GADHAVI :

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that a large number of NGOs/VOs are receiving Central Assistance under the various schemes of the Ministry and these organizations divert the funds into non-specific purposes by violating ethical standards and rules;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a detailed audit of the NGOs and VOs which are getting Government funds is being carried out on annual basis;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, whether the Government proposes to formulate a policy for conducting annual audit of accounts of all NGOs and VOs by a statutory authority to check irregularities and misuse of Government funds; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR) : (a) to (f) The grant

in aid to the extent of 90% of the approved project cost is released to the NGO each year on the basis of past performance and on receipt of audited accounts duly certified by a Chartered Accountant. Thus provision for annual audit is built into the schemes.

Before grant-in-aid is released, the NGOs are required to execute a bond agreement with the Government for abiding by certain terms and conditions. The terms and conditions include the utilisation of the grant-in-aid for the specified purpose, maintenance of separate accounts for the grant released and refund of the unspent balance. Whenever it comes to the notice of the Government as a result of inspection or information from other sources, that an NGO has misutilised the grant, further release of grant in aid is suspended. Thereafter, a show cause notice is issued to the management of the NGO and if their explanation is found to be unsatisfactory, action is taken to blacklist the organisation.

Shortage of Manpower

*337. SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any acute shortage of manpower in the Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any study has been conducted by the Railways to standardise the ratio with the manpower and growth and development of railways;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD) :

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Manpower planning on the railways is dependent on operational strategies and technological changes.

[Translation]

Indo-Iran Gas Pipeline Project

*338. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :

SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI :

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

- (a) whether some differences have surfaced between India and Iran over the Gas Pipeline issue;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has presented a detailed action plan before Iran regarding the said Gas Pipeline;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the points on which Iran has raised its objection; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to clarify the objections raised by Iran?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (e) No, Sir. There no differences between India and Iran over the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline project.

The Government is discussing the details of the IPI Project with the Governments of Iran and Pakistan. The discussions are progressing satisfactorily. Two separate, Secretary-level joint Working Groups (JWGs), viz., India-Pakistan JWG and India-Iran Special JWG (SJWG), have been constituted for this purpose. So far, two meetings each of the India-Pakistan JWG and the India-Iran SJWG have been held. The third set of meetings is scheduled for December, 2005. Various technical, commercial, financial, legal and related issues have been discussed at these meetings, which were reviewed by the Indian and

Iranian Ministers at their meeting in Riyadh on 19 November on the sidelines of the function to inaugurate the headquarters building of the International Energy Forum Secretariat.

It is envisaged that the project structure and the Framework Agreement for the project will be finalized by early next year.

Licences for New TV Channels

339. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the new TV Channels having been granted telecasting licences in the country during the last three years;
- (b) whether the Government is aware that in the emerging competitive environment in the broadcasting industry, some TV Channels have been indulging in telecasting news lacking factual basis repeatedly to the viewers;
- (c) if so, whether the Government has received complaints in this regard during the last one year;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) The Ministry has permitted 94 private TV channels to be uplinked from India since January, 2003. A list of such channels is enclosed as statement.

(b) to (e) All programmes telecast on TV channels transmitted/retransmitted through the Cable/DTH network are required to adhere to the Programme Code prescribed under the Cable Television networks (Regulation) Act, 1995. The Government had received complaints against three news channels. No action was taken on one complaint as the Inter-Ministerial Committee constituted to

look into violation of the Programme & Advertising Code was of the view that there was no violation. The other two complaints are being looked into by the Committee.

Statement

No.	Channel Name
1	2
1.	India Vision News
2.	Nepali
3.	Tamilan Television
4.	Sadhna
5.	ND TV India
6.	Headlines Today
7.	Sanskar
8.	Aajtak Tez
9.	Delhi Aaj Tak
10.	CNBC-TV 18
11.	MH 1
12.	SS Music
13.	India TV
14.	Mansi
15.	Comedy TV
16.	Aastha TV
17.	Aastha International
18.	GCV
19.	ETV 2
20.	Sur Sangeet
21.	Ahimsaa

1	2
22.	Sangeet
23.	NE TV
24.	Lashkara
25.	Gurjari
26.	TV9
27.	Care TV
28.	Channel Guide
29.	Star News
30.	Premiere Cinema
31.	Golden Cinema
32.	Classic Cinema
33.	Action Cinema
34.	Khoj TV
35.	Jagran
36.	Bhajan
37.	Delhi TV
38.	Aapka
39.	Cine World
40.	Jaya TV
41.	Jaya Plus
42.	TVC Online
43.	Yes Indivision
44.	Lamhas Classic
45.	Aawaaz
46.	Tamil Thirai (Ttv)

1	2
47.	Balle Balle
48.	Win TV Kannada
49.	Amrita
50.	Total TV
51.	Enter 10
52.	Shakti
53.	S 1
54.	South Asia World
55.	Zoom TV
56.	Seven Star Care
57.	Zee Sports
58.	Shalom TV
59.	Hungama TV
60.	Zee Business
61.	People
62.	Anamda
63.	M-3
64.	Zee TV USA
65.	Zee TV South Africa
66.	Zee International
67.	Zee Cinema UK
68.	Zee Music UK
69.	Alpha Punjabi UK
70.	Zee TV SE Asia
71.	Zee TV UK
72.	NDTV Profit

1	2
73.	JTV Chanel 7
74.	Sudarshan
75.	Asianet Plus
76.	Jhankar TV
77.	Star Anando
78.	Jagran USA
79.	Jagran UK
80.	Classic Cinema USA
81.	Classic Cinema Uk
82.	Action Cinema USA
83.	Action Cinema UK
84.	Zee Cinema USA
85.	Alpha Gujrati USA
86.	Alpha Gujrati UK
87.	Janmat
88.	Broadcaast News
89.	Satya TV
90.	Sonar Bangla
91.	YO Music
92.	Kasthuri
93.	NE HI-FI
94.	Power Vision

[English]

Expansion/Modernisation of Airports

*340. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government has asked the State Governments for sharing the expenditure for expansion and modernisation projects of airports in their respective States keeping in view the requirement of sizeable funds for those projects;

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

(c) the reaction of the State Governments thereto; and

(d) the details of other sources from which the Government proposes to mobilise the funds to complete the expansion/modernisation projects?

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

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

(d) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has plans to approach the market for borrowing a sum of Rs. 4000 to Rs. 5000 crores in one or more tranches over next 4 to 5 years for funding the development/modernisation of tentatively selected 35 Non-metro airports.

Rail Neer

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

(a) whether the 'Rail Neer', a packaged drinking water, is manufactured by the Railways;

(b) if so, the total quantity of 'Rail Neer' sold/supplied by Railways to its catering units and its vendors/customers during each of the last three years;

(c) the quantity of packaged drinking water of other brands sold by Railway catering units/Pantry Car Services during the said period;

(d) whether there is any proposal to sell only Rail Neer drinking water in Railway catering units/dining car services;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) if not the reasons therefor; and

(g) the existing norms to check the quality of Rail Neer and drinking water of other brands sold/supplied in Railways?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD) :

(a) 'Rail Neer', a packaged drinking water, is manufactured by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC), a fully owned Government of India undertaking under the Ministry of Railways.

(b) The details of Rail Neer supplied to departmental catering units and licensees of Railways/IRCTC since 2003 are given in the enclosed statement-I.

(c) The details of packaged drinking water of other brands supplied to departmental catering units and pantry cars since 2003 are given in the enclosed statement-II.

(d) Rail Neer has been decided to be the exclusive brand of packaged drinking water to be procured and sold by the departmental and private licensee operated catering units on the premises of Indian Railways including on trains, subject to availability and supply of the same from IRCTC. Installation of Rail Neer plants and supply therefrom are being implemented in a phased manner. At present IRCTC owns two plants, one located at Nangloi, Delhi and the other at Danapur, Bihar. Each of these Plants is having a production capacity of 6000 cartons (containing 12 bottles of 1 litre), per day for 27 days in a month, i.e., 1,62,000 cartons per month on three-shift basis.

(e) The details of stations and trains where Rail Neer is sold, are given in the statement-III.

(f) Does not arise in view of (d) above.

(g) Rail Neer is produced in 'state of the art' plants having Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certification. The quality parameters of BIS are continuously monitored and periodically tested from BIS approved National Accreditation Board for Testing and calibration Laboratory labs on

rotation basis. Packaged drinking water of other brands procured and sold on Indian Railways has also to comply with the specifications of BIS. Railways conduct frequent

sample checks for other brands also under Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA) and stern action is taken including banning the brand for procurement on Railways.

Statement-I

The details of Rail Neer supplied to Departmental Catering Units and Licensees of Railways/IRCTC since 2003.

(Figures are in Cartons)

Particular	Nangloi Plant			Danapur Plant		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06 (Upto Sept., 05)	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06 (Upto Sept., 05)
Departmental	665567	785321	452929	2185	551522	359664
Licensee	233687	687789	387995	4058	293425	201867
Total Quantity	899254	1473110	840924	6243	844947	561531

*(Each Carton contains 12 Bottles of 1 Litre)

Statement-II

The details of packaged drinking water of other brands supplied to departmental catering units and pantry cars since 2003.

Year	Quantity (in litres) of packaged drinking water of the other brands by Railway Departmental Catering units	
	Static	Mobile
2002-03	8151008	4832041
2003-04	7248713	3893893
2004-05	7253639	2708042
April 2005- Nov.05	3538894	1190219

Details of Packaged Drinking Water of other brands sold by licensee operated units are not maintained by Railways.

Statement-III

The details of stations and trains where Rail Neer is sold.

Rail Neer supplied from Nangloi Plant

Static Units	Mobile Units
1	2
New Delhi Rly. Station	Mumbai Rajdhani Exp.
Old Delhi Rly. Station	Howrah Rajdhani Exp.
H. Nizamuddin Rly. Station	A P Exp.
Rail Bhawan	G T Exp.
Parliament House	T N Exp.
Parliament Annexe	Kerla Exp.
North Avenue	Kalka Shatabdi

1	2	1	2
Jhansi	Poorvottar Sampark Kranti	Pathankot	
Moradabad	Ajmer Shatabdi	Ludhiana	
Tundla	LKO Shatabdi	Jullandhar Cantt./City	
Kanpur	Sealdah Rajdhani	Bhatinda	
Allahabad	Chennai Rajdhani	Amritsar	
Ghaziabad	Trivandrum Rajdhani	Phagwara	
Agra	Amritsar Shatabdi	Dhuri	
Mathura	Dibrugarh Rajdhani	Nabha	
Saharanpur	Guwahati Rajdhani	Kapurthala	
Etawa	Bhubaneshwar Rajdhani	Ferozpur	
Bareilly	Saptkranti Exp.	Ambala City/Cantt.	
Pilibhit	August Kranti Exp.	Kurukshetra	
Jaipur	Sampark Kranti Exp.	Kalka	
Marwar	Kota Janshatabdi Exp.	Yamunanagar	
Phulera	Goa Madgaon Exp.	Panipat	
Alwar		Rewari	
Jodhpur		Chandigarh	
Bikner		Gwalior	
Abu Road		Bhopal	
Kuchamancity		Kathgodam	
Ajmer		Roorkee	
Merta road		Dehradun	
Makarana		Haridwar	
Nerta City		Raiwala	

Rail Neer supplied from Danapur Plant.

Static Units	Mobile Units
1	2
Guwahati	Magadh Exp.
Tinsukia	Sampooran Kranti Exp.
Barauni	Patna Cochin Exp.
Gaya	Brahmaputra Exp.
Bhagalpur	Dadar-Guwahati Exp.
Jamalpur	Farakka Exp.
Kiul	Lokmanyatilak Exp.
Patna	Mahananda Exp.
Sanaetupur	North East Exp.
Arrah	Patna Kural Exp.
Bettia	Patna Amakulam Exp.
Buxer	Patna Pune Exp.
Chapra	Punjab Mail
Dehri-on-son	Rajdhani Exp.
Danapur	Dhanbad Allapy Exp.
Darbhanga	Jharkhand Swam Jayanti Exp.
Hajipur	Dhuli Exp.
Kathihar	Nilachal Exp.
Khagaria	Konark Exp.
Motihari	Hirakund Exp.
Mokamah	Purashottam Exp.
Muzaffarpur	Utkal Exp.
Narkatiaganj	Sampark Kranti Exp.

1	2
Patna	Falaknama Exp.
Rajendra Nagar	Himgiri Exp.
Rexual	Howrah Rajdhani Exp.
Siwan	Purba Exp.
Tatanagr	Coromondal Exp.
Ranchi	Dhubli Exp.
Dahanbad	Mumbai mail
Gomoh	Steel Exp.
Hatia	Geetanjali Exp.
Behrampur	Patna Janshatabdi
Cuttack	Tista Torsa
Khurda Road	Malda Janshatabdi
Rourkela	Sealdah Rajdhani Exp.
Bhubaneswar	
Jaipur	
Angul	
Dhenkanal	
Balugan	
Asansol	
Howrah	
Sealdah	
Burdwan	
Bolpur	
Maldah	
NJP	

1

2

Adra

Bandel

Bankura

Bishnupur

Durgapur

Garbeta

Purulia

Santragachi

Santhali

Gorakhpur

Lucknow

Varanasi

Mughal Sarai

Territorial Army

3286. SHRI M.K. SUBBA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to raise additional battalions of Territorial Army in the North East Region;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the expenditure likely to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Three additional Infantry Battalions of Territorial Army (TA) on the "Home and Hearth" concept have been approved for raising with effect from 1st November 2005, in Manipur, Nagaland and Assam-Tripura.

(c) An estimated expenditure of Rs. 107.51 Crores

is likely to be incurred on the raising of these three Battalions.

Second Container Terminal at Chennai Airport

3287. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) the present status of the Second Container Terminal at Chennai Airport; and

(b) the time by which it is likely to be made operational?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) There is no proposal with Airports Authority of India to construct a Container Terminal at Chennai International Airport?

[Translation]

New Train Between Mumbai-Chandrapur

3288. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any demand for starting a new train between Mumbai-Chandrapur has been made;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Some representations including from an Hon'ble Member of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly have been received for introduction of a train between Chandrapur-Mumbai.

(c) Examined but not found feasible.

[English]

Conference of Non-Aligned Countries Information Ministers

3289. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister

of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether two-days Sixth Conference of Information Ministers of Non-aligned countries was held in Kuala Lumpur recently; and

(b) if so, the issues discussed and the decisions arrived therein?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Sixth Conference of Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries (COMINAC VI) was held on 21st & 22nd November, 2005 at Kuala Lumpur. The Conference was preceded by a two day Senior Officer's meeting on 19th & 20th November, 2005.

(b) The Ministers of Information of the Non-Aligned Countries convened their Sixth Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 21-22 November, 2005 on the theme "Advancing Information And Communication Collaboration Towards A More Dynamic NAM." The main issues discussed were (i) Overview of Global Trends and Developments in Information and Communication, (ii) New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), (iii) Broadcasting Organization of Non-Aligned Countries (BONAC), (iv) Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool (NANAP) and (v) Status of the International Information Centers of Non-Aligned Countries. A declaration was made at the conclusion of the Conference, a copy of which is awaited from the Secretariat of COMINAC VI.

[Translation]

Setting up of International Rail Strategic Management Institute

3290. SHRI Y.G. MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to set up an International Rail Strategic Management Institute in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds allocated alongwith objectives for the purpose; and

(d) the time by which it is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Ministry of Railways are supporting UIC (International Union of Railways)'s initiative to set up International Railway Strategic Management Institute in India.

(b) The Institute is being set up with the objective of keeping hold of railway industry talent and to prepare railway managers to meet the future challenges including that of global rail operations. The Institute is being set up by UIC (International Union of Railways) in India to conduct training/workshops/seminars for Railway Managers of railway systems world-wide, with the partnership of global business schools who would, apart from other topics, also provide inputs in financial matters, market, investment and financial management. Operational expenses of the Institute would be met through income from the investment of endowment capital, raised through one-time contribution from UIC (International Union of Railways), its Members and fee to be charged for the courses conducted for railway managers. Cost of housing the Institute would be borne by the host country (India). After being fully functional, the Institute will function on self-financing basis.

(c) A seed capital of 2.5 million Euros has been contributed for setting up the Institute. Indian Rupees equivalent to US \$2.5 million (approximately) is also earmarked for infrastructure of the proposed Institute.

(d) The Institute is likely to be fully functional by 2010. However, it has become operational since 2005 and one programme has been conducted in 2005 in two parts at Paris and Vadodara.

[English]

EMU Suburban Service

3291. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply given to

unstarred Question No. 3872 dated December 23, 2004 regarding EMU suburban services and state :

- (a) whether the matter has been examined;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor and the time by which the matter is likely to be examined?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) An action taken note on the Audit Para No. 2.2 of Comptroller and Auditor General's (C&AG) of India report No. 9 of 2001 was prepared and sent to the Audit for vetting on 19-05-2005. As per the laid down procedure Action Taken Notes on Audit Paras included in C&AG's Annual Reports are submitted to the Public Accounts Committee duly vetted by Audit, through Ministry of Finance. Accordingly, Action Taken Note will be submitted after vetting by Audit.

Doubling of Mangalore to Shoranur Railway Line

3292. SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the work of doubling Mangalore-Shoranur railway line has been completed;
- (b) if so, when; and
- (c) if not, the present status of the project and the time by which it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) Section-wise position of Mangalore-Shoranur doubling work is as under :-

- i. Mangalore-Calicut-218 Kms. out of 221 Kms of

doubling has been completed except Netravati-Kankanadi section. This balance section is likely to be completed during 2007-08.

- ii. Calicut-Shoranur-Work between Calicut and Kuttipuram has been completed and the balance length is targeted for completion during 2005-06.

Railway Projects of Kerala

3293. SHRI T.K. HAMZA :

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) the details of the railway projects submitted by the Government of Kerala during 2005-06;
- (b) the details of the projects which have been accepted;
- (c) the reasons for rejection of the remaining projects;
- (d) whether the Government is aware that the inadequate fund allocation to the various railway projects in Kerala is hampering the progress of these projects; and
- (e) if so, the steps taken to provide adequate funds for timely completion of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) Record of each and every demand received for new railway projects is not maintained. However, details of the proposals for new railway projects received from Government of Kerala during 2005-06 is as under :-

S.No.	Proposal	Action Taken
1	2	3
1.	Rail connectivity to Vallarpadam	The project has not been found to be viable. The project can be implemented as private railway by Cochin Port Trust which has been advised to the Port Authorities.

1	2	3
2.	Nilambur-Nanjangud Town new line	Survey for construction of new rail line from Nilambur Road to Nanjangud has already been completed. In view of unremunerative nature of the line and acute resource constraint with the Railways, this proposal could not be considered.
3.	Chengannur-Mulanturutti doubling	On this alignment, patch doubling of Kuruppantara-Mulanturutti section has been approved.
4.	Electrification of Shoranur-Mangalore	Electrification of various sections is taken up in priority of traffic density of the route. Shoranur-Mangalore section will be taken up for electrification as and when it becomes due.

(d) and (e) The funds to various projects are being provided as per availability of resources based on State-wise formula. The funds to projects in Kerala are also being provided as per the formula and the projects are not getting delayed on account of fund constraint.

Condition of Children Homes

3294. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government is aware that in the absence of a centralized system among the social welfare departments of the States and Union Territories to trace families of children residing in children homes in Delhi and other States, these children homes are bursting at seams and also lack basic facilities, thus defeating the very purpose of having congenial atmosphere for the development of such unfortunate children;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government is considering to issue any guidelines to be followed by the States so that overall conditions of children homes could be gradually improved over a period of time; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) Government is

aware that in some States/Union Territories, the children homes may be having capacity less than the requirements.

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has issued model rules under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 which lay down the basic requirements for every home such as physical infrastructure, clothing and bedding, nutrition, medical, educational, vocational training and recreation facilities. This Ministry has also been regularly inviting proposals from the State Governments/Union Territories under its scheme, "A Programme for Juvenile Justice" for construction of new children homes as well as for the upgradation of facilities in existing homes.

Assamese Language TV Channel

3295. SHRI NARAYAN CHANDRA BORKATAKY : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any Doordarshan Assamese Language TV Channel;

(b) if not, whether the Government would consider to start a separate Doordarshan Assamese Language TV Channel; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

(SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) Prasar Bharati has informed that Assamese Language programmes are relayed daily in time slots of different durations by 27 transmitters in Assam through the regional transmission of DDK, Guwahati..

(b) Prasar Bharati has informed that, at present, there is no proposal to start a Regional Language Satellite Service in Assamese.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Telecasting of Serials

3296. SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the norms/criteria prescribed for telecasting of serials on various channels of Doordarshan;

(b) whether there is any proposal to make changes in the norms/criteria; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) Prasar Bharati has stated that the guidelines for telecast of programmes/serials under the 'Sponsorship Scheme', 'Commissioned Programme' and 'Self Financed Commissioned Programmes' are available on Doordarshan's website www.ddindia.gov.in.

(b) Prasar Bharati has also informed that there is

no such proposal to make any change in the existing guidelines.

(c) Does not arise.

[English]

Procedure for Disposal of Scraps

3297. SHRI HITEN BARMAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the procedure being followed in screening, evaluating and disposing of Railway scraps;

(b) the details of volume of scrap generated and volume/value of disposal made during each of the last three years;

(c) whether changes/modifications have been made in the erstwhile procedure as per the announcement made in the Rail Budget 2005-06;

(d) if so, details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) The scrap generated is screened and segregated in different categories like melting scrap, re-rolling scrap etc. It is then evaluated by Survey Committee and their recommendations are approved by competent authority before it is declared as scrap for disposal. The sale of scrap is arranged through Public Auction/Advertised Tender. The schedule dates for auctioning of scrap are given wide publicity in the newspapers. Any prospective bidder can participate.

(b) The details of volume of scrap generated and volume/value of disposal during each of the last three years are as under :

Years	Metal Scrap (Metric Tonne)		Rolling Stock				Total value (in Crs. of Rupees)
	Generated	Disposal	Wagons (in Four Wheeler Units)		Coaches plus Locos (in Nos.)		
			Generated	Disposal	Generated	Disposal	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2002-03	1000230	1051014	14489	14788	1107	1237	1111

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2003-04	912081	886846	12625	12151	1365	1403	1314
2004-05	564798	454175	16138	16091	1348	1325	1032

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) No changes were announced in procedure in the budget for year 2005-2006. However, in the Budget for year 2004-05, it was decided to explore the possibilities of in-house utilisation of scrap by recycling it, instead of selling it to outside parties subject to detailed examination of the logistics, cost benefits analysis etc. A high level committee was constituted in this regard which has submitted its report.

[Translation]

Gauge Conversion Work in Rajasthan

3298. SHRI RAM SINGH KASWAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAY be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the no-going railway gauge conversion projects in Rajasthan;

(b) the progress of work done on each project till date;

(c) the expenditure incurred on each project so far; and

(d) the time schedules for completion of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (d) The details of ongoing gauge conversion projects in Rajasthan, progress so far made, expenditure incurred on each project and the target wherever fixed are given as under :-

(Rs. in crore)

S. No.	Name of Project	Expenditure incurred upto March, 2005	Overall physical progress/target wherever fixed
1	2	3	4
1.	Rewari-Sadulpur including Sadulpur-Hissar	0.48	1%
2.	Bhildi-Samdri	2.77	18%
3.	Ajmer-Chittaurgarh-Udaipur including material modification for extension from Udaipur to Umra	175.69	Chittaurgarh-Udaipur section has already been completed and opened for traffic on 27.06.2005. The progress of the remaining section from Ajmer to Chittaurgarh is 45%.

1	2	3	4
4.	Sriganganagar-Sarupsar	0.27	Detailed estimate for formation work, preliminary expenses and bridge work sanctioned. Earthwork and bridge works have been taken up.
5.	Pipar Road-Bhara	3.85	15%
6.	Ajmer-Phulera-Ringus-Rewari	—	The work has been included in the Supplementary Budget 2005-06 and entrusted to Rail Vikas Nigam Limited.

[English]

Children in Jail

3299. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government has sought informations from the various States regarding the children languishing in jails in contravention of Children's Act;

(b) if so, whether any directive has been issued by the Union Government in this regard to the States;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether in view of the magnitude of the problem of the suffering children, the Union Government has considered the desirability of having a fresh look at the entire legislation in this regard and its administration; and

(e) if so, the details and the result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) to (c) The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, inter-alia, provides for juveniles in conflict with law to be lodged in observation homes pending inquiry and not to be put in jails. The Ministry of Social justice and Empowerment has been regularly impressing upon the State Govern-

ments/Union Territory Administrations need for proper implementation of the Act. However, no information has been sought on children in jails.

(d) and (e) Review of the provisions of the Act is an ongoing process.

Overbridges in Andhra Pradesh

3300. SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the projects relating to construction of overbridges on the railway lines crossing on National Highways in Andhra Pradesh are pending with the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government to clear the projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) Railway construct the Road Over/Under Bridges (ROB/RUBs) in lieu of busy level crossings where traffic density is more than 1 lakh Train Vehicle Units (TVUs) on cost sharing basis otherwise on deposit terms. In both the cases proposal is to be sponsored by State Government duly fulfilling the certain preliminary requisites as per extant rules. These works are examined for the feasibility at site, requisite undertakings having been provided by State Government, progress of

ongoing works and throwforward of sanctioned works before being considered for inclusion in Railway's Works Programme.

In addition to works sanctioned on cost sharing basis, at present there are 14 ROB works on National Highways falling in the State of Andhra Pradesh and being executed by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) at their cost. Monthly meetings are held with concerned NHAI/Road authority officials and Railway authorities to sort out pending issues and for expeditious clearance of the design and drawings.

Doubling of Pune-Miraj Railway Line

3301. SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to lay a double line on Pune-Miraj railway line section;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is considering to start new superfast train between Pune and Bangalore; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) An updating survey for Pune-Miraj-Kolhapur doubling (326 kms) has been taken up.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Modernisation and Development of Railway Stations

3302. SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal for modernization and development of Badagra, Koylandy and Thelassery Railway stations;

(b) if so, details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the works are likely to be started ?

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

(b) The details of sanctioned works are as under :-

(i) Extension of platform No. 1 at Badagara Railway station with electrical and communication installations.

(ii) Replacement of Public Address system at Tellicherry.

(iii) Provision of Touch Screen machines at Tellicherry.

(iv) Provision of Passenger Operative Enquiry Terminal at Tellicherry.

(v) Provision of Interactive Voice Response System and Passenger Name Record enquiry with 2 MB connectivity at Tellicherry.

(vi) Provision of Electronic Display Board at Tellicherry.

(vii) 90 metre platform shelter at Quilandi Railway station with electrical and communication works.

(c) The works have already commenced.

[Translation]

Survey of Darbhanga, Kusheshwar, Sthan, Behri, Scindia Railway Line

3303. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government had conducted the survey for Darbhanga-Kusheshwar-Sthan-Behri-Scindia railway line in September, 1997;

(b) if so, the details of the survey report;

(c) whether the Government has re-started the survey work of this railway line; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the rationale behind conducting of new survey after spending huge expenditure on earlier survey?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) A survey for Darbhanga and Saharsa via Kusheswarasthan new line was conducted in 1996-97. As per the results of the survey, cost of the 94 km. long line had been assessed as Rs.166 crore at the then prevailing price level.

(c) and (d) Survey for new line from kusheswarasthan to Darbhanga has been taken up. The survey has been taken up on persistent demands of the people of the area to reassess the traffic potential on this route.

[English]

Shirdi-Puntamba Rail line

3304. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the work on Shirdi-Puntamba new Railway line has been held up;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) The work on the project is awaiting land acquisition.

(c) No target date for completion of the project has yet been fixed.

[Translation]

Community Kitchen

3305. SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies has planned to set up community kitchen in 1.40 lakh villages all over the country; and

(b) if so, the number of community kitchens set up so far, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) Public Sector Oil marketing Companies (OMCs) propose to set up LPG based community kitchens in 1.40 lakh villages across the country over a period of time. As on 1.12.2005, OMCs have set up 1,493 community kitchens in various States of the country. The State-wise details are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Details of community kitchens set up by OMCs in various States/UTs as on 01.12.2005

States/Uts	Number of Community Kitchens
1	2
Andhra Pradesh	42
Arunachal Pradesh	0
Assam	2
Bihar	38
Chhattisgarh	14
Delhi	11
Goa	0
Gujarat	52
Haryana	13
Himachal Pradesh	19
Jammu & Kashmir	38

1	2
Jharkand	49
Karnataka	42
Kerala	8
Madhya Pradesh	99
Maharashtra	267
Manipur	0
Meghalaya	0
Mizoram	0
Nagaland	0
Orissa	20
Punjab	38
Rajasthan	75
Sikkim	0
Tamil Nadu	50
Tripura	0
Uttar Pradesh	596
Uttaranchal	5
West Bengal	15
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0
Chandigarh	0
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0
Daman & Diu	0
Lakshadweep	0
Pondichery	0
Total	1,493

(English)

Borrowing by Oil PSUs

3306. SHRI MAHBOOB ZAHEDI.: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Public Sector oil Companies have started borrowing aggressively from Financial Institutions (FIs);

(b) if so, the total amount borrowed by the Public Sector Oil Companies from Financial Institutions as a short-term loan by the first six months of the current year;

(c) whether the level of credit demand from Public Sector Oil Companies is unprecedented since April-September, 2005 out of the banking cumulative lending of the Oil Companies against the total bank lending in comparison in the last fiscal year;

(d) if so, the details of amount borrowed and its percentage thereof, alongwith the reasons for such higher working capital needs of the Public Sector Oil Companies, company-wise;

(e) whether oil companies in borrowing from banks can avail loans at low interest rate i.e. 5.5 per cent per annum; and

(f) if so, the reasons for borrowing at high interest rate by such Public Sector Oil Companies?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (d) The major public sector oil companies viz. ONGC, IOCL, IBP Co. Ltd., BPCL and HPCL have availed short term loan facility as under :

(Rs. in crore)

Name of the Oil Companies	2004-05	2005-06 (Apr-Sept.)
1	2	3
ONGC	3166.83	2590

1	2	3
IOCL	5345	566
IBP Co. Ltd.	Nil	14.17
BPCL	1308	2307
HPCL	1952	3850

There is an increase in the short term credit demand of some oil companies owing to a temporary cash mismatch brought about by high international oil prices and lower internal accrual because of under-recoveries on the sale of certain petroleum products.

(e) and (f) The oil companies have availed of short term credit facilities where the interest rates range from 5.18% to 6.44%. During April to September, 2005 the rate of interest is linked to Mumbai Inter Bank Offered Rate (MIBOR). One month commercial paper rate is in the range of 6.20% to 6.25% per annum. At present, banks are offering short term loans at an interest rate of 6.75% per annum for a period upto one year.

[Translation]

Passenger Trains

3307. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any scheme to run any of the passenger trains hauling at Kota Junction as 24/26 coach;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any scheme to run Swammandir Mail and Avadh Express as 24/25 coach;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the hurdles in increasing the number of coaches in the said passenger trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Augmentation of trains to 23/24 coach length is an ongoing process subject to traffic pattern, operational feasibility and resource availability.

(c) to (e) No, Sir. At present, there are operational constraints coming in the way of augmenting 2903/2904 Amritsar-Bandra Terminus Golden Temple Mail and 9037/9038/9039/9040 Gorakhpur/Muzaffarpur-Bandra(T) Awadh Express to 24 coaches.

Increase in Frequency of Sachkhand Express

3308. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to run the Sachkhand Express daily;

(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) There is no such proposal at present.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) It is not feasible due to operational constraints.

[English]

Export of ALHs to Chile

3309. SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether India is exporting Advanced Light Helicopters (Dhruv) to Chile;

(b) if so, whether there were any contender in the said deal;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the number of ALHs exported to Chile in the recent past?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE) :

(a) The Advanced Light helicopter (Dhruv) manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has been trial evaluated by the Chilean authorities.

(b) and (c) Major Helicopter manufacturers have participated in the trial evaluation.

(d) No Advanced Light Helicopter has been exported to Chile.

Direct Train Service for Rourkela

3310. SHRI JUAL ORAM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has a proposal to provide additional train facilities to steel city Rourkela;

(b) if so, the steps taken to connect Rourkela by direct train from Hyderabad, Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi;

(c) whether the Government has also a proposal to provide a direct train between Rourkela and Amritsar; and

(d) 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) Does not arise.

[Translation]

New Railway line between Barhaj to Faizabad

3311. SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to lay new railway line between barhaj to Faizabad via Dohrighat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the percentage of work completed so far on the project; and

(d) the steps taken for timely completion of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (d) A survey for a new line from Barhaj Bazar to Faizabad via Dohrighat (190 Kilometre) has been included in the budget 2005-06.

Construction of Footpaths on Railway Bridges

3312. MOHD. MUKEEM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has received several requests for the construction of foot-paths on the sides of railway bridge on the river Banganga on Gorakhpur-Gonda railway line in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Some requests were received for construction of footpath for use of general public on the sides of railway bridge over river Banganga. The requests were examined. The existing metre gauge girder bridge is being replaced by a new railway bridge for broad gauge as part of gauge conversion projects. The existing bridge had gangway for inspection of Railway officials and not for general public. In view of safety & technical considerations, the new bridge shall also not be provided with separate pathway for general public. Incidentally, there is a road bridge upstream of existing Railway Bridge at a distance of approximately 400 metres for the use of general public.

Setting up of Hydro CNG outlets

3313. SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN :

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI :

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

- (a) whether the Government is contemplating to set up hydro C.N.G. outlets in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the locations at which these outlets are proposed to be set up State-wise; and
- (d) the expenditure is likely to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (d) Indian Oil Corporation Limited has recently set up a hydrogen CNG dispensing station at its R&D Center at Faridabad, for the re-fueling needs of test/demo vehicles operating on hydrogen-CNG blends. As the R&D Centre already had hydrogen producing facility, the hydrogen-CNG dispensing unit was set up at a cost of about Rs. 1 crore.

The outcome of the research/demo project will help in taking a view about setting-up such stations elsewhere in the country. The likely expenditure will however vary in terms of the technology used for production of hydrogen. At a conservative estimate, a hydrogen-CNG dispensing station (involving setting up of a hydrogen producing units as well) can cost about Rs. 5 crore, and fuelling infrastructure required for running 1000 hydrogen operated vehicles can cost Rs. 150 crore.

Doordarshan Kendras

3314. SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

- (a) the number of Doordarshan Kendras in the country at present, State-wise;
- (b) whether the Government has received proposals to set up more Doordarshan Kendras in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by the Government thereon and the places where new Kendras are proposed to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) Currently, there are sixty-four Doordarshan Kendras in the country. Details are given in the enclosed statement. There are also available on Doordarshan's website viz. www.ddindia.gov.in.

(b) to (d) Such requests are received from diverse sources from time to time and the details are not maintained centrally. These are considered for appropriate follow-up action. Doordarshan Kendras are proposed to be set up at Calicut in Kerala and Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir.

Statement

S. No.	Name of the State/ Union Territory	Number of Doordarshan Kendras
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	3
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1
3.	Assam	4
4.	Bihar	2
5.	Chhattisgarh	2
6.	Goa	1
7.	Gujarat	2
8.	Haryana	1
9.	Himachal Pradesh	1
10.	Jharkhand	2
11.	Jammu & Kashmir	3

1	2	3
12. Kerala		2
13. Karnataka		2
14. Madhya Pradesh		3
15. Meghalaya		2
16. Maharashtra		3
17. Manipur		1
18. Mizoram		1
19. Nagaland		1
20. Orissa		3
21. Punjab		2
22. Rajasthan		1
23. Sikkim		1
24. Tamil Nadu		3
25. Tripura		1
26. Uttranchal		1
27. Uttar Pradesh		7
28. West Bengal		3
29. Andaman & Nicobar Islands		1
30. Chandigarh		1
31. Delhi		2
32. Pondicherry		1
Total		64

Rail Services

3315. SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to formulate special scheme to enhance the network in the State like Himachal Pradesh where extension of railway services and frequency is negligible;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which the scheme is likely to be materialized; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise

(d) Railway projects are taken up on national perspective considering te operational and other requirements. In Himachal Pradesh, recently a new line between Una and Chararu Takrala has been constructed and one pair of Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) has been introduced on the section for the convenience of the passengers.

[English]

New TV Centres/Radio Stations

3316. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up new TV Centres/Radio Stations in Karnataka during the current financial year;

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

(c) the time by which these are likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) to (c) Prasar Bharati has informed that two Low Power Transmitters (LPTs) of Doordarshan at Mudhol and Sindhnur have been

commissioned in Karnataka during the current financial year. Besides, an additional channel with 1kW FM transmitter (interim set up) of All India Radio at Gulbarga has been made operational in August, 2005. There is no scheme to set up any other new TV and radio station in the state.

Role of Indian Coast Guard

3317. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the role of Indian Coast Guard (ICG) in and around North and Middle Andaman in view of strategic location of Coco Island;

(b) whether the Government has identified the requirements of ICG to combat maritime terrorism;

(c) if so, the details thereof ;

(d) whether there is any need to redefine the role of ICG in view of the scenario of changing world order and new emerging concepts; and

(e) if so, the measures taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (e) The role of the Indian Coast Guard is specified in Section XIV of the Coast Guard Act, 1978. This role includes protecting India's off-shore wealth by preventing poaching, smuggling, illegal immigration and other such unlawful activities in our territorial waters.

The Indian Coast Guard is carrying out its mandated role in the Andaman & Nicobar Island region through its Regional Headquarters situated at Port Blair. The Indian Coast Guard is suitably equipped with state of the art technology, modern armaments and versatile ships to neutralize maritime challenges and threats within the Maritime Zones of India.

Under the Suppression of Unlawful Act, 2002 the Indian Coast Guard is empowered to thwart attempts to maritime terrorism.

Non-availability of Rakes

3318. PROF. M. RAMADASS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that due to mismanagement and non-availability of rakes, Railway freight traffic has suffered significantly;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to improve the system and also to ensure of availability of rakes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) No, Sir. There has been no mismanagement of rakes and due to non-availability of rakes, Railway freight has not suffered.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Steps have been taken to improve terminal management system and wagon turn round. Intensive monitoring through the use of Freight Operation Information System (FOIS) of the rakes at the terminals and review of pattern of examination of the rakes have helped railways in improving the availability of rakes. In addition, based on the projection of traffic in the next financial year, plan for acquisition of additional wagons and locos are also made out. Planning and implementation of capacity enhancement works are being given priority. Improvement in sectional capacity and terminal capacity have helped in increasing availability of rakes for freight loading.

Classic Commissioned Programmes

3319. SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether classic commissioning category, telefilms/teleserials are prepared on literary classics and the programmes so made are commissioned to reputed national/regional Directors by the Doordarshan Kendras of respective States;

(b) If so, the number of teleserials/television films commissioned in the classic category in the current year by the Bhubaneswar Doordarshan Kendra along with the details of the respective Directors.

(c) whether any reputed/renowned telefilm/television serial maker/Director of Orissa was ignored/left out in the process;

(d) if so, whether there is any proposal to award classic commissioned programmes in future to the left out reputed Producers/Directors of Orissa; and

(e) If so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) to (c) Prasar Bharati has informed that telefilms/television serials under Classic commissioning category on literary classics have been assigned to reputed national/regional producers/Directors by Doordarshan Kendras of respective States. So far, the following four eminent/award winning producers/Directors have been assigned commissioning of 26 episodes under Classic commissioning in Oriya language by DDK, Bhubaneswar :

- (i) Shri A.K. Bir
- (ii) Dr. Mehmood Hussain
- (iii) Ms. Parbati Ghosh
- (iv) Shri Sadhu Meher

(d) and (e) Prasar Bharati has informed that the Indian Classics series is being commissioned in phases and in future, other eminent award winning Producers/Directors of Orissa will be considered subject to availability of funds and programme requirements of Doordarshan.

Construction of ROB

3320. SHRI P. RAJENDRAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has sanctioned the construction work of ROB at S.P. office in Kenam city;

(b) if so, whether the construction work has been started;

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

(d) the steps taken by the Government for early completion of the said ROB?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (d) No, Sir. There is no such proposal or sanctioned work. However, a road over bridge has been sanctioned in replacement of level crossing No. 541 at Km. 156/8-9 near S.P. Office at Kollam. Railway portion is to be executed by Railway and approaches by State Government. General Arrangement Drawing (GAD) has been approved. Tenders for Railway portion were called for but had to be discharged. Fresh tenders have been opened on 7.9.2005 and under finalization.

Electrification of Railway lines in Tamil Nadu

3321. SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of electrification of railway line undertaken by the Southern Railway in Tamil Nadu and the progress made so far on electrification work on each project; and

(b) the time by which the electrification of each project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Only one electrification project Villupuram-Pondicherry (38 Route kilometres), the major portion of which falls in Tamil Nadu, is in progress and is targeted for completion during the year 2005-06.

[Translation]

Assistance to Cooperative Societies of Weaker Sections

3322. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENG PATIL :

SHRI V.K. THUMMAR :

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

(a) whether the Government provides assistance to co-operative societies of weaker sections in the country;

(b) if so, the number of such societies to which assistance has been provided during each of the last three years, State-wise; and

(c) the achievements of these co-operative societies therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment provides assistance through National Scheduled Castes Finance & Development Corporation to cooperative societies of Scheduled Caste members.

(b) No Co-operative society has availed financial assistance during the last three years.

(c) Does not arise.

[English]

Transaction with M/s. Denel

3323. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO :

DR. K. DHANARAJU :

SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA :

SHRI RASHEED MASOOD :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government was in touch with the South African Government in the case involving arms manufacture M/s Denel;

(b) if so, whether all transactions with M/s Denel had been suspended after it was learnt that the South African company had engaged an agent, breaking its contractual obligations;

(c) whether South African Minister had visited Delhi to discuss this matter;

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

(e) the action taken/proposed to be taken against the firm?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (e) In the context of news reports about the alleged payment of agency commission by M/s Denel to secure contracts of Anti material Rifles, besides sending notices to M/s Denel, the Ministry of External Affairs was requested to get in touch with the Government of South Africa and furnish the correct position. A decision was also taken to put on hold all contracts already signed and any other future purchases being negotiated with M/s Denel.

Based on the information received from the Government of South Africa through the High Commissioner of India in South Africa, which revealed that M/s Denel had, *prima-facie*, violated the clauses on Agents/Agency Commission contained in the contracts on Anti-Material Rifles signed in March, 2002, a decision was taken in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs to cancel the contract signed on 7-3-2005 for procurement of 400 Anti Material Rifles and also to initiate action to cancel all other contracts.

The matter was discussed by the Minister of Public Enterprises, Government of South Africa, with Raksha Mantri on 9.8.2005.

Taking cognizance of the media reports, the matter had promptly been referred to the CBI for investigation. The CBI has since filed an FIR in the matter against, *inter alia*, unknown public servants.

Induction of Brahmos Missile

3324. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL :

SHRI SUGRIB SINGH :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is facing difficulties in

fixing Brahmos missile in its fighter aircraft as reported in *Dainik Jagaran* dated September 19, 2005;

(b) if so, whether the Government has consulted Russia in this regard;

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

(d) the steps taken by the Government to fix Brahmos missile in Indian Air Force fighter aircrafts?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) No, Sir. There is no fact in this.

(b) to (d) Indian and Russian scientists have jointly established the feasibility of integrating the Brahmos Missile with Sukhoi Aircraft (SU-30MKI) for use by Indian Air Force. Air Force has approved the proposal and work is in progress.

Harassment to Children by Parents

3325. SHRI RABINDRA KUMAR RANA :
SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA :

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

(a) whether the Union Government has asked the State Governments to take legal action against erring parents in case of neglect or harassment of children under Section 125 of Code of Criminal Procedure and also under the Hindu Adoption Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government proposes to give wide publicity in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Reduction in Railway Freight on steel

3326. SHRI SUKDEO PASWAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has received representations from the steel manufacturing companies for reduction in Railway freight on steel;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Jiribam-Tupul Railway line Project

3327. SHRI VIJOY KRISHNA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the present status of Jiribam-Tupul railway line project in Manipur;

(b) the expenditure incurred so far on the said project till date; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for timely completion of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) The final location survey for new line from Jiribam to Imphal Road (Tupul) has been taken up.

(b) An expenditure of Rs. 0.07 crore has been incurred up to 31st March 05. An outlay of Rs. 10 crore has been provided during 2005-06.

(c) The project has been approved as 'National Project' to be funded through additional funds over and above the Railway's Gross Budgetary Support. The target date for completion of the project is March, 2010.

Procurement of Boeing Business Jets

3328. SHRI PRABODH PANDA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government has concluded a contract with M/s Boeing, USA for procurement of three Boeing Business Jets;

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

(c) the time by which these jets will be delivered by the said Company?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The cost of the three aircraft along with initial spares, ground handling equipment, etc. is approximately Rs. 734 crores.

(c) The three Boeing Business Jets along with integration of required fitments, are expected to be delivered in January 2008, June 2008 and October, 2008.

[Translation]

Keeping of Railway Iron

3329. SHRI CHANDRABHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that iron belonging to Railways keeps lying near the railway lines in an unsafe manner and it leads to its theft also;

(b) if so, the number of cases of stolen iron belonging to Railways reported during the last one year;

(c) the action taken against the persons found guilty; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for its safety?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. 1,754 cases of theft of railway items of iron have been reported during the year 2005 (upto September).

(c) 3,241 persons including 34 Railway employees have been arrested during the year 2005 (upto September)

under section 3 (a) of Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1966 and prosecuted in the Court of law.

(d) The following preventive measures are being taken to prevent such theft :-

(1) Iron material, lying near the railway lines are being guarded by the staff of concerned Departments.

(2) As far as feasible, Railway materials are stacked at a place where guarding by staff of concerned Department is feasible or in the vicinity of Railway offices signal cabins/near manned level crossing gates.

(3) Regular preventive checks are being conducted.

(4) Close surveillance is being kept over the activities of criminals and receivers of stolen railway property.

(5) based on criminal intelligence, raids and searches are conducted on the dens of criminals/receivers in order to bring them to book.

Renaming of Airports

3330. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government has any proposal to rename some of the airports in the country;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government has sought the views of the concerned State Governments in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the response of the State Governments thereto; and

(e) the time by which the process of renaming of airports is likely to be materialized?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (d) Proposals for renaming of various airports in the country are considered by Government from time to time. Views of the concerned State Government are normally obtained. While certain State Governments agree to such proposals, sometimes some State Governments do not support such proposals.

(e) The time taken in taking the final decision on renaming proposal is inter-alia contingent on the response time of various consulting agencies.

[English]

Radio Revolution

3331. SHRI V.K. THUMMAR :
SHRI SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has decided to bring about a radio revolution by improving the scope of 400 FM Radio Stations and 4000 Community Radio Centres;

(b) if so, whether Government is considering to liberalise the rules in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which the rules are likely to be liberalized?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government has, on 13th July, 2005, notified the policy for expansion of FM Radio broadcasting services through private agencies (Phase II). The Policy, inter-alia, provides for One Time Entry Fee (OTEF) to be decided on the basis of closed tender system, annual fee @ 4% of gross revenue subject to a minimum of 10% of Reserve OTEF, foreign investment including FDI, upto 20% of the paid up equity, continued restriction on broadcast of news

and current affairs and a graded penalty regime for violation of terms and conditions. The policy also provides for migration of Phase I operators to Phase II regime. Further details are available on Ministry's website www.mib.nic.in.

The Proposed policy regarding Community Radio is under consideration by a Group of Ministers.

Completion of Railway Projects under South Western Railway

3332. SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the reasons for delay in completion of doubling of railway lines between Bangalore-Kengeri, Kengeri-Ramnagar and Yeshwanthpur-Tumkur sections under the South Western Railway; and

(b) the steps taken by the Government to complete these projects expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Yeshwantpur-Golahalli (26 Kilometre) of Yeshwantpur-Tumkur and Bangalore-Kengeri-Bidadi (27 Kilometre) of Bangalore-Kengeri & Kengeri-Ramanagaram doubling projects are targeted for completion during 2005-06.

The reasons for delay are as under :-

- i. The matching funds have not been provided by the State Government for Bangalore-Kengeri-Ramanagaram doubling which is affecting the progress of works.
- ii. Delay in supply of sleepers.

The matter has been taken up with the State Government for release of funds. Necessary action has also been initiated for arranging sleepers.

[Translation]

Changes in Exploration Licensing Policy

3333. SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK :
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :

SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO :

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL :

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

(a) whether the Government proposes to alter the new Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) in order to increase the production of petrol and diesel in the country;

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

(c) whether the Government has since received any report from the Petroleum Federation of India in this regard;

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

(e) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (e) NELP is concerned with exploration and production of crude oil and gas, not of petrol and diesel. The Ministry held a meeting of stakeholders at a CEOs conclave under the auspices of Petrofed on 7.7.2005, where the issue of modifying NELP after comparing the position in other countries was discussed. The Ministry asked Petrofed to undertake a study on suggested improvements to be effected in NELP after taking the views of industry members. Petrofed has submitted its report. The salient features of the report are given in the enclosed statement. Consultations have been held on the suggestions contained in report of Petrofed with stakeholders. The Government targets to launch NELP-VI during the first quarter of 2006. The suggestions will be appropriately incorporated in the bid documents for NELP-VI.

Statement

1. Categorization of the blocks based on the risk-reward perception of the blocks.
2. Availability of data at single platform.

3. Concurrent bidding round and proposed open acreages licensing policy.

4. Offering development acreages in consumption with exploration acreages.

5. Get speculative seismic data acquisition done through sponsoring at no cost to the Government of India.

6. Need to put in place an independent regulator.

7. Sharing of non proprietary data after five years.

8. Fine tuning of Bid Evaluation Criteria (BEC) weightages specially Minimum Work Programme (MWP).

9. Strict enforcement of Production Sharing Contract penalty terms w.r.t. MWP.

10. Reduction in number of clearances required.

11. Freedom to choose seven years tax holiday period.

[English]

Strengthening of Urban/Suburban Railway Network

3334. SHRI D.V. SADANAND GOWDA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have undertaken some works for strengthening the urban/suburban railway network in various cities of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the percentage of Railways in funding of each of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Railways have undertaken some works for strengthening the urban/suburban railway network in Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Secunderabad.

(b) and (c) A statement is enclosed.

Statement

The details of projects/works and the percentage of railway's funding are given City-wise in following tabular form

Name of City	Name of the Work		Estimated Cost (Rs. in crore)	Expen- diture upto Mar.05	Funds Allocat- ed for 2005-06 (Rs.in crore)	Perce- ntage of funding of the project	Remarks	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Chennai	Tirumailai- Vellachery ph.II (11kms)	Railway State Govt.	244.46 488.93	225.05 346.85	3.39 6.88	33% 67%	Track works have been completed from Tirumailat to Taranmani (7.91kms) and the section between Tirumailai and Tiruvanmiyur (5.95kms) has been opened for passenger traffic. Works are in progress to complete works in balance length.	
	Chennai Beach-	Railway	231.13	144.30	3.03	50%		Work completed.
	Tambaram- Changalpattu gauge conversion from Meter Gauge to Broad Gauge	State Govt.	231.13	144.31		50%		
Mumbai	Thane-Turbhe- Nerul-Vashi	Railway State Govt.	131.47 271.92	124.84 207.53	5.84 57.44	33% 67%	Thane-Turbhe-Vashi double line com- muter corridor (18.50 km) has been opened for traffic on 9.11.2004. All works have been completed except construc- tion of Rabale Station Building, which is in progress. The work on Turbhe-Nerul section (4.80 km) is in progress.	
	Belapur- Seawood-Uran	Railway	163.49	26.26	5.00	33%		Earth work upto Jassai has been com- pleted. Works are progressing satisfacto- rily in Minor bridges, Major Bridges, and Panval Creek Bridge
		State Govt.	331.95	40.94	30.52	67%		

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Mumbai Urban Transport Projects	Railway State Govt. World Bank loan	756.00 756.00 1613.00	485.68 485.68	147.00	50% 50% 50%	Rail component of Mumbai Urban Transport Projects is being executed on a 50:50 cost sharing basis between Railways and State Govt. of Maharashtra. A loan of Rs. 1613 crore will be repaid by Railways and Govt. of Maharashtra on 50:50 sharing basis.
Kolkata	Extension of Metro Railway From Tollyganj to Garia (8.50 km)	Railway State Govt.	608.15 299.54	207.29 76.50	63.00	67% 33%	The proposed extension is for a length of 8.50 km with 6.80 km. being on elevated viaduct. Civil Engineering works are in progress. Progress achieved so far is about 30%.
	Circular Railway: a) Extension from Princepgat to Majerhat (5.80 km)	Railway	229.00	144.61	45.00	1001%	Both these work are being extended as single line electrified sections. BG, EMUs will ply on these lines.
Secunderabad/	Multi Model Transport	Railway	42.96	24.94	0.10	50%	Work completed
Hyderabad	System of Falaknuma- Secunderabd (14.54 km) and Hyderabad- Secunderabd- Lingampalli	State Govt.	42.96	24.94		50%	

Requirement of Locos

3335. SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the number of existing shunting Locos at Ernakulam Diesel Loco Shed are inadequate to cater to the requirement in the Thiruvananthapuram, Palakkad and Konkan Divisions;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (d) whether there is any proposal to increase the present capacity of Ernakulam Diesel Loco Shed; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. Ernakulam diesel shed caters to the requirement of shunting locos in Trivandrum (Thiruvananthapuram) Division only. For other units, shunting loco requirement is met from other diesel sheds.

- (d) At present there is no proposal to increase the existing capacity of Ernakulam diesel shed.
- (e) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Rail Land Development Authority

3336. SHRI RAKESH SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) the present status regarding setting up of Rail Land Development Authority;
- (b) the time by which it is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Amendment to the Railways Act, 1989 as approved by Parliament has been notified in the Gazette of India on 16.9.2005 after President's assent. Formulation of Rules for constituting the

Authority is in progress. The Authority shall be in a place in due course thereafter.

[English]

Defence Minister Visit to Russia

3337. SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY :
SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN :
SHRI ARJUN SETHI :
SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI :
SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD :
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Minister of Defence visited Russia recently;
- (b) if so, the whether several bilateral defence agreements have been concluded with the Government of Russia; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) Raksha Mantri visited Russia from 15-16 November 2005 to co-chair the 5th meeting of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC). The Commission reviewed progress of ongoing projects and deliberated on further enhancing the military technical cooperation between the two sides. Protocols of the 5th IRIGC-MTC Working Group on Military Technical Cooperation and the Working Group on shipbuilding, Aviation and Land Systems were signed. Both sides expressed satisfaction at the on-going level of defence exchanges and cooperation between the two countries. No bilateral agreement was signed with Russia during the visit.

Modernisation of Rail Traffic Infrastructure

3338. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPAPARAI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government has received proposals for review of facilities and modernization of railway traffic

infrastructure as well as railway safety keeping into account the present level of railway transport users ratio;

- (b) if so, the details in this regard;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to establish efficient project management system in the Railways;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the time by which these proposals are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) No, Sir. However, various Zonal Railways and other Units of Indian Railways periodically make investment proposals under Works and Rolling Stock Programmes for modernization of railway traffic infrastructure in order to make the system safer and competitive. These are scrutinized and sanctioned under established procedure including Parliamentary approval.

(b) Status of various on-going works is contained in Works, Machinery and Rolling Stock Programmes of Railways for 2005-06, which is a part of Railway Budget document.

(c) to (e) Railways already have an established system of project monitoring and management. The projects are regularly being reviewed at field, Zonal and Board's level. Development of map based on line Project Information Management System to monitor on-going projects on Indian Railways has been considered to be done in phases.

[Translation]

Broadcasting Centre in Rai Bareilly

3339. SHRI MOHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up a Broadcasting Centre of Akashwani / Samachar Bharati Service (FM Channel) in Rai Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the areas to be covered by this radio station in Uttar Pradesh; and

(d) the capacity of the proposed radio station and the expenditure likely to be incurred on it?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A FM Relay Station with 20 kW FM Transmitter has been included in the 10th Plan at Rai Bareilly in U.P. at an estimated cost of Rs.11 crore subject to approval and availability of funds. It will provide FM coverage within a radius of 85 Kms.

Besides the entire district of Rai Bareilly, this will also cover parts of the districts of Allahabad, Banda, Barabanki, Chitrakoot, Faizabad, Fatehpur, Kanpur (urban), Kaushambi, Lucknow, Pratapgarh, Sultanpur and Unnao in the State.

Issue of Pre-Paid Smart Cards

3340. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :
SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to appoint commission agents in rural areas for the sale of tickets to remove the problems of passengers for purchase of tickets;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether pre-paid smart cards are also proposed to be issued for the urban passengers;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the benefits to be accrued to the Government and the general public therefrom; and

(e) the stations at which the said scheme is proposed to be launched in the first phase and the time by which it is likely to be launched?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU) : (a) and (b) Presently there is no such sanctioned scheme of appointing commission agents in rural areas.

(c) and (d) 'Smart Card System' for issue of suburban journey tickets was introduced at five suburban locations on Central Railway i.e. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Dadar, Ghatkopar, Thane & Kalyan during the year 2002-03.

(e) In view of poor response to the scheme at present there is no proposal to expand it further. Moreover, there is no other sanctioned scheme of pre-paid smart card for urban passengers.

Prices of Petroleum Products

3341. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN" :
SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN :

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

(a) whether the "Energy and Research Institute" in their study report has stated that diesel and petroleum consumer prices in the country should be fixed on the basis of open market instead of import price;

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

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The main recommendations of The Energy & Resources Institute (TERI) report on "Petroleum Pricing in India : balancing efficiency and equity", are as under:-

(i) The Government must, as soon as possible, move to a system of market-determined pricing of petroleum products as recommended by the Expert Technical Group.

(ii) The import parity pricing formula needs to be revisited to ensure that the Indian refining

industry enjoys a rational margin that is fair to producers as well as consumers.

(iii) The Government can define a sliding scale for excise duties that would ensure that its revenue expectations remain untouched with changes in international prices of crude and products. This would not only ensure that the consumer does not have to face the cascading effect of an *ad valorem* duty but also make transparent and certain the response of the Government to international price changes.

(iv) The State Governments can also devise a similar formula.

(c) In order to formulate a long-term pricing policy for petroleum, products, the Government have constituted an inter-ministerial Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. C. Rangarajan, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.

The Committee is mandated to look into various aspects of pricing and taxation of petroleum products with a view to stabilizing/rationalizing their prices, keeping in view the financial position of the oil companies, the investment needed in the sector, the need to conserve petroleum products, and establishing a transparent mechanism for the autonomous adjustment of prices by the oil companies. Taking into consideration the interests of all stakeholders concerned, the Committee will suggest a comprehensive mechanism for pricing and taxation of sensitive petroleum products, and other allied issues.

Completion of Maksi-Godhra Railway Line

3342. SHRI CHHATTAR SINGH DARBAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the work on Maksi-Godhra railway line has been delayed due to lack of allocation of sufficient funds;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to provide adequate funds for completion of the project expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) On Godhra-Indore via Dahod, Jhabua, Dhar & Dewas-Maksi new line project, work on Dewas-Maksi section has already been completed. Necessary action has also been initiated to obtain requisite clearances to take up work on balance length.

[English]

Installation of CUTE

3343. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the software CUTE (Common User Technical Equipment) installed by Airports Authority of India has been a cause of delays and congestion as reported in 'Hindustan Times' dated November 17, 2005; and

(b) if so, the efforts being made to resolve the issues and make the system more friendly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) No, Sir. Airports Authority of India (AAI) has not installed CUTE system at any airports of AAI.

(b) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Extraction of Methane from Seabed

3344. SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA :
SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI :

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

(a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme to extract methane from under the seabed;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the progress made so far in this regard; and

(d) the expenditure incurred thereon so far?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (c) Government of India have formulated a National Gas Hydrate Programme (NGHP) for carrying out Research and Development (R&D) in the field of exploration and development of gas hydrate resources of the country. The technology for extraction of gas (mainly methane) from gas hydrates is at present not available anywhere in the world and efforts are at the R&D stage.

(d) An expenditure of Rs. 18 crore has been incurred so far on R&D for implementation of the NGHP.

[English]

Construction and Maintenance of Roads

3345. SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN :
SHRI HEMMAL MURMU :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any provision for allotment of funds under community development or peripheral development for construction and maintenance of roads on railway stations, railway offices, railway colonies and its areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total funds allotted and released to each Zonal Railway under peripheral development/community development for construction and maintenance of roads during the last two years and the current financial year; and

(d) the amount actually spent by each Zonal Railway during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) No, Sir. There is no provision for separate allotment of funds under "Community Development" or "Peripheral Development" for construction and maintenance of roads in Railway areas. Such

works are done under "Revenue" Demand No.4, or as part of sanctioned projects.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Criminal Activities in Railway Platforms

3346. SHRI K.S. RAO : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government Protection Force in uniform has been identified to have employed corrupt means encouraging the bad characters to become incharge of railway platforms and exploit the minors selling small articles;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there has been increase in criminal activities on the railway platforms affecting the safety and security of passengers;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to check this tendency and to eradicate corruption from among the protection force in uniform?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Constitution of DRUCC and ZRUCC in Railways

3347. SHRI S. AJAYA KUMAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has constituted Divisional Railway Users Consultative Committees (DRUCC) and Zonal Railway Users Consultative Committees (ZRUCC) in different Zones and Divisions; and

(b) if so, the details of the criterion being followed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Yes, Sir. Railway Users' Consultative Committees at Zonal & Divisional levels have been constituted for a two years term w.e.f. 01-08-2004.

(b) In these Committees, representation is given to local Chambers of Commerce and Industries, Trade Associations, Passenger Associations, Agricultural Interests, Consumer Forums, Handicapped Associations, Representatives of State Government, State Legislatures, Members of Parliament etc. in addition some members are also nominated to represent the interests of those users who have not been otherwise given representation.

[Translation]

Chair Car facility in New Delhi- Mumbai Rajdhani Express

3348. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether chair car facility was available in New Delhi-Mumbai August Kranti Rajdhani Express earlier;

(b) if so, whether the chair car facility has been withdrawn from the said train;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and since when this facility has been withdrawn;

(d) whether the Government has received any requests/representations from various quarters for re-introducing chaircar facility in the train;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the action taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. In view of

over-night travel and long hours of journey, there were frequent complaints from passengers about discomfort in AC Chair Car coaches. Railways started production of AC 3 Tier coaches in which nearly same number of berths were available as the number of seats in the Chair Car thereby providing better comfort to the travelling passengers. With effect from 10.01.1999, 4 AC Chaircars provided earlier on 2953/2954 Nizamuddin-Mumbai August Kranti Rajdhani Express were replaced with one 2-tier AC Sleeper and three 3-tier AC Sleeper coaches.

(d) to (f) Some representations including that from the Hon'ble MP have been received. These have been examined but not found feasible for acceptance.

Jobs to Dependents of Land Oustees

3349. SHRI D.B. PATIL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether jobs have been given to the dependents of all those persons whose land was acquired for Nanded Division Railway Office;

(b) if not, the number of such cases still pending;

(c) whether persons are demanding their land back who have not been given jobs; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) An employment notice was issued during 1995 calling for applications from the land losers. In response to the notification, 47 applications were received. After scrutiny, 26 eligible applicants were offered appointment and 21 applications were rejected on grounds of ineligibility.

(b) No such case is pending.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

FDI Norms for Airports

3350. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL :
SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI :
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has prescribed any FDI norms for the development of Airports;

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal to relax these norms; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) Foreign equity participation in development of greenfield airports, in general, is permitted upto 74% under the automatic route and upto 100% through FIPB approval. For the modernisation and restructuring of Delhi and Mumbai airports, FDI to the extent of 49% has been permitted.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Air Services from Adampur to Delhi

3351. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is an air-base of Air Force at Adampur in Punjab

(b) if so, whether this air-base is also used for landing of VIP airplanes;

(c) if so, whether the Government proposes to start some civilian flights from Adampur to Delhi;

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

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

(b) Aeroplane carrying VIPs are permitted to use the aerodrome as and when need arise, subject to approval of Ministry of Defence.

(c) to (e) It is upto airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability and airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of route guidelines issued by Government. At present, no request has been received from any scheduled airlines to start air services from Adampur in Punjab.

[English]

PSUs under I and B

3352. KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH :
 SHRI ANIRUDH PRASAD ALIAS SADHU
 YADAV :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

- (a) the details of Public Sector Undertakings functioning under the administrative control of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting;
- (b) whether the Government has reviewed the performance of these PSUs;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYÁ RANJAN DASMÚNSI) : (a) to (d) There are two Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, viz., Broadcast Engineer-

ing Consultants India Limited (BECIL) and National Film Development Corporation (NFDC). The review of these PSUs is an ongoing and continuous exercise undertaken by the Government from time to time.

The performance of these PSUs comes under review both by the Ministry as well as the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) under the aegis of the Ministry of Heavy Industry. The terms of MoU are also finalised in consultation with the DPE. There has been a quantum leap in respect of the profit of BECIL from Rs. 8.60 lakh in 1995-96 to Rs.201.25 lakh during the financial year 2004-05 and based on its performance, it has been assigned a provisional rating of 'Very Good' by the DPE. NFDC has become active with the amalgamation of Film Finance Corporation and Indian Motion Pictures Export Corporation with it in 1980. NFDC has also been getting good/fair ratings till 2004-2005.

However, as for the fiscal performance of NFDC is concerned, while it was a profit making organization during the fiscal years 2000-01 and 2001-02, for the subsequent three consecutive financial years till 2004-05, it has been incurring losses. A number of steps have been taken to streamline its functioning and to curtail its losses which, *inter alia*, include down-sizing the strength of staff, introduction of Voluntary Retirement Scheme and extending financial assistance by the Government.

Production of TV Serials

3353. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

- (a) whether there is any scheme of the Doordarshan for collaboration in the field of production of TV serials;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any norms have been formulated in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the number of TV serials produced by DD in joint ventures during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati has stated that there is no such scheme for collaboration in the field of production of TV serials. However, Doordarshan has entered into co-production arrangements with private producers in a few cases.

(c) and (d) Prasar Bharati has stated that though there are no specific norms in this regard, however, a decision in such cases is taken based on criteria like capability of the production team, suitability of the programme for telecast, technical quality, market potential, cost of production, subject matter etc.

(e) Prasar Bharati has stated that during the last three years one talent hunt show titled 'Kalakaarz' has been produced by Doordarshan in joint venture.

Exploration and Production Data

3354. SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons has been empowered to keep all exploration and production data held by exploration licensees;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Directorate General of Hydrocarbons has also been given powers to check overseas exploration and production strategies of the State run oil companies;

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

(e) whether the exploration companies are maintaining the exploration data etc.; and

(f) if not, how Directorate General of Hydrocarbons would be able to keep a check on the functioning of exploration companies?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) Under the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) regime, all data/information acquired by the contractors belongs to the Government of India and contractors are required to give copies of all such data/information to DGH. With respect to exploration areas held by National Oil Companies (NOCs), namely ONGC and Oil India Limited (OIL), the Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 1959 (P&NGR) stipulate that they would provide all data on relinquishment of an area.

Government have designated DGH to receive and maintain all such data.

(c) and (d) As per the Gazette Resolution dated 8th April, 1993, on functions and responsibilities of the DGH, DGH can advise the Government on the strategy to acquire equity oil and gas from abroad. As such, DGH is invited to participate in meetings of the Empowered Committee of Secretaries when proposals requiring such inputs are discussed.

(e) All companies under PSC regime maintain all data at their offices in India and deliver copies of the same to DGH. With respect to nomination blocks held by NOCs, the data is maintained by them and copies given to DGH on relinquishment of an area under the PNG rules.

(f) In view of (e), issue does not arise.

[Translation]

Change In Railway Time Table

3355. SHRI AJIT JOGI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has decided to bring radical changes in all India Railway Time Table in view of changes in infrastructure and operation techniques of Railways during the last few decades;

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

(c) the time by which the new time table is likely to be prepared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, improving the time table to suit the convenience of travelling passengers is an ongoing exercise and is designed taking into account technological and infrastructural improvements and operational feasibility.

(c) Time Tables are generally effective from 1st July of every year.

[English]

Action Plan of IOC

3356. SHRI ANIRUDH PRASAD ALIAS SADHU YADAV : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has formulated any action plan to be achieved by 2011-12;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the strategy chalk out for implementing the action plan?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) Yes, Sir. Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) has formulated an action plan to emerge as a US \$ 60 billion company by 2011-12.

(b) The major initiatives to achieve this action plan by 2011-12 include pursuing new growth paths in the areas of exploration and production, diversification into gas business, integration in petrochemicals, downstream marketing and exports of products and services.

(c) The strategy to implement the action plan includes project investments across the value chain, both within the country and abroad, and alignment of resources to achieve these corporate objectives.

[Translation]

Abolition of Prasar Bharati

3357. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has taken a decision to bring AIR and DD under the control of Government again by abolishing Prasar Bharati;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the steps taken by the Government for strengthening the autonomy of the Prasar Bharati?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Prasar Bharati enjoys autonomy under various provisions of the Prasar Bharati (Boardcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990. Besides, a committee has been appointed by the Government on 30th March, 2005 for suggesting a viable capital and financial structure for Prasar Bharati to strengthen its functioning.

[English]

Proposals for State Government Airlines

3358. SHRI RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government has received proposals from some State Governments for setting up of their own airlines;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) The

State Government of Kerala proposes to set up an airline to operate flights to Gulf Region.

(c) According to the Government regulations, airlines must have a fleet of 20 aircraft and a minimum 5 years continuous flying experience in domestic sector before seeking overseas flight rights. Moreover the Government has also reserved the Gulf route for Air India and Indian Airlines for 3 years. As such, clearance has not been given to the State Government proposal.

**Formation of Joint Venture by
GAIL and HPCL**

3359. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether GAIL (India) Limited and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited propose to form joint venture to pursue oil and gas exploration;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total investment earmarked for this purpose;

(d) whether there is any proposal to go abroad for exploration; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) On 16th November 2005, GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly identify and pursue Oil, Gas, Exploration and Production (E&P) activities in India and abroad. This is expected to meet the strategic needs of both the companies. The scope of the MoU includes the following:

(i) Prepare a 'Blue Print' for E&P business model for India and Overseas.

(ii) Identify and evaluate business opportunities in

E&P related sectors in India as well as countries in Middle East, South Asia, Africa and other regions of interest.

(iii) Joint bidding for Blocks in NELP, CBM Bidding Rounds in India and abroad;

(iv) Jointly Explore possibilities for farm-in option in already awarded exploration blocks in India and abroad;

(c) No investment has been earmarked for such ventures at present. Investment quantum will depend on the type of E&P opportunities available and pursued.

(d) and (e) Although, no bid has been submitted till date by GAIL & HPCL consortium for any exploration & production blocks, GAIL has recently bid for exploration blocks in Australia along with Prize Petroleum (a JV of HPCL, ICICI), OILEX NL and GSPC.

**Inclusion of Pasi Community in
SC List of A.P.**

3360. DR. BABURAO MEDIYAM : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Pasi community is recognized as Scheduled Caste (SC) in 13 States in the country;

(b) if so, whether the said community is not being included in the SC list of Andhra Pradesh;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the reaction of the Government for inclusion of said community in the SC list of Andhra Pradesh?

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

(b) and (c) The Government of Andhra Pradesh has not recommended inclusion of Pasi community in the list of Scheduled Castes.

(d) Only those proposals which are recommended by the concerned State Government are considered as per the approved modalities.

[Translation]

**Radical reforms in Trains and
Railway Stations**

3361. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has issued instructions to the General Managers of the Railway Zones to introduce radical reforms in trains and railway stations and make foolproof arrangements of complaints redressal within stipulated time limit;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is aware that despite the instructions, arrangements have not been made for redressal of complaints in various Zones; and

(d) if so, the corrective steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (d) As per instructions Commercial Control Rooms for redressal of public complaints are in place in Railway Divisions and Zonal Headquarters. These are already dealing with redressal of public grievances reported to them.

Construction of Railway Bridge

3362. SHRI TUFANI SAROJ : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government had conducted any survey for the construction of railway bridge near Tari Ghat on the Ganga River in Gazipur District;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(c) the hurdles/problems in construction of the said railway bridge?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[English]

Overhauling and Maintenance Facilities

3363. SHRI ABDULLAKUTTY : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether as a pre-condition to placement of orders for Boeing/Airbus, India has sought foreign investment in Civil Aviation sector by establishing repair, overhaul and maintenance facilities in India;

(b) if so, whether Boeing Airplane Company and Airbus Industries have committed to provide facilities for maintenance, repair and overhaul of their aircrafts in India; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) Issues relating to counter trade/offset commitments are taken up as part of the process of finalisation of the Purchase Agreement.

(c) and (c) In the case of Indian Airlines order Airbus Industrie will assist in creation of MRO facilities in India. The estimated investment is of the order of US\$100 million/ As regards Air India, the arrangements are yet to be finalised with the manufacturers.

[Translation]

**Establishment of Doordarshan Kendras and
relay centres in U.P.**

3364. SHRI MUNAWAR HASSAN : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to establish new Doordarshan Kendras and Doordarshan Relay Centres in Uttar Pradesh in the near future;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which these Kendras/Centres are likely to be established?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) to (c) Prasar Bharati has informed that there is no scheme to set up any new Doordarshan Kendra/Relay centre in Uttar Pradesh. A permanent studio facility at Gorakhpur is under implementation, which is expected to be ready in 2007.

[English]

Agreement between IOC and Gulf Oil

3365. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has entered into an agreement with Gulf Oil for selling Gulf car care products through IOC retail outlets;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the benefits likely to be derived by IOC from the agreement?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) While the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) have not signed any agreement, as such, with Gulf Oil for the sale of Gulf car care products through their retail outlets, they have formalized an arrangement with Gulf Oil for the sale of such products through some of their select retail outlets. The current arrangement, which is for a period of three months on a pilot basis, covers five cities, namely, Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Chandigarh and Ahmedabad. In each of these cities, about 10 to 15 retail outlets have been selected for trial marketing of M/s Gulf Oil's car care products. The products being sold on a trial basis include AC neutralizers, various types of car polishes, and tyre repair

products. IOC plan to review this pilot arrangement in the month of January, 2006. The decision to enter into a formal agreement will depend on the commercial success of the pilot arrangement, both for IOC and Gulf Oil.

(c) The sale of car care products is part of the additional services proposed to be rendered at IOC's retail outlets, with a view to improving customer service and retaining customer loyalty. The sale is also likely to be a source of additional revenue to the dealers. Therefore, if IOC signs an agreement with Gulf Oil consequent upon the success of the pilot project, it is expected to lead to a higher retention of customers as well as the generation of additional income to dealers, thereby benefiting IOC in the long run.

[Translation]

National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

3366. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE :
SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY :

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

(a) whether the National Commission for Minorities has made any recommendations on the composition of recruitment of the police force;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these are being implemented in all the States;

(d) if not, the names of those States; and

(e) the measures taken by the Union Government for implementation of the said recommendations by the State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) and (b) The National Commission for Minorities though has recommended increasing the representation of the minority communities in the police forces, yet no specific recommendation

regarding the composition or percentage of representation of each of the five notified minority communities in the police forces of the Union and State Governments has been made.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

[English]

Railway Overbridges in Orissa

3367. SHRI ARJUN SETHI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of pending projects for the construction of railway overbridges on cost sharing basis at important and heavy traffic points in the State of Orissa;

(b) Since when these projects are pending and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken to clear these projects expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Railways construct 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 (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 the State Govt. fulfilling certain preliminary pre-requisites required under extant rules. No firm proposals for construction of Road over bridges received from the Government of Orissa are pending with the Railways for sanction.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Gauge conversion of Sholapur - Gadaq Rail Line

3368. SHRI M. SHIVANNA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the expenditure incurred so far on the gauge conversion of Sholapur - Gadaq railway line;

(b) the funds provided for the project during the current financial year;

(c) the present status of the project; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Rs. 260.83 crore.

(b) Budget outlay of Rs. 15 crore has been provided during 2005-06.

(c) and (d) On this project, gauge conversion of Solapur-Bijapur (110 kms) has already been completed and commissioned. The balance work i.e. gauge conversion of Bijapur-Gadaq (190 kms) is being executed on cost sharing basis (50:50) with the Government of Karnataka. On Bijapur-Basavana-Bagewadi (45 kms) track linking has been completed. Work on the balance section has also been taken up. No target for completion of the project has been fixed.

[Translation]

Frequency of Moradabad - Sambhal Rail Bus Service

3369. DR. SHAFIUR RAHMAN BARQ : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the frequency of Moradabad-Sambhal Rail Bus Service in the Moradabad Division is very low;

(b) if so, the details therefor;

(c) whether there is any proposal to increase its frequency;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the frequency of the said service is likely to be increased?

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

pairs of Rail Bus services are available on Moradabad-Sambhal Hatimsarai section.

- (b) Does not arise.
 (c) No, Sir.
 (d) and (e) Do not arise.

[English]

Study on Loss of Sleep

3370. SHRI K.C. SINGH "BABA" : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences, New Delhi has conducted any studies regarding loss of sleep resulting in short term memory and other ailments in army jawans posted at higher altitudes;

- (b) if so, the detailed findings thereof; and
 (c) the remedial steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) DIPAS, a laboratory of DRDO has conducted study on sleep patterns at high altitude during the process of acclimatization.

(b) and (c) There are sleep disturbances at high altitude like increased episodes of awakening and periodic breathing. These are normal processes of acclimatization and help in preventing further accentuation of hypoxemia at high altitude. An elaborate schedule of acclimatization has been evolved as preliminary step to reduce sleep disturbances.

Business secured by RITES Ltd.

3371. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA :
 SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL
 SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the RITES Limited has secured business contracts from abroad;

(b) if so, the details of the contracts secured by the RITES Ltd. during 2004-05 and 2005-06;

(c) the details of the turnover achieved by RITES Ltd. during the above period; and

(d) the profits earned by the RITES Ltd. during each of the last three years?

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

(b) The details of the contracts secured by the company during 2004-05 and 2005-06 so far is as under:

Year	Total number of contract secured	Total Value
2004-05	53	Rs. 439 Cr.
2005-06	28	Rs. 108 Cr.
(upto Oct.'05)		

(c) The details of the turnover achieved by the company during 2004-05 and 2005-06 so far are given below:

Turnover	2004-05	2005-06 (upto Oct.'05)
Foreign	Rs. 51 cr.	Rs. 45 cr.
Domestic	Rs. 171 cr.	Rs. 93 cr.
Total	Rs. 222 cr.	Rs. 138 cr.

(d) The profits earned by the company during the last three years are as under :

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Profit after tax	Rs. 95 cr.	Rs. 48 cr.	Rs. 41 cr.

Conversion of Nuapada-Gunupur Rail Line

3372. SHRI B. MAHTAB : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether conversion of Nuapada-Gunupur narrow gauge railway link project has been completed;
- (b) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether any study has been conducted for extension of this railway link to Theruvali; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

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

(b) The work is being progressed as per the availability of resources.

(c) and (f) The bankability study of Naupada-Gunupur gauge conversion project with extension of the line up to Theruvali has been taken up.

[Translation]

Gauge conversion of Narkatiaganj-Bhikluathori Railway Line

3373. SHRI KAILASH BAITHA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government has any proposal regarding gauge conversion of Narkatiaganj-Bhikluathori railway line;
- (b) if so, the time by which the work of gauge conversion is likely to be started by the Government;
- (c) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government for providing Mahajogin halt between Gaunaha and Bhikluathori railway stations; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) The gauge conversion of Narkatiaganj-Bhikluathori section has been approved as a part of gauge conversion of Jaynagar-DarbhangaNarkatiaganj rail line.

- (b) Preliminary works like detailed survey, preparation of detailed estimate etc. have been completed.
- (c) No, Sir.
- (d) Does not arise.

[English]

Export of Wheels Sets

3374. SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) the number of railway wheel sets produced during each of the last three years;
- (b) the number of wheel sets consumed domestically and the number of wheel sets exported during the said period; and
- (c) the steps taken to increase the production and export of wheels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) The number of railway wheel sets produced during the last three years is as under:

Year	Wheel sets produced
2002-03	27984
2003-04	32200
2004-05	32732

(b) All the wheel sets were consumed domestically; except for 52 wheel sets which were exported to Malaysia in 2003-04.

(c) Setting up of a wheel shop at Chhapra in Bihar, is under process to supplement the production of wheels.

Programme Production Centres

3375. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up Programme Production Centres in the tribal areas of Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which these are likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Modernisation of Old Godowns at Ganj Basoda

3376. SHRI RAM CHANDRA PASWAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to modernise the old godown at Ganj Basoda under the Central Railway;

(b) if so, the funds earmarked for this purpose; and

(c) the time schedule fixed for its completion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A work for augmentation of loading/unloading facilities at Ganj Basoda under West Central Railway at a cost of

Rs. 81.00 lakh has been sanctioned in the August 2005 under Supplementary Demands for Grants for Expenditure of the Central Government on Railways. The allocation of the year 2005-06 is Rs. 1.00 lakh. Since it is a new work, the plans are being finalized for execution.

[English]

Task Force on Global Strategic Developments

3377. SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has constituted any Task Force on global strategic developments;

(b) if so, details of its composition, functions and the terms and conditions thereof; and

(c) the time by which the Task Force is likely to submit its report of the Government?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) To Government has constituted a Task Force on "Global Strategic Developments" to examine various facets of the evolving global strategic developments and their implications for India. The Task Force comprises nine members namely K. Subrahmanyam (Chairman), Prof. Amitabh Mattoo, Shri Arvind Virmani, Shri F.K. Pachauri, Shri Tarun Das, Air Marshal (Retired) Vinod Patney, Prof. M.S. Ananth, Prof. P. Rama Rao and Commodore Uday Bhaskar who is also designated as Member-Secretary. The tenure of the Task Force is initially for a period of six months. The terms and conditions of appointment of the members of the Task Force are broadly same as applicable to members of any National Commission. In respect of members and experts who are in Government Service, the respective service rules would be applicable. No specific time frame could be indicated at this stage for finalization of the Report by the Task Force.

[Translation]

Outstanding Dues against UNO

3378. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any amount is outstanding against the UNO for the participation of Indian soldiers in peace mission;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the efforts made by the Government to realize the said amount from UNO?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) India has been an active participant in the peacekeeping operations conducted by the United Nations (UN) since 1950. For their services in UN Peacekeeping Missions, reimbursement is made by UN Headquarters towards troops cost, contingent owned equipment (CoE), and for self sustaining items like office and catering equipment, furniture, etc. The process of reimbursement is that the UN carries out a verification of the manpower and equipment deployed in the Mission Areas. Based on this verification, the reimbursement is calculated and payment certified by the UN.

As on 30.11.2005, a sum of Rupees 389.14 Crore (Approx) is due from the UN for ongoing Missions.

The balance outstanding dues for the closed missions are Rupees 70.04 Crore (Approx).

The issue relating to payment of dues is constantly pursued with the UN through the Permanent Mission of India, New York.

Electrification of Katni-Allahabad and Jhansi-Manikpur Rail Routes

3379. SHRI GANESH SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal for electrification of Katni-Allahabad and Jhansi-Manikpur railway routes; and

(b) if so, the time by which the work is likely to be completed on these routes?

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

(b) Does not arise.

[English]

Investment by Public Sector Oil Companies

3380. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that the Public Sector Oil Companies have made investments in other industries in and outside the country;

(b) if so, the details of the investment made by these oil companies during each of the last three years; and

(c) the profit earned through such investments by these public Sector Oil Companies during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Upgradation of Railway Stations under NF Railway

3381. SHRI M.K. SUBBA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any scheme for upgrading certain railway stations under the North Frontier Railway as model stations;

(b) If so, the details of the stations identified for the purpose;

(c) the progress of the work done so far in this regard; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) With a view to provide upgraded passenger amenities, 32 stations under the Northeast Frontier Railway have been nominated as model stations. These are Alipurduar Jn., Aluabari Road, Araria Court, Cooch Behar, Dalkolha, Dharmanagar, Dibrugarh Town, Dimapur, Ghum, Gosaigaonhat, Guwahati, Harishchandrapur, Jalpaiguri, Jorhat Town, Kamakhya, Katihar, Kishanganj, Kokrajhar, Lumding, Mal Bazar, New Alipurduar, New Bongaigaon, New Coochbehar, New Jalpaiguri, New Mal Jn., New Tinsukia, Purnea jn, Raiganj, Rangiya jn., Silchar, Siliguri Town and Srirampur.

(c) Work has already been commenced. 10 stations viz. Katihar, New Jalpaiguri, Kishanganj, New Cooch Behar, Guwahati, New Tinsukia, Alipurduar jn., New Alipurduar, Dharmanagar and Lumding are targeted for development during 2005-06.

(d) March. 2008.

Passenger Traffic

3382. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the average number of passengers travelling by the Railways, Zone-wise;

(b) whether there is an increase in passenger traffic over the year;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the measures taken/to be taken care of the growth in passenger traffic;

(d) if so, the details and salient features thereof; and

(e) the date from which the said scheme become effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) The total number of passengers travelled by Railways (comprising by 16 zones and Metro Rail) during 2004-05 (latest available) was 5513 million and the average for each zone/metro works out to 324 million. The zone-wise actual number of passengers (2004-05) is given below:

Railway	No. of passengers (in million)
Central	1261
Eastern	761
East Central	163
East Coast	41
Northern	437
North Central	118
North Eastern	140
Northeast Frontier	34
North Western	84
Southern	459
South Central	205
South Eastern	157
Southeast Central	67
South Western	82
Western	1330
West Central	77
Metro	87
Total	5513

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The number of rail passengers during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 have been 5048, 5203 and 5513 millions respectively.

Railways have taken following steps to take care of the growth of passenger traffic:

- (i) To generate additional seating capacity in trains by introducing additional trains and by changing the profile of trains through Passenger Profile Management (PPM) project.
- (ii) To enhance load of patronised trains to the maximum.
- (iii) To attach additional coaches to clear waiting list.
- (iv) To improve utilisation of coaching stock so as to ward off the shortage of coaches.
- (v) To ease ticket distribution introducing automatic ticket vending machines, computerising ticketing, opening additional windows where required etc.

(d) and (e) A scheme of Frequent Travellers (SOFT) is being launched which will be applicable to 1st AC, 2AC & AC Chair Car classes. A Frequent Traveller will get a complimentary train trip after certain number of reward points are accumulated.

(f) The SOFT scheme is likely to be started in the current Financial Year 2005-06.

Setting up of New Rail Coach Factory

3383. SHRI HITEN BARMAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government proposes to set-up any new Rail Coach Factory in the country;
- (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 IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Institutions for Neglected Children

3384. SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI :
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :

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

- (a) the number of institutions working for homeless, neglected and delinquent children, State-wise;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to set up more such institutions in various States;
- (c) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and
- (d) the time by which these are likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) As per the information available with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the State/Union Territory-wise information is given in the enclosed statement.

(b) and (c) The homes are set up by the concerned State Governments/UT Administrations in accordance with the requirements.

(d) The time to be taken for the construction of these institutions is decided by the State Governments/UT Administrations.

Statement

S.No.	States	No. of Homes
1	2	3
1.	Tamil Nadu	19

1	2	3
2.	Orissa	5
3.	Rajasthan	4
4.	Sikkim	1
5.	Haryana	7
6.	Meghalaya	3
7.	Chhattisgarh	12
8.	Goa	2
9.	Karnataka	62
10.	Nagaland	2
11.	Gujarat	55
12.	Kerala	22
13.	Madhya Pradesh	24
14.	Assam	7
15.	Maharashtra	291
16.	Andhra Pradesh	18
17.	Punjab	13
18.	Mizoram	4
19.	Chandigarh	1
20.	West Bengal	32
21.	Tripura	1
22.	Delhi	14
23.	Uttar Pradesh	93
24.	Bihar	14
25.	Himachal Pradesh	3
26.	Jharkhand	7

[English]

Upliftment of Mushar Community

3385. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government proposes to formulate any scheme for the economic and social upliftment of Mushar community which comes under the Scheduled Caste category of Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government has received any proposal from Government of Bihar in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reaction of the Union Government thereto alongwith release of funds thereunder?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

[English]

Development of Medium Battle Tank

3386. SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the present status of the development of Medium Battle Tank (MBT);

(b) the time by which it is likely to become operational;

(c) the original estimated cost and the escalated cost of the project thereof;

(d) whether some foreign countries have made any demand to procure the MTB; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Main Battle Tank Arjun is currently under production at Heavy Vehicles Factory, Avadi under the aegis of Ordnance Factory Board (OFB). Users have placed an indent of 124 tanks with OFB. The entire quantity will be produced by March 2008.

(b) Five Arjun tanks have been handed over to Army for evaluation. Twenty nine tanks will become operational with the users by June 2006.

(c) The original estimated cost of Rs. 15.50 crores in May 1974 was revised to Rs. 305.60 crores at the time of completion of the project during March 1995 due to change in specifications and scope of the project.

(d) and (e) There has been no such demand.

[Translation]

Developmental Work of Kota-Bina Railway Line

3387. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have undertaken upgradation and developmental works on Kota-Bina railway line section, West Central Railway;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which these works are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The following works in this section have already been sanctioned:

1. Work of Panel Interlocking at 6 stations in Kota-Baran Section.

2. Provision of Tokenless Block Instruments at Mahadeo Khedi-Karod Section.

3. Provision of additional loop line at Mahadeo Khedi.

4. Loop lines along with Panel Interlocking with Tokenless Block Section Instruments at 8 stations on Baran-Ruthiyai Section.

5. Provision of Foot Over Bridge at Mungaoli.

6. Provision of Passenger Amenities on Platform No. 1 & 2 for making model station at Guna.

7. Provision of Additional loop line at Sogariya.

8. Improvement of station circulating area at Baran.

(c) Kota-Bina Section is an identified high density traffic route and the works will be taken up on priority.

[English]

Proposals from Karnataka

3388. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Karnataka has forwarded some proposals to the Union Government regarding release of central share for 2003-04 to Karnataka SC/ST Development Corporation for schemes of SC, central assistance under centrally sponsored schemes for construction of Ashram buildings for SCs for 2004-05, release of grants for 2003-04 for the maintenance of Residential Schools and Release of grants for maintenance of educational blocks in low literacy pockets for the development of women literacy in tribal areas;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Union Government thereon and the present status of the proposals;

(c) the reasons for keeping the proposals pending therefor and the time by which these proposals are likely to be cleared;

(d) the total allocation sought by the State Government for the above proposals; and

(e) the criteria/guidelines laid down to clear such proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Scheme wise status of the proposals in respect of Scheduled Tribes is given in the enclosed statement-I

No such proposal has been received in respect of Scheduled Castes.

(c) The requisite information is given in the enclosed statement-II.

(d) The requisite information is given in the enclosed statement-III.

(e) Funds are released as per the prescribed guidelines contained in the schemes.

Statement-I

Scheme-wise status of the proposals

S. Name of Scheme No.	Year of Sanction	Status of proposal
1. SC/ST Development Corporation	2003-04	A proposal of Rs. 144.00 lakhs was received from the State Government of Karnataka and also the Karnataka SC & ST Development Corporation during 2003-04. However due to paucity of fund only Rs. 14.00 lakhs was sanctioned during 2003-04.
2. Establishment of Ashram School in TSP area for STs.	2004-05	Rs. 77.51 lakhs as arrear grant for completion of 5 Ashram Schools sanctioned during 2002-03.
3. Grant-in-aid to NGO for Residential School	2003-04	The grant amounting Rs. 10127087/- has been released to nine NGOs.
4. Educational Complex in low literacy pocket	2003-04	The grant amounting Rs. 2366000/- has been released for one Educational Complex.
5. Eklavya Model Residential School	2003-04	Rs. 97.00 lakhs.

Statement-II

Reasons for pending of the proposals scheme-wise

S.No.	Name of the Scheme	Reason for pending of the proposals
1	2	3
1.	SC/ST Development Corporation	Proposal of Rs. 144.00 lakhs was received but only Rs. 14.00 lakhs was released during 2003-04 because of

1	2	3
		paucity of fund. The proposal of the Corpn. Would be considered during 2005-06 alongwith proposals received from other State Finance Devp. Corpns.
2.	Establishment of Ashram School in TSP area for STs	Proposal for Rs. 227.51 lakhs was received from the State Govt. for construction of 10 new Ashram Schools and for completion of 5 Ashram Schools sanctioned during 2002-03. Due to paucity of fund only Rs. 77.51 were released during 2004-05 for completion of the schools sanctioned during 2002-03. The remaining amount has been released during the current financial year (2005-06).
3.	Grant-in-aid to NGO for Residential School	There is no pendency under these schemes.
4.	Educational Complex in low literacy pocket.	
5.	Eklavya Model Residential School	

Statement-III

Allocation sought by the State Government

S. No.	Name of Scheme	Year of Sanction	Amount sought by the State Government
1.	SC/ST Development Corporation	2003-04	Rs. 144.00 lakhs
2.	Establishment of Ashram School in TSP area for STs.	2004-05	Rs. 227.51 lakhs
3.	Grant-in-aid to NGO for Residential School	2003-04	Rs. 101.27 lakhs
4.	Educational Complex in low literacy pocket	2003-04	Rs. 23.66 lakhs
5.	Eklavya Model Residential School	2003-04	Rs. 97.02 lakhs.

**News and Current Affairs Programmes
on Regional Kendras**

the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be
pleased to state :

3389. SHRI NARAYAN CHANDRA BORKATAKY : Will

(a) whether the Government is aware that news

and current affairs programmes under the sponsored category in Regional Kendras of Doordarshan has been discontinued;

- (b) if so, the reasons thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to re-start the said programmes?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati, an autonomous statutory corporation, has informed that News and Current Affairs programmes under the sponsored category in regional kendras of Doordarshan, have been discontinued in accordance with a decision taken by the Prasar Bharati board to undertake all news bulletins as an in-house activity.

- (c) Prasar Bharati has informed that no such proposal is under consideration.

Training of MES Officers Abroad

3390. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether Military Engineer Services (MES) Officers are being sent for training to foreign countries keeping in view the expanding technological advancement in Warfare; and

- (b) if so, the number of officers sent for such training during each of the last three years, country-wise?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) No, Sir. Since Military Engineer Services (MES) does not deal with warfare activities, MES officers are not sent to foreign countries for training on warfare.

- (b) Question does not arise.

Policy for Allotment of Petrol Pumps

3391. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Will the

Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government proposes to change the existing policy for allotment of petrol pumps in the country;

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

- (c) whether the Government is aware that private companies are manipulating and compelling the public sector petrol pumps owners to change their locations from one place to another;

- (d) if so, the number of such cases came to the notice of the Government during the last three years; and

- (e) the steps taken by the Government to check such activities of private companies?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) Based on certain broad parameters advised by the Government to the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs), the latter have framed their guidelines for the selection of retail outlet dealerships, LPG distributorships and SKO-LDO dealerships for viable locations in the country, and have been making selections and allotments of such dealerships/distributorships in terms of these guidelines. These guidelines, which are objective and transparent in nature, provide for a detailed procedure to be followed by the OMCs in making selection/allotment of dealers/distributors. At present, no change in policy in the matter of allotment of retail outlets, is contemplated.

- (c) and (d) No, Sir. The OMCs have not come across any instance of private companies manipulating and compelling their retail outlet dealers to change their locations.

- (e) While granting authorization for marketing rights to private companies, Government have prescribed that they would not be allowed to encroach on the existing retail outlet of any marketing company.

Training to Professionals for PWD

3392. PROF. M. RAMADASS : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

- (a) the number of professionals engaged in teaching/training of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in proportion to the population of the disabled persons;
- (b) the areas in which training is offered;
- (c) whether the number of professionals available for training/rehabilitation of disabled is adequate in proportion to their population; and
- (d) if not, the measures being taken to rationalise the ratio?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) Since education/training of persons with disabilities is being promoted in inclusive environment, the number of professionals engaged is not separately maintained.

(b) The training is offered in Audiology & Speech Therapy, Speech Pathology, Special Education for Teachers, Vocational Counselling, Multi-purpose Rehabilitation Therapy, Rehabilitation Psychology, Orientation & Mobility, Rehabilitation Counselling etc.

(c) and (d) The Institute of Applied Manpower Research has been requested to conduct a study to estimate manpower requirement of various professionals and develop plans to meet the requirement

Scheme for Old Age People

3393. SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Union Government has received any proposal from the Government of Kerala for the old age people;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

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

(b) The State Government has forwarded two proposals on Non Governmental Organisations for sanction of grant in aid for maintenance of old age homes.

(c) After scrutiny of the proposals, necessary documents required for further processing of the proposals have been called for from concerned organizations.

Technical Snags in Aeroplanes

3394. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIROA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the aeroplanes of Indian Airlines or its subsidiary Alliance Airlines had to be grounded or had to make emergency landings due to various technical snags during the last few months;

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

(c) whether any cases of use of spurious material in the maintenance of aeroplanes have come to the notice of the authorities;

(d) if so, the details alongwith the action taken thereon;

(e) whether any indepth investigation into the causes of emergency landings has been conducted;

(f) if so, the details thereof and the corrective measures taken in this regard; and

(g) the losses suffered by IA and its allied services due to emergency landing of its flights?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) There has

been no emergency landing involving Indian Airlines and Alliance Air aircraft during the last three months.

(b) No, Sir.

(d) to (g) Do not arise.

[Translation]

**Electrification of Gorakhpur-Lucknow
Railway Line**

3395. YOGI ADITYA NATH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the proposals regarding electrification of railway lines under the Lucknow Division of North Eastern Railways, approved by the Government.

(b) the progress of work done so far on the approved projects; and

(c) the time by which electrification of Gorakhpur-Lucknow railway line section is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) At present, there is, no proposal to electrify rail lines under Lucknow Division.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Lucknow-Barabanki section which is a part of Lucknow-Gorakhpur line is already electrified and due to relative priority for electrification of other high density routes, there is, at present, no proposal to electrify Barabanki-Gorakhpur railway line.

Incident at Damoh Station

3396. SHRI CHANDRABHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that coach of a stationary train at Damoh station in Madhya Pradesh caught fire recently;

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

(c) the losses of lives and properties therein;

(d) whether an inquiry has been ordered into incident;

(e) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken against the officials found guilty; and

(f) the measures being taken to check recurrence of such incidents?

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

(b) The coach No. West Central Railway (WCR) 90214/AB of 189 BN (Kota-Damoh Passenger) caught fire on 17.10.2005 due to electrical fault at 14.00 hrs. at platform No.3 of Damoh station, coach was immediately detached from the rake and the Fire Brigade extinguished the fire at 14.45 hours.

(c) Loss of Railway property has been Rs. 7,00,000/- approximately and there was no loss of lives.

(d) and (e) A Joint enquiry by the officers of Electrical, Safety and Mechanical Departments has been ordered and the matter is under investigation. The persons found guilty would be acted against.

(f) The West Central Railway, Jabalpur has issued guidelines to workshops and Maintenance Depots to stop recurrence if such incidents in future.

**Kolayat-Falaudi and Pipad-Bilada
Rail Routes**

3397. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the time by which Kolayat-Falaudi and Pipad-Bilada railway routes are likely to be made operational;

(b) the reasons for slow progress of work on these projects; and

(c) the steps taken to expedite the completion of works on these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) The details are given as under:

(i) **Kolayat-Phalodi new line:**

Earthwork, bridge works, etc. are in various stages of progress. 2.88 hectare of land near Kolayat yard has still not been handed over by the State Government of Rajasthan as the matter is sub-judice in High Court at Jodhpur. The project is targeted for completion during 2005-06 which will depend on handing over of the above land by the State Government

(ii) **Pipar Road-Bilara gauge conversion:**

The target date for completion of the work has not been fixed. The work is progressing as per availability of resources. However, a number of initiatives have been taken to mobilize other than normal budgetary resources to expedite completion of ongoing projects.

Expansion of Air Services

3398. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA :
SHRI MODH. TAHIR :
SHRI MUNSHI RAM :
SHRI SHISHUPAL N. PATLE :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government considers the desirability of involving State Governments for expansion of air services to the small cities/towns within the States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government has sought views of some State Governments in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the response of the State Governments thereto; and

(e) the further action taken/proposes to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (e) Alliance Air, subsidiary of Indian Airlines has held preliminary discussions in this regard with the Governments of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. Indian Airlines has recently submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI) against an advertisement issued by Government of Jharkhand for operation of air services to/from Ranchi and Jamshedpur under a subsidy scheme.

[English]

Inclusion of Mangalore Division in South Western Railway

3399. SHRI D.V. SADANAND GOWDA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal to include Mangalore Division in South Western Railway, Mysore;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) There is no Division named as Mangalore Division on Indian Railway System.

Modernisation of Small Airports

3400. SHRI UDAY SINGH : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether modernisation of various airports in the country have been undertaken by the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the small airports in various States are being ignored for modernisation;

(d) if so, the details of modernisation work undertaken at large, medium and small airports in the country during the last three years; and

(e) the funds allocated/released and spent for the purpose, Airport-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (e) Modernisation of airports including small airports is an ongoing process depending upon traffic demand, availability of resources etc. Funds allocated and spent during the last three years (in crores of Rs.) on account of modernisation works undertaken at various airports are as under:

Extension and modification of terminal-IB, construction of four international remote parking bays, line taxi-track parallel taxi-way, new additional parking bays, rapid-exit taxi-track, night parking bays and resurfacing of secondary runway at Mumbai (146.56, 100.35); construction of integrated cargo complex and linking of apron at Kolkata (84.53, 63.03); reconstruction of international apron, construction of five additional bays, parallel taxi-way etc. at Delhi (128.09, 78.24); expansion of administrative building, construction of shoulders and turning pad, bays, expansion and modification of terminal building at Chennai (138.41, 107.55); upgradation works at Amritsar (21.50, 59.69); Surat (2.00, 1.55); and Trivandrum (38.92, 34.71); strengthening and extension of runways etc. at Trichy (6.21, 2.43), madurai (1.10, 0.05), Coimbatore (5.87, 6.64), Hyderabad (22.91, 30.63), Khajuraho (1.50, 4.52), Dehradun (3.60, 0.00), Dibrugarh (1.40, 3.05), Silchar (2.00, 0.00); construction of new runway, apron, isolation bay, new integrated passenger terminal building etc. at Vishakhapatnam (13.10, 54.03); construction of new arrival and departure blocks, new international complex with three passengers boarding bridge at Ahmedabad (10.11, 2.41), expansion and modification of international terminal building, passenger boarding bridges, apron etc. at Calicut (8.35, 0.18), construction of new runway, ground lighting facilities etc. at Mangalore (3.85, 9.72); strengthening of runway etc. at Hubli (0.20, 0.00), expansion/modification of terminal buildings etc. at Bangalore (1.95, 2.42), Srinagar (3.10, 4.24); construction of new integrated building, passenger

boarding bridges etc. at Gaya (6.00, 23.78), construction of technical block cum control tower etc. at Lucknow (0.55, 1.65) and construction of new terminal building, control tower etc. at Agatti (0.50, 0.91), respectively.

Non-Official Part-Time Directors in Oil PSUS

3401. SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVRAJ : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to replace all Non-Official Part-time Directors on Board of Directors in the Public Sector Oil Companies;

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

(c) whether the new Directors have been identified by the Government for appointment in these Public Sector Oil Companies; and

(d) if so, the time by which these Directors will be appointed?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) No, Sir.

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

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Proposals for newly recommended candidates, who have given their willingness to accept appointments as Non-Official Part-Time Directors in Oil Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), have been sent to the Department of Personnel & Training (DOPT) for taking the approval of the Competent Authority.

Construction of Power Plants in Nigeria

3402. SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE :

SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD :

SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH :

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

(a) whether ONGC-Mittal Energy Limited is planning to invest 6 billion dollars for building power plants and refinery in Nigeria;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the ratio of partnership for this project.

(c) whether this joint venture will yield reciprocal return from Nigeria; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (d) A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 23.7.2005 between ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) and M/s. Mittal Steel Group, for E&P activities abroad. Subsequently, a joint venture company, viz. ONGC-Mittal Energy Limited (OMEL) has been incorporated in which OVL, Mittal Investments Sarl and SBI Caps have 49.98%, 48.02% and 2% participating interest, respectively, for pursuing hydrocarbon opportunities on exclusive basis in identified countries.

OMEL signed an MoU with the Ministry of Petroleum Resources of Nigeria in November 2005 which includes an offer from the Nigerian side to consider offering oil exploration blocks on a nomination basis; a certain quantity of oil on a term- contract basis; and LNG when the fields/ infrastructure have been developed in Nigeria. In return, OMEL will consider participating in Nigeria's infrastructure development projects in the refinery, railways and power sectors. The details in regard to this "economic package" are yet to be worked out.

Evolution of Oil Blocks

3403.SHRI DHANUSKODI R. ATHITHAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a review has been sought on the entire evaluation process of two Blocks i.e. Block-D-3 and Block-6 in Krishna Godavari (KG) under NELP-V;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. Block D-3 (KG-DWN-2003/1) falling in KG deepwater & Block 6 (GV-ONN-2003/1) falling in the Ganga Valley basin under the Fifth Round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-V) have already been awarded separately to two consortia. Block D-3 (KG-DWN-2003/1) has been awarded to a consortium of M/s Reliance Industries Ltd. and Hardy Exploration Y Production Indian Inc.; and Block 6 (GV-ONN-2003/1) has been awarded to consortium of M/s Cairn Energy Indian Pty. Ltd, Cairn Exploration (No.1) Ltd. and ONGC, and the Production Sharing Contracts with these consortia have already been signed on the 23rd September, 2005

[Translation]

Exemption from Frisking and Security Check at Airports

3404.SHRI MOHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) the details of VVIPs/VIPs/dignitaries who have been exempted from frisking at security check at the Airports;

(b) whether the Government has prescribed any norms for granting exemption from frisking and security checks to various categories of dignitaries;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there is any dispute over inclusion or exclusion of certain categories of dignitaries;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to solve the dispute?

THE MINISTER OF THE STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) The President, vice President, Prime Minister of India, Speaker of Lok

Sabha, Chief Justice of India, Union Ministers of Cabinet rank, Governors of States and foreign dignitaries of the same status; Former Presidents, Judges of Supreme Court, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha, Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha & Deputy Speaker Lok Sabha, Chief Ministers/Deputy Chief Ministers of States/UTs, Chief Justices of the High Courts, Lt. Governors of Union Territories, Ambassadors of foreign countries, Charge D' Affairs and High Commissioners and their spouses, Cabinet Secretary, his Holiness the Dalai Lama, SPG Protectees and Shri Robert Vadra (while travelling with SPG Protectees) are exempted from pre-embarkation security checks at all civil airports in the country.

(b) and (c) Exemption from frisking is given based on security/protocol considerations and is reviewed from time to time.

(d) to (f) Inclusion of Judges of Rajasthan High Court in the list of persons exempted from frisking at the airports is pending the Supreme Court.

[English]

Waiving of Tax Dues from Oil Companies

3405. SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI :

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR :

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

(a) whether oil refining companies have urged the Government to waive off almost Rs.1400 crore tax dues from these companies on account of irrecoverable taxes;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the details of such irrecoverable taxes to which oil companies fail to recover;

(d) whether a new strategy would be formulated to check such huge losses; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) On behalf of the members of the oil industry, the Petroleum Federation of India (Petrofed) has urged the Government to resolve the issue of irrecoverable taxes of oil companies. Petrofed has suggested various measures which include, *inter alia*, continuation of "The Irrecoverable Taxes Compensation Scheme, 2002", introduction of Special Additional Duty (SAD), covering petroleum products under VAT and direct reimbursement to State Governments out of cess or increased excise duty.

(c) Oil companies are unable to recover, through price, irrecoverable taxes like entry tax/octroi on crude, Central Sales Tax (CST) on inter state movement of products, purchase tax/turnover tax, etc. on products.

(d) and (e) In order to facilitate the smooth transition from the Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) to market-determined pricing regime, the Government had notified "The Irrecoverable Taxes Compensation Scheme, 2002". The scheme was valid only for the year 2002-03. A proposal to extend the validity of the scheme for the year 2003-04 is being examined by the Government.

[Translation]

Allotment of Petrol Pumps/LPG Agencies to SC/ST/OBC

3406. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE PATIL :

SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD :

SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHALE :

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

(a) the number of applications received by the Government from SC/ST/OBCs for allotment of petrol pumps/LPG (Liquified Petroleum Gas) agencies during the last three years till date, State-wise;

(b) the number of petrol pumps/LPG agencies

allotted to SC/ST/OBCs during the last three years, State-wise and Company-wise; and

(c) the number of petrol pumps/LPG agencies likely to be allotted to SC/ST/OBCs during the current year, State-wise and Company-wise?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) While the guidelines of the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) for selection of dealers/distributors of petroleum products do not provide for any reservation for allotment of dealerships/distributorships to the members of 'Other Backward Classes', these guidelines provide for a reservation of 25% of dealerships/distributorships for the Scheduled Caste (SC)/Scheduled Tribe (ST) categories. State-wise details about the applications received by OMCs from candidates belonging to the SC/ST category for allotment of retail outlet (RO) dealerships (petrol pumps) and LPG distributorships during the last three years and till date are available with the Director (Marketing) of the OMCs concerned.

(b) During the last three years, i.e., from 2002-03 to 2004-05, the OMCs namely, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPC) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPC) and IBP Co. Limited (IBP) have allotted 1,870 retail outlet dealerships and 331 LPG distributorships to candidates belonging to SC/ST. While State-wise details of these allotments are available with the Director (Marketing) of the OMCs concerned, OMC-wise position of the allotments are given as under:-

OMC	Allotments made during 2002-03 to 2004-05	
	RO	LPG
1	2	3
IOC	780	175
HPC	472	87

1	2	3
BPC	369	65
IBP	269	4
TOTAL	1,870	331

(c) Marketing plans of OMCs contain details regarding allotment of dealerships/distributorships in respect of different categories of candidates, including SC/ST category, at various locations in the country. These details are available with the Director (Marketing) of the OMCs concerned. However, it is not possible to indicate the number of retail outlet dealerships/ LPG distributorships that are likely to be allotted to, among others, to SC/ST category during the current year as the exercise involves various steps like advertisement, scrutiny of applications and documents, conduct of interview of the eligible candidates for selection dealers/distributors, release of merit panels, field investigation in respect of selected candidates, etc.

Modernisation of Railway Station with Private Participation

3407. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme for the modernization of New Delhi Railway Station with private participation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any proposal to start such scheme for the other important stations of the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Railways have planned to develop New Delhi into world class station through proposed Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA), as announced in Railway budget 2005-06.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Railways have planned to develop important railway stations in Metro cities into world class stations through the proposed Rail Land Development Authority, as announced in Railway Budget 2005-06.

Construction of Railway Lines

3408. SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD :

SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the railway lines for which the construction was started during the last three years and the current year so far alongwith the estimated cost thereof;

(b) the number of railway lines out of them that have been completed so far;

(c) the amount spent thereon;

(d) the present position regarding the construction of the remaining railway lines; and

(e) the reasons for non-completion of the construction work therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (e) Following 10 New Lines were included in the Budget during the last 3 years and during the current year i.e. 2005-06:

(Figures in crores)

S. No.	Project	Year of inclusion in the Budget	Anticipated Cost	Expenditure upto March, 2005
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Kolayat-Phalodi	2003-04	163.9	96.97
2.	Talcher-Bimlagarh	2003-04	726.96	0

1	2	3	4	5
3.	Hajipur-Sagauli	2003-04	324.66	4.56
4.	Kosi Bridge	2003-04	323.41	1.56
5.	Maharajganj-Masrakh	2003-04	113.75	0.11
6.	Kichha-Khatima	2003-04	165.67	0.11
7.	Jiribam-Imphal Road (Tupul)	2003-04	727.56	0.07
8.	Jind-Sonipat	2003-04	190.81	0.24
9.	Rewari-Rohtak	2003-04	221.25	0.41
10.	Hathua-Bhatni	2005-06	200.73	0

None of these projects has been completed. The projects are in initial stages of execution and would be completed in the coming years as per the availability of resources.

[English]

Shifting of Oil Depot

3409. SHRI SUKDEO PASWAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has taken the decision to shift the oil depot from Forbesganj to another place;

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

(c) whether the Government has received representations/requests against the shifting of the said depot; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) The petroleum storage

depot of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) at Forbesganj was commissioned in the year 1972. The Forbesganj depot was receiving products by rail from Siliguri Terminal through meter gauge. Owing to conversion of the gauge by the Railways, supplies to Forbesganj were getting affected. Considering this, as well as the unsafe condition of the depot which was situated in the middle of a residential locality and did not conform to Oil Industry Safety Directorate (OISD) norms, the depot was closed for operation in January 2003. Thereafter, supplies to the Forbesganj fed market are being made from Barauni. Even after the closure of this depot and direct supplies from Barauni, there have been no dryouts reported at any of the markets which were earlier being fed from the Forbesganj depot.

(c) No such representation/request has been received in the recent past by this Ministry.

(d) Does not arise, in view of reply to part (c).

Procurement of Stationery Items

3410. SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN :

SHRI HEMMAL MURMU :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the existing norms for procurement of different type of papers like paper parcels, general stationery in the Railways;

(b) the total amount incurred by each Zonal Railway for procurement of stationery items during the last three years and current year till date;

(c) whether the Government has received any complaint regarding violation of norms for procurement of stationery items from National Consumer Cooperative Stores Ltd. and others;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps being taken by the Government to check irregularities in procurement of stationery items?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) As per the existing norms, any procurement of stationery and other items is guided by the General Financial Rules, 2005.

(b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

(c) to (e) Do not arise in view of (e) above.

Rural Channels

3411. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to launch rural channels in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which these channels are likely to be launched?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) to (c) Prasar Bharati, an autonomous corporation, has informed that they are not considering any proposal, at present, to launch a separate rural channel in the country. Doordarshan is already telecasting agricultural programmes from select transmitters in narrowcasting mode.

Akashwani and DD Programmes

3412. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that the quality of the programmes on Akashwani and Doordarshan has been deteriorating;

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

(c) the steps being taken to improve the quality of the programmes on Akashwani and Doordarshan?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) to (c) Prasar Bharati has informed that in order to fulfill its mandate as a Public Service Broadcaster to inform, educate, entertain the Public, Prasar Bharati has been constantly aiming for excellence both in terms of content and quality. AIR and DD constantly review the quality of serials/programmes broadcast/telecast on their various channels and make efforts to further improve the content and technical quality/transmission.

AIR and DD have respectively, informed that there is no decline in quality and that the popularity of programmes has increased and that they constantly endeavour to offer programmes that retain viewer interest.

Production of Natural Gas

3413. SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) the production of natural gas during each of the last three years in the country, on-shore and off-shore separately;

(b) whether the production of natural gas from on-shore fields of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. was lower than the target during the said period; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to increase on-shore production?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) The production of natural gas in the country during the last 3 years was as follows:—

(in Billion Cubic Meters)

Year	Onshore	Offshore	Total
2002-03	11.904	19.483	31.387
2003-04	12.845	19.116	32.005
2004-05	12.897	18.872	31.769

(b) and (c) The actual production of gas from the onshore fields of ONGC during the last two was less than the targets as given below:—

Onshore Gas Production (BCM)		
Year	Target	Actual
2002-03	5.684	5.871
2003-04	6.112	5.778
2004-05	5.699	5.528

The decline/stagnation of production from matured and aged fields in the onshore areas is a natural phenomenon in the life cycle of any fields. ONGC has been taking various steps to augment/maintain the gas production, which include the following:—

- (i) Measures to tap locked up gas reserves in Tripura by augmenting the gas handling capacity from 1.6 MMSCMD to 5.1 MMSCMD to meet the requirement of gas supply to the proposed 750 MW power plant at Palatana.
- (ii) Development of G 1 & GS 15 fields from where gas will be sent to the Rajamundry asset.
- (iii) Conceptualization/implementation of power generation projects under the Gas-to-Wire (GTW) Scheme in Kalol & Gandhar fields in Gujarat and Lakwa-Lakhmani, Geleki and Rudrasagar fields in Assam to increase oil production which is expected to yield incremental production of gas as well.

Setting up of Naval Academy

3414. SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No.3413 dated March 24, 2005 regarding Ezhimala Naval Academy and state the present status of the proposed Ezhimala Naval Academy?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Indian Naval Ship Zamorin, the depot ship of the Naval Academy at Ezhimala has been commissioned on 6th April 2005 and training programmes have commenced at the campus with effect from 5th August 2005.

[Translation]

Survey of New Railway Lines

3415. SHRI RAM SINGH KASWAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of proposals for new railway lines included in the Railway Budget for the year 2004-05 for the purpose of conducting survey;

(b) the stipulated time period to complete the survey work of these new railway lines;

(c) the criteria prescribed to approve new railway lines after the survey is completed;

(d) whether the survey of new railway line from Sikar to Nokha via Salasar, Sujargarh, Bidasar and from Sardarshahar to Hanumangarh and from Churu to Nohar via Taranagar is under the consideration of the Government;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) 41 surveys for New Lines have been included in the Budget 2004-05. All the surveys are targeted for completion during 2005-06.

(c) The policy for taking up new line projects was enunciated by the National Transport Policy Committee in 1980. This policy states that new lines would be taken up on the following criteria;

(i) Project oriented lines to serve new industries for tapping mineral and other resources.

(ii) Missing links for completing alternative routes

(iii) Lines required for strategic reasons; and

(iv) Lines for establishment of new growth centers or giving access to remote areas.

Apart from this, the financial viability of the project is also taken into consideration. As per extant norms, a project is considered financially justified if it yields a return of not less than 14% under Discounted Cash Flow Method.

(d) to (f) No, Sir. However, survey for new lines from Nokha to Sikar, Churu to Taranagar and Hanumangarh-Sardarshahar-Ratargarh had been conducted in the past. The proposed new lines could not be taken up due to unremunerative nature, constraint of resources and huge throwforward of on-going projects.

Fake Railway Tickets

3416. DR. LAXIMINARAYAN PANDEY :

SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI :

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SINGH :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that large number of fake railway tickets are in circulation in the country;

(b) if so, the number of such cases reported during the current year, Zone-wise;

(c) the number of persons/officials arrested so far in such cases; and

(d) the action taken by the Government against the persons / officials found involved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Some cases of movement of labour in groups travelling on fake tickets have been reported. Such groups were found travelling from eastern

region like Malda, Katihar, Danapur, Howrah etc. to Central, Western and Northern regions.

(b) and (c) Following cases have been reported during Jan. 2005 to Nov. 2005:—

Zones	Cases Reported	Persons/Officials arrested
Eastern	11	69
Northern	07	104
North East Frontier	07	168
South Central	03	08
Western	03	04
East Central	06	05
North Central	03	35
West Central	07	07

(d) The persons found travelling with fake tickets were handed over to Government Railway Police/Local Police for prosecution. Three Railway officials found involved on East Central and Northern Railways are being taken up under Disciplinary and Appeals Rules.

[English]

Shortage of LNG

3417. SHRI JUAL ORAM : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

- whether there is a severe scarcity of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in the country;
- if so, the reason thereof;
- the steps taken to meet the demand of LNG;
- whether the Government proposes to increase the import of LNG; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (e) The existing demand for gas in the country is being met by a combination of domestic gas produced in the country and imported liquefied natural gas (LNG). Against an estimated demand of around 150 MMSCMD, the total availability is around 93 MMSCMD, including around 18 MMSCMD of regasified LNG. Imports of LNG are under OGL and companies have set up, or are setting up, LNG import facilities on commercial consideration.

At present, there are two LNG terminals in the country. M/s. Petronet LNG Limited (PLL) have commissioned a 5 MMTPA (million metric tonne per annum) LNG terminal at Dahej, Gujarat in April, 2004. M/s. Shell have commissioned a 2.5 MMTPA LNG terminal at Hazira, Gujarat in April, 2005.

Ratnagiri LNG terminal in Maharashtra is likely to be commissioned in 2006. PLL have also initiated action for setting up an LNG terminal at Kochi, Kerala, which is likely to be commissioned in the last quarter of 2009. PLL is expanding the capacity of Dahej LNG terminal from 5 MMTPA to 10 MMTPA. IOC and ONGC are planning LNG terminals at Ennore, Tamilnadu and Mangalore, Karnataka respectively.

PLL have contracted 7.5 MMTPA LNG from Rasgas in Qatar. Out of this, 5 MMTPA LNG is being imported at the Dahej terminal, with balance quantity of 2.5 MMTPA likely to be available in 2009. GAIL (India) Limited / Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)/ Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) have signed a Sales purchase Agreement with National Iranian Gas Export Co. Ltd. (NIGEC) in June, 2005 for the import of 5 MMTPA LNG from Iran, beginning from the last quarter of 2009.

[Translation]

Non-Utilisation of Recommendations of NCSC

3418. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK : Will the Minister of

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government is aware of the non-compliance of the recommendations/requests made by the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) by the State Governments as appeared in the "Daink Jagaran" dated September 28, 2005;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the details of recommendations/requests made by NCSC to the State Governments during the last three years;

(d) the names of those States complying and not complying with the recommendations/requests made by the Commission during the said period; and

(e) the measures taken by the Union Government for strict compliance of the recommendations/requests made by NCSC to the State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) and (b) The NCSC has not submitted any report for the last three years. The last i.e. Seventh Report submitted by the Commission pertains to the period 2001-02.

(c) and (d) The Commission had written to Chief Secretaries of the State Governments/UT Administrations on 12.02.03 for furnishing information on false caste certificates and also subsequently reminded them. The Commission has so far received information from 15 States/ UTs only. The Commission has also written to State Governments for display of hoardings mentioning salient features of SCs & Sts (POA) Act, 1989 in all police stations/ public places. Replies have so far been received from 27 State Governments/UTs.

(e) The Commission directly corresponds with the State Governments/UT Administrations without bringing the issues to the notice of the Government.

[English]

Import of LNG From Russia

3419. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Petroleum for importing substantial quantities of LNG from Sakhalin-I fields in Russia;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any agreement in this regard has been reached with the Russian Government;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the total quantity of LNG to be imported from Russia under this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Funding for Modernisation of Airports

3420. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO :
SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN :
SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI :
SHRI SURAJ SINGH :
SHRI AJIT KUMAR SINGH :
SHRI JUAL ORAM :
SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR :
SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIŞI :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has decided to enter the capital market to raise resources for

funding the modernization of about 30 airports across the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the airports identified therefor;

(d) the estimated amount required for their modernization;

(e) whether the AAI has also decided to enter into joint ventures with some private parties in this regard; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (c) Airports Authority of Indian (AAI) has chalked out plans to develop the following tentatively-selected 35 Non-metro airports in phases. It has plans to approach the market for borrowing a sum of Rs.4000-5000 crores in one or more tranches over next four to five years :

Phase I - Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Guwahati, Jaipur, Udaipur, Trivandrum, Lucknow, Goa, Madurai and Mangalore.

Phase II - Agatti, Aurangabad, Khajuraho, Rajkot, Vadodara, Bhopal, Indore, Nagpur, Vishakhapatnam, Trichy, Bhubaneshwar, Coimbatore, Patna, Port Blair and Varanasi. Besides Agartala, Dehradun, Imphal, Ranchi, Raipur, Chandigarh, Jammu, Pune, Agra and Dimapur have been selected for development in subsequent phases.

(d) The estimated amount required for this purpose is Rs.5000-5500 crores.

(e) and (f) AAI has no such proposal at present.

Survey on Minorities

3421. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has conducted any survey to identify the actual number of eligible beneficiaries belonging to minority communities having family income below double the poverty line;

(b) if so, the details thereof; State/UT-wise;

(c) if not, whether in the absence of such survey National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) has not been able to achieve its task/objectives of economic development of the notified minorities;

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to address the problems of minorities?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (e) The absence of survey has not affected the activities of National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation for economic empowerment of minorities. It has provided assistance to about 2.95 lakhs beneficiaries through various Schemes.

[Translation]

Allocation of Funds to Handicapped

3422. SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware of the discrimination in allocating funds under schemes/programmes being implemented by Non-Governmental Organisations to provide various services to handicapped in different states;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the reasons for such a huge difference in allocation of funds under the schemes/programmes to different States; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) to (d) The Ministry does not make any State-wise allocation of funds under its schemes implemented through Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) for providing various services to handicapped persons. Grant-in-aid to various NGOs is provided in accordance with the eligibility criteria and financial norms prescribed under the schemes. Further, for better geographical distribution of projects, new proposals from districts where less than two projects for each disability are supported, are given preference.

[English]

Amendment to PWD Act

3423. SHRI M. SHIVANNA : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the amendment to the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 is pending with the Union Government;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(c) the present status of the Act and the time by which the Act is likely to be amended?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) to (c) Suggestions for amendment to the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 are at various stages of processing. It is not possible to indicate time frame.

[Translation]

Survey of Sambhal Gajraula Railway Line

3224. DR. SHAFIUR RAHMAN BARQ : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government has completed the survey of Sambhal-Gajraula railway line under Muradabad division;

(b) if so, the time by which the work on this railway line is likely to be started; and

(c) if not, the reasons for delay and the time by which it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A survey for construction of new broad gauge rail line between Sambhal and Gajraula was completed in October, 2001. As per survey report, the cost of construction of 43.32 kms. long line has been assessed at Rs.105.06 crore with a rate of return as (-) 18.41%. Due to heavy throwforward of ongoing projects, acute constraint of resources and unremunerative nature of the line, it was not considered feasible to take up this work.

[English]

Weapons Available with Army

3425. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the types of weapons available with the Army are in consonance with the current force structure and force levels;

(b) if so, the measures taken to modernize the Army and to upgrade their weapon systems and to provide required number of weapons to them; and

(c) the steps taken to equip the infantry man with superior light weight weapons and equipment?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Modernization of equipment with Army including infantry is planned through:

- (i) Procurement of selected state of art equipment,
- (ii) Indigenous development of required equipment by Defence Research & Development Organization, Ordnance Factory Board or Indian industries, and
- (iii) Technological upgradation of existing equipment.

(c) The requirement of modernized weapons and equipment for infantry has been catered for through 15 years Long Term Perspective Plan, 5 years Services Capital Acquisition Plan and Annual Acquisition Plan drawn in consonance with revised War Establishment.

Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute

3426. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government has received any proposal from the Government of Gujarat to set-up a unit of Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute at Gandhinagar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

Flights during Peak Hours

3427. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL :
SHRI SUGRIB SINGH :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided that new international flights will not be permitted in peak hours;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government would consider to review the timings of new flights in order to avoid inconvenience to the passengers; and

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

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Whenever Airlines make request for review of flight timings, in order to avoid inconvenience to passengers, such as during fog conditions, these requests are considered by Airports Authority of India for appropriate action.

[English]

Laying of Railway Lines in Madhya Pradesh

3428. SHRI GANESH SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal for laying second and third railway lines from Bina to Katni and Rewa to Satana in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[English]

Beglbeel Bridge

3429. SHRI M.K. SUBBA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has received any representations from Members of Parliament and other representatives of the people of Majuli-Island for modification in the design of the Bogibeel bridge in Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken for carrying out necessary modifications?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) Record of each and every demand received is not maintained. However, design of Bogibeel Bridge has already been studied and finalised. As per the study conducted, construction of this bridge will not have any effect on Majuli Island.

[Translation]

**Irregularities in RPF Training Institute,
Mokama**

3430. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR MODI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that some irregularities were being committed at Railway Protection Force Training Institute at Mokama;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether any inquiry has been ordered into the matter;

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

(e) the action taken against officials found guilty; and

(f) the measures taken/to be taken by the Government to check such incidents?

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

(b) and (d) On observation that some financial

irregularities were being committed at the Railway Protection Force Training Institute at Mokama, a preliminary inquiry was conducted by three senior officers of the Force. The Committee found prima-facie evidence of irregularities committed at the Institute with the active connivance of the Principal of the Institute.

(e) The principal has since been transferred out of the Institute and action under Railway Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1968 is being instituted against him.

(f) All the Chief Security Commissioners have been advised to exercise close supervision over the Railway Protection Force Training Centres under their jurisdiction so that such unsavoury situations do not arise in any of the Centres in future.

[English]

Helicopter Services in NE Region

3431. SHRI HITEN BARMAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) the details of places in the North East Region provided with the helicopter services;

(b) whether the helicopters being used for ferrying passengers in Lakshadweep happens to be more than 15 years old; and

(c) if so, the steps the Government proposes to take to replace the old helicopters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) In the North East region, Pawan Han Helicopters Limited (PHHL) has provided helicopters on long term lease to Government of Meghalaya, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura. The regular passenger services are being run under the aegis of the respective State Governments as per their requirements.

(b) and (c) Lakshadweep Administration has been provided with Dauphin N helicopter. As per the

manufacturer's specifications, there are no limits to the calendar life of the Dauphin type helicopters as long as the operator follows the recommended maintenance schedules and procedures. As a generic economic life, Dauphin can be operated for 35 years or 1,00,000 flight hours and PHHL helicopters are well within this span both in terms of years and flight hours.

[Translation]

Non-Availability of Tickets under Tatkal Reservation Scheme

3433. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that the passengers who desire to get reservation tickets under the Tatkal Reservation Scheme (TRS) are facing a great problem in some Mail/Express/ Superfast trains particularly Kota Junction bound trains;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) whether the Government has received complaints regarding non-availability of tickets under the TRS during the last three years;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the policy of the Government for providing tickets under TRS;

(f) since when the TRS has not been reviewed; and

(g) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to provide tickets to the passengers under the TRS and review the TRS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU) : (a) to (g) The earlier Tatkal Scheme was reviewed and a revised Tatkal scheme issued in August 2004, in which many of the shortcomings of the earlier scheme were removed e.g.

(i) Instead of only few trains, in the revised Tatkal scheme almost all Mail/Express trains are covered.

(ii) There is no requirement of Identity Card in the revised scheme.

(iii) Tatkal booking has been done 3 days in advance instead of one day at present.

(iv) Complaints were received in respect of Tatkal scheme, with respect to Identity Card etc. However, no separate statistics is maintained of such complaints centrally.

[English]

Improvement in Standard Specifications

3434. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Military Engineer Services (MES) has made any improvement in Standard Specification relating to building products;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether MES shares its research/improvements with other Government Departments; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (d) The MES strives to improve the standard specifications of building products by evaluating newly introduced engineering products to be incorporated in the construction industry. Some materials/products possessing the latest technology and processes approved for incorporation in defence works are:

(i) Solar energy utilization in weather heating system, stand-alone solar powered street light system, stand-alone solar powered security kiosk.

- (ii) Lightning Protection, Surge Protection and Earthing system.
- (iii) Energy efficient lighting products.
- (iv) Aqua free urinal system.
- (v) Extracting water from atmosphere for domestic use by using latest technology.
- (iv) Power factor correction capacitors and accessories for energy saving.

The information on improved specifications and new materials introduced is shared with other engineering departments through seminars/workshops organized by MES and other engineering organizations like Institution of Engineers, Construction Industry Development Council.

Computerised Reservation Centres in Karnataka

3435. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) the details of Railway Stations under the South Central Railway Zone in Karnataka where Computerised Reservation Counters are functioning at present;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to establish more Computerised Reservation Centres in the Railway Stations under the South Central Railway Zone in Karnataka during the current financial year; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU) : (a) At present, computerised reservation centres are functioning at 4 Railway stations in the State of Karnataka under South Central Railway Zone, namely, Yadgir, Bidar, Raichur and Seram.

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

Installation of Radar for ATC

3436. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has started installation of radar which will give out the position of all vehicles moving in technical area under the Air Traffic Control (ATC) during fog;
- (b) if so, the details of the progress made so far in this regard;
- (c) the cost of the said system;
- (d) the distance of visibility upto which the flights will be able to land and take off after the start of said system;
- (e) whether the pilots of all airlines in the country have been trained for such landing / take off system;
- (f) if so, the details in this regard; and
- (g) if not, the steps taken by AAI in this regard?

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

- (b) Installation of Radar forming part of Advanced Surface Movement Guidance and Control System (ASMGCS) for monitoring of the surface movement of vehicles at Delhi airport is at advanced stage.
- (c) Rs.11.89 crores.
- (d) The visibility for landing/ take off of flights utilizing Cat-IIIB ILS ranges between 200 metres and 50 metres.
- (e) No, Sir.
- (f) Does not arise.
- (g) Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has prescribed qualification/ experience and training for pilots operating domestic airlines to undergo training for

Cat-II/III operations. Only DGCA approved pilots are authorised to use ILS during fog. Various airlines are coordinated from time to time for expeditious training of their pilots for use of Cat-II/III ILS. At present, Air India, Indian Airlines have trained their pilots for operating ILS under CAT-II, CAT-IIIA and CAT-IIIB conditions.

Optimum Utilisation of Airports

3437. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has finalised any optimum utilisation programme for the National and International Airports in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the airports to be given top priority; and

(c) the details of the leasing conditions, project appraisal report and benefits to be accrued by such leasing of airports particularly Mumbai airport?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Optimum utilization of infrastructure facilities of National and International Airports managed by Airports Authority of India (AAI) is a continuous process. Improvement of infrastructure facilities have been taken up at Delhi - Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and other non-metro international airports to increase runway, apron and terminal capacity in a phased manner. 35 Non-metro airports have also been tentatively identified for improvement of infrastructure facilities in phased manner.

(c) The details of the leasing conditions are spelt out in the Transaction Documents issued to the Pre-Qualified Bidders which inter-alia include rights and obligations of contracting parties. As per these documents, after the end of the concession period the airport would revert to AAI. The International airports at Delhi and Mumbai are being restructured and modernized through Public Private Partnership. In the Joint Venture for Mumbai and Delhi, AAI and other Government PSUs will be holding

26% equity. The balance 74% will be held by the private partners. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in this transaction has been capped at 49%. Development of these airport through leasing have several short / medium / long term tangible and intangible benefits which inter-alia include capacity enhancement, performance improvement, revenue and capital gains etc. It has also been estimated on preliminary basis that the capital investment to the extent of Rs.7961 crore and Rs.6131 crore would be required for Delhi and Mumbai airports, respectively over a period of 20 years in 4 stages of 5 years each.

[Translation] -

Doubling of Gorakhpur-Lucknow Rail Section

3438. YOGI ADITYA NATH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the work on doubling the Gorakhpur-Lucknow railway section has commenced;

(b) if so, the status of progress made in this regard; and

(c) the time by which this work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) and (b) The doubling of left over sections of Gorakhpur-Lucknow section is being taken up in phases. Double line already exists from Gorakhpur to Domingarh, Gonda to Bhurwal and Barabanki to Lucknow. Doubling of Domingarh-Munderwa and Gonda-Babhnan have been taken up. Doubling in balance sections would be considered as per traffic requirements.

(b) No target date has been fixed for completion of doubling on the entire route.

[English]

Profit/Loss of AI and IA

3439. SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) the profit/loss position of Air India (AI) and Indian Airlines (IA) during the first six months of the current financial year and how these are compared to the corresponding figures of the previous year; and

(b) the likely growth expected by AI and IA in the current financial year and the next two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) Air India has not yet finalised the provisional results for the first six months of current financial year. Indian Airlines has indicated a Net Profit of Rs.15.45 crore during April-September, 2005 as compared to a Net Loss of Rs.66.40 crores during April-September, 2004.

(b) As per the Budget Estimates 2005-06, the estimated Net Profit is Rs.61.60 crores and Rs.11.50 crores in respect of Air India and Indian Airlines, respectively. The projected figures may undergo a change depending on the physical parameters and the input costs. As both airlines are in the process of acquiring new aircraft, the growth plan for the next two years have not been finalised by the two airlines.

Change in LNG Shipping Policy

3440. SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to change the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Shipping Policy to allow the LNG purchaser the choice of carrier; and

(b) if so, the details thereof;

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) The Director General (Shipping) had issued guidelines dated 5th July, 2004 stipulating, *inter alia*, that no licence shall be granted for any chartered LNG vessel unless:—

(i) the said LNG vessel is an Indian flag vessel; and

(ii) the 'Indian partner' owns the LNG vessel wholly or owns not less than 26% of the ownership of the company owning the said LNG vessel.

The matter was considered by the Government and, with a view to providing flexibility in transportation of LNG, it has been decided that these guidelines may be kept in abeyance. It has also been decided that no restrictions should be placed which would entail the import of LNG only on an FOB basis. The position may be reviewed, on a need basis, by an Inter-Ministerial Committee which may keep track of the changing market situation and suggest appropriate changes in policy, as and when required.

Acquisition of Stake in Petrokazakh

3441. SHRIMATI MANORAMA MADHAVRAJ :
SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL :

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that the combined bid of ONGC-Mittal Company for acquisition of stake in Petrokazakh of Kazakhstan was overlooked and the process manipulated in favour of the Chinese bidders CNPC;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to take up that matter with its counterpart in Kazakhstan to secure a share in Petrokazakh;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (d) As per the procedure laid

down by Petro Kazakhstan for sale of its share, any bidder had the right to offer higher value for the stake than the highest bid received by them. Making use of this provision, the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) made a superior offer to the seller. Before ONGC-Mittal (OMEL) could make a counter-offer, it was announced that CNPC had won the bid.

The matter was discussed in a meeting of the Minister of the Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India with his counterpart in Kazakhstan on 4 October, 2005 during an official visit to Almaty, Kazakhstan. It was brought out that under the same provision, ONGC - Mittal Joint Venture had the right to further submit a superior bid. However, OVL was to take its own commercial or legal decision in the matter. Subsequently, OVL decided and to pursue the matter after considering the various techno-economic and commercial aspects of the deal.

**Offer of P-3C Orion Reconnaissance
Aircraft by USA**

3442. SHRIMATI NIVEDIATA MANE :

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA :

SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD :

SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether it is a fact that the USA has offered two P-3C Orion reconnaissance aircraft to Indian Navy;
- (b) if so, the terms and conditions thereof;
- (c) the expenditure likely to be incurred thereon;
- (d) whether the Indian Navy is considering to buy such planes from other countries; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (e) The USA has indicated that two

P-3C Orion aircraft could be made available on lease. No formal offer has, however, been received from the USA in this regard. The likely cost and other terms and conditions of the lease have not been received. A case for acquisition of Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance Anti-Submarine Warfare (LRMRASW) aircraft is under consideration for replacing the existing TU 142M aircraft.

**Expenditure on Advertisements by
Oil PSUs**

3443. SHRI DHANUSKODI R. ATHITHAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state the expenditure incurred by the Public sector Oil Companies on advertisements of their products during each of the last three years, company-wise?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : The expenditure incurred by major Oil PSUs on advertisements of their products during each of the last three years is as under as intimated by the PSUs concerned:

Name of Oil PSUs	(Rs. in crore)		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
GAIL (India) Ltd.	Nil	4.51	4.82
India Oil Corporation Limited	20.83	42.88	73.19
Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd.	22.95	40.74	35.26
Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd.	50.72	54.03	36.28
IBP Co. Ltd.	4.38	4.49	1.64

Railway Line from Radhikapur to Raiganj

3444. SHRI SUKDEO PASWAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that the work on broad gauge line from Radhikapur to Raiganj has been stopped due to lack of funds;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to provide adequate funds for timely completion of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) No, Sir. Gauge conversion work on Radhikapur to Raiganj section has been completed.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Construction of Nandi Railway Overbridge in Kerala

3445. SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that the construction of Nandi Railway Overbridge between Koyilandi and Badagara in Kozhikode District, Kerala is pending for a long time;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) The work of Nandi Road overbridge in lieu of level crossing No. 206, Km. 695/700-800 between Ettakot and Cannanore Stations was sanctioned during Works Programme of 1999-2000 on cost sharing basis. General Arrangement Drawing has been concurred and Estimate has been sanctioned. Work is in progress. The entire work including approaches is being executed by Government of Kerala through Road & Bridges Development Corporation of Kerala (RBDCK) a Government of Kerala's undertaking. The progress is around 50%. There has been delay in completion due to contractual problem. RBDCK has fixed new agency and

work is in progress and expected to be completed by 2006-07.

[Translation]

Atrocities against Lower Castes

3446. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK :
SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cases of atrocities against lower castes have been registered by the National Commission for Scheduled Castes during last one year;

(b) the necessary steps taken by the Government to stop such atrocities;

(c) whether the Government has received any recommendations from the Commission to abolish Hindu surnames which denote caste;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) During the year 2004, a total number of 1131 complaint cases were received by the National Commission for Scheduled Castes.

(b) It is for the respective State Governments to take necessary steps on such cases of atrocities as law and order is a State subject.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

[English]

Visit of British Defence Secretary

3447. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether British Defence Secretary visited India recently;

(b) if so, the details of issues discussed and outcome thereof;

(c) whether there is any proposal to hold joint exercise with British Forces; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) The Secretary of State for Defence of the United Kingdom (UK) came to India on a visit from October 4-6, 2005.

(b) During his visit a large number of issues were discussed, including bilateral military to military cooperation and issues of mutual interest, including the global fight against terrorism and disaster management, exchanges and cooperation in the field of high-technology warfare.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Exercise Konkan - 2006 is scheduled to be held in Western Seaboard during May, 2006 with Royal Navy.

Nomination of SCAs

3448. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether State Channelising agencies (SCAs) are the main link between the beneficiaries and the National Minorities Development and Financial Corporation (NMDFC);

(b) if so, the main functions of these SCAs;

(c) whether it is compulsory for each State to nominate SCAs in their respective State;

(d) if so, the States which have not yet nominated SCAs for the welfare of the minorities;

(e) whether the Government has taken up the matter with these States to nominate SCAs or establish Minorities Development Corporation in their respective States;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure that the funds made available to these SCAs are used within a time limit?

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

(b) Identification of viable projects/activities, selection of beneficiaries, obtaining funds from NMDFC and disbursements to beneficiaries and make recoveries are the main function of SCAs.

(c) No, Sir. All the State Governments have been requested to nominate a SCA so that benefits of programme are made available to the minorities in the State.

(d) Arunachal Pradesh and Goa have so far not nominated SCAs.

(e) and (f) State Government of Goa has informed that there is no need to implement the scheme of NMDFC as Minorities are literate and socio-economically advanced. The matter of nomination of SCA has already been taken up with the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

(g) The loaning procedure has been decentralized and the SCAs have been delegated powers to sanction loans to the individual beneficiary in order to ensure utilization of funds in time.

[Translation]

Acquisition of Oil Blocks In Foreign Countries

3449. SHRI HANSRAJ.G. AHIR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Public Sector Oil companies have procured oil blocks in other countries;

(b) if so, the details of the oil blocks procured by each oil companies during the last three years;

(c) the volumes of petroleum products proposed to be sent by these companies keeping in view the requirements of petroleum products in the country;

(d) whether it is going to effect the import of Petroleum products of the country; and

(e) if so, the other steps taken/being taken by the Government to make the country self-sufficient in the production of petroleum products?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) During the last three years the public sector oil companies viz., ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL), Oil India Limited (OIL), India Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) and GAIL (India) Limited acquired Participating Interest in various Exploration & Production (E&P) properties in Sudan, Australia, Ivory Coast, Qatar, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Cuba, Nigeria, Vietnam and Myanmar. The details are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) By acquiring equity ownership of overseas E&P projects, these companies would be in a position to bring crude oil to India depending on commercial viability. While in normal circumstances the crude oil could be sold on commercial considerations, in times of national requirement the same can be brought to India. Availability of overseas equity oil, therefore, effectively provides the country with the necessary supply assurance.

Except for the Greater Nile Oil Project (GNOP) in Sudan, Sakhalin-I Project in Russia and the Vietnam Project, in which OVL have participating interest, the other overseas assets are at various stages of exploration. Hence, the quantum of oil and gas available from these projects would depend on the outcome of the exploratory efforts.

Currently, OVL is producing crude oil from the GNOP in Sudan. During 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 (till December '05) OVL has brought 0.81, 0.33 and 0.08 million metric tonnes (MMT) of crude oil respectively, to India out of its share of production.

The gas produced from the Vietnam project of OVL is being sold to the domestic power plants in that country. The gas being produced on a limited scale from the Sakhalin-I project is also being sold domestically. Production from other properties which are at various stages of exploration has not been started.

(d) and (e) About three-fourths of the national demand for crude oil in terms of refinery through-put is met through import. In so far as domestic production of petroleum products is concerned, the country has become a net exporter in recent times. However, with the growth of India economy the demand for petroleum & petroleum products is increasing. Various measures are being taken to substantially accelerate exploratory activities for enhancing domestic oil and gas production. These measures include the following:—

- (i) increasing exploration efforts through the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP): Under NELP, 108 exploration blocks have been awarded to National Oil Companies, foreign companies and private/joint venture companies through International Competitive Bidding. This includes 18 Exploration Blocks recently awarded in the fifth round of NELP;
- (ii) improving the recovery factor from existing major fields by implementing Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) schemes. In particular, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) have taken up 15 fields for this purpose at an estimated investment of Rs.10,972 crore, which would also help in accelerating oil production from these fields;

- (iii) exploring new areas, especially in deep waters and difficult frontier areas, as also the deeper layers of already producing fields;
- (iv) developing newly discovered fields speedily and stepping up the use of new technologies for seismic surveys, work over and stimulation operations, drilling of wells etc. in producing areas; and
- (iv) acquiring equity oil and gas from abroad.

The refining capacity of the country which was 127 MMT as on 1.04.2005 is expected to increase to 138 MMT by next year as a result of expansion in the capacity of existing refineries and setting up of a few new refineries.

Statement

Participating Interest acquired by the Oil Companies during the last three years, in overseas E&P properties

Name of the Project and country	Participating Interest with details of partners
1	2
Greater Nile Oil Project Sudan	OVL - 25% CNPC - 40% Petronas - 30% Sudapet - 5% (Joint - Operatorship)
Block NC- 188 & NC-189 Libya	OVL - 49% TPOC - 51% (Operator)
Block # 24 Syria	OVL - 60% IPR International - 40% (Operator)

1	2
Block 5A Sudan	OVL - 24.125% Petronas - 68.875% (Operator) Sudapet - 7%
Block 5B Sudan	OVL - 23.5% Petronas - 41% (Operator) Sudapet - 11% Lundin - 24.5%
Block CI-112, Ivory Coast	OVL - 23.5% Oil Indian Ltd. - 11.5% Vanco - 30% with Operatorship Sinopec - 30% Petroci - 5%
Najwat Najem Oil Structure, Offshore, Qatar	OVL - 100% (Operator)
Block-6- North Ramadan, Egypt	OVL - 70% JPR - 30% (OVL and IPR will jointly develop the block with IPR taking the lead during exploration phase.)
Blocks 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 36 (including part of Block 35), Cuba	OVL - 30% Reposol - YPF - 40% (Operator) Narsk - Hydro - 30%
Block 34 & 35, Cuba	OVL - 100%

1	2
Block 81-1, Libya	OVL- 100%
Block-2, Nigeria	OVL - 9%
Saoo Tome Principe	EEL - 6%
JDA	Pioneer Energy - 33% (Operator) EHRC Energy Inc. - 32% A & Hatman - 10% Foby Engineering - 5% Momo Petroleum Ltd. - 5%
Block 127, Vietnam	OVL - 100%
Block 128, Vietnam	OVL - 100%
Block A-3, Myanmar	OVL - 20% Daewoo-60% (Operator) KOGAS - 10% GAIL - 10%
Block-86, Libya	OIL - 50% (Operator) IOC - 50%

1	2
Block-102(4)	OIL - 50% (Operator)
Libya	IOC - 50%

[English]

**Performance of Production
Units of Railway**

3450. SHRI JUAL ORAM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has reviewed the performance of the production units of Railways;

(b) the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to further improve the performance of these production units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) The review of performance of Production Units is a continuous process. Annual production targets are communicated to the Units and month wise monitoring is carried out by the Railway Board.

(b) Production performance of Production Units for the last 3 years is as below:

	2002-03		2002-03		2004-05	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chittaranjan Locomotive Works	69	69	86	86	90	90
Diesel Locomotive Works	100	116 (100+16 NRC)	109	116 (109+4 NRC+3 Export)	120	121 (117+ 4NRC)
Integral Coach Factory	900	944	1135	1070	1100	1119
Rail Coach Factory	941	944	1201	1201	1250	1201

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rail Wheel Factory Wheels	100716	101554	109600	110407	95081	95125
Axles	40754	43322	49925	50513	46010	49502
Diesel Loco Modernisation Works Loco rebuilding	70	73	70	73	72	74

NRC = Non Railway Customers

(c) Since there has been a slight shortage of coach production vis - a - vis requirement of coaches, works have been sanctioned to enhance capacities of Rail Coach Factory from 1000 to 1400 coaches per year and of integral coach factory, Chennai from 1000 to 1250 coaches per year.

Indian Institute of Mass Communication

3451. SHRI VIKRAMBHAI ARJANBHAI MADAM : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up a Centre of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication at Gandhinagar, Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Construction of Overbridge on National Highway

3452. SHRI GANESH SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has accorded approval for the construction of overbridge on National Highway No.7 near Maihar Railway Station of Allahabad-Jabalpur Rail route:

(b) if so, whether the State Government has provided its share for the construction work; and

(c) if so, the action taken by the Government to expedite the construction of this overbridge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) The work of a Road Over Bridge at Maihar was sanctioned on deposit terms and State Government was asked to deposit the cost to commence the works, but no amount has yet been deposited by them hence work could not be taken up.

[English]

Theft of Vehicles at IGI Airport

3453. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether cases of theft of vehicles are frequently taking place from the paid-parking lots of the International Cargo Terminal of IGI airport;

(b) if so, the number of such cases registered during each of the last three years; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent the recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) During the last three years four cases of theft of two wheelers have occurred from the parking lot of the Cargo Terminal, Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) The number of incidents of theft occurred for was nil for 2003, one for 2004 and three for 2005.

(c) Following measures have been taken to prevent cases of theft of vehicles from the parking lot of the International Cargo Terminal of IGIA.

- (i) Checks at entry and exit points are intensified.
- (ii) Entry has been restricted by issuing passes for different areas to eliminate entry of unauthorised persons.
- (iii) Different colour tokens have been introduced to identify the various types of vehicles.
- (iv) Contractor has been asked to employ police verified staff and to keep his staff vigilant.
- (v) Barricades & check points have been increased.
- (vi) Security personnel and vigilance staff have been deployed to patrol parking areas.
- (vii) The contractor is advised to make good the losses as per the terms of the contract.

Utilisation of SCRAP

3454. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have decided to explore the possibilities of in-house utilisation of scrap by recycling it, instead of selling it to outside parties;

(b) if so, whether the decision has been implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay and the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) Yes, Sir. Railways have explored that part quantity of scrap generated can be recycled.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Construction of Residential Complex

3455. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether despite several directions issued by the Supreme Court for banning on mining in Aravallis, the DRDO flattered Aravallis for the its residential complex in Nausena Bagh, Delhi;

(b) if so, the details in this regard alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and

(d) the estimated construction cost of the said residential complex?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) No, Sir. The ownership of the land is with Director General Defence Estates (DGDE). The project has been undertaken by DRDO for the residential accommodation of DGDE and not for DRDO. Accordingly, foundation work had commenced, which is general levelling of the ground in terraces.

(b) and (c) There has been no activities of mining by DRDO and as such there has been no violation of Supreme Court directions.

(d) The proposed residential complex is estimated to cost Rs.601.22 lakh.

Incidents of Flying Over No-Fly Zone

3456. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

- (a) whether there have been a spurt in the incidents of flying over no-fly zone recently;
- (b) if so, the details of such incidents noticed during the current year;
- (c) whether any enquiry has been conducted in this regard;
- (d) if so, the outcome thereof; and
- (e) the action taken or proposed to be taken against the persons found guilty?

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

- (c) and (e) Do not arise.

Establishment of Regional Offices of NMDFC

3457. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) have powers to sanction loan upto Rs.50,000 are referred to National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC);
- (b) if so, whether this procedure takes a lot of time to clear the loan application;
- (c) if so, whether the Government proposes to establish Regional Offices of NMDFC in all the four regions of the country for expeditious sanction of loans to minorities;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government for expeditious sanction of loan to the eligible beneficiaries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : (a) The SCAs have been delegated with powers to approved and sanction loans for units costing up to Rs.50,000.

In case of units costing more than Rs.50,000 and up to Rs.5 Lakhs, the SCAs refer the proposal for one time approval to the NMDFC. One such approval is given for a particular unit and the same is applicable for that type of unit in future. All the proposals submitted by the individual beneficiaries are sanctioned by the respective SCAs and are not referred to NMDFC.

- (b) This usually does not take much time as proposals are processed expeditiously.

(c) to (e) In view of the foregoing, there is no proposal for establishing regional offices of NMDFC for sanction of loans.

Train Service Between Baripada-Rupsa

3458. SHRI JUAL ORAM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government has any proposal to operate regular train service from Baripada to Rupsa in Orissa on the broad gauge Railway line;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the time by which the regular train service would be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) It has been announced in Railway Budget 2005-2006 to introduce train services to Rupsa-Bangariposi section. The train will be introduced during the financial year between Rupsa and Baripada.

Circular Train Service in Trans Yamuna Area

3459. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government had chalked out any plan for running of circular train service from Trans Yamuna area of Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has decided to implement the said plan;

(d) if so, the progress made in this regard so far and the scheduled time for its introduction; and

(e) if not, the reasons for delay in implementation of the said plan?

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

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Unauthorised Constructions Around Airports

3460. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government has directed the State Governments to remove the unauthorized construction including jhuggi clusters, around all the major airports in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the response of the State Governments thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (c) Unauthorised construction in the vicinity of airports pose threat to aviation safety. Hence, Airports Authority of India (AAI) on regular basis co-ordinates with the concerned State governments for removal of encroachments. The local law relating to removal of encroachments differ from State to State. State Governments are normally, responsive to the request of AAI for removal of encroachment.

Upgradation of Hubli and Belgaum Airports

3461. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to upgrade of Hubli and Belgaum airports in Karnataka;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds earmarked for the purpose; and

(d) the further steps being taken in this regard keeping in view the growth of traffic in these airports?

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

(b) Strengthening of runways and associated pavements has already been initiated by Airports Authority of India (AAI) at Hubli and Belgaum airports for operation of ATR-72 type of aircraft. Besides, AAI has initiated action for the upgradation of ground lighting facilities at Hubli airport.

(c) Funds earmarked for Hubli and Belgaum airports are Rs.11.14 crores and Rs.14.79 crores respectively.

(d) Keeping in view the growth of air traffic, AAI has plans for modification of existing terminal buildings at these airports.

IA Flights to Europe

3462. SHRI GANESH SINGH : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Airlines (IA) has sought permission to run its IA Flights to Europe;

(b) if so, the destinations where IA proposes to run its flights; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF

CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) Indian Airlines has sought permission for flying to London and Birmingham in United Kingdom.

(c) Permission has already been granted to Indian Airlines by the Government to commence operations to the above mentioned destinations.

Illegal Cooking Gas Agencies

3463. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that a large number of illegal cooking gas units are functioning in many parts of the country including Tamil Nadu; and

(b) if so, the number of such agencies unearthed by the Government alongwith the action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have not reported any illegal cooking gas units functioning in any part of the country including Tamil Nadu.

Manufacturing of Fighter Engines

3464. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Government has sought Russian Cooperation in manufacturing and developing fighter engine (K-10);

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

(c) the response of the Russia thereto;

(d) the expenditure incurred so far in Kavery project; and

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

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) DRDO have sought cooperation from design houses of international repute for joint development of fighter engine Kaveri K-10. M/s. Pratt & Whitney, USA, M/s. SNECMA, France and M/s. NPO Saturn, Russia have responded.

International cooperation is being sought with a view to shorten development time and reduce risk.

(d) The expenditure incurred as on 5th October 2005 is Rs. 1200.94 crore against the sanctioned cost of Rs.2839 crore.

(e) Production release of K-10 engine is expected by December 2009.

Supply of Under Weight LPG Cylinders

3465. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY :

SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL :

SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO :

SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA :

SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO :

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that gas cylinders being supplied to the consumers contain less gas than the prescribed weight;

(b) if so, whether Government is formulating any scheme to introduce new cylinder seal to check the theft of gas with a view to supplying full weight gas cylinders to the consumers;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the other steps the Government proposes to take to check such theft in future?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (d) Public Sector Oil Marketing

Companies (OMCs) have reported 31 cases of supply of underweight cylinders to consumers by their LPG distributors during the period, April-October 2005. The erring distributors have been penalized by OMCs in accordance with the provisions of the Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG).

Whenever OMCs receive complaints regarding the supply of underweight cylinders, these are investigated and if the complaint is established, suitable action is taken against the LPG distributor(s) concerned in accordance with the provisions of the LPG Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG). In addition to the action taken by OMCs, the Weight and Measures Departments of the State/UT initiate legal action against those believed to be culpable.

At present, OMCs are using heat shrinkable preformed Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) seals, developed and recommended by the LPG Equipment Research Centre (LERC), as a tamper evident sealing system for LPG cylinders with a view to supplying correct weight of LPG to the consumers. PVC seals are difficult to duplicate, shrink at high temperature and require special technical expertise to manufacture. There is no proposal to replace the PVC seals in use.

Requirement of Funds for Railway Projects

3466. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL :

SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the progress of the on-going railway projects is not satisfactory due to constraints of funds;

(b) if so, the estimated funds required for completion of the on-going railway projects; and;

(c) the measures taken by the Government to mobilise the funds so as to complete the on-going railway projects in a time bound manner?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) The progress of on-going railway projects is affected due to constraints of funds.

(b) Railways have a throwforward of Rs.47354 crore of ongoing Railway projects as on 1st April, 2005.

(c) A number of initiatives have been taken in the past few years for generation of additional resources through project specific funding for National Projects, funding from Ministry of Defence, Public/private partnership and non-budgetary initiatives for National Rail Vikas Yojana.

Laying of Optical Fibre Cable Network

3467. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railtel Corporation of India (RCI) plants to lay a high speed optical fibre cable network along 42000 km. of rail tracks;

(b) if so, the total length of optical fibre cable laid by the RCI till date;

(c) the total expenditure incurred by the RCI thereon;

(d) how the RCI has mobilised the funds for the projects; and

(e) the time by which the work on the project is likely to be completed?

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

(b) Rail Tel Corporation of India Ltd. (Rail Tel) and Railways have laid a total of 28000 Kms approximately Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) upto October 2005. It further plans to lay balance OFC in the next 2-3 financial years.

(c) RailTel has incurred Rs.265 crores on creating OFC network and the balance amount has been spent

by the Railways. RailTel is issuing equity shares to Railways against OFC assets of Railways transferred to RailTel.

(d) RailTel raised funds of Rs.150 crores from Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) and Rs.72 crores from Banks.

(e) The OFC backbone has been targeted upto 42,000 KMs in the next three years.

Reimbursement of DD Commission

3468. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY :

SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI :

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

(a) whether the system of reimbursement of DD commission to petrol pump dealer during the APM regime was continued by the Oil PSUs after dismantling of APM;

(b) whether the cost of DD commission was merged in the dealers' commission;

(c) if not, the reasons for changing the systems arbitrarily by oil industry and its impact on the profitability of dealers particularly located in rural and remote areas;

(d) the probable impact of changes on the market share of Oil PSUs in the long run;

(e) whether the Oil PSUs have sought permission/ approval from the Government in this regard; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor;

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Considering the competitive scenario

and the fact that most banks were found to waive demand draft charges owing to introduction of Electronic Fund Transfer facilities, a decision was taken by the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to discontinue reimbursement of demand draft making charges, effective midnight of 11-12/09/05. However on account of serious objections raised by the Federation of All India Petroleum Traders (FAIPT), the OMCs have decided to continue reimbursement of demand draft making charges, at actuals, for the time being and in the meantime take up with the banks the question of introducing electronic transfer facilities and waiving DD charges.

(e) and (f) Since the announcement of the dismantling of the Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM), the issue of dealers' commission is to be decided by the OMCs based on market considerations. No Government permission/approval is required but the Ministry is from time to time required to play a facilitating role.

Night Landing Facility at Hubli Airport

3469. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the development of Hubli Airport in Karnataka is being delayed despite the sanction is accorded for night landing facility;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) Work for development of Hubli airport, including strengthening of runway and associated pavements for operation of ATR-72 type of aircraft, has been awarded in September, 2005. The upgradation of ground lighting facilities is being taken up simultaneously.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

**Status of Sub-Urban Terminus to
Railway Stations in Nagpur**

3470. SHRI SUBODH MOHITE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government proposes to develop and convert Khapri, Ajni, Butibori and Itwari stations as sub-urban terminus in Nagpur city;

(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) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Not found justified.

**Selling of Euro-III and Bharat-II Petrol
Diesel in NCR**

3471. SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No.4474 dated 25.08.2005 rates of Euro-II/III Petrol/Diesel and state :

(a) whether Euro-III Equivalent Diesel/Petrol Introduced in National Capital Region (NCR) is costing more as compared to Bharat Stage II, diesel/petrol;

(b) if so, whether the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have been directed to charge prices for Euro III equivalent diesel/petrol to Bharat Stage II;

(c) if so, whether the Government is aware that this step is helping the private oil companies to earn more profit as they are getting more recoveries for HSD/Petrol by selling their products out of NCR; and

(d) if so, the corrective measures being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. However, the prices of Euro-III equivalent diesel is same as that for Bharat stage II diesel in the entire country. There is a marginal difference in the price of Euro-III equivalent petrol and Bharat Stage II petrol, to partially cover the additional cost.

(c) and (d) While the retail selling prices of petrol and diesel are fixed by the OMCs on an industry basis in consultation with the Government, the private marketing companies are free to fix their own prices. As such, minor variations are likely in the rates charged by the OMCs and private companies.

Cancellation of Flights

3472. DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that the Indian Airlines Flights between Guwahati and Dimapur and Guwahati and Imphal have been cancelled frequently; and

(b) if so, the corrective measures the Government is contemplating to avoid such unwanted cancellation of flights in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) Indian Airlines does not operate services to/from Dimapur. During the period from September, 2005 to November, 2005 only one A-320 flight operating between Guwahati and Imphal was cancelled due to bad weather. Alliance Air operation between Guwahati and Dimapur and between Guwahati and Imphal were withdrawn/curtailed due to shortage of crew.

(b) Negotiations are being held for obtaining the services of foreign pilots. Advertisements have also been issued for appointment of co-pilots etc.

**Repairing of Approach Roads of
Bogibeel Bridge**

3473. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that the approach roads to Bogibeel bridge construction site are in dilapidated conditions;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for repairing the roads?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (c) The existing Public Works Department (PWD) roads serving as approach road to Bogibeel Bridge had been taken over and was widened/strengthened. The south side approach road requiring repairs has already been taken up.

Kolhapur Airport

3474. SHRI S.D. MANDLIK : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has received any representations from Members of Parliament and from some private airlines for the development of Kolhapur Airport;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government for the development of Kolhapur Airport?

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

(b) The representations have requested for upgradation of Kolhapur airport.

(c) Since, Kolhapur airport has been handed over to State Government of Maharashtra on 01.02.1997 on lease for 15 years, AAI has no plan to develop this airport, at present.

Navi Mumbai Airport

3475. SHRI MILIND DEORA :
SHRI SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the simulation study conducted for setting up a new airport at Navi Mumbai has been completed;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof; alongwith the follow-up action taken thereon; and

(c) if not, the time by which it is likely to be completed?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has requested the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) consultants to compete the study by March 2006.

Air Connectivity to Jaipur and Jodhpur

3476. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to increase the air connectivity to the Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur in Rajasthan; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) Indian Airlines presently has no plans to the increase connectivity to Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur in Rajasthan.

[Translation]

Modernisation of Refineries

3477. SHRI Y.G. MAHAJAN :
SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI :

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

(a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme for modernization of refineries operating at present in the country.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the amount sanctioned by the Government for this purpose; and

(d) the time by which this scheme is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (d) Government does not formulate any schemes for modernisation/expansion of refineries. It is for the Board of Directors of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) to decide on the programme for modernisation / expansion. The details of the on-going major refinery modernisation projects (more than Rs.100 crore) by oil sector PSUs are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Details of Modernisation Projects

Name of the oil company	Location of the refinery/project	Expected date for completion of the project	Anticipated/ approved cost of the project (Rs. in crores)
1	2	3	4
Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)	Panipat Refinery Diesel Hydrotreating Facilities	December, 2005	1070.00
IOCL	Gujarat Refinery MS Quality Upgradation Project	June-2006	453.00
IOCL	Haldia Refinery Distillate Yield Improvement and Diesel Quality Upgradation Project	April-2009	1876.00
Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL)	Mumbai Refinery #	December-2006/ Jan-2007	1850.00
HPCL	Visakh Refinery #	December-2006/ Jan-2007	1635.00
Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)	Mumbai Refinery Lube Oil Base Stock Project	February-2006	371.00
Kochi Refineries Limited	Kochi Refinery # MS and HSD Upgradation project	September-2009	1995.00

1	2	3	4
Numaligarh Refinery Limited	Numaligarh Refinery MS Quality Upgradation project	March-2006	297.00
Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited	Mangalore Refinery Isomerisation Project	July-2006	267.00

Expansion cum Modernisation Project

[English]

Exploration of Gas in Bengal Basin

3478. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is striking gas in Bengal Basin;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether ONGC has also signed a MoU with Department of Science & Technology and the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics for launching a pilot project for production of helium; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) is currently drilling an exploratory well in block WB-OSN-2000/1 awarded to a consortium of ONGC (85%) and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOC) (15%) under the New Exploration Licensing Policy-II in the Bay of Bengal off the West Bengal Coast. The results of the exploratory well will be known only after the completion of drilling and subsequent testing.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between ONGC, Department of Science & Technology and Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics for launching a Pilot project for production of Helium.

It is a Research & Development project amounting to Rs.5.2 crore for which ONGC's contribution is Rs.4.0 crore, the Department of Science & Technology contribution is Rs.0.6 crore, and the Department of Atomic Energy's contribution is Rs.0.6 crore. The pilot plant is expected to be installed by April, 2006 at Kuthalam field in Tamil Nadu.

**Permission to Private Companies for
Air Services**

3479. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has allowed certain private airlines to operate air services in the country;

(b) if so, whether some private airlines have complained to the Government about certain obstacles being faced by them in operating their services;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

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

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

(b) to (d) M/s Dwarka Air Taxi Service Ltd. who were denied permission to import one Dornier 328-300 aircraft due to non-availability of parking space at IGI Airport, New Delhi have represented against the rejection of their request. The matter will be placed before the competent authority.

**Modernisation of Airports in
Southern Region**

3480. SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPAPARAI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has any plan to upgrade / modernize the airports in Southern Region;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds sanctioned for upgradation modernization of each airport in Southern Region;

(d) the progress made so far in this regard; and

(e) the details of new flights introduced in the Southern Region during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (d) Major upgradation / modernisation works undertaken by Airports Authority of India (AAI) at various airports in Southern Region and the fun sanctioned (in crores of Rupees) are as under:—

Strengthening and extension of runway etc. at Trichy (25.93); strengthening and extension of runway etc. at Madurai (35.25); strengthening and extension of runway, construction of parallel taxiway, improvement/ modification of terminal building area with additional aero-bridge, extension/ expansion of apron at Hyderabad (88.7); construction of new runway of 10,000 feet length, apron, isolation bay, ground lighting facilities, Instrument Landing System (ILS) etc. at Vishakhapatnam (159.0); expansion and modification of international terminal building for 1000 passengers with 2 passenger boarding bridges and expansion of apron etc. at Calicut (97.42); construction of new runway of 8000 feet length, ground lighting facilities, ILS etc. at mangalore (55.26); strengthening of runway and pavements and improvement of ground lighting facilities at Hubli (11.14); resurfacing of runway, improvement of ground lighting facilities etc. at

belgaum (14.29); expansion and modification of domestic and international building at Bangalore (10.5); construction of new terminal building, control tower, fire station etc. at Agatti (5.5).

These projects are at advanced stages. Strengthening and extension of runway etc. for Rs.19 crores at Coimbatore airport has been completed. Work for construction of new integrated passenger terminal building for 800 passengers at Vishakhapatnam airport for Rs.89 crores has been awarded. However, construction of new integrated terminal complexes at Trichy and Madurai are at preliminary stages.

(e) It is upto the airlines to provide air services to specific places including Southern region in India depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. Given the commercial viability. Given the commercial viability airlines are free to introduce new services anywhere in the country subject to compliance of the route dispersal guidelines issued by the Government.

[Translation]

Bogus Railway Examinations

3481. SHRI RAKESH SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any bogus office conducting railway examinations under West Central Railway Zone Jabalpur has come to light;

(b) if so, whether any recruitment advertisement by the said bogus office has also appeared in Rojgar Nirman;

(c) if so, whether the Government has ordered any enquiry into the matter;

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

(e) the action taken against the erring persons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) No, Sir. Only a notification regarding the results of fictitious candidates in the name of Railway Recruitment board, Divisional Railway Manager's office Compound, Jabalpur was published in the Employment News dated 29.01.2005 - 04.02.2005.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) The case was forwarded to Superintendent of Police, Central Bureau of Investigation / Jabalpur, who after investigation have closed the case due to allegations not being verifiable.

(e) Does not arise.

Benefits/Facilities to Sales Agents

3482. SHRI CHHATTAR SINGH DARBAR : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the public sector airline companies are giving any other benefits/facilities apart from commission to their sales agents;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of the agencies engaged in the task of air ticket bookings at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) Apart from commission, Air India and Indian Airlines give benefits/facilities to sales agents as permitted by IATA.

(c) Air India ticketing can be done by 2300 IATA Agents in the country. As regards Indian Airlines, the number of passenger Sales Agents engaged in domestic sales as on 31.03.2005 was 1890.

[English]

Handling of Parcel Services

3483. SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware that the new system adopted by the Railways to handover the parcel services and other good services has resulted in unemployment of the existing railway porters;

(b) if so, whether the Government would reconsider the decision in the matter;

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

(d) if not, the other alternative steps taken to provide employment to existing porters in the Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU) : (a) to (d) With a view to maximize utilization of parcel space in Brake Vans of passenger carrying trains and to provide valued-added services to the rail customers, a scheme for leasing of parcel space in Brake Vans of passenger carrying trains has been introduced by the Indian Railways. Under the scheme, parcel space in Brake Vans of passenger carrying trains is leased out to private participants by inviting bids through open tenders. Loading/unloading of parcels is done by the lease holders. On the same concept, leasing of Parcel Vans on round trip basis by mail/express trains has also been introduced. Leasing is the most economical way of handling parcels as Railways are assured of full earning capacity of parcel space irrespective of the actual utilization of the space. The above system also has the advantage of ensuring a more passenger friendly atmosphere on platforms by reducing the cluster of parcel packages since lease holders are permitted to bring their consignments during trains timings and load them directly in Brake Vans. In addition to above, Railways also save on cost on handling of parcels, documentations, marking and storage of parcels.

However, there is no proposal to curtail the existing work force of Parcel Porters.

Vertical Transformation of IA

3484. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Indian Airlines (IA) is likely to undergo a vertical transformation;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the time by which it is likely to be done and the likely impact of the changes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (c) The Board of Indian Airlines has already been strengthened with the induction of four full-time functional Directors so as to achieve increased efficiency and quicker decision making.

Selling of Bunker Fuel

3485. SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU :
SHRI K.C. PALANISAMY :

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

- (a) whether the Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) has any proposal to sell bunker fuel in the near future;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether there is any proposal to set up bunkering and storage facilities at Mangalore Port;
- (d) if so, the details alongwith the cost thereof; and
- (e) the number of companies registered with the Directorate General of Shipping as bunker fuel suppliers?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Mangalore Refinery and petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) have proposed to take up the project for providing comprehensive port bunkering fuel facilities at

all the jetties within the New Mangalore Port. The proposed facilities include both bunkering facilities as well as storage facilities for bunker fuel. The estimated cost for setting up these facilities is Rs.20.32 crore.

(e) At present, 17 companies are formally registered with the Directorate General of Shipping as bunker fuel suppliers meeting the relevant Regulation.

[Translation]

Release of Acquired Land

3486. SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government proposes to release any acquired land at Jodhpur;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether it is proposed to open passages to the villagers through army area; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. There is no proposal to release any acquired land at Jodhpur as it is required for defence purposes.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

[English]

Round Table Conference

3487. SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government has recently held a Round Table Conference for a new world oil order; and

(b) If so, the issues discussed and the decision arrived at the Conference?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) The Ministerial Round Table Conference of North and Central Asian Producers and Principal Asian Consumers was held on 25.11.2005 in New Delhi.

The summary of the conclusions of the Conference is given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Round Table of Asian Oil Ministers Summary of Conclusions

New Delhi, 25 November 2005

Minister and Heads of Delegation from the principal Asian oil and gas producing countries – the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan – met with the principal Asian oil and gas consuming countries – Japan, the Republic of Korea, China, Turkey and India at the invitation of His Excellency Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, India, in New Delhi on 25 November 2005.

Noting the conclusions of the January Round Table which had brought together the principal West Asian and South-east Asian producing countries with principal Asian consuming countries, participants in the November Round Table came to the following broad conclusions:

- (i) It was noted that Asia in the 21st century is Merging as the largest single supplier of oil and gas, as well as the fastest growing consumption centres in the world.
- (ii) Regional cooperation in the Asian oil and gas economy must be pursued within the framework of global cooperation. In this context, they welcomed the forthcoming assumption by the co-chair of the Round Table, Russia, of

the chairmanship of G-8, and expressed the hope that the concerns and views expressed in this Round Table would be factored into G-8 initiatives for Energy, Ecology and Efficiency which Russia proposes to undertake. They also welcomed the Russian intention to associate important producers and import-intensive countries, including participants in the Round Table, in the deliberations of the expert groups that are expected to be set up by G-8.

- (iii) Participants noted with concern the recent volatility in international oil and gas prices and agreed that stable and reasonable prices would be in the interests of producers and consumers alike to ensure, on the one hand, that the growth prospects of consuming countries are not damaged and, on the other, that investment in producing countries is promoted.
- (iv) The need was recognised to study the possibility and feasibility of promoting and developing gas and oil interconnections through LNG and through trans-national oil & gas pipelines within the Asian region for intergrating energy markets, as well as improving the transportation infrastructure. In relation to the oil logistics, the Republic of Korea offered to make available crude and product storages. This too would be studied. This study could include the exploration of all alternative linkages by land and sea throughout Asia, including alternatives of linking the Caspian basin to countries in South Asia. To this end, the Indian proposal to initiate such a study, in association with participating countries, in particular the Republic of Korea which has proposed a working group to prepare a master plan, under the overall aegis of the International Energy Forum, was endorsed. The study will also take into account the suggestion made in one of the presentations to the Round Table of the possibility of

establishing the proposed Asian Gas Grid Institute.

- (v) The Japanese proposal was endorsed to study the possibility of networking the countries of Central, South and East Asia and elsewhere with the Japanese initiative to promote a Sustainable and Flexible Energy System (SAFE).
- (vi) The importance of mutual cross-investment to reinforce mutual trade in oil and gas and associated downstream industry was emphasized as the optimal means of promoting stability, security and sustainability in the Asian oil and gas economy. It was emphasized that environment-friendly investment in upstream and downstream projects should be encouraged, that the investment climate should be improved to augment investment in the Asian oil and gas sector, and that Asian investment in Asian properties, including those in the Caspian region, be supported. Initiatives towards this end were welcomed.
- (vii) The significance of transparency in access to all relevant data relating to reserves, demand, supply and investment was recognized, and the importance of predictability was emphasized as a key element of stability, security and sustainability in the Asian oil and gas economy, and, indeed, the world over.
- (viii) It was agreed that practical steps be taken bilaterally and regionally, as well as globally, for networking the knowledge-base of participating countries in the development of the Asian oil and gas sector and the energy economy in general. In this context, the need to move towards the most optimal energy mix for each country and towards new and renewable energy sources was recognised as a priority for the Asian and global economy.
- (ix) It was further agreed that cooperation among participants in human resource development and training programmes would contribute an important element to the development of the Asian oil and gas economy.
- (x) Asian countries may consider joining hands to undertake joint ventures towards developing modern oil & gas facilities with the latest technology in the upstream and downstream sectors of the oil and gas economy of Asia and elsewhere. Such cooperation may be based on sound considerations of equality and mutual benefit, sincere mutual treatment, and enhanced communication aimed at benefiting all partners in a win-win spirit.
- (xi) Participants agreed that this Round Table offers a truly significant opportunity for Energy Ministers of energy-producing and energy-consuming countries in the region. Accordingly, to strengthen business ties, regional cooperation as well as global cooperation, and with a view to strengthening dialogue, cooperation and exchange among each other, participants agreed to meet one every two years and to keep the complementary fraternal Round Table of West and south-east Asia countries informed of their deliberations as also to inform itself of the proceedings of that Round Table. It was also agreed that this Round Table would not be to the detriment of the dialogue in other regional and global fora.
- (xii) The Round table gratefully accepted the kind offer to Turkey to organise, with Azerbaijan as co-chair, the next meeting of the Round Table.
- (xiii) It was agreed that this Summary would be put to the next Round Table for final approval.

Foreign Tourist Charter Flights

3488. SHRI JASHUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government proposes to allow foreign tourist charter flights on the major airports;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard; and
- (c) the other steps taken or proposed to be taken to attract more foreign tourists?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) and (b) Government has allowed operation of tourist charter flights originating from any foreign country on Inclusive Tour Package basis to all airports in India having customs & immigration facilities without any limitations on frequencies of flights or size of the aircraft. These Inclusive Tour Package Charter flights can also be operated to other airport and the facilities for Customs and Immigration would be made available on ad-hoc or seasonal basis by Customs and Immigration authorities on the request of tour operator.

(c) In accordance with the policy of liberalization in the civil aviation sector and with a view to attract more passengers including tourists, the Government has adopted an overall liberal approach in the matter of grant of traffic rights under bilateral agreements with various foreign countries. Ministry of Tourism has also taken many steps to attract foreign tourists in the recent past like creation of world class collaterals, centralised electronic media Campaign, direct Co-operative marketing with tour operators, participation in trade fairs and exhibitions, optimising editorial public relations and publicity, generating tourists publications and launching of Road shows in key source markets etc.

[Translation]

Raids on Gas Agencies/Petrol Pumps

3489. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KUSHAWAHA :
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR :

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

- (a) whether the Government has recently conducted raids on some gas agencies/petrol pumps in the capital to check malpractices;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the outcome thereof;
- (c) the action taken against the gas agencies/petrol pumps found guilty;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to start a campaign to inspect gas agencies in all the States;
- (e) if so, the time by which the said inspection process is likely to be completed;
- (f) if not, the reasons thereof; and
- (g) the measures being taken by the Union Government to check such irregularities?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (g) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) conduct inspections of LPG gas agencies and petrol pumps and take action against the erring LPG distributors / petrol pump dealers as per the provisions under the Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG). In addition, State Government are empowered to take action as per law. The Weights and Measures Department of Delhi Government conducted raids on 143 LPG distributors and 128 petrol pump dealers of OMCs in Delhi during the period April-September 2005 and discrepancy has been observed in respect of 62 LPG distributors and 9 petrol pump dealers. All the erring dealers have been fined by the State Department as per their procedure. In the case of LPG distributors, fine has been imposed on 50 distributors and 12 cases are pending.

The steps taken by the Government/OMCs to check malpractices/irregularities in LPG distribution include:—

- (i) LPG (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000 under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 have been promulgated. Under this Order, various malpractices like pilferage of LPG from cylinders and supply of underweight cylinders, etc. are prohibited.
- (ii) State Governments are empowered to take action against erring distributors / persons under the provisions of the above Order.
- (iii) Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG) for LPG distributors of Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have been laid down prescribing punishment for offending distributors involved in various malpractices of LPG.
- (iv) Officials of OMCs carry out random checks at distributor's godowns, delivery points as well as enroute to forestall pilferage. If pilferage is established, on any complaint, action is taken against the erring distributor in terms of the MDG.

Similarly, following steps have been taken to prevent adulteration on petrol pumps:—

- (i) Under the Control Orders issued by the Government to prevent fuel adulteration, under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, State Governments are empowered to take action against those indulging in adulteration. Government have taken up this matter with all the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to step up inspections/surprise checks to ensure that adulteration-related activities are minimized and to exercise vigil/conduct inspections at various private firms, factories, processing units, etc., under their jurisdictions so as to identify the perpetrators of

adulteration and take stringent action against them within the available legal framework.

- (ii) As advised by the Government, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have created a separate wing to report to a Director other than Director (Marketing), which will oversee and monitor all activities and operations to curb adulteration and specify norms and guidelines in this regard.
- (iii) Keeping in view the misuse/diversion of SKO for adulteration, the import of SKO by private parties has been canalized through OMCs.
- (iv) OMCs have introduced new tamper proof tank-truck locking systems to prevent en route adulteration by transporters.
- (v) Information Technology (IT) solutions like monitoring movement of tank trucks through Global Positioning System (GPS) and monitoring level of fuel tanks in Retail Outlets through retail automation are being introduced.
- (vi) Branding of Retail Outlets and third party certification of Retail Outlets have been initiated by the OMCs.
- (vii) Effective 2nd October 2005, Government launched the Jan Kerosene Pariyojana as a pilot project in 417 blocks covering 23 States and one Union Territory for a period of six months with a view to strengthening and streamlining the infrastructure for kerosene distribution and involving the Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats and State Panchayati Raj Institutions in the supervision of PDS kerosene distribution, so as to ensure that entitled beneficiaries actually receive their entitlement and diversion to adulteration and black-marketing is capped, reversed and eventually eliminated.

[English]

Construction of Airport at Kannur

3490. SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI :
SHRI ABDULLAKUTTY :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government of Kerala has submitted the feasibility report of construction of airport at Kannur;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the follow-up action taken thereon; and
- (d) the time by which the final decision about construction of airport at Kannur will be taken?

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

(b) to (d) The report is under examination.

Loan for Dedicated Freight Corridor Project

3491. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether Japan has offered loan to Railways for the dedicated freight corridor project;
- (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. It has been agreed between the Govt. of India and Japan in the Joint Statement of the two Prime Ministers signed on 29.04.2005 that the feasibility of a dedicated high axle load freight corridor project for Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah sectors of Indian Railways utilizing the Japanese STEP (Special Terms of Economic Partnership) YEN loan shall be examined. A proposal for carrying out a development study for the dedicated freight corridor project has since been posed to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on 07.07.2005.

(b) There is no offer of Loan so far. However, normally under the STEP Yen loan scheme, 30% of the loan would be tied to procurement from Japan. The loan covers up to 85% of the total project cost with an interest rate of 0.4% and repayment period of 40 years including 10 years grace period.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Vat on PNG

3492. SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) is collecting Value Added Tax (VAT) on the supply of cooking gas;
- (b) if so, the percentage of VAT being collected by the said company on supply of cooking gas;
- (c) whether it is in accordance with rules; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Effective 1.4.2005, Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) is collecting Value Added Tax (VAT) @20% on the supply of piped natural gas (PNG) for cooking and other purposes to its consumers in National Capital Territory of Delhi.

(c) and (d) VAT is being charged @ 20% on piped natural gas (PNG) for cooking and other purposes as per rules under the 4th schedule of the Delhi Value Added Tax Act, 2004.

Under Schedule – 4 of the Delhi Value Added Tax Act, 2004, all petroleum products, except CNG, LPG and Kerosene, are taxable @ 20%. The Office of the Commissioner, value Added Tax, New Delhi, has clarified to IGL that PNG is taxable @ 20%.

12.01 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India), New Delhi, for the year 2002-2003, alongwith Audited Accounts, under sub-section (4) of section 21 of the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India, India) Act, 1990.
- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3223/05]

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : 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 Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Bangalore, for the year 2004-2005.
 - (ii) Annual Report of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Bangalore, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3224/05]

- (b) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai, for the year 2004-2005.

- (ii) Annual Report of the Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3225/05]

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : 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:—
 - (b) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Mumbai, for the year 2004-2005.
 - (ii) Annual Report of the Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Mumbai, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3226/05]

- (b) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Biecco Lawrie Limited, Kolkata, for the year 2004-2005.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Biecco Lawrie Limited, Kolkata, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3227/05]

- (c) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Engineers India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Engineers 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 3228/05]

(d) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, Mumbai, for the year 2004-2005.

(ii) Annual Report of the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, Mumbai, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3229/05]

(2) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Oil Industry Development Board, 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 Oil Industry Development Board, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3230/05]

(3) A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (Hindi and English versions) between the Oil India Limited and the Ministry of petroleum and Natural Gas for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3231/05]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : I beg to lay on the Table—

(1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Airports Authority of India, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Airports Authority of India, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3232/05]

(2) A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (Hindi and English versions) between the Indian Airlines Limited and Ministry of Civil Aviation for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3233/05]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN 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 sub-section (3) of section 21 of the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957:—

(i) The Railway Protection Force (Amendment) Rules, 2005 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 365 in Gazette of India dated the 15th October, 2005.

(ii) The Railway Protection Force (Amendment) Rules, 2005 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 368 in Gazette of India dated the 15th October, 2005.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3234/05]

(2) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 819 A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

(a) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Rail Vikas Nigam Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.

(ii) Annual Report of the Rail Vikas Nigam 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 3235/05]

- (b) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Ircon International Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Ircon International 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 3236/05]

- (c) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Container Corporation of India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Container Corporation of 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 3237/05]

3. (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Railway Sports Promotion Board, 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 Railway Sports Promotion Board, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 3238/05]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619 A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (1) Review by the Government of the working of the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and

Development Corporation, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.

- (2) Annual Report of the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation, 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 3239/05]

12.03 hrs.

MESSAGE FROM RAJYA SABHA
AND
BILL AS PASSED BY RAJYA SABHA

[English]

SECRETARY-GENERAL : Sir, I have to report the following message received from the Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha:—

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 111 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to enclose a copy of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2005 which has been passed by the Rajya Sabha at its sitting held on the 13th December, 2005."

2. Sir, I lay on the Table, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2005, as passed by Rajya Sabha on the 13th December, 2005.

12.03½ hrs.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Statement

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table (Hindi and English versions) of the Statement showing action taken on the

recommendations contained in the following Action Taken Reports of Public Accounts committee:—

- (1) 15th Report (13th Lok Sabha) on "Procurement of solar Photovoltaic Panels";
- (2) 42nd Report (13th Lok Sabha) on "Calamity Relief Fund";
- (3) 4th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on "Excesses over Voted Grants and Charged Appropriations (1999-2000)";
- (4) 4th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on "Wasteful expenditure on rent"; and
- (5) 11th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on "allotment of PAN."

12.04 hrs.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

Eighth and Ninth Reports

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY (Mandsaur) : Sir, I beg to present a copy each of the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on External Affairs:—

- (1) Eighth Report of Action Taken by the Government on the recommendation contained in the 7th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2005-2006.
- (2) Ninth Report of Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 6th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on demands for Grants of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs for the year 2005-2006.

12.05 hrs.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

(I) Status of implementation of recommendations contained in the Second to Fifth Reports of Standing Committee on Defence

[English]

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : Sir, with your permission, I want to make a statement regarding the Status of Implementation of the Recommendations contained in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Reports of the Standing Committee on Defence (14th Lok Sabha).

I am making this statement on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Reports of the Standing Committee on Defence (14th Lok Sabha) in pursuance of the direction 73A of the hon. Speaker, Lok Sabha *vide* Lok Sabha Bulletin – Part II dated September 01, 2004.

The 2nd Report of the Standing Committee on Defence (14th Lok Sabha) was presented to the Lok Sabha on 25.4.2005. The 3rd and 4th Reports were presented on 26.4.2005 and 5th Report was presented on 10.5.2005.

The 2nd Report relates to examination of Demands for Grants of Ministry of Defence for the year 2005-2006. Third Report is on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 1st Report of the Committee (14th Lok Sabha) on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2004-2005. Fourth Report is on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 20th Report of the Committee (13th Lok Sabha) on 'Welfare of Servicemen and Ex-Servicemen'. The Fifth Report is on the 'Cantonments Bill, 2003'.

Action Taken Statements on the recommendations and

*Also placed in Library. See No.LT 3240/05.

[Shri Pranab Mukherjee]

observations contained in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th reports of the Committee had been sent to the Standing Committee on Defence on 22.8.2005. Action Taken Statement on the 5th Report has not yet been sent.

The Second Report contains 33 recommendations, the Third contains 12 recommendations, and the Fourth Report contains 12 recommendations where action is called for on the part of the Government. These recommendations pertain to various issues as detailed in column 2 of the Annexures I, II and III respectively of my statement. The Fifth Report is about various amendments suggested by the Standing Committee on Defence on the Cantonments Bill, 2003.

The present status of implementation of the various recommendations made by the Committee in their Second, Third and Fourth reports is indicated in the Annexures I, II and III respectively to my statement which is laid on the Table of the House. I would not like to take the valuable time of the House to read out all the contents of these Annexures. I would request that this may be considered as read. As regards implementation status of the Fifth Report relating to Cantonments Bill, 2003, necessary Cabinet Note has been prepared and the same will be sent for the consideration of the Cabinet shortly.

12.06 hrs.

(ii) Status of Implementation of recommendations contained in the Nineteenth Report of Standing Committee on Information Technology on 'Functioning of Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI)' pertaining to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND
MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

*Also placed in Library. See No.LT 3241/05.

(SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : I am making this statement on the status of implementation of recommendations contained in the Nineteenth Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology 2004-05 pertaining to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, in pursuance of Direction 73A of the hon. Speaker, Lok Sabha issued vide Lok Sabha Bulletin – Part II, dated September 01, 2004.

The Nineteenth Report of the Standing Committee on Information Technology was presented to the Lok Sabha on 13th May, 2005. The Report relates to functioning of the Registrar of Newspapers for India.

In the Nineteenth Report, the Committee made 14 recommendations in all. The Action taken Notes on these recommendations/observations have been furnished to the Committee on 2nd September, 2005 (in English version) and on 19th September, 2005 (in Hindi version). These recommendations mainly pertain to: amendment to the Press and registration of Books Act, 1867; opening of more Regional offices; plan outlay; verification of titles; on-line registration; de-blocking of titles; refusal of title being same as a foreign title; annual statement under the Act; enhancing the minimum number of circulation figure; deletion of ceased publications; verification of circulation claim; publishers' demands on verification; fee for title clearance or registration; and facsimile editions.

The present status of implementation of the various recommendations/observations made by the Committee is indicated in the Annexure to my statement which is laid on the Table of the House. I would request that this may be considered as read.

12.07 hrs.

(iii) Pilferage of diesel while supplying from IOC Ambala Depot to Army Depot at Leh

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL
GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI

*Also placed in Library. See No.LT 3242/05.

SHANKAR AIYAR) : In July, 2005, it was reported in the media that Tank Trucks (TTs) carrying diesel from Ambala depot to Leh were found to be carrying water. Commanding Officer, Field Petroleum Depot, Indian Army, Leh vide his letter of 16th July, 2005 had informed IOC's Ambala Terminal that seven TTs loaded with HSD ex-Ambala were found to be carrying water. This Ministry had asked Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to get an inquiry conducted through their Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) into the alleged pilferage of oil supplied to the Army in the Ladakh region.

The CVO conducted the inquiry and has, *inter alia*, recommended the following:

- (i) Major penalty proceedings against the Senior Terminal Manager, the then Depot Manager, Leh; Deputy Manger, Ambala Terminal and Assistant Manager, Ambala Terminal; and their transfer from the present locations to non-sensitive jobs.
- (ii) Minor penalty proceedings against the Foreman, Ambala Terminal and Senior Operator, Ambala Terminal and their transfer to non-sensitive jobs.
- (iii) Action against the transporters as per contract agreement including banning of Tank Truck (TT) crews involved in the incident of seven TTs being seized at Leh.
- (iv) Ambiguity in the checking of inventories of locks and system for handing/taking over of master keys to be removed by issuing a fresh circular, and fix responsibilities on particular persons associated with it.
- (v) The inspection of Terminals/Depots to be made by senior officers of State/Head Officer at a regular frequency and action to be taken for the removal of discrepancies observed during inspections in a time bound manner.

- (vi) The present system to secure the transportation of POL products to be replaced with a superior/advance system to make it full proof against any tampering.

After examining the report of the CVO, the management of IOC has placed the Senior Terminal Manager, Ambala Terminal under suspension. Further, regular disciplinary proceedings have been initiated by IOC against Senior Manager, the then Depot Manger, Leh, Deputy Manager, Ambala Terminal, Assistant Manager, Ambala Terminal, Foreman, Ambala Terminal and Senior Operator, Ambala Terminal found to be involved in the alleged pilferage. Transfer orders of the officials concerned have been issued. Seven TTs which were caught by Police at Leh have been suspended. Moreover, 45 TTs belonging to the transporters whose tank trucks were involved in the incident have also been suspended.

IOC have issued a circular on the role and responsibilities of officers handling security locking systems and inspection of depots/terminals as per schedule. They are highlighting the importance of the master key in their conferences. IOC have further stated that while it is absolutely essential for the consignees to check the quality and quantity of the product before taking deliveries, it would be their endeavour to search for cost-effective devices to be installed in tank lorries so as to make it difficult for the carriers to pilfer or adulterate the product.

12.11 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT
PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Situation arising out of Government's decision to
engage private companies to modernise and operate
two important Airports of the country namely
Mumbai and Delhi Airports**

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, the House shall take up item No.14.

Hon. Members a Calling Attention regarding situation arising out of Government's decision to engage private companies to modernize and operate two important Airports of the country, namely, Mumbai and Delhi is listed in the names of Sarvashri Basu Deb Acharia, Sunil Khan, Ajoy Chakraborty, Md. Salim and Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan in today's Order Paper at Sl.No.14.

In the meantime, Saravashri Basu Deb Acharia, Sunil Khan and Ajoy Chakraborty have, vide their letters today requested that Md. Salim may be allowed to call the attention of Minister of Civil Aviation instead of Shri Basu Deb Acharia.

I have acceded to their request and allow Md. Salim to call the attention of the Minister of Civil Aviation.

MD. SALIM (Calcutta North East) : Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Civil Aviation to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"Government's decision to engage private companies to modernize and operate two important airports of the country, namely, Mumbai and Delhi."

MR. SPEAKER : It is long statement. Mr. Minister, do you want to read it? I hope, the hon. Members have got a copy of the statement.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) I have the statement ready.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, do you want to read the statement?

MD. SALIM : He can lay it on the Table of the House.

MR. SPEAKER : All right. No exuberance is necessary.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Hon. Members have got the statement. All right. I can lay it on the Table of the House.

MR. SPEAKER : All right, it can be treated as laid on the Table of the House.

MD. SALIM : Thank you, Sir. I can utilise the time.

MR. SPEAKER : Thank you for what!

*SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Sir, I beg to lay the statement.

Statement

The need to modernize IGI Airport at Delhi and CSI Airport at Mumbai has been felt for a long period of time. The then Prime Minister in 1998 had made a declaration that world-class international airports would be set up in the country. It was then thought that this objective could be achieved by corporatizing the existing airports at Delhi and Mumbai. Subsequently, the Task force on Infrastructure held on June 3, 1999 decided that World class airports would be better achieved by restructuring through long term lease instead of corporatization. The long term lease route was preferred as ownership of assets would remain with the Airports Authority of India (AAI), there would be receipts on account of lease rentals, and it was felt that this route would be faster. The then Solicitor General of India and Ministry of Law and Justice opined that the objective of airport restructuring could be achieved through the Joint Venture route within the existing provisions of the AAI Act 1994. It was also thought that the Joint Venture format could be used to ensure effective mechanisms to oversee the performance of selected bidders as part of the Concession Agreement, and a high degree of autonomy to the selected bidder for professional management and executing works of commercial nature would be possible under this arrangement.

Thereafter, the then Government on 11th September 2003, accorded its approved for restructuring of Delhi and Mumbai airports by adopting the Joint-Venture route. The Government also constituted an Empowered Group of Minister (EGOM) to take decisions on various issues connected with the restructuring of Mumbai and Delhi

*Laid on the Table and also placed in Library. See No.LT 3243/05.

airports. The Government also constituted an inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) to assist the EGOM.

Mumbai and Delhi airports are the two major metro international airports in India. During the year 2004-05 Mumbai airport handled approx. 153 thousand aircraft movements, 15.66 million passengers and approx 403 thousand tonnes of freight which was an increase of 11.6%, 17.9% and 23.4% respectively over the previous year. During 2004-05 Delhi handled approx. 122 thousand aircraft movements, 12.78 million passengers and 344 thousand tonnes of freight which was an increase of 15.7%, 23% and 16.5% respectively over the previous years. And the growth is continuing in the current year. At present the annual passenger handling capacity of Terminal IA and IB at Mumbai is approx 6.00 million and 4.00 million respectively. The passenger handling capacity of Terminal II A and II C is approx 2.5 million and 3.0 million. The Terminal I B and II A are already saturated. The capacity of terminal IA is also likely to be fully utilized in near future. The annual passenger handling capacity of Terminal IA and IB at Delhi is approx 2.68 million and 1.34 million. The passenger handling capacity of the International Terminal is approx 4.6 million per annum. Their Terminal IB at Delhi is fully saturated. The Terminal IA is also expected to be saturated by 2010.

As per an expert study undertaken last year it has been forecast that the Terminal passengers at Mumbai are expected to cross 21 million in 2010, 30 million in 2015 and 54 million in 2025 and 102 million in 2040. Similarly in case of Delhi the Terminal passengers are expected to exceed 17.5 million in 2010, 56 million in 2030 and 85 million in 2040.

The current modernization and restructuring for Delhi and Mumbai airport transaction envisages up upfront payment of Rs.150 crores from each airport and a minimum of 5% of gross revenue on a year to year basis for AAI. After the Transaction the overhead cost of AAI is also expected; to reduce significantly. As per an expert analysis carried out by consultants and with the most

conservative estimates (with minimum revenue share of 5% specified in the Request for Proposal (RFP) document, although the actual revenue share as Operation Management and Development Agreement (OMDA) fee is expected to be higher), the present value of the cash flows to AAI under the Joint Venture Company (JVC) route for the forecast period (30 years) is significantly positive. In the scenario where AAI undertakes the development of Delhi and Mumbai airports on its own, the present value of the free cash flows from the airports would have become negative.

It is also submitted that the AAI has a plan to develop 35 non-metro airports for which an amount of about Rs.500 crore is required. In case the AAI invests its funds in Delhi and Mumbai airports, it may not be possible for the organization to undertake development of these non-metro airports. After handing over Delhi and Mumbai airports to JVC, the Authority is expected to continue to remain a profitable organization.

While considering the functions to be allocated to the Joint Venture Company it has been decided not to entrust the JVC with any of the sovereign functions like security, Air Traffic control, communication Navigation and Surveillance Services, customs, Immigration etc. Further AAI is also planning to improve Air Traffic Management (ATM) and Communication Navigation and Surveillance (CNS) services at the Airports.

I would like to inform this House that there has been continuous dialogue with the staff and employees of AAI. To safeguard the interest of existing AAI Employees it has been made mandatory for the JVC to absorb a minimum of 40% of the employees posted at Mumbai and Delhi airports. However, it is understood that almost all the bidders have expressed their intention to absorb much higher percentage and a weightage is being given to this factor in the evaluation of bids. Moreover, the period of deputation of existing employees to JVC has also been increased to 3 years. In view of the fact that during next 3 years AAI shall be expanding its activities at various

[Shri Praful Patel]

other airports and would therefore need additional manpower, the employees who are not absorbed by the JVC shall be deployed by AAI at such other airports.

The employees of AAI have submitted an alternative plan for development of Delhi and Mumbai airports. The plan has been examined by AAI and also the Consultants. The recommendations of AAI in this regard would also be considered by the EGOM.

It is necessary that appropriate airport infrastructure is created to support and accelerate the economic development of the country. Considering huge investment required in the airport infrastructure development, it is inevitable to invite Foreign Investment, but to keep the management control in the Indian hands it has been decided to cap the Foreign Investment at 49% in this particular transaction.

The process of restructuring and modernization of Delhi and Mumbai airports is based on transparent procedures. It has also gone through considerable consultations process. The best professional consultants were appointed by AAI after inviting bids for this purpose. Expressions of Interest (EOI) were solicited from interested parties to acquire 74% equity stake in the JVC and the complete documentation, in this regard, was uploaded in the websites of AAI and Ministry of Civil Aviation (MCA) on 17.2.2004 after obtaining the approval of EGOM. The last date for submission of EOI was 4.6.2004 which was later extended to 20th July, 2004.

The extension was given because Government approved the 49% cap on FDI, restriction of equity participation by Indian scheduled airlines up to 10% increasing the deputation period of employees in the JVCs from 2 to 3 years and also decided to give weightage to bidders who would induct more number of employees over and above the mandatory induction of 40%.

Ten entities had lodged their EOIs by 20th July 2004

(i.e. last date of the receipt of EOIs). Of these nine entities were short-listed. The draft Transaction Documents were issued to the nine short-listed bidders on 30th August 2005. Six pre-Qualified Bidders (PQBs) submitted their binding Offers (both Technical and Financial bids) for Mumbai Airport and five PQBs submitted their binding Offers for Delhi Airport on 14th September 2005. The evaluation of Technical Bids was entrusted to a composite team of consultants who were authorized to evaluate as per their scope of work. A Government Review Committee (GRC) was constituted for an independent review of the evaluation exercise undertaken by the consultants. The report of the consultants and the report of the GRC are currently being reviewed by the IMG. The Empowered Group of Ministers would take a decision regarding the technical pre qualification of bidders based on the report of the IMG after which the concerned financial bids would be opened to select the successful bidders.

MD. SALIM : As you have rightly pointed out, it is a long and informative piece of statement. I would appreciate that.

MR. SPEAKER : That is what you want. You must have wanted informative statement.

MD. SALIM : I agree with most parts of the statement of the hon. Minister. As far as Mumbai and Delhi Airports are concerned, time and again, we have also expressed our concern. We have to roam around before landing as there is congestion. Hon. Minister also appreciates that. Civil Aviation Ministry as well as the Tourism industry are growing at a rapid pace. After a long time, we have now come into the picture. We are boosting the entire economy - eight per cent or 10 per cent growth. It is all related and being the lopsided development, Mumbai and Delhi Airports are important because Civil Aviation industry and the economy are going to grow. For several years, it depended on these two Airports.
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No whisperings, please.

MD. SALIM : So, there is a need. It is not that all of a sudden the Minister is emphasising on modernization and expansion. I happened to be, in my earlier incarnation, as a Member of Rajya Sabha and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Tourism and Transport. Since 1990, a Member of the Consultative Committee of Civil Aviation. As in the airlines, similarly in the case of airports, the Government could not take decisions at the appropriate time and cripple the public sector airlines and airport authority so that no expansion takes place.

Please do not spend. It takes time. Now you are talking about the fast track and rapid expansion. I do appreciate that. What was the position of the Government till now? In 1998, the then Prime Minister told – it is in your statement – that modernisation is needed. The Parliament has given this authority, through its Act, to the Airports Authority of India. In January 2003, they had prepared a proposal and given it to the previous Government. What happened to that? It was a fast track project. They cited the example of DMRC, the National Highways Authority of India to say how the Government agencies are capable of doing big things if autonomy is given to them and funds are made available.

The Airports Authority of India is a debt free company and it has a reserve. The aviation industry generates the major part of its income and profit from these two airports. What the Minister is now proposing is privatisation of the profits and nationalisation of the losses. They are trying to hand over the lucrative business to the private companies. The NDA Government – Shri Ananth Kumar is here – had taken the decision to adopt the joint venture route. As far as the second para is concerned, the Minister himself has accepted the decision of 11th September, 2003 of the NDA Government. They have buried the expansion plan of the Airports Authority of India. There is no response. The NDA Government, true to its nature, decided to hand over these two airports to the private company through a joint venture route. Now there is a change. My first question to the Minister is this. In the changed circumstances, the UPA

Government and Mr. Minister who is the Minister of the UPA Government, is going by the Common Minimum Programme and going by the thrust given to the public sector. The Standing Committee is demanding the 'mini ratna' status to the Airports Authority of India. I would like to know whether they are picking up from the Cabinet decision of the then Government or whether they have applied their mind to it afresh.

[Translation]

When next generation takes over, it questions the decision taken by the earlier generation as to whether they were right or wrong? The Government has changed, whether you have reviewed that Cabinet decision? You have not done so. You are following the line of their decisions. Why we have Standing Committees in the House? I would thank you that the Minister gives reply about the action taken. The Standing Committee had expressed its views about the modernization of Airports in August 2005. I would not go into its details because it is an accessible document. It has made a mention about what happened in Bangalore and Hyderabad and its examples are also given there. What will be the effect of the modernization you are talking about? The Minister must have seen the report of the Standing Committee. I am not against modernization. I was the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Tourism and Transport at the time when the Prime Minister had made an announcement in this regard in 1998-99. We were talking of modernizations, expansion at that time.

In the situation that has emerged after 9/11, merely creating air space and constructing buildings at the Delhi Airport will not serve the purpose. We do not get even 70 percent air space which receives flight information. Only real estate development will not be sufficient here. This is the reason that the Standing Committee had expressed the view that one green field Airport is required for Delhi and Mumbai. If I go through his statement he has stated the same in para three. I will not repeat it. I agree with that. The kind of projections we have, the freight will increase,

[Md. Salim]

number of flights will increase, the number of passengers will increase, and whether the modernization plan we are preparing right now will be sufficient to deal with the new situation? He can not built a separate run-way in Mumbai by Modernization. We are developing real estate. If we have to develop Airports, then the data furnished by his which shows a growth of 23 percent, will saturate by the year 2010. They are making plans for 60 years. When they are talking of hand over, then they are talking of 60 years. Projections are being given and growth rate of business is insufficient. I do not have any objection if the Minister allows private taxies for both Delhi and Mumbai. Let them come and let them invest, if they do not have the money. It is the proposal of the Airports Authority to set up green fields Airports.

It was a proposal of the civil aviation Ministry that it should be located a bit far from Delhi. In Delhi we have security concerns, There is VVIP movements and centres of Air force are also so we located over there can construct it on the out skirts and commence work with a projection till the year 2050. If the people are ready to invest, they are interested then why don't they given them a chance?

[English]

why do you want to handover your assets? Those two airports are the prime assets of the Government of India and the people of India. Why do you want to hand it over?

[Translation]

Later on I will come to it as to how to do it and how to do it properly.

Now, I want to speak about third point if you hand it over then some transparency should be applied. They may apply their mind. Some fairness should be observed so that we can raise our head with pride in the world and show to them as to what we understand by the term privatization and how we can do it, it is improper to ask the Minister repeatedly, how they are doing it and how it

is improper. The Minister...(Interruptions) Airports are under the Airport Authority of India. As far as the Parliament is concerned to Airports.

[English]

According to the Act, it is Airports Authority of India. [Translation] But the Airports Authority is only for name sake and the actual job is done by the Minister of Civil Aviation. [English] It was hi jacked. [Translation] This Ministry has a supervisory role but total process is being done by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in the past phase. The Ministry of Civil Aviation has engaged consultants to show transparency. There are three consultants area there-legal, financial and technical. A Consultant Evaluation Committee (E.C.) has been set up. It will be reviewed by the Government Review Committee (GRC). There will be an inter ministerial group, thereafter an empowered group of Ministers will come. It has multi-tier system, therefore, I am saying that it is very serious, complicated matter. It is not easy. My question is about the manner in which you have selected these Consultants? This should be 'made transparent. They have shown in agreement that it has been handed over to the Ministry of Civil Aviation and there is no conflict of interests. I have with me an advertisement of the ABN AMRO whiles appeared in the Today Business dated 4 December. Why I am mentioning it? You can raise objection to it. I am mentioning it just because it is written in the big document that"

ABN AMRO is the Financial Advisor to the Airports Authority of India on this transaction and is managing the transaction process." [Translation] They are consultants also and giving consultation in transaction process as well. A very interesting thing is said in the advertisement of 4th December. [English] It says that we believe in focusing on our clients, ABN AMRO. [Translation] They are saying it publicly. The process is underway.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : You do not have to show it. It is not permitted.

[Translation]

MD. SALIM : I am not showing any magazine. I am showing my documents. In the documents Reliance Industries Limited is number one client and on number five is GMR and both are in bidding process. I will come to this point later whether there is any conflict interest in it. ...*(Interruptions)*

I will tell about other people one by one.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : He will speak; you need not get exhausted.

MD. SALIM : All the consultants have given on affidavit to the Ministry of Civil Aviation that they do not have any conflict of interest with any bidder. You know the famous cases of Enron and Anderson.

[Translation]

Anderson was document as well as consultant. The whole world knows what happened to Enron and Anderson? Our Finance Minister Sh. Chidambaram was Enron's Counsel. When the matter came before the Supreme Court, the court found many lacuna in it. When Shri Chidambaram become Minister both the times he said it openly that he will not see the file as he was Enron's Counsel. It was right thing as there should not be any witness of conflict. There is conflict interest which is not about bank but about legal consultant.

[English]

Amar Chand Mangaldas, Managing Director of the Company is your Legal Advisor of this process.

He also happens to be one of the members of the Board of Directors of one of the bidder companies.

[Translation]

It has been given in detail in the Economic Times that

when demerger process was on in a big company the responsibility was being given to Mangaldas.

[English]

They are very close to that company. They know everything.

[Translation]

The process should be fair and transparent. The Government are talking about competition. Which is going on now. It is doing nothing. The Government is saying that the company, the advisors will do the technical evaluation but there is conflict of interest within. Therefore, when the Inter-Ministerial Group met it could not take any decision knowing well that the last date of bonds was December 13. Who will take responsibility for that? We are quoting that whether GOM or Inter Ministerial Group will not take its responsibility. The Committee is saying it is not our responsibility. If the matter goes to the court in the later stage, it will be Government's responsibility. It is ready to give away prime assets without taking any responsibility. If your wish, I have all the documents and I can quote them one by one.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I do not know what it is.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Sir, is the hon. Member authenticating what he is reading because I have not seen any document in this regard? He should at least authenticate what he is reading. It is only a request.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Of course, you are entitled to raise question about transparency. You are reading from a document but you have not given any notice to me. After all, it is an important question. Dust cannot be thrown on the face. Therefore, you may try to say or refer to whatever is there in the document but do not read from a document which is not before us. You can refer whatever you want to.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : I just wanted you to give us the papers...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : you have been permitted by Shri Sathpathy to continue.

[Translation]

MD. SALIM : Reliance advertises for mutual funds. There are 5.6 trustees out of whom five are from the Reliance company and one is from ABN-AMRO, who would like *[English]* to authenticate it? They declare. Custodians Since the Minister is provoking me to refer to the document, I will try to just switch over to the document.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : I am not provoking you.

MR. SPEAKER : You can mention what is there in the document. Reading out means problem. You can give a gist of it.

MD. SALIM : I am not going to sensitives. I am not emotional.

[Translation]

But the Government Review Committee is not doing evaluation. The company has given the accounts. This has been given about Airplan. That complaint has been taken over. There is an article in Spanish about Global Technical Assistance and Mexican Bidding Associates, which I am not quoting. Despite that Mexican Airport is being run by the Government and is going to be privatised due to its poor performance. It's equity is not more than 15 percent. Why the Government is handing over Delhi and Mumbai Airports to it by making it as a partner? To Whom the Government are giving these airports and from whom? Mumbai ranked 120th in the last year and that company ranked 119th. So, both are of the same level.

[English]

Subjectivity is inherent in the evaluation process.

MR. SPEAKER : There are four other hon. Members to speak.

MD. SALIM : This report has been prepared at the instance of the Airports Authority and the Ministry of Civil Aviation. No independent search of any kind has been undertaken or conducted to ascertain whether any document or information submitted by the PQB is authenticate, truthful and reliable.

MR. SPEAKER : What are you reading from?

MD. SALIM : I am reading from the disclaimer attached to the evaluation report prepared by the Evaluation Committee, constituted by the Civil Aviation Ministry comprising of three members. I have already told about the characters of the Committee. They are ABN Amro, Airplan and Mangal Das.

[Translation]

They are depending on that we have not done any evaluation.

[English]

I am completing the sentence. It is said:

"ABN AMRO and Airplan have assumed that the bid documents are authentic, truthful and reliable in all respects. Accordingly, we have placed reliance – this reliance is not capital R - on the same in the preparation of this Report. Representatives of ABN AMRO and Airplan have not verified the veracity of any documents or information furnished to us by the PQBs. This Report, markings and its conclusions are based on a subjective analysis of the bid documents by the Evaluation Team."

MR. SPEAKER : You have to authenticate them. Otherwise, it will not go on record.

MD. SALIM : I will authenticate them. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : But that is not the general

system. You have to give it to the Chair. You have to inform the Chair. You just cannot throw something and say that I am authenticating it. I have been telling you to mention it.

MD. SALIM : It is available in the market place.

A representative of the Planning Commission has given a note saying that it will not stand the scrutiny of the judicial process and it will stand the scrutiny of the Parliament.

MR. SPEAKER : All right. I am not stopping you from referring to it. I only objected to your reading it.

MD. SALIM : It is very serious. It is said:

"... neither ABN AMRC/Airplan nor their employees or advisors make any representation or warranty, express or implied, or accept any responsibility or liability, whatsoever, in respect of any statements or commissions herein, or the accuracy, completeness or reliability of this Report, and shall incur no liability under any law, statute, rules or regulations as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of this Report."

[Translation]

The matter is becoming live Anderson's Union Carbide gas tragedy, of Bhopal, and nobody is taking any responsibility. I do not want to go further but my point is very clear that we are going to hand over a prime asset whose process is not transparent and fair. The Government talks about competition, but where is it? The Government have selected two or three companies by short listing. After that the Government say that it will not go into details. It will only listen to the views of the consultants. Out of 7 big airports of the world 6 airports are in Asia. Therefore, I am proud to be an Asian. We have not found any airport of international standard with which we can consult and work here. The Government are thinking about airports of year 2050. We should compete with better airports of the world. The Airport Authority or the Government invite global

tenders by competing the design and after that the airport become the best. Since this airport is not only meant for tomorrow. The hon. Minister may perhaps remain in power for a year or two and the Government may remain for 4 to 5 years but the airport will remain 60-70 or 100 years. Therefore, the Government will have to work accordingly as it is not meant for temporary gains.

[English]

It is scam unfolding. I am asking the UPA Government to mind it. There should not be any stink. That is why I would like to ask the Minister whether he is going to scuttle the entire process, take a fresh view and ask the Airports Authority of India to go to the world, start it again and build the airport. Thank you.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : Sir, I am puzzled to know the dubious way in which all these things, right from the bidding process to evaluation to short-listing was done. The only purpose was to hand over these two airports, where the Government is earning sixty per cent of its revenue. These two airports are now being over to I found from the statement of the hon. Minister that the decision to modernise and upgrade these two airports was taken in 1998, I wonder whether the earlier Government, the NDA Government, was competent enough to take such a decision. It is because this decision was taken prior to 2003 when the Airports Authority of India Act was amended. Before amending the Act, how the Government took a decision to hand over, to modernize and upgrade these two Airports, and for that, in a joint venture route?

Sir, prior to that, the Act at that point of time did not permit you for joint venture. ...*(Interruptions)* The Airports Authority of India Act did not permit you to adopt joint venture route. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : s only putting question.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Put your question, Mr. Acharia. Already, we have taken a lot of time on this.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : I would like to know from the Minister when in 2003, the Airports Authority of India ...*(Interruptions)* Before 2003, only the Airports Authority of India had the authority to modernize and upgrade the Airports...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You have already mentioned that.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : When did that organization submit a proposal for modernization of these Airports? Why was any positive action not taken at that point of time? An alternative proposal was submitted. He has admitted and he has stated that proposal. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : It is not so easy to control!

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : The alternative proposal was submitted by the Joint Forum of the unions of Airports Authority of India. He has stated in his statement that their proposal would be considered along with the others. When was the alternative proposal submitted to the Government? Why was that not considered before the Expression of Interest (EOI) was invited? He has stated that it has not yet been finalized.

I would like to know whether on the 5 December, the proposal was sent to the Empowered Group of Ministers. Is it a fact that the Empowered Group of Ministers has returned back the proposal for reconsideration? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You do not want information; you are giving information.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Everything has been done, the bidding, evaluation, etc. Doubts have been

expressed by this House and everybody. It has not been done in a transparent manner. Rather, it has been done in a dubious manner. ...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi) : Such a dubious thing and you are still supporting this.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : I would like to know whether the Government would review it and desist from handing over these two Airports to private companies. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I thought the Opposition's objection was to the method.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR (Bangalore South) : The earlier Member said that it is a scam. ...*(Interruptions)* now, he is saying it has been done in a dubious way...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Please do not complicate further.

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (Durgapur) : Sir, will the hon. Minister ignore the critical issues just by virtue of some recommendations of a Consultant of Foreign Origin (GTA)? Sir, I would like to submit...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : No submission. Only question, please.

SHRI SUNIL KHAN : I want a clarification and there is also one question. How is this bidding process going on as a result of which our country loses Rs.62,784 crore?

MR. SPEAKER : It is the same thing.

SHRI SUNIL KHAN : This is just a hypothetical loss. It could be more in case the competition is eliminated. Sir, I am just going to the point how it is going to be ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : 'How'. 'How is it' has already been stated. Put question only.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, I will not allow it.

SHRI SUNIL KHAN : If the gross revenue is considered as Rs.1200 crore against the present figure of Rs.600 crore only, it would mean receivable to AAI as OMDA fees nearly Rs.60 crore. Please compare it with the present day net profit to AAI. Out of the 84 operational and 42 non-operational Airports, 11 Airports make profit of Rs.796 crore per year at its present level of operation. Delhi and Mumbai Airports' net profit is Rs.272 crore and Rs.345 crore. They contributed 34 per cent and 43 per cent respectively.

MR. SPEAKER : You have said that it has not yet been finally decided. What do you all speak?

(Interruptions)

SHRI SUNIL KHAN : It is going to be a loss of the order of - Rs.272 crore minus Rs.60 crore -Rs.212 crore...*(Interruptions)* How our public sector units, the funds of the general masses go to the hands of the private and the foreign sector, especially to ASA which has no personal idea, no expertise in the world, as a world class. So, we have to consider how the Government is losing money and how and from where it comes.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ajoy Chakraborty. Only you have to put the question because a lot of elaboration has already taken place.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY (BASIRHAT) : I am putting the questions, only. I am coming to that. The first question is this.

Is it a fact that M/s. ABN Amro, who have been selected as the main consultant and financial advisor for the Delhi and Mumbai modernisation process, have also been the main financial advisor and arranged huge funds for M/s Reliance and M/s. GMR Group in various projects?
...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You can club it with Shri Salim's question. Shri Salim has put an identical question. It is the same question. He has put the same question as you have done. Therefore, you say that you put the same question.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY : No, Sir. That is the main point. Secondly, is it a fact that the managing Partner of M/s Amarchand and Mangaldas, Mr. Cyril Shroff was one of the Directors of Reliance Energy Limited and closely associated with the demerger process of the Reliance Group which is supposed to be done by a person of confidence?

MR. SPEAKER : No insinuation is to be recorded. You can make a statement.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Without notice, you cannot make any insinuation.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY : I would like to know whether the said Director resigned from the REL Board and subsequently M/s Amarchand and Mangaldas was appointed by the Airports Authority of India as the legal consultants for this project.

MR. SPEAKER : You should have sat together and decided who should put which question.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY : Though six parties were pre-qualified for technical and financial evaluation and also accepted various terms and conditions of the tender document, then, how only two bidders, M/s Reliance and M/s GMR have been made eligible for the financial bid?...*(Interruptions)*

It is a fact that the consultants for the Delhi and Mumbai Airports modernisation process have refused to take any accountability or responsibility for the outcome of the project?...*(Interruptions)*

[Shri Ajoy Chakraborty]

Sir, please permit me one minute. I shall complete it.

Is it also a fact that the consortium with partnership of ASA Mexico in the world airports ranking 119 has been selected for the financial bid whereas the other ranking airports groups have been ignored? If so, the reason thereof be mentioned.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Chakraborty, you have heard the similar questions that have been already put. You also reiterate those questions.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY : I am putting the same question. We are not opposing the modernisation of the Airports.

MR. SPEAKER : Good.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY : We say that the AAI is earning a profit with a capital of Rs.2500 crore. The Standing Committee of the Department concerned has submitted the report against the privatisation of the Delhi and the Mumbai Airports on 26th August, 2005. Even the technical experts, the engineers have made an alternative proposal before the Department, to the Ministry against the privatisation of the Airport on 18th June, 2004. That was not accepted by the Department concerned.

MR. SPEAKER : I hope you also want the Kolkata Airport to be modernised.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY : I would only remind the hon. Minister that he is the Minister of the UPA Government. He is not the Minister of the NDA Government. This Government is functioning on the basis of the Common Minimum Programme. It was incorporated in the Common Minimum Programme that profit making PSUs should not be privatised. But they are going beyond the Common Minimum Programme.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN (Indore) : Mr. Speaker,

Sir, I would like to request you, before asking a question, that I had given a Calling Attention regarding development and upgradation of Airports of small cities. I request you to give me an opportunity to speak on that issue also.
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Leave it to Mr. Malhotra. He wants to speak on this.

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to ask two-three small questions to hon. Minister...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : As you have demanded, we can have a proper discussion on this.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir as per my information, there are 120-125 Airports out of which 50-60 Airports would be functional...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : It is only for Delhi and Mumbai

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN : The Airports of Mumbai and Delhi earn 60 per cent profit. I would like to ask if the Government hand over these two Airports to JVC, then how would it be able to maintain non-profitting Airports? What is its plan regarding those Airports? Whether the Government propose to privatise Airports in non-metro cities like Ahmedabad, Agra and Vishkapatnam

He has stated in his statement that if the Government hand over both these Airports, approximately Rupees 5 thousand crores would required for non-metro cities whether the Government would like to keep them or give them since no investment is required there on. It is written

in the statement. I would like to know the amount spent or invested on these two Airports during the last ten years alongwith the profit and ratio thereof so that we can get this assurance that the Government can provide funds to non-metros by actually disposing of something ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : There is nothing about non-metros in it

(English)

It is engaging private companies to modernise.

(Translation)

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN : The third thing I want to ask is that you have said that you are doing privatisation of profit-making commercial activities, this privatisation is not being in respect of souvenir activities. This has been stated by you in your statement. If you are not doing so, then wherefrom the money will come for souvenir activities since they are in need of maximum development. Today, congestion is also being talked of. If more and more investment is required in it, then wherefrom you will bring in the money? Have you formulated any scheme in this regard?

In fourth thing which I want to ask is what scheme you have formulated for widely distribution of equity. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Sumitra ji, it is O.K., it is enough now. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am only putting forth questions only, not going into other details. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Not on non-metro airports, be specific to airports which have been privatized. You will be given a chance again. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir,

I should be allowed to put forth my fifth submission atleast.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Vijay Kumar Malhotra.

(English)

Just one question because your name has not come unfortunately.

(Interruptions)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Sir, in that case, I cannot speak. Such a scandal, such a dubious thing is being heard. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : What can I do? According to rules, only five Members are permitted to speak on a Call Attention. Even then I am considering your request.

(Interruptions)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : All right Sir, I will ask just one question then.

(Translation)

Whether Mr. Minister will enlighten us about the statement of his cabinet colleague, Shri Kamal Nath. Is it correct, is it right? He has said that it lacks transparency. This is being done improperly, this is being done badly. Is this a fact? Mumbai and Delhi both the airports should be completed and that too at the earliest but whether this is the right way where two or four major groups, capitalists are managing them in such a way. I want to know from him whether it is a fact that ABN-AMRO, which has been selected by you, has those very persons who are committing all sorts of scandals, who are hatching conspiracy to commit scams. He has that it is being done in a dubious manner. Please explain everything in this regard. Please let us know what are the precaution you are going to take in future in this regard?

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will be recorded.

*(Interruptions)**MR. SPEAKER : Please do not interrupt the Minister.
[Translation] take your seats. please keep silence.*(Interruptions)**[English]*

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ajoy Chakraborty, will you please take your seat?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : He is answering now your important questions.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : If you do that, I will ask the Minister not to reply.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing is being recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Kharabela Swain, please sit down. Shri Ajoy Chakraborty, please sit down, otherwise I will request the hon. Minister not to reply.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You just cannot take the House to ransom.

*(Interruptions)**[Translation]*

MR. SPEAKER : Everything is going on smoothly,

**Not recorded.*

despite that trouble is being created.

*(Interruptions)**[English]*

MR. SPEAKER : Do not record anything which he says.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : Will you please sit down? Why are you competing with him and disturbing the proceedings? Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : We are all men of soil.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Nandy, do not compete with him. Please sit down. It is very unfair. There is no charm in this.

It is a very important subject and I have allowed him. Naturally, this matter is of great importance. Everybody is talking of modernisation but you have no patience.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the outset, let me assure all my senior colleagues here that we are running this UPA Government with a lot of help, support and encouragement from your side. There is a NCMP which we are all committed to, and we stand by that.

The question here is this. What is the fate of Airports Authority of India? The first answer to that is that the Airports Authority of India is neither being sold off, nor privatised. The Airports Authority of India, as an entity, continues and shall remain to continue, as the torch-bearer of running Airports in our country. That is an issue which

**Not recorded.*

I would like to be very clear about. Without the Airports Authority of India being the torch-bearer, you cannot see all-round development of air connectivity and running of Airports in our country. I would be very clear on that that we respect the position of the NCMP in terms of making sure that Airports Authority remains a premier organisation.

The issue that here has come is about Mumbai and Delhi Airports. As all of us know, aviation in India for all these last 58 years – so also our Independence – has been largely driven through Mumbai and Delhi Airports. But that is not a very healthy situation if you look at the overall development of the country. As I have been experiencing through the Question Hour and during other times when I have been in the House, and through your goodself also, that air connectivity is becoming an area of increasing concern, and all the Members of the House are very keen that we should expand our activities.

The background to this exercise came from the fact that as the Airports Authority of India, shall we keep on investing money in Mumbai and Delhi for which large amounts of investments were required, or should we use our resources and try to develop all the other Airports across the length and breadth of our country? That was, I think, the genesis on which this issue started taking shape and this went forward.

Sir, Mumbai and Delhi airports, I do admit, have been the flagship of the Airports Authority. Therefore, a lot of concerns were raised by our hon. Members as to what happens to the Airport Authority, if Mumbai and Delhi airports go out of the system. But let me tell you that we have taken into account a lot of other things, which were originally envisaged in this process by the previous Government. Now, after we came, especially keeping view the NCMP as well as the Employees' Unions who are party to the entire process for whom we are equally concerned that they should have a good and secure future, we took certain decisions in the best interest of both the Airports

Authority, its long-term health and the future of the employees of the Authority.

Just to give you a little background, originally this concept was mooted by the previous Government to go in for a joint venture exercise in Mumbai and Delhi airports. First let me assure you that there is no question of selling of these airports. What we are envisaging is a joint venture for 'X' number of years, and that is not a sale of asset or transfer of asset to any 'A', 'B', or 'C' party who will eventually be in the joint venture exercise.

Secondly, when we came in, legitimate concerns were raised by many Members of Parliament, many political parties which are supporting us and by our own employees. Therefore, we said that let us not go into this process as was originally envisaged. The Government, in its wisdom, also took a step to have an empowered Group of Ministers so that we have a wider consultation, more expertise available, and also we will see that this process goes meaningfully forward addressing a lot of concerns which were raised then.

After we came, the first effort which we made was that we talked to the employees. In the earlier process, each and every employee was only to be on deputation to the joint venture company for two years. After that his fate was unknown. In fact, it could be that he could continue in that organisation or he could be losing his job. What we first did was that we wanted to see that our employees are 100 per cent protected. So, as a measure of abundant caution, in this exercise we made sure that all the employees would go into the joint venture for three years on a mandatory deputation. After that, the joint venture will ensure, at least 40 per cent of the employees of the existing airports shall be retained by the joint venture company.

I can also tell you that at least 10 to 15 per cent of the employees will continue to remain with the Airports Authority in that same airport for the reasons I will spell out a little later, and the balance employees, if any, if not

[Shri Praful Patel]

absorbed by the joint venture company, will be absorbed by the Airports Authority. It is because fortunately, as I have been saying, Airports Authority is a growing organisation. There is more and more demand for new airports or more services at other airports across the length and breadth of the country. Therefore, we made sure that each and every employee of the Airports Authority would be given his due respect, and his position would not be compromised. In the joint venture, we also made it a point that weightage will be given to the joint venture bidders who give higher absorption of the employees within the existing airport over and above the minimum mandatory 40 per cent.

So, as far as the employees are concerned, I can assure you that the Airports Authority in this exercise completely protects the future of the employees who are working, which earlier was not the case. Earlier that was no protection available to them. I can give you this as a commitment and it is an assurance given by the Government of India to her own employees.

On the issue of what will happen to the Airports Authority in the future, there is one thing which we must factor, that is, the profits came to the Airports Authority only from Mumbai and Delhi because the traffic was high only in Mumbai and Delhi. As you are seeing now, in the last year-and-a-half, the trends are changing. There are many airports which are handling many more flights. The losses of loss-making airports have reduced or many loss-making airports have become profitable airports.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Do not interrupt him.

13.00 hrs.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL : I would also like to point out that in their revised document and in the revised process which we have adopted, we have ensured that the Air Traffic Control and the CAN, CTM or whatever, the income

arising in Mumbai and Delhi, they continue to remain with the Airports Authority of India. That itself is a substantial chunk of the overall income. As a result of that, a part of that income can be preserved, I do not want to give you the exact percentage because otherwise you may say something but it is in the high 40s. Therefore, if that kind of income remains with us and that does not go away in this joint venture exercise, the profitability of Mumbai and Delhi is not going to be adversely affected. I have moved one step further. Besides ensuring this income, we have also ensured that there is a revenue share; a minimum five per cent revenue share has been mandated. When the bids will be opened, we do not know what they will be, but it has to be a minimum of five per cent and it could be more. Factoring all this income which is going to continue to accrue, there is no reason for anybody to have any apprehension as to whether the Airports Authority of India will remain a profitable organization or not. We went one step further. The original transaction was envisaged to have 74 per cent FDI and only 26 per cent to be held by the Airports Authority of India. After wider consultations with our employees, we took a call, that we should have a special policy for Airports Authority of India.

There were issues raised about security, safety and overall process. We have stated that yes, we will take a special call. We have reduced the FDI from 74 per cent to 49 per cent in the case of the Delhi and Mumbai restructuring. As a result, we have ensured that at least five per cent of the equity remained in Indian hands. There were issues about security. I can assure you that the security concerns will remain to be addressed by the Government of India. They will not be handed over to any joint venture partner. There will be no loss of jobs to the employees of Airports Authority of India and there will be no question of Airports Authority of India not being able to make money. I also go a step further, Sir, that the Government, in its wisdom, took a conscious decision that we will have at least 35 other non-metro airports to be developed and scaled up to the standards, as Mahajanji was mentioning, which will make those airports of high

quality. They will be of international standards. They will also, over a period of time with the increase in the volume of traffic, start making more and more money for the Airports Authority of India.

Sir, we have to raise money for this exercise. It is not that when I say that when the Standing Committee or our friends raised issues that there are reserves with the Airports Authority of India; I still dispute that figure. Still having said so, there is a substantial reserve. If we have to put all that reserve in Mumbai and Delhi then as to what is going to happen to other airports. We are really going to be able to do it. It am sure that the aspirations of the Members across the House and which has been voiced many a time will never be fulfilled if we are again going to look - even after 58 years of Independence- that Mumbai and Delhi are the only premier Airports. There are demands for airports; whether it is Jaipur, Trivandrum, Lucknow, Guwahati, Kolkata, - with due obedience - Chennai, Bhuvaneshwar and all that. So, I go to a large question. That is as to how we respond to these situations. However, I would take one step further and say that the process has been envisaged. There were some issues raised regarding global and technical advisors, financial advisors and all the legal advisors. *...(Interruptions)* Please listen to me...*(Interruptions)* I would like to assure all of you that all the people who have been appointed, have been appointed through due process. There has been no arbitrariness that A, B or C shall be so and so advisor. They have gone through a process. Now, the entire process I would like to mention. This entire bidding is in two parts. There is technical bidding and financial bidding. The technical and the financial bidding have come in together. There is sufficient competition at the time when both the financial bidding along with the technical bidding has come. As of now, no process complete. The issue is to be resolved. First the technical advisor gives the report. After that, there is Government Reviewing committee. The there is an inter-Ministerial Group and then it goes to the Empowered Group of Ministers. It is not that the process is being short-circuited at any level.

Many doubts have been raised by hon. Members. Many letters and representations have also been received by us; many of them have been written by name and many others have been anonymous. We have forwarded all of them to the appropriate quarters to see and examine what the complaints are. What has been mentioned here also would definitely be given its due consideration. All the points made by hon. Members are being taken note of. So, there is no short circuit in the process. As of now, the process is not complete.

I am sorry to say, since no report is final, whatever has been read out or attributed cannot be something which could rely upon to make a statement or give a clarification but by way of abundant caution, I can assure hon. Members that we would like to ensure full transparency in the process. We would see that all the other issues would be resolved in the best interests of Airports Authority of India, in the interests of the country and of overall development of air traffic all across the world. *...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, no answer has been given in regard to the question that was asked. *...(Interruptions)* we are not satisfied with this answer therefore, we are staging a walkout from the House.

13.06 hrs.

(Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra and some other Hon'ble Members then left the House.)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Minister has assured full transparency.

(Interruptions)

MD. SALIM : Sir, he was avoided answering the questions I have raised...*(Interruptions)*

13.06½ hrs.

(At this stage, Md. Salim and some other hon. Members left the House.)

MR. SPEAKER : He has said this body would look into it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY : Sir, we are totally dissatisfied with the manner in which the hon. Minister has given his reply. ...*(Interruptions)*

13.06½ hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Ajoy Chakraborty and some other hon. Members left the House.)

MR. SPEAKER : I cannot walk out. So, I am going to my room!

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned to meet again at 2 p.m.

13.07 hrs.

(The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till Fourteen of the Clock)

14.04 hrs.

(The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at four minutes past Fourteen of the Clock)

[Mr. Deputy-Speaker in the Chair]

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : We will not take up item no.15, introduction of the Bill

**CENTRAL SALES TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL,
2005***

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P.

* Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2 dated 15.12.2005.

CHIDAMBARAM) : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Central Sales Tax Act, 1956.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Central Sales Tax Act, 1956."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, I introduce the Bill.

140.05 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Next item, Matters under Rule 377.

Is it not possible to lay them on the Table of the House?

(Interruptions)

SHRI BIKARAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi) : Sir, it will hardly take 10 minutes. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Okay.

- (i) **Need to provide special economic package to the Government of Himachal Pradesh to compensate recurring loss due to ban imposed on cutting green trees in the State**

[Translation]

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH (Mandi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to draw the attention of the House and the Government, through you, towards the forest resources of Himachal Pradesh, whose estimated worth (including direct and indirect profits) amounts to almost Rupees One Lakh Crore. Despite having been endowed with such a huge resources, the State Government has imposed a ban

on cutting green trees in national interest in order to maintain ecological balance in the Western Himalayan Region, resulting in a complete ban on commercial cutting of green trees in the state. Himachal Pradesh is incurring losses of crores of rupees every year owing to it but the Union Government has made no efforts for compensation thereof. My request is that a special economic package of Rs.250 crore per year should be given to Himachal Pradesh which is forsaking its own interest in national interest to compensate its recurring losses due to ban imposed on cutting of trees.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri S.K. Kharventhan.

Shri A. sai Pratap.

- (ii) **Need to provide Rs.100 crore financial assistance to the Government of Andhra Pradesh for providing relief to the people affected by cyclonic rains in Rajampet Parliamentary Constituency**

[English]

SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP (Rajampet) : Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of the august House that the cyclonic havoc recently occurred in my parliamentary constituency due to cyclonic depression in the Bay of Bengal.

Sir, in one night, 390 mm, the highest rainfall has been recorded in mandal headquarters of Obulavaripalli. In Rajampet and Kodur assembly segments, in eight mandal headquarters, 7,500 houses have been completely damaged leaving a number of villagers homeless. Many irrigation tanks/reservoirs were breached and the flood waters completely washed out the roads, culverts and bridges, paralysing the road transportation.

The district authorities have noticed and recorded heavy losses, destruction and severe damage to crops like banana, papaya, mangoes, oranges, lemons, betel leaves and paddy fields to the extent of 8,000 acres in both

segments. With this situation, the peaceful lives of the villagers and farmers have been alarmingly ruined.

Under these pathetic conditions, I would request the Union Government to provide financial assistance of at least Rs. 100 crore immediately on *ad hoc* basis to meet the situation. This is in addition to the hon. Chief Minister's report submitted seeking financial assistance of Rs.800 crore for the earlier damages occurred due to cyclonic effect in the last month itself in the entire State. So, I humbly request the hon. Prime Minister to release the said assistance to the State of Andhra Pradesh accordingly to meet the natural calamities in the States.

- (iii) **Need to open branches of nationalised banks at Vedasenthur, Kangayam and Kallimandiyam in Palani Parliamentary Constituency, Tamil Nadu.**

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Kharventhan, in future, whenever you like to speak, first you have to go to your seat.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (Palani) : In my Palani Parliamentary Constituency, Vedasenthur in Vedasenthur Taluk, Kangayam in Kangayam Taluk and Kallimandiyam in Oddanchatram Taluk are all very important business centres. Vedasenthur is having nearly 30 spinning mills and a number of textile units. It is on the National Highway No.7 between Karur and Dindigul. But unfortunately, there is no nationalised bank in Vedasenthur town. The people of the area want to have a branch of Canara bank or any other nationalised bank in Vedasenthur.

Kangayam in Erode district is one of the famous centres for butter, ghee and textiles, Nearly 30 butter and ghee industries are functioning here. Hundreds of handloom textiles are also functioning here. The people of the region also want to have the facility of Canara bank branch or any other nationalised bank.

Kallimandiyam is also one of the biggest centres in Oddanchatram Taluk. Kallimandiyam is famous for butter,

[Shri S.K. Kharventhan]

are transported from here to various parts of the country. Vegetables and food grains are also transported to northern India from here only. The business people of the region want to have a nationalised bank branch, particularly Canara Bank or any other nationalised bank.

I request the Hon. Finance Minister to direct the bank authorities to open bank branches at Vedasenthur, Kangayam and Kallimandiyam at the earliest.

(iv) Need to take suitable precautionary measures to check spread of deadly disease-affecting coconut trees with a view to protect the interest of coconut farmers in Tumkur district of Karnataka

*SHRI S. MALLIKARJUNIAH (Tumkur) : Sir, Tumkur District in Karnataka is facing a severe drought situation as there was no sufficient rain there during the last four years. The ground water level has gone down to 660 ft. to 700 ft. The coconut trees are affected by various diseases like Black Mind, Root Wilt, etc. The unfortunate Districts where the production of coconut has gone down drastically are Tumkur, Kolar, bangalore, and parts of Chikkamagalur and Hassan. Even the size of the coconut has been reduced to one-fourth of its original size. The coconut garden owners are not in a position to pay instalments on their bank loans. Some small farmers who are mainly dependent upon coconut trees have committed suicide.

There is a drastic reduction in the export of copra thereby affecting the country's foreign exchange earning. Under these alarming circumstances, the Government of India should come forward to the rescue of coconut growers in Karnataka. I urge upon the Centre to come out with a comprehensive package to provide adequate compensation and to save the suffering coconut growers immediately.

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada.

(v) Need to address the grievances of running staff including guards's working in Railways

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD (Yavatmal) : Sir, there is a great resentment amongst the Running Staff of Railway in general and Guards in particular against recommendation of RAC 2002. The RAC has drastically curtailed the pay element for retirement benefit from 55 per cent to 20 per cent and this pay element is further reduced from 30 per cent to 10 per cent for other benefits. It has recommended to reduce the rate of running allowance from 83.40 per hundred kms. To 75.50 per hundred kms. which will badly hamper the over all benefits of Running Allowance to the Running Staff. This has caused great discontentment amongst Running Staff and they are compelled to go on agitation.

This time, both the recognised Federations are also supporting the All India Guards Council for their legitimate right. To avoid further complications and to maintain the cordial relation with Running Staff, intervention of the Railway ministry in this matter is earnestly requested.

(vi) Need to continue revised long-term action plan for the period of five years from the year 2007-08 for development of KBK region in Orissa

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi) : Sir, the Revised Long-Term Action Plan (RLTAP) for KBK Districts envisages special intervention by Government of India for a period of nine years from 1998-99 to 2006-07. While the additional Central Assistance under RLTAP was just Rs.46 crore in 1998-99, it increased to Rs.100 crore in 2001-02, Rs.200 crore in 2002-03 and Rs.250 crore from 2003-04 onwards. The Central intervention has been intensified during last three years and it has had a positive impact on the living conditions of the people through creation of basic social infrastructure in the remote areas. This type of Central intervention for the KBK region should continue at least for a further period of five years starting from 2007-08. The Headquarters of the KBK should be located at Bhawanipatna in the District of Kalahandi.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri, Pankaj Chowdhary -
Not present.

(vii) **Need to open more post offices in Surat
Parliamentary Constituency, Gujarat**

SHRIKASHI RAM RANA (Surat) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir, my parliamentary constituency, Surat is a large industrial area which has a population of over 40 Lakh but the number of post offices in Surat as compared to the number of industries and population is very less, owing to which people and industries are facing many difficulties. Workers confront many difficulties in sending money orders to their native places. Other private couriers are making huge profit in absence of postal facilities. If the postal department increases its facilities, then this revenue will be cornered by the department. Besides, the post office of Surat is functioning from an old building which is in a dilapidated condition. There is an urgent need to shift it to a new building. People have told that there is scarcity of postal stamps and money orders in post offices as well.

Therefore, I urge upon the Union Government, through this House, that new post offices should be opened on the basis of Surat population and the number of industries there and headquarters located in Dak Bhavan should be shifted to a new building. Besides, availability of all postal items should be ensured in Dak Bhavan.

(viii) **Need to provide adequate railway services to the
people of Sundarbans area in North and South 24
Parganas, West Bengal**

[English]

PROF. BASUDEB BARMAN (Mathurapur) : Sir, the plight of the people of Sundarbans area (District North and South 24 Parganas) of West Bengal, good parts of which fall in my parliamentary constituency, Mathurapur (SC), where people are suffering due to non-availability of adequate railway service facility.

I would like to request for extension of railway network facilities for: Jaynagar to Raidighi, Canning to Sonakhali, Jaynagar to Jamtala and Park Circus to Dhamakhali; and laying of double lines in the Baruipur-Diamond Harbour Section, of which Baruipur-Magrahat sub-section requires immediate attention; also in Baruipur-Lakshmikantapur-Kakdwip Section. It is needless to reiterate that rail passengers of concerned areas suffer very badly due to heavy pressure on the single tracks in these Sections.

Also, a halt at Madhavnagar Road between Nischindapur and Kashinagar Stations in Sealdah-Lakshmikantapur-Kakdwip Section is to be set up at the earliest.

I would like to urge upon the Government that steps be taken to mitigate the sufferings of the people of Sundarbans areas of West Bengal as early as possible.

(ix) **Need to provide special allocation of subsidised
kerosene to the traditional fishermen in Kerala**

DR. K.S. MANOJ (Alleppey) : Sir, the State Government allocated kerosene to the fishermen for operating their Out Board Engines for their boats from 1990 onwards. There are 15,500 fishing permits which have been issued against a requirement of 5,200 kilo litre of kerosene per month. The allotment of kerosene to Kerala till March, 2001 was 33,174 kilo liters per month. The Central Government had reduced allocation every year to the extent of 10,000 kilo litres per month for the last five years. Consequently, on the reduction in the kerosene allotted by the Government of India to the State Government, the State Government have been giving only 50 per cent of the requirement for the fishing sector. So the fishermen have to purchase kerosene from the open market at exorbitant prices. This results in exploitation of the fishermen. Post Tsunami, fish catching is also reduced and they are in debt burden. In order to lift them from the debt burden, I would request the Central Government to provide special allocation of subsidised kerosene to the traditional fishermen in Kerala.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Paras Nath Yadav —
Not present.

Shri Anirudh Prasad *Alias* Sadhu Yadav — Not present.

(x) **Need to provide special economic package for the development of Purvanchal in Uttar Pradesh**

SHRI KAILASH NATH YADAV (Chandouli) : Mr. Dy. Speaker, Sir, like Bihar, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and other states Naxalism is also spreading in Chandouli, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur districts of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. Its sole reason is that people there have not been made part of the mainstream of development and they are being beguiled to support Naxalites. There is no provision of potable water, education or employment for Tribals and common people residing in the forest area. The poor and Tribals are getting recruited as Naxalites due to their economic backwardness. This area of eastern Uttar Pradesh is adjacent to Bihar. Therefore, there is a pressing need to provide potable water, education and employment to the people of Chandouli, Sonbhadra and Mirzapur.

In my constituency Chandouli the only sources of irrigation are dams and drains. The canals are in a dilapidated state and are not in a position to irrigate the agricultural land. Therefore, crops are wilting and the peasants are on the verge of starvation.

I, therefore, through the august House request the Central Government to make available grants separately for repair and maintenance of these dams and canals and provide the facility of education, potable water and employment, to the poor people of these districts to dissuade the younger generation from joining the ranks of Naxalism and to encourage them to extend their full cooperation in the development of the eastern region of Uttar Pradesh (Poorvanchal).

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Arjun Sethi - Not Present.

Shri Ajoy Chakraborty - Not present.

(xi) **Need to conduct early Panchayat elections in Pondicherry**

PROF. M. RAMADASS (Pondicherry) : Sir, the Union Territory of Pondicherry, an erstwhile French Colony, is famous for her local body institutions. Even after merger, there were regular elections to the local bodies till 1968. But since then and till now, that is, for 37 years, election to these bodies were not conducted. As a result, grass-root democracy and association of people with the planning process have been deliberately absent. This is happening even after the passage of 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution which call for periodic and statutory election to these bodies. At one stage, when the Union Territory Administration was ready for election, some one to stall it, raised several legal objections in the Madras High Court. Now the clearance has been given for holding elections. Even then there was no sign of election. Therefore, I raised this issue in the Parliament last year. The Hon. Minister for Panchayat Raj assured that elections would be held as early as possible. Now more than one year has elapsed but there is no sign of elections. As Pondicherry happens to be a Union Territory, Government of India has the sole responsibility of holding panchayat elections there. Prolonged delay in holding elections appears to be a constitutional violation. Therefore, it should issue immediate orders to the Union Territory Administration for holding elections before the Assembly elections due in May 2005. This is the view of the large majority of the people of Pondicherry and the Government of India should respect the feelings of the people. Development and democracy would get a boost at the lower level after 37 years and the people would feel the benefit of economic development and decentralization.

(xii) **Need to issue directions to the Government of Andhra Pradesh to Reduce VAT levied on tea from 12.5 per cent to 4 per cent**

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool) : Sir, the tea industry in Andhra Pradesh has been slammed with 12.5

per cent VAT. Bihar and AP are the only States in the country to levy 12.5 per cent VAT while other States have reduced it to four per cent, in line with the recommendations of the Empowered Committee of States' Finance Ministers. High VAT rates would push up tea prices and tea being price sensitive item could witness a drop in consumption. Drop in tea consumption and resultant depression in demand could destabilize realizations of tea producers further affecting an industry, which has been witnessing severe recession in the last five years. It is, therefore, imperative to keep end-consumer prices at reasonable level.

India is the biggest producer and a major exporter of tea. It is a large foreign exchange earner for our country. Tea industry is the second highest employer after the Indian Railways, with nearly 50 per cent of the employees being women. Protection of this employment would crucially depend on sustained increase in tea consumption. At this juncture, any high rate of VAT on tea could adversely affect tea consumption and threaten the future of millions employed in the tea plantation industry.

Sir, the higher rate of VAT would encourage cross border infiltration from the neighbouring States which have a cheaper rate of VAT on tea. Through you, Sir, I request the Government to impress upon the State Governments to reduce VAT on tea to four per cent.

(xiii) Need to increase the quota of tonnage for airlifting essential Supplies and number of civilians in service aircrafts to Ladakh and Leh regions to meet the unforeseen emergent requirements

SHRI CHEWANG THUPSTAN (Ladakh) : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Defence Minister to the problem being faced by Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council of Leh and Kargil, the civil administration of the two district in my Constituency and the general public at large due to inadequate tonnage allotted by the Defence Ministry to enable them to lift essential supplies to meet the unforeseen emergent requirements. Whereas we are grateful to the Defence

Ministry for cooperation extended by them to the civil administration and the local population in times of need, yet this needs to be strengthened in strategic and sensitive border like Ladakh to maintain harmonious relations between Defence forces and civilians. As Ladakh remains isolated and cut off from rest of the country for more than six months in a year, the administration there and the local population, have to depend on Armed forces for lifting essential supplies and also airlifting of civilians in service aircrafts especially from Srinagar to Kargil and Nubra to Chandigarh. I would, therefore, earnestly request the Defence Minister to kindly increase tonnage for airlifting essential supplies and passengers and pass on instructions to airlift civilians as per past practice, which I understand, is suspended for the moment.

14.27 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS – (GENERAL), 2005-06

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, the House shall take up Item No. 17 – Supplementary Demands for Grants (General). The discussion was over yesterday. Now, I would request the hon. Finance Minister to reply.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Members – 17 of them - who participated in the debate on the Supplementary Demands, and for the valuable suggestions they have made.

The Supplementary Demands are not new. Usually, after the Budget, there is a first request for Supplementary Grants in the month of August, and there is usually, one in the month of December. In fact, this time the second batch of Supplementary Demand is for a very small amount, which represents the cash outgo. It is only Rs.1,965 crore and compares very favourably with the second Supplementary Demands in previous years.

[Shri P. Chidambaram]

These expenses for which we are asking Parliament to give us more money are unavoidable. They have been listed in the Demands for Grants. The major items have been noticed by hon. Members. It is for fertilizer subsidy, it is for settling outstanding claims of the State Trading Corporation, assistance to the State Governments from the National Calamity Contingency Fund, lump sum provision for reviving and restructuring some public sector enterprises, and for reimbursement of losses to the Cotton Corporation of India. Each one of these items, Members will appreciate, arose after the Budget was presented and after the first Supplementary Demands were moved. I would respectfully submit that I was obliged to come to this House to ask for more money.

Sir, the principal speaker on the side of the Opposition, Shri Kailash Joshi raised a number of issues and pointedly commented that I should answer each one of them. I am prepared to answer, but perhaps he has not found it possible to be present now. Be that as it may, Sir, let me quickly run through the major points raised by Mr. Joshi because he was the principal speaker on the side of the principal Opposition party.

Rural godowns : This is a scheme being implemented by NABARD and NCDC. Till 30th November, 2005 about 10,816 such projects having a capacity of 1,54,85,000 tonnes have been sanctioned. The total eligible subsidy was Rs.434.23 crore against which the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has already released Rs.330.55 crore. Therefore, this is a scheme which is being implemented with great vigour and I hope that many more godowns will come and large warehousing capacity will be created in this country.

On Demand No.7, Bhopal Gas victims' compensation, the factual position is that the Welfare Commissioner was obliged to start disbursement of the compensation and complete it between 15.11.04 and 31.04.05. Accordingly, last year I had made a provision for Rs.315.11 crore but only Rs.212.02 crore was disbursed. This year, we have

made a provision for Rs.663.71 crore and till the end of September Rs.419.76 crore has been disbursed. The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers has sought an extension from the Supreme Court to pay the balance amount and if further disbursements have to be made, I am taking the precaution of having money so that disbursements can be made.

Under Demand No.8, Shri Joshi wanted to know why an additional provision of Rs.1000 crore to fertiliser subsidy has become necessary. It has become necessary because of the increase in the prices of fertiliser inputs, namely, Naphtha and Ammonia, which is of course the reflection of the high crude oil price.

On Demand No.18 Shri Joshi wanted to know about the wages of the staff of Super Bazar. Super Bazar is under liquidation now. There is a case before the Supreme Court. A large proportion of the staff has already left service through VRS but the Department of Consumer Affairs has not provided salaries to the remaining skeletal staff. We cannot deny them salary. Therefore, Rs.42 lakh has been provided so that the skeletal staff is paid salary.

Under Demand No.32 Shri Joshi wanted to know why I am paying some money to the RBI. The National Defence Gold Bond scheme matured in the year 1980 and the subscribers were paid the maturity value in terms of pure gold. However, when the weight of the bars was determined, there was a difference of 494.5 gms. Obviously, we have to settle this value and, therefore it was decided that since the account has been reconciled, transparently we should ask the Parliament to give us money and pay the RBI and close this account. This is a very small amount.

Under Demand No.34 Shri Joshi wanted to know why a sum of Rs.250 crore is being set apart for Stressed Assets Stabilisation Fund Another hon. Member, I think Shri Sathpathy raised the issue of IDBI. What is the factual position? The factual position is, the Act to convert IDBI into a company was passed by the Lok Sabha under the guidance of the previous Government.

I inherited the Act. So, we had the IDBI Limited which has become a full-fledged bank with a subsidiary IDBI Bank which is another full-fledged bank. The parent bank had no branches. The subsidiary bank had branches. Therefore, as a logical corollary to the Act passed by this House, one had to merge the IDBI Limited with the IDBI Bank. It was so merged. The Stressed Assets, the Non Performing Assets, have been sequestered and Stressed Assets Stabilisation Fund has been created. This Stressed Assets Stabilisation Fund is now being provided Rs.250 crore as an enabling provision because Rs.250 crore is coming back from the SAS through recovery. It is indicative of recovery of the IDBI which is being used to redeem the Government securities which we issued as part of the restructuring package.

On Point No.41, Shri Joshi wanted to know why a provision of Rs.1 lakh is being made. Now, this is being made to meet the expenditure of Rs.2.34 crore for conducting a survey on delivery of services under the Consumer Protection Act and for conducting quality check under the Pradhan Mantri Sadak Yojana. Since Rs.2.34 crore has to be spent under a new head, as a token provision Rs.1 lakh is being provided. So, that explains the various questions raised by the hon. Member, Shri Joshi.

I have listened with great respect to other hon. Members who have made general remarks on the economy and the direction of the economy. I am grateful to them. We shall certainly bear in mind the suggestions of the hon. Members.

We have placed in this House the Mid-Year Review. I am sure the hon. Members had an opportunity to read the Mid-Year Review. The Mid-Year Review presents a healthy picture of the economy. Now, if Shri Swain wants to claim that it is because of what their Government did, he is most welcome to make that claim. Why should I deny him the pleasure of making that claim? But I hope that he will not continue to claim that even in the fifth year of this Government. Some time or the other the law of limitation has to set in.

Last year, the economy achieved a growth rate of 6.9 per cent. This year, in the first half, the economy registered a growth rate of 8.1 per cent. But I have been guarded in my projection in the Mid-Year Review. I said that the economy is expected to grow by over seven per cent this year. Shri Swain missed the word 'over'. He said that I have said that the economy will grow at seven per cent. No. I said that the economy will grow at over seven per cent. There are downside. I have pointed this out in the Mid-Year Review. I am glad that some hon. Members have noticed it.

Mining, especially coal, and electricity are showing sluggish growth. These are key sectors. Some time, I believe, this House has to discuss as to how we can generate high growth if the coal sector does not deliver and because of shortage of coal, electricity generation is also hampered. One can take be ideological view or a pragmatic view on this. My appeal to the House would be that we must take a pragmatic view on this. We have coal reserves for, according to some estimates, 200 years or 300 years or some say even 500 years. But we exploit it most inefficiently. The legal and the economic framework that we have seem to be the major hurdles for exploiting coal reserves efficiently. The Ministry of Power tells me that because coal linkages are not there, because coal supplies are not adequate and because the quality of coal is not good, it hurts the generation of electricity. Without electricity, how do you have high growth? Anyway, this is not the occasion to get into a debate on coal and electricity. I am just flagging the point which is flagged in the Mid-Year Review. We have been quite candid about it. These two sectors are growing at a sluggish rate. They must grow at a much higher rate. Only then can I - Mr. Swain and others project on 8 per cent growth rate, but, at the moment, I would rest content with projecting a growth rate of over 7 per cent. Let us see how much over 7 per cent it is. Will it be closer to 8 per cent or closer to 7 per cent?

Sir, I have flagged about half-a-dozen issues which I need to answer. I possibly cannot answer every single

[Shri P. Chidambaram]

issue raised in the debate. This is only for supplementary grants. But I would quickly answer half-a-dozen issues which I think are important issues. That does not mean that the rest are not important. I will certainly respond to the Members, if necessary. Firstly, the progress of Public Private Partnership (PPP). We announced the Scheme for viability gap funding in August 2005. We have received so far only 8 proposals from State Governments. I wish, Members will tell their State Governments to kindly send more proposals. The Empowered Committee will meet on the 19 December to consider these 8 proposals. I am confident that some of these proposals will be approved. In November 2005, Cabinet approved the setting up of the SPV. That work is underway. The SPV will be registered this month and we hope to be able to identify infrastructure projects which can be funded by the SPV. I would once again appeal not only to the line Ministries of the Central Government but also to the State Governments to present proposals for infrastructure which require funding from the SPV. The State Governments must seize this opportunity by sending us good proposals both the PPP and for funding through the SPV.

Sir, it is true that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) is being implemented this year by a combination of funds available under *Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana* and the National Food for Work Programme. Next Year onwards, of course, there will be a full-fledged NREGP. But, in order to meet the initial expenses of the NREGP we re-appropriating Rs.300 crore from within the overall demand under the Head of NREGP. We are not asking for fresh money.

Some question were raised about the Golden Quadrilateral. This is a perennial question. It is being raised every time. I though. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri) : There is a routine answer every time.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Wait a minute. We will not give you a routine answer this time. If you have a piece of paper, I would appeal to you to note down these numbers. Mr. Yerrannaidu, please give him a piece of paper.

The GQ was commissioned in the year 2000. Obviously, initially, in the first couple of years, preliminary work has to be done. In 2002-03, the Government – I am not saying past Government or the present Government – completed 1,327 kilometers. In 2003-04, the Government completed an additional 1,285 kilometres making a total of 2,612 kilometres. In the third year, or the first year of the UPA Government, this Government completed 2,087 kilometres - more than the previous year as well as the previous year and the cumulative was 4,699 kilometres. In the current year, we have so far completed, up to the middle of November, 398 kilometres. The cumulative now is 5,097 kilometres.

We are not slowing down the project. We are as committed to the project as the previous Government. There is no politics in this. We need a Golden Quadrilateral in this country. Let me once again assure you, finally I hope, that the Government is as committed as the previous Government. We will complete it according to the schedule.

As far as NHDP Phase-II is concerned, that is the North-South, East-West Corridor, this was commissioned in 2002. In 2002-03, a total of 557 kilometres were completed. In 2003-04, only another 31 kilometres were added. In 2004-05, this Government added 119 kilometres. In 2005-06, so far, we have added 81 kilometres. This is a scheme which is taking a little more time because there are special difficulties. The GQ is on the existing highway track. But regarding this, we have to really link a number of roads. This is going at a slower rate, But that has nothing to do with the previous Government or the present Government. But this is also being completed.

In addition, we have the NHDP-III. That, in my view, is more important than the NHDP-I which is the GQ or the

NHDP-II, because that will link all the State Capitals, all the industrial towns and all the seaports and airports. That is the major, most ambitious programme. I am told, bidding will start for that programme in the months of December, January, February and March.

As far as the allocation under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is concerned, again a lot of misinformation is there, from 2000-01 to 2003-04, for a period of four years, the total Budget allocation was Rs.9825 crore. If you divide Rs.9825 by four - I am not saying it is allocated equally - the average allocation in the four years was Rs.2446 crore. In the first year of this Government, in 2004-05, the Budget allocation was Rs.2468 crore - it is a part of the year because we came into office only in May and the Budget was passed in September. In 2005-06, the allocation is Rs.4220 crore. So, we are not slowing down this project. In fact, more money has been allocated for the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.

I have already spoken about the IDBI.

Another point that was raised was about agricultural growth. The Prime Minister has repeatedly stressed the need for higher agricultural growth. It is elementary arithmetic that if the agricultural sector does not grow by four per cent, it is well-nigh impossible to achieve over 8 per cent growth because agricultural sector still accounts for about 22 to 23 per cent of GDP. Only a four per cent growth of agriculture will contribute about one per cent of GDP and without that one percent of GDP, however robust the growth in industry and services is, you cannot take the GDP growth beyond 8 per cent. It is a very simple calculation. Anyone can do that calculation. We are, therefore, committed to accelerating agricultural growth through more investment - public investment, private investment, especially infrastructure investment, diversification from cereals to other crops, emphasising horticulture, emphasising value added crops and export of agricultural products. The strategy has been spelt out in the Mid-Year Review. If you kindly look at the Mid-Year Review, you can find several paragraphs have been

devoted to agriculture. I think this strategy is likely to pay results in the future.

As far as agricultural growth is concerned, you all know that 2002-03 was negative and on that negative base 2003-04 showed a very sharp upturn. But that is statistical. In 2004-05, there was a 13 per cent deficiency in the monsoon. Therefore, growth was only 1.1 per cent. In the current year, in the first half, growth is 2 per cent. It is not satisfactory but it is better than last year. I hope that growth will improve in the second half because the Rabi crop is coming now. The reservoirs are full. There has been some damage due to floods. But, by and large, our projection is that agriculture will grow at more than 2 per cent - perhaps close to 3 per cent. But we must not flag our efforts as far as agriculture is concerned. It is very, very important in this country.

Finally, Sir, on the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission some questions were raised. In 2003-04, the allocation and release was Rs.2,565 crore and 39,736 habitations were covered in that year. In 2004-05, release was Rs. 2,930 crore and 69,382 habitations were covered. In 2005-06, so far, against the budget allocation of Rs.4,050 crore, we have released Rs.1,766 crore and 35,000 habitations have been covered so far. We are committed to ensuring that drinking water is provided to all the habitations. This is one of the items under 'Bharat Nirman' and we will continue to allocate enough money and to accelerate the delivery of drinking water to our villages.

Sir, in conclusion let me say that if all sections of the House cooperate, I believe we can put India firmly on the path of a high growth trajectory. This requires difficult decisions to be taken. This requires, if I may say with great respect, a human face no doubt, at the same time, as far as possible, a non-ideological and a pragmatic approach. What will ultimately yield good results is pragmatism. More and more State Governments are veering round to the view of pragmatism. I see very encouraging statements from all sections of the House from the BJP, BJD, Samajwadi Party,

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CPI(M), CPI, especially, parties which are in Government in one State or other are beginning to take pragmatic view of matters. I was in Kolkata only last week. I read the speech of the General Secretary of the CPI(M) in Thiruvananthapuram last week. I have interacted with my good friend Shri Naveen Patnaik in Orissa. I have interacted with Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav in Uttar Pradesh. The Chief Minister of Bihar, our good friend, Shri Nitish Babu came to visit me a couple of days ago. Not only the Congress Chief Ministers, all other Chief Ministers realise that growth is a function of investment. India's Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR) is better than China's which means we are more efficient in converting investment into growth. Our human resources are outstanding. We have access to the best technology. We have a reasonably good administration in most parts of the country although it can be improved considerably. Given all that, what in slang we would say, we can get more bang for the buck. For every rupee invested, we can get more growth than most other countries. At the level of investment of about 27 per cent to 28 per cent, we are generating over 7 per cent growth. If the investment to GDP ratio is 32 per cent, we can get far more growth. Therefore, growth being a function of investment, I would appeal to all sections of the House that wherever we identify a hurdle to investment, that hurdle must be removed. We must invest, invest in agriculture, invest in infrastructure, invest in education, invest in health care, invest in technology, invest in R&D – that is very important – we must invest in R&D, invest in human resources and of this investment, the bulk of it will come from the public sector and from budgetary resources.

But the private sector can also mobilise funds and invest and foreign funds can also help us raise the level of investment.

Sir, I am very happy to note that wherever I travel, whichever Chief Minister I interact with, they are now extremely bullish about accelerating investment. The

business confidence today is the highest in 10 years. Every survey discloses that. The Centre for monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) has raised the growth rate to 7.6 per cent although I would be more guarded.

Therefore, there is today a buzz about India. In three days, I received at least six delegations of major companies, all willing to invest a billion dollars or billion-and-a-half dollars. Mr. Bill Gates had breakfast with me - not because he had breakfast with me - and the next day he announced \$1.7 billion investment. I would be happy to give him lunch and dinner. Mr. Craig Barrett of Intel has promised a billion dollars, Volkswagen is promising investment, Nokia is promising investment, Motorola is promising investment, Mr. Utsumi of the Japan Investment Agency met me yesterday. He said, \$5 billion is waiting in Japan to come to India. We had Mr. Okuda of Toyota visiting with a huge delegation saying that they are ready now to invest in India. They want to spread their investments from China to India. This is a great opportunity. I sold this idea to the Chief Minister of West Bengal, to the Chief Minister of Kerala, to the Chief Minister of Orissa etc.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (Srikakulam) :
Andhra Pradesh!

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : In Andhra Pradesh, our own party Government is there. If I say anything about the Congress Party, you will say, it is your party. But we are committed to investment. There is not doubt about it. *...(Interruptions)* Let me tell you very clearly, any State Government which wants to attract investment will find in the Government of India a help and a friend for investment irrespective of party.

Therefore, Sir, I think, we are now in a situation where, with a little more effort we can raise the growth rate to eight per cent and more. I seek the cooperation of everybody and I ask this House, respectfully, to please vote the Supplementary Demands.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, sir, I would like to have a clarification from the hon. Finance Minister.

With regard to providing electricity to all the villages, I will respectfully ask the hon. Minister of Finance as to how much he is allocating this year and by which year every village or every household is to be electrified.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This is concerning the Power Minister.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, actually the Power Minister will answer this. But let me inform the hon. Member that the National Rural Electrification Programme has been launched. This is a programme which has been made to ensure that every village is provided with electricity in, I think, four to five years. Now, the plan is the backbone will be built by the Government. The infrastructure will be built by the Government, the power will be taken to the village, the distribution will be through the franchisee model. That is the model which we have adopted. The backbone is being put in place. There are several agencies which are engaged in putting this backbone, NTPC, NHPC and several other public sector agencies are engaged in this. I think the funding has been tied up. Hopefully, in four to five years every village will be provided electricity and then the household connection will be given through the franchisee model. Earlier, we were counting a village as electrified if there was one street light. That was the model adopted until three years ago. We have rejected that benchmark. Now, the benchmark is, a village is considered as electrified only if a certain proportion of households is electrified.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : 10 houses.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Is it 10? I do not remember exactly. But if he says 10, it must be right.

Therefore, certain proportion of households must be electrified, only then a village can be considered as electrified, not because one little 40-watt bulb is there in the street. That is what we are aiming at and, I think, we

will complete it in about four to five years. But the hon. Member can ask the Power Minister. I think, they have put out to brochure also on the National Rural Electrification Programme. It is available, I think, on the web site, it is available in the Power Ministry and the hon. Member can access it.

15.00 hrs.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Sir, I did not get any answer from the hon. Minister. According to the Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, many nationalised and private banks are not following the 18 per cent of the credit lending to the farming community as per the Reserve Bank of India guidelines. So many schemes have been announced by the Government of India in Tenth Plan. Three years are already over and no scheme has been taken up by the Ministries due to lot of cumbersome procedures and all that. How would they meet the announcements made by the concerned Ministers on the floor of the House? we are reaching at the end of the Tenth Plan. When will these schemes be implemented? I need an answer for that.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I hope this will be the last clarification. Another Bill is pending....(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No more clarifications, please.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO (Parvatipuram) : Sir, I will just take half a minute.

My point of clarification is that the other day the hon. Minister, along with the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, had gone on record in the newspapers that they would not be able to achieve the GDP growth rate of 8 per cent if disinvestment is not done. The hon. Finance Minister just spoke about FDI, but he never mentioned about the disinvestment of those public sector enterprises which are going in losses.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, the last two clarifications. On 18 per cent priority sector lending to agriculture, yes.

[Shri P. Chidambaram]

many banks were below 18 per cent. They have to achieve 18 per cent. It cannot be done in one year. Last year, when I announced that agricultural credit would increase by 30 per cent, some of you were sceptical. We achieved 32 per cent. This year again, we will increase agricultural credit by 30 per cent. Actually, we are now running close to 40 per cent so, far. If we continue to raise agricultural credit every year at 30 per cent for three years, virtually every bank will achieve 18 per cent. So, it is in order to achieve 18 per cent that we have requested the banks to increase the lending to the agricultural sector by 30 per cent every year. We achieved it last year, I assure you that we will achieve it this year and God willing, we will achieve it next year also. After three years, you ask me this question, how many banks have achieved 18 per cent and I will give you an answer.

As far as disinvestment is concerned, again, there is a mistake. Disinvestment revenues are not being taken into the budget. That is the political consensus that we have been able to forge. Disinvestment revenues are now going to go into the National Investment Fund. From that

Investment Fund, there will be return. Bulk of that return, say, 70 per cent, will be used for social sector projects and the balance for restructuring public sector enterprises. Disinvestment revenues have nothing to do with our investment strategy. If some money comes out of that, well and good. That is an additionally.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I shall now put the Supplementary Demands for Grants (General) for 2005-06 to the vote of the House.

The question is:

"That the respective supplementary sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the Order Paper be granted to the President of India, out of the Consolidated Fund of India, to defray the charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 2006, in respect of the heads of Demands entered in the second column thereof against Demand Nos. 1, 5, 7, 8, 10 to 12, 18, 20, 23 to 25, 29 to 32, 34, 36, 41, 44, 47, 48, 50, 51, 54, 56 to 60, 63, 65, 67, 70 to 72, 75, 79, 80, 82, 83, 92, 100, 101 and 103 to 105."

Lok Sabha

Demands for Supplementary Grants (General) for 2005-2006 to be submitted to the Vote of Loks Sabha

No. & Title of Demand	Amount of Demand for to be submitted to the Vote of the House	
	Revenue Rs.	Capital Rs.
1	2.	3
1. Department of Agriculture and Cooperation	3,00,000	2,00,000
5. Atomic Energy	1,00,000	1,00,000
7. Department of Chemicals and Petro-chemicals	10,17,00,000	1,00,000
8. Department of Fertilisers	1000,00,00,000	—

	1	2	3
10. Ministry of Coal		100,00,00,000	—
11. Ministry of Mines		1,00,000	1,00,000
12. Department of Commerce		103,50,00,000	—
18. Department of Consumer Affairs		—	1,00,000
20. Ministry of Culture		1,00,000	—
23. Defence Services - Army		1,00,000	—
24. Defence Services - Navy		1,00,000	—
25. Defence Services - Air Force		1,00,000	—
29. Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region		—	22,33,00,000
30. Ministry of Environment and Forests		3,00,000	10,40,00,000
31. Ministry of External Affairs		40,00,00,000	42,00,00,000
32. Department of Economic Affairs		2,00,000	1,00,000
34. Payments to Financial Institutions		250,02,00,000	243,02,00,000
36. Transfers to State and Union territory Governments		200,00,00,000	—
41. Indian Audit and Accounts Department		1,00,000	—
44. Indirect Taxes		1,01,00,000	—
47. Department of Health		2,00,000	—
48. Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH)		1,00,000	49,00,000
50. Department of Heavy Industry		82,64,00,000	210,02,00,000
51. Department of Public Enterprises		15, 1 00	—
54. Police		1,00,000	—
56. Transfers to Union Territory Governments		—	1,00,000
57. Department of Elementary Education and Literacy		2,00,000	—

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	1	2	3
58. Department of Secondary Education and Higher Education		3,00,000	—
59. Department of Women and Child Development		3,00,000	—
60. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting		—	1,00,000
63. Law and Justice		1,00,000	—
65. Ministry of Non-conventional Energy Sources		—	500,00,000
67. Ministry of Panchayati Raj		1,00,000	—
70. Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions		—	1,48,00,000
71. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas		5750,00,00,000	—
72. Ministry of Planning		1,00,000	—
75. Lok Sabha		19,44,00,000	—
79. Department of Rural Development		3,00,000	—
80. Department of Land Resources		1,00,000	—
82. Department of Science and Technology		1,00,000	—
83. Department of Scientific and Industrial Research		1,00,000	—
92. Ministry of Textiles		290,89,00,000	—
100. Department of Urban Development		2,00,000	695,01,00,000
101. Public Works		—	1,00,000
103. Department of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation		1,00,000	—
104. Ministry of Water Resources		1,00,000	—
105. Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports		2,00,000	—
Grand Total		7848,24,00,000	1229,85,00,000

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The motion was adopted.

15.05 hrs.

**APPROPRIATION (GENERAL) NO.5
BILL, 2005***

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, we will taken item No.18 Shri P. Chidambaram.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2005-06.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2005-06"

The motion was adopted.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I introduce** the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now the House will take up item No. 19. The Minister may move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I beg to move:

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2005-06 be taken into consideration."

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is:

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of Consolidated

Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2005-06 be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House will now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is:

"That clauses 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

The Schedule was added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

15.07 hrs.

**ANDHRA PRADESH LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
BILL, 2004**

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, we will take item No.20. Shri H.R. Bhardwaj.

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ) : I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the creation of Legislative Council for the State of Andhra Pradesh and for

* Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2 Dated 15.12.2005.

**Introduced with the Recommendation of the President.

[Shri H.R. Bhardwaj]

matters supplemental, incidental and consequential thereto, be taken into consideration."

Sir, the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council Bill, 2004 seeks to provide for the creation of Legislative Council in the Legislative of the State of Andhra Pradesh and for matters supplemental, incidental and consequential thereto.

The Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh passed a Resolution on 8th July, 2004 in terms of Article 169 (1) of the Constitution for creation of a Legislative Council in that State. In this connection, it may be stated that a Legislative Council existed in the State of Andhra Pradesh prior to 1985, which was abolished with effect from 1st June, 1985. Thereafter, on the basis of a resolution passed by the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly for revival of the Legislative Council in the State, a Bill to the effect - containing certain similar provisions for the State of Tamil Nadu also - was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 10.05.1990 and passed by that House. This Bill, however, lapsed on the dissolution of the Ninth Lok Sabha. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh later withdrew its request for the revival of the Council.

The present Bill seeks to provide for creation of a Legislative Council in the State of Andhra Pradesh with a total strength of 90 Members, 31 of which are to be elected by the local authorities, 8 each are to be elected by the Graduates and Teachers Constituencies, 31 by the Legislative Assembly and the remaining 12 are to be nominated by the Governor. The local authorities being represented in the Legislative Council are Municipal Corporations, Municipalities, Nagar Panchayats, Cantonment Boards, Zila Parishads and Mandal Praja Parishads.

The constitution of the Legislative Council is, therefore, the same as it had existed prior to its abolition, except for the local bodies constitution the local authorities, constituency.

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council Bill, 2004 introduced in the Lok Sabha on 16th December, 2004, was referred to the Departmentally-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice for examination and report. The Committee laid its report in Parliament on 24th March 2005 in which it favoured the Bill and recommended to have a re-look on the issue of enrolment of primary teachers in teachers's constituencies. In this context, it may be added that the issue of providing voting rights to Primary School Teachers in the Legislative Council has been under consideration since 1957 but no decision has been possible in the absence of consensus among the concerned bodies, namely, the States having Legislative Councils and Central Advisory Board of Education. The Government, therefore, is not accepting the recommendation and is proceeding with the Bill as suggested by the Resolution of the Legislative Assembly.

Sir, with these words, I commend this Bill for the consideration of this House.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Motion moved:

"That the Bill to provide for the creation of Legislative Council for the State of Andhra Pradesh and for matters supplemental, incidental and consequential thereto, be taken into consideration."

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the Bill, which is going to be passed for the formation of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, is a welcome measure. Accordingly, the Andhra Pradesh Assembly also passed a Resolution that the formation of the Council is necessary in the State of Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, the hon. Law Minister has brought in this Bill for formation of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council.

The constituencies will be the Municipal Corporations, Municipalities, Nagar Panchayats, Cantonment Boards, Zila Praja Parishads and Mandal Parishads, and from these constituencies the members will be elected and the

Council will be formed. But was it really necessary to form this Council which has been mooted? It is because by passing this Bill and by forming the Council, it should not just be a Council to dole out favours to the politicians who have been denied Assembly tickets in the House. The Legislative Council should not be primarily a place for hosting and placing all the rejected candidates, whoever have been rejected in the elections.

So, here I would like to say that let it be a true legislative body like the Rajya Sabha which we call the Upper House so that proper debate could be carried out for the development and betterment of Andhra Pradesh. Today I was reading a report that one-man judicial probe by one Mr. Reddy has been ordered into the suicide deaths in Andhra Pradesh. He has said that the previous Government is responsible for the suicidal deaths in the State of Andhra Pradesh. He has said that because of non-building of water tanks, non-digging of tube wells and because of stopping of the *ex-gratia* payment to the farmers whose tube wells failed, deaths have taken place. So, these problems of the State could be hammered out in the newly formed Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, and thereby, I think the people of Andhra Pradesh will be able to get some justice. It might be any Government but our commitment to the people must be there. What we say in the manifestos should be implemented for the people.

Now, Sir, they have come up, the UPA Government have struck a deal with the Telangana Party or with Mr. Chandra Shekhar Rao, saying that they will form a Telangana State. I think no action has been initiated till date. Now, to satisfy or to satiate the political wishes of the left out Congress workers of Andhra Pradesh, this Bill has been brought to satisfy them. Our Party, the BJP and the NDA believed in the smaller States. We made three new States - Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Jharkhand - which was a commitment to the people, and we did that. Now, we would like to see the commitment of the UPA Government...*(Interruptions)* How much commitment they have got for the formation of Telangana

State that is totally neglected. It is a neglected region. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No running commentary please.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : I come from a neglected region. It is the Kalahandi where a KBK programme is going to on to uplift the poorer people there. In that State, some action oriented programme should be taken up. I hope and believe that our Constitution has provided for the formation of Legislative Council. I hope, after the formation of Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, the people of Andhra Pradesh will be able to get some justice. I request the Treasury Benches and the present Government of Andhra Pradesh to send proper candidates with commitment to the people. It should not be a place of political patronage. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I have not received any notice.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.S. RAO (Eluru) : Sir, basically, we are a Federal Union and a Union of all States. States are free to make their own laws in certain aspects. States are free to make their own laws in certain areas, their own decisions, planning and the programming as has been provided in the Constitution. While framing the Constitution, the framers of the Constitution said that there has to be a second Chamber. There can be a second Chamber and the States are at liberty to choose it depending upon their needs. So, the second Chamber wherever is constituted is not anything out of the way. It is as decided by the framers of the Constitution itself. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri) : Then why had you dissolved it in 1985?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.S. RAO : Do you not have patience to listen?...*(Interruptions)* You want to be told everything in one word. ...*(Interruptions)* Have patience, I will tell you. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please do not disturb.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.S. RAO : He does not know the history. I will tell him. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : You were in power at the Centre. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No running commentary please.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore) : When Congress was having 415 Members in the Parliament...*(Interruptions)* at that time then how do they say that they had opposed it at that time?...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No. wainji, that is not the way. You and your Party will get a chance to say your side.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.S. RAO : The second Chamber in Andhra Pradesh was functioning extremely well. But in 1983, when the TDP Government came into power, it was almost ruled like an autocratic State and not a free democratic State. The Leader of the State...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (Srikakulam) : The great, Shri N.T. Rama Rao was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. ...*(Interruptions)*

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool) : It was a democratic and elected Government...*(Interruptions)* How can you say that?...*(Interruptions)* He should withdraw that part...*(Interruptions)* People voted us to power. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing will be recorded except the speech of Shri K.S. Rao.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I will give you time.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI K.S. RAO : You say whatever you want to say...*(Interruptions)*

DR. M. JAGANNATH : He should withdraw that part. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI K.S. RAO : In those days, the majority in the State Legislative Council was of the Congress Party. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, you delete that word. My friend can criticise the Telugu Desam Government but he should withdraw those words. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I would see later on. If that is objectionable, that would be expunged.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Thank you, Sir.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : He has used highly objectionable words. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.S. RAO : The TDP Government at that time could not reconcile to the majority of the Congress Party in the Council. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing other than the speech of Shri K.S. Rao should be recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI K.S. RAO : They had a fear that if a Bill were passed in the Legislative Assembly and referred to the Council, they would face some difficulty. They were not in a position to reconcile with even a little criticism if there were to be something wrong or if there were to be some differences. Having not been able to reconcile with even a little criticism in the Council, which was also a Constitutional organ, they decided to abolish it. They made challenge that they would abolish the Council and see that there was no criticism from that side. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This is not the way.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing should be recorded except the speech of Shri K.S. Rao.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI K.S. RAO : The majority was with the TDP in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly. They made a resolution to abolish the Council in 1985 and referred it to Parliament. In Parliament, in the Lok Sabha, in 1985, there used to be 415 Members from the Congress Party. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You have only for or five more minutes at your disposal.

SHRI K.S. RAO : Having respect for the decision made by the majority of the Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, the then Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, in spite of having absolute majority here, which

*Not recorded.

was more than four-fifth, said that we should respect their desire and we should respect their Resolution. He said that there need not be any discussion, in spite of the fact that the Congress party in Andhra Pradesh was totally against the dissolution. Still he said that we should pass the Bill without any discussion and their own Members supported it.

The then Leader of the Telugu Desam Parliamentary Party, Shri Madhav Reddy had expressed his gratitude. He expressed his happiness and gratitude to the Government for 'accepting the wishes of the Government of Andhra Pradesh.' It is on record in this House.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : There is nothing wrong in that.

SHRI K.S. RAO : Yes, there is nothing wrong. We appreciate that. You must also have the same mindset.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Since it was abolished, they need not have again passed a Resolution and sent it to the Government of India to take approval from Parliament. The people of Andhra Pradesh might not give you the mandate every time. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.S. RAO : Sir, he is taking half of my time. ...*(Interruptions)*

Shri Ayyapu Reddy expressed his thanks to Rajivji, the then Prime Minister for responding to the wishes of the people and respecting the Resolution passed by the Andhra Pradesh Assembly. ...*(Interruptions)*

In spite of the fact that we had got 415 Members, we had respected their Resolution and also the wishes of the people. Now, the Congress Government which has got 185 Members; whereas the TDP has got 44 Members. They have made a Resolution in the Assembly with 207 Members in favour of it and only 44 Members from the Telugu Desam, but no other Member, opposed to it.

[Shri K.S. Rao]

In this background this is to be seen. This is also in spite of the fact that the Congress Government did not do it all of a sudden. Even before it went to the polls they made a promise. It was incorporated in the manifesto that 'once we get elected we will get this Council'. so, there is nothing out of the way. As the hon. Member from the BJP was telling, it was not an after-thought. It was not to bring only those persons who were rejected by the people or to dole out any favour to somebody. It is an election promise, a committed thing.

Presuming that what he said is right, today are they prepared to leave all the 90 seats to the Congress Party? Even now out of the entire 90 seats in the Council, only 31 will come from the Assembly and even out of these 31, the maximum we may get is 19 and the balance 12 seats will once again go to the Opposition. The hon. Member from the BJP says that the other 31 seats will be from municipalities, Panchayats, Mandal Presidents and Zilla Parishads etc. and all those things. He says that the people are against the Congress Government and tomorrow if you go to the polls in the local Board elections they will get majority. If they were to be so confident, why not they get it tomorrow?
...(Interruptions)

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : The Council has no power in that. ...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Yerrannaaidu, when your turn will come, you can say whatever you like. I would request you not to disturb when he is speaking.

SHRI K.S. RAO : The comment of the BJP has no value because if we were to dole out all the 90 seats, yes, he can make that comment. But once again opportunity is given to all of them. Every Party can definitely go to the people and say it in Parishads, in Municipalities and in Graduates constituencies. The most important section in the society is the learned people, that is teachers and graduates who want a representation to represent their

own issues and problems and get the Acts made to favour them. What do they want to favour? They want to favour the development of the nation. So, nothing is going to be one-sided. It is for everybody to decide tomorrow. Why should they make so much fuss about it? That means they have no respect for the wishes of the people. They have no respect for the resolution passed in the Assembly by a majority? If that be so, then we would not have allowed it to be abolished at all. They must understand this much.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : They have the right to say something in the House.

SHRI K.S. RAO : Yes, Sir. I quote some instances. In 1962 the great, respected leader of Tamil Nadu, late Annadurai was defeated in the 1962 election; but later, in 1967 he won the election to the Lok Sabha; but he became a Member of the Legislative Council and became a Chief Minister. Similarly, late Rajagopalachari, in 1952, became the Chief Minister from the Legislative Council.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please conclude now.

SHRI K.S. RAO : That means, on some occasion, when we have got eminent personalities whose services are required, whose intelligence is to be utilised, whose capacities are to be utilised, then there is nothing wrong in having a second chamber. Even they can bring such people tomorrow if they were to come into power. It cannot be attributed to any Party. We did not make any allegation.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please conclude now.

SHRI K.S. RAO : We did not make any allegation about them. The hon. Member from the BJP was telling that they are for small States. If they were to be really for small States what came in their way in going hand in hand with the TDP which was for integrated State/ The TDP was opposing tooth and nail the separate Telangana. But then they made an association with them. What kind of morals do they have? What kind of ethics do they have? What kind of principles do they have?...(Interruptions)

SHRI BIKARAM KESHARI DEO : Sir, this is not correct. We have started the process. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You cannot advise them.

(Interruptions).

SHRI K.S. RAO : Every politician wants to be like that. They want to get a favour out of it. they want to criticise whenever an opportunity comes. When they come to power they forget all these things. I do not want to take too much time.

Even in 1990 when the Congress Government had come to power in Andhra Pradesh, they made a resolution and it was first referred to the Rajya Sabha. In the Rajya Sabha it was passed to revive the Council. The CPI(M) Member at that time, Shri Moturi Hanumantha Rao said – "Though we are in principle opposed to it, but we honour the resolution passed by the State Government. We are not against it." When they made such a statement, could they not - either the BJP or the TDP - understand this much?

I wish that the other Members also would be very reasonable in the discussion. It is not for any personal favour. It is not to give any favour to any individual. All Parties can do that. The genuine people, intelligent people and competent people can be brought into the Council.

I wholeheartedly support this Bill and I wish this will go without much acrimony and allegations and long discussions in the House.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, my party opposes in principle the Bill brought to revive the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council. The Statement of Objects and Reasons given by the hon. Law Minister is not convincing.

In our country, more than 20 States have no second Chamber, that is, Legislative Council. Only four States have Legislative Councils - Karnataka, Bihar, Uttar

Pradesh and Maharashtra. One more Council is in Jammu and Kashmir as per their own Constitution. We cannot take it as the fifth State. According to the Constitution of India, there is no binding on the Government of India, there is no binding on the Parliament and there is no constitutional obligation also. This is merely a recommendation of a particular State. So, many States have made such recommendations. In the year 1976, the Punjab Government had passed a resolution in the Punjab Legislative Assembly, recommending it to the Government of India, but till today there is no reaction from the Government of India. So many Governments have come in the meanwhile since 1976 till today.

Ever since the Legislative Council was abolished by late Shri N.T. Rama Rao in the year 1985, our party's stand is very clear. Even the Congress Party came to power in Andhra Pradesh and they made the recommendation twice and passed the resolution. At that time also, my party had opposed in *in toto* and pressed for diversion in the Legislative Assembly.

What is the role of the Legislative Council There are no powers given to the Legislative Council. It is only an advisory body. Even the Upper House, Rajya Sabha, can reject any legislation, but the Legislative Council can only give advice; they cannot reject. Even their suggestions may not be accepted by the concerned State Assembly. That is only the sixth finger. There will be lot of burden on the State Exchequer.

There is a lot of pressure from the Congress Party cadres as they had mentioned in their election manifesto also. The present Bill is politically motivated. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Do not disturb now.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the present Bill is politically motivated to accommodate those who could not get seats in the last election. That is the prime motto of the Congress party. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing except the speech of Shri Yerrannaidu is to be recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : They are reviving it to accommodate those who could not win over through direct elections. They want to accommodate those people who were defeated in the recent Assembly elections. The Council would be dumped with the representatives of the vested interests to enable them to become members of the Council of Ministers. If the Chief Minister or somebody is interested to make some particular person a Minister and he has not won in the direct election, they would nominate him to the Legislative Council through the backdoor and make him a Minister in the Council of Minister.
...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Mr. Rao, I had not allowed him to interrupt your speech and whatever he has said has been expunged. I, therefore, would like you to listen to him.

[English]

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, you go through the debates of the constituent Assembly. With regard to the retention of the second Chamber, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had clarified in the Constituent Assembly and said:

"All that we are doing by this Constitution is to introduce the second Chamber purely as an experimental measure. We have not, by the draft Constitution, given the second Chamber a permanent place. We have not made it a permanent part of our Constitution. It is a purely experimental measure, as I said, and there is a sufficient provision..... for getting ride of the second Chamber."

Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council was created in

the year 1957 by Act 37 of 1957. After so many years, we felt that the second Chamber is of no use. This is an additional burden on the State's exchequer. This is meant to create employment for the politically unemployed people. That is why we decided to abolish the Council.

The retention of Second Chamber was extensively debated by the Constituent Assembly. Shri Kuladhar Chaliha considered that 'A second chamber is nothing but a clog in the way of progressive legislation'. Suppose you want to make a progressive legislation in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly, even though the Legislative Council does not have any legislative power, after passing of the Bill when you refer the measure of the Legislative Council they may keep it for a month, two months, or three months without having any power. What happens to that progressive legislation during that time? That is why we decided to abolish the Legislative Council.

I would like to quote what a member of the French Constituent Assembly once said. He said, 'The law is the will of the people and the people cannot have two wills on the same subject. When there are two Chambers, discord and divisions will be inevitable and the will of the people will be paralysed by inaction.'

So many instances are there. In the year 1985, the present Law Minister was the then Law Minister who moved the Bill for abolition of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council. The same Minister is now moving this Bill for creation of the Legislative Council of Andhra Pradesh. ...*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to pose one question to the hon. Law Minister. The party he belongs to claims itself to be a national party. If that party is in favour of creation of Legislative Council in Andhra Pradesh, they should follow the same principle in the case of all the States which are under the Congress rule. If it is correct that the State will progress by the creation of the Legislative Council, this is very good, people can be accommodated and they will play a vital role in the process

of legislation, why do they not create Legislative Councils in all the States which are under their rule? This is a dual policy. This is not at all correct. A national party should play a national role. There should be a debate on the existence of a second Chamber in the States.

When you go through the history you will see that the Tamil Nadu Legislative Council was abolished in 1969. The West Bengal Legislative Council was abolished in 1969. The Punjab Legislative Council was abolished in 1969. There are many instances in the country.

Once a Legislative Council was abolished with the approval of Parliament, nowhere in the country it was again proposed to be created. This is the first time that the Congress led UPA Government is moving this Bill to create Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council.

My party opposes this move in toto. *...(Interruptions)*
This is a politically motivate move. The second Chamber will remain a political rehabilitation centre. It will not serve any useful purpose. This is just a sixth finger which does not have any use. This will put a lot of burden on the State's exchequer. The people of the State do not want creation of a Legislative Council in Andhra Pradesh. My party opposes this Bill in toto. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Why I mentioned the Resolution of Punjab Legislative Assembly was, my good friend Shri K.S. Rao was saying that we have to give respect to the State Assembly and people of that particular State. What happened to the Punjab Legislative Assembly Resolution, I ask him through you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Radhakrishnan, you have only only five minutes.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil) : If that is the case, I will not speak.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, this is a very important subject. Please allow him.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Let him speak.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : If there is no interruptions, I will speak. I want a patient hearing. I am a person who is following the provisions of the Constitution. On that basis I oppose this Bill, not on any party politics. I am not speaking on party politics. What transpired in 1985 or prior to that, I am not basing my speech. I am basing the argument purely on ethics.

Now, I must submit, first of all, that I come from a State where there was bicameral Legislature - Srichitra - Legislative Council and Srimoolam - Legislative Assembly. It was abolished prior to Independence. Prior to the Kerala Assembly, it was bicameral. After Independence, when our Constitution was under promulgation, Dr. Ambedkar was very particular about giving a bicameral parliamentary legislature here, just like the Westminster - House of Lords and House of Commons. So also we have Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

India is a vast country. We have different cultures, different languages and it is quite nature that all sections could not be represented in the House of the People because Members are elected through direct elections. All the interests and cultures could not be represented in Parliament as a Federal State has a very big area. Dr. Ambedkar thought it proper to have an Upper House, Rajya Sabha with the best of intentions for giving representation to all communities. Nominations process was also allowed. There was no nominations in Lok Sabha except for Anglo-Indian community. That was the purpose. Moreover, it was given powers also. Except in the financial matters, in all other matters, they are both equal and they deal with the same matters. So, that was essential. If Rajya Sabha is having a role to play as per the provisions of the Constitution, here it is a case where we are creating a legislature, a council. For what purpose? I do not know. The Minister did not explain.

*Not recorded.

[Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan]

While I touch this topic in the first place, I must mention about the speech made by Prof. M. Ramadass sometime before. It was on a very important topic. We had passed the Seventy-third and the Seventy-fourth amendments to the Constitution making it mandatory that there shall be elections to the local bodies. He has told me that for the last 38 years, there was no elections in Pondicherry, which is a Union Territory. The Law Minister is liable. He will have to answer this question. If I could say, he will be* for violating the provisions of the Constitution. With due respect to Rajiv Gandhi, whom he follows, and who had passed a Statute making it mandatory to have elections to the local bodies and that too within five years, for the last 35 years, no elections had been held in Pondicherry. Are we not ashamed of bringing this Bill for creating?

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I have got that word expunged.

[English]

SHRI MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ) : Do not use such words. You are an elderly Member. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No., I have expunged it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ : You have no right to speak like that. ...*(Interruptions)* You are a very senior Member. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : It is a Union Territory. It is the look after of the Law Minister so see that constitutional provisions are obeyed and implemented. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You should not use unparliamentary words.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : No elections were held in the Union Territory for the last 38 years.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It was expunged.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Now, he is bringing a new Bill to create a Council. For what purpose? I would just like to inform that we are economically in difficulty. Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and other States are in difficulties. We are mad after investments.

We do not get sufficient funds even to implement the development activities in the State. Creating another House will involve crores of rupees. What is the purpose? If he can convince me that this is for the benefit of the State, I will vote for it. I will not vote for political reasons or for political expediency. Is it a child's play? Is it a mockery? I must remind the hon. Law Minister that we passed the States Reorganization Act in 1956 on the basis of language. Kerala State was formed; Tamil Nadu was formed; Andhra Pradesh was formed; and Karnataka was formed on the basis of language. We have a single legislature in Kerala. Tamil Nadu has only one Assembly. Andhra Pradesh has got one Assembly. But we did one thing. We have to make a special mention of Andhra Pradesh. We had passed the resolution in 1957 for the establishment of a Legislative Council for Andhra Pradesh. It was passed by this House in 1957. It came into effect after that. A representation was made at that time as pointed out by my learned friend Shri K.S. Rao, and then it came into existence. It lasted up to 1985. Then, all of a sudden, a new resolution came for abolition of it following the suit of Tamil Nadu, and other States. Shri Rajiv Gandhi was good enough to move it with a resolution passed from the State Assembly. ...*(Interruptions)* Shri Rajiv Gandhi was gracious enough to agree to pass it. The Council continued till 1985. We felt that it was not necessary and we should abolish it. Then

**Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

came a request for that and we abolished it. I can understand that.

Before completing two decades, a new resolution is before this House for reviving the Council which was abolished by this House 19 years before. Within 20 years, after the abolition, we are again to pass a resolution. Is it a child's play? The Assembly had asked us to pass the resolution. That was done in 1957 as a special case. Then this House passed another resolution abolishing it in 1985. Now they are asking us to revive the old thing. If things go on like this, what will happen?...
(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record except what Shri Radhakrishnan speaks.

(*Interruptions*)*

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : If things go on like this, then in 2025 another resolution will come asking us to abolish it. I may not be there at that time. But, then if the Andhra Legislative Assembly will pass a resolution asking us to abolish it, can we do that? That will be a political expediency. If the party in power wants it, they will pass the resolution. They will send it here for passing it. Are we rubber stamps? Are we tools in their hands? We are not bound by that.
...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : There should be no running commentary.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : It is not at all binding. According to their political convenience, they have passed the Resolution, but we are not bound by that. Once they passed the Resolution, we agreed, as a special case. Now, this is the third time that they are asking us to revive the Council.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Again, it will come fourth time to abolish the same!...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record except the speech of Shri Radhakrishnan.

(*Interruptions*)*

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : In 1985, they wanted it to be abolished.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You are repeating the same point. Please conclude now.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : No, in 2005, they are again wanting it to be revived. Again after some time, they will ask you to abolish it.

Sir, this House is not bound by their Resolution. This House is a sovereign body. We are not bound by the dictates of any Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council of any State. This House has a separate entity; this House has its own existence; and this House has its own system. We cannot be dictated. According to their whims and fancies, they will pass a Resolution asking Parliament to revive their Council!

So, Sir, I strongly oppose this. We cannot be party to it. If we pass it, it will be a black mark in the history of the House.

With these few words, I conclude.

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Mohan Singh your turn always comes after him.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria) : Sir, its always so and he also changes the course of discussion.

This Bill has come after scrutiny from Parliamentary Committee and the hon. Minister-in-charge is only its mover. If any Parliamentary Standing Committee consisting of the hon. Members belonging to all the parties has unanimously approved any Bill, I would regard it morally wrong to support the Bill in the Parliamentary Committee

*Not recorded.

[Shri Mohan Singh]

and oppose the same in the august House. This is not a healthy tradition. Therefore, in these circumstances, I support the Bill.

Secondly, I would like to submit that constitution makers have empowered all the states to create Second Chamber according to their needs. I have been Member of the Council of Uttar Pradesh after being getting elected through the local bodies. I would like to humbly submit that when the Constituent Assembly was elected, there was limited franchise in the country and not adult franchise. People elected through limited franchise have given India a wonderful constitution, in which every nicety has been taken care of. It is one of the best constitutions of the world. Therefore, it can not be said that the Second Chamber is created to politically accommodate the people rejected by the electorate. The people levelling this allegation should look at their history of their own leaders. If it is not taken otherwise, I would like to say that both the senior leaders of the Bhartiya Janata Party have spent most of their time in the Council of State. They have been in the Rajya Sabha much more than in the Lok Sabha. Even the Prime Minister of India is not a Member of Lok Sabha. Had the Rajya Sabha not been in existence, Shri Narsimha Rao would not have got the opportunity to become Prime Minister and lead this House. It is, therefore, explicit that in many circumstances we need Second chamber. However, which states need it, has been left to the Legislative Council Assemblies to decide. I want to know why such a provision was made? Presently the population of Uttar Pradesh is 17 crore 40 lakhs and it is represented by 400 MLAs. Each member of the Legislative Assembly gets the opportunity to represent 7-8 people and you have passed a motion in the House that there will be delimitation including delimitation of Assembly constituencies and delimitation of Lok Sabha seats, but the number of seats will not be increased till 2025. The Lok Sabha constituency which I represent has a population of 25 lakh. The representation systems in the country has disparity. I am representing a population of 25 lakh, while another constituency with a

population of 1-5 lakh is being represented by some other member. If such a system has been put in place in which number of members in the big Legislative Assemblies will not be increased, I am of the opinion that if in certain circumstances some people do not get elected and it becomes imperative to give them membership of the Rajya Sabha, it can not be called immoral system. It is for this reason that there is provision of Second Chamber for big states. A state with a populations of 70 lakh has been carved out of my state. Before its creation it was part of the Uttar Pradesh and had representation in the Legislative Council. But if a state having a population of 70 lakh and 90 MLAs demands for Second Chamber, I think, it will not be reasonable. If big states demand second chamber, then it is justified and it should be supported. If Government of India after having dialogue with all the big states creates Second Chamber for all those states, it can not be called unjustified. Either allow to increase the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly or if not, give permission for creation of Second Chamber, this is my request.

It is often reiterated that due to these representative bodies financial burden is increasing. This is the reason which says that Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha are places of big expenditure, and these should be wound up to contain unnecessary expenditure. This is not democratic and points to paucity of views to contain representative bodies. I, therefore, submit that in Uttar Pradesh there is representation of local bodies, registered graduates, the graduates who can not get elected by people, teachers. There are people working in other organizations, who can not get elected to Legislative Assembly because they can not be servants of public for 24 hours, whether these people should not be represented in the elected bodies? To give representation to such elements, provision of second chamber has been made. To get registered graduates represented, to get teachers represented, to get university teachers represented and I want to submit humbly that today the number of primary teachers has become very big. Primary teachers have no representation in any Legislative Assembly.

It is quite deplorable that the primary teachers have been deprived of representation in the proposed creation of Council in Andhra Pradesh. It is not good. Therefore, I urge the Government to carryout an amendment in the said law so that the representation of primary school teachers can be ensured in the Council.

Further, I would suggest to provide for nomination of a few persons of eminence in the file of politics or sports, on the lines of Rajya Sabha, as they find it difficult to contest and win the election.

16.00 hrs.

People like Shri Navjot Singh Sidhu are rare who find favour with the party and get elected. Generally, sportsmen, cine-stars and musicians find it difficult to get a berth in Parliament through elections. So, they cannot fulfill their responsibility towards the people entrusted upon them by dint of adult franchise. Therefore, a system of nomination of persons of eminence by the hon'ble President of India was evolved. Similarly, the Governors of the States nominate persons of the State Legislative Councils. There is a provision to nominate 12 Members to the Councils in each State as is being done in Rajya Sabha. But some sort of restrictions should be there. Social workers of repute who have rendered exemplary service to the society should also be nominated. Existing provision is often criticized as politicians, who have been rejected by the people and who can not win elections are being nominated. One way, it is a misuse of existing provision in the law. The power of Governor to nominate 12 persons should be explicitly specified with regard to the areas such as academics, sports, music, art etc. wherefrom the said persons would be nominated. The hon'ble President and the hon'ble Governor should nominate to the second chamber the persons who have excelled in their respective fields. With these words I conclude.

[English]

*SHRI RATAN SINGH AJNALA (Taran Taran) : Deputy Speaker Sir, I am obliged to you for allowing me to

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

participate in the discussion on the Bill brought by the Law Minister Shri Bhardwaj regarding Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council. I rise to oppose this Bill. I was listening to the arguments as to why there was a need for a Legislative Council. If a Legislative Council was needed then why was it abolished earlier? If it was abolished, there was some reason behind the move. It was felt that this council was no longer needed Why is the Legislative Council needed today?

Deputy Speaker Sir, today, there is a Congress Government Andhra Pradesh as well as the Centre. This council is needed just to adjust and accommodate the Congressmen. Otherwise, it is not needed. It will entail a lot of expenditure. All the States are in a bad condition financially. We will be over-burdening the already bad condition of these States by our decision to revive the Legislative Councils.

Deputy Speaker Sir, I am ashamed to mention about the corrupt practice indulged in by the eleven Members of Parliament recently. We will be further promoting corruption by reviving more and more such institutions. There is no need of this council. The elected body of people is assembly. In Punjab too, there was Legislative Council. But it was abolished later. An appeal was made to revive the Legislative Council in Punjab but it was not done. When it cannot be done in Punjab, why is it being done in other States? This is injustice. Justice should be meted out to all the States.

The Law Minister is an expert. The Legislative Council is not necessary for passing a Bill. It will not be an elected body. Whether it is a Co-operative body or any such institutions, the Local Governments commit irregularities in it and the council members will be members of these bodies. So, the need of the hour to avoid such extravagant acts and save the States from financial crisis. This is my request, Deputy Speaker Sir. It is not imperative for us to pass Bills in accordance with the views of a Legislative Assembly. We should apply our own mind and discretion. We are all elected.

[Shri Ratan Singh Ajnala]

Members of Lok Sabha. We have come here to pass laws for the welfare of the people. We should not pass Laws that harm the people. so, this Bill should not be passed.

PROF. K.M. KADER MOHIDEEN (Vellore): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for having given me this opportunity to speak on an important Bill Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council Bill.

First of all, I congratulate the hon. Minister for having brought about this Bill. My friends here said that he should be prosecuted. I would like to say we should all join together to compose an ode in praise of Shri Bhardwaj ji because more than 7 crore people of Andhra Pradesh will certainly admire, commend and ever remember him for bringing about this Bill. Our country is the largest democracy in the world. Great founding fathers of our Constitution were great believers in democracy. They wanted to strengthen democracy in this country because as believers in democracy, as believers in bicameralism, they gave the Legislative Council as well as the Legislative Assembly for the States of this country.

Sir, as great visionaries, the great founding fathers of our country have shown everywhere to strengthen democracy in our country from the grass-root level. One of our friends here said that Legislative Council is the sixth finger. I would like to say that it is one of the eyes of democracy. A State without a Council is having only "one eyed Democracy". At the Centre, we have the Parliament consisting of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. I would like to make my humble suggestion that only Legislative Councils should be there in all the States where we do not have Legislative Councils, we should have the Legislative Councils. Even in the Union Territories where Assemblies are there, there should be Legislative Councils. The Legislative Assemblies represent the people. There is no doubt about it.

16.08

[SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN *in the Chair*]

But the Legislative Councils represent various sections of the people like the scholars, the professionals, the lawyers, the educationists, even the spiritual leaders, the community leaders, social scientists, religious leaders, players, sportsmen, craftsmen, artisans, etc. All these people are represented only in the Councils. If they are not given a chance, we are denying the very fundamental right, the democratic right to all these sections of the people. Therefore, we would like to say that the Legislative Council should be universally made a part of the democratic set-up in every State in this country.

In Tamil Nadu, in 1986 during Dr. MGRs' regime, it was abolished. Here, it was mentioned. If it has been abolished in one State, it does not mean that it should not be brought about in other States. Even, in Tamil Nadu, I would like to say that our great leaders have said that there should be a Legislative Council in our State. I would like to say that in 1986, the Council was abolished. By God's grace, in 2006 after elections the same Council will be restored in Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Dr. Kalaignar. That is the possibility which is going to happen.

About the Legislative Council, I would like to mention here one or two points. In the Legislative Council, out of the total Members who form the Members of the Council, 12 representatives are nominated by the Governor. I would like to say that while the nomination is made, they should extend the nomination to the Chambers of Commerce, the trade unions. All the trade unions in the State should be made representatives in the Council. Along with that, most of the religious leaders, most of the spiritual leaders who are doing yeoman service for the communities' development, upliftment never come out openly. They never contest any election. These real spiritual leaders of this country are found everywhere. In a particular State or in any State, the spiritual leaders, who are guiding

the people to be harmonious, who are guiding the people to live in peace and happiness, who are guiding the people saying that the minds of the people should meet together, should be made to represent the Council. For this, while the Governor nominates, leaders from the communities, leaders from various sections of the people, the spiritual leaders also should be taken into account. Those people also should be given representation in the Council.

With these words, I congratulate the hon. Minister for bringing forward this Bill. I support the Bill on behalf of the DKM Party.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri B. Mahtab. to speak now. Please conclude in five minutes because so many speakers are here. If you kindly cooperate, it would be better.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack) : Sir, I will only repeat what you have said when you were sitting in this Bench that here an attempt is made to rush it through and we should not be a party to it. Here, this Bill has been moved by the hon. Law Minister for the creation of a Legislative Council in the State of Andhra Pradesh. But the manner in which the debate has unfolded, especially when the previous speaker just said, is something important. Today, it is the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council which is sought to be created. Tomorrow, it will be the Tamil Nadu Legislative Council. We do not know what will happen to other States. After 58 years of Independence, after half a century of the debate that went in the Constituent Assembly regarding the creation of a Council in different Provinces, I think it is necessary to go into those debates that had occurred in 1947 or 1948 and 1949.

Now, I would come to the crux of the matter. There was a division of opinion in the Constituent Assembly. There was no one opinion because, at that time, the situation was quite different. We had larger States. The larger States were inherited from the larger Presidencies like the Bengal Presidency, the Bombay Presidency and the Madras Presidency. But, at that time, Dr. Ambedkar, while going

through the debates and reports of the Committee which was formed during that time, had very succinctly commented:

"That Constituent Assembly envisaged the composition of the Legislative Council as a transitional provision in the Constitution."

I would like to lay more stress on the "transitional provision" of the Constitution. It was not a mandatory provision but a transitional provision and the transitional provision fructified after the abolition of the Andhra Pradesh Council if we are talking of only the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, as you have rightly said when you were sitting here.

In 1957, a Resolution was moved. It was accepted by the House of the People or the Lok Sabha here. Subsequently, in 1985, the elected representatives of Andhra Pradesh Assembly passed a Resolution. That was the mandate of the Andhra Pradesh people then.

Today we have another mandate which says that we have notified it in our election manifesto. They say they got votes because of that. How much is that I do not want to go into that debate but this is a mandate. But, today the question arises before Lok Sabha and before the Government of India and it will be a question which will be repeated that whether the resolution of any Assembly will be the base, will be the only basis for creation of a Council. I want to go back to the debate on the Constituent Assembly. That time, as Mr. Mohan Singh had very rightly mentioned that a very limited franchise system was prevalent then. At that time, in their wisdom the leaders of the country, the founding fathers of the Constitution, when they were framing, when they were debating in the Constituent Assembly, they said that they are the elected Members and they should represent the people in the Constituent Assembly. That is the main reason why certain provisions were made. But I would like to draw the attention of this House, already half a century has passed with adult franchise. Have we not progressed? A transitional provision is being reconfirmed in this 21st century which

[Shri B. Mahtab]

was abolished 20 years back? Which was abolished subsequently by different other State Assemblies. Today, we are discussing that we want to bring it back. For what purpose? If it is really necessary to frame law, I would put a basic question. How many days actually the Andhra Pradesh Assembly for that matter sits in a year? Is it 60 days? Within last 10 years has Andhra Pradesh Assembly sat for 60 days? It has not. Very rarely! It is only West Bengal's Assembly which has completed 61 days. No other State Assembly is sitting for 60 days in a year. If this is the position, what legislative business the Legislative Assemblies have today to do? So that you need another chamber to discuss and debate. The Assembly itself does not have that much of business, 60 days of work or business. Our Uttar Pradesh hardly sits for 31 days in a year. Yet they have a Council because it is a larger State and the discussions that have been going on ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWASI (Hyderabad) : What about Orissa?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI B. MAHTAB : We do not have a Council. ...*(Interruptions)* Thank you for reminding me about my State. Our State this time has sat for 49 days. Last year it was for 55 days. The year before last year it was much more than that. But, when I say no State is sitting for 60 days other than the West Bengal, Orissa also is a part of that. One should understand. But this was discussed. Creating a Upper House or a Council in different provinces was discussed in the later forties in Orissa Assembly also. I have gone through those debates. It was very categorically mentioned. I just want to draw the attention of the hon. Members. That time an idea was floated. Some school of thought of people will not get representation, respective organisations will not get representation, educated academia will not get representation. This was discussed in Orissa Assembly in the late forties. During that time, Prof. Pranakrushna Parija who is an internationally renowned Botanist of the Blackman Parija Theory, which

propounded life is in plants, was elected to the Legislative Assembly by popular mandate. We have also another Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Baidyanath Mishra. He contested but lost. We have also another eminent legal luminary who was Chief Justice of Orissa High Court, Justice Lingaraj Panigrahi. He was elected after retiring from Chief Justiceship.

He fought election, got elected to the Assembly and became the Law Minister. He again fought election, got elected and became the Speaker of Orissa Legislative Assembly. But at the same time, we have a number of other educated persons whom the party projected as its candidates. Should we presume that Andhra Pradesh, their respective political parties, especially the Congress Party, is not in a position to select educated people so that they can get the popular mandate and get elected to the Assembly and that is why the Government wants them to be nominated to the Council? This is not proper. You cannot satisfy the people in this way.

SHRI K.S. RAO : That is why the TDP got 44 MLAs in Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Okay. Our strength in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly is 44. In the last Assembly, their strength was 26. This time they came to power and so with 44, next time we will come to power.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please take your seat. Nobody will be allowed to intervene. Shri Mahtab alone can speak and conclude now.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : Sir, I would only say that if the ruling party wants some better persons to come to the Assembly, some knowledgeable persons in specific fields to come to the Assembly to become Ministers in the Ministry or to be elected to give more inputs for the functioning of the governance, they they should get them elected because ultimately it is the party which contests the election, not the individual. It is the political party which contests, it is the symbol which is popular. Very rarely individuals can

get the mandate from the people and those are of very high quality and calibre.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Mahtab, you have taken 10 minutes. Please cooperate and conclude now. We have hear different opinions.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : I would only like to remind one thing to the Law Minister. He is knowledgeable and he is very much aware about what we inherited practically from the British parliamentary democracy. British Isles, Great Britain has House of Lords and house of Commons. Scotland is a part of British Isles, but it does not have any second Chamber. It has a Parliament, but it does not have a second Chamber, neither Wales have, nor Northern Ireland have. Why should we have it here?

Sir, The Government is opening a floodgate today. The Government is encouraging a group of persons to pressurise political organisations to move in this direction which will create more damage to the State Exchequer and unnecessary burden will be there on the Exchequer of different States. Is it necessary? I do not think it is necessary. It is not at all necessary. When States like Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal had abolished the second Chamber since 1969, why are we opening that floodgate again? The Government should not open the Pandora's box again.

Sir, I know the Congress Party has made a commitment and, as you know, they say, they always keep their word. But this is the only commitment they are going to fulfil. I do not think they have fulfilled any other commitment made in the manifesto during the last 18 or 20 months. This is the last commitment they are going to fulfil. *...(Interruptions)* Sir, they have made a number of commitments. I do not think they remember those commitments today, but the Government has brought forward this Bill only because of persons around it. Our party is totally against opening a second Chamber in Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH (Bhilwara) : Mr.

Chairman, Sir, I stand to speak on the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council Bill, 2004 which is brought here to provide for the creation of a Legislative Council in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

Sir, much has been said about whether we should have this Council in Andhra Pradesh or not. In all ordinary circumstances, I feel that this House would have just vetted the decision, the mandate of Andhra Pradesh.

I feel that as provided by our founding fathers and I all their wisdom they had decided that the bigger States in India can have the Legislative Council, and a few Councils were there. But this is not an ordinary circumstance because there was a Legislative Council, which was abolished. I think, this is the first time in the history of Parliament that we are discussing something which has been debated from both the sides that whether decision regarding the abolition which has taken place earlier was right or that now we want to create another one is right.

It can become a regular practice. It can become a political motive. It can become a practice that some States will have it and next year the next Government will abolish it and again it will be recreated. Now, this is the problem that we, in the Parliament, are facing. I feel that this Parliament as such should go by exactly what the State wants. If the State wants to create one or abolish one, we have that. We cannot say, we cannot dictate because it is a Federal System and in the Federal system, bigger States, as our founding fathers have said, an have one or not have one. We cannot say that this State will not have.

As somebody has very rightly said that one Government will have it and the next Government will not have it and I am sure the next Government in Andhra Pradesh, which is going to be the TDP and most probably it is going to be, will again abolish it...*(Interruptions)* They will come here again...*(Interruptions)* I m sure, they will come. That is a different thing. It is a hypothetical case that I am putting across. *...(Interruptions)*

[Shri Vijayendra Pal Singh]

Let me also say that our founding fathers, in all their wisdom, under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, had created two Chambers even at the Centre and when these were created, there was a lot of discussion. It was also thought that why do not we have the Presidential form of the System, like the American System, which was doing well.

We opted for the Parliamentary system with a Council of Ministers under the Prime Minister. There was a lot of debate in those times. I will not go into the debate of that time. But it was also felt that the President of America can get the best people from any field to be on the Ministry. They do not have the Minister. They have the Secretary of State and all that. Let us not get into that. What I am trying to say is, that we have the Rajya Sabha Members, with the capability —...* and who should be in the Ministry - inducted into the Ministry. That is the system that we have here.

I would like to praise it because there are a lot of customs in our country. In the House of Commons, most of the laws are customary. We have also had, in the 58 years of our Independence, a lot of customs. You will remember the first lady Prime Minister of our country was hon. Madam Indira Gandhi. When she became the Prime Minister for the first time, she was a member of the Rajya Sabha and not the Lok Sabha.

But, she thought it right to become a Member of the Lok Sabha. She resigned from Rajya Sabha and she became a Member of the Lok Sabha. I feel that this custom must also be kept in this country* I feel that is the right way of going about it. Those are the things that we must do. Those are customs. Why should we be afraid of it? Somebody very rightly said that it is the party which fight.....* That is the way it should be, and there is nothing wrong in it, when an example was set by Madam Indira Gandhi...(Interruptions)

**Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Any personal remark will not go on record.

(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am afraid, he is casting aspersion on the other House. He must not do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I will look into the matter and see that it will be expunged.

MR. VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH : Madam Indira Gandhi set an example her and it should be set as an example by the Congress party. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Your time is over. Shri G. Venkataswamy.

MR. VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH : I also feel that this House should fully endorse what the State Legislature wants.

[Translation]

SHRI G. VENKATSWAMY (Peddapalli) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, everyone is speaking in English, however, I would like to express my views in Hindi.

The Members of TDP and the members from other States have also criticized the said bill. Since the public in the State gave its mandate in it favour that is why the Speaker of Legislative Assembly of the concerned State referred it to the Standing Committee. Everybody in the Standing Committee has supported it, but, I am surprised that they are opposing it here since the Bill has been passed in the Assembly and also approved by the Standing Committee, there is no need to emphasize too much on it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the people who played active role in the freedom of India and also in framing our constitution

had realized the need for a second chamber. And today, there is no one to challenge them. It's need was felt to give representation to educated persons of weaker sections of society. It is a matter of surprise that seats have not been reserved for them in the Rajya Sabha. I would like to remind the hon'ble Minister of law that when Dr. Ambedkar drafted our constitution, there were only a few educated persons amongst dalits. But now we have a large number of educated persons amongst SCs and STs, therefore, there is a need to reserve seats for them in Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils as well.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I hail from Telengana region and people of my area are apprehensive that after the creation of the said Council in Andhra Pradesh, which chamber will consider the issue of Telengana? I wanted to move an amendment but I could not do so because of constraints of time. I wanted to add a clause, that if the Council is created it won't oppose carving out Telengana from Andhra Pradesh. The people want creation of Telengana and thus the Council should not come in its way. On the other hand, after formation of a separate State, Telengana should have it own council.

I would like to add one more thing, especially about experts. Dr. Sarvpalli Radhakrishnan, during his time, had moved a resolution favouring representation of teachers in the Council. With due apology to Shri Yerrannaaidu, who is present here, I would like to say that once Late Shri N.T. Ramarao told me that he was fed up of Legislative Council and he desired it's abolition. And practically it so happened. Whatsoever happened in the Council, it was not taken up in the Assembly...
(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Mr. N.T. Rama Rao never said, "It is useless". That is the sixth finger.

SHRI G. VENKATSWAMY : I did not use the word 'useless'.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

**SHRI G. VENKATSWAMY :

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Member, Mr. Venkataswamy, you address the Chair. If you do not address the Chair, then difficulties will arise.

SHRI G. VENKATSWAMY : Please give me a minute's time.

SHRI SARVEY SATYANARAYANA (Siddipet) : Sir, you give me five minutes more.

MR. CHAIRMAN : If you turn around and address, difficulties will arise. So, in order to prevent difficulties, I would request you to address the Chair.

[Translation]

SHRI G. VENKATSWAMY : We request the hon. Law Minister to please make efforts to apply provision of reservation, this is essential even in all our councils and Rajya Sabha too. There were no experts among weaker sections in the last fifty years but now there is sufficient number of experts available That is why I am demanding reservation in these block.

Secondly, I feel that this council would facilitate a forum for discussion on the problem of Telangana. That is why I regard this council as an important move and support that. I also request the opposers of this move to please not to oppose it.

[English]

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY (Nalgonda): Sir, for quite some time issue of the restoration of Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council is in the discussion though not in Parliament but outside. The Legislative Council of

*Not recorded.

**Spoke in Telugu, but English Translation was not provided.

[Shri Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy]

Andhra Pradesh was abolished a few years back when Shri N.T. Rama Rao was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh as there was a confrontation between the Legislative Council and the then Government.

I believe, later also once the State Assembly passed a Resolution but in Parliament the Bill has not come. Lots of arguments were made from both sides in favour and against the Second Chamber. The CPI, from the very beginning, was opposing the Second Chamber for different reasons. Of course, in the last several years after Independence, many democratic institutions have come up. No doubt even the Legislative Council also in some places played some important role.

But here I would like to refer to the point made by hon. colleague, Mr. Mahtab who raised a very important issue about the number of working days of the Legislative Assemblies and Parliament. It is very said that the number of working days of the Legislative is coming down drastically.

I believe, in the first Parliament, it was almost about 150 days used to be the working days. But now, it has been reduced to less than 80 days. He was raising the point of other Legislatures. Andhra Pradesh is also one of the States where Constitutional obligation of 45 days or so are the working days. I would like to say whether it is Congress or the TDP whoever is in the Government, the Governments are trying to bypass the Legislatures. This is the most unfortunate thing. This is also to be discussed in the Parliament and the number of working days of Parliament is also to be raised because the Government is accountable to the people and the nation through the Legislatures. The Government wants to avoid the responsibility, the number of working days of the Parliament and the Legislatures is coming down. Anyway, that point is to be taken into consideration while we are discussing the other issues.

As far as the matter of formation of Legislative Council

is concerned, I think it has gone to the Standing Committee also and the Standing Committee, I was told, has recommended the restoration with the same old type of method. I believe, the Legislative Council, as it is, is outdated. There is a representation of one-third representatives through Legislative Assembly, one-third from Local Bodies and I think about one-twelfth through graduates. This is one provision that was provided during the days immediately after Independence when the literacy rate was very less. Now, when there are millions of graduates in this country and when literacy rate is about 70 per cent, there is no meaning in thinking that only the graduates are the intellectuals who should be represented in the Legislative Councils. There is no representation for trade unions and working class who should get their representation. There is representation for the teachers but a big chunk of these teachers who constitute in the elementary section, these primary teachers are kept out of this election purview; only from the high school level will have their representation.

Here, I would like to inform this House that even at this juncture, the Law Minister did not find it possible to include a provision for the one-third reservation for women. We could not get it in the Assemblies and Parliament. But when a legislation for the restoration is coming, I request the Law Minister if he is ready to agree for one-third representation for women, we are ready to support for it. Though from my Party's point of view, we are not happy with the formation of Legislative Council. We will abstain from voting as the Assembly of Andhra Pradesh has decided in favour of it. If possibility is there, let him think of it and at least let us start from the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council for giving more representation for women.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, Ravinder Naik Dharavath. You have only three minutes for your speech.

SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR (Hanamkonda) : We are an important political Party in Andhra Pradesh. ...*(Interruptions)*
We should get more time. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAVINDER NAIK DHARAVATH (Warangal) : Sir, I rise to support the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council 2004 and like to put forward some points before the Government, from Telangana Rashtra Samiti Party. I congratulate the Government to keep for this promises to which we i.e. Telangana Rashtra Samiti and Congress made to the public of that region while jointly contesting for the elections. I express my gratitude to the UPA Chairperson, Smt. Sonia Gandhi for this. BJP is a national party and our friend from that party Shri Deo Saheb very rightly said and, I agree with that, the BJP has stuck with its concept of smaller states. He has also said it rightly that such council is not needed as the country faces many other burning problems. Today there is increase in incidents of illegal trafficking and abuse of children in the country, particularly Telanga region, people are committing suicide and rate of migration is high. It is necessary to consider the root-causes of bringing about this Bill. I would like to mention a few points in this regard. I congratulate my elder colleague Venkataswamy ji for what he said. Sonia Gandhi ji said that there is proposal of creation of Telangana State in the UPA agenda, it is also mentioned by the Hon. President. Although this Bill to create a council was formally not there in the agenda, but we paved way for that as we so promised to the people. The demand for creation of a separate "Telangana" State has been there for past fifty years. Now some solution to it is needed, we have full faith in Sonia Gandhi ji. I hope, she will see that the promises in the UPA agenda are kept in letter and spirit. also hope that Mrs. Gandhi and Congress Party would talk to our friends opposing this idea and help find the appropriate solution. I want to request our BJP friends to stand for Telangana also as they stand for smaller States and this Council Bill.

This movement for a separate Telangana State has been there for last fifty years and we gave required mandate for that twice in the past. Once the people elected 12 MPs under the leadership of Shri Chenna Reddy and secondly, when TRS and Congress jointly fight elections

from here 2004, we secured mandate and support from all the three regions- Andhra, Royalseema and Telangana. We are not to forget this as we have to work for our democracy. One more point is regarding including the teachers in the Council which has not been taken care of in this Bill. SCs, STs and Minorities should be give priority in this Council and in Assembly also. Where there are two States, there will be too Councils. I was watching on TV a programme on Late Pottē Shri Ramju today in which our leaders were saying that he sacrificed his life to merge Telangana with Andhra Pradesh. No, he sacrificed his life for creation of a separate Andhra Pradesh separating it from the then Madras residency. he never did that for merger of Telangana and Andhra.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : We are discussing the creation of Legislative Council in Andhra Pradesh, not of Telangana.

SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR : Sir, it is related. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAVINDER NAIK DHARAVATH : Sir, this is related to the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council and also related to Telangana region.

[Translation]

There is a fifty year long movement for separate Telangana State, Only some Andhrites belonging to certain parties are opposing this Bill. I request Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Minister of Law, Shri Bhardwaj as they know well about the conditions in Telangana. Scenes of poverty and deprivation are all over there among the 4 crore people of Telanga region. In the last elections of 1998, BJP gave a slogan 'One vote, two States' and later their Government carved out three separate State too, i.e. Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and Chattiegarh.

Sir, on these lines we request BJP and their top leaders to please come forward openly in support of this move and stand with Telangana. With these words, I conclude.

[English]

DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM (Bhadrachalam) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to participate in the discussion on this Bill – the Andhra Pradesh State Legislative Council Bill, 2004. I rise to oppose this Bill because this Bill provides for the revival of the Council which was abolished 20 years ago. In the Statement of Objects and Reasons of this Bill the indistinct objectives and irrelevant reasons are stated. If we read that Statement word by word, there is not concrete reason as to why this Bill should be introduced here. The only one reasons that I made out was that the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly resolved on 8th July, 2004, with a clear majority, to have a council.

But this Council was abolished by the then TDP Government in 1985. The reasons shown in the discussions that took place on that day, while it was being abolished, have not disappeared and they are still here and existing. It seems that there is no specific objective to bring in this Bill. The only reason is that it is based on the political reason, that because the TDP Government abolished it, the Congress wanted to revive it again.

My second point is that in this Bill a misinterpretation of the constitutional provision has been given. In the Statement of Objects and Reasons they have quoted article 169 (1) of our Constitution. This small bit of the Constitution and its spirit and its teaching was ignored and misinterpreted in this Bill. I want to quote article 169 (1) (2) (3) put together and separately also.

"Parliament may by law provide for the abolition of the Legislative Council of a State having such a Council or for the creation of such a Council in a State having no such Council, if the Legislative Assembly of the State passes a resolution to that effect by a majority of the total membership of the Assembly and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of the Assembly present and voting."

Sir, what exactly is the spirit of these words? The article

clearly says that the State Assembly can resolve to abolish the Council where there is a Council and the State Assembly can resolve to create a Council where there is no Council. But, in the case of Andhra Pradesh there was a Council previously and it was abolished 20 years ago and again it is going to be revived. But, as far as this article of the Constitution is concerned, there is no provision here in the Constitution to revive the abolished Council. On this constitutional point, this is irrelevant and unconstitutional. This is what I believe and my Party believes and that is why I am opposing this.

My next point is a lot of discussion has taken place here about the Constituent Assembly. As the CPI(M) we are not opposed to the bicameral system at the national level. Yes, we must have it, keeping the particular characteristics of our country in view like the multi-linguistic nature and multi-religious character and the multi-party political system. Because of these we must have the Upper House at the national level. But it is not the case with the Council at the State level because if you go into the origin of the State Councils, you see how they came into existence and to serve whose interests these were formed. These are the relevant questions.

It is, by and large, a legacy of the British imperialism which ruled our country for 200 years. These Councils are the legacy and heritage of the Imperial system and imperial thought to press our nationality, our culture and our resources. Who were there in the past Councils? Those Councils were filled with the people who admired the British imperialism, the people who subjugated their interest for the British interests. Such Lords of the princely States used to be given Council membership in the State Councils.

Under our Constitution, now it is a federal system. I am not objecting to the resolution of the Andhra Pradesh State Assembly because I know pretty well that it is the discretion of the State Legislature to resolve like that, but as Members of the Parliament, the highest august body of this country, we must look into this constitutional provision, where it is ignored in bringing this Bill.

What is the past experience of the Councils? So many of my colleagues, learned and experienced colleagues, have explained how the disgruntled, defeated by people and corrupt politicians were brought back through the backdoor to these Councils and made Ministers. It is the practice followed in the previous years.

My another point is why they were there. In those days, there was no adult franchise. That is why, the people who had some property or wealth were going to be voters in those days. That is why, they were not representing all the people as a result of which the representation of various strata of the communities was not there. You see the position today in the Andhra Pradesh State Assembly. This Bill provides for about eight graduate constituencies. In the State Assembly of Andhra Pradesh, having a strength of 294, there are 196 graduates. Then, there are also professionals, artists and teachers. Then, 26 per cent of the professionals are doctors and lawyers in the State Assembly of Andhra Pradesh. What does it show? It shows that people are amply represented in the present Legislative Assembly. So, there is no necessity of having such a Council which leads to discontentment of the people.

Though the Council is going to be formed, the Council is not connected with the aspirations and needs of the people. What are the needs of Andhra Pradesh today? It is said that UPA had promised something and because of that promise only, we are getting this Bill. They said so. There are other promises also which are more important than this. Now, we are not able ...*(Interruptions)* It does not reflect the needs and aspirations of the people as such.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM : I will conclude in one minute.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have been given eight minutes already. You must conclude within one minute.

DR. BABU RAO MEDIYAM : This is going to be a burden on the Budget of the State Government. It is expected that the expenditure of the Council, if it is revived, would be about Rs.6 crore per month. That is going to be Rs.72 crore *per annum*. When there are people without drinking water and without so many other things, I feel that it is a mere waste that we spend Rs.72 crore for another House, which is not at all reflecting the aspirations of the people. That is why, I oppose this Bill. The Council wherever it occurs, clogs the legislative and administrative functioning and results in an impediment to the local bodies.

17.00 hrs.

As our learned colleague has said, the Seventy-Third and Seventy-Fourth Constitutional Amendments are already there for Panchayati Raj and Nagar Palikas. Even those bodies are not given proper rights to implement programmes. In this scenario, creating the Legislative Council will only be an impediment in the process of legislation. Every time a Bill is passed by the Legislative Assembly and sent to the Council, it will take three to four months to give its opinion on the Bill. I feel that it will become an impediment in the functioning local bodies and local administration. That is why I would request the whole House to consider this measure again.

I oppose this un-Constitutional Bill; I oppose this unnecessary Bill; I oppose this Bill which does not have administrative and legislative sanction; I oppose this Bill aimed at reviving the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chall) Mr. Chairman, Sir, you have given me this opportunity to speak on the Bill regarding creation of Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, 2004, Thank you very much.

As our honoured members of TRS, BJP and CPI have suggested that since this Bill has the approval of

[Shri Shaitendra Kumar]

Parliamentary Standing Committee and the Cabinet it should be passed unanimously. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has given proper interpretation of the two Houses—Upper and Lower, in our Constitution. My suggestion is that this kind of council should be created in every State where it is not in existence. Our Lower and Upper Houses are complementary to each other. We, in these Houses, discuss on many Bills and varied problems and this process takes place in both the Houses. If one House do not facilitate some discussion, the other one given vent to that. That is why a second House is very necessary. Almost every section of Member—as we have 12 nomination seats in our council also, which consist of literatures, poets, sportspersons, social activists, panchayat representatives, representatives of graduate constituencies and teachers—has put forth its views in this matter.

I would like to urge hon. minister and the Government, through you that representation from labour-class should also be there in the Legislative Council as we have a great number of them in our country. Many hon. Member have given their suggestion, a very senior member Shri Venkataswamyji has highlighted the demand of representation to the ST classes in the Legislative Council and Rajya Sabha. A quota in this regard should be fixed, then only we can fulfill the spirit of the Constitution given to us by Dr. Ambedkar. This will contribute to his vision. Besides, we have a great number of primary teachers in the country too. Our leader Shri Mohan Singh has expressed his views and associating with it I would like to say that this is a worthwhile Bill and more such councils should be created by way of a Bill in the States where they do not exist. This will help the public represent for their problems and a forum will be there to discuss on them.

With these words, I strongly support the Bill related to creation of Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, 2004 and conclude my speech.

*SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAI SI : Thank you, Sir, On behalf of my party, I support the bill presented in this House today on the ground that during the recent assembly and parliamentary elections, the people of the state of Andhra Pradesh reposed their confidence and gave their mandate to the Congress party because of the commitment made by the latter in its election manifesto. The manifesto said that the Legislative Council would be restored to the state once the party was voted to power. I was listening to the speeches made here with rapt attention. I was nappy to note that the leader of the Telugu Desham Parliamentary Party still has some respect left in his heart for his late lamented leader, N.T. Ramarao. He is opposing the bill because his late leader was not in favour of the second chamber and had abolished it. I can distinctly remember that day when I was occupying my seat in the lower house of Andhra Pradesh as a member of the Legislative Assembly and late N.T. Ramarao was sitting beside me. At that time, his party members did not allow late N.T. Ramarao to speak for even a minute. This way they came to power after dethroning him. However, that is a chapter of the history book now. Today, they are reminiscing and respecting the memories of their late leader. But the question is why should they oppose it? The Constitution of India provides that the Legislative Council of a state can be recreated if the Parliament receives a resolution to this effect sent by the Legislative Assembly of the concerned state for its consideration. Right now, provision of reservation to women was advocated in the House. Let me remind the House that if a survey or assessment of the representation of different communities in the Legislature is conducted, one will find that the Muslims have all along been the least representative community in the annals of Indian polity. There is need to give the desired protection to the Muslims once a Legislative Council is restored.

The second important thing is that this bill presented here is a direct outcome of the commitment made by the Congress Party in its manifesto though there have been

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Persian.

a plethora of promises. However, I am sorry to say that only 37 members of Parliament in this UPA Government are supporting it. It is extremely deplorable to state that step motherly treatment is being meted out to the people of Andhra Pradesh. During the tenure of Shri Chandra Babu Naidu, the state of Andhra Pradesh was granted a special status which it is devoid of today. Be it the matter of distribution of Ministerial portfolios or the sanction and approval of different central schemes and projects for Andhra Pradesh, the fact remains that the state does not get its due share.

17.06

[SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL *in the Chair*]

Today, the issue of Telangana has been raised here. Let me put it in clear terms before this House that the Congress and the TRS jointly contested the elections on the issue of the state of Telangana and in their joint election manifesto committed that once they form the Government at the Centre, they would constitute the second State Reorganisation Commission. The Congress, the TDP and now the TRS are jointly responsible for the backwardness of the Telangana region. Now, whenever the TRS people raised the Telangana issue, I am reminded of famous verse, "Ghat ko aag lagi, ghar ke chirag se". They are a shattered lot today. They would have been thrown out of power had their member of Parliament from Medhak not done some good work for the people. On the issue of Telangana, the government should pay heed to what the Muslims have to say. They cannot decide our fate after trampling us down. We demand that the second State Reorganisation Commission should be constituted.

My third point is that the leader of the TDP Parliamentary party made a mention of the six point formula when the gentleman's agreement on six point formula was passed and his contention was that an elected representative from Telangana should be given the office of the Deputy Chief Minister. During their nine year rule, they have never mentioned the six point formula but, today,

when the Congress is holding the reins of power in the State and the Deputy Chief Minister is not from their party, they should at least, now, endeavour to do justice with the issue of Telangana...*(Interruptions)*. I am concluding but it was necessary to put forth my views on this issue. Every time the issue of Telangana is raised, it is preceded by the issue of Legislative Council. I am aware of the unhappiness and pain our senior leaders are experiencing. Through you, I urge upon the Government to do justice to Andhra Pradesh. The State has not been granted the special status it deserves. By bringing this Legislative Council bill, the Government cannot claim to have fulfilled their promises. They should fulfill all the promises made to the electorate and give the state of Andhra Pradesh its rightful place. With regard to Telangana, they can not take any decision without taking us into confidence. If they are ready to constitute the second State Reorganisation Commission, we will be able to convince our electorate. It would be wrong to say that the people of Telangana have delivered their verdict twice.

My last point is that Shri N.T. Ramarao abolished the Legislative Council because the Congress was split at that time. The second time the Congress was catapulted to power, it passed the resolution but the National Front Government at the Centre did not pay any heed. It is not the Congress but the UPA Government which has made efforts to pass this legislation. I would like to remind my TDP friends that if they are opposing this legislation in deference to late N.R. Ramarao, they should not forget how they stabbed him in the back and ousted him out of power. It would not suffice to say that they opposed it for the sake of their late leader, Shri Ramarao. History stands testimony to their machinations. With these words I conclude by saying that without taking the Muslims of Telangana into confidence they can not decide the fate of Telangana.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri M.A.K. Swain. he is the last speaker and would conclude soon.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore) : Sorry, Sir, I would prefer not to speak if I have to run fast. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : The time allotted to your party has already exhausted. I am giving you an opportunity since you made a request.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : If the objective is merely to pass the bill, it can be done with or without my consent. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right, as you please.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Thank your.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please speak now. Please do not elaborate and try to take the minimum time.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, I was a bit reluctant to speak from the very beginning because my Party did not instruct me whether to support it or oppose it. But, as the debate unfolded, I thought it is very much required to take a principled stand on ethics. I will be fair to the Congress Party. I am not accusing them that they have any political motive in bringing this Bill. I am not saying this. Democracy is the art of persuasion. It is not the art of confrontation. I am not going to confront the Congress Party.

My moot point is, what is the purpose of bringing this Bill. Hon. Members Shri Mahtab and Shri Babu Rao have already said that there is hardly any Assembly in India which is sitting for 60 days in a year. The Notification is issued that the Assembly will sit up to a particular date. We have seen the Assembly getting adjourned even eight to ten days before the expiry of the Session because there is not enough business. In my own State, the Assembly was adjourned 11 days before the expiry of the Session because the Government said that there was not enough

business to do. This is not the case only with Orissa but also with other States. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is stating the facts of his own State. Why do you worry? Please address the Chair.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : When Shri Mohan Singh was speaking, he was comparing the Rajya Sabha with State Councils. Rajya Sabha is a body provided under the Constitution. I will show the difference between the Rajya Sabha and the State Councils. If there is a Constitution Amendment, the Rajya Sabha has got a say. The Rajya Sabha votes on that. But the State Councils do not have that power. They do not participate in the Constitution Amendment.

The President and Vice President, it is the MLAs who vote and MLCs do not have the right to vote. That is why, I say that they do not have any financial power. It has got absolutely no constitutional power, no financial power. Then why should we have it?

I will give you another interesting example. In Madhya Pradesh, they built a very big chamber for the State Council. But later on, it was very strongly opposed, and this House was abandoned. Initially, they built it but then found that it was totally unnecessary.

Sir, see the way the debate unfolded. Many of the speakers said as to what was the purpose for which Andhra Pradesh should have a State Council. One was that they had promised it in the manifesto. But I would very humbly like to know from my friends in the Congress party that: Was it their main point in the election, to revive the State Council? Did people vote for them that when they come to power, they should have a State Council? Was the 'farmers' suicide' not the moot point? Was it not the main purpose for which they fought the election in Andhra Pradesh? Then, how do they say that 'for this purpose - to revive the State Council - only, they had been voted by the people?

There was another very strong argument given by the Telangana Rashtriya Samiti (TRS) people that 'this is being created to facilitate the creation of Telangana Rashtra.' I am asking the hon. Members of the Congress party: "The purpose for which they are going to have the State Council?"

Sir, they say that various sections of the society should be represented. I would appeal to the hon. Law Minister that if he thinks that it is for the people who cannot come through the direct election, then just like in the Rajya Sabha, he should bring in a Constitution Amendment 11 that in the Vidhan Sabhas, some people could be nominated. He may bring this amendment so that people could be nominated to the Vidhan Sabhas also, instead of creating a Council.

To conclude, I would say that it is not in the national interest. I would appeal to the Congress party that please do not take it as a prestige issue. I would request the hon. Law Minister to kindly withdraw this Bill. Let there be a national debate on this issue for some more time. After two three months, in the next Budget Session, he may re-introduce this Bill. And in the meantime, since once it has been withdrawn from the Lok Sabha, it would definitely attract the attention of the nation, the TV channels and media; and they would debate over it. If there is a national consensus; if the nation feels: "Yes, there is a very much necessity and it is absolutely necessary to have the Council," then, it would be passed.

Sir, I know, they have got the majority in the House; they have summoned their people; hardly there is anybody on our side; and they will pass it. But the Left is opposed to it. Almost the whole NDA is opposing it. ...*(Interruptions)*

Since they have the majority, they could get it passed. I think, the Opposition has also got a view, and they should give credence to our view and to the view of the Left also because it is unnecessary; and it is going to put more pressure on the State exchequer. It is not at all required.

So, for these reasons, I would again appeal to the hon. Law Minister to withdraw this Bill, and if required, he could bring it later on.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would thank all the hon. Members who have taken part in this debate. The scope of discussion of this Bill was very limited. But hon. Members have chosen to speak on diverse subjects; and this House is free to touch any point they like.

But primarily, what am I doing, Sir? Through this Bill, I am obeying the Resolution of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly because, the Constitution, under Article 169, provides that if the special majority of Assembly of a State passes a Resolution, then Parliament may create or abolish a Legislative Council.

Sir, the leader of the Telugu Desam Party is present here. He referred to the 1985 Resolution regarding this Council. I was the Minister at that time also; and my good friend, late Shri N.T. Ramarao was the Chief Minister. He spoke to me personally. Although we had overwhelming strength of 425 MPs in the Lok Sabha who were opposed to it and our party was opposed to this because they wanted to continue with the Legislative Council. But the then Prime Minister, late Shri Rajiv Gandhi upheld the highest democratic tradition.

In order to uphold the highest democratic traditions, we at that time in the Government, decided that the Andhra Pradesh people have chosen a Government which has a majority in the Assembly, we should implement it....*(Interruptions)* I am very sorry. I am requesting the Members that we are here to debate and not to interfere. I am very sorry to say that a habit is being developed in the House that Members do not listen to constructive points. At this point of time I am making some submissions which remind me of some traditions. In 1985, I was the same Minister, we implemented the Resolution of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly. The same Assembly, which has been elected recently by the mandate of the people, wants a Legislative Council be created. I have already submitted

[Shri H.R. Bhardwaj]

in my preliminary remarks that I am not even accepting an amendment of that Resolution. We have never negated the recommendation of a parliamentary standing committee. We want to uphold the highest traditions. Shri V.P. Singh Badnora, on the other side, spoke very rightly that we should uphold the traditions. The Legislative Assembly of a State has its own functions, its own sovereignty.

Being present in Parliament, we must understand well that the members of the Legislative Assembly have their own privilege and rights. They are sovereign in all the spheres allotted to them by the Constitution. It would be a sad day if we do not show respect to the assemblies of the States. Therefore, in order to maintain the quasi federal structure of this country, we should show respect to the States. If States resolve certain thing, in the rarest of the rare opportunities we should not show any disrespect.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR (Calicut) : Kerala Assembly had passed a Resolution. They have passed so many resolutions unanimously. Have you ever considered them...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ : I will reply to them. You please sit down. You are a young man let us now listen to each other.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : What about the Resolution passed by the Punjab Assembly?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ : I may tell you that the Constitution provides for a federal structure and this Parliament has certain areas of constitutional competence and in areas where we do not have constitutional competence to legislate, it is the States which legislate. These areas have been divided. Once an Assembly has passed a Resolution, this Government is implementing that Resolution. The Government has decided to do that.

17.23 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

So far as Punjab is concerned, I am myself a Punjabi. Punjab has seen so many changes. Punjab has been divided into Haryana and Punjab and some part has gone to Himachal. We have lost so much because of diverse thinking. When it was united we got PEPSU merged into Punjab. We have gained and lost also. What has happened in Punjab? The legislative Council building which housed the Legislative Council is now the Assembly of Haryana. Can you do or undo what has happened? So, please do not argue about other States. Let us stick to this Bill.

In order to implement the Resolution of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly we have come before this House, and Constitution provides for it, to say that this Legislative Council be created. Members have said that this will incur expenditure. The expenditure has to be looked after by the State. There is an Assembly which will manage the expenditure. There is a Government to see that. It is not our worry. What will happen to the other difficulties which Andhra Pradesh will face? There is an Assembly. There is a duly elected Government. So, we have nothing to worry about it. We are simply respecting the sentiments of the people of Andhra Pradesh. They have given a massive majority...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : How many times you had shown respect to them in the past? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please sit down.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Will you please yield me for a minute?

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ : No, I am not yielding. Let us observe some elementary decorum. I am replying to the debate. I have listened fifteen hon. Members. You should

at least listen to two points which I want to make before this House.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan, please sit down.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, in the parliamentary practice, I can, at least, request the hon. Minister to yield. If he does not yield, then it is a different matter. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ : I am very sorry. This is not the etiquette of Parliament. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing is going to be recorded except the speech of the hon. Minister.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Let the hon. Minister conclude.

(Interruptions)

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ : Sir, I am not yielding. ...*(Interruptions)* I told Shri Swain that I am not yielding. I am replying to the debate. ...*(Interruptions)*

What I am saying is that there is nothing unusual in this. You can always speak for or against in a debate. Now, it is a simple question. In 1985 respecting the Resolution passed by the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly, as the Law Minister then, I got it abolished. Today, I am moving this Bill to re-create the Legislative Council because this is the Resolution passed by the Assembly of that State. We are just implementing it. ...*(Interruptions)*

We are implementing it in order to respect the sentiments of the people of the State. let us not show disrespect to the people of Andhra Pradesh. Let us not take it lightly. So, I commend that this Bill be passed. ...*(Interruptions)*

*Not recorded.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Hon. Members, you can ask for clarifications one by one.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing is going to be recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The hon. Minister has replied to the debate He has shown a lot of respect to the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly and to the people of Andhra Pradesh! This Resolution was not passed unanimously. The TDP has opposed it and the Members of the communists parties made a walk out. So, they have also not supported it.

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly passed a unanimous Resolution and forwarded it to the Government of India for categorisation. It is pending for more than one year. Why has the Government of India not given priority to this Resolution? It was passed unanimously by the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly. That Resolution was sent to the Government of India to bring a legislation on that. That Resolution was sent before this Resolution. There is no respect for that Resolution. I just want to mention this to the hon. Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the creation of Legislative Council for the State of Andhra Pradesh and for matter supplemental, incidental and consequential thereto, be taken into consideration."

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Those in favour may please say 'Ayes. Those against may please say 'No'. I think, the 'Ayes' have it.

(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Sir, I am pressing for division. ...*(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, after you give a decision, division is not asked for. The division is asked for before adoption of the motion. It is not asked for after the adoption. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : No, this is not the practice. You can go through the records. ...*(Interruptions)* We should not bypass the Constitution. ...*(Interruptions)* This is our constitutional right. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : All right. No doubt, you have a right to press for division. I agree with you. You can ask for division.

Let the lobbies be cleared—

Now, the Lobbies are cleared. Secretary-General to read the instructions.

SECRETARY-GENERAL : Kind attention of the hon. Members is invited to the following points in the operation of the Automatic Vote Recording System:—

1. Before a Division starts, every hon. Member should occupy his or her own seat and operate the system from that seat only.
2. As may kindly be seen, the "Red Bulbs above Display Boards" on either side of hon. Speaker's Chair are already glowing. This means the voting system has been activated.
3. For voting, please press the following the two Buttons simultaneously immediately after sounding of first going, viz.,

One "Red" Button in front of the hon. Member on the Head Phone Plate and

ALSO

Any one of the following Buttons fixed on the top of desk of seats.

AYES — GREEN COLOUR

NOES — RED COLOUR

ABSTAIN — YELLOW COLOUR

4. It is essential to keep both the Buttons pressed till the second gong sound is heard and the Red Bulbs are "OFF".

The hon. Members may please note that the vote will not registered if both Buttons are not kept pressed simultaneously till the sounding of the second gong.

5. Please do not press the amber Button (P) during Division.
6. Hon. Members can actually see their vote on Display Boards and on their desk unit.
7. In case vote is not registered, they may call for voting through slips.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill to provide for the creation of Legislative Council for the state of Andhra Pradesh and for matters supplemental, incidental and consequential thereto, be taken into consideration."

The Lok Sabha divided:

AYES 17.35 hrs.

Aaron Rashid, Shri J.M.

Ahamed, Shri E.

Aiyar, Shri Mani Shankar

*Ansari, Shri Furkan

*Voted through slip.

Athithan Dhanuskodi, Shri R.

Baal, Shri T.R.

'Baba', Shri K.C. Singh

Bansal, Shri Pawan Kumar

*Bhakta, Shri Manoranjan

Bhuria, Shri Kanti Lal

Challha, Shri Kirip

Chander Kumar, Prof.

Chidambaram, Shri P.

Chitthan, Shri N.S.V.

Dasmunsi, Shri Priya Ranjan

Deo, Shri V. Kishore Chandra S.

Dev, Sontosh Mohan

Dharavath, Shri Ravnder Naik

Dikshit, Shri Sandeep

Dubey, Shri Chandra Shekhar

Elangovan, Shri E.V.K.S.

Fanthome, Shri Francis

Gaikwad, Shri Eknath Mahadeo

Gamang, Shri Giridhar

Goyal, Shri Surendra Prakash

Handique, Shri Bijoy

Harsha Kumar, Shri G.V.

Jai Prakash, Shri

Jagadeesan, Shrimati Subbulakshmi

Jogaiah, Shri Hari Rama

Kader Mohideen, Prof. K.M.

*Kerketta, Shrimati Sushila

Kharventhan, Shri S.K.

Krishnan, Dr. C.

Krishnaswamy, Shri A.

Kuppusami, Shri C.

Kyndiah, Shri P.R.

Lalu Prasad, Shri

McLeod, Ms. Ingrid

Manjhi, Shri Rajesh Kumar

Maran, Shri Dayanidhi

Mehta, Shri Alok Kumar

Meinya, Dr. Thokchom

Mishra, Dr. Rajesh

Mukeem, Mohd.

Mukherjee, Shri Pranab

Naik, Shri A. Venkatesh

*Narendra, Shri A.

Ola, Shri Sis Ram

Oraon, Dr. Rameshwar

Owaisi, Shri Asaduddin

Panabaka Lakshmi, Shrimati

Patil, Shri Balasaheb Vikhe

Patil, Shri Jaysingrao Gaikwad

*Voted through slip.

*Voted through slip.

Patil, Shri Laxmanrao

Patil, Shrimati Suryakanta

Pilot, Shri Sachin

Raja, Shri A.

Rajenthiran, Shrimati M.S.K. Bhavani

Ramadass, Prof. M.

Ramakrishna, Shri Badiga

Rana, Shri Rabinder Kumar

Rao, Shri D. Vittal

Rao, Shri K.S.

Rao, Shri Rayapati Sambasiva

Reddy, Shri Anantha Venkatarami

Reddy, Shri K.J.S.P.

Reddy, Shri M. Raja Mohan

Reddy, Shri Madhusudan

Reddy, Shri S.P.Y.

Regupathy, Shri S.

Sahu, Shri Chandra Sekhar

Sai Prathap, Shri A.

Saroj, Shri Tufani

Satyanarayana, Shri Sarvey

Sayeda, Shrimati Rubab

Selvi, Shrimati V. Radhika

Shallendra Kumar, Shri

Shandil, Dr. Col. (Retd.) Dhani Ram

Singh, Chaudhary Bijendra

Singh, Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad

* Singh, Shri Mohan

Singh, Shrimati Pratibha

Sippiparai, Shri Ravichandran

Sugavanam, Shri E.G.

Sumbui, Shri Bagun

Suryawanshi, Shri Narsingrao H.

*Thangkabalu, Shri K.V.

Thummar, Shri V.K.

Vaghela, Shri Shankar Sinh

Vallabhaneni, Shri Balashowry

Venkatapathy, Shri K.

Venkatswamy, Shri G.

Venugopal, Shri D.

Vinod Kumar, Shri B.

Vundavalli, Shri Aruna Kumar

Yadav, Dr. Karan Singh

Yadav, Shri M Anjan kumar

Yaskhi, Shri Madhu Goud

Noes

*Ahir, Shri Hansraj G.

Audikesavulu, Shri D.K.

Bellarmin, Shri A.V.

Dhotre, Shri Sanjay

*Voted through slip.

Gao, Shri Tapir

Hamza, Shri T.K.

Jagannath, Dr. M.

Khanna, Shri Avinash Rai

Mahtab, Shir B.

*Mallikarjuniah, Shri S.

Mediyam Dr. Babu Rao

Mohan, Shri P.

Naik, Shri Shripad Yesso

Nayak, Shrimati Archana

*Patasani, Dr. Prasanna Kumar

Paul, Dr. Sebastian

Rajendran, Shri P.

*Radhakrishnan, Shri Varkala

Rao, Shri P. Chalapathi

Rijju, Shri Kiren

Satheedevi, Shrimati P.

Satpathy, Shri Tathagata

Sujatha, Shrimati C.S.

Tripathi, Shri Chandra Mani

Tripathy, Shri Braja Kishore

Veerendra Kumar, Shri M.P.

Waghmare, Shri Sureeh

Yerrannaidu, Shri Kinjarapu

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Subject to correction *, the result of the division is :

Ayes : 93

Noes : 25

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House will now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That clauses 2 to 4 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted

Clauses 2 to 4 were added to the Bill.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri) : Sir, this is most undemocratic and unconstitutional. That is why, we are walking out.

17.36 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Braja Kishore Tripathy and some other hon. Members left the House.)

Clause 5

Amendment of
Section 15A of
Act 43 of 1951

Amendment made :

Page 2, line 35,--

*The following Members also recorded their votes through slips.

Ayes : 93 + Shri Manoranjan Bhakta, Shri K.V. Thangkabalu, Shri A. Narendra, Shrimati Sushila Kerketta, Shri Mohan Singh, Shri Furkan Ansari = 99

Noes : 25 + Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan, Dr. Prasanna Kumar Patasani, Shri Hansraj G. Ahir, Shri S. Mallikarjuniah = 29

*Voted through slip.

[Shri Braja Kishore Tripathy]

for "2004"

substitute "2005" (3)

(Shri H.R. Bhardwaj)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That clause 5, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 5, as amended, was added to the Bill.

Clause 1 Short Little

Amendment made:

Page 1, line 2,--

for "2004"

substitute "2005" (2)

(Shri H.R. Bhardwaj)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 1, as amended, was added to the Bill.

Enacting Formula

Amendment made:

Page 1, line 1,--

for "Fifty-fifth"

substitute "Fifty-sixth" (1)

(Shri H.R. Bhardwaj)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Enacting Formula, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

The Enacting Formula, as amended, was added to the Bill.

The Long Title was added to the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The Minister any now move that the Bill, as amended, be passed.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ : Sir, I beg to move :

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Lobbies be opened.

17.41

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Problems being faced by Agriculture Sector-contd.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, we will take up Item No. 21. Last time Chaudhary Bijendra Singh was on feet. He has already taken two minutes. Now I request him to continue his speech.

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY BIJENDRA SINGH (Aligarh) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, I rise once again to discuss the problems related to agriculture, and I thank you for giving

me this opportunity. I only want to submit that 80 percent farmers are supplying food grains to all the people of the country. Today our nation is self-sufficient in food grains and Godowns are filled with food-grains, but farmers are not self-reliant. This is definitely the result of the policies of our Government. Farmers are entitled to 80 percent of the Budget but only a small portion is allotted to them in the Budget. The demand made by the Agriculture Department has never been met in the Budget. It affects adversely the agriculture. Poet Ghaghra has said at the time of country's independence: "Uttam Khaity Madhyam Bandh, Nischit Chaki Bhikh Nidan." However, today the situation is that the farmers have been ruined and are facing problems and now the this saying has lost relevance. Farmers are saying now job is superior business and agriculture comes on second place and farming has become like begging. Sir, Now reality is that many suggestions that have been given by the Standing Committee on Agriculture are to be incorporated in our policies so that the problem of farmers can be solved, but all these recommendations are gathering dust in our files and laws can not be enacted for farmers. I want to submit that when country became independent, the provision for granting loan to the farmers was Rs. 200 crore and now it has been revised to Rs. 70,000 crore. When we look at this amount we find that a big part of the Budget is being granted as a loan, but when we compare it with that of any other department, we find that only a little amount is being spent on agriculture. Actually the Budget which is asked from Department of Finance by the Agriculture Department is curtailed and as a result the problems of farmers can not possibly be sorted out. The amount which is sanctioned as loan in the Budget is not provided to the farmers as per the provisions made in the Budget and upto 18% farmers may have been provided loans. However, on the contrary merely 7% farmers are provided loans in this way. I would like to say one thing more that the farmers are still dependent on the vagaries of nature as well as on the policies of the Government. This is the reason the farmers are not self-dependent even today. Basically, the agriculture in this country depends on nature. You may have seen that how much hard the farmer tries to produce

crops, even then he has to face, natural calamity, hail storms, flood, abundance of rain, drought etc. and still the farmers are on the verge of bankruptcy. We have seen here that the Agriculture Department was a big department after independence. With this very department, so many departments like power, irrigation, horticulture etc. were associated and now all these are separate Departments. The Agriculture Department makes all the efforts to promote agriculture and also tries to meet the needs of the country with their own production capacity but now the Agriculture Department has to depend on other Departments. When the power is required, there is no power.

Sometimes, there is no irrigation facility available and sometime irrigation department become inactive. As a result of this Agriculture Departments and the farmers have to pay the price for it and we would like that a Standing Committee and a Co-ordinating Committee may be constituted before the crop season. As for example when the Rabi season comes the coordination Committee of all the Departments may be constituted prior to it in which there should be a coordination so that the power supply should be enhanced right from the beginning of the growing to the harvesting of the crops, and in that period proper irrigation facilities should be provided. If there is no co-ordination in all these Departments, farmers can not increase production. Thus all these things trouble the farmers. A number of demands have been made by the Standing Committee and so many discussion have been taken place even in the House regarding how to make agriculture sector self dependent, but until the Co-ordination Committee is constituted Co-ordination between all the Departments is there and all the prior preparations are made, we can not achieve our objectives.

Farmers need loans. The Government have reiterated their commitment about loans to the farmers and they have also made efforts so many times. But the situation is that the procedure for providing loans to the farmers is very long. It needs to be made easy and simple. We would like to congratulate the hon. Finance Minister that he has

[Chaudhary Bijendra Singh]

introduced credit card scheme. However, there is old procedure in vogue for credit card scheme...*(Interruptions)* I want to submit that the objective of credit card scheme was to provide more and more loans to the farmers so that they could increase agriculture productivity. Further, I have to submit with regret that when an industrialist establishes a small industry, then there is no limit for taking loans. But if a farmer applies for a credit card as per his requirement then a credit limit is fixed. He is not able to meet his requirement within this limit and farmers cannot increase production. We want that this limit should be increased and a short cut method should be adopted.

Moreover, I want to submit that when there is need for fertilizer and seeds, the farmers have to depend on other sources. You are aware that there are LSS societies in co-operative sector and there are big godowns of fertilizer, in which the big businessmen dump. As a result the farmers could not get fertilizers at the right time. Efforts of farmers to increase production could not succeed. I also want to submit that when the country became independent, agriculture was encouraged. Many exhibitions were organised and scientists were sent on tour. Farmers were encouraged and efforts were made to introduce new techniques. But after that the speed of progress in this regard became slow and it appears that our farmers don't need technical education and there is no need to apprise them of the modern techniques of agriculture. When technical education is being encouraged in every Department all over the country, new institutions are being opened and information is being provided. We should encourage agriculture, if we want redressal of problems related to agriculture. Further we should also encourage technical education in this Department and open such type of institutions which can give valuable information to the farmers. They could get information regarding fertilizers, transportation, dairy, horticulture and other related information.

I want to submit that if a producer gets more price for

crop in comparison to cost price, only he gets profit. When there is no or minimal gap between cost price and crop price, there is no profit. It has been often seen that the rate for agricultural commodities are fixed after the harvesting of crops. It is also seen that the crop price are not fixed on the basis of cost price. You are aware that during the last few years the price of diesel has been increased four or five times.

The prices are increased, irrespective of the party in power and the prices are increased from a certain date. The prices of a certain crop is fixed for a year and if in the intervening time, the rates of the inputs like oil, diesel, irrigation move upwards, they cast a damaging effect on the agricultural profits. The farmers, whether they belong to Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu or any other State, are left with no choice but to commit suicide. I, through you, want to say that cost prices are fixed for a year with a view to maximize the agricultural returns to farmers and likewise any increase in the rates of the inputs in that year must not be increased. If the inputs costs are increased procurement price should also be increased proportionately .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the farmers are given loans by the banks. They are given credit cards. There is also a Crop Insurance Scheme for them. I have no hesitation to say that here, in the House, there are a number of MPs who are farmers and hail from villages. We used to keep discussing about agriculture, but Crop Insurance Scheme for the farmers is nowhere implemented. The farmers are witnessing grave disasters like drought, flood, hailstorm etc. but crop insurance scheme is nowhere implemented to cushion them from these misfortunes. When the farmers are making contribution against the insurance out of the loan amount they must be given benefit for the same so that their economic condition can be improved. Now, in our country, around 40 per cent of the farmers want to get rid of their occupation because agriculture is becoming synonymous with losses. I desire the same attention of the Government towards agriculture as it has shown towards other sectors. It will make the farmers self-dependent and ensure country's development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on agriculture.

[English]

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi) : Thank you Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, I congratulate Dr. Chinta Mohan for getting a discussion under Rule 193 regarding the problems faced by the farmers of our country.

It is a very important thing that, in our country, when you think of agriculture, when you think about our farmers' plight there are two major crops, that is, rice and wheat, where most of the farmers of the country are involved in the production of these two crop.

Agriculture, if you go to say, depends upon three important stages. One is production, second is procurement and third is distribution. It has been seen that of these three systems, in the production stage the farmer of India has achieved, after the Green Revolution, the maximum from the farms. The per hectare yield has gone up, the per hectare fertiliser consumption has gone up and we have achieved the targets of the Green Revolution.

But still we should know how much of money, which the farmer puts into agriculture, gets back. That important aspect is procurement. It is the production of paddy or wheat linked and then procurement comes. The Government fixes the Minimum Support Price for a particular product, say, for example, rice, which is eventually procured at the Minimum Support Price. After procurement, the farmer gets the money. But it has been seen that due to the weakness in the procurement strategy of the FCI or NAFED or any other organisation, which does the procurement, there is a news of distress sale. There is always a distress sale. So, the farmer is not able to get his proper price.

At the same time, the inputs for agriculture have started going up. The Government does not have sufficient godown. But today, in the Supplementary Demands for

Grants (General), thanks to the hon. Finance Minister, a lot of money has been provided for the creation of godowns, warehouse facilities, etc. That is a good move. But still today, the rice millers, who get the paddy from the farmers are underpaid. Today, in the rice-milling sector, the levied rice is procured somewhere around Rs. 800 odd per quintal. But the same rice, which is procured and supplied by Government agencies like NAFED or any primary agencies or any Government organisations, that is acquired at Rs. 1,036 per quintal of levy rice. Here, I would like to say that the Government should try to alter this policy. It is because the linkage between the rice mill and the producer is there. If the rice mills do not buy paddy at a proper rate, and if the rice millers do not get a proper levy price, then what will happen? The cost of production, the fuel cost, the cost of petrol, diesel and input cost in processing of paddy has gone up. Therefore, the Government should consider this aspect. If the rice millers are looked after properly and they are paid appropriate price for the levy rice, I am sure the farmers also will not be in a distress to sell the paddy at the time of need.

Sir, as you know 4,000 billion cubic metres of water received from precipitation, monsoons and snow flows to the sea and we have been able to harness only 29 per cent of that water. Besides, our models for prediction of monsoons mostly depend on the God. Here also, we have failed. For example, in June or July 2002, when the last predictions of monsoons came on July 29, at that time, out of the 593 districts of the country, 321 districts in 12 States were badly affected, and the Government tried their best to stall the misery. Thanks to the Green Revolution. It is because our godowns were packed with grains, so we could feed our poor, underprivileged people living below poverty line through various new schemes. But, at the same time, we should say that at the procurement stage, we are losing millions of tonnes of paddy. It is because of lack of storage facilities. You can go to Chhattisgarh and several places in Orissa. All the paddy which is procured is stored in the open and is just covered with tarpaulin. Flood comes and that thing is washed away. Therefore,

[Shri Bikram Keshari Deo]

I would like to say that the procurement system and the godowns should be strengthened.

Regarding distribution, I do not have much to say because the distribution system has to be further harnessed and further strengthened. It should be further revamped. For places like Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput (KBK) on Orissa, where the Government is initiating new programme, we have demanded since long that these people should get mobile vans, but they have not got the mobile vans. It is because it is a part of agriculture, that is why I am saying it. It is regarding distribution. Your Ministry also deals with Public Distribution System.

Another big challenge has come before us between developing and developed countries. You know as to what is going on in the WTO. I would like to congratulate the Commerce Minister, Shri Kamal Nath. He has tried his level best to fight it out in Hong Kong and he fought to the last inch so that the Indian farmer is not neglected. There has been a big hue and cry and big demonstrations in Hong Kong by the developing countries and other people that WTO is favouring the developed countries where they are not willing to reduce their subsidies. Where would the developing countries go? So, I congratulate the hon. Minister, Shri Kamal Nath. Though he is not here yet he should be commended for the work done by him. There was a debate on that also before he went there. He clearly mentioned that he would not be able to do anything much because the lobby of the developed countries is very strong. So, the lobby of the developing countries has to be further strengthened to fight out the cause of the country.

Then, I would like to mention about the extension work which is done by the Agriculture Department through R&D and other facilities. I am pained to say that institutions like Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) takes out a Handbook on Agriculture on National Farmers Body. The

National Farmers Body have come down heavily on the latest 2005 edition of the Handbook on Agriculture published by ICAR.

18.00 hrs.

They showed how the book was, in fact, a reprint of the 1980 edition. After the 1980 edition, the book is being reprinted in 2005. What message will it send about what the Government is doing or what the R&D people are doing or what the ICAR is doing? The ICAR is the one which is supposed to do all the R&D for the agricultural sector. This is a very sorry state of affairs. So, the Government should look into it and give the latest R&D materials to the farmers, and the concept, the principle, from laboratory to the land, started by Dr. Swaminathan should be followed.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please wait a minute. I would like to know this from the hon. Members of this House.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : Sir, I would only take five minutes' time.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please listen to me. I have a list of more than 30 hon. Members to speak. If I continue this discussion, I think we will not be able to even complete it up to 11 o' clock.

[Translation]

I have to take up matters of urgent public importance also.

[English]

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : Sir, please allow me to continue for another five minutes.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE) : Sir, we continue the discussion. May I suggest that we

continue the discussion for one hour? At seven o' clock, we will take up the 'Zero Hour'

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Does the House agree.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore) : Sir, yesterday the 'Zero Hour' was not taken up. I will make a request on behalf of everybody that you take the 'Zero Hour' now today itself. The discussion could be taken up tomorrow. He can complete his speech tomorrow.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Does the House agree?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Yes.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House is extended till the 'Zero Hour' is over.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : Sir, I would only take two minutes' time.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You will continue your speech tomorrow.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, let him complete his speech.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : All right, Mr. Bikram Keshari Deo, you should finish it within two minutes.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I have given the ruling. You please sit down.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You talk to Minister.

[English]

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : So, this is the status

of the ICAR. Therefore, the Government should concentrate more on the farmers as today we are importing nearly Rs. 50,000 crore worth of pulses, oil seeds. Now, the Government has initiated the Horticulture Mission. But we are losing nearly Rs. 45,000 crore worth of vegetables and horticulture produce by destroying them. So, these three sectors have to be looked into properly. If they want to do the Horticulture Mission in true spirit, then let them please tell the Food Processing Ministry to create additional facility of storage, cold storage, food preservation and all the other thing which are required so that the farmers get their actual price for their produce.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, we will take up matters of urgent public.

Shri Gaurishanker Chaturbhuji Bisen - Not present.

Shri Sailendra Kumar.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I through you, in Zero Hour, want to attract the attention of the Government towards an important matter.

Sir, in these days, the entire Northern India is reeling under the severe cold. This cold whether is a curse only for the poor people including all agricultural labourers. People are migrating from the villages to the urban centres and you can see the most of the labourers in cities standing, at what are called the labour chowks. They are those people who work daily to survive themselves. Most of these people spend their nights on footpaths, under the bridges or trees.

I, through you, demand from the Government to build night shelter for such type of labourers. We have seen particularly in Delhi that a large number of migrant labourers come from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to earn their

[Shri Shailendra Kumar]

living, they may be given this facility. In the night shelters, there are other facilities available like quilts etc. for which the people are charged a fee. This matter may be investigated. Besides the Government should immediately make arrangements for fires lit in the open. The forest department has a plenty of wood. I urge upon the Government to arrange fires in the chowks, besides blankets may be distributed among the needy so that they could save themselves in the severe cold. There is report from Uttar Pradesh that at about 15-16 persons have died of cold. I demand from the Government particularly from the Minister for Rural Development and Minister for Urban Development to build night shelter at district, tehsil, block headquarters, bus stands or railway stations so that the poor people could stay there in this extreme cold.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I would like to request the hon. Members to speak for two minutes only as a large number of Members are here to speak.

[English]

Shri Tek Lal Mahto - Not present.

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan - Not present.

[English]

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil) : Sir, the Regional Cancer Centre functioning at Trivandrum is a prestigious institution. They are doing research work. So far as treatment of patients is concerned, it is very satisfactory. Considering the development of health attained in this field, it is a fit institution to be transformed into a deemed university. I would request not only to the University Grants Commission but also to the Government and the Minister of Human Resource Development to give instruction to the UGC for giving recognition as a deemed university to the Regional Centre at Trivandrum.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Chhattar Singh Darbar - not present.

[Translation]

DR. KARAN SINGH YADAV (Alwar) : Sir, I want to draw the attention of the House towards the problems and anguish of the groundnut growing farmers of Rajasthan due to non-procurement of groundnut by the Government.

The minimum support price of groundnut is fixed at Rs. 1520/- per quintal, which is very low as far as expectation of the farmers are concerned. But it is very sad that there is no Government procurement even at this minimum price and the farmers are constrained to sell their crop to the traders at as low as Rs. 1,000/- to Rs. 1,300/- per quintal.

The Agriculture Department under the Oilseeds Production Development Programme, encouraged the farmers of the desert districts of Rajasthan including Bikaner, Dungeerpur, Jaipur, Nagaur, Ganganagar, etc. for groundnut cultivation. Now the State produces around 5 lakh metric tonne of groundnut and from 80000 to 1,00,000 sacks of groundnut is coming daily in markets but the farmers are not getting remunerative prices of their produce. I, therefore, through the House, request the Minister for Agriculture to arrange for the procurement of groundnut at Minimum Support Price by the Central Government itself or the Government agencies of the State Government.

[English]

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (Lakhimpur) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the state of violence, the ethnic clashes, which started in the month of September in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. It has taken more than one hundred lives and making more than 46,000 people homeless who are now taking shelter in 57 camps.

Sir, the violence which started on 26th September, continued unabated due to the inaction of the State Government. The initial inaction of the Police Administra-

tion has made the violence expand to many villages. Already more than 120 villages have been gutted and 3,500 families are uprooted due to this kind of violence.

The root cause of the problem is because of the militant outfits, United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) and Dime Halan Daogah (DHD). These two outfits are under a cease-fire agreement with the Central Government. Due to inadequacy of application of the cease-fire rules, the arms which are being allowed to be kept by militants in the camps are used for ethnic cleansing. So, there are ethnic clashes between two communities, the Karbis and the Dimasas. This is a serious matter.

The State Government has totally failed to control the situation and the Chief Minister has publicly admitted his failure. The Government of India has very lately intervened by sending the Army but they should have controlled it. The violence has continued unabated all these months. So, I would request the Central Government to intervene in the situation to adequately enforce the ground rules and give protection to the innocent people who are victims of such violence. It is unfortunate that 46,000 innocent people are in the camps. They are not getting adequate warm clothes. Their living conditions and supply of food and water for them are very poor. It is unfortunate that the Central Government should not have come forward to help these people and protect their lives and property. We demand a judicial inquiry. The State Government has already declared that it would be inquired by the CBI but we also demand a judicial inquiry to find out the reason why this kind of violence had been allowed unabated for three months.

Lastly, I urge upon the Government to send adequate relief and rehabilitation material to help these people, to control the violence, to find out the culprits and the causes for this violence, and also take adequate preventive measures so that such violence does not take place in the future.

[Translation]

SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR (Chandrapur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards forest dominated areas. These regions are inhabited by tribals, non tribals and forest dwellers whose economic conditions are similar. The people of these areas, which normally comprise of forest, be they belong to any caste, have no other occupation other than agriculture and dealing with forest products. Therefore, they have more or less similar income. It is therefore, necessary that the Government should provide equal facilities to all those people living in tribal areas.

Sir, at present there are some schemes of the Government which are running in tribal areas and only tribal people are benefited by these schemes. People belonging to other castes living in the same areas are deprived of the benefits of the Government run schemes like providing aid for cultivation or to educate tribal children by opening special schools. People of all castes should be given benefits of these schemes because they all have almost similar incomes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, approximately 80 per cent of Chandrapur and Garhchiraioli regions comes under forest cover. The condition of people living there and in the remotest areas belong to varied castes and is extremely poor and their source of income is also limited. Therefore, in order to provide economic benefits of the Government run schemes to all tribals, it is necessary to provide equitable justice to all. This is my humble request to him.

[English]

SHRI LONAPPAN NAMBADAN (Mukundapuram) : Thank you, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, for the opportunity given to me.

For the first time since it came into effect, the provisions of the National Highways Act, 1988 are being

[Shri Lonappan Nambadan]

enforced in Kerala to acquire land for widening of NH-47. However, the compensation offered to the affected persons is very meagre which is not at all sufficient to meet the demands of livelihood. Till the formation of the National Highway Authority, land for widening of highways was acquired under the provisions of the Central Land Acquisition Act, 1894. When land is acquired under the National Highways Act, the affected land-owners are not given adequate compensation as provided under the Central Land Acquisition Act.

Under the CLA Act, the land owners are entitled to get solatium at the rate of 30 per cent of the market value, which is denied under the Highways Act. Again, under the CLA Act, additional 13 per cent of the land value is given to the land owners either from the date of notification to the date of declaration of the Award or till the actual acquisition of the land. Under the Highways Act, even this compensation is not given. Under the CLA Act, the land owners are free to approach the courts to get additional or better cost for their land. Under the Highways Act, even this natural right is denied. The only grievance redressal forum is arbitration.

I would, therefore, request that the land owners, whose land is acquired for widening of the NH-47 should be given fair and adequate compensation as per the Central Land Acquisition Act, I would also request the Government to relax the existing rules and allow the affected persons to construct their buildings in the remaining portion of the land left after acquisition, allow six months' time to hand over the building or house, disburse the full amount of compensation without levying taxes, make one-time payment of the entire amount of the compensation and take urgent action to rehabilitate the displaced persons/families at suitable places.

[Translation]

SHRI TUFANI SAROJ (Saidpur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw your attention towards Medical

College and its hospital, which come under the Union Government. For the last few years this Kashi Hindu Vishwavidyalaya hospital has become a den of corruption. Common and poor people from Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Central Madhya Pradesh come to this hospital for treatment. In fact a large number of people from Nepal also visit this hospital but the doctors there are fleecing the patients instead of treating them. Facilities for all kind of tests like blood test, X-ray, ultrasound, C.T. Scan and MRI are available in this hospital, but the doctors there insist upon getting these tests done from private labs of the city and these private lab centres charge heavy fees from the patients for these tests. The concerned doctor takes his commission out of this fees. Almost all the doctors are resorting to this practices. Not only this, the doctors call the patients at their home for examination instead of examining them at hospital and charge heavy fees from them. This is not only causing problems for the patients but the Union Government also is losing its reputation due to this. At one point of time this hospital was named amongst the few good hospitals of the country but now such acts of doctors has not only damaged the reputation of the hospital but common people are also a harassed lot.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to demand from the Government to curb such practices of doctors so that the patients can get treatment as per the system conceptualized by the Union Government. Would also like to request the Government to get this matter looked into secretly so that the reputation of this Hospital can be saved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have raised this issue in the House earlier also but nothing was done about it. No action is taken on whatever we speak during the zero hour. Through you, I would like to request hon'ble Minister that all the people from Bihar visit Kashi Hindu Vishwavidhyalya for treatment and this hospital has become a den of corruption...*(Interruptions)* therefore, I would request him to pay some serious attention towards this and take some action in this regard.

[English]

DR. PRASANNA KUMAR PATASANI (Bhubaneswar) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, presently the cartoon animations are creating havoc and poisoning the minds of our small kids and children. Children are the flowers of God's garden and children bloom like flowers. The western civilisation is anti-Indian culture and telecast of cartoon animations by TV channels is poisoning our vibrant India. We are saying that we are vibrant India, incredible India. So, through you, Sir, my appeal is that the Government should propagate, particularly through the cartoons, Indian culture, that is, Jatak Kathaein, the Panchtantra, the Mahabharat and the Ramayana so as to encourage and disseminate our Indian culture.

[Translation]

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (Durgapur) : Sir, I rise to speak about the workers engaged in unorganized sericulture.

In the month of December thousands of workers from various parts of the country had assembled at Parliament Street as they wanted the Government to bring a comprehensive Bill for the workers engaged in unorganized sericulture so that their provident fund and pension scheme could be materialised which will take care of them in the future. For e.g., there are "matiya mazdoor's" who work as long as they are healthy, they earn during that period and spend their time, but how are they going to spend the rest of their lives? There are more than 37 crore unorganized workers in India who are working in brick kilns/furnaces bidi workers, and rickshaw pullers but there is no one to think about their welfare.

We are Members of Parliament and we also get pension. There are Doctors, Professors and Teachers who also get the benefit of both Provident Fund and Pension. But the common man, Poor, farmers, agriculture workers, who elect us to the Parliament do not get any such benefit. We have been able to give some relief in West Bengal because there we have introduced Provident Fund in some selected trades.

Therefore, I would like to request the Government to bring a comprehensive Bill for more than 37 crore agriculture labourers, rickshaw pullers, workers of brick/kiln and construction workers so as to bring some kind of relief to them and will be in a position to impart education to their wards and also to remove their health problems so that they could be able to feed their children when they get old.

With these words I conclude.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur) : First, I am speaking from another seat because my own seat has been occupied by one of my colleagues. So you allow me to speak from this seat.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You may speak from there.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Rajasthan is the biggest State in area. It has 10.4 per cent area of the total area of the country. Not only that 5.5 per cent of the total population of country and 18.70 per cent of total live stock is in the State of Rajasthan only, while 1.16 per cent of surface water quantity available in the country is available in Rajasthan. The demand for water is constantly increasing for drinking water. Irrigation and industries along with the growing population and all round development while the resources of surface and ground water are limited in the State. The quantity of fluoride and salinity in the water in many areas has gone beyond the prescribed limit. The situation is that 32 blocks out of 237 blocks of the State are in conserved category. The limit for exploitation of water resources was 35 per cent in the year 1984, and the places where the water level of basic water resources like old deep wells with steps, Taanke, Wells, Tube wells and hand pumps has gone down. It has been necessary to do revamping work of anicut, hand pumps and Khadinirman. Not only that, it is very necessary to do water harvesting not only in the cities but collecting rain water by digging tanks.

I, therefore, make a demand to the Government that the funds be made available to make the water drive

[Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava]

successful in addition to linking of rivers so that the water drive in the cities as well as in the village may be successful. Rain water could be used by harvesting it in the cities and the water from the villages could be harvested in the tanks and the water could be used for irrigation. I extend my thanks to the present Chief Minister of Rajasthan sister Vasundharaji for doing all this. She has commenced a very good programme in Rajasthan and she has chalked a very good plan at State level, district level and village level in Rajasthan. How can the drinking water be made available to the people of Rajasthan. There is no difference in her saying and doing. It is being said that the next world war may be fought over water. It is an endeavour of sister Vasundharaji that the people of Rajasthan may be happy as far as water is concerned. Through you, I am congratulating sister Vasundharaji.

Thank you.

[English]

SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN (Nagercoil) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, India has large reserves of beach sand minerals such as Ilmenite, Rutile, Zircon and other atomic minerals mainly as placer deposits. These reserves are mostly located in the coastal stretches of peninsular India, with the exception of a few inland placer deposits. The total reserves of Ilmenite according to preliminary exploration amount to 348 million tonnes. Out of the total reserves, about 87 million tonnes are located in Tamil Nadu, especially in Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and Tuticorin districts. The deposits at Kanyakumari are of superior grade in that the T1Q2 content in Ilmenite is as high as 55 to 56 per cent as against other places.

The total mineral reserves of Ilmenite in Kanyakumari are about 15 million tonnes. A major portion of this deposit lies in and around Manavala Kurichi village which is about 25 km. away from Kanyakumari and about 75 km. from Trivandrum.

There is already a public sector undertaking, Indian

Rare Earths Limited, working in Manavala Kurichi, which is engaged in mining and production of all the prescribed minerals including Ilmenite, Monazite, Rutile, Zircon, etc. The Manavala Kurichi plant presently produces one lakh tonnes per annum of Ilmenite and it is understood that they have plans to double the capacity of Ilmenite production.

There is a good scope for starting a Titanium pigment industry in Kanyakumari district using Ilmenite from Manavala Kurichi plant of Indian Rare Earths Limited. All the infrastructural facilities are available in and around Manavala Kurichi such as proximity to raw mineral, skilled labour, land, water, chemicals and effluent discharge. The market potential is very high and availability of Ilmenite is guaranteed for 100 years or more.

So, I urge upon the Union Government to initiate steps to set up a Titanium Dioxide manufacturing unit at Manavala Kurichi in Kanyakumari district.

18.27 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Twentieth Report

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Before I call the next speaker, I would call Shri Kharabela Swain to present the report of the Business Advisory Committee to the House.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore) : I beg to present the Twentieth Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI (Rewa) : Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you I want to attract the Government towards Rewa University which falls in my Constituency

for committing fraud in the name of the Government. Diploma in pharmacy was commenced in 1994. It was published in all the news papers of India that this diploma is recognised by the All India Technical Education and Pharmacy Council of India and it is also recognised by the Government of Madhya Pradesh. Two hundred seventy six student sought their admission in the course by paying a fee of Rs. 8631/-. They studied for one and a half year or two years and after that they were given mark sheets. With the mark sheets they went to the Madhya Pradesh Pharmacy Council for getting themselves registered with the Council. They were informed that this course is not recognised. These students are at cross roads Later, they approached Pharmacy Council of India in the All India Council for technical education. When they were denied justice even from there they approached High Court. Hon'ble Delhi High Court directed that their problem should be solved within three months but nothing has been done so far.

Deputy Speaker, Sir, this fraud has been committed in the name of the Government of India and those students, who were higher secondary passed in Arts or Science stream, have been registered to open medical store as per the provision and directions of section 42 and sub-section-I of Pharmacy Council of India. Those students after having secured fifty five per cent of marks in B.Sc. did a course after making payment of fee on the basis of an advertisement and passed the sponsored exam, gave dissertation and completed diploma but they are not being given the diploma. Later on that course was discontinued.

I request the Government of India because this fraud has been committed in the name of the Government and no simple fraudster has not done it. This fraud has been committed by an educational institute. The least provision that may be made in this connection that those 239 diploma holders who have done it one year back, should be registered with the Madhya Pradesh Pharmacy Council so that they could open their medical store.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Avinash. Khanna you are allowed to raise only one matter.

[Translation]

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA (Hoshiarpur) : Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to attract your kind attention to the 470 villages of Punjab where the people cannot irrigate their land nor can they make houses on that land due to wrong policies of the Government. An Act was enacted in the year 1900 which is a part of Forest Act. Land Preservation Act was made in Punjab. 105 years back to stop erosion. It used to rain at that time. But after that long period of 105 years, the climate has changed and the situation has changed but those people did not get an opportunity to irrigate to cultivate and to make houses on their land. Act has to be reinforced, it has to be re-passed and for that purpose the respective collectors have to issue notice to the people and they have to hear the people's views but even that formality is not completed. Therefore, the people there cannot cultivate 66,166.82 hectare of land falling in 470 villages. Likewise 3200 acres of land is for construction purposes. They cannot even build houses there.

If the Government of Punjab sends the Bill to the Ministry of Forest to make amendment in the Act, then that Act should be amended keeping in view the interest of the people ...*(Interruptions)*. It is forest related point. On the other hand, Japan has given some funds to plant trees in Kandi area under which three districts fall and that area particularly fall in my constituency but the trees were not planted there. A scam is there. If plantation work is done in some areas by forest officers and forest department. The forest is set on fire and it is shown that forest got ruined. It is required to make an enquiry into it.

I would like to say that keeping in view the problem of the people of Kandi area into consideration, the Government of Punjab should be allowed to make an

[Shri Avinash Rai Khanna]

amendment in the PLPA Act so that the people can make proper use of their land.

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool) : Respected Deputy-Speaker, Sir, ragging in educational institutions has become death knells for some of the students. Though ragging was prevalent since many years, it is only to help the students to know each other by making the new entrants entertain the seniors by singing songs, dancing and making mimicry, etc. in professional colleges only. They are meant only to make fun.

But in recent past, this activity is creating a scare in the minds of the parents of the students who are entering into the collegiate education as the ragging had gone from bad to worse. For deriving sadistic pleasure, in some of the educational institutions throughout India, and more so in Andhra Pradesh, the behaviour of the senior students led to the committing suicides by some of the brilliant students causing irreparable loss to the parents and to the nation.

Even the girl students are not lagging behind. I do not want to name the colleges in Andhra Pradesh where some junior students were confined to one closed room. Indecent behaviour of the senior girl students cannot be explained in words. This is as per the televised version of the sufferers. This is an example of the inhuman act under the guise of ragging being committed in colleges.

Though the educational institutions are claiming that they are taking remedial measures, yet this is going on unchecked. Unless the Government of India comes out with a comprehensive Bill in the Parliament for banning ragging in educational institutions, this inhuman, barbaric activity cannot be contained. I would urge upon the Government of India to come out with a comprehensive Bill in the Parliament banning ragging in educational

institutions which is sometimes leading to unpleasant and irreparable loss to the students, the parents and the society.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRÉNDRA KUMAR (Sagar) : Deputy Speaker, Sir, Bina-Katni Railway line which falls in West Eastern Railway, is an important railway line. Being a goods track, trains with coal and iron coming from Chhattisgarh keep passing from there. A train passes from there at an interval of 15.20 minutes and as a result, train passengers have to face a lot of difficulties to go from one platform to another platform. Sometimes the passengers have to go the other side from under the train.

Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my constituency Ganeshganj Jaruakheda, Naryawali and Makronia are such stations where two-three trains at a time keep standing. Just two or three years back a man had died at Makronia station due to this.

I, therefore, request the Union Government that like four stations falling in my constituency in West-Eastern railway and on all such stations where trains remain standing due to route mismanagement, should be provided with over bridge as soon as possible.

[English]

DR. K.S. MANOJ (Alleppey) : Sir, our Post and Telegraphs Department has celebrated its 150 years of service recently. Still in this era of information technology and mobile telephony, post and telegraphs are the only means of communication and for conveying messages in many parts of rural India. Unlike in the cities and urban areas, there are no courier services in the rural areas and no courier service providers would come forward for servicing in the rural areas.

Apart from the postal services, post offices are also a source of providing banking services in villages. Many villagers have post office savings account and

also have national Savings Certificates. This is of immense help for the rural people where there are no banks.

Without considering all these factors, the Government is closing down a good number of post offices in the rural areas. One post office in my constituency which is near the Medical College Hospital, Alappuzha has been shut down last week. This had been working there for the last five decades. The postal superintendent had transferred the furniture and other articles from the post office during night for fear of protest from the people. Now a hunger strike is going on in front of the post office. In my constituency, Alappuzha alone, there are 15 other post offices which are in the shut down list. So, I urge upon the Government, through you, that the move to shut down the post offices in my constituency and other places should be stopped and the Government should think of other measures to improve the services given through the post offices.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : Sir, Christmas is not only celebrated as a national holiday but also as an international holiday. Normally, no work or examinations in universities are conducted on that day. I have been contacting the Alagappa University. This time, they have scheduled a lot of examinations for MBA, BBA, M.Phil and many other examinations on this day. This must be stopped. A clear direction has to go that on this auspicious day, such type of work should not be undertaken in universities and other places. I would request the Government of India to give directions specifically to this University so that they do not conduct the examinations on this auspicious day of Christmas.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Dr. Ramchandra Dome - Not present.

SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI (Badagara) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the kind attention of this House to a matter of urgent public importance that there

is need to introduce the pension scheme to the employees of the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti and the restoration of gratuity to them. Though Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas were set up two decades ago by the Government of India, yet the employees and teaching staff, in particular, are not granted the retirement benefits, like pension, gratuity etc.

The plight of teachers, in particular, is highly pathetic. When they retire after a whole lifetimes of service, they just get the management share of CPF and nothing else. This situation of the teaching community, who work restlessly day and night even engaging in duty on holidays, have no social security either to them or to their family members at the fag end of their life.

Sir, various representations have been submitted to the Authorities from time to time, right from 1991 onwards describing their poor service conditions. But nothing has been done. The denial of these benefits has created a great deal of discontentment and frustrations among the employees, and in particular, the teaching community.

Sir, it is a fact that education sector needs more attention in the country. The expenditure incurred in education is being treated as an investment. All the more, quality education provided to the rural talented students is surely to make an impact on the socio-economic conditions of the rural population. Thus, it is beyond the comprehension of anyone, why social security of the employees involved in the above process is given least priority.

Therefore, I would like to request the Union Government to kindly consider this matter most seriously and do the needful at the earliest.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Rashtriya Kavi Late Maithilisharan Gupt once said:

[Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat]

"Hum kya the, kya ho gaye aur kay honge abhi,
Aao milkar vicharen desh ki samasyaen sabhi"

Sir, I would like to draw your attention towards increasing corruption in the country. Approximately since 1968 efforts are being made to weed out high level corruption from the country and to this effect Lok Pal Bill should be introduced in the Parliament and it should be passed and Lokpal should be appointed and high offices should be brought under the ambit of Lokpal after enforcing rules and regulations relating to Lokpal so that they could be under his direct surveillance. With deep regret, however, one has to admit that all the parties have announced this in their manifestoes and reiterated their resolution and it was discussed in the Parliament on several occasions and this Bill was introduced in the Parliament in the year 2001, was even sent to the Standing Committee and the Advisory Committees for discussion but all this has proved futile. Therefore, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the UPA Government again to this fact that the situation kept on worsening despite the remedial measures. Similarly, an Urdu poet also said :

"Gulistan barbad kame ko ek hi ullu kaafi hai,
Anjam-e-Gulistan kya hoga jahan har shakh par ullu
baitha hai"

In such a situation respecting the sentiments of the public Lokpal Bill should be brought immediately to the Parliament in public interest to set an ideal and establish good governance and weed out corruption so that all the high offices that of the Prime Minister and others could be brought under the ambit of Lokpal to enable inquiry in case of any doubt so as to obviate such doubts and to ensure clean administration in the country.

18.45 hrs.

SUBMISSION BY MEMBERS

Re: Need for early release of fishermen and their boats held captive by Pakistan

[English]

SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA (Dhandhuka) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am raising here a very important issue regarding fishermen of Gujarat who are now languishing in Pakistan Jails.

[Translation]

Sir, you know that there are high seas near Gujarat and the local fishermen go there. If fishermen go beyond a limit the Pakistan coastal guards catch hold of them and put them in the prison. Half of their lives get spent in Pakistani jails. I would like to quote official figures to inform you that from October 2003 to 13 February 2005 some 1142 fishermen were caught by the Pakistani coastal guards and this practice is still continuing. 35 boats of fishermen have been seized by the marine security and 210 fishermen, caught along with these boats are imprisoned in their jails. They are seldom set free after repeated negotiations. So many fishermen have not yet been set free as on date. Talks are going on with the Ministry of External Affairs for this purpose but proper decision is not being taken. Through you, I would like to make this humble submission that fishermen of both the countries should be questioned and set free there itself if found innocent. If they are released after being imprisoned their entire family suffers. There is one single bread earner in the family and ten dependents and they also lose their boat. This way the entire family is ruined that is why through you I would request the Government to provide them assistance and to provide them with certain means for a living. Along with this the Government of both the countries should take proper decision after thorough deliberations.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : They should be released from jails.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE) : I will bring this matter to the notice of the concerned Minister.

[Translation]

SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA (Dhandhuka) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Your point has been noted. Please sit down now.

[English]

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack) : Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the National Urban Renewal Mission which has recently been launched on the 3rd of December, 2005.

Around 63 urban areas have been very randomly selected by the Government. My objection here is, out of all the States, some States have three cities and some have two or one city. It was invariably mentioned that the Capital cities of all the States have been included in this. But while going through the list of the cities. I find there is no specified criteria which has been fixed. Some mega cities have been included. Cities with a population less than one lakh have also been included. Cities with a population less than 10 lakh have also been included. There has been no specific criterion by which the Government is selecting the number of cities. Within another 15 years the urban population will be growing and so the problems will also be growing. The main thrust of this Mission was to have a concerted growth of urban amenities. Around Rs. 50,000 crore is

going to be spent within another seven years. In 2005-06 around Rs. 5,467 crores has been demarcated and 63 cities have been identified. The problem here is, if the Government has selected religious cities, Tirupati has not been included. Amritsar, Haridwar, Puri and Bodhgaya though have been included but Tirupati, which is another major tourist attraction of a religious nature, has not been included. The Government has included a number of mega cities but from West Bengal only two Asansol and Calcutta have been included. In UP around seven cities have been included. So, there are no specific criteria. Let the Government come out and say as to what is the criterion by which it has been selected these cities and omitted some other cities. My own home town, Cuttack, which is the main growth centre of Orissa has been omitted.

I would request the Government should consider including Cuttack and Tirupati so also other cities which qualify to be included. At the same time, my demand is that the Government should come out with the specifications, the criteria under which these 63 cities have been selected.

[Translation]

SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN (Deogarh) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to raise an issue before the Government. The Vanshadhara river flows down from Orissa towards Andhra Pradesh and then flows back to Orissa and falls in the Ocean. Both the States reached an agreement in the sixties on how to divide the waters of the Vanshadhara. Ever since the new Government has come to power in Andhra Pradesh a proposal of constructing a new bridge over the Vanshadhara is being hypothesized merely to augment tension in both the States and achieve political ends. Six months back all the hon. Members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha from Orissa had raised this issue with the then hon. Minister of Water Resources who is now Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. The hon. Minister summoned the representatives of both the State Governments. No one came from Andhra

[Shri Dharmendra Pradhan]

Pradesh. This agreement was reached in the sixties and now it is an inter-State issue, an issue of the interest of two States. Some four or five days back the hon. Minister of Revenue, Andhra Pradesh went for the foundation laying ceremony of Vanshdhara state-II. People in Andhra Pradesh are protesting, people who are being displaced from there and the people of Orissa are also raising their voice in protest. When there is so much resentment and the Union Government has intervened to mitigate such resentment, then going ahead again on this work is against the spirit of the Constitution and the interest of the country.

Through you, I would again request the hon. Minister that the Union Government may intervene in this matter and get that work stopped.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Kharabela Swain please.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : I would not like to raise my issue now because the Minister concerned is not present here.

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE : Sir I do not know the details of the particular issue that he wanted to raise. So, I will not be able to respond.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : I am not raising the issue, since the Leader of the House is not present here, I am not raising the issue.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Haribhau Rathod please. Even through you notice came late, I am giving you a chance.

[Translation]

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD (Yavatmal) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to raise a very important issue before the Government. The Gowari

community living in Maharashtra has been making a demand for inclusion in the list of Scheduled Tribes for the last 40 years. Hundreds of tribes have been making similar demands but their demand is different. A Bill was introduced in the year 1967 and it was deliberated upon even in this House. I would like to draw your attention towards question number 176 of 22 December 1977 in reply to which it was stated that:

[English]

"The Joint Committee on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Bill 1967 had examined the case of this community. The Committee recommended the inclusion of Gowari community as a Scheduled Tribe in the district of Amravati, Bhandara, Buldhana, Chanda, Nagpur, Wardha and Yavatmal of Maharashtra State. This recommendation of the Joint Committee will be taken into consideration when the Government of India would decide to undertake a legislation for the comprehensive revision of the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes."

[Translation]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill was introduced in 1967. Thereafter, it was referred to the Joint Committee and was recommended by it. Three generations' time was wasted in introducing this Bill. 114 people lost their lives in Nagpur for this issue but the Government is not yet paying any attention towards it. Through you, I would request the hon. Minister to introduce this Bill. The family members of the people martyred in Nagpur are running from pillar to post even today.

Sir, they are so poor that their condition is worse than a tribe. So, through you, I would like this Bill to be reintroduced.

SHRI MUNSHI RAM (Bijnor) : With deep sorrow I have to say that Fireman Shri Suraj Singh son of Shri Nanhe Singh, resident of village Malduamafi, Police Station Syohara, District Bijnor (U.P.) who was deputed at Fire Station, Gajraula and who was on duty at Ganga

Snan Mela, Tigri District - Jyotibaphulenagar on 14 November, 2005 has been missing since 11 p.m. of 16.11.2005. As soon as the family members came to know they reported it the concerned police station. I spoke to the Deputy Controller General Muradabad in this regard that fireman Suraj Singh was missing. After making all kinds of efforts the dead body of fireman late Suraj Singh was found under the bridge of Brij Ghat on 28.11.2005 at 6 p.m. which was cremated in the night itself by the police after the post-mortem. This tragic incident seems to be murder conspiracy. The police is trying to hush up the matter. I would like to request the Government through this House that a CBI inquiry of the case should be conducted to expose the murderers of fireman

Late Shri Suraj Singh and bring the people responsible for this murder to book.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow, the 16th December, 2005 at 11.00 a.m.

18.56 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the
Clock on Friday, December 16, 2005/
Agrahayana 25, 1927 (Saka)*

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