

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(English Version)

Twelfth Session
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)



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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Monday, December 3, 2007/Agrahayana 12, 1929 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Six minutes past
Eleven of the Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

REFERENCE BY THE SPEAKER

World Disability Day

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, today is being observed as the World Disability Day. This occasion calls for recognition of the indomitable spirit of the disabled people and expression of our solidarity with them in their endeavours to achieve self-reliance and economic independence.

On this day, let us reiterate our resolve to strive for ensuring equal opportunities and rights for the differently abled persons.

It is not my fault that we are sitting three or four minutes late. I hope, this will not be repeated any time, in future that in the morning, we have to wait for the quorum to be there.

11.03 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Q. No. 241 Shri N.S.V. Chitthan

Employment Opportunities for Women

*241. SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of educated, uneducated, skilled, unskilled, self employed and unemployed women in the country as on date, State-wise;

(b) whether employment opportunities for women have increased during each of the last three years;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the funds allocated, released and utilised for the purpose during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

Reliable estimates of employment and unemployment are obtained through quinquennial labour force surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation. Last such survey was conducted during 2004-05. As per the results of those survey, women employment in the country on usual status basis has gone up from 123.04 million in 1999-2000 to 148.98 million in 2004-05, implying that 5.18 million women were provided employment per year during the period 1999-2000 to 2004 05. Out of 148.98 million women workforce during 2004-05, about 91 million were self employed and the estimated number of unemployed women was about 4.05 million. During 2004-05, about 61.8 percent of women workers were illiterate. The figures with regard to the entire country as well as the breakup with regard to major states are given in the enclosed Annexure.

Employment grew across all sectors of economy and also among both men and women. The self employment and educational levels among women have also increased during the period. Government of India has been implementing various employment generation programmes both for men and women. Some of these are Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY); Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY); Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) and Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP), National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, (NREGA) and Support to Training and Employment Programme for women (STEP). These schemes are generally demand driven and no separate allocation of fund is made for women. However, adequate measures are taken to ensure that benefits of the schemes extended to women as well. Under the scheme support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), and in the National Vocational Training Institutes and in Regional Vocational Training Institutes (NVTI/RVTI) for women, the funds allocated and released during the last three years are as follows:

I. STEP			II. NVT/RVTI		
(Rs. in lakhs)			(Rs. in lakhs)		
Year	Funds allocated	Funds released	Year	Funds allocated	Funds released
2004-05	2500	1781.87	2004-05	501.91	579.48
2005-06	1500	1717.92	2005-06	637.80	629.28
2006-07	1600	1597.64	2006-07	702.56	697.32

Annexure

*Estimated number of women workers on usual status basis (UPSS)—
All India & major states during 2004-05*

Total All India

(in million)

Number of workers	Self employed	No. of Unemployed
148.98	90.95	4.05

Breakup with regard to Major States

(in million)

Sl. No.	Major States	Number of workers	Self employed	Number of Unemployed
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	16.29	7.73	0.14
2.	Assam	2.68	1.79	0.10
3.	Bihar	5.58	2.88	0.01
4.	Chhattiegarh	4.39	2.31	0.02
5.	Gujarat	8.34	4.72	0.05
6.	Haryana	2.75	2.22	0.06
7.	Himachal Pradesh	1.51	1.36	0.04
8.	Jammu and Kashmir	1.17	1.07	0.03
9.	Jharkhand	3.82	2.87	0.01
10.	Karnataka	9.89	4.74	0.16
11.	Kerala	4.09	2.08	1.26
12.	Madhya Pradesh	9.63	5.55	0.02

1	2	3	4	5
13.	Maharashtra	17.39	8.37	0.20
14.	Orissa	5.61	3.37	0.62
15.	Punjab	3.05	2.46	0.22
16.	Rajasthan	10.36	8.83	0.04
17.	Tamil Nadu	11.41	5.19	0.28
18.	Uttar Pradesh	18.17	15.21	0.12
19.	Uttaranchal	1.56	1.38	0.02
20.	West Bengal	6.99	4.11	0.33
21.	Delhi	0.60	0.13	0.04

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in order to give focus to issues relating to women, our UPA Government has created an independent Ministry of Women and Child Development. More than 42 laws related to women administered by various Ministries are either passed or under the scrutiny of our Government. Some of them are: The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; The Hindu Succession Act, 1955; prohibiting arrest of women after sunset; steps are being initiated to eliminate female foeticide; amendments are also considered to Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; Foreign Marriages Act, 1961; The Plantation Labour Act, 1951. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question?

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN : I am coming to the question.

MR. SPEAKER: Please do !

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN: Our UPA Government's prestigious Act, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 is focusing the impact of Government spending on the welfare of women. One-third reservation for women in legislatures has been made. ...(*Interruptions*)

From the statement laid on the Table of the House, it is noted that 5.18 million women were employed per year. During 2004-05, about 61.8 per cent of women workers were illiterate.

MR. SPEAKER: All these figures are there in the reply. You need not quote them here.

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN: What steps the Government would take to educate them? In the funds allocated for 2004-05, it was Rs. 2,500 lakh; but in 2006-07, it has been reduced to Rs. 1,600 lakh and only Rs. 1,597 lakh has been released. What are the reasons for the sharp decrease in allotment and release?

MR. SPEAKER: You have put two questions together!

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: The effort is to provide technical education to women. We have definitely earmarked not only funds, but institutions are also giving special training to women in the country through the ITIs that come under my Ministry. Our effort is to at least reserve 30 per cent of the jobs for women under the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme which is achieved too. There is no dearth of funds; it is only the spending of the money by various States that has been granted the necessary resources.

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN: The cost of living is increasing day by day, both men and women have to work and earn for the planned maintenance of the family. While our women are ready even to serve the army, there are specific areas like education, IT sector, food processing, computers, etc., where women can be absorbed in large numbers. As the earmarking has been done for women in NREG Scheme, as the hon. Minister has just mentioned, may I ask through you, Sir, will our UPA Government initiate steps to give more than one-third reservation in specific jobs as women are more than 50 per cent of our population and what are the

steps that it would take to encourage self-help groups to run entirely by women?

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: The entire effort is to encourage self-help groups in the country; though it has been our endeavour to have 50 per cent reserved for women, it has crossed the limit of 50 per cent; and about 80 per cent of the self-help groups are run by women and very efficiently run, at a lower rate of interest. This is progressively moving and women are taking benefit. As I have already stressed, our entire effort is to empower women through technical education. The figures with respect to education will also show that a large number of women are progressing in education.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KARUNA SHUKLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in reply to part (a) of the question, the hon'ble Minister has not furnished figures about the number of educated and uneducated women. The figures furnished are about working women, self-employed women and unemployed women. I would like to know about it from the hon'ble Minister in this regard.

Secondly, we women are the most affected by the presently rising prices. Employment is not available even to educated women. Will the Government formulate any scheme to make employment opportunities available to more and more women, because loan is provided to Self-Help Group through banks but the women are not that educated to be able to fulfill the formalities required for obtaining loans from banks. They face difficulties and are not able to pay even the interest on bank loans taken to set up small business. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether he would make any special budget provisions for this purpose?...*(Interruptions)* Be it Employment Guarantee Scheme, or Pradhan Mantri Sadak Yojna. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You have said it, it is a very good question, let him reply.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KARUNA SHUKLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this question is related to women. It is not no way beneficial to the women. Fifty percent of the population is of women, therefore separate provisions should be made for them.

I have two questions—one is about educated and uneducated women and the other is whether separate provision of funds will be made for them? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You have already asked the question.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Our Government has started gender budgeting and all the Departments of the Central Government have been given directives, that whatever money we are spending, there should be a definite allocation for spending on women.

About the literacy rate, in 2001, the overall literacy rate was 65 per cent with female literacy rate at 54 per cent and male literacy rate of 75 per cent.

SHRIMATI ARCHANA NAYAK: May I know from the hon. Minister of Labour and Employment as to what is the future planning of the Ministry to create more job opportunities for women because getting the highest professional qualification without a job will make them feel insecure in their lives.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: As I have already narrated, the best way to empower women is through education. To tell you the fact, I had visited the Delhi University Canteen and found only women in the canteen. When I asked them why is it that more number of women are there in the canteen, the girls told me on that they had come through merit. If you go through the Delhi University you will find more number of women in the colleges because of merit. Through primary education we have been empowering women and today, women are reaching the top.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUMAN MAHATO: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has stated in his reply that as per the 2004-05 survey on usual status basis, the number of unemployed women is 4.05 million I would like to know whether the Government propose to provide employment to those unemployed women by launching a special recruitment drive for them? If so, the details thereof?

[English]

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: In the organised sector women are getting their due because of merit. In the unorganised sector, as I have narrated, we have got various schemes under which women are getting employment. If you want, I would narrate all such schemes.

MR. SPEAKER: The details are there. If you like, you can lay it on the Table of House.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to know the number of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled women in the country. Are the Government having any schme for upgradation of semi-skilled and unskilled women into the category of skilled women?

[English]

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: We have introduced schemes whereby unskilled women and even the general category of people are provided skills. Even the technical schools, like the IITs that we have, we are trying to give them assistance with domestic funding, World Bank funding and through institutional funding so as to upgrade them to world level schools of technology. When this kind of education is provided, we can provide more employment opportunities to our women.

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA: As a result of the overall changes in the economy, women employment share has increased in both industrial and service sector. In view of the above, whether the Government of India is considering any amendment in the Factories Act which restricts the presence of working women in the premises of industrial establishments after 7.00 p.m.? If so, what mechanism is going to be evolved by the Government to guarantee the safety and security of the working women?

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: We have relaxed the working conditions for women in factories so that they get equal opportunities with the condition that they are fully protected. Special facilities like rooms are provided for them in the factories.

MR. SPEAKER: Q.242. Shri G.M. Siddeswara—Not present.

Q.243. Shri Jivabhai A. Patel.

[Translation]

Soil Tests

*243. SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:
SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the soil tests on non-agricultural and agricultural land being conducted by the Government;

(b) whether soil-tests are not being conducted according to the rules due to which the production capacity of land is not being fully utilised;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon; and

(d) the details of the performance of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes in this regard?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTIONS (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) Soil tests for soil fertility on agricultural land are being carried out by the soil testing laboratories as per standard methodology. Besides, Soil and Land Use Survey of India (SLUSI) conducts detailed soil survey in the priority watershed of various catchments of river valley project, as per standard methodology irrespective of soils occurring under various land use such as agriculture, forest and open scrub.

(d) Under the centrally sponsored scheme (namely, balanced and integrated use of fertilizer) assistance is given for setting up of new laboratories and for strengthening the existing laboratories. At present there are 651 soil testing laboratories in the country with an annual analyzing capacity of about 7 million soil samples. The capacity utilization is about 82%. Under the central sector scheme for Soil and Land Use Survey of India (SLUSI) detailed surveys are conducted in the priority watersheds. The organization has so far covered 13.5 million hectares under detailed soil survey.

[Translation]

SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, ONGC has been exploring oil and gas on a large scale in my parliamentary constituency, Mehsana. After oil and gas exploration, they leave the land as it is, due to which farmers are not able to cultivate it. The report of soil tests conducted after gas exploration are not found satisfactory.

Sir, this way the fertile land in my area is becoming barren and leakage is taking place in many fields. Even today, one can see gas and oil leaking in tube wells installed in fields of farmers in Gamanpur village.
...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: What are you doing? Put a question on soil testing.

[Translation]

SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL: Sir, my question is, that soil testing has been done in my parliamentary constituency, Mehsana. What are its results and the action being taken by the Government in this regard?

[English]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, the question is specifically about soil testing.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. That is what I was saying.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, if the hon. Member wants specific information about Mehsana District, I have no objection. I will collect that and forward it to the hon. Member.

MR. SPEAKER: You are entitled to say that. You can ask your second supplementary relating to the main question.

[Translation]

SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL: My second question is about the steps taken by the Government to conduct the soil tests on the land rendered barren and to make it cultivable and the details thereof?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, arrangement has been made for obtaining samples and testing soil and to provide report of deficiency in soil to the farmer after due analysis.

At the time of preparing the report, the farmers are also advised to take appropriate steps keeping in view the deficiencies pointed out in the report. In my view, those areas having oil and gas establishment have some particular problems. They have to be taken up separately and the Government are ready to provide assistance to farmers by taking up this information separately. This is a particular problem of the farmers of that area, the Government are prepared to help the farmers there.

SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD: Sir, at present 1407 lakh hectares of land is affected by soil erosion, floods, water logging and silt formation in the country. There are 651 soil testing centers and 122 mobile centers in the country. These centers are performing below capacity. These centers mostly conduct tests of soil affected with chemical fertilizers whereas the fertility of land in the country is declining due to floods, drought and erosion. Are the Government paying any attention to it? Due to decline in fertility of land, people are moving away from agriculture profession. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question?

SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD: Sir, the farmers are using their own experience for maintaining the fertility of land and those farmers have more knowledge about soil testing than the scientists of these soil testing centers. They are not getting any specific help from the soil testing centers. Through you, I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether the soil test of land affected by erosion has been conducted? If so, the results thereof?

[English]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, as the hon. Member has said, there are 651 soil testing laboratories and out of them 134 are mobile. We had collected some of the samples. In the year 2006-07, 70 lakh samples were collected and detailed report was given to the farmers. If the hon. Member wants any specific information or if he is having any specific question, he can write to me, I will take appropriate action.

MR. SPEAKER: Please relate your questions to the main answer.

[Translation]

SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, are the Government going to provide any kind of subsidy in future on the money charged for soil testing from the farmers by the soil testing laboratories because at this

time the farmers are in distress and they are in great need of this facility.

[*English*]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: It is a State subject and the State Government takes the decision as to what money should be charged.

[*Translation*]

Laboratories charge simple limited amount for soil testing.

[*English*]

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Sir, according to the Swaminathan Committee Report, it has been suggested that in future we have to devise the way of using less land and more productivity. In that regard, soil test is an important ingredient. Already, nutrients of the soil have been decreasing in various parts of our country. Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether, as per reports of soil testing, the level of soil nutrition has decreased in the States where Green Revolution was started.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: The major States which had practically taken care of foodgrains in the country are Punjab and Haryana. Recently we have been facing a major problem in these two States. It is because in these two States production of two crops, namely, wheat and rice, has become much popular and because only the production of two crops are being taken up continuously and since they are consuming water continuously, productivity is coming down. We would like to prepare a special programme. We are discussing this issue with the State Government. This particular problem is there in these two particular States.

SHRI RAVICHANDRAN SIPPIPARA: Sir, today a very large number of agricultural graduates are unemployed in this country. Therefore, I would like to know if the Government has any proposal to support these unemployed agricultural graduates by putting up new soil testing laboratories in the country?

MR. SPEAKER: At last he has brought in the issue of the scientists.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, as I have said, the respective State Governments have already set up soil

testing laboratories. Recently, the Government of India has taken a decision to help the Krishi Vigyan Kendras. Already 304 soil testing laboratories have been set up during 2004-05 and 2006-07. There is no specific scheme for unemployed agricultural graduates.

[*Translation*]

Drought Conditions in Some Districts

*244. SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some Meteorological Districts have faced drought conditions during the monsoon this year;

(b) if so, the details of these districts; and

(c) the quantum of assistance rendered to these districts to help fight drought conditions?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

As reported by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), during South-West Monsoon 2007 (1.8.2007 to 30.9.2007), out of 533 meteorological districts in the country, 124 districts received deficient rainfall (-20% to -59%) and 20 districts received scanty rainfall (-60% to -99%). The State-wise/Union Territory-wise details of districts which received deficient and scanty rainfall, during the South-West Monsoon period, is indicated below:

State	Districts with Deficient Rainfall (Nos.)	Districts with Scanty Rainfall (Nos.)
1	2	3
Andhra Pradesh	1	0
Arunachal Pradesh	3	1
Bihar	1	2
Chandigarh	1	0
Chhattisgarh	5	0

1	2	3
Haryana	16	1
Himachal Pradesh	5	2
Jammu & Kashmir	1	1
Jharkhand	1	0
Karnataka	1	0
Madhya Pradesh	22	2
Maharashtra	1	0
Manipur	2	0
Nagaland	1	1
Punjab	8	3
Rajasthan	14	0
Tamil Nadu	3	0
Uttar Pradesh	34	7
Uttarakhand	3	0
West Bengal	1	0

2. The Government of Madhya Pradesh have informed that drought has been recognized in 145 Tehsils in 37 districts.

3. The Government of Uttar Pradesh have informed that the State Government have declared Bundelkhand area as drought prone and provided Rs. 2 crores per district to tackle the problem of drought. The State Government have also informed that Rs.108 crores have been sanctioned to 7 districts in Bundelkhand area for agriculture input subsidy *i.e.* Rs. 20 crores for Banda district, Rs. 5 crores for Chitrakoot district, Rs. 16 crores for Hamirpur district, Rs. 10 crores for Jalaun district, Rs. 20 crores for Jhansi district, Rs. 22 crores for Lalitpur district and Rs. 15 crores for Mahoba district. The State Government have further informed that a special package has been prepared by the State Planning and Agriculture Department to tackle the drought situation.

4. No other State Government/Union Territory Administration has so far reported drought this year.

5. It is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments concerned to take necessary measures in

the wake of natural calamities including drought. The Government of India supplements the efforts of the States with financial and logistic support. There is ready availability of funds with the States under Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) to take necessary measures. The Government of India and State Governments concerned contribute to CRF in the ratio of 3:1. Additional assistance, over and above CRF, is considered from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF), if necessary, for natural calamities of severe nature, in accordance with an established procedure, on submission of Memorandum for assistance from the NCCF by the State Government. No memorandum for Central assistance has been received from any State Government for the current drought.

[Translation]

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is on account of adverse weather condition that there is low rainfall all over the country. It is due to scanty rainfall that the crops have been affected on a large scale and the condition of farmers is deteriorating. The hon'ble Minister in his reply, has stated that 31 districts of Uttar Pradesh have received scanty rainfall. It is on account of rainfall that all the crops have been damaged and the sowing of 'Ravi crops' is also not being undertaken. The Uttar Pradesh Government has declared only seven districts of Bundelkhand as drought affected. I would like to know whether the Union Minister of Agriculture will announce on his part to provide financial assistance to those 34 districts which have received rainfall and where crops have been damaged by declaring those districts as drought affected.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, till date we have not received any report from the Uttar Pradesh Government regarding those districts. When there is deficient rainfall, a drought like situation arises. The State Governments send report in this regard to the Government of India and then a team is constituted and sent to the drought affected districts of the concerned State. The team goes there and surveys the situation there and after holding talks with the respective State Governments it submits report to the Central Government. Thereafter, the Central Government assesses the situation and if necessary, they provides financial assistance to those affected districts. As far as the question of Uttar Pradesh Government is concerned, it has taken necessary steps in respect of some of the districts, however, till date no demand has been made to the Government of India.

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister in his reply has said that apart from seven districts the Uttar Pradesh Government has not sent any other report. Through you, I would like to submit that in the annexure enclosed in the written reply to the question, 34 districts are reported to have rainfall. Areas of four tehsils of Allahabad namely Koraon, Meza, Bara and Karchana are rocky and plateau. There is no water in the dams over there, and canals are also not operational. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether taking cognizance of my information, the Union Government will instruct the Uttar Pradesh Government to conduct a survey in this regard and send proposal for assistance.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, I, myself, have said that in Uttar Pradesh specifically 4 districts have received deficient rainfall and 7 districts have scant rainfall. I have accepted it that we have such information, but as far the specific State and the districts are concerned, when there is a need of assistance, the proposals for financial assistance are sent to the Government of India. Till date, the Government of India have not received any such proposal. The State Government has got the amount of the CRF and on the basis of that they have taken some steps. The hon'ble Member says that there is problem in some specific district, if he writes to me, I will draw the attention of the Uttar Pradesh Government and will instruct them to take necessary steps.

SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is on account of drought that today the condition of farmers are in distress all over the country. Last week, in reply to a question, the Minister of Science and Technology hon'ble Kapil Sibal had said that his Ministry has introduced a new software on the basis of which several tests have been carried out in Haryana for doing area specific forecasting of dry farming to foretell their productivity. Through you, I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether the Ministry of Agriculture will approach the Ministry of Science and Technology for the extensive popularization of that software satellite programming model all over the country so that it may be made available for the farmers to enable them face drought conditions.

[English]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: The Ministry of Science and Technology has developed a particular type of technology.

[Translation]

The experiment of that technology has been started in Haryana. The Ministry of Agriculture and also the State Government have participation in it. After the report of the outcome of the field trials and its experience, the Ministry of Science and Technology will decide about its application all over the country.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Sir, the farmers of Maharashtra are trapped in a vicious circle. Our hon'ble Minister is from Maharashtra and he knows that the irrigation system in the State is not good. The entire cultivation is dependent on rainfall. Through you, I would like to submit to the hon'ble Minister that on account of drought condition the agricultural is in bad shape and the farmers give money for taking loans. He has written that—

[English]

It is primarily the responsibility of the State Government concerned to take necessary measures in the wake of natural calamities including drought.

[Translation]

Through you, I would like to request the hon'ble Minister for waiving loan of farmers. If their loans are not waived their well being cannot be ensured. The farmers are committing suicide despite the announcement of package by the hon'ble Prime Minister. Approximately more than 30 thousand farmers have committed suicide. Will the Government provide them with loan waiver to restrain them from committing suicide? It is on account of this that they are committing suicide.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: He has got a special name because of Maharashtra.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Let there be silence in the House as it is a very important matter.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: This particular subject regarding rainfall is relating to the report of Meteorological Department in the country. The question is not regarding waiver or any other issue. If the hon. Member wants that type of information, I will require a separate notice for it.

...(Interruptions)

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: Let me support you, you please sit down.

[*English*]

The entire country is concerned, I am sure, about the suicide of farmers which, according to me, is a national shame. Therefore, all of us should not politicize it but try to solve this issue in a manner which behoves our great country.

[*Translation*]

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to submit to the hon'ble Minister that when it comes to the issue of farmers, we all know that they do not get sufficient electricity. The crops of farmers are destroyed due to floods and drought. This problem is raised here during every session of the House. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether the State Governments and the Union Government will jointly chalk out such a policy to ensure that the damage of farmers is automatically compensated in the event of flood or drought, because every time we make this demand. Many a people cannot approach Government, even survey is not done. I would like to know whether the State Governments and the Union Government together will certainly provide relief from flood and drought or not.

MR. SPEAKER: He has said that he will see if any proposal is received from the State Government.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, today crop insurance scheme is in operation in the country for this purpose. Those farmers who get their crops insured have right to demand compensation in the event of damage of crops due to drought or flood and necessary arrangements have been made in this regard.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, providing relief is the responsibility of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture is concerned with the Ministry of Agriculture. I, therefore, feel that complete information regarding the relief work has not been made available through the Department of Agriculture. This year the irony of the monsoon was such that the eastern zone and southern zone received heavy rainfall, however, north-western zone received deficient rainfall. Haryana, Punjab, Western Uttar Pradesh and some of the Uttaranchal region adjacent to it were severely affected

on account of severe drought and the situation in Bundelkhand is so critical that cracks are appearing on the lands and volcano like steam eruption is being witnessed.

It is inaction on the part of the State Government, but the farmers and the poor should not suffer loss on account of it. The cheques amounting to about Rs. 150 or Rs. 100 to the farmers. ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: I have allowed the matter to be raised already in the House.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Sir, I would like to ask question to the hon'ble Minister because the Government have stated in their reply that no memorandum for Central assistance was received from any State Government in time, then is it not a practice that in such cases Union Government take *suo-motu* and send a team of officers for conducting survey and assistance to States is provided accordingly. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether the Union Government will take *suo-motu* action to send team of officers for conducting survey in most drought-affected States?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, as has been said about Haryana, it is true that 16 districts have received very low rainfall. But in this State and Punjab, the substantial area is under irrigation, therefore they are not as severely affected, as other parts of the country. After reviewing the condition of entire country, I have come to the conclusion that all districts of Bundelkhand area in Uttar Pradesh and all districts of Madhya Pradesh are severely affected. But, we have not received any report in this regard from the State Governments. After seeing the data of last three years in regard to Bundelkhand, I have reached to the conclusion, that there is a need to constitute a team by Union Government consisting of officers of the concerned State Governments as well. There is a need to take separate initiatives in this regard, because an abnormal situation is prevailing there for the last two, three years. Therefore, I am going to send a team there.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Q.No. 245—Shri Tukaram Ganpatrao Renge Patil—not present.

Shri L. Rajagopal.

Fake Bt. Cotton Seeds

+
*245. SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL:
SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE
PATIL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether fake Bt. cotton seeds have been sold in many States during the last two years and in the current year also;

(b) if so, the details thereof and its impact on the cotton crops during the above period;

(c) the number of persons against whom action has been taken in this regard;

(d) whether the Government has taken a decision to include cotton seeds in the list of essential commodities to contain the prices of Bt. cotton seeds; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Some cases of sale of fake Bt. Cotton seeds have been reported in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Punjab.

(b) No significant impact on production of cotton due to fake Cotton seeds has been reported by these States.

(c) 15,979 packets of fake Bt. Cotton Seeds were seized and 80 cases were registered in different States for infringement of law.

(d) and (e) Proposal to re-notify cotton seeds as essential commodity under Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2006 is under consideration of the Government.

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you. India, after surpassing the USA, has now become the second largest producer of cotton, after China.

Cotton farming takes place in more than nine million hectares, with an average yield of more than five bales per acre. If you see the cost of seeds, it is very high. In fact, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has gone to the MRTPC and won the case, because of which the price was brought down from Rs. 1,750 to Rs. 750.

I want to know from the hon. Minister whether it is true that the Central Institute of Cotton Research is working to release 25 varieties of indigenous Bt. Cotton which are better suited to the climatic conditions of dry and rainfed areas and also expected to be sold between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100 per 450 grams.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: The question is very long.

[English]

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: I also want to know when these varieties will be reaching the market.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: It is true that there are lot of advantages in Bt. Cotton and it is also true that there are a lot of complaints about the Bt. Cotton. The main issue which has been raised by many States, especially by the farming community with the State Government, is about the price. About the price, it is true that Andhra Pradesh has taken certain decisions. Therefore, the price has been brought down there. In other States also, companies are bringing down the prices. We have one Cotton Research Institute located in Nagpur. That Institute is working for the last few years to develop an indigenous transgenic variety. But, they have not reached that stage where we will be able to release that variety. Unless and until that variety comes in the market for sale, unless and until we get clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Agriculture Ministry, we cannot provide that seed for sale. It is only after getting all these clearances, that it will be possible. We are trying to provide a sort of seed to the market, but we have not reached that stage as yet.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Second Supplementary, please.

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: I would like to know from the hon. Minister the details of cases and companies behind selling fake Bt. seeds in Andhra Pradesh during the last 3 years and the number of such cases registered. In

fact, the Minister has already said that 80 cases have been registered. I want to know what action has been taken against them.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: How can the hon'ble Minister give you full details.

[English]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: This is a prerogative of the State Government. The State Governments have communicated to me that they have registered a certain number of such cases and the cases are in the courts.

SHRI B. MAHTAB: Bt. Cotton is the only commercially grown GM crop in India which got the approval for cultivation in 2002. I want to know whether it is a fact that only 3 hybrids of Mahyco were approved in 2002, whereas now 135 GM cotton varieties of 16 companies have been approved by Genetic Engineering Approval Committee. Have any field trials been conducted? If so, are there any laws or guidelines governing such trials? Have any violations been reported? Is it a fact that because of failure of regulatory mechanism, States, like Orissa and Kerala have announced not to allow GM plants in their States?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: This process started in our country with MICO which was taking advantage of three types of transgenic crops. Now, the situation is something different. In north zone, there are about 34 Bt. cotton hybrid varieties. In central-north zone, there are 5 varieties. In central zone, there are 47 varieties. In central-south zone, there are 32 varieties. So, about 167 hybrid varieties are available in the country today. Whenever a decision is taken for approval of these varieties, especially Bt. cotton, the developer has to take trials for at least 3 to 6 years in different parts of the State. These trials are under the observation of Indian Council of Agricultural Research. After that, these trials are also observed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. After getting clearances from both the organisations, there is a high level committee which studies this entire issue and decides whether we should allow this particular variety in the open market or not. So, it takes practically between 3 and 7 years and one has to consider whether it is environment-friendly, whether it is affecting any other crop or not. So, all these angles, one has to study and only after that, some variety is released for sale.

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: I would like to know from the Minister by when the existing Act of 1966 is likely to be replaced. In 2004, a Bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha. The Standing Committee has already given its recommendation. At the same time, Farmers' Rights Act, 2001 is also there. An authority in this regard was also created in 2005. Due to the fake seeds, the crop has become dry resulting in suicides. By when are all these Acts likely to be passed? How can the loss be recovered? It will be recovered from the seed company or from any other agency.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, the Bill has already been introduced in Parliament. The Standing Committee has also given the Report and the Bill is now pending before Parliament. Whenever there is an opportunity to take a final view on the Bill, the Government is definitely eager to take an early action.

[Translation]

Telecom Tariff Rates

*246. SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the tariff for various telecommunication services in the country are higher in comparison to other countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the present pulse rates of the various telecommunication services of United States, Australia, China, Pakistan and Sri Lanka separately; and

(d) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to reduce the tariff rates of various telecommunication services in the country?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Sir, telecom tariff in India is considered to be on the lower side internationally. However, international

comparison of tariff for telecom services is rendered difficult because of multiplicity of alternative tariff packages.

(b) The details of tariff for telecom services as per 'World Telecommunication Development Report 2006 of International Telecommunication Union (ITU)' are given in the enclosed Annexure.

(c) Sir, Information on current pulse rates for various countries is not available.

(d) The Government has allowed more telecom operators from time to time to encourage competition which led to reduction of tariff. In addition, the Government has set up an Independent Regulator i.e. Telecom

Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for regulation of Telecom Tariff in the country. The TRAI has taken the following steps to reduce the tariff rates of various telecommunication services in the country:

- Tariff for National Roaming Services were reduced to the extent of 22% to 56% in February, 2007
- Tariff for Leased Circuit is streamlined.
- Interconnection usage charges (IUC) Regulation resulting in uniformity across network, neutral to technology and charges fixed in the form of ceiling.

Annexure

World Telecommunication/ICT Development Report 2006

Telephone Tariffs

Sl.No.	Name of the Country	Residential		Business		Local Call (US \$ 2005)	Subscription as % of GDP per capita 2005
		Connection (US\$) 2005	Monthly subscription 2005	Connection (US\$) 2005	Monthly Subs. 2005		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Afghanistan	—	—	—	—	—	—
2.	Bangladesh	158	—	158	—	—	-8.1
3.	Benin	109	—	109	—	0.12	12.0
4.	Bhutan	14	3.5	14	3.5	0.03	—
5.	Burkina Faso	46	4.6	46	4.6	0.18	21.3
6.	Burundi	9	0.4	55	0.4	0.07	5.6
7.	Cambodia	29	2.9	52	5.9	0.03	11.5
8.	Cameroon	55	3.2	55	3.2	0.11	—
9.	Central African Rep.	65	5.1	65	5.1	0.55	19.0
10.	Chad	98	6.5	98	6.5	0.14	18.1
11.	Comoros	100	5.5	100	5.5	0.18	—
12.	Congo	—	—	—	—	—	—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13.	Cote d'Ivoire	37	11.1	37	11.1	0.28	14.4
14.	D.P.R. Korea	—	—	—	—	—	—
15.	D.R. Congo	—	—	—	—	—	—
16.	Eritrea	73	2.4	73	2.4	0.04	
17.	Ethiopia	41	0.9	41	2.0	0.02	—
18.	Gambia	41	1.5	41	1.8	0.03	—
19.	Ghana	50	1.3	50	1.3	0.03	—
20.	Guinea	110	3.0	110	3.0	0.08	—
21.	Guinea-Bissau	—	—	—	—	—	—
22.	Haiti	—	—	—	—	—	24.6
23.	India	23	2.8	23	4.7	0.02	5.0
24.	Kenya	30	6.6	30	6.6	0.11	15.3
25.	Kyrgyzstan	21	1.3	58	2.3	0.07	3.6
26.	Lao P.D.R.	33	1.5	33	1.5	0.06	4.3
27.	Lesotho	51	8.1	51	8.1	0.20	16.2
28.	Liberia	—	—	—	—	—	—
29.	Madagascar	40	8.1	40	8.1	0.10	26.7
30.	Malawi	10	0.8	10	0.8	0.09	7.2
31.	Mali	37	8.3	37	8.3	0.30	23.5
32.	Mauritania	19	3.9	19	3.9	0.11	—
33.	Moldova	39	1.9	39	3.4	0.05	3.8
34.	Mongolia	52	0.7	70	5.7	0.02	1.6
35.	Mozambique	17	7.9	17	7.9	0.14	—
36.	Myanmar	—	—	—	—	0.04	0.4
37.	Nepal	26	2.8	26	2.8	0.03	12.0
38.	Nicaragua	168	6.4	256	17.0	0.08	9.6
39.	Niger	52	4.8	61	5.8	0.13	30.0
40.	Nigeria	68	3.8	68	3.8	0.15	8.9
41.	Pakistan	9	3.0	9	3.0	0.03	5.8

1	2	3	4.	5	6	7	8
42.	Papua New Guinea	3	2.4	17	6.9	—	3.5
43.	Rwanda	31	2.1	31	2.1	0.09	—
44.	S. Tome & Principe	44	4.4	44	11.0	0.17	—
45.	Senegal	43	4.5	43	4.5	0.22	7.4
46.	Sierra Leone	47	0.5	47	1.0	0.03	—
47.	Solomon Islands	40	8.0	45	9.6	0.09	—
48.	Somalia	—	—	—	—	—	—
49.	Sudan	20	2.4	20	2.4	0.08	6.5
50.	Tajikistan	4	0.2	24	1.4	0.01	—
51.	Tanzania	35	3.7	35	3.7	0.16	—
52.	Togo	92	6.9	92	6.9	0.18	—
53.	Uganda	69	5.8	69	5.8	0.22	24.3
54.	Uzbekistan	10	0.5	28	2.5	0.01	—
55.	Viet Nam	38	1.7	38	1.7	0.02	3.7
56.	Yemen	93	0.6	93	0.6	0.02	1.2
57.	Zambia	10	2.1	31	4.2	0.08	—
58.	Zimbabwe	36	2.0	36	2.0	0.08	—
	Low Income	47	3.6	53	4.5	0.10	11.5
59.	Albania	99	0.8	199	7.1	0.02	—
60.	Algeria	48	2.1	48	2.1	0.08	1.5
61.	Angola	46	5.7	112	11.2	0.09	—
62.	Armenia	27	2.0	32	7.3	0.03	2.2
63.	Azerbaijan	85	0.7	128	7.4	0.11	0.8
64.	Belarus	23	0.6	60	1.0	0.02	0.3
65.	Bolivia	37	4.4	37	6.2	0.06	5.5
66.	Bosnia	124	—	124	—	—	1.2
67.	Brazil	22	14.7	22	22.9	0.07	2.9
68.	Bulgaria	43	6.5	43	10.2	0.04	2.5
69.	Cape Verde	34	2.8	34	2.8	0.05	1.7

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
70.	China	—	—	—	—	—	2.9
71.	Colombia	110	4.2	132	5.3	0.03	2.4
72.	Cuba	93	5.8	93	—	0.08	—
73.	Djibouti	55	11.0	55	11.0	0.08	
74.	Dominican Rep.	51	16.7	51	13.3	0.11	9.2
75.	Ecuador	32	0.9	—	—	—	3.2
76.	Egypt	105	1.4	174	2.3	0.02	1.4
77.	El Salvador	7	1.0	7	1.6	0.01	0.5
78.	Fiji	46	1.5	151	2.2	0.06	—
79.	Georgia	93	1.9	93	2.8	0.03	—
80.	Guatemala	314	5.5	314	5.5	0.08	3.1
81.	Guyana	3	2.8	17	8.4	—	3.7
82.	Honduras	25	2.0	59	5.1	0.05	2.7
83.	Indonesia	31	3.4	47	6.0	0.04	3.8
84.	Iran (I.R.)	122	—	122	—	0.01	—
85.	Iraq	—	—	—	—	—	—
86.	Jamaica	11	8.1	15	20.2	0.03	2.7
87.	Jordan	50	6.2	101	14.0	0.06	3.9
88.	Kazakhstan	78	2.4	281	3.8	—	—
89.	Kiribati	53	6.1	53	10.6	—	—
90.	Maldives	134	2.3	134	2.3	0.06	—
91.	Marshall Islands	35	12.0	35	30.0	—	—
92.	Micronesia	24	8.0	24	16.0	—	3.7
93.	Morocco	68	10.8	135	14.9	0.18	7.8
94.	Namibia	35	7.1	40	9.1	0.14	—
95.	Palestine	55	4.4	166	4.4	0.14	—
96.	Paraguay	126	3.4	126	4.7	0.05	3.7
97.	Peru	116	14.3	116	14.3	0.07	7.0
98.	Philippines	36	10.8	63	22.6	—	12.4

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
99.	Romania	10	5.1	10	8.3	0.09	2.0
100.	Samoa	20	3.4	29	5.1	0.04	—
101.	Serbia & Montenegro	86	0.7	173	0.07	0.01	—
102.	Sri Lanka	196	4.9	196	12.4	0.09	5.7
103.	Surinam	154	—	154	—	0.05	0.8
104.	Swaziland	32	3.6	54	6.4	0.09	1.1
105.	Syria	76	0.8	76	0.8	0.01	—
106.	FYR Macedonia	25	8.0	25	14.0	0.06	—
107.	Thailand	90	2.4	90	2.4	—	1.1
108.	Tonga	56	2.9	56	5.8	0.08	—
109.	Tunisia	46	2.0	46	2.0	0.02	0.9
110.	Turkmenistan	77	0.2	500	9.6	—	—
111.	Ukraine	32	2.0	128	3.2	—	1.8
112.	Vanuatu	79	13.8	79	13.8	0.35	—
	Lower Middle Income	67	4.9	99	8.2	0.06	3.1
113.	Antigua & Barbuda	—	—	—	—	—	—
114.	Argentina	52	4.6	52	13.1	1.43	1.4
115.	Barbados	48	17.0	48	55.5	—	—
116.	Belize	51	—	51	—	—	3.0
117.	Botswana	42	4.6	62	7.3	0.09	1.8
118.	Chile	36	8.3	36	8.3	0.02	1.5
119.	Costa Rica	42	4.2	42	4.9	0.02	1.2
120.	Croatia	84	10.1	—	11.8	0.04	1.5
121.	Czech. Republic	154	13.2	154	17.6	0.18	1.5
122.	Dominica	55	8.8	55	17.6	0.08	—
123.	Equatorial Guinea	—	—	—	—	—	—
124.	Estonia	64	7.6	64	7.6	0.12	1.2
125.	Gabon	100	17.5	100	—	—	3.7
126.	Grenada	85	9.7	85	14.7	0.08	2.5

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
127.	Guadeloupe	51	15.3	—	—	0.03	—
128.	Hungary	166	16.7	—	21.6	0.18	2.0
129.	Latvia	61	6.2	61	12.3	0.14	1.3
130.	Lebanon	71	7.6	71	7.6	0.09	—
131.	Libya	—	—	—	—	—	—
132.	Lithuania	88	8.1	88	9.8	0.18	1.5
133.	Malaysia	13	6.7	13	12.1	0.03	1.7
134.	Mauritius	35	3.1	70	7.9	0.07	0.8
135.	Mayotte	—	—	—	—	—	—
136.	Mexico	106	14.7	106	18.6	0.14	—
137.	Northern Marianas	—	—	—	—	—	—
138.	Oman	26	7.8	26	7.8	0.06	1.0
139.	Panama	40	6.2	40	14.9	0.09	—
140.	Poland	77	9.0	77	9.0	0.09	2.0
141.	Russia	192	3.5	345	—	—	—
142.	Seychelles	96	13.1	96	14.3	0.16	—
143.	Slovak Republic	33	8.1	33	11.4	0.19	1.6
144.	South Africa	38	13.2	38	17.5	0.18	—
145.	St. Kitts and Nevis	—	—	—	—	—	—
146.	St. Lucia	46	8.1	46	14.8	0.09	—
147.	St. Vincent	37	7.5	37	17.6	0.10	2.4
148.	Trinidad & Tobago	11	4.6	22	27.8	0.04	0.6
149.	Turkey	5	8.1	5	28.1	0.15	2.3
150.	Uruguay	45	9.0	45	17.1	0.14	1.8
151.	Venezuela	36	6.5	49	8.1	0.02	1.2
	Upper Middle Income	63	9.0	67	15.1	0.15	1.7
152.	Andorra	44	4.7	44	4.7	0.15	—
153.	Aruba	127	8.5	127	8.5	0.09	—
154.	Australia	158	14.0	158	26.5	0.23	0.5

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
155.	Austria	123	19.3	202	22.9	0.18	0.7
156.	Bahamas	40	—	—	—	—	—
157.	Bahrain	53	3.1	53	5.7	0.06	0.2
158.	Belgium	80	20.7	80	20.7	0.18	0.7
159.	Bermuda	60	26.0	60	32.0	0.20	0.9
160.	Brunei Darusalm	—	—	—	—	—	—
161.	Canada	45	16.3	—	29.6	—	0.7
162.	Cyprus	78	14.7	78	14.7	0.08	0.8
163.	Denmark	154	19.3	154	19.3	0.12	0.5
164.	Faroe Islands	121	18.6	121	18.6	0.16	—
165.	Finland	120	15.1	120	15.1	0.18	0.5
166.	France	67	16.9	67	16.9	0.20	0.6
167.	French Guiana	—	—	—	—	—	—
168.	French Polynesia	54	21.7	54	21.7	0.35	—
169.	Germany	72	19.3	72	19.3	0.12	0.7
170.	Greece	35	14.4	35	14.4	0.09	0.9
171.	Greenland	81	24.3	81	24.3	0.21	—
172.	Guam	35	14.0	60	36.0	—	—
173.	Guernsey	123	10.0	123	10.0	0.11	—
174.	Hong Kong, China	61	11.6	61	14.4	—	0.6
175.	Iceland	86	13.2	86	13.2	0.09	—
176.	Ireland	147	29.2	147	29.2	0.18	1.0
177.	Israel	61	—	61	—	—	0.6
178.	Italy	169	16.4	169	24.7	0.13	0.8
179.	Japan	345	15.9	345	23.4	0.08	—
180.	Jersey	140	18.6	140	18.6	0.01	—
181.	Korea (Rep.)	59	5.1	59	5.1	0.04	0.4
182.	Kuwait	121	8.6	259	20.1	—	0.5
183.	Luxembourg	70	22.2	70	22.2	0.11	0.4
184.	Macao, China	48	8.1	48	24.1	—	0.5

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
185.	Malta	67	7.3	134	19.0	0.15	0.6
186.	Martinique	151	15.3	—	—	0.33	—
187.	Neth. Antilles	99	10.1	99	10.1	0.16	—
188.	Netherlands	—	—	—	—	—	0.7
189.	New Caledonia	—	—	—	—	—	—
190.	New Zealand	31	27.1	37	39.7	—	1.4
191.	Norway	152	24.3	152	24.3	0.19	0.5
192.	Portugal	105	18.5	87	15.7	0.22	1.2
193.	Puerto Rico	50	—	120	—	0.39	—
194.	Qatar	55	9.1	55	32.0	—	0.4
195.	Reunion	51	15.3	—	—	0.33	—
196.	Saudi Arabia	80	8.0	80	8.0	0.04	1.0
197.	Singapore	19	5.2	19	7.9	0.02	0.3
198.	Slovenia	86	10.3	86	10.3	0.08	0.9
199.	Spain	72	15.3	72	15.3	0.17	—
200.	Sweden	125	16.1	—	—	0.15	0.5
201.	Switzerland	33	19.6	33	19.6	0.19	—
202.	Taiwan, China	94	1.6	94	8.3	0.05	0.2
203.	U. Arab Emirates	49	4.1	49	4.1	0.24	—
204.	United Kingdom	131	20.1	173	24.0	0.21	—
205.	United States	43	24.3	74	43.8	—	—
206.	Virgin Islands(US)	—	—	—	—	—	—
	High Income	87	14.9	100	19.0	0.13	0.6
	World	66	8.0	81	11.1	0.11	4.4
	Africa	51	5.1	59	5.7	0.12	11.3
	Americas	65	8.3	75	16.0	0.11	3.9
	Asia	65	4.1	92	7.6	0.04	3.0
	Europe	87	12.3	101	14.9	0.13	1.2
	Oceania	52	10.7	66	16.1	0.13	1.8

Prepaid cellular tariffs, US\$ August 2005

Sl.No.	Name of the Country	Connection charge 2005	Per minute local call		Cost of local SMS 2005	100 minutes of use As % of GNI	
			Peak 2005	Off-peak 2005		US\$	Per Capita
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Afghanistan	45.00	0.10	0.10	0.05	10.00	—
2.	Bangladesh	23.67	0.09	0.05	0.03	7.10	21.3
3.	Benin	35.02	0.28	0.18	0.05	23.04	62.8
4.	Bhutan	13.95	0.12	0.11	0.05	11.34	21.6
5.	Burkina Faso	2.65	0.25	0.25	0.06	25.00	100.0
6.	Burundi	7.08	0.17	0.17		16.95	226.0
7.	Cambodia	—	0.06	0.05	0.03	5.65	22.06
8.	Cameroon	—	0.42	0.28	0.13	35.02	66.7
9.	Central African Rep.	36.87	0.18	0.18	—	18.43	85.1
10.	Chad	—	0.28	0.22	0.05	24.89	124.4
11.	Comoros	—	0.25	0.25	0.12	24.58	65.5
12.	Congo	4.61	0.36	0.28	0.09	31.80	58.7
13.	Cote d'Ivoire	—	0.41	0.15	0.09	27.65	50.3
14.	D.P.R. Korea	—	—	—	—	—	—
15.	D.R. Congo	—	—	—	—	—	—
16.	Eritrea	—	0.13	0.09	—	10.74	67.8
17.	Ethiopia	50.59	0.08	0.03	—	5.63	75.1
18.	Gambia	—	—	—	—	—	—
19.	Ghana	—	0.20	0.13	0.07	16.69	62.6
20.	Guinea	—	—	—	—	—	—
21.	Guinea-Bissau	—	—	—	—	—	—
22.	Haiti	57.38	0.12	0.12	—	12.05	36.1
23.	India	2.30	0.02	0.02	0.03	2.33	5.2
24.	Kenya	32.79	0.21	0.21	0.07	20.98	63.0
25.	Kyrgyzstan	—	0.09	0.07	—	8.38	29.6

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
26.	Lao P.D.R.	—	—	—	—	—	—
27.	Lesotho	—	0.44	0.24	0.11	34.04	67.0
28.	Liberia	—	—	—	—	—	—
29.	Madagascar	7.72	0.16	0.16	0.06	16.37	67.7
30.	Malawi	4.13	0.25	0.16	0.05	20.58	154.3
31.	Mali	—	0.38	0.26	—	31.80	131.6
32.	Mauritania	—	—	—	—	—	—
33.	Moldova	5.62	0.20	0.20	0.08	20.6	40.8
34.	Mongolia	14.91	0.21	0.19	0.03	19.86	49.6
35.	Mozambique	—	—	—	—	—	—
36.	Myanmar	—	—	—	—	—	—
37.	Nepal	14.23	0.07	0.07	0.01	6.66	33.3
38.	Nicaragua	—	0.46	0.28	0.06	37.13	60.2
39.	Niger	—	0.36	0.22	0.07	29.03	174.2
40.	Nigeria	—	0.28	0.26	0.11	27.37	93.8
41.	Pakistan	2.55	0.09	0.09	0.03	8.69	20.0
42.	Papua New Guinea	—	—	—	—	—	—
43.	Rwanda	—	0.27	0.23	0.10	25.10	136.9
44.	S. Tome & Principe	—	—	—	—	—	—
45.	Senegal	4.61	0.21	0.18	0.04	19.82	44.0
46.	Sierra Leone	—	—	—	—	—	—
47.	Solomen Island	—	—	—	—	—	—
48.	Somalia	—	—	—	—	—	—
49.	Sudan	30.55	0.10	0.10	0.02	9.78	25.5
50.	Tazikistan	11.70	0.05	0.05	—	4.87	27.9
51.	Tanzania	—	0.23	0.13	0.04	18.06	72.2
52.	Togo	—	—	—	—	—	—
53.	Uganda	11.56	0.19	0.10	0.05	14.60	70.1
54.	Uzbekistan	—	—	—	—	—	—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
55.	Vietnam	—	0.15	0.15	—	14.97	37.4
56.	Yemen	—	—	—	—	—	—
57.	Zambia	3.29	0.21	0.13	0.05	17.32	54.7
58.	Zimbabwe	30.13	0.46	0.41	0.10	43.63	109.1
	Low Income	17.70	0.22	8.17	0.06	19.31	74.6
59.	Albania	27.67	0.46	0.46	0.17	46.12	31.8
60.	Algeria	19.15	0.16	0.16	0.08	16.41	10.2
61.	Angola	48.00	0.24	0.16	0.08	20.00	32.4
62.	Armenia	24.54	0.37	0.26	0.07	31.29	39.5
63.	Azerbaijan	17.02	0.26	0.13	0.05	19.15	28.0
64.	Belarus	—	0.04	0.04	0.04	3.73	2.8
65.	Bolivia	3.73	0.22	0.11	0.05	16.77	22.4
66.	Bosnia	28.04	0.21	0.21	0.06	21.33	16.7
67.	Brazil	10.29	0.45	0.24	0.13	34.57	15.3
68.	Bulgaria	18.55	0.37	0.37	0.11	36.62	20.6
69.	Cape Verde	45.21	0.39	0.28	0.17	33.53	27.9
70.	China	—	—	—	—	—	—
71.	Colombia	—	0.12	0.09	0.06	10.41	6.9
72.	Cuba	111.11	0.46	0.30	0.15	37.96	21.2
73.	Dzibouti	55.10	0.17	0.11	—	13.77	18.2
74.	Dominican Rep.	—	0.20	0.20	0.02	19.60	11.0
75.	Ecuador	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0
76.	Egypt	19.97	0.09	0.09	0.09	8.68	7.5
77.	El Salvador	—	0.39	0.22	—	30.32	15.6
78.	Fizi	52.98	1.18	0.24	0.12	70.83	37.9
79.	Georgia	—	0.16	0.16	0.03	15.92	24.8
80.	Guatemala	—	0.18	0.08	0.07	12.86	8.1
81.	Guyana	25.07	0.21	0.16	—	18.38	24.5
82.	Honduras	5.01	0.25	0.15	0.05	20.05	24.8

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
83.	Indonesia	2.61	0.10	0.10	0.02	10.44	15.5
84.	Iran(IR)	—	—	—	—	—	—
85.	Iraq	—	—	—	—	—	—
86.	Jamaica	16.18	0.16	0.11	0.04	13.75	5.5
87.	Jordan	17.52	0.17	0.04	0.07	10.51	6.8
88.	Kazakhstan	—	—	—	—	—	—
89.	Kiribati	—	—	—	—	—	—
90.	Maldives	38.91	0.13	0.08	0.02	10.47	5.3
91.	Marshall Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—
92.	Micronesia	—	—	—	—	—	—
93.	Morocco	11.12	0.40	0.24	0.11	32.24	29.5
94.	Namibia	13.81	0.38	0.15	0.09	26.7	16.3
95.	Palestine	32.96	0.17	0.17	—	17.26	18.7
96.	Paraguay	10.18	0.12	0.03	0.02	7.64	8.3
97.	Peru	—	0.38	0.38	0.10	38.37	21.5
98.	Philippines	1.61	0.14	0.07	0.02	10.75	11.9
99.	Romania	—	0.19	0.19	0.06	19.24	10.2
100.	Samoa	7.33	0.31	0.10	0.08	20.27	16.9
101.	Serbia & Montenegro	14.51	0.18	0.07	0.04	12.46	7.8
102.	Sri Lanka	28.78	0.11	0.07	0.00	8.93	11.5
103.	Suriname	—	0.25	0.25	0.05	25.00	13.2
104.	Swaziland	9.83	0.39	0.30	0.12	34.80	30.9
105.	Syria	73.37	0.14	0.14	0.09	13.76	14.2
106.	TFYR Macedonia	14.96	0.46	0.18	0.10	31.92	19.3
107.	Thailand	21.50	0.12	0.12	0.07	12.10	6.6
108.	Tonga	—	—	—	—	—	—
109.	Tunisia	7.63	0.14	0.11	0.05	12.21	6.5
110.	Turkmenistan	—	—	—	—	—	—
111.	Ukraine	11.48	0.19	0.19	—	19.13	23.7
112.	Vanuatu	43.82	0.35	0.35	0.18	35.06	35.7

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Lower Middle Income	20.22	0.26	0.17	0.07	21.35	17.4
113.	Antigua & Barbuda	—	0.33	0.33	—	33.09	4.3
114.	Argentina	—	0.19	0.11	0.05	15.16	4.8
115.	Barbados	—	0.15	0.05	0.10	9.85	1.3
116.	Belize	20.25	0.43	0.30	0.13	36.71	13.1
117.	Botswana	13.81	0.33	0.08	0.04	20.72	7.0
118.	Chile	12.50	0.59	0.59	0.09	58.93	16.2
119.	Costa Rica	—	0.06	0.05	0.00	5.54	1.5
120.	Croatia	50.42	0.20	0.20	0.07	20.17	4.5
121.	Czech Republic	9.83	0.30	0.30	0.15	30.09	5.0
122.	Dominica	9.19	0.26	0.22	0.07	23.90	8.6
123.	Equatorial Guinea	—	—	—	—	—	—
124.	Estonia	5.80	0.30	0.15	0.12	22.41	5.0
125.	Gabon	—	0.34	0.16	—	24.89	8.9
126.	Grenada	—	0.26	0.22	0.07	23.90	7.7
127.	Guadeloupe	24.18	0.45	0.45	0.15	44.74	—
128.	Hungary	3.94	0.22	0.10	0.12	15.76	3.0
129.	Latvia	5.22	0.38	0.06	0.10	21.91	6.0
130.	Lebanon	47.17	0.47	0.47	0.09	47.04	14.0
131.	Libya	—	—	—	—	—	—
132.	Lithuania	—	0.10	0.10	0.04	10.16	2.7
133.	Malaysia	5.36	0.14	0.10	0.01	12.06	3.7
134.	Mauritius	—	—	—	—	—	—
135.	Mayone	—	—	—	—	—	—
136.	Mexico	—	0.14	0.14	0.08	14.11	2.7
137.	Northern Marianas	—	—	—	—	—	—
138.	Oman	36.27	0.14	0.12	0.03	12.95	2.1
139.	Panama	—	—	—	—	—	—
140.	Poland	—	0.23	0.23	0.07	23.19	5.3
141.	Russia	—	0.15	0.08	0.06	11.27	5.2
142.	Seychelles	—	0.77	0.39	0.19	57.88	9.3
143.	Slovak Republic	18.92	0.30	0.12	0.11	21.16	5.1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
144.	South Africa	22.54	0.41	0.41	0.12	40.85	17.8
145.	St. Kitts and Nevis	—	—	—	—	—	—
146.	St. Lucia	9.19	0.26	0.20	0.07	22.98	6.8
147.	St. Vincent	9.19	0.26	0.20	0.07	22.98	8.3
148.	Trinidad & Tobago	24.06	0.26	0.09	0.06	17.48	2.7
149.	Turkey	—	—	—	—	—	—
150.	Uruguay	—	0.37	0.37	0.04	37.06	11.6
151.	Venezuela	23.27	0.39	0.09	0.06	24.04	8.3
	Upper middle income	14.04	0.30	0.21	0.08	25.26	6.8
152.	Andorra	—	0.54	0.33	—	44.12	—
153.	Aruba	26.25	0.40	0.18	0.08	29.21	2.0
154.	Australia	18.94	0.29	0.01	0.19	15.25	0.8
155.	Austria	24.06	0.36	0.36	0.27	36.64	1.6
156.	Bahamas	49.75	0.33	0.15	0.05	24.21	1.9
157.	Bahrain	21.18	0.12	0.10	0.13	10.84	0.9
158.	Belgium	30.23	0.30	0.24	0.18	27.51	1.3
159.	Bermuda	9.99	0.30	0.30	—	30.25	1.0
160.	Brunei Darussalam	23.95	0.24	0.12	0.06	18.20	1.8
161.	Canada	—	0.20	0.20	0.12	20.62	1.0
162.	Cyprus	31.72	0.08	0.08	0.02	8.33	0.5
163.	Denmark	16.05	0.12	0.12	0.03	12.28	0.4
164.	Faroe Islands	16.05	0.49	0.32	—	41.00	—
165.	Finland	21.64	0.19	0.19	0.13	19.54	0.9
166.	France	36.28	0.79	0.42	0.16	61.25	3.0
167.	French Guiana	24.18	0.41	0.41	0.13	41.52	5.8
168.	French Polynesia	24.50	0.84	0.84	0.34	85.20	6.3
169.	Germany	24.12	0.59	0.35	0.23	47.75	2.3
170.	Greece	24.06	0.40	0.40	0.13	40.30	3.7
171.	Greenland	64.83	0.28	0.20	0.06	24.43	—
172.	Guam	—	0.25	0.25	0.05	25.25	—
173.	Guernsey	61.30	0.26	0.26	0.18	26.53	1.0
174.	Hong Kong, China	12.87	0.02	0.00	—	1.31	0.1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
175.	Iceland	46.13	0.17	0.17	0.15	17.20	0.7
176.	Ireland	12.08	0.39	0.23	0.16	31.22	1.4
177.	Israel	22.12	0.14	0.19	0.08	16.84	1.2
178.	Italy	48.37	0.30	0.30	0.18	30.28	1.7
179.	Japan	26.79	0.27	0.18	0.04	22.59	0.8
180.	Jersey	61.30	0.26	0.26	0.12	26.53	—
181.	Korea (Rep.)	—	—	—	—	—	—
182.	Kuwait	—	0.14	0.14	0.07	13.76	0.9
183.	Luxembourg	36.28	0.15	0.09	0.15	12.15	0.3
184.	Macao, China.	—	0.13	0.07	0.03	10.36	0.7
185.	Malta	14.19	0.57	0.33	0.09	45.26	5.0
186.	Martinique	24.18	0.45	0.45	0.15	45.19	3.5
187.	Neth. Antilles	—	0.48	0.48	0.14	48.36	5.3
188.	Netherlands	30.23	0.42	0.42	0.28	42.74	2.0
189.	New Caledonia	—	—	—	—	—	—
190.	New Zealand	23.81	0.61	0.61	0.14	61.15	4.7
191.	Norway	30.63	0.43	0.43	0.12	43.15	1.2
192.	Portugal.	—	0.42	0.42	0.18	42.74	4.3
193.	Puerto Rico	25.00	0.15	0.15	0.10	15.15	1.6
194.	Qatar	82.39	0.20	0.20	0.11	19.97	0.8
195.	Reunion	6.05	0.41	0.23	0.19	32.45	—
196.	Saudi Arabia	53.32	0.23	0.23	0.07	22.89	3.0
197.	Singapore	—	0.13	0.13	0.03	13.31	0.8
198.	Slovenia	21.25	0.22	0.03	—	12.62	1.3
199.	Spain	30.23	0.25	0.25	0.18	25.65	1.8
200.	Sweden	12.87	0.51	0.04	0.16	28.06	1.2
201.	Switzerland	37.98	0.77	0.62	0.16	70.15	2.1
202.	Taiwan, China	31.30	0.19	0.11	0.08	15.21	1.4
203.	United Arab Emirates	44.91	0.07	0.05	—	5.78	0.4
204.	United Kingdom	—	0.09	0.09	0.09	8.84	0.4
205.	United States	—	0.10	0.10	0.10	10.10	0.3
206.	Virgin Mands(US)	—	—	—	—	—	—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	High Income	27.35	0.32	0.26	0.13	28.49	1.8
	World	21.01	0.27	0.20	0.09	23.77	25.2
	Africa	13.63	0.29	0.20	0.09	24.31	70.05
	Americas	13.30	0.28	0.21	0.08	24.68	10.63
	Asia	21.48	0.15	0.12	0.05	13.56	13.44
	Europe	21.52	0.31	0.23	0.12	27.36	6.33
	Oceania	24.48	0.55	0.34	0.15	44.43	17.03

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the table it has been stated in the reply placed by the hon'ble Minister, that the pulse rate of Airtel, Reliance and VSNL at international level is comparatively very low as compared to BSNL.

Through you, I would like to ask the hon'ble Minister whether with a view to promote trade in SAARC countries the Government do not think that the pulse rate of BSNL at international level should be lower than other telecom service providers?

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the pulse rate of every telecom operator is not fixed. The duration of call also vary, and Somewhere the pulse rate is of three minutes and somewhere it is of 30 seconds Every operator has different pulse rates, therefore uniformity is not possible. SAARC countries are our friendly countries and BSNL PSUs are operating in those countries. Beside that, TRAI has the right to fix tariffs. TRAI gives facility to common people in rural areas with certain instructions. Beside that, for forbearance the people will use sim of the company which will provide them more benefit. They will not use the sim of company which will not provide them benefit. I am also of the opinion that SAARC countries are our friends, they should have better and simplified telecom services.

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Sir, I am not satisfied with this reply, because it seems that the time limit for executing this task has not been fixed. Only Airtel, Reliance and VSNL are providing long distance international call services, whereas BSNL has not yet

started international long distance call facility, which is called ILD. Broadband facility at the rate of Rs. 250 per month is given for residential purpose and if unlimited service is availed, it costs Rs. 900 per month. If we use broadband service, we have to give Rs. 700 per month. I would like to ask the hon'ble Minister whether the Government propose to start unlimited broadband service for business purposes If so, the time by which it is likely to be done?

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD: As I have said, TRAI has the right to fix rates for rural areas. After that Telecom companies offer various packages. Some are charging low rental and some are charging high rental, at some places pulse rate is low, somewhere it is high. We started broadband services in 200 cities at the initial phase. We have given 4000 broadband connections. There is no difference between business and private operators. But we definitely want, that broadband connections should be provided at cheapest rates, whether it is used for business or domestic purposes more and more people should be able to use it. We have fixed a target of giving nine million new broad band connections during the current year.

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question was whether it would be made unlimited for the business purpose, I have not got the reply.

DR. SHAKEEL AHMED: Sir, the telecom companies present their proposals from time to time and the consumers choose the package which they like. The Government, the BSNL definitely want the expansion of broadband, and our broadband has been a great success, but we are sorry that we are not able to meet the

demand. We will try to fulfill the demand at the earliest. The consumer chooses the package which suits his needs from the various packages available.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: So you have no proposal to reduce.

SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN: Sir, I want to know whether the Government will consider to remove the disparities in the tariff rates among the tele-service providers in India and ensure a uniform tariff levied through the country the first.

MR. SPEAKER: He has answered it.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI A. RAJA): Sir, I may be permitted to add to that. The problem, as my colleague has put it, is that the tariff is not fixed by the TRAI, who is the regulator supposed to fix the tariff. The concept which is being given by the tariff is the concept of forbearance. We have a healthy competition between the existing operators. They are at liberty to have various packages, as my colleague put it. Sometimes, the rental charges may be free, the pulse rate may be high or they can reduce the pulse rate and rental charges may be in excess, including the other facilities. Likewise, they are giving separate packages.

Even in the other House, when I was responding to a question, a specific question was asked by an hon. Member....

MR. SPEAKER: You need not refer to that.

SHRI A. RAJA: Sir, even here, generally, I am being asked by the hon. Members whether the tariff is going to be fixed or not. This point is well taken for the last 15 days in both the Houses. We have decided that let us refer the matter back to the Regulator and if any solution is available, then I will come back to the House.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shrimati Kiran Maheshwari has raised very good question about the tariff. The hon'ble Minister has also given reply in this regard. Everything depends on better network and

better services. BSNL has received very poor response in comparison to rates and networks of various companies. The rural areas have also found a mention in the reply. I would like to tell the hon'ble Minister that the situation there is very bad. The PCO owners are doing business everywhere. They are depending on telecom network of other companies except BSNL will the Government make provision for increasing networking facility and reducing rates of BSNL for entering in the competition?

[English]

SHRI A. RAJA: Sir, again the quality also is being controlled and monitored by TRAI. I have not come across any specific allegation against BSNL or MTNL, owned by the Government as PSUs, that the quality of services are comparably less than the other private operators. With regard to the rural tele-density, we have achieved more. The Government commitment is that by 2007, we have to reach seven percent, but we have reached more than that.

MR. SPEAKER: Q.No.247—Shri Bapu Hari Chaur—
not present.

Shrimati Bhavana Pundalikrao Gawali—not present.

Q.No. 248—Shri Prakash B. Jadhao—not present.

Shri Chandra Mani Tripathi

Minimum Support Price for Cotton

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*248. SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:
SHRI PRAKASH B. JADHAO:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the minimum support price of cotton fixed by the State Governments particularly Maharashtra during the current year alongwith the cost of production of cotton in different areas;

(b) the extent to which farmer's interests have been safeguarded thereunder; and

(c) the details of cotton production during the last three years, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of cotton are fixed by the Union Government and not by the State Governments.

Government of India fixes MSPs for two basic varieties of cotton viz. medium staple cotton (i.e. J-34/F-414/H-777) and long staple cotton (i.e. H-4) on the basis of recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) at the country level. While recommending the MSP, the CACP takes into account the relevant factors including the cost of production of cotton. The projected costs of production (measured in terms of A2 + FL cost viz. all expenses in cash and kind including rent paid for leased-in land and imputed value of wages of family labour) of cotton for the country and the MSPs for those basic varieties for the 2007-08 season are as follows:

Items	Cotton season 2007-08
Weighted average A2 + FL cost (in Rs. per Quintal)	1528.11
MSP for medium staple (F-414/H-777/J-34) (Rs. per Quintal)	1800
MSP for short staple (H-4) (Rs. per Quintal)	2030

After the Government fixes the MSP for aforesaid two basic varieties of cotton, the Textile Commissioner, Ministry of Textiles fixes the MSP for other 26 varieties of Fair Average Quality with regard to their quality differentials, normal price differentials and other relevant factors.

The Government also arranges the procurement of cotton through the designated agency viz. the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI). During the year 2006-07, the CCI has purchased 11,78,455 bales (of 170 Kgs. each) of cotton.

(c) The State-wise details of cotton production during the last three years are shown below:

(Production in lakh Bales of 170 Kg each)

States	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	2108.0	2127.0	2097.0
Gujarat	6772.0	8787.0	9000.0
Haryana	1499.0	1814.0	1912.0
Karnataka	554.0	440.0	258.0
Kerala	3.5	2.0	0.0
Madhya Pradesh	745.1	829.0	425.0
Maharashtra	3160.0	4950.0	5805.0
Meghalaya	7.8	0.0	0.0
Orissa	144.8	108.0	146.0
Punjab	2395.0	2678.0	2440.0
Rajasthan	880.5	747.0	763.0

1	2	3	4
Tamil Nadu	213.3	174.0	82.0
Uttar Pradesh	5.2	1.0	0.0
West Bengal	6.0	23.0	0.0
Others*	4.8	16.0	14.0
All India	18499.0	22696.0	22943.0

*Others include Assam, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Pondichery.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had asked a question to the Minister of Agriculture regarding minimum support price of cotton. The hon'ble Minister has stated in his reply that the Government of India fixes minimum support prices for two basic varieties of cotton viz. medium staple cotton and long staple cotton on the basis of recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices at the national level. The Minister has stated this, but I would like to know as to what is the cost of production of quintal one cotton about which he has discussed here, because the same cotton goes to the factory and when the cloth is manufactured, then its price goes up very high. But, when the matter comes up to pay the farmers, a vague reply is given and thus, they do not get the proper support price. I would like to know as to what is the actual cost of production of one-quintal cotton and on the basis of it how much support price has been fixed.

[English]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: It has also been given in the reply that the weighted average of A2 and FL costs per quintal is Rs. 1528.11. This is for the cotton season of 2007-08. Of course, this is a weighted average for all over India. Andhra Pradesh has a different situation; Andhra Pradesh has got Rs. 1163 per quintal cost; Gujarat has got Rs. 1420 per quintal cost; Haryana has got Rs. 1349 per quintal cost. Like that, it differs from State to State, but the weighted average is Rs. 1,528 per quintal. When the 1,528 is the weighted average for the whole country, the MSP for the medium staple has been given Rs. 1,800 per quintal and for short staple it is given Rs. 2,030 per quintal. But, as on today, whatever

information I am getting, today's market price is higher than the price which has been fixed by the Government of India. In fact, the purchases from the Cotton Corporation of India are also not up to the mark.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI: Sir, I have seen the thing which has been mentioned by him, but I would like to know particularly as to what cost or expense is involved on its production and in comparison to it how much support price is fixed. But, the hon'ble Minister has given no reply of it. In Maharashtra, maximum number of farmers are committing suicide, whereas the hon'ble Minister comes from this State, so will he take some effective measures to protect the interests of the farmers by fixing support price more than what has been fixed today?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: He is a Minister for India.

[Translation]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: This policy is for the whole country which includes Maharashtra also.

[English]

As I said, the weighted average cost per quintal is Rs. 1,528; and it is given Rs. 2,000 per quintal. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI K.S. RAO: The hon. Minister in his reply has stated that the CACP is deciding the Minimum Support Price on the basis of the projected cost of production where he says, it is measured in terms of A2+FL costs,

all expenses in cash and kind including the rent paid for the leased—in land and imputed value of wages of the family labour.

MR. SPEAKER: That is there.

SHRI K.S. RAO: Yes, Sir. What I want to say is that a lot of cotton growers, cotton growing farmers are committing suicides on the basis that they are not getting even the input cost in their own land where they are not paying lease, whereas the hon. Minister says he is including even the leased-in land price. Actually even this year there were cases of suicides, and there is huge demand uproar to increase the MSP of the cotton from Rs. 2,000 per quintal to Rs. 3,500 per quintal. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will verify whether this rent of leased land also is included in the price correctly.

MR. SPEAKER: He has said that.

SHRI K.S. RAO: He has said it. If so, I would like to know whether he will consider the demand of the cotton growers to increase the price to Rs. 3,500 per quintal.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Generally, when we get a report from the CACP, CACP does not take a final view about the price. Ultimately, the Cabinet takes a final decision about CACP on the basis of the recommendation of the CACP. Whatever the decision has been, that decision has been taken for the whole yearly cotton season and for the entire country.

You cannot change the decision for every month or every year because that will invite a serious problem. I have to make one position very clear. When there is a shortage, in that year the Government do announce an additional bonus but for the last two years, the country's cotton production is one of the highest, which the country has seen. Secondly, the domestic and international markets are also very good, and that is the reason why there is no other decision has been taken.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, production of cotton is the highest in the Vidharbha region of Maharashtra State and so is the production of sugarcane in that region. So the Government should take a decision to bring cotton mills on co-operative level for

the cotton producers on the same line co-operative sugar mills have been setup for manufacturing sugar from sugarcane. I would like to know whether the Government intend to make such an experiment for cotton on co-operative basis?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, although some States have taken a decision in this regard, but as far as Maharashtra is concerned, ginning pitching mill has been set up at co-operative level. At the same time, co-operative spinning mills have also been set up in some districts. But there has not been good experience about the co-operative sector, particularly the spinning mills for the last many years. All the spinning mills have suffered big losses there and this problem is also before the State Government.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Q. No. 249—Shri Rayapati Sambasiva Rao—not present.

Shri S.K. Kharventhan.

Upliftment of Construction Workers

*249. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN:
SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to formulate a comprehensive policy for the overall upliftment of the labourers in the housing sector/construction industry;

(b) if so the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to provide social security like job security, better working conditions, medical care etc. to the workers engaged in housing sector/construction industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The Government have enacted the Building and other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment & Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and the Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Act, 1996 for

the betterment of working and living conditions of workers engaged in construction industry. The Building and other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment & Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 envisages constitution of State Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Boards at State level for providing various welfare/social security measures to the building and other construction workers, like immediate assistance in case of accident, medical assistance in case of major ailments, group insurance, maternity benefit to female workers, education to children and old age pension. The legislation has provisions for regulating service conditions as well as detailed provisions for safety and health of the construction workers at workplace. Regarding regulatory provisions, implementation of the Act in respect of establishments under the Central sphere lies with the Central Industrial Relations Machinery (CIRM) and in case of establishments in the State Governments, the responsibility rests with the State Government.

The Government has introduced the 'Unorganized Sector Workers Social Security Bill, 2007' with the objective to provide social security to the workers, including building and other construction workers, in the unorganized sector.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Sir, construction workers are a part of the country's unorganized sector, which accounts for 93 per cent of the total workforce of 457 million people. However, their situation has not improved since Independence. They have no guarantee of regular employment and they work for low wages without medical and other benefits.

The Committee headed by Dr. Arjun Sengupta has recommended various benefits like health insurance, maternity benefits, insurance to cover natural and accidental death, old age pension, etc. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please put your question. There is not much time.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether all the recommendations contained in Dr. Arjun Sengupta's Committee Report have been implemented. If not, the reasons thereof and the time by which it is likely to be implemented.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, as far as construction workers are concerned, there are already Acts, that is, the Construction Workers Regulation of

Employment and Conditions of Service Act, 1996 and the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996. Sir, through these Acts, we have been able to provide social security to the workers in case of accidents, loss of limbs and death, and this cess is being used for the welfare of the construction workers.

Other than that, the question raised by the hon. Member is about Dr. Arjun Sengupta Committee's Report. Sir, the Unorganized Sector Workers' Bill has been introduced in both the Houses of Parliament and we will be able to deal with the problem of the construction workers.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Sir, the Government of Tamil Nadu has implemented their own legislation for the welfare of the building and other construction workers and formed the 'Tamil Nadu Construction Workers' Welfare Board' for them. Some States have implemented the Central legislation and the remaining States have not implemented any laws for their welfare so far.

I would like to know whether the Union Government has issued any orders/directions to the State Governments which have not so far implemented the laws for the welfare of the construction workers, and if not, the reasons thereof.

MR. SPEAKER: The Central Act should be applicable everywhere.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, we have taken up the matter with every State. Eighteen major States in the country have already accepted and implemented it also. We are trying to bring in line the rest of the States, and we are monitoring the matter on regular intervals to see that every State will implement this law.

MR. SPEAKER: Q. No. 250—Shri Raghunath Jha—not present.

Q. No. 251—Shri Harisinh Chavda—not present.

Shri Mansukhbhai D. Vasava—not present.

Q. No. 252—Shri M.P. Veerendra Kumar.

Decline in Export of Textiles

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*252. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR:
SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the textile industry in the country is heading for recession owing to sluggish orders for exports which have fallen considerably during the first three months of the current fiscal year; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken by the Government to ensure the continuity of the jobs of the workers in the industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The provisional data of the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics, Kolkata, indicates a decline in India's textiles exports during the first quarter of current financial year by 14% in US dollar terms and 22% in Rupee terms compared to corresponding period of preceding year.

(b) The Government is seized of the submissions of textiles export promotion councils and other industry associations, which mainly attribute the decline; in India's textiles exports to recent appreciation in the value of the Indian rupee vis-a-vis the US Dollar. As per Textiles Industry estimates; export of Rupees one crore result in incremental employment of 35 jobs. The Government has taken certain measures to strengthen the textiles industry, which include increase in Duty Entitlement Pass Book and Duty Drawback rates, exemption from service tax on select services, reduction in interest rates of pre-shipment and post-shipment credit and faster clearance of arrears of terminal excise duties and Central Sales Tax.

MR. SPEAKER: I have got you the reply. Now, Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Performance of Grain Banks Scheme

*242. SHRI G. M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Grain Banks Scheme being implemented in the tribal areas in the country for providing food security;

(b) whether any assessment has been made regarding the impact of the scheme in providing food security;

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

(d) whether there is any proposal to extend this scheme to the entire country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be extended?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The Village Grain Banks Scheme is being implemented by the Department of Food and Public Distribution from 2005-06 in chronically food scarce areas like drought/natural calamity prone areas, the tribal areas, hot and cold deserts and far flung inaccessible hilly areas. Under the scheme, 30-40 Below Poverty Line and Antyodaya Anna Yojana families can set up grain banks in a village identified by a State Government in tribal and non-tribal areas. The Village Grain Banks are to be managed by Village Panchayats, Women's Self Help Groups and Non-Governmental Organizations.

The objective of the scheme is to provide a safeguard against starvation during periods of natural calamity or lean season when food insecure households do not have sufficient resources to purchase food. Such households can borrow foodgrains from the Grain banks.

The scheme has foodgrains component and cash component. Government releases foodgrains @ one quintal per member family as one time grant to the grain bank. For weights and measures, storage bins, training of member families and transportation, the Government releases funds as one time grant.

Details of Village Grain Banks sanctioned and funds for them released by the Department of Food and Public Distribution are given in the enclosed statement.

(b) and (c) The Department is getting the scheme evaluated by World Food Programme in Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. The evaluation has not been completed.

(d) and (e) The scheme is applicable to all States and Union Territories. Its implementation during the 11th Plan period has been approved.

Statement

Village grain banks sanctioned by department of food and public distribution

Name of State	No. of VGB Sanctioned during 2005-06	No. of VGB sanctioned during 2006-07	Total of Column. (2&3)	Total Funds released (fig. in Lakh of Rs.)
Maharashtra	-	1377	1377	935.29
Andhra Pradesh	1214	3743	4957	3132.84
West Bengal	-	170	170	108.20
Gujarat	-	226	226	133.82
Madhya Pradesh	926	-	926	476.38
Orissa	240	-	240	152.76
Tripura	13	-	13	8.27
Chhattisgarh	262	1642	1904	1211.86
Jharkhand	583	-	583	371.06
Meghalaya	44	-	44	28.00
Uttar Pradesh	-	500	500	257.60
Assam	-	100	100	63.65
Sikkim	-	80	80	50.92
Himachal Pradesh	-	55	55	35.01
Nagaland	-	150	150	95.47
Uttarakhand	-	55	55	35.01
Manipur	-	93	93	59.19
Total	3282	8191	11473	7155.33

[Translation]

Private Companies in Telecom Sector

*247. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE:
SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDALIKRAO GAWALI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is encouraging more participation of private companies in the

Telecommunication Sector in the country, especially in Maharashtra;

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

(c) the break up of density of telephone connections in rural and urban areas circle-wise in the country, especially in Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and

(b) Given the central aim of New Telecom Policy-1999 (NTP-99) to ensure rapid expansion of teledensity, Government, in the public interest in general and consumer interest in particular and for the proper conduct of telegraphs and telecommunications services, has issued licences to Private as well as Public Sector Companies for telecom access services throughout India including Maharashtra. This has resulted in reduction in telecom tariff and unprecedented growth of telecom services due to competition.

(c) The circlewise break up of density of telephone connections in rural and urban areas in the country including Maharashtra as on 30.09.2007 is given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

*Rural and Urban tele-density
(Status as on 30.9.2007)*

SI.No.	Name of Circle	Tele-Density	
		Rural	Urban
1	2	3	4
1.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	13.45	23.72
2.	Andhra Pradesh	8.50	63.21
3.	Assam	2.81	64.45
4.	Bihar	2.45	70.45
5.	Chhattisgarh	1.08	12.96
6.	Gujarat	13.17	52.45
7.	Haryana	13.64	54.79
8.	Himachal Pradesh	26.90	98.46
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	6.29	51.88
10.	Jharkhand	1.07	10.96
11.	Karnataka	9.30	65.41
12.	Kerala	22.71	87.36
13.	Madhya Pradesh	3.89	47.88
14.	Maharashtra (excluding Mumbai)	9.58	48.32

1	2	3	4
15.	North East-I	5.38	74.22
16.	North East-II	2.80	25.18
17.	Orissa	5.48	44.99
18.	Punjab	17.98	79.00
19.	Rajasthan	9.37	51.98
20.	Tamil Nadu (excluding Chennai)	12.82	47.65
21.	Uttarakhand	4.58	23.00
22.	Uttar Pradesh	4.29	46.55
23.	West Bengal (excluding Kolkata)	5.63	44.93
24.	Kolkata	0.00	49.02
25.	Chennai	0.00	86.91
26.	Delhi	0.00	98.70
27.	Mumbai	0.00	72.77
All India		7.30	56.93

[English]

Standard of Sainik Schools

*250. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the standard of Sainik Schools in the country has declined over a period of time;

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

(c) the steps taken to maintain high standards of education in the Sainik Schools;

(d) whether there is any proposal to open more Sainik Schools in the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) to (e) The objectives of Sainik Schools is to create an opportunity in each state to contribute to the officers pool in the armed forces and to bring public school

education within the reach of the common man. There has been a constant improvement in the academic standards of Sainik Schools. A statement showing this trend is enclosed. However, the infrastructure standards and general facilities of these Schools have been facing a decline.

With a view to maintain the academic standards in Sainik Schools, an elaborate programme of in service training to the teachers and competition oriented training for the cadets is being implemented with the assistance of experts from the Services and professional educational institutions/bodies. The Ministry of Defence also provides

training grants to the schools with a view to upgrade training infrastructure and skills.

Sainik Schools are established on receipt of a specific request from a State Government agreeing to provide land alongwith funds for the creation and maintenance of basic infrastructure, equipment and facilities besides scholarships for the cadets of the State. There are 22 Sainik Schools functioning in the country. The Ministry of Defence has accorded 'in principle' approval for the establishment of new Sainik Schools at Chingchip (Mizoram), Ravangla (Sikkim) and Ambikapur (Chhattisgarh).

Statement

A. National Defence Academy (NDA) Selections

Year	Total Intake (both terms)	Number of Sainik School Students selected	Percentage share of Sainik School Students
2003	602	102	16.9%
2004	623	125	20.0%
2005	596	114	19.1%
2006	667	171	25.6%
2007	643	162	25.1%

B. CBSE Class-X Board Examinations

Year	Number appeared	Number passed	Pass percentage	Percentage of 1st Divisions
2003	1548	1513	97.7	80.29
2004	1550	1511	97.61	86.12
2005	1588	1567	98.78	88.79
2006	1606	1570	97.75	85.24
2007	1621	1621	100	91.47

C. CBSE Class-XII Board Examinations

Year	Number appeared	Number passed	Pass percentage	Percentage of 1st Divisions
2003	963	897	93.14	77.36
2004	893	770	86.22	66.34
2005	908	794	87.44	71.55
2006	995	924	92.86	66.12
2007	995	971	97.29	87.10

[Translation]

System for Fixing Minimum Support Price

*251. SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:
SHRI MANSUKHBHAI D. VASAVA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the recommendations made by the Swaminathan Commission with respect to fixing of Minimum Support Price (MSP) for various crops in the country during the last two years and the current year;

(b) whether the Government proposes to make the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) a statutory body and also to bring changes in the present system of fixing prices by it;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) The National Commission on Farmers (Swaminathan Commission) has recommended that:

- (i) the Minimum Support Price (MSP) needs to keep pace with rising input costs,
- (ii) Pulses and Coarse cereals should be purchased for PDS at reasonable MSP.
- (iii) MSP mechanism should be implemented throughout the country,
- (iv) Procurement price could be higher than MSP.
- (v) MSP should be at least 50 per cent more than the weighted average cost of production.

The Government fixes the MSP for crops based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) which, inter-alia, takes into account the cost of production of respective crops. However, it needs to be recognized that there cannot be any mechanical linkage between cost of production and MSP since cost per quintal varies from year to year depending on the yield level. Further, the MSP fixed for the selected crops is uniform for all the states and the

designated agencies intervene in the market when the market prices tend to rule below the fixed MSP. Also, in situations when purchases by the designated agencies at given MSP are not adequate to meet the PDS requirement, higher price is offered through granting bonus over and above the MSP. The CACP is an expert body giving recommendations and providing professional advice to the Government on agricultural price policy and related matters. As such, CACP is autonomous in its functioning.

[English]

Utilisation of Spectrum

*253. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has proposed to enforce more accountability on the Spectrum allotted to PSUs and the Government Departments at no cost or at a very low cost;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether TRAI has observed that the Spectrum allotted to PSUs and the Government Departments are not fully utilized and remain idle;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore; and

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

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) TRAI, in its recent recommendations on "Review of license terms and conditions and capping of number of access providers" dated August 28, 2007 has observed, among others, that presently, large parts of the spectrum have been set aside for use by public sector (e.g. government departments, state-owned enterprises, military). Subjecting public spectrum use to market discipline can result in widespread efficiency gains within and beyond the public sector, etc.

(e) Government has already initiated action to get the spectrum required for mobile services and Broadband Wireless Access (BWA) released from Defence and PSUs. Further, spectrum charges are levied to all PSUs and Government Department/Organizations with a view to

ensuring efficient and optimal usages of spectrum allotted to them.

Procurement of Rice

*254. SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY:
SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government agencies failed to procure sufficient quantity of paddy and rice during the current Kharif season despite the announcement of bonus;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the targets set and achieved for procurement of paddy and rice during the last three years and during the current season, State-wise;

(c) the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government has decided to open more procurement centres and hike the rate of bonus to achieve the procurement targets; and

(e) if so, the details thereof alongwith the other measures proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) As per the estimates given by State Food Secretaries before the

onset of Kharif Marketing Season (KMS), it has been estimated that 276 lakh tonnes of rice would be procured in KMS 2007-08. The procurement in the current KMS 2007-08 upto 28.11.2007 has been 90.29 lakh tonnes of rice against 93.86 lakh tonnes procured in the corresponding period last year. Since KMS 2007-08 commenced on 01.10.2007 and will continue upto 30.9.2008, it is not correct that Government agencies have failed to procure sufficient quantity of paddy and rice in current KMS.

(b) and (c) Since procurement of foodgrains is under Minimum Support Price (MSP) operations, Government agencies have to purchase all quantities offered at MSP by farmers. Therefore no targets are fixed. However, for operational and administrative reasons, estimates of procurement are drawn up for each State based on the assessment made by State Food Secretaries. The State-wise estimates as well as actual procurement of rice during the last three years as well as current KMS are given in the enclosed statement-I.

(d) and (e) Food Corporation of India has informed that as on 20.11.2007, 8448 procurement centers have been opened by Government agencies in KMS 2007-08. FCI/State Agencies have been directed to open more procurement centers wherever needed. Government has decided on 15.11.2007 to give an additional incentive bonus of Rs. 50 per quintal (over and above the bonus of Rs. 50 per quintal already announced) for procurement of paddy during KMS 2007-08. The measures taken to maximize procurement of paddy/rice in the current KMS 2007-08 are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

Statement I

Estimated and Actual Procurement of Rice

(in lakh tonnes)

STATE/UTs	KMS 2004-05		KMS 2005-06		KMS 2006-07	
	Estimated Procurement	Actual Procurement	Estimated Procurement	Actual Procurement	Estimated Procurement	Actual Procurement
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	—	0.01	0.10	—	—	—
Andhra Pradesh	45.00	39.06	37.13	49.71	50.9	53.27
Assam	—	—	0.84	0.01	—	—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bihar	6.00	3.43	2.34	5.24	6.0	4.76
Chandigarh	—	0.19	—	0.13	—	0.10
Chhattisgarh	22.00	28.37	26.10	32.65	31.1	28.58
Haryana	12.00	16.62	15.72	20.54	17.4	17.73
Himachal Pradesh	—	0.02	0.05	—	—	—
Jammu and Kashmir	—	0.01	0.16	—	0.03	—
Jharkhand	—	0.01	0.13	0.02	0.2	0.05
Karnataka	—	0.21	1.84	0.48	0.5	0.22
Kerala	—	0.33	1.61	0.94	0.7	1.51
Madhya Pradesh	2.00	0.42	1.34	1.36	1.2	0.74
Maharashtra	3.00	2.05	2.17	1.94	1.8	0.96
Nagaland	—	0.11	0.18	—	—	—
Orissa	13.00	15.90	12.35	17.85	17.0	19.93
Punjab	82.00	91.06	82.00	88.55	84.7	78.28
Rajasthan	—	0.22	0.33	0.23	0.3	0.10
Tamil Nadu	5.00	6.52	6.70	9.26	8.7	10.78
Uttar Pradesh	20.00	29.71	26.70	31.51	30.7	25.49
Uttaranchal	3.00	3.16	3.34	3.36	3.1	1.76
West Bengal	10.00	9.44	8.94	12.75	15.7	6.44
Others	2.00	—	—	—	—	0.06
Total:	225.00	246.85	230.07	276.56	270.00	250.75

Estimated and actual Procurement of Rice in KMS 2007-08

(in lakh tonnes)

STATE/UTs	KMS 2007-08	
	Estimated Procurement	Actual Procurement (as on 28.11.2007)*
1	2	3
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	—	—
Andhra Pradesh	62.00	0.85

1	2	3
Assam	—	—
Bihar	8.40	Neg.
Chandigarh	—	0.09
Chhatisgarh	28.00	2.57
Haryana	19.50	14.00
Himachal Pradesh	—	—
Jammu and Kashmir	—	—
Jharkhand	—	—
Karnataka	0.50	—
Kerala	2.00	0.48
Madhya Pradesh	1.10	0.03
Maharashtra	1.50	0.13
Nagaland	—	—
Orissa	24.80	0.98
Punjab	80.00	69.35
Rajasthan	0.20	0.03
Tamil Nadu	11.10	Neg.
Uttar Pradesh	26.70	1.67
Uttarakhand	2.10	0.11
West Bengal	8.00	0.00
Total:	276.00	90.29

Neg. below 500 MT

*Does not include levy due from millers. Levy is assessed on the basis of leviable paddy purchased by millers. Since purchase by millers is going on, final figures are not available.

Statement II

Steps taken by the Government to maximise procurement of rice in (KMS) 2007-08:

- (i) The MSP for rice was fixed at Rs. 645 and Rs. 675 per quintal for Common and Grade 'A' variety respectively for KMS 2007-08, an increase of Rs. 65 per quintal, in order to encourage farmers to grow more rice.

- (ii) The Commission to Societies and Self-Help Groups undertaking procurement of paddy on behalf of the FCI/State Agencies, etc. has been allowed at a maximum of 1.5% of MSP.
- (iii) The Government has announced a bonus of Rs. 100 per quintal over and above the MSP of Rs. 645 per quintal for 'Common' and Rs. 675 per quintal for Grade 'A' variety of paddy, respectively.

- (iv) Export of non-basmati rice below Minimum Export Price of \$ 425 per MT has been banned.

**Credit Linked Capital and Interest
Reimbursement Scheme**

*255. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to introduce a Credit Linked Capital and Interest Reimbursement Scheme for Textile Sector in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has received the recommendations of a working group in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to extend the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme to Textile Machinery Sector also; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) and (b) A credit linked capital and interest reimbursement scheme for textile sector, namely the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS), is already in operation in the country since April, 1999. The major benefits available under this Scheme are as follows:

- (i) The Scheme provides interest reimbursement on spinning machinery @ 4%. However, all the remaining sub-sectors covered under the scheme get interest reimbursement @ 5%.
- (ii) The Scheme also provides coverage for foreign exchange rate fluctuation not exceeding 5%. However, for the spinning machinery the coverage is 4%.
- (iii) The Scheme provides an additional option to the powerlooms units to avail of 20% Margin Money subsidy under TUFS in lieu of 5% interest reimbursement on investment in TUF compatible specified machinery subject to a capital ceiling of Rs. 200 lakh and ceiling on subsidy Rs.20 lakh.

- (iv) The Scheme provides 15% Margin Money subsidy for SSI textile and jute sector in lieu of 5% interest reimbursement on investment in TUF compatible specified machinery subject to a capital ceiling of Rs. 200 lakh and ceiling on subsidy Rs. 15 lakh.

- (v) The Scheme provides 5% interest reimbursement plus 10% capital subsidy for specified processing machinery, garmenting machinery and machinery required in manufacture of technical textiles.

- (vi) The Scheme provides 25% capital subsidy on purchase of the new machinery and equipments for the pre-loom & post-loom operations, handlooms/up-gradation of handlooms and testing & Quality Control equipments, for handloom production units.

(c) and (d) The working Group on Textiles & Jute Industry for the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) has recommended for extension of TUFS in the Eleventh Plan Period. The Government has extended the Scheme for the entire period of the Eleventh Plan.

(e) No, sir.

(f) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Edible Oils

*256. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHALE:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the production, demand and import of Edible Oils during the last three years and thereafter indicating the name of the countries from where it was imported, State-wise and Oil-wise;

(b) the expenditure incurred on the import of Edible Oils;

(c) whether the prices of Edible Oils in the country have been spiralling during the said period;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to ensure adequate availability of Edible Oils in the country and to check their prices?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Production, import and demand of Edible Oils in the country during the last three years and thereafter are enclosed at Statement-I. State-wise and oil-wise production of edible oils during the last 3 years is at Statement-II and Statement-III respectively. The name of the countries from where the edible oils were imported (quantity and value) is at Statement-IV. State-wise import of Edible Oils is not available.

(c) and (d) The prices of edible oils in the country have gone up. Statement-V showing monthly average wholesale prices in domestic market is enclosed.

(e) The steps taken to ensure availability and check prices of Edible Oils in the country include:

1. Import of oilseeds/edible oils except copra/coconut oil has been allowed on Open General Licence (OGL).
2. Implementation of Centrally Sponsored Integrated Scheme for Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM) in certain States, financial

assistance for Oil Palm Development, assistance provided for purchase of breeder seed, production of foundation seed, production and distribution of certified seed, integrated pest management etc.

3. Enhanced incentives to the farmers through fixation of higher Minimum Support Price (MSP) of major oilseeds.
4. During the period beginning from August 2006, import duties have been reduced, Import duty on crude and refined palm oil/ Palmolen has been reduced from 80% to 45% and 90% to 52.5% respectively. Duty on crude and refined sunflower oil reduced from 75% to 40% and 85% to 50% respectively. Duty on crude and refined soyabean oil reduced from 45% to 40%.
5. Crude and Refined edible grade vegetable oils have been exempted from 4% SAD w.e.f. 1.3.2007.
6. In order to harmonize the interests of farmers, processors and consumers, the import duty structure on edible oils is reviewed from time to time.

Statement I

Year-wise domestic production, import and demand of edible oils in the country

(In lakh tonne)

Oil Year (Nov.-Oct.)	Net availability of edible oils from all domestic sources	Import of edible oils	Demand*
2004-05	72.47	45.42	113.00
2005-06	83.16	42.88	118.50
2006-2007 (Estimate)	72.43	47.15	124.10
2007-08 (Provisional)	83.81	45.00	128.81**

* Projection made by Group constituted by Ministry of Agriculture.

** Projection made by Department of Food & Public Distribution.

Statement II*State-wise production of edible oils during the last three years*

(In Lakh Tonne)

State/UT	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Oil seed	Oil	Oil seed*	Oil	Oil seed**	Oil	Oil seed***	Oil
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A. Primary Source								
Andhra Pradesh	22.09	5.51	20.41	5.12	13.06	3.40	10.44	2.55
Assam	1.47	0.45	1.13	0.34	1.35	0.42	0.14	0.04
Bihar	1.17	0.37	1.37	0.42	1.37	0.43	0.06	0.02
Chhatisgarh	1.24	0.30	1.27	0.31	1.62	0.37	0.72	0.15
Gujarat	29.87	8.23	46.82	12.36	25.88	7.31	33.87	9.04
Haryana	8.41	2.61	8.25	2.57	8.55	2.66	0.08	0.03
Himachal Pradesh	0.12	0.04	0.05	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.00
Jammu and Kashmir	1.24	0.38	0.03	0.01	0.40	0.12	0.02	0.01
Jharkhand	0.07	0.02	0.09	0.03	0.71	0.20	0.16	0.04
Karnataka	15.70	4.27	17.15	4.85	11.23	3.12	7.61	1.94
Kerala	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.00
Madhya Pradesh	47.98	9.05	57.22	10.79	58.14	10.69	43.13	7.07
Maharashtra	27.44	5.29	33.73	6.37	35.74	6.49	41.19	6.95
Orissa	1.79	0.48	1.88	0.51	1.38	0.37	0.75	0.21
Punjab	1.00	0.31	0.90	0.28	0.86	0.27	0.09	0.02
Rajasthan	55.41	15.57	59.64	16.93	50.49	14.29	13.90	2.89
Tamil Nadu	10.61	2.49	11.53	2.70	12.55	3.00	5.89	1.40
Uttar Pradesh	9.52	2.89	10.66	3.23	7.44	2.24	1.20	0.29
Uttarakhand	0.38	0.08	0.30	0.07	0.21	0.05	0.15	0.03
West Bengal	6.53	1.97	6.10	1.83	6.52	1.96	1.20	0.37
Others	1.48	0.35	1.23	0.30	1.26	0.32	0.63	0.12
Sub Total	243.54	60.67	279.79	69.06	238.84	57.73	161.25	33.17

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
B. Secondary Source								
Coconut		5.50		4.20		4.50		4.50
Cottonseed		4.30		5.70		6.30		8.00
Ricebran		6.20		6.80		7.00		7.20
Solvent Extracted Oils		3.50		4.30		3.50		4.00
Tree & Forest Origin		0.80		1.30		1.20		1.20
Sub Total		20.30		22.30		22.50		24.90
Total (A + B)		80.97		91.36		80.23		58.07

Source: Oilseeds: Ministry of Agriculture

Oils: Based on the oilseeds produced in the respective States

* Final Estimates

** Fourth advance estimates (declared by Ministry of Agriculture on 19.7.2007)

***Based on 1st advance estimates of Min. of Agriculture on 19.9.07 of Kharif Crop (Rabi crop not included).

Statement III

Oil-wise production of edible oils during the last three years

(Quantity in lakh tonnee)

Name of Oilseed	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Oil seed	Oil	Oil seed	Oil	Oil seed*	Oil	Oil seed**	Oil
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A. Primary Source								
Groundnut	67.74	15.58	79.93	18.38	49.09	11.29	77.19	17.75
Rapeseed/Mustard	75.93	23.54	81.31	25.21	70.97	22.00	75.20	23.31
Soybean	68.77	11.00	82.74	13.24	88.57	14.17	90.44	14.47
Sunflower	11.87	03.92	14.39	04.75	11.78	3.89	12.48	4.12
Sesame	0.6.74	02.09	06.41	01.99	5.86	1.82	5.69	1.76
Niger Seed	01.12	00.34	01.08	00.32	0.71	0.21	0.83	0.25
Safflower Seed	01.74	00.52	02.29	00.69	2.24	0.67	2.60	0.78
Castor	07.93	03.17	09.91	03.96	7.95	3.18	9.28	3.71

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Linseed	01.70	00.51	01.73	00.52	1.67	0.50	2.54	0.76
Sub Total	243.54	60.67	279.79	69.06	238.84	57.73	276.25	66.91
B. Secondary Source								
Coconut		5.50		4.20		4.50		4.50
Cottonseed		4.30		5.70		6.30		8.00
Rice Bran		6.20		6.80		7.00		7.20
Solvent Extracted Oils		3.50		4.30		3.50		4.00
Tree & Forest Origin		0.80		1.30		1.20		1.20
Sub Total		20.30		22.30		22.50		24.90
Total (A+B)		80.97		91.36		80.23		91.81

* Fourth advance estimates (declared by Ministry of Agriculture on 19.7.2007).

** Based on 1st Advance Estimate and targeted figures of Ministry of Agriculture on 19.9.2007.

Statement IV

Name of the countries from where the edible oils are imported with quantity and value

Sl. No.	Name of Edible Oil	Qty. in Lakh Tonnes			Value in Rs. crores			Import from countries during 2006-07
		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Soyabean oil	10.93	16.51	12.16	2955.01	3899.91	3103.68	Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, UAE, Bangladesh, Nepal, USA, China, Germany, Netherland, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia,
2.	Palm oil	35.03	24.49	27.66	7691.27	4563.41	5629.14	Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Singapore, Bangladesh, UAE
3.	Sunflower oil	0.38	0.71	1.41	109.86	184.67	422.98	Argentina, Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Japan, Singapore, UK, USA
4.	Coconut oil	0.13	0.04	0.15	40.87	11.46	51.86	Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines
5.	Other oils	1.06	1.18	1.36	305.10	343.31	372.87	USA, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Canada, Italy,

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
								Bangladesh, Nepal, Belgium, Brazil, Georgia, Germany, UK, China, Czech Republic, France, Japan, Switzerland, Singapore, UAE, Thailand, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Estonia, Oman, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Netherlands, Australia
	Total	47.53	42.93	42.74	11102.11	9002.76	9580.53	

*Source: DGFT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry

Statement V

Monthly Whole Sale Average Prices in Domestic Market during the last four years

(Price: Rs. Per Quintal)

Name of the Oil	Nov.,2007*	Nov., 2006	Nov.,2005	Nov.,2004
Mustard Oil	5252	4559	3915	4568
Groundnut Oil	6483	5598	4711	5248
Soyabean Oil	4817	4248	3508	3914
Vanaspati (15 kg pack)	832	776	646	732

*Monthly wholesale average prices of November, 2007 are average of prices upto 23.11.2007.

National Livestock Policy

*257. SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government is contemplating to formulate a National Livestock Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a draft of the said policy has been prepared and sent to various State Governments for their comments; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the State Governments thereto?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposed National Livestock Policy aims at achieving qualitative and quantitative improvements in livestock, livestock products and feed and fodder resources. It seeks to provide better inter-face between modern technologies and management practices in regard to breeding, nutrition and health care.

(c) and (d) A draft of the said policy had been circulated to various States for their comments. Some responses have been received from State Governments, which are under consideration.

*(English)***Sugarcane Prices**

*258. SHRI M. SHIVANNA:
SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sugarcane farmers in the country particularly in Karnataka have been demanding increase in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Sugarcane for 2007-08;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether an amendment to the Sugar Control Order, 1966 has also been sought by the Sugarcane farmers for ensuring better price for their produce; and

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

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) No, Sir. The Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) for sugarcane payable by the sugar factories for 2007-2008 sugar season was fixed at Rs. 81.18 per quintal for a basic recovery rate of 9 per cent subject to a premium of Rs. 0.90 for every 0.1 percentage point increase in the recovery above that level. This was conveyed to the sugar producing States in January, 2007. No demand has been received from sugarcane farmers to increase the SMP for 2007-2008 sugar season.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Per-capita Consumption of Foodgrains

*259. SHRI M. SREENIVASULU REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the decline in per-capita consumption of cereals particular coarse cereals has worsened the nutritional status of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to promote consumption of coarse cereals in the country for improving the nutritional status;

(c) whether the food security has been achieved at the national level particularly with reference to poor in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the steps being taken to strengthen food security in the country?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) As per 61st round of National Sample Survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation, between 1993-94 and 2004-05, per capita per month consumption of cereals including coarse cereals, has declined from 13.4 kg to 12.1 kg in rural India and from 10.6 kg to 9.9 kg in urban India. Decline in consumption of cereals may affect nutritional status of people, unless the diet is compensated with consumption of vegetables, fruits and pulses. However, specific details about adverse effects of reduced cereal consumption on nutritional status of people are not available.

Food & Nutrition Board of the Ministry of Women & Child Development carries out work through its 43 Field Units located in 29 States; and UTs for generating nutritional awareness (including nutritional importance of coarse grains) among public.

(c) to (e) Yes, Sir. At the national level, for ensuring food security in the country, Government implements Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The TPDS is focused on below poverty line families, including the poorest of the poor (Antyodaya Anna Yojana) families. For 6.52 crore BPL families, the Govt. allocates to States and Union Territories foodgrains @ 35 kg per family per month. The Govt. also allocates foodgrains under TPDS for Above Poverty Line (APL) families depending upon their availability in the Central Pool and by linking them with offtake during previous years.

A number of welfare schemes such as Mid-day Meal Scheme, Wheat Based Nutrition Programme (ICDS), National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Nutritional Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG), etc. are implemented by different Ministries of the Government.

Allocations of foodgrains are made for them by the Deptt. of Food & Public Distribution. For chronically food scarce areas, Govt. also implements Village Grain Banks (VGB) Scheme under which foodgrains are allocated to States and Union Territories free of cost, as one time grant and funds are provided for setting up and running of the VGBs.

In addition, the Govt. keeps a continuous watch on prices of food articles. To keep their prices affordable, the Govt. also releases foodgrains for sale in the open market to augment their supplies.

To meet the emergencies and unforeseen situations of food scarcity, the Govt. maintains minimum buffer stocks of foodgrains in the Central Pool. The Govt. also allocates foodgrains as a part of relief measures in case of natural calamities. In case requirements of stocks of foodgrains in the Central Pool are not met from domestic procurement, the Government also imports foodgrains.

Agricultural Growth Rate

*260. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI:
SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the agricultural growth rate for the last three years *vis-à-vis* the growth rates in the other core sectors in the country;

(b) the factors for slow growth of the agricultural sector, if any, during the above period; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to increase the growth rate for the agricultural sector in the current year and in the next year?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) As per the data compiled by Central Statistical Organization (CSO), the sectoral percentage growth rates in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant (1999-2000) prices in Agriculture & allied sectors, Mining, manufacturing, electricity, construction and Services during the last three years are given below:

Year	Agriculture & Allied Sector (%)	Mining, manufacturing, electricity, construction (%)	Services (%)
2004-05	0.0	9.8	9.6
2005-06	6.0	9.6	9.8
2006-07	2.7	10.9	11.0

(b) The factors for slow growth in the agriculture sector are mainly attributed to lack of adequate public sector investment in agriculture and periodic failures/weak monsoon in some years of the tenth Plan. However, the average growth rate realized during the last two years has been more than 4 per cent.

(c) The National Development Council (NDC) in its 53rd meeting held on 29th May, 2007 reaffirmed its commitment to achieve 4 per cent annual growth in the agricultural sector during the Eleventh Plan and resolved that agricultural development strategies must be reoriented to meet the needs of farmers and urged the Central and State Governments to evolve a strategy to rejuvenate agriculture. Towards improving the growth in the agriculture sector, recently, the Government has done the following:

- Launched the National Food Security Mission with an outlay of Rs.4,882 crore for the Eleventh Plan period. It aims to produce additional 10 million tonnes of rice, 8 million tonnes of wheat and 2 million tonnes of pulses by the end of the Eleventh Plan.
- Launched the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), with an outlay of Rs.25,000 crore which aims at achieving 4% annual growth in the agriculture sector during the Eleventh Plan period, through incentivising the States to invest more in the sector.
- Established National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) to assist and support in planning for rainfed areas.
- Provided additional financial resources for irrigation.
- Strategic focus on the national agriculture research effort.

*[Translation]***Construction of Roads in Border Areas**

2210. SHRI KIREN RIJJU:
SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the army contingents take longer time to reach border areas due to the dilapidated conditions of the border roads;

(b) if so, whether the Government is working on any scheme to link border areas with roads in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the names of the border areas which are currently being linked with the roads?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) The roads along the border (with BRO) are not in a dilapidated condition, and are being used smoothly by the Army;

(b) and (c) BRO is engaged in construction, improvement and maintenance of about 29000 Km of roads in border areas under various scheme for linking with roads in the country.

(d) Border areas of North, North Eastern States and Western States are being linked with the other roads.

*[English]***Zonal Tenders for Building Works**

2211. SHRI TEK LAL MAHTO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new contract system called Zonal Tender System has been introduced in MTNL to benefit a few contractors;

(b) if so, whether no prior approval of Board of Directors was obtained before introducing this system which was mandatory;

(c) if so, whether the new system has adversely affected the healthy competition;

(d) if so, whether this new system is discriminatory and against the policy of providing level playing field to each contender particular to class-V Contractors;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Government has conducted or propose to conduct an inquiry into the above irregularities; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir. In MTNL, Delhi, instead of calling tenders for individual works, annual term contract for a building or a group of building has been introduced since last year for building maintenance/minor works. The annual term contract is finalized based on open tender system. However, there is no change in the existing system in MTNL, Mumbai.

(b) The prior approval of Board of Directors is not mandatory as procurement procedures are well within the power of Executive Directors, Delhi.

(c) No, Sir. The new system is based on open tendering and hence involves competition.

(d) No, Sir. The new system is not discriminatory and not against the policy of providing level playing field to each contractor particular to Class-V contractors as they can also participate in the open tenders within their tendering.

(e) to (g) Do not arise in view of (d) above.

*[Translation]***Sale of Ration in Open Market**

2212. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ration meant for soldiers posted in Siachin is being sold in the open market;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry has been conducted by the Government in this regard;

(d) if so, the brief details of the enquiry report; and

(e) the action taken so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) to (e) The Army came to know of some pilferage of special rations meant for soldiers. Based on this information, the local Police carried out raids and recovered certain items of special rations and stores from Chumathang, Tangtse, Hunder/Kha:sar/Sasoma and Nubra (Panamik).

Eleven First Information Reports (FIRs) have been lodged with the Police and 31 civilians have been arrested.

Two Courts of Inquiry were ordered to investigate into the matter. Based on the first Court of Inquiry for Chumathang, the Army Commander has directed administrative action against three Officers and two Junior Commissioned Officers. The second Court of Inquiry is in an advanced stage.

[English]

Depletion of Bamboo Forests

2213. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether about 25% of the bamboo forests have depleted in Karnataka;

(b) if so, whether the Karnataka State Forest Department has asked the Centre for Rs. 130 crores under the Bamboo Mission for the regeneration of bamboo;

(c) whether the Union Government has considered the request of the Karnataka Government; and

(d) if so, the time by which the Union Government is likely to provide assistance to the State of Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No scientific information is available on the status of bamboo forests in Karnataka. However, the gregarious flowering of bamboo which is occurring in some parts of the State (once in 30-40 years) results in death of all bamboo culms after profuse seeding.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. The forest Department of Karnataka has submitted a project proposal for Rs. 132.33 crore for a period of XI Five Year Plan under National Bamboo Mission, out of which Rs. 19.81 crore was proposed for 2007-08. The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation in its meeting held in October, 2007, considered the current proposal and approved an amount of Rs. 9.00 crore, out of which Rs. 2.12 crore has been released to the State for implementation of the mission.

[Translation]

Compensation to the Family Members of Farmers Committing Suicide

2214. SHRI BALESHWAR YADAV: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to give any package to the widows, children of the farmers committing suicide;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which such packages are likely to be given by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The Rehabilitation Package for the farmers in 31 suicide prone districts in the four States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Kerala inter-alia; includes provision of financial assistance from Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) @ Rs. 50.00 Lakh per District.

The funds would be used for giving assistance to needy debt-stressed farmers and their families, for expenditure in connection with health and education especially of children. The assistance from PMNRF has already been released to the respective districts.

Micro Irrigation

2215. SHRI V.K. THUMMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of projects launched/proposed to be launched during the Eleventh Five Year Plan under Micro

Irrigation Scheme in the country particularly in Gujarat, State-wise;

(b) whether some projects have spilled over from the Tenth Five Year Plan to the Eleventh Five Year Plan; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Micro Irrigation, which was launched during the Tenth Plan (January, 2006), provides financial assistance to the farmers for taking up Drip and Sprinkler Irrigation.

The assistance under the scheme is available for all types of drip irrigation systems such as on-line drip irrigation systems, in-line systems, sub surface drip irrigation system, micro jets, fan-jets, micro sprinkler, mini sprinklers, misters and similar other low discharge irrigation systems.

The details of projects launched, State-wise, during the Eleventh Plan (2007-08), as per the approved Annual Action Plan are given in the enclosed Statement-I. In so far as Gujarat is concerned, Rs. 16510.69 Lakh has been approved for the current year 2007-08.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The State-wise detail of spill over works from Tenth Plan to Eleventh Plan is given in the enclosed Statement-II.

Statement I

Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Micro Irrigation— Details of Projects Launched—State-wise As Per Approved Annual Action Plan for 2007-08

S.No.	State	No. of Districts covered	Approved Action Plan (2007-08) (Amount: Rs in lakh)
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	22	14865.67
2.	Goa	1	15.44

1	2	3	4
3.	Gujarat	25	16510.69
4.	Haryana	20	959.41
5.	Karnataka	27	8309.60
6.	Madhya Pradesh	48	1296.65
7.	Maharashtra	33	14781.64
8.	Orissa	30	835.85
9.	Punjab	20	509.47
10.	Rajasthan	32	3087.32
11.	Tamil Nadu	29	13372.09

The Annual Action Plan for 2007-08 from the remaining States have not been received.

Statement II

Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Micro Irrigation— Details of Spill over works from Tenth Plan to Eleventh Plan (2007-08)

(Amount: Rs in lakh)

Sl. No.	State	No. of Districts Covered	Spill Over of funds (Central Share) from Tenth Plan to Eleventh Plan
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	22	15161.01
2.	Bihar	38	2482.10
3.	Chattisgarh	16	2776.67
4.	Delhi	1	15.71
5.	Goa	1	11.33
6.	Gujarat	25	905.79
7.	Haryana	20	212.10
8.	Jharkhand	22	229.92
9.	Karnataka	27	2363.16

1	2	3	4
10.	Kerala	14	3755.63
11.	Madhya Pradesh	48	580.48
12.	Maharashtra	33	1707.02
13.	Orissa	30	316.99
14.	Punjab	20	382.42
15.	Rajasthan	32	1193.91
16.	Tamil Nadu	29	5491.61
17.	Uttar Pradesh	26	1096.09
18.	West Bengal	18	195.67
Total		422	38877.61

Shortage of Light Combat Aircraft in Air Force

2216. SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether shortage of Light Combat Aircraft is being felt in Indian Air Force;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the existing position with regard to Light Combat Aircraft in Indian Air Force;

(d) whether the Government is formulating any plan to purchase aircraft in view of the requirement of Light Combat aircraft; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):
(a) to (e) Government constantly reviews the security environment and accordingly decide to induct appropriate aircraft and to make other arrangements for adequate defence preparedness. A contract for procurement of 20 Light Combat Aircraft in initial Operational Clearance configuration from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has been signed by Government in March, 2006.

[English]

Removal of Grains from Future Trade

2217. SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether some States particularly Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan have requested the Union Government to remove certain foodgrains including Bengal gram and pulses from future trading to control their prices; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The Government have received requests from the State Governments of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu to ban futures trading in essential commodities in the context of rise in prices of some of the foodgrains.

(b) In the context of discussion regarding whether and to what extent futures trading has contributed to price rise in agricultural commodities in recent times, the Government has set up an Expert Committee on 2.3.2007 under the Chairmanship of Professor Abhijit Sen, Member, Planning Commission to study, *inter alia*, the extent of impact, if any, of futures trading on wholesale and retail prices of agricultural commodities. The final view on forward trading in agricultural commodities would be taken after the Report is submitted by the Committee.

Norms for Buffer Stock

2218. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the current buffer stock norms for foodgrains in the country;

(b) whether the Government proposes any reduction in buffer stock norms to cut food subsidy;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the manner in which the food subsidy is proposed to be reduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The current minimum buffer stock norms for foodgrains (wheat & rice) in the country are as under:-

(figures in lakh tonnes)

Date	Rice	Wheat	Total
1st April	122	40	162
1st July	98	171	269
1st October	52	110	162
1st January	118	82	200

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Following important steps have been taken/are being taken by FCI to reduce the food subsidy:

- (i) Adhering to the procurement and movement ratio norms of 1:1.35 as fixed by the Govt. of India to reduce the expenditure on freight.
- (ii) Making continuous efforts to reduce losses taking place in handling of foodgrains.
- (iii) Making efforts to reduce the incurrence of Railway demurrage charges.
- (iv) Controlling the administrative cost by following minimum recruitment of resultant entry level posts in spite of increased volume of operations and implementation of Voluntary Retirement Scheme.
- (v) Encouraging decentralized procurement and distribution of foodgrains.
- (vi) Optimisation of foodgrains movement and reduction of demurrage charges,
- (vii) Disposal of old stock of foodgrains leading to reduction of carrying cost.

*[Translation]***MSP for Crops**

2219. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to bring some other agro-products like banana, coconut, onion, tomatoes and potatoes under MSP scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to bring the rapidly perishable products like tomatoes, potatoes, coconut and onion etc. under MSP scheme in order to protect the farmers against the heavy loss caused in case of excess production thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) The Government fixes Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for 25 major crops. It has no proposal to bring other agro-products like banana, onion, tomatoes and potatoes under the MSP scheme.

Government implements Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) on the request of a State/UT Government for procurement of agricultural and horticultural commodities not covered under the MSP. The MIS is implemented in order to protect the growers of these commodities from making distress sale in the event of bumper crop when the prices tend to fall below the economic level/cost of production. Losses, if any, incurred by the procuring agencies are shared by the Central Government and the concerned State Government on 50:50 basis (75:25 in case of North-Eastern States). However, the amount of loss to be shared between Central Government and the concerned State Government is restricted to 25% of value of procurement. Profit, if any, earned by the procuring agencies is retained by them.

Foodgrain Production in Bihar

2220. SHRI GIRIDHARI YADAV: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the production of foodgrains in Bihar during the last three years, crop-wise;

(b) the total demand of foodgrains in Bihar;

(c) the current trend of the production of foodgrains; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to increase the production of foodgrains in Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) Following table presents the crop-wise production of foodgrains in Bihar during 2003-04 to 2005-06 and during 2006-07:

(Lakh Tonnes)

Crop	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07*
Rice	54.48	24.72	34.96	49.96
Wheat	36.89	32.63	32.39	35.84
Coarse Cereals	15.13	15.02	14.06	14.59
Pulses	5.63	4.67	4.47	4.61
Foodgrains	112.13	77.04	85.87	105.00

*4th advance estimates released on 19.07.2007

On the basis of the monthly per capita quantities of consumption reported in the National Sample Survey 61st Round Report on "Household Consumption of Various Goods and Services in India, 2004-05" and the population projections given by the Office of the Registrar General of India, the total foodgrains required in Bihar during 2007-08 is estimated at 17.61 million tones which includes seed, feed and wastage.

(d) The Integrated Cereals Development Programmes (ICDP) in rice, wheat and coarse cereals based cropping systems have been under implementation since October, 2000 to promote their production in the country, including Bihar. An Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilpalm and Maize (ISOPOM) is also under implementation with effect from April 2004, inter-alia, to promote production of pulses. However, in order to increase the production of rice, wheat and pulses further, recently a Centrally Sponsored Scheme "National Food Security Mission" (NFSM) has also been launched from 2007-08 in the country, including Bihar. It aims at increasing the production of rice by 10 million tones, wheat by 8 million tones and pulses by 2 million tones by the end of the Eleventh Plan, i.e. by 2011-12 through area increase and productivity enhancement in targeted districts of the country.

[English]

Water Distribution

2221. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a large scale inequitable distribution and mismanagement of water in the country; and

(b) if so, the details of availability, demand and supply of water for the current plan period and projected for the next plan periods, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The average annual precipitation over the country is 1170 millimetre (mm). However, there is large spatial and temporal variation in the rainfall. The rainfall varies from about 100 mm in Western Rajasthan to over 10,000 mm in Cherapunji (Meghalaya). About 75% of the rainfall occurs during the monsoon period (June to October) and that too from a few spells of intense rainfall. As a result, there is considerable variation in the availability of water. There are instances of over-exploitation of the water resources, mostly ground water, in specific regions leading to lowering of ground water table and that of over irrigation in certain areas causing drainage congestion & water logging.

(b) The availability, demand and supply of water is not worked out Plan-wise.

Reimbursement of State and Local Level Duties

2222. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the textile exporters have requested the Union Government for reimbursement of State and local level duties;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) So far the decision of the Government is that the Central Government cannot neutralise the State taxes.

[Translation]

Post office in Panchayat

2223. PROF. PREM KUMAR DHUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to set up branch post office, sub-post office or post office in each panchayat in order to make available the postal services in each panchayat in the country;

(b) if so, the time by which it would be implemented;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the number of Gram Panchayats in the country especially in the State of Himachal Pradesh where postal services and facilities are not available; and

(e) the time by when these facilities would be made available?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Post Offices are opened in rural areas subject to fulfillment of prescribed norms of population, distance and income, and also availability of resources. Most of the villages including the Gram Panchayat villages do not fulfill above norms which are relaxed and subsidized for the entire rural extent especially for hilly, tribal, desert and inaccessible ones. The Department provides facilities of delivery of mail, collection of letters from Letter-Boxes and selling of stamps/stationery at the doorstep of customers in villages. For counter facilities, all the villages where Post Offices do not exist are served by the nearest existing Post Office/Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendra.

(d) and (e) The number of Gram Panchayats in the country where Post Offices as on 31.3.2007 are not existing is 1,18,380 including 607 Gram Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh. The postal facilities are available in all the villages through the nearest existing Post Offices/Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras. All these villages/Gram Panchayats are provided daily delivery of dak, collection of mail from Letter-Boxes and sale of stamps at the doorstep.

Closure of Military Dairy Farm

2224. SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the agricultural land of village Kajarwara and Bilahari had been acquired for the Military dairy farm of Jabalpur; and

(b) if so, the details of terms and conditions of land acquisition and compensation paid to land owners?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) No, Sir. No agricultural land of village Kajarwara and Bilahari has at all been acquired for the Military Dairy Farm of Jabalpur.

(b) Does not arise.

[English]

Shortage of SSC officers

2225. SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Armed Forces is facing shortage of Short Service Commissioned (SSC) officers in Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has any proposal to extend the tenure of the existing SSC Medical Officers and also to recruit more officers in the near future; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) At present shortage of Medical Officers, Dental Officers and Military Nursing Officers with reference to the authorized strength in the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) is as under:

Service	Shortage
Medical Officers	138
Dental Officers	58
Military Nursing Officers	230

(c) and (d) Government has already extended the tenure of Short Service Commissioned Officers in the Armed Forces Medical Services from 10 years to 14 years. Recruitment of officers in AFMS is an on going process.

Loss of Imported Wheat

2226. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state.

(a) whether huge quantity of wheat imported from Australia for Public Distribution System was held up in Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns without being distributed;

(b) if so, whether most of this wheat perished in FCI godowns for non distribution in time; and

(c) if so, the details thereof the corrective measures taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir. Out of 14.28 Lakh MTs of wheat imported from Australia, only 40,913 MTs of wheat is lying in various Food Corporation of India godowns for distribution.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Erosion due to diversion from Brahmaputra Channels

2227. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had sent a expert team for evaluating the combined effect of erosion from Dhola Hatighuli to Rohmaria area upon diversion of channel of Brahmaputra;

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof indicating the main recommendations and plan finalised for Eleventh Plan;

(c) the protection measures undertaken at these places alongwith the progress made therein;

(d) the impact of the said works;

(e) whether some more diversions have been reported from Assam;

(f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard; and

(g) the current status of the work at Dhola Hatighuli Brahmaputra dyke alongwith the reasons for delay in handing over the same to the Government of Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir,

(b) The expert team comprising the Chairman, Brahmaputra Board, the Chief Engineer (FM) CWC, Chief Research Officer, CWPRS and Additional Chief Engineer, Water Resources Department Government of Assam visited the site on 31.08.2006. The recommendation of the expert team is given in the enclosed Statement. Brahmaputra Board has not received any programme of works from Government of Assam in the Eleventh Plan.

(c) The Brahmaputra Board took up protection measures for protection of Dhola Hatighuli in three phases with estimated cost of Rs. 20.72 crore. The progress made in three phases is as follows:

Phase-I (i) Construction of Tie bund of length 2.26 km.

(ii) Construction of permeable RCC porcupine screens of length 1500 m

(iii) Construction of retirement of length 4.65 km at Hatighuli.

Phase-II (i) Construction of RCC porcupine screens across Balunalla and Anantanallah.

(ii) A pilot channel of 30m bed width with bell mouth transition from a width of 100m at the beginning to a width of 30m in distance of 100m to guide the flow.

Phase-III (i) Construction of 7 rows RCC porcupine across the river Lohit from Dholaghat to outfall of Pilot channel for a length of 5500 m.

- (ii) Construction of 3 rows of RCC porcupine screens along the left bank of Pilot channel for a length of 4000 m
- (iii) Construction of 3 rows of RCC porcupine screen along the left bank of Lohit and Dhollaghat for a length of 2000 m.
- (iv) RCC porcupine screen along the left bank of river Lohit offtake of spill channel of Sisini of length 600 m.
- (v) Construction of 3 rows of RCC porcupine screen for a length of 150 m at upstream and construction of 4 rows of RCC porcupine screen of length of 1200m at downstream of tie bund along left bank of river Debang at Bahbari.

(d) Due to the works executed, the main flow of river Dibang was diverted to the original course. The flow through Balunala got decreased and the problem of erosion along the southern bank of Balunala including Rohmaria area was reduced. The flood channel off taking from Sisini almost silted up. The main channel of river Lohit has been further shifted towards north west direction for which erosion at bank is to some extent mitigated. The works carried out have resulted in benefit to a number of Tea gardens and also helped in controlling the erosion problem to a large extent in Rohmaria area of Assam.

(e) No reports of diversions have been received from Assam.

(f) Does not arise

(g) After completing the retirement of length 4.6 km at Hatighuli in 2003, the Brahmaputra Board had requested the Water Resources Department, Government of Assam to take over the same. The response from the State Water Resources Department is awaited.

Statement

Recommendation of expert team which visited the site on 31-8-07

(1) The affected reach at Rohmaria is about 8.5 km. It is suggested that the scheme with the construction of RCC porcupine dampeners should be done in the reaches where erosion of the bank is more pronounced.

(2) Construction of RCC Porcupine Dampeners (RCC porcupine in layers) of 25 meter length (20 meter inside the river and 5 meter on the bank) at a spacing of 100 m to 150 m depending upon the criticality of the reach.

(3) The steel pipes permeable spur constructed by the Civil Authorities has been found to be partially effective in reducing the rate of erosion. It is necessary to tie up the pipe spurs to the bank by adding two lines of pipe on both upstream and downstream of spur. It is therefore suggested that additional pipes may be driven in the bank/bed in two rows on both sides of the pipe spurs. Each row may contain four pipes starting from the top edge of the bank. Further, the junction is to be strengthened against erosion by adding stone in crates.

(4) In order to honour the sentiment of the local people, more steel pipe permeable spurs may be constructed to the extent steel pipes could be made available by the Oil India Ltd, conveniently. The steel pipe permeable spurs may be enriched with RCC porcupines in between the pipe spurs to increase the permeable spurs' resistance to flow. The pipes are to be driven to a depth of the firm layer of boulder. Considering high velocity of flow and persistent river attack in this reach, it is felt necessary to drive the pipes at least 9-10 meters below the bed, so that, the pipes will have firm grip. Similarly, in order to resist bending/damage of the pipes, the spurs may be tied by steel wire ropes and anchored to the bank on the upstream side.

(5) For better monitoring of the overall work and as a part of long term measures, studies for bankline changes in the entire reach should be carried out for full implementation of the Dholla Hatighuli scheme in the upstream. Long term measures for protection are to be decided after thorough comparison of bank-line changes from upstream confluence and up to downstream of Dibrugarh.

(6) Considering the likely tendency of Dibang and Lohit rivers to retrieve their older courses, the achievement made at Dholla Hatighuli reach also needs to be stabilised. Therefore, it is suggested that a scheme for maintenance and permanent stabilisation of the achievements may also be prepared.

(7) Similarly, scheme for long term protection of Rohmaria reach may also be prepared.

Plot for Construction of Post Office Buildings

2228. SHRI PRATIK P. PATIL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of plots reserved for construction of Post Office buildings in the country especially in Maharashtra and Gujarat Circles during the Eleventh Plan;

(b) the number of plots so above acquired by the Department of Posts are in Tenth Plan and are in actual possession for development in Maharashtra and Gujarat Circles;

(c) the number of plots surrendered or likely to be surrendered for want of provision of funds during the Eleventh Plan for Maharashtra and Gujarat Circles;

(d) the amount earmarked for acquiring land and constructing buildings during the Eleventh Plan in Maharashtra and Gujarat Circles, location-wise; and

(e) the number of rented premises of Post Offices surrendered to landlords during the years 2000 to 2006 alongwith reasons in Maharashtra and Gujarat Circles, location-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The proposal for construction of Post Office buildings during Eleventh Plan is not approved yet by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) and the same is under examination.

(b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) No such proposal is made in Eleventh Plan which is under examination for approval of the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) and the same is under examination.

(d) The Proposal for acquisition of land construction of buildings during Eleventh Plan is not approved yet by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) and the same is under examination.

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

*[Translation]***Electronic Alarm System for Detection of Infiltration**

2229. DR. RAMESHWAR ORAON: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether electronic alarm system for detecting infiltration in border areas is lying unused in defence laboratories for the last several years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for non-procurement of the said electronic alarm systems by the Defence Forces; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to install the said system to stop infiltration?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) DRDO has not developed any electronic alarm system for detecting infiltration in border areas, hence the same is not lying unused in defence laboratories. Currently, as part of counter infiltration posture, a number of electronic surveillance devices have been co-opted with the Line of Control fence to enhance area coverage and detection capabilities. Second tier deployment of troops facilitates continuous surveillance and immediate response to neutralize the terrorists attempting to infiltrate.

*[English]***Inter-Cantonment Transfer of Staff**

2230. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT "BACHDA": Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any transfer policy is enforced for facilitating inter-Cantonment Board transfer of non-gazetted/technical staff in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) There is no policy for transfer of Cantonment Board employees from one Cantonment to another.

(b) The question does not arise.

**Rejection of Indigenous Weapons
by Armed Forces**

2231. SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of instances in the last five years when the Armed Forces have rejected the indigenous Defence equipment manufactured by the Public Sector Undertakings and other organizations under the Ministry; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) The Army has reported certain deficiencies in some batches of 5.56 mm INS AS Rifle, 5.56 mm Light Machine Gun (LMG). Small Arms Ammunitions, Tank Ammunitions and Delay Igniter. The Armed Forces have segregated the affected quantity of arms and ammunitions for investigation/repair/modification.

(b) A statement is attached.

Statement

Sl.No.	Items	Reasons
1.	5.56 mm INSAS Rifle	Problem of Oil Spray noticed. Periodical maintenance instructions have been amended and the design has been modified.
2.	5.56 mm INSAS Light Machine Gun	Accelerated User Cum Reliability Trial was conducted as an exercise to improve the quality. As an outcome certain modifications in design have been considered. These are being validated for incorporation.
3.	125 mm High Explosive Ammunition	Burning particles found during firing, due to use of Triple Base Propellant. Repair of segregated ammunition has been started and likely to be completed in next year.
4.	125 mm High Explosive Anti tank Ammunition	
5.	125 mm Fin Stabilized Armour Piercing Discarding Sabot	Quality manufactured as per hybrid design approved by competent authority is being replaced and converted to original design to address the problem of burning particles found during firing. The repair is likely to be completed within 2007-2008.
6.	Igniter 4 Sec. Delay	This igniter, which is used for hand and rifle grenades, was found to have problems during storage at the depots. Design Improvement has been carried out and a new variety has been offered to the Army for trial evaluation.
7.	Small Arms Cartridge 7.62 mm	Some ammunition became rusted during storage. The segregated ammunition has been repaired.
8.	Small Arms Cartridge 5.56 mm	A small quantity of this ammunition segregated due to material design defects has been repaired.
9.	Coat Combat ICK	A small quantity reported defective due to fitment problem is being replaced.

*[Translation]***Organic Fertilizers**

2232. SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA:
SHRI SWADESH CHAKRABORTY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of organic fertilizers produced in rural areas using non-convention means, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government has conducted any study on the possibility of making natural fertilisers from animal excrete, agricultural waste and green waste etc; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) A statement indicating State-wise quantity of rural compost, vermi-compost produced and area covered under green manuring is enclosed.

(b) and (c) Technologies have been developed and are being promoted under National Project on Organic Farming for making natural/organic fertilizers from animal excreta, agricultural waste & green waste etc. These include enriched compost, phospho compost and vermi compost. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has also developed improved technology for the preparation of quality/enriched composts from animal excreta, agricultural waste and crop residues (green wastes) enriched with low grade rock phosphate, phrites, waste mica and phosphate solubilizing bacteria etc. Besides, vermi-composting technology has also been standardized using various organic resources. These products have been tested successfully on various crops and soil types.

Statement

State-wise quantity of rural compost, vermi-compost produced and area covered under green manuring

Sl. No	State	Rural Compost (Lakh tonne)	Vermi Compost (Tonne)	Green Manuring (Lakh ha)
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Haryana	54.18	NA	0.72
2.	Tamil nadu	43.48	NA	0.96
3.	Uttar Pradesh	0.04	NA	0.01
4.	West Bengal	NA	NA	1.58
5.	Himachal Pradesh	6.45	9526.00	0.03
6.	*Punjab*	322.00	NA	1.43
7.	Chhatisgarh	6.38	NA	0.31
8.	Rajasthan	63.17	NA	0.78
9.	Maharashtra*	17.83	800.00	0.41
10.	Karnataka*	587.17	3228.00	24.97
11.	Kerala	0.32	2.85	0.01

1	2	3	4	5
12.	Goa	2.45	NA	0.3
13.	Orissa*	127.05	NA	2.23
14.	Bihar*	6.12	NA	NA
15.	Madhya Pradesh*	32.00	NA	1.50
16.	Gujarat*	0.12	45.23	0.02
17.	Pondicherry	NA	NA	NA
18.	Assam	0.066	NA	NA
19.	Delhi*	0.15	NA	0.05
20.	Uttarakhand	0.12	NA	0.022
21.	Andhra Pradesh	1.98	NA	0.308
22.	Mizoram	16.5	NA	0.015
Total		1287.576	13602.08	35.655

* Likely

NA- Not Available

Source - Information provided by NCOF, Ghaziabad.

[English]

Armed Forces Tribunal Bill

2233. SHRI MILIND DEORA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Cabinet has approved the amendments to the Armed Forces Tribunal Bill, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the salient features of the Bill;

(d) the composition of the Tribunal;

(e) the number of cases pending in High Courts and Supreme Court, filed by Armed Forces personnel;

(f) whether these cases will also be transferred to this Tribunal; and

(g) the extent to which the process of settlement of cases will be stepped up?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):
(a) to (g) The Union Cabinet has approved the amendments proposed by the Ministry to the Armed Forces Tribunal Bill, 2005. A Notice for moving the Amendments has also been referred to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

The salient features of the Armed Forces Tribunal Bill, 2005 includes the provision for the adjudication or trial by the Armed Forces Tribunal of disputes and complaints with respect to commission, appointments, enrolment and conditions of service in respect of persons subject to the Army Act, 1950, the Navy Act, 1957 and the Air Force Act, 1950 and also to provide for appeals arising out of orders, findings or sentences of courts-martial held under the said Acts and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The Bill amongst others, contains provision for establishment of the Tribunal and Benches thereof; eligibility criteria for appointment of Chairperson and Members; jurisdiction, powers and authority of the Tribunal; and provisions relating to procedure and appeal etc.

The Tribunal will consist of a Chairperson and such number of Judicial and Administrative Members as determined by the Central Government.

A total number of approximately 169 and 9755 cases filed by the Armed Forces personnel are pending in the Supreme Court and various High Courts, respectively. A provision exists in the Bill to transfer cases pending before any court including a High Court to the Tribunal.

It is expected that the setting up of the Tribunal will result in speedy and less expensive dispensation of justice to the Defence Services personnel.

Pesticides used by Farmers

2234. SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether farmers in and around Delhi using pesticides rich in carcinogenic pollutants like endosulfams are poisoning the capital air which can affect human health and the food chain as per the first Global study of United Nations Environment Programme;

(b) if so, whether the Government has examined the report; and

(c) if so, the response of the Government thereto and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) No information, about the use of endosulfan rich pesticides, which are poisoning the capital air and affecting human health and the food chain, is available.

Increase in Maternity Leave to Government Employees

2235. SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY:
SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to increase the period of maternity leave for the female Government employees by amending the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961:

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the time by which the said Act is likely to be amended;

(c) whether the Government intends to bring the private sector under the purview of the said Act; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 covers private sector also. Section 2 of the Act applies to every shop and establishment within the meaning of any law for the time being in force in relation to shops and establishments in a State, in which ten or more persons are employed, or were employed, on any day of the preceding twelve months provided that the State Government may, with the approval of the Central Government, after giving not less than two months notice of its intention of so doing, by notification in the Official Gazette, declare that all or any of the provisions of this Act shall apply also to other establishment or class of establishments, industrial, commercial, agricultural or otherwise.

Agricultural Wing at Rome

2236. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has set up an Agricultural wing headed by a senior officer of Joint Secretary rank with the designation of Minister (Agriculture) in Indian Embassy at Rome;

(b) if so, the details of staff strength under this Minister (Agriculture);

(c) the benefit likely to accrue therefrom;

(d) whether some projects are being implemented in States with the assistance from Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO); and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE

MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The staff strength under Minister (Agriculture) is two, i.e., one Personal Assistant and one Messenger.

(c) The Minister (Agriculture) is Alternative Permanent Representative of India to the three UN organizations namely Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) all with headquarters in Rome. The Indian Ambassador to Italy is concurrently the Permanent Representative of India to these three UN bodies. As per standard practice, these officers look after India's interest in the three UN agencies, participate in the meetings of their Governing Bodies and various Committees. They also follow up on policy issues and project proposals of interest to India.

(d); and (e) FAO has several project activities of varying degrees of coverage and involvement over a host of States. Some of these are Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems Project, Water Management Project and Cleaner Fishing Harbours Project in Andhra Pradesh, Agriculture, Man and Ecology Foundation (Project) in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Limited (KNNL) and Irrigation Management Project in Karnataka. Long-term Rehabilitation of Post-Tsunami Fisheries Livelihoods and Sea Safety in Tamil Nadu, Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project covering Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal.

Apart from these, FAO also has small Telefood projects, studies and pilots in Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttarkhand, Karnataka, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

In the recent past, FAO has implemented a number of horticulture related Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP) on floriculture in Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Karnataka, on apples in Himachal Pradesh and on bananas in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

A large programme was on plant quarantine improvement. There was also a Food Insecurity & Vulnerability Information & Mapping System (FIVIMS) project in two States of Himachal Pradesh and Orissa. A successful Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) in support

of the Ministry of Agriculture and National Programme on Organic Production ended in 2006 covering several States including the North Eastern States.

Recruitment of Defence Personnel

2237. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Defence Personnel recruited throughout the country during 2006-07 and 2007-08, State-wise;

(b) the steps taken by the Ministry to give proportionate representation to the people of tribal dominated States of the country;

(c) the location-wise recruitment centres in the country as on date especially in the tribal areas; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to go for local purchase of various tribal products in all defence establishments in the country?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) The recruitment of officers in the Army, Navy and Air Force is based on merit and is equally open to every citizen of the country without discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, tribe or religion. There is, therefore, no state-wise allocation of vacancies in the recruitment of officers.

Recruitment of Personnel Below Officer Rank (PBOR) in Army is made in the block of two years on the financial year basis. Details of candidates recruited in Army during the Recruiting Year 2006-2007 are given in Annexure-A. The number of candidates recruited for the year 2007-2008 is not available as the recruitment is not completed. In Navy and Air Force recruitment of PBOR are carried out on calendar year basis. Details of recruitment of PBOR in Navy and Air Force for the year 2006 and 2007 are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

Recruitment in the Armed Forces is open to every citizen of India provided he or she meets laid down physical, medical and educational criteria. The following steps are being taken by Services to step up recruitment from tribal dominated states of country:

(i) The Army conducts Recruitment rallies in the North Eastern States. Wide publicity is given to the Recruitment rallies. Emphasis is given on

organising recruitment rallies in the rural and backward areas with the help of civil administration. Youth of certain areas which are not so well developed are given dispensation in educational and physical standards.

- (ii) Navy conducts recruitment through examination centres. Special recruitment drives are also carried out in low response, remote areas to fill up unfilled vacancies.
- (iii) The Air Force conducts Recruitment rallies for selection of Airmen in order to give opportunity to the youth hailing from tribal, remote and low response areas.

List of recruitment centres in the country in respect of Army, Navy and Air Force are attached as Statement-II to IV.

Certain items like fresh vegetables, fresh fruits, potato, onion, garlic, hay and milk which are scaled to the Army are being procured from local cooperatives located at inaccessible areas of J&K and North East through negotiated contracts. In Navy, local purchase of authorized provisions, which could include tribal products, is carried out by the local formations on the basis of competitive rates as per Defence Procurement Manual (DPM), 2006.

Statement I

List of Recruitment of Personnel Below Officer Rank (PBOR) in Army, Navy and Air Force

Sl. No.	Name of the State & UT	Army	Navy		Air Force	
		2006-07	2006	2007 up to Nov.	2006	2007 up to 20/11
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Assam	464	37	66	82	57
2.	Andhra Pradesh	1196	271	78	483	310
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	20	0	02	0	0
4.	Bihar	1628	323	385	1978	1205
5.	Chhatisgarh	266	07	16	07	05
6.	NCT Delhi	476	15	08	86	60
7.	Gujarat	755	02	02	121	50
8.	Goa	11	02	05	08	0
9.	Himachal Pradesh	623	105	49	170	53
10.	Haryana	718	305	215	787	611
11.	Jharkhand	474	27	33	289	184
12.	Jammu and Kashmir	850	112	49	206	50
13.	Karnataka	760	18	21	97	48
14.	Kerala	698	41	107	153	248
15.	Madhya Pradesh	1042	36	43	50	118

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	Maharashtra	2138	54	27	99	37
17.	Manipur	115	24	51	75	69
18.	Meghalaya	34	0	03	05	01
19.	Mizoram	108	07	08	12	01
20.	Nagaland	189	10	15	10	0
21.	Orissa	753	128	79	219	154
22.	Punjab	1533	66	33	415	93
23.	Rajasthan	1522	205	148	876	636
24.	Sikkim	10	11	11	0	02
25.	Tamil Nadu	980	34	17	42	11
26.	Tripura	30	02	0	05	32
27.	Uttar Pradesh	3391	573	423	1739	1264
28.	Uttarakhand	1196	72	79	370	73
29.	West Bengal	969	109	22	139	107
30.	Pondicherry	01	0	01	24	04
31.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	28	06	10	34	03
32.	Daman and Diu	0	—	—	0	0
33.	Lakshadweep	0	—	—	0	0
34.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	0	—	—	0	0
35.	Chandigarh	0	05	0	32	15
Total		22978	2607	2006	8613	5501

Recruitment of PBOR from Nepal in Army-797 and Air Force-01 in the year 2006

Statement II

List of Recruiting Organisation (Recruiting Office and Army Recruiting Office) of Army

Sl. No.	Place (Recruiting Office/Army Recruiting Office)
1	2
<i>Haryana & UT of Chandigarh</i>	
1.	Ambala (RO)
2.	Rohtak (ARO)

1	2
3.	Hissar (ARO)
4.	Charkhi Dadri (ARO)
<i>Himachal Pradesh</i>	
5.	Palampur (ARO)
6.	Himripur (ARO)
7.	Shimla (ARO)

1	2
8.	Mandi (ARO) <i>Karnataka, Kerala, Goa and UT of Mahe & Lakshadweep</i>
9.	Bangalore (RO)
10.	Mangalore (ARO)
11.	Belguam (ARO)
12.	Trivandrum (ARO)
13.	Calicut (ARQ) <i>Tamil Nadu. Andhra Pradesh, UT of Puducherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands</i>
14.	Chennai (RO)
15.	Trichirapalli (ARO)
16.	Coimbatore (ARO)
17.	Secunderabad (ARO)
18.	Guntur (ARO)
19.	Vishakapatnam (ARO) <i>Bihar and Jharkhand</i>
20.	Danapur (RO)
21.	Muzaffarpur (ARO)
22.	Gaya (ARO)
23.	Katihar (ARO)
24.	Ranchi (ARO) <i>Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh</i>
25.	Jabalpur (RO)
26.	Gwalior (ARO)
27.	Mhow (ARO)
28.	Bhopal (ARO)
29.	Raipur (ARO) <i>Rajasthan</i>
30.	Jaipur (RO)

1	2
31.	Ahwar (ARO)
32.	Jhunjhunu (ARO)
33.	Jodhpur (ARO)
34.	Kota (ARO) <i>Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir</i>
35.	Jalandhar (RO)
36.	Amritsar (ARO)
37.	Ferozpur (ARO)
38.	Patiala (ARO)
39.	Ludhiana (ARO)
40.	Jammu (ARO)
41.	Srinagar (ARO) <i>West Bengal, Sikkim and Orissa</i>
42.	Kolkata (RO)
43.	Siliguri (ARO)
44.	Kanchrapara (ARO)
45.	Berhampore (ARO)
46.	Cuttack (ARO)
47.	Sambalpur (ARO)
48.	Gopalpur Cantt (ARO) <i>Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand</i>
49.	Lucknow (RO)
50.	Meerut (ARO)
51.	Bareilly (ARO)
52.	Agra (ARO)
53.	Varanasi (ARO)
54.	Amethi (ARO)
55.	Lansdowne (ARO)
56.	Almora (ARO)
57.	Pithoragarh (ARO)

1	2
	<i>Maharashtra, Gujarat and Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli</i>
58.	Pune (RO)
59.	Mumbai (ARO)
60.	Nagpur (ARO)
61.	Kolhapur (ARO)
62.	Aurangabad (ARO)
63.	Ahmedabad (ARO)
64.	Jamnagar (ARO)
	<i>Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura</i>
65.	Shillong (RO)
66.	Jorhat (ARO)
67.	Narangi (ARO)
68.	Rangapahar (ARO)
69.	Silchar (ARO)
70.	Aizawal (ARO)
	<i>Nepal and Bhutan</i>
71.	Kunraghat (RO)
72.	Ghoom (ARO)
	<i>Delhi and Distts of Gurgaon, Mewat and Faridabad of Haryana</i>
73.	Delhi Cantt (IRO)

Statement III*List of Recruiting Centre of Sailors in Indian Navy*

Sl.No.	Recruitment Centres
1	2
1.	Aizawal
2.	Ambala

1	2
3.	Arakkonam
4.	Almora
5.	Chennai
6.	Chilka (Orissa)
7.	Coimbatore
8.	Kolkata
9.	Dehradun
10.	Delhi
11.	Srinagar
12.	Ranchi
13.	Goa
14.	Guwahati
15.	Jabalpur/Gwallor
16.	Gangtok
17.	Jalandhar
18.	Jammu
19.	Jamnagar
20.	Jodhpur
21.	Kanpur
22.	Kochi
23.	Kohima
24.	Karwar
25.	Lonavia
26.	Leh
27.	Visakhapatnam
28.	Shimla
29.	Mumbai
30.	Shillong
31.	Trinavelli
32.	Port Blair

Statement IV*List of Airmen Selection Centre (ASC)*

Sl.No.	Place
1.	Ambala
2.	New Delhi
3.	Kanpur
4.	Barrackoore
5.	Jodhpur
6.	Mumbai
7.	Bangalore
8.	Tambaram
9.	Bhubaneswar
10.	Bihta
11.	Guwahati
12.	Begumpet
13.	Cochin
14.	Bhopal

Semi-conductor Manufacturing Units

2238. SHRI K.S. RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the problems being identified for semi-conductor manufacturing units in bringing higher level of investment in the sector;

(b) the financial and other incentives available/being extended to manufacturing units to encourage investors;

(c) the estimated requirement alongwith production capacity projected to be created during the next three years for semiconductors and other equipment, machinery and parts thereto;

(d) whether the Government proposes to initiate steps to encourage manufacturing of semi-conductors and development of nano-technology to meet the entire projected demand from domestic production to ensure

fast expansion of communication network and information technology sector; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (e) The semiconductor industry and other high tech industries are characterized by constraints that challenge their viability. These are highly capital intensive and have to deal with constantly changing technology. No significant investment has been made in semiconductor industry in the country, the main reasons being: the lack of ready infrastructure to attract investments as compared with other countries, the lack of a national policy framework in the past; and the domestic market in India not being large in the past to gain attention of the global players.

As per a recent study conducted by Frost and Sullivan, the total available market for semiconductors in India is expected to reach US\$ 5.8 billion by 2010 and US\$ 15.5 billion by 2015. The extent to which production/manufacturing capacity that would be created for semiconductors in the next 3 years will depend the response of the investors to the SIPS scheme announced by the Government.

The Special Incentive Package Scheme (SIPS) to encourage investments for setting up semiconductor fabrication and other micro and nano technology manufacture industries in India, has been announced by the Government vide Gazette Notification No. 78, Part I, Section I dated 21st March, 2007. In accordance with para 7.1 of the notification, an Appraisal Committee has been constituted by the Department of Information Technology (DIT) under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary, DIT. Further, for the effective functioning of the Appraisal Committee, a set of guidelines have also been issued on 14.9.2007. The SIPS Notification as well as Guidelines for the Appraisal Committee are also available on the website of DIT (<http://www.mit.gov.in>).

Grain Export Scam

2239. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased state:

(a) whether the Central Bureau of Investigation has since completed its investigation into the grain export scam in 2004; and

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Retail Trade

2240. SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN:
SHRI SWADESH CHAKRABORTY:
SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) entering the retail sector in the country alongwith the number of Malls and Outlets opened by the Multi-National Companies (MNCs);

(b) the growth registered in the retail market during the last three years;

(c) the extent of employment generated in the country in retail sector by the entry of the organised sector;

(d) whether the Government has defined the single branded retail for the purpose of allowing FDI in retail;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the commodities allowed to be sold through the organised retailers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) No Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Retail trading except for Single Brand product retailing where FDI upto 51% is permitted with prior Government approval subject to the following conditions:

(i) Products should be sold and should be of a single brand only

(ii) Products should be sold under the same brand internationally.

(iii) Single brand product retailing would cover only products which are branded during manufacturing.

Till August, 2007, 18 proposal for single brand retail have been approved.

(b) As per the GDP estimates of the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) the growth rate in GDP of trade sector as a whole has been estimated as 7.5 per cent during the year 2004-05. Separate official estimates of rate of growth of share of retail sector in GDP are not available.

(c) As per two latest quinquennial rounds of National Sample Survey Organization on employment, and unemployment opportunities on Current Daily Status basis in trade, hotel and restaurant sector (including retail trade) have been estimated at 37.58 million in 1999-2000 (55th round) and at 47.99 million in 2004-05 (61st round). Share of trade, hotel and restaurant sector in total employment was estimated at 5.87% in 1999-2000 and at 7.39% in 2004-05. Data is not available separately on employment in retail sector.

(d) and (e) As per reply given at part (a) above.

(f) Organized retailers register their shops with concerned authorities in various State/UT Governments in respect of the commodities sold by them. There is no express ban on number/type of commodities sold by domestic organized retailers.

Rural Information Technology Network

2241. SHRI P.C. GADDIGOUDAR:
SHRI K. VIRUPAKSHAPPA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any proposal for setting up of Rural Information Technology Network in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any problem has cropped in the first phase of the new projects; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) No. However, the Government has recently approved a Scheme for providing support for establishing 100,000 broadband, Internet enabled, Common Service Centres (CSCs) in rural areas of the country. These Centres would be opened in the ratio of 1 CSC for every 6 Census villages in a State. These Centres would provide a mix of Government and private Services in rural areas. While the State Government would decide the exact nature of Government services to be provided, the nature of private services to be provided would be determined by the entity selected for establishing the CSCs. It is expected that non government services like computer education, agriculture consulting, insurance, edutainment etc. would be delivered through these centres. The Scheme is to be implemented in a public private partnership. The full details of the Scheme are available in the CSC guidelines which are accessible at www.mit.gov.in. The total outlay of the Scheme is Rs. 5742 crores, including the cost of establishment of the CSCs and their operation for four years thereafter. The Government support in the form of viability gap funding is estimated to be Rs. 1649 crores, with the balance coming from private sector investments. These centres would thus be available for a variety of uses in rural areas including computer education, raising awareness about IT in rural areas etc. The Scheme is currently under implementation.

(c) and (d) No significant problems have cropped up in the implementation of the Scheme. However, it may be mentioned that since the implementation of the CSC Scheme is being carried out by the State Governments, the speed of implementation of the Scheme is dependent on the initiative and interest shown by the States in implementing the Scheme.

[Translation]

Vaidyanathan Committee

2242. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:
SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some States have raised objections to some of the provisions of the package based on the second report of Vaidyanathan Committee;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to make amendments in the revival package of Rural Co-operative Credit Institutions; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) Government of India has sought the views of the State Governments on the Report submitted by Vaidyanathan Committee for Revival of Long-Term Cooperative Credit Structure (LTCCS). Some of the State Governments have furnished their views and suggested modifications/changes in respect of some recommendations of the Committee. The suggestions mainly relate to shifting of cut-off date for the purpose of cleansing of the balance sheet, eligibility criteria, freedom of affiliation with higher structure of their choice, freedom to borrow from alternative Financial Institutions and proportion of sharing of losses between Government of India, State Governments and units of LTCCS.

The Government of India had a meeting with Ministers of various States on this issue on 10th October, 2007. The observations/suggestions of the State Governments will be kept in view in finalizing the Revival Package for LTCCS.

[English]

Filling up of Vacant Posts

2243. SHRI SUNIL KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of vacant posts of grade 'C' are still lying pending before the Ministry;

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

(c) the time by which the vacant posts are likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) The details of vacant posts in group 'C' are as under:

Department of Telecommunications:

At present there are 564 vacancies in group 'C'. Filling up of the vacancies for direct recruitment is pending for want of clearance from the Screening Committee as required in terms of DoP&T's instructions regarding optimization of direct recruitment to civilian posts. As the process of absorption of ITS Group 'A', officer in BSNL/MTNL has not yet been finalized, the sanctioned strength of various groups posts including Group 'A' & 'C' could not be determined, as a result of which clearance of the Screening Committee for filling up Direct Recruit vacancies is held up. Vacancies for promotion are being filled up. As regards filling up of the post of Manager Grade-II, DoT Canteen, DoP&T has issued instructions for re-categorization of Departmental Canteens and also for re-fixation of norms for canteen staff. The re-categorization of departmental Canteen of DoT in Sanchar Bhawan is in process. Regarding the post Computer (GCS), the selected candidate did not join. Case for filling up the post has been initiated.

Department of Posts:

At present there are 26,054 vacancies in group 'C'. Filling up direct recruitment vacancies is a time consuming process as certain prescribed pre-requisite procedure have to be followed before resorting to direct recruitment in any grade such as approval of Screening Committee, clearance from the Surplus Cell, reporting of vacancies to SSC, conducting examination by the various nodal agencies, verification of character and antecedents of persons recommended for appointment etc. Promotional posts are filled by holding DPCs and Departmental Examination.

Department of Information Technology:

At present there are 127 vacancies in group 'C'. Filling up the posts for Direct Recruitment are subject to the guidelines issued by DOPT from time to time regarding optimization in recruitment through Annual Direct Recruitment Plan (ADRP) and approval of the same by Screening Committee. This exercise is underway in the Department. However, the Department is proposing exemption of S&T Posts from the purview of ADRP, which would also necessitate exemption of non-S&T Posts. As far as other posts to be filled up under promotion quota are concerned, action has already being initiated to fill up such posts as per provisions in the Recruitment Rules.

*[Translation]***Dryland Farming**

2244. SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Central schemes being implemented at present for dryland farming in the country, State-wise;

(b) the existing provisions for allocation of funds for the said schemes and the funds allocated for the said schemes during the last three years, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government has made any assessment of the said schemes; and

(d) if so, the details thereof during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The watershed programmes/schemes are being implemented by Government of India for development of degraded and rainfed areas including drylands. Following schemes are implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Rural Development:

Ministry of Agriculture

- (i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPA)
- (ii) Soil Conservation in the catchments of River Valley Projects and Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR)
- (iii) Watershed Development project in shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA)

Ministry of Rural Development

- (iv) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP)
- (v) Desert Development Programme (DDP)
- (vi) Integrated Waste Land Development Programme (IWDP)

(b) A statement-I showing the state-wise release/expenditure incurred during the last three years (2004-05 to 2006-07) is enclosed.

(c) and (d) These schemes have been assessed by different independent agencies through evaluation studies. The salient findings of evaluation studies are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

Statement I

Release/Expenditure made under different watershed schemes during the last three years (2004-05 to 2006-07)

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Sl.No.	State	NWDPR	RVP& FPR	WDPSA	DDP	DPAP	IWDP
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2041.4	1679.34	—	6336.0	13521.0	10568.4
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1214.5	144.78	574.8			4449.2
3.	Assam	1009.4	68.54	1200.0			9878.9
4.	Bihar	1338.0	27.40	—		994.0	2376.0
5.	Chattishgarh	4478.4	905.60			4296.0	6046.4
6.	Goa	810.3	—				24.1
7.	Gujarat	4171.3	5397.17		13631.0	9044.0	6204.0
8.	Haryana	582.1	632.26		4534.0		1654.8
9.	Himachal Pradesh	926.1	2587.11		1556.0	1454.0	5762.3
10.	Jammu and Kashmir	327.8	6021.22		1963.0	743.0	2205.1
11.	Jharkhand	3380.9	3374.00			3100.0	741.9
12.	Karnataka	6992.7	3299.19		7229.0	8415.0	8169.3
13.	Kerala	2809.9	690.84				1197.9
14.	Madhya Pradesh	4854.3	2808.15			15989.0	10916.6
15.	Maharashtra	5946.1	5478.26			13668.0	5679.9
16.	Manipur	1917.0	163.92	1200.0			2734.3
17.	Meghalaya	1487.2	11.49	1147.6			2200.8
18.	Mizoram	2701.9	567.35	1600.0			2953.9
19.	Nagaland	2093.5	444.00	2100.0			6695.7
20.	Orissa	4410.4	410.30			4714.0	5826.8
21.	Punjab	1329.2	165.17				847.6
22.	Rajasthan	12426.0	6584.84		39948.0	5868.0	8799.2
23.	Sikkim	699.1	235.47				764.8
24.	Tamil Nadu	7817.9	2360.98			7540.0	7763.3

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
25.	Tripura	1030.1	79.85	876.7			1233.1
26.	Uttarakhand	4125.3	1164.09			3362.0	4038.8
27.	Uttar Pradesh	4942.4	4940.70			7568.0	9761.8
28.	West Bengal	1359.5	293.82			901.0	1248.7
29.	Andaman and Nicobar Island	92.9					
Total		87315.6	50535.84	8699.1	75197.0	101197.0	130543.6

Statement II

Impacts of major Watershed Development Programmes

A. Programmes of Ministry of Agriculture

I. NWDPR: Evaluation studies conducted for NWDPR reveals the following

- Increase in crop yield ranging from 15 to 220 % in respect of major crops, viz; paddy and wheat and more than 35% in respect of pulses.
- Increase in cropping intensity from ranging from 8 to 60%.
- Reduction in sediment loss varying from 3 to 80%.
- Increase in groundwater recharge ranging from 0.6 to 10 mt.
- Significant increase in family income through diversified farming systems; viz; agro-forestry, dry-land horticulture, livestock development and household production activities in the treated watersheds.
- The agro-forestry and horticulture plantations raised under the scheme have shown survival percentage ranging from 25 to 75%. There has been increase in bio-mass production varying from 2.39 to 58%.
- Large number of water harvesting structures were created under the programme.

II. RVP & FPR: Evaluation studies conducted for RVP & FPR reveals the following:

- Yield of agricultural crops has increased. The variation of increase is very high, ranging from 10% to 76%.

- Increase of cropping intensity varying from 80% to 115% has been observed.
- The sediment yield at watershed level has reduced ranging from 17% to 94%.
- The flood peaks at the end of watersheds has reduced to 36%.
- The soil conservation measure has increased the groundwater re-charge. The increase in groundwater table ranges from 0.5 to 2 meter.
- The soil conservation measures have helped in employment generation in rural areas.

III. WDPSCA: Evaluation studies conducted for WDPSCA reveals the following:

- Significant decrease (30%) in shifting cultivation area due to adoption of permanent/ settled cultivation has been noticed.
- About 27% Jhumias have abandoned Jhum practice
- Jhum area per family has been reduced from 0.84 ha to 0.56 ha
- Sustainable increase in productivity of agricultural crops, horticultural crops, livestock, inland fisheries, etc. was observed. In case of Paddy cultivation 13% increase in level of productivity was reported.
- Increase in overall income by 25% of the Jhumia family as compared to pre-project was reported.
- Increase in cropping intensity by 40% was observed.

- Active participation and contribution of the watershed community in completion of all the planned works/activities for development of the watershed was effective and very useful in after care of assets created.
- The new institutional set up *viz* Watershed Association/Panchayats has helped in promoting participatory approach during project period and even beyond project period.

B. Programmes of Ministry of Rural Development

The salient findings of impact assessment studies reveals:

- There has been an overall improvement in land use.
- There has been increase in the net sown area, gross cropped area and area sown more than once.
- Number of irrigation options enhanced in all the areas where watershed projects were taken.
- The fuelwood and fodder availability has increased, especially in the areas where emphasis has been laid on catchment's area treatment.
- The actual number of livestock has increased and there was a marked preference for improved breed. In many states the fishery potential has increased.
- There has been changes in the cropping pattern from one to two crops annually. This was directly attributable to the availability of water in the dry season. In some regions adoption of improved crop varieties was observed in the studies.
- There has been increase in agriculture related employment opportunities, among beneficiaries and in other sectors for non-beneficiaries. These included trade, dairy, poultry, masonry etc. Changes in household income levels were noticed as high as 50%.
- The institutional arrangement got strengthened.
- Peoples' participation through slow in the beginning got a momentum in course of time.
- In all project areas capacity building was at various levels.

Setting up of I.T. Parks/Centres

2245. SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the States from which proposals for setting up of Information Technology Parks/Centres have been received by the Union Government during the current year; and

(b) the action taken/being taken by the Union giving approval to the proposals received?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) During the current financial year Department of Information Technology (DIT) has received a request from Government of Gujarat for setting up Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) centers at Surat, Rajkot, Jamnagar and Bhavnagar. A decision has been taken to setup STPI center at Surat.

[English]

CBI Enquiry in PDS Operations

2246. SHRI TAPIR GAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased state:

(a) whether the Public Distribution Scheme (PDS) in North Eastern States particularly in Arunachal Pradesh has been referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI);

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

(c) whether the CBI has since completed the enquiry; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) On an excess payment of Rs. 193.52 crore reported by a Special Audit Team of FCI to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh under the Hill Transport Subsidy (HTS) Scheme during the year 2002-03 and 2003-04, the matter was referred to Central Vigilance Commission (CVC). Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)

asked Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to investigate the matter regarding irregularities in reimbursement of HTS to the State. The CBI expressed its willingness to take up the investigation provided required notifications under Section 5 and 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act (DSPE) were issued by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

(c) and (d) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has not completed the enquiry.

PDS in Tribal Areas

2247. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has failed to provide adequate quantity of foodgrains to the poor and needy people in the remote and tribal areas of the country under Public Distribution System (PDS);

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last two years and the current year and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government has formulated any concrete policy to provide the benefits of the PDS in the said areas; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) and (d) The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has evolved as a system of management of distribution of foodgrains at affordable prices to poor sections of society. TPDS is supplemental in nature and is intended to make available half requirement of foodgrains of 6.52 crore BPL households. For focused coverage of the poorest of the poor families under the TPDS, Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) is under implementation since December, 2000. Presently 2.42 crores families have been covered under it as per details given in the enclosed statement. They are being distributed rice at Rs. 3/- and wheat at Rs. 2/- per kg. @ 35 kg. per family per month in tribal as well as non-tribal blocks.

Statement

Status of identification of Households under AAY (Normal & Additional)

(Fig. in lakh)

S.No.	States/UTs	No. of BPL families as on 1.3.2000	Estimated No. of AAY families	AAY Families identified & Ration Cards issued
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	40.63	15.578	15.578
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	0.99	0.380	0.380
3.	Assam	18.36	7.040	7.040
4.	Bihar	65.23	25.01	24.285
5.	Chhattisgarh	18.75	7.189	7.189
6.	Delhi	4.09	1.568	1.502
7.	Goa	0.48	0.184	0.145

1	2	3	4	5
8.	Gujarat	21.20	8.128	8.098
9.	Haryana	7.89	3.025	2.924
10.	Himachal Pradesh	5.14	1.971	1.971
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	7.36	2.822	2.557
12.	Jharkhand	23.94	9.179	9.179
13.	Karnataka	31.29	11.997	11.997
14.	Kerala	15.54	5.958	5.958
15.	Madhya Pradesh	41.25	15.816	15.816
16.	Maharashtra	65.34	25.053	24.100
17.	Manipur	1.66	0.636	0.504
18.	Meghalaya	1.83	0.702	0.702
19.	Mizoram	0.68	0.261	0.261
20.	Nagaland	1.24	0.475	0.475
21.	Orissa	32.98	12.645	12.645
22.	Punjab	4.68	1.794	1.794
23.	Rajasthan	24.31	9.321	9.321
24.	Sikkim	0.43	0.165	0.165
25.	Tamil Nadu	48.63	18.646	18.646
26.	Tripura	2.85	1.131	1.131
27.	Uttar Pradesh	106.79	40.945	40.945
28.	Uttarakhand	4.98	1.909	1.512
29.	West Bengal	51.79	19.857	14.799
30.	Andaman and Nicobar	0.28	0.107	0.043
31.	Chandigarh	0.23	0.088	0.021
32.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.18	0.069	0.052
33.	Daman & Diu	0.04	0.015	0.015
34.	Lakshadweep	0.03	0.012	0.012
35.	Pondicherry	0.84	0.322	0.522
	Total	652.03	249.998	242.084

*[Translation]***Sale of Vacant Land of VSNL**

2248. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sale of the vacant land of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) is not being done to the pressure of the company while the vacant land is not covered under disinvestment and Government is overlooking the recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee on Finance regarding the sale of the vacant land;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the ground on which the vacant land of the VSNL was handed over to its buyer the Tata Telecom/Tata Group, while it was not covered under investment;

(d) the portion of the vacant land of the VSNL lying with its buyer the Tata Group;

(e) whether the Government has formulated any scheme to sell out the vacant land of the VSNL;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) There is no pressure from the company on Government to sell the vacant (surplus) Land of VSNL. And there is no recommendation regarding sale of vacant (surplus) land VSNL by Standing Parliamentary Committee of Department of Disinvestment, Ministry of Finance.

(c) VSNL (A Private company) is the custodian of the vacant (surplus) land. And the TATA Group is the major stake holder in VSNL.

(d) The vacant (surplus) Land identified prior to disinvestment is 773.13 Acres. M/s VSNL is the custodian of this land.

(e) to (g) The Government is considering all possible options and the matter is under consideration of the Government.

*[English]***Decline in Poverty in South Asian Region**

2249. SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent report by International Labour Office (ILO) has revealed a general decline in poverty and increase in productivity in the South Asian Region during the last decade;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the change in the said indices with reference to India; and

(c) the official assessment made with regard to the above during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir. The Reports of ILO has revealed that there has been a decline in poverty and increase in productivity in South Asian Region during the last decade.

(b) and (c) As per the ILO Report (Key Indicators of the Labour Market) share of working poor (1 US \$ a day) in the total employment for South Asia has come down from 56.6 percent in 1996 to 33.5 percent in the year 2006. As per the Report, the annual percentage change in Labour productivity in South Asia was 2.3 percent in 1996, which further increased to 5.8 percent in the year 2006. In case of India, the annual growth rate of Labour Productivity (defined as value added per person employed) during 1980 to 2005 was 3.7 percent. Poverty ratio, in India, which was 36 percent in 1993-94, has come down to 27.5 percent in 2004-05 (Uniform Recall Period bases).

*[Translation]***Agents in Post offices**

2250. SHRI ANANT GUDHE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether cases of consumers being entrapped by the Recurring Deposit agents in post offices have come to light;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action being taken against these corrupt agents and officials colluding with them;

(d) whether the Government proposes to reimburse the money of the Recurring Deposit (RD) amount deposited by consumers to these agents;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the number of such cases reported so far, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Cases of defrauding the depositors of Recurring Deposit Accounts of Post Office Savings Bank by Mahila Pradhan Kshetriya Bachat Yojna (MPKBY) Agents have been noticed.

(b) Total 85 cases as in (a) above, have been detected in various Post Offices of the Country. Three types of frauds are noticed *viz.* (i) the amount was collected by the MPKBY Agents from the depositors but not credited in the Post Office, (ii) the amount was shown as deposited by falsification of records like making entries and impressing postal stamps in pass books in collusion with postal employees, and (iii) misusing the blank withdrawal forms got deceitfully signed from depositors while opening the account, or forging signatures of depositors to get maturity/premature closure amounts.

(c) The agency sanctioning authorities i.e. the Small Savings Authorities of State Governments are asked to cancel the agencies of errant MPKBY Agents. The cases are also reported to police. Disciplinary action is also taken against the postal officials involved for their complicity.

(d) and (e) In cases where the authenticated entries of deposits are produced by the depositors establishing entrustment of deposits to the post office, justified claims of the defrauded depositors are settled. In absence of any such proof, the Department of Posts is not liable for reimbursement of money given by depositors to the MPKBY Agents.

(f) State-wise details of the number of such cases reported are given in the enclosed Statement.

Statement

Name of States and number of Cases where Recurring Deposit agents Entrapped Customers in the Posts Offices

Sl. No.	Name of States	Number of Cases
1.	Chhattisgarh	4
2.	Delhi	5
3.	Gujarat	6
4.	Karnataka	2
5.	Kerala	41
6.	Maharashtra	9
7.	Madhya Pradesh	2
8.	Tripura	1
9.	Orissa	2
10.	Punjab	2
11.	Rajasthan	4
12.	Tamil Nadu	4
13.	Uttar Pradesh	3
Total		85

No cases are reported from other States.

[English]

Employment to Agricultural Graduates

2251. SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether 43 per cent of agriculture graduates and 23 per cent of post-graduates in rural areas are unemployed as on date;

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

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken to provide employment to such youths?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) A study was got conducted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research through the Institute of Applied Manpower Research (IAMR). As per the study, the position of employability is as follows:

	Graduates (%)	Post-Graduates (%)
Employed	38.3	57.3
Pursuing for higher studies	11.3	10.1
Unemployed	42.7	22.5
Self-employed	4.7	4.6

(d) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research/ Department of Agricultural Research & Education has launched programmes like experiential learning, hands-on-training, curricula revision etc. so that the graduates and post-graduates produced by the Universities possess entrepreneurial skills and confidence to enhance their employability including self-employment.

Import of Wheat

2252. SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH:
SHRI HEMMAL MURMU:
SHRI ANANTA NAYAK:
SHRI M. SHIVANNA:
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:
SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the production of wheat during the last three years and current year alongwith the estimated production of wheat in the country during the ensuing season;

(b) whether the Government has finalised a proposal for import of additional quantum of wheat during the current year to increase the buffer stock;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the reasons for wheat import despite adequate availability in the country;

(e) whether the tender for said import has been floated;

(f) if so, the details thereof and the response of exporting countries thereto; and

(g) the steps taken to ensure availability of foodgrains including wheat in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The production of wheat in the country during the last three crop years is as follows.

(in lakh tonnes)	
Crop Year	Production
2003-04	721
2004-05	686
2005-06	694
2006-07	749 (4th Advance Estimate)
2007-08	Sowing is under progress*

*Estimate of production will be released by Department of Agriculture and Cooperation in January, 2008.

(b) to (d) Since procurement was only 111.27 lakh tonnes in RMS 2007-08 as against the estimated requirement of 150 lakh tonnes of wheat for TPDS, other welfare schemes and relief work for natural calamities etc. Government has decided to import 23 lakh tonnes of wheat for Central Pool out of which orders have been placed for import of 13.06 lakh tonnes.

(e) and (f) Out of the 13.06 lakh tonnes of wheat, 5.11 lakh MTs has been contracted at a weighted average price of US \$ 325.59 per tonne C&F (FO) for import from Canada, Russia or any other country as per the sellers' choice. Another 7.95 lakh tonnes has been contracted at a weighted average price of US \$ 389.45 per tonne C&F (FO).

(g) the steps taken to ensure availability of foodgrains including wheat in the country are given in the enclosed Statement.

Statement

To increase cereals production, Centrally Sponsored Integrated Cereals Development Programme (ICDP) in Rice, Wheat and Coarse Cereals is in operation from October 2000. Under these schemes, assistance is provided on 90:10 basis between the Government of India and the State Governments for propagation of improved/hybrid production technology, pest management, farm implements, installation of sprinkler irrigation system, varietal replacement and production of certified seeds. Likewise, to increase the production of pulses, Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Malze" (ISOPOM) is under operation since 01.04.2004. Under this scheme, assistance is provided on 75:25 basis by the Government of India and the State Governments.

Government of India has also initiated two schemes for increasing foodgrains production and improving the agricultural growth in the country. These are (i) National Food Security Mission (NFSM), and (ii) Rashtriya Krishi Vikash Yojana (RKVY). NFSM has been launched in the country from 2007-08. It aims at increasing the production of rice by 10 million tonnes by the end of the Eleventh Plan (2011-12). This along with the Rashtriya Krishi Vikash Yojana will improve the supply position of foodgrains including wheat.

Participation of Private Sector In Defence Production

2253. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:
SHRI RAKESH SINGH:
SHRI SUNIL KHAN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the deliberations on the recommendations made by the Kelkar Committee have been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof, alongwith the extent to which Private Sector participation in Defence production has increased so far after permitting Indian Private Sector with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI);

(c) whether the Government has not been able to utilize full capacity created in the public sector enterprises;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the measures taken to utilize maximum capacity of Public Sector Enterprises in Defence production;

(e) the present share of indigenous production in Defence procurement and the expenditure incurred on indigenous equipment vis-a-vis imported ones for the last three years; and

(f) the steps being taken by the Government to encourage Private Sector and Public Sector Enterprises so as to minimize dependence on import?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

Out of total 40 recommendations in part-I of Kelkar Committee report, 26 recommendations were accepted for implementation out of which 18 have been implemented so far. 8 recommendations were accepted for implementation with certain modifications out of which 6 have been implemented so far. Out of remaining 6 which were to be deliberated upon further 2 have been implemented and 1 has been dropped after due deliberations. While in respect of part-II of the report out of 19 recommendations, 4 recommendations have been implemented, further action is not required/envisaged in respect of 13 recommendations and one has been dropped after due deliberations.

Since May 2001, when the Defence Industry sector was opened up for Indian private sector participation with FDI permissible upto 26%, 73 Letters of Intent/Industrial Licenses have been issued to private companies for manufacture of wide range of defence items. Of the above, a few projects have started implementation.

(c) and (d) The market for defence goods is user driven and is based on requirement projected by the services in their annual and long-term acquisition plan as a result of which full capacity utilization may not always be feasible.

(e) The share of indigenously produced items in defence procurement was about 77% in 2006-2007. Details of expenditure for the last three years is as below:

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Indigenous Equipment	Imported Equipment	Total Expenditure
2004-2005	12365	12937	25302
2005-2006	18019	7362	25280
2006-2007	25647	7710	33356

(f) Government has taken various initiatives to encourage participation of Indian industries in defence production including provisions relating to offset, maintenance through Indian industry of 'Buy' category items procured from overseas. Also issues like shared development cost and minimum order quantity have been addressed in the 'Make' procedure notified as part of Defence Procurement Procedure-2006.

Auction of Spectrum

2254. DR. RAJESH MISHRA:
SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has written to Prime Minister on the issue of auction of spectrum;

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

(c) whether some foreign firms including Rookie Telecom and S. Tel have offered voluntarily to pay Rs. 6,000 crores to DoT for allocation of spectrum;

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

(e) the reasons that Government do not want to auction spectrum to telecom operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Communications have been sent to Prime Minister on issues related to licencing and allocation of spectrum aspects which includes, among others, licensing procedures, enhancement of subscribers linked spectrum allocation criteria, spectrum charges, use of dual technology by telecom service providers etc.

(c) and (d) M/s. S. Tel Ltd. in their letter have stated among others, that S. Tel is of the view that the policy that was evolved when the industry was at its infancy, will not serve the public purpose now, when the industry is among the most advanced. Consistent with its knowledge and understanding of the business of telecom and the high value of spectrum, S. Tel comes forward voluntarily to pay additional revenue share to the extent of Rs. 6000 crores to the DOT, over and above the spectrum charges revenue share payable as per the existing policy, over a period of 10 years from the date of the spectrum allotment. This will bring into effect a prioritization model, which will fully subserve the larger public interest.

(e) Taking into account the TRAI recommendations the Government has decided not to auction the spectrum of 2G services at present and to grant new Unified Access Services (UAS) Licences as per the existing guidelines.

[Translation]

Committee on Contract Labours

2255. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any high level committee of industrialists has been constituted by the Government for considering the issues related to Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970;

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

(c) whether the said committee has submitted its report;

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

(e) whether the Hon'ble Supreme Court has issued a directive imposing the ban on recruitment contract labour wherever regular vacancies are available; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

(e) The Ministry of Labour & Employment has not received any directive from the Supreme Court imposing the ban on recruitment contract labour wherever regular vacancies are available.

(f) Does not arise.

Old Age Pension through Post Office

2256. SHRI GANESH SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that Old Age Pension is being given through the post offices;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the beneficiary has to himself fill up the withdrawal form;

(d) if so, whether the Government is contemplating to provide free of cost forms in all the post offices of the country;

(e) if so, whether the withdrawal forms not available in any of post offices of the country and the beneficiary has to purchase the form from the market; and

(f) if so, the time by which the process of making pension forms available in the post offices would be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. It is admitted that Old Age Pension is being paid through post offices.

(b) Old Age Pension is being paid in Bihar, Delhi, Jharkhand through post office savings bank and in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, through money orders.

(c) In case of withdrawal from post office savings bank account, the beneficiary is required to fill up a withdrawal form.

(d) Withdrawal form for the post office savings bank is available free of cost in all Post Offices in the country.

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

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

Problem of Unemployment

2257. SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Group consisting of C. Rangarajan, Padma Aiyar, Kaul and Seema has collectively prepared and submitted a document/paper wherein it has been stated that problem of unemployment is likely to be solved within next two to three years;

(b) if so, whether any study has been conducted by the Government for ascertaining the facts and details of this document/paper;

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

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) A group consisting of C. Rangarajan, Padma Aiyar, Kaul and Seema has collectively prepared and published a paper titled 'Revisiting Employment and Growth' in September 2007 issue of ICRA BULLETIN-Money and Finance.

(b) to (d) No study has been conducted by the Government in this regard.

[English]

Inclusion of Gosikhurd Irrigation Project as National Project

2258. SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any proposal from the Government of Maharashtra for inclusion of Gosikhurd Irrigation Project in the series of national projects;

(b) if so, whether the said project has been designed to provide irrigation benefits to the tribal areas in Vidarbha region;

(c) if so, the details thereof indicating the area to be covered under the project; and

(d) the time by which the Government is likely to take decision in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAYPRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Vidarbha Irrigation Development Corporation which is implementing the project has informed that total Irrigable Command Area (ICA) of the project is 190000 ha out of which ICA of 8335 ha is in tribal area.

(d) So far, there is no scheme in force with the Ministry of Water Resources for funding of National Projects.

Impact of Private Sector in Dairy Industry

2259. DR. M JAGANNATH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has recently decided to allow entry of private sector in Dairy Industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof and its likely impact on availability of milk for consumers; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure availability of milk to consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) No Sir. As such there is no restriction on setting up of new dairy plants or expand the milk processing capacity of existing dairy plants by the private and cooperative sectors, as per the provision of Milk and Milk Product Order-1992.

(c) Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries reviews/monitors the milk availability in the country in consultation with state milk federations, NDDB, etc.

Trade Fairs and Exhibitions

2260. SHRI ABU AYES MONDAL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken steps to promote trade of textiles between India and other countries through trade fairs/exhibitions;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of foreign exchange earned by the Government during each of the last three years from such exhibitions/trade fairs; and

(d) the percentage of the earnings provided to encourage the Indian artisans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Government is providing financial support under Market Development Assistance (MDA) and Market Access Initiative (MAI) Schemes for participation in Buyer/Seller Meets, Trade Fairs and Exhibitions through Export Promotion Councils, for providing greater exposure to global markets. However, it is not possible to quantify the generation of foreign exchange through such exhibitions/fairs. The details of activities undertaken by the Councils have been included in the Annual Reports of the Councils, which have been laid in both the Houses of Parliament.

(d) The participants in the Exhibitions/Fairs, are eligible to receive financial assistance from the Marketing Development Assistance funds provided by the Government to meet part of their expenses.

[Translation]

Change in Consumer Laws

2261. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:
SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to change the consumer legislation to make them more stringent;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total number of cases of exploitation of consumers registered during the last three years, State-wise; and

(d) the total number of people held guilty in the said cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. There are proposals to amend the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 to make them more stringent by strengthening the penalty provisions and the powers of the Consumer Fora, among other things.

(c) and (d) As informed by the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), cases of exploitation of consumers & number of people held guilty as such is not maintained, however, in all cases where the merits so warranted, appropriate relief is granted by the Consumer Fora. State-wise details of cases filed and disposed off by the Consumer Fora during the last 3 years as per information furnished by the NCDRC, are given in the enclosed Statement I and II.

Statement I

Year-wise Filing & Disposal in National Commission & State Commissions

(Upto 31.10.2007)

	2004		2005		2006		2007	
	Filed	Disposed	Filed	Disposed	Filed	Disposed	Filed	Disposed
National Commission	4046	4171	3878	4767	5222	4269	4902	5546
Andhra Pradesh	1728	1022	2176	995	1261	281	1527	281
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Arunachal Pradesh	1	0	4	0	4	7	6	7
Assam	186	93	246	20	302	1	26	0
Bihar	936	800	936	585	556	483	623	535
Chandigarh	520	581	181	112	976	821	962	813
Chhattisgarh	807	1054	539	874	865	895	586	632
Dadra and Nagar Haveli/ Daman and Diu	2	2	2	3	1	1	N.A.	N.A.
Delhi	1272	1809	1294	2063	1589	2928	650	1133
Goa	84	132	71	128	131	113	86	70
Gujarat	3208	2566	2177	2265	2294	1888	1314	912
Haryana	3370	407	2729	769	3025	1395	2683	1261
Himachal Pradesh	1369	1273	1195	851	1664	2040	1722	1511
Jammu and Kashmir	195	264	202	43	162	34	169	81
Jharkhand	562	306	525	657	442	447	703	149

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Arunachal Pradesh	17	11	7	16	11	9	6	6
Assam	512	323	647	255	620	151	N.A.	N.A.
Bihar	2962	3270	3636	3029	1624	2338	3154	2389
Chandigarh	2600	2410	1393	1042	1850	1509	1421	1348
Chhattisgarh	1139	1001	738	824	2187	2084	1607	1174
D & N Haveli/Daman & Diu	5	1	13	12	9	4	N.A.	N.A.
Delhi	11950	14206	11312	11833	5082	4786	6342	5510
Goa	204	152	216	120	206	358	100	124
Gujarat	8301	8775	7390	6257	16898	16116	5733	5733
Haryana	9787	2641	10149	10023	10619	11871	8913	10098
Himachal Pradesh	2435	2781	1868	1913	2096	1880	1585	1884
Jammu and Kashmir	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Jharkhand	2653	2911	2066	1905	2211	2257	938	782
Karnataka	6064	6044	6634	6271	8398	8535	7473	4008
Kerala	5498	5459	5266	4856	4444	3113	2105	730
Lakshadweep	0	0	3	4	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Madhya Pradesh	7640	8476	8006	8007	10850	9597	5712	4515
Maharashtra	9628	12175	10519	12868	10942	14614	8123	9234
Manipur	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Meghalaya	28	16	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Mizoram	147	78	40	58	28	28	N.A.	N.A.
Nagaland	25	23	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Orissa	4275	4304	3471	3526	2844	3083	4057	3582
Pondicherry	113	205	94	83	88	88	88	88
Punjab	9309	8973	8001	8735	6302	4663	5413	5799
Rajasthan	12368	13382	12399	13369	14064	13853	10761	9214
Sikkim	0	0	11	6	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Tamilnadu	4567	4470	3961	3994	3194	2742	7529	357
Tripura	116	113	16	15	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Uttar Pradesh	16944	13335	19047	19108	17568	14512	11862	14446
Uttaranchal	1118	1264	1064	1272	1413	898	965	1038
West Bengal	3470	3433	3331	3009	3518	3165	2735	2466
TOTAL	131219	123174	128767	125844	131183	123780	101647	86674

Note: 'N.A.' means data not available

Misuse of Concessions by Exporters of Handicraft

2262. DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the misuse of concessions and facilities being provided to the exporters to promote the export of handicraft items;

(b) if so, the details of such cases reported during each of the last three years, State-wise; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) No, Sir. There is no reported case of misuse of concessions and facilities being provided to the exporters to promote the export of handicrafts items.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Investment in Agriculture

2263. SHRI JAI PRAKASH (Mohanlal Ganj): Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has seen the report released by the World Bank which suggests heavy investment in agricultural sector for the welfare of millions of poor rural Indians;

(b) if so, whether the Government is taking any steps in view of the above report;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) World Development Report 2008 titled 'Agriculture for Development' emphasizes for greater investment in agriculture in developing countries. The report stresses that the agricultural sector must be placed at the centre of the development agenda for reducing extreme poverty and hunger.

As per the data compiled by Central Statistical Organization, the total investment in the Agriculture and allied sectors measured in terms of Gross Capital Formation (GCF) (at constant 1999-2000 prices) has increased from Rs. 53,840 crore in 2003-04 to Rs. 57,253 crore in 2004-05 and further to Rs. 64,131 crore in 2005-06. Further, towards improving the growth in the agriculture sector, Government has initiated, inter-alia, the following:

- Launched of National Food Security Mission (NFSM) with an outlay of Rs. 4,882 crore for the Eleventh Plan period. It aims to add additional 10 million tonnes of rice, 8 million tonnes of wheat and 2 million tonnes of pulses by the end of the Eleventh Plan.
- Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), a State Plan Scheme, with an outlay of Rs. 25,000 crore aims at achieving 4% annual growth in the agriculture sector during the Eleventh Plan period, to ensure a holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors.
- Providing additional resources for irrigation.
- Strategic focus on the national agriculture research effort.

*(English)***Promotion of IT in Orissa**

2264. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to promote Information Technology enabled services in the country especially in Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the assistance likely to be provided by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Government of India through Department of IT, has approved the Common Services Centers (CSC) Scheme on September 26, 2006 for establishment of 1,00,000 + CSCs across rural India for delivery of Government, private and social sector services to rural citizens of India including Orissa.

(b) The Government of India has approved the CSC Scheme for Orissa and accordingly administrative sanctions of Rs. 135.72 Cr. have been issued including release of 1st Installment of Rs. 16.96 Cr. to Orissa. The Orissa Government has also issued RFP for selection of potential Service Center Agency (SCA)

(c) Government is providing revenue support for the four years in the CSC Scheme. Government of India has appointed a National Level Service Agency (NLSA) to assist the States for implementation of the CSC Scheme.

Suberna Rekha Project

2265. SHRI PRABODH PANDA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Suberna Rekha Project of West Bengal;

(b) whether the Union Government has agreed to fund 90% of the total cost of this project; and

(c) if so, the time by which this project is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Subernarekha Barrage project (West Bengal) envisages construction of a barrage across Subernarekha river downstream of Chandil dam and Galudih barrage near Bhosraghat to irrigate 1,14,198 ha. annually in the Midnapur district of West Bengal through a left bank canal and its distribution system covering a culturable command area of 96,860 ha. as approved by the Planning Commission in 1995. The project was taken up for construction in the year 1995-96 at an estimated cost of Rs. 215.61 crore (1987 price level).

(b) and (c) As per the existing guidelines on AIBP, the irrigation projects benefiting drought prone/tribal/flood prone areas are eligible for up to 90% grant of the project cost included in AIBP depending on the extent of irrigation benefits provided by the project to such area that has been proposed in AIBP. The extent to which, the Suberna Rekha project could receive funding under AIBP could be decided on receipt of proposal from State Government of West Bengal as per guidelines of the AIBP in force.

Irrigation being a state subject, the planning, execution, funding as well as priority of execution of such projects is within the purview of the concerned State Governments.

*(Translation)***Training for PDS Employees**

2266. SHRI HEMMAL MURMU: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any scheme to provide training and research facilities for strengthening and upgrading the skills of personnel engaged in the implementation of Public Distribution System had been launched;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government provides any financial and physical assistance to the States under the said scheme;

(d) if so, the details of the assistance provided to each State during each of the last three years; and

(e) the number of persons benefited therefrom during the said period, Statewise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Department of Food & Public Distribution has provided financial assistance to States/UTs under the Central Sector Scheme 'TRAINING, RESEARCH & MONITORING' (TRM) for strengthening Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in States/UTs.

Under this Scheme, financial assistance is provided upto Rs. 50,000/- for conducting one week's training programme, and also for holding conference/workshop by the State Governments and Union Territory administrations to train the officers/officials of State Food Supplies

Departments, State Civil Supplies Corporation, Consumer Cooperative, Super Bazars and district level officers engaged in the public distribution of essential commodities. One time financial assistance upto Rs. 1.50 lakh was provided to the State Governments and Union Territories administration for purchase of computers for connectivity of Food and Civil Supplies Directorate with NIC network.

Under the scheme, evaluation studies were got conducted on Targeted Public Distribution System through research institutions.

(d) and (e) Details of assistance provided under the scheme to States/UTs during last three years are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Details of assistance provided to States/UTs for conducting training and workshops for TPDS functionaries during last three years

S.No.	States/UTs	Proposal	Amount released
1	2	3	4
2004-05			
1.	Bihar	Training Programme	4,50,000
2.	Gujarat	Training Programme	45,000
3.	Mizoram	Training Programme	10,000
4.	West Bengal	Training/Seminar	55,849
Total			5,60,849
2005-06			
1.	Rajasthan	Purchase of Computer	36,000
2.	Rajasthan	Training Programme	38,250
3.	Andhra Pradesh	Training Programme	5,40,000
4.	Maharashtra	Regional Conference	1,50,000
5.	Himachal Pradesh	Regional Conference	1,50,000
6.	Mizoram	Training Programme	2,00,000
7.	Haryana	Training Programme	1,35,000
8.	Nagaland	Purchase of Computer	1,35,000

1	2	3	4
9.	Kerala	Regional Conference	1,20,000
10.	Punjab	Training Programme	44,500
11.	West Bengal	Training Programme	1,40,000
12.	Nagaland	Training Programme	27,000
13.	Sikkim	Training Programme	1,80,000
14.	West Bengal	Regional Conference	1,68,000
15.	Assam	Regional Conference	2,10,000
16.	Tamil Nadu	Training Programme	11,50,000
17.	Bihar	Training Programme	50,000
18.	Gujarat	Training Programme	11,25,000
Total			45,98,750
2006-07			
1.	Gujarat	Purchase of Computer	6,512
2.	Kerala	Conference	30,000
3.	Tripura	Training Programme	4,50,000
4.	Mizoram	Training Programme	3,60,000
5.	Chhattisgarh	Training Programme	9,82,000
6.	Delhi (ITDC)	Conference	34,642
7.	West Bengal	Training Programme	11,820
8.	Haryana	Training Programme	9,55,000
9.	Gujarat	Seminar	2,70,000
Total			30,99,974

[English]

Charging of Octroi by Cantonment Board

2267. SHRI VIJAY BAHUGUNA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Cantonment Board of Chakrata in Uttarakhand is charging three percent octroi at price of goods entering this Scheduled Tribe area:

(b) the number of Cantonment Boards in the country which are charging octroi; and

(c) the reasons for non-abolition of the gate pass system by the Cantonment Board of Chakrata in Uttarakhand?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) Cantonment Board, Chakrata is imposing and collecting Octroi at various rates on goods/commodities and animals

brought within the Cantonment limits for consumption, use or sale.

(b) Seven.

(c) There is no gate pass system in connection with Octroi in Cantonment Board, Chakrata.

Export of Textile/Garments

2268. SHRI M. APPADURAI:
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

Will the Minister TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity and value of textiles/garments exported during each of the last three years and thereafter, Country-wise;

(b) the target fixed and success achieved for exports during the said period;

(c) and the steps taken by the Government to achieve the said target?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The quantity and value of garments exported from India during the last three years is given below and country wise total value of garments exports is given in the enclosed Statement.

Garments exports from India	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
In million pieces (quantity wise)	1663.72	2356.48	2195.39
In US\$ million (value wise)	6573.97	8626.63	8901.82

Source: Apparel Export Promotion Council

(b) The targets fixed and success achieved for the garments exports during the said period is as follows:

(Value in US \$ Million)

Year	Targets	Achieved
2004-05	6000	6025
2005-06	6450	8626
2006-07	9500	8901

(c) In order to boost India's textiles exports and achieve the set targets, the Government has been taking a series of measures which, *inter-alia*, include:-

(i) To improve productivity and quality of cotton for manufacture and export of competitive downstream textile products, Government has launched the Technology Mission on Cotton (TMC). The Mission has achieved success in increasing the productivity and reducing the contamination through upgradation of cotton market yards and modernisation of Ginning & Pressing factories.

(ii) The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) was launched to facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of the textile industry both in the organised and unorganized sector. The Scheme has been further fine tuned to increase the rapid investments in the targeted sub-sectors of the textile industry. The cost of machinery has been further brought down by reducing the customs duty on imports.

(iii) For speedy modernisation of the textile processing sector, Government has introduced w.e.f. 20.04.05, a credit linked capital subsidy scheme @10% under TUFS, in addition to the existing 5% interest reimbursement.

(iv) To provide the textile industry with world-class infrastructure facilities for setting up their textile units meeting international environmental and social standards, a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) based Scheme known as the "Scheme for Integrated Textile Park (SITP)" has been introduced in August 2005.

(v) Government has launched the Debt Restructuring Scheme w.e.f. Sept., 2003 with the principal

- objective to permit banks to lend to the textile sector at 8-9% rate of interest.
- (vi) In order to cater to the growing skilled manpower requirements at shop floor level, Government is providing assistance for strengthening existing and opening new Apparel Training and Design Centres (ATDCs).
- (vii) Government has allowed 100% Foreign Direct Investment in the textile sector under automatic route.
- (viii) Government has de-reserved the readymade garments, hosiery and knitwear from SSI sector so that large scale investments may be encouraged in these sectors.
- (ix) National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) has been set up to provide the leadership role in sensitizing the industry to the concept of value addition by inducting trained professionals to manage the industry. This has resulted in an increased demand for trained professionals in various sectors servicing the industry.
- (x) In the Budget (2007-08), with a view to making, textile industry more competitive, import duty on raw materials such as DMT, PTA and MEG has been reduced from 10% to 7.5% and import duty on PSF, PFY and Polyester chips from 10% to 7.5%. The peak rate of advalorem component of customs duty for all non-agricultural products including textiles has been reduced from 12.5% to 10%, Education cess hiked to 3% from 2%. The optional exemption for entire textile sector other than the msm made fibre & filament yarn is continuing in the current budget also. Excise duty exemption for 16 specified silk textile machinery under List 3 continues. The concessional duty of 5% on 387 machinery of List 30, 31, 32, 45 and 46 continues to be at 5% and import duty on other textile machinery continuous to be at 7.5%. Central Sales Tax reduced from 4% to 3%. In addition, all companies and firms with a taxable income of Rs. One crore or less has been exempted from surcharge on the income tax payable and this will be relief small and medium enterprise in textile sector.

Statement**Countrywise Garments Exports**

(Value in US \$ Million)

Sl. No.	Country	2004-2005 Mn. US\$	2005-2006 Mn. US\$	2006-2007 Mn. US\$
1	2	3	4	5
1.	U.S.A.	1996.82	2859.16	2889.31
2.	U.K.	658.85	946.50	945.41
3.	France	475.19	641.02	670.99
4.	German F. Rep	451.51	679.96	646.45
5.	U. Arab Emts.	524.31	448.19	523.88
6.	Italy	291.74	384.13	443.54
7.	Netherland	205.56	294.08	349.76
8.	Spain	209.57	361.22	308.40
9.	Canada	251.82	275.24	272.96

1	2	3	4	5
10.	Denmark	107.71	185.10	194.91
11.	Saudi Arab	169.21	196.74	191.12
12.	Belgium	93.95	133.17	167.36
13.	Japan	85.09	118.61	122.67
14.	Sweden	43.56	73.75	74.28
15.	Russia	105.56	21.13	69.96
16.	Mexico	44.22	55.11	62.78
17.	Switzerland	79.95	55.06	55.17
18.	Singapore	40.80	43.65	53.58
19.	South Africa	56.54	59.21	52.39
20.	Kuwait	50.57	43.49	47.78
21.	Other Countries	645.04	768.43	751.17

Source: Monthly Statistics of the Foreign Trade of India, DGCIS, Kolkata.

Over-Exploitation of Ground Water

2269. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a huge quantity of groundwater is being used for commercial purposes by the soft drinks and bottled drinking water companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the water tables are dipping as a result of groundwater being drawn by these companies;

(d) if so, the extent thereof;

(e) whether the Central Underground Water Authority has laid down any norms in this regard;

(f) if so, the main features thereof;

(g) whether these norms are being strictly observed by the companies; and

(h) if not, the action taken against them for violation of the norms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The ground water is used mainly for agricultural and domestic purposes and it is also used for industrial and commercial purposes.

(c) and (d) The studies conducted by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) reveal that the water tables are dipping due to cumulative effect of domestic, agricultural and industrial use, including withdrawals of ground water by soft drinks and bottled drinking purposes.

(e) to (h) The Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) has been constituted for the purpose of regulation and control of ground water management. The Authority has been vested with powers to invoke penal provisions, as may be necessary under the law.

Review for Spectrum Allocation

2270. SHRI S. AJAYA KUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has constituted a panel to review the spectrum allocation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether spectrum allocation will be made on the basis of subscriber figures; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (d) A committee in DOT has been constituted to recommend the revision of subscriber based spectrum allocation criteria for mobile services. The matter is sub-judice before Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT).

Agro Climatic Zones

2271. PROF. M. RAMADASS:
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has conducted a study for formulating strategies for long-term mechanization of Agri Climatic Zones;

(b) if so, the details of the major recommendations of this study;

(c) whether the Government has accepted the recommendations of this study; and

(d) if so, the details of the steps proposed to encourage mechanisation of agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. The "Study Relating to Formulating Long Term Mechanization Strategy for Each Agro-Climatic Zone/State" was entrusted to Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute (IASRI), ICAR by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation in 1999-2000. The IASRI has submitted the study report.

(b) The major recommendations of this study report relating to different agro-climatic zones cover the issues regarding inadequate availability of farm power, improved agricultural implements and machinery for crop production, mechanization of horticultural crops, feeds and fodder management, biomass management, on farm post harvest technology, infrastructure improvements and institutional framework which needs to be improved for enhancement of mechanization and productivity.

Other set of recommendations at the national level relate to institutional framework. testing and training, research and development, Range of equipment, quality of farm machinery, special initiative for regions with low level of mechanization, banking norms, assured supply of power and fuels, repair and maintenance of agricultural machinery, health & safety and agricultural mechanization data.

(c) and (d) The Government (Department of Agriculture & Cooperation) has broadly accepted the study report and the study report has been forwarded to all the State Governments/Union Territories for implementation of the strategies applicable to their areas/agro-climatic zones.

[Translation]

Foreign Currency Exchange Counter

2272. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to start services like Foreign Currency Exchange Counter, goods transport and Instant Money Order as well as other income earning services schemes at selected post offices of metropolitan cities to attract large number of customers towards post offices;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) The Department of Posts is providing various services other than postal services in selected post offices in collaboration with other

Government and non Government agencies to optimally utilize the network and to attract large number of customers. These services are broadly as below:

- (i) The Department has started a pilot to provide financial inclusion in rural areas under the scheme of Business Correspondent in collaboration with the State Bank of India. A pilot for extending disbursement of micro credit to self help groups has also been started in collaboration with the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development. The Department is distributing financial instruments like Mutual Funds etc. on behalf of financial-institutions like UTI, SBI, Franklin Templeton, Reliance Mutual Funds etc.
- (ii) The Department has started Passenger Reservation Service in collaboration with the Ministry of Railways.
- (iii) The Department has launched Logistics Post service for carrying goods and large consignments. In addition to basic services comprising transportation and delivery of logistics consignments, Logistics Post aims to provide whole range of service on the logistics value chain covering packaging, warehousing, inventory management etc.
- (iv) Instant Money Order (iMO) is an online domestic money transmission service, introduced on 20th January, 2006 which is intended for a market clientele requiring instant money remittance. At present iMO service is available in 571 location across the country.
- (v) The proposal of providing foreign currency exchange services through post offices is under examination in the Department of Posts. Since the examination of the proposal is at a preliminary stage, it is not feasible to fix any time frame for implementation of this scheme.

[English]

Poor Quality Foodgrains

2273. PROF. M. RAMADASS:
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received complaints from various States regarding supply of poor quality foodgrains to them by Central agencies for distribution under Public Distribution System (PDS);

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years and thereafter, State-wise; and

(c) the remedial measures taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Some complaints had been received from various States about supply of poor quality of foodgrains under Public Distribution System (PDS) by Food Corporation of India (FCI). During 2005-06, complaints had been received from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka and Bihar about supply of inferior quality rice by FCI. During 2006-07, complaint had been received from Rajasthan regarding supply of inferior quality wheat by FCI for PDS. Similarly, in 2007-08, complaints have been received from Maharashtra & Tamil Nadu about poor quality foodgrains being supplied in PDS.

(c) The Government had issued instructions to FCI that only good quality foodgrains conforming to Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA) standards should be distributed through PDS. Besides, the following steps are being taken to ensure the supply of good quality foodgrains for PDS:-

- (i) Adequate opportunities are provided to the officials of the State Governments/UT Administrations to inspect the stocks prior to lifting from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns.
- (ii) Instructions have been issued to all the State Governments/UT Administrations that an officer not below the rank of Inspector should be deputed to check the quality of foodgrains before lifting from the FCI godowns.
- (iii) The samples of foodgrains are to be jointly drawn and sealed by the officers of the State Governments/UT Administrations and the FCI from the stocks for display at the counters of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) for the benefit of consumers.

- (iv) Instructions have been issued to all State Governments that all the stocks available with the State Government Agencies & Fair Price Shops should be regularly inspected for their quality and only those stocks of wheat should be distributed, which meet the required quality specifications.

Periodical Evaluation of Defence Equipment

2274. SHRI FRANCIS FANTHOM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any mechanism to continually evaluate the best in class weapons and surveillance equipment required by the armed forces;

(b) if so, whether this information is made available to the armed forces in a routine manner; and

(c) whether there is adequate transparency in the decision making process to ensure that the equipment are considered on due merit and requirements identified?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) The Armed Forces regularly evaluate weapons and equipment available around the world on the basis of information obtained through various sources to identify the best in class weapons and surveillance equipment.

(c) Acquisition process of weapons and equipment is carried out in a transparent manner provided in the Defence Procurement Procedure which also ensures that the equipment under procurement is as per the requirement and fulfils quality specifications.

Child Labour in Cotton Field

2275. SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:
SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether lakhs of children are engaged in hybrid cotton field as reported in the *Hindustan Times* dated September 27, 2007;

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

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

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

(e) the remedial steps taken by the Government in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) to (d) No, Sir. The reports received from the State Governments indicate that there are some cases of children working in the hybrid cotton fields where children were found to be mostly working with their parents. As per the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986, employment of children is presently not prohibited in cotton fields. However, the State Governments have taken steps to ensure that children do not work on processes involving handling of pesticides in the hybrid cotton fields.

(e) Government is regularly monitoring the enforcement of Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 by the States. In order to step up enforcement of the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, a fortnight long nation-wide 'Enforcement Drive against Child Labour' was launched by the Government on 14th November 2007. During this period, the State Governments had been specifically directed to conduct inspections/raids and also launch awareness campaign against child labour.

Supply of Sub-Standard Equipment by BEL to Air Force

2276. DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has been supplying sub-standard kits and equipments to Indian Air Force;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the equipments and kits which are in controversy and the objections of Air Force in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) No, Sir. All the supplies made by BEL to Indian Air Force (user) are thoroughly inspected and tested by the Internal Quality

Assurance & Testing Department as per the user approved acceptance test procedures. Further, the equipments are also checked for physical and technical performance by the customer inspection agency, viz., Director General of Aeronautical Quality Assurance (DGAQA). Based on the acceptance by DGAQA a clearance note is issued before the item is supplied to the user.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

Safety and Security of I.T. Employees

2277. SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to enact suitable legislation to ensure the service conditions and working hours for the employees working in Information Technology (I.T.) sector at par with their counter parts in other Government and Public Sectors;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to consider to bring in suitable legislation ensuring the safety and security of women employees in I.T. sector;

(c) If so, whether the Government proposes to pass necessary statutory orders to the I.T. firms, not to employ the women employees after 6 p.m.; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (d) As per the Ministry of Labour and Employment, IT and ITES (IT Enabled Services) are covered under existing labour laws. With regards to the Information Technology sector, the State Government are the "Appropriate Governments" under most of the labour laws and are legally vested with the powers to deal with the violation of the labour laws including the welfare measures for the employee in IT sector. The working conditions in the business process outsourcing (BPO) companies are largely regulated by the provisions of the Shops and Establishment Act enacted and implemented by the State Governments and the working hours of the BPO employees are governed by the same. However, the employees in IT sector do not come under the purview of the Factories Act, 1948.

On the issues of protection to the women employees of BPOs/call centers, the National Commission for Women had a meeting with the representatives of the BPO companies /call centers and concerned police authorities in Delhi/Gurgaon/Noida on 17.01.2006. Based on discussions the commission-formulated guidelines ensuring safety of women employees in BPO. companies/call centers. The guidelines have been sent to all BPOs companies in Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Pune, Mumbai and Chennai.

Fishery Development

2278. SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Assam has submitted any proposal for development of fish production in Assam keeping in view of the huge potential of fishery development there; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the special training provided to the fish farmers in the State under special scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Proposal for Rs.12.30 lakh under Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Development of Water logged areas & derelict water bodies into aquaculture estate in the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries and Rs.113.36 lakh for Intensive Aquaculture in ponds/tanks and hatcheries in National Fisheries Development Board have been received in the year 2007-08. Under existing component of Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Development of Inland Fisheries & Aquaculture through Fish Farmers Development Agencies and Fisheries Training & Extension, 6048 fish farmers have been trained during 10th Five Year Plan i.e. 2002-03 to 2006-07.

Flight Safety Record of Services

2279. SHRIMATI JHANSI LAKSHMI BOTCHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a series of air crashes this year involving aircraft and helicopters of the armed forces has put a severe strain on the flight safety record of the services;

(b) if so, the details of the crashes that took place across the country; and

(c) the action being taken by the Ministry to improve the flight safety record?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) There is no strain on the flight safety record of the Services, keeping in view the quantum of flying effort achieved and operational risks associated with military flying operations.

(b) A total number of 7 aircraft and 1 helicopter of the Services have crashed during the current financial year i.e. from 1.4.2007 till 26.11.2007.

(c) A continuous and multi-faceted effort is always underway in the Defence Forces to enhance and upgrade flight safety. Measures to enhance the quality of training to improve the skill levels, ability to exercise sound judgment and situational awareness of pilots are being pursued. Constant interaction with Original Equipment Manufactures (OEMs), both indigenous and foreign, is also maintained to overcome the technical defects of aircraft. Besides, anti-bird hit measures are also undertaken.

Import of Seeds

2280. SHRI CHEWANG THUPSTAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether seeds worth crores of rupees are imported every year from foreign countries to meet domestic requirements;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has identified any region of our country especially for seed production;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government is aware of the fact that Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir is ideal for quality seed production due to its unique geo-climatic conditions; and

(f) if so, whether the Government proposes to initiate steps to utilise the unique conditions in Ladakh by identifying the entire region as quality organic seed producing area to meet domestic requirements and for export?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (f) Seeds, particularly of fruits and vegetable crops, are imported as and when required. Similarly, Seeds of some crops like onion etc. are exported from India. Details of recommendations of Exim Committee of Department of Agriculture & Cooperation for imports for the last three years are given in the enclosed Statement. No region of the country has been identified as such for seed production. However, agro-climatic conditions are a major factor influencing seed production. The Government has been encouraging and assisting all states to produce quality seeds to meet their requirement under its various schemes.

Statement

Particulars of recommendations of Exim Committee of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation for Import of Seeds and Planting Materials during last 3 years

S.No.	Name of Seeds/ Planting Material	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Watermelon Seed	64.730 MT	0.050	—
2.	Berseem Seed	2,062.00 MT	2,930 MT	7,594.00
3.	Strawberry Plants	4.18 lakh	24.865 lakh	11.24 lakh
4.	Oil Palm Sprouts	27.55 lakh	16.5 lakh	31.30 lakh

1	2	3	4	5
5.	Hybrid Cotton	5.00 kg.	12.00 kg.	9.00 kg
6.	Maize seed	12.00 kg.	2.00 kg.	450.00 kg.
7.	Cabbage seed	0.5 MT	—	100 kg.
8.	Cucumber seed	0.1 MT	—	—
9.	Papaya Seed	0.850 MT	0.645 MT	0.651 MT
10.	Banana Tissue Culture Plant	0.2 15 lakh	—	0.10 lakh
11.	Sweet Sorghum	0.052 MT	0.095 MT	—
12.	Sunflower seed	0.0116 MT	0.500 MT	0.050 MT
13.	Chicory seed	28.520 MT	2.10 MT	—
14.	Fruit Plants (Apple, Grapes, Berry, Citrus and Kinnoo etc.)	0.936 lakh Nos.	25.17 lakh Nos.	29.12 lakh Nos.
15.	Bamboo Sucker	—	15,000 Nos.	—
16.	Grass Seed	—	4,350 lbs	—
17.	Pea Seed	—	200 kgs.	—
18.	Date Palm	—	4.9 lakh Nos.	0.30 lakh Nos.
19.	Neem Seed	—	1,500kg.	—
20.	Sweet Corn seeds	—	2.033 MT	69.4 MT
21.	Astomeria Plant	—	—	6,000 Nos.
22.	Baby corn seed	—	—	10.20MT
23.	Soyabean seed	—	—	75.00 kg.
24.	Aster seed	—	—	8.00 kg.

Deemed University Status for AFMC, Pune

2281. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to accord Deemed University status to Armed Forces Medical College, Pune; and

(b) the action taken by the Government on the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Defence in their Twelfth and Twenty-third report in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) The recommendation of the Standing Committee on Defence to accord Deemed University status to the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune has been considered by the Government. As per the University Grants Commission Guidelines, according Deemed University status involves converting AFMC, Pune into a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 or into a separate Trust under the Public Trust Act. After due consideration, therefore, the proposal has not been found acceptable by the Government.

Corporatisation of DMS

2282. SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN:
SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to corporatise the Delhi Milk Scheme;

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

(c) the steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. Government has decided to corporatise the Delhi Milk Scheme to provide more autonomy in its operation and management, flexibility in financial matters having regards to the consumers and in organization's interest, to make it more efficient and viable. Expression of Interest (EOI) from reputed professional agencies to prepare feasibility report and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Articles of Association (AoA) and other related job have been invited in the matter.

Constitution of Multi-disciplinary Panel

2283. SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) recommended that there should be no cap on the number of service providers in any circle and suggested the constitution of multi-disciplinary panel, as reported in the *Hindustan Times* dated August 30, 2007;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) the salient features of the panel alongwith the scope/work assigned to it; and

(d) the manner in which common man is likely to be benefited?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (d) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), in its recommendation dated 28.8.2007 on "Review of license terms & conditions and capping of number of access providers" has inter-alia, recommended that there should be no cap on the number of access provider in any service area and constitution of a multi-disciplinary committee to frame a new spectrum allocation criteria.

On 7.11.2007, Government has constituted a Committee to recommend revised subscriber based spectrum allocation criterion for allocation of spectrum in a scientific and practicable manner.

No capping on the number of access provider in any service area will increase the level of competition between service providers resulting in reduction of tariff, better customer services, network coverage, and service quality.

[Translation]

Communication Network

2284. SHRI RASHEED MASOOD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether still there are no proper communication facilities such as telephone, internet and postal service in the villages;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken to make proper arrangements for the said facilities;

(d) the present policy for opening sub-post offices in villages;

(e) the total number of post offices proposed to be opened in the villages of Uttar Pradesh; and

(f) the total number of villages in Saharanpur district selected for opening of post offices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) The details of the telephone, internet and postal service in the villages of the country are given below:

Telephones

The work of providing telecom facilities to uncovered villages has been taken up under Bhart Nirman Programme. 16,302 villages remain to be linked with communication network as on 30.9.2007. This excludes villages having population less than 100, lying in thick forests/naxalite areas.

Internet

"Internet on dial-up" can be accessed in most of the villages where telephone facility exists.

Postal Service

Postal service facilities in terms of delivery of mail, collection of letters from letter boxes and sale of stamps/stationary at the doorstep of customers is available in all the villages.

(c) and (d) Following steps are being taken to make proper arrangements for provision of telephone, internet and postal service facilities in the villages:

Telephone

Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in November 2004 for provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in remaining 66,822 unconnected villages of the country. This excludes villages having population less than 100, lying in thick forest areas/naxalite infested areas etc. As on 30th September 2007, out of these 66,822 villages, 50,520 eligible villages have already been provided with VPT facility and the remaining 16,302 villages will be provided with VPT by June, 2008.

Internet

BSNL has planned to install equipment in 23,000 rural exchanges in phase-I rural development plan, from which broadband facility shall be extended to 25,000 villages. Additionally, BSNL is also planning to provide wireless broadband through WiMax technology in 1000 blocks, which is expected to cover 25,000 villages by June 2008.

Postal Service

Post offices are opened subject to fulfillment of prescribed norms of distance, population, income and

availability of resources. All the villages where opening of separate Post Office is not justified are provided basic Postal facilities through the nearest existing Post Office/Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendra. Departmental Sub Post Offices in rural areas are opened/Gramin Dak Sewak Branch Post Offices (GDSBOs) are upgraded into Departmental Sub Post Offices provided the conditions of minimum workload of 5 hours and permissible limit of loss of Rs. 2,400 per annum (for normal areas) and Rs. 4,800 per annum (for hilly and tribal areas) are fulfilled.

(e) During the financial year 2007-08 it is proposed to open 12 Gramin Dak Sewak Branch Post Offices in the villages of Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, it is also proposed to provide 30 Departmental Sub Offices in rural/urban areas of Uttar Pradesh either by upgradation of GDSBOs or opening of new Departmental Sub Offices.

(f) In the villages of Saharanpur District of Uttar Pradesh there is no justified demand pending for opening of a new post office.

[English]

Survey on Consumer Preference for Foodgrains

2285. SHRI DALPAT SINGH PARSTE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted to identify the Consumer preference for foodgrains particularly wheat and wheat flour in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the procedure followed in the survey, Statewise; and

(c) the findings of the said survey particularly with reference to Tribal and Scheduled Caste dominated regions in Madhya Pradesh, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Question does not arise.

Interest Subvention Scheme

2286. SHRI SURESH ANGADI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has introduced or proposes to introduce any Interest Subvention Scheme to provide agricultural loan at lower rates of interest;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the States where the said scheme is under operation; and

(d) the number of farmers benefited/likely to be benefited through the said scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government of India has introduced interest subvention scheme for providing crop loans upto Rs. 3 Lakh per borrower at 7% rate of interest per annum. The policy came into force with effect from Kharif 2006-07. To implement the scheme, Government of India also provided interest subvention @ 2% p.a. to Public Sector Banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Cooperative Banks on their own involvement of funds in the crop loan disbursement. The interest subvention scheme has been continued for the year 2007-08 also with a budgetary provision of Rs.1677 crore. The scheme is under implementation in the entire country.

(d) All the farmers availing crop loans upto a principal amount of Rs. 3 Lakh are eligible beneficiaries under the scheme.

Baba Saheb Ambedkar Smarak

2287. SHRIMATI NIVEDITA MANE:
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Maharashtra has sought permission from the Government to acquire Indu Mill No. 6, National Textiles Corporation, Mumbai to construct the Baba Saheb Ambedkar Smarak;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the reasons for the delay in giving approval to the said proposal; and

(d) the times by which it is likely to be handed over to the State Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) to (d) The issue was discussed with Chief Minister of Maharashtra & Principal Secretary of Government of Maharashtra, and it was desired by Government of Maharashtra to submit the layout plan of Indu Mill No.6 (INDU Mill) to Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) for approval on stand alone basis with provision of surrendering 33% of open land to MCGM and 37% of open land to Maharashtra Housing & Area Development Authority (MHADA) in the same mills as the National Textile Corporation (NTC) had earlier submitted the development plan of all the mills in an integrated manner. Accordingly a separate layout of Indu Mill No. 6 has been filed with MCGM.

It may be stated here that the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) and Group of Ministers (GOM) have, in-principle, approved construction of a world class 72 storey India International Trade Tower (IIIT) on the land of Indu Mill No. 6, Mumbai, as a part of the Revival Scheme for NTC. This landmark project will not only create considerable employment but also attract huge foreign exchange to the country. In the backdrop of above, the issue was later examined by renowned architects and it was not found feasible to develop world class tower on this mill land if above said land is surrendered from mill land of INDU mill No. 6. Accordingly, this was informed to the Chief Minister of Maharashtra also.

Growth of Dairy Sector

2288. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:
SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some States have formed regional conference to strengthen inter-State cooperation to augment sustained and equitable growth in the dairy sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the country has become the top milk producer in the world but the per capita consumption and availability of milk here were far behind the global average;

(d) if so, the facts thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Union Government to encourage to explore possibility of establishing a common regional milk grid to strengthen cooperation in dairy sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of Kerala organized a regional conference of Ministers of Dairy Development and Animal Husbandry on 21st November 2007 for strengthening regional cooperation for synergy in dairying and animal husbandry sector at Thiruvananthapuram. It was inaugurated by Shri V.S. Achuthanandan, Chief Minister of Kerala and participated by the Dairy Ministers and Officials of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala to take stock of the situation and strengthen inter-state cooperation to augment sustained and equitable growth in the dairy sector.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir. India now ranks first among the world's milk producing nations. The production of milk during the year 2005-06 was 97.1 million metric tones and has achieved a level of 100.90 million metric tones (Provisional) during 2006-07. The per capita availability of milk was 241 gram per day during 2005-06 and has achieved 245 grams per day during 2006-07 but it is still low compared to the world average of 265 gram per day.

(e) The Union Government has not received any proposal for establishing a common regional milk grid to strengthen cooperation in dairy sector. The National Milk Grid which existed during Operation Flood period used to divert excess milk from neighbouring States to the Metro dairies/milk deficient regions. However, presently the dairy cooperatives in the country have a system of linking major milk production centres in the country with the markets in urban areas through a network of Rail Milk Tankers (RMTs) and Road Tankers. RMTs are used to transport milk to Delhi and Kolkata from Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu etc.

[Translation]

Establishment of Sainik Nigam

2289. SHRI RAGHUVeer SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government, alongwith various State Governments, is contemplating to establish a separate Sainik Nigam;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is a system at the State level for effective implementation of various schemes of the Union Government for the benefit of Ex-Servicemen, War-widows and their families;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps likely to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) to (e) For effective implementation of various schemes of the Union Government for the benefit of Ex-servicemen, widows and their families, there are 32 Rajya Sainik Boards (RSBs) and 355 Zila Sainik Boards (ZSBs) at the State and district level respectively throughout the country. These Boards function under the Department of Sainik Welfare of the respective State. Constant efforts are being made at the Central and State level to revitalize these Sainik Boards so that the schemes for welfare of ex-servicemen could be implemented more efficiently.

NABARD Fund for Construction of Ponds

2290. SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of ponds constructed or under construction with the loan or grant provided by NABARD in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra since 2004 to 31st March, 2007;

(b) whether the Government has received any complaints in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) NABARD has not sanctioned loans for construction of ponds under Rural Infrastructure

Development Fund (RIDF) to the States of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra during the period since 2004 to 31st March 2007. However, the details of Minor Irrigation Projects sanctioned by NABARD to States of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra under RIDF during 2004-05 to 2006-07 are as under:

(Rs. Crore)

Year	Madhya Pradesh		Rajasthan		Maharashtra	
	Number of Projects	Loan Sanctioned	Number of Projects	Loan sanctioned	Number of Projects	Loan sanctioned
2004-05	83	143.66	6	43.54	0	0.00
2005-06	46	72.49	23	100.47	0	0.00
2006-07	37	115.89	14	48.54	165	230.50
Total	166	332.04	43	192.55	165	230.50

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Public Sector in Retail Business

2291. SHRI RAJNARAYAN BUDHOLIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to enter the Retail Sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASILMUDDIN): (a) No, Sir.

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

[English]

Extension of one India Plan

2292. SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to extend One India Plan and other such plan to the PRJ/BRI lines users;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a number of customers especially in Gujarat can be benefited; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) BSNL has already extended One India Plan on Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) PRI on option basis. However, there is no proposal to extend this plan on ISDN BRI at present.

There is no such proposal in MTNL to extend One India plan and other such plan to the PRI/BRI line users.

(b) The details of plan offered by BSNL are as follows:

(i) Fixed monthly charges - Rs. 10,000.

(ii) Free calls - Nil

(iii) Unit Rate - Re. 1.00.

(iv) Pulse:

Intra-Circle Calls within 50 kms	Pulse
Own Network (fixed, WLL)	180 Seconds
Own Network (Mobile)	60 Seconds
Other network (Fixed)	180 Seconds
Other Network (WLL, Mobile)	60 Seconds
Intra-Circle Calls more than 50 Kms and Inter-Circle Calls	
Own Network/other Network	60 Seconds

(c) and (d) The tariff is very competitive and all PRI customers, including the State of Gujarat, can avail this Plan and get benefited.

Import of Textile Machinery

2293. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to simplify the procedure of import of textile machinery;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether there is any scheme to co-ordinate new and traditional technique;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether domestic textile machinery manufacturing companies are unable to meet the demand;

(f) if so, whether the Government proposes to set-up any joint venture by establishing co-ordination between India and foreign manufacturing companies; and

(g) if so, the details thereof alongwith the progress made till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) and (b) The Government has already liberalized the import of textile machinery as all machinery (new and second hand) is allowed to be imported under Open General Licence (OGL).

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The domestic textile machinery manufacturing companies have already increased their production substantially and are gearing up to further increase their capacity to meet the demand.

(f) No, Sir. The Government doesn't propose to set up any joint venture.

(g) Does not arise.

Utilisation of Services of IAF Pilots

2294. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of trained and fit pilots of Indian Air Force are sitting idle or doing some desk work due to non-availability of aircraft;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the expenditure incurred on their training;

(d) the plan to utilise their service; and

(e) the extent to which Russia's additional demand of money for each Sukhoi aircraft will hamper acquisition of aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) to (d) There is no trained and fit pilot sitting idle in Indian Air Force. The trained IAF pilots who are on ground assignments are on authorized posts which need to be manned by flying branch officers in order to sustain combat potential of the IAF.

Flying training is a continuous process in the job profile of a pilot. The average cost of operational flying training varies from aircraft to aircraft. Besides, on all the fleets and systems, all personnel undergo operational conversion and continuity training. This is an ongoing activity.

(e) The supplies from Russia are based on mutually agreed pricing philosophy mechanism and will not affect acquisition of Sukhoi aircraft.

[*Translation*]

Security concern over Allotment of Spectrum

2295. SHRI KIREN RIJJU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a difference of opinion between Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Communications and Information Technology on the issue of vacating spectrum and a group of Ministers has been set up to deal with the differences;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to get vacated spectrum from Defence sector so as to provide it to the Private Companies;

(d) if so, details thereof;

(e) whether the necessities and terms and conditions of the Defence Department has been fulfilled; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (d) A Group of Ministers (GoM) has been set up for "vacation of spectrum and raising resources for the purpose". The spectrum vacated by Defence would be used for the growth of mobile telecom services.

(e) and (f) As per the recommendations of the Project Definition Team (PDT) in the Ministry of Defence including representative of Department of Telecommunications, an Optical Fiber Cable (OFC) based network has been taken up for release of spectrum in GSM and 3G frequency bands.

(*English*)

Fishermen Development Rebate on HSD Oil

2296. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the utilization certificate for Centrally Sponsored Scheme for reimbursement of fishermen development rebate on High Speed Diesel (HSD) oil for 2006-07 has been submitted by Government of Karnataka;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the amount of Central share out of the above pending as on date;

(d) the reasons for the delay in release of Central share; and

(e) the time by which it is likely to be released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government of Karnataka has submitted utilization certificate for the entire amount of Rs. 380 lakhs released to them by Central Government during 2006-07 for implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Development of Marine Fisheries component on 'Fishermen Development Rebate on HSD oil' in the State.

(c) to (e) Does not arise.

[*Translation*]

Rural Telephone Exchanges

2297. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE PATIL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of rural telephone exchanges functioning in the country especially in Parbhani and Jalna districts of Maharashtra as on date, State-wise and location-wise;

(b) the number of rural telephone exchanges lying defunct for the last one month;

(c) whether the Government has found any official responsible for the fault in the rural exchanges;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Total 29,244 rural telephone exchanges of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited functioning in the country including Parbhani and Jalna districts of Maharashtra are given in the enclosed statement.

(b) Nil.

(c) to (e) Do not arise in view of (b) above.

Statement

Sl.No.	Telecom Circle	Number of Rural Telephone Exchanges functioning in various Telecom Circles of BSNL	Remarks, if any
1.	Andaman & Nicobar Island	43	
2.	Andhra Pradesh	3146	
3.	Assam	427	
4.	Bihar	995	
5.	Kolkata Telecom District	Nil	
6.	Chennai Telecom District	85	
7.	Chhattisgarh	441	
8.	Gujarat	2677	Including Daman & Diu U.T.
9.	Haryana	892	
10.	Himachal Pradesh	941	
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	254	
12.	Jharkhand	294	
13.	Karnataka	2224	
14.	Kerala	992	
15.	Maharashtra	4310	Excluding Mumbai Metro & including Goa U.T.
16.	Madhya Pradesh	2169	
17.	North East-I	256	Meghalaya, Tripura & Mizoram
18.	North East-II	160	Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland & Manipur
19.	Orissa	936	
20.	Punjab	1218	Including Chandigarh U.T. & some areas of Haryana State
21.	Rajasthan	1953	
22.	Tamil Nadu	1217	Excluding Chennai Telecom District
23.	Uttar Pradesh (East)	1632	
24.	Uttar Pradesh (West)	493	
25.	Uttaranchal	343	
26.	West Bengal	1146	Including Sikkim State and excluding Kolkata Telecom District
Total		29244	

In Jalna & Parbhani Districts of Maharashtra

Sl No.	Districts	Number of Rural Telephone Exchanges functioning in Maharashtra
1.	Parbhani	101
2.	Jalna	90

*[English]***Complaints regarding irregularities in Telecom Sector**

2298. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the complaints regarding irregularities and corruption received by the Department of Telecommunication from all over the country are not being disposed off;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to solve the problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir. All the complaints received are disposed of as per guidelines of CVC.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Financial Assistance to farm Sector

2299. SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Tamil Nadu has sought financial assistance to reform the farm sector in the State;

(b) if so, the details alongwith the action taken by the Government thereon; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE

MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No proposal has been received from the Government of Tamil Nadu seeking financial assistance specifically to reform the farm sector in the State.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Aerobatics Shows by Air Force

2300. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of aerobatics shows conducted by the Air Force during the last three years alongwith the locations thereof;

(b) whether the Air Force has any proposal to conduct similar exercises in various other parts of the country including smaller cities to bring awareness among the youths; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) Air Force had conducted 124 Aerobatics shows in various parts of the country in the last three years

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The planning of such displays in various parts of the country including smaller cities is a continuous exercise keeping in view the requests of civil/state agencies.

Allocation of Spectrum to GSM Operators

2301. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has signed an agreement with GSM operators on the allocation of spectrum on revenue sharing basis;

(b) if so, whether the Government feels that allotment of spectrum through auction would be more transparent and bring in more revenue to the exchequer;

(c) if so, whether legal opinion holds that a changeover from revenue sharing to auction basis would be arbitrary, discriminatory and violative of Article 14 of the Constitution; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The Unified Access Services License (UASL) provides that spectrum charges would be payable on Revenue Share basis, as notified separately from time to time.

(b) Taking into account the TRAI recommendations, the Government has decided not to auction the spectrum for 2G services and to continue with the existing guidelines at present.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (a) & (b) above.

Import of Fish

2302. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has considered the objections raised by the fishermen in the country particularly from Kerala as the import will adversely affect them by depressing the price of fish in the market; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Government has taken note of the objections made by the fishermen of Kerala through the State Government for the import of fish under the Free Trade Agreement with European Union stating that it would be against the interest of Indian fishermen; hence, should be kept out of the purview of tariff liberalization programme. The sensitivity of any item in all such cases is decided on the basis of economic studies and consultations with the domestic stakeholders and the administrative Ministries/ State Governments, etc. Further, the agreement also prescribes suitable safeguards such as anti-dumping provisions in case of surge in imports leading to the problems of domestic industry.

Frequency for Radio Communication

2303. SHRI PRATIK P. PATIL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Koyana Wild Life Sanctuary and Chandoli National Park in Maharashtra have been

provided the frequencies for radio communication for patrolling purposes; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) The applications for grant of wireless licenses for Koyana Wild Life Sanctuary and Chandoli National Park were received from Conservator of Forests, Kolhapur Wildlife, Kolhapur. After necessary technical analysis, suitable frequency spots with associated technical parameters have been identified in the Very High Frequency (VHF) band. However, these frequency spots could not be conveyed to the applicant for want of certain clarifications, which are still awaited from them.

[Translation]

Telephone Exchanges

2304. DR. RAMESHWAR ORAON: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of telephone exchanges in Palamu, Gadghwa, Latehar, Lohardaga and Gumla Districts in Jharkhand are working in rented private houses;

(b) if so, whether the Government purposes to construct buildings for said exchanges in these Districts and residential accommodation for the staff;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. Whenever departmental land will become available, buildings will be planned and constructed.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

(d) No land is available at these places. Efforts are being made to acquire land. Telephone exchange Buildings and/or staff quarters shall be planned and constructed whenever departmental land becomes available.

Closure of Broadband Service

2305. SHRI RAKESH SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has noticed the incidents of discontinuing BSNL broadband services in the country especially in Jabalpur;

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

(c) the details of losses being incurred by the subscribers in this regard;

(d) whether the Government has taken any measures to compensate the losses incurred in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No Sir. There is an appreciable demand of BSNL Broadband connections. Ever since launch of BSNL Broadband in the month of January, 2005, the demand has been outpacing the capacity. The number of Broadband connections at Jabalpur also is constantly growing. Growth of Broadband connections is furnished below.

Date	Number of Broadband connections at Jabalpur	Total number of Broadband connections of BSNL (Lakh)
31.03.2006	2245	5.52
31.03.2007	3076	9.42
27.11.2007	4145	12

(b) to (e) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

(English)

TV on Mobile Service

2306. SHRI MILIND DEORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has introduced TV on Mobile services in Hyderabad in November, 2007;

(b) if so, the features and details of the Scheme;

(c) the amount of monthly subscription to be paid by a customer to avail this facility;

(d) whether the scheme will be extended to the other parts of the country where BSNL is functioning; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Special features of BSNL TV on mobile service are Streaming/Progressive Play of Live & Video on Demand content from TV channels and other Mobile Exclusive Video Content.

(c) Monthly subscription to be paid by the customer to avail this facility as under:

Services	Price point
Pay per Day—Watch any channel Unlimited viewing for one full day	Rs. 10/- (Rupees Ten Only)
Pay per channel—Monthly subscription	Rs. 50/- (Rupees Fifty Only)
All Channels—Monthly subscription	Rs. 150/- (Rupees One Hundred & Fifty only)
Preview	Free Preview—One month
Application Download	Free

(d) **Yes, Sir.**

(e) Mobile on TV service has been extended to the locations mentioned below:

- (i) BSNL East Zone—Service is commercially launched and available.
- (ii) BSNL North Zone—Service is commercially launched and available.
- (iii) BSNL South Zone—Service is commercially launched in Andhra Pradesh Circle only and is likely to be extended in other circles in couple of weeks.
- (iv) Regarding BSNL West Zone commercial launch is expected in next couple of weeks.

Import of Pulses

2307. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:
SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether pulses were imported from Myanmar recently to meet the shortage in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the quantum, price and subsidy thereon during each of the last three years;

(c) whether there has been a delay in shipments from Myanmar;

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

(e) whether the price of pulses in the country increased due to such delay;

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

(g) the remedial measures taken by the Government to check the price of pulses in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) During the year 2007-08 (Upto 28.11.07), State agencies (NAFED, PEC LTD, MMTc and STc) contracted a

quantity of 2.48 lakh MTs in the range of US \$ 384—704.45 for import of pulses from Myanmar.

(b) The details of pulses imported from Myanmar over the last 3 years are given in table below:

Year	Quantity (Tonnes)	Value (lakhs)
2004-05	479229	67904.26
2005-06	459624	86729.49
2006-07	605794	156561.90

Government decided that NAFED would keep the subsidy element in the import of pulses up to 15% of landed cost during the year 2006-07. During the current year, it has been decided that PSUs & NAFED may be permitted to seek reimbursement of losses on import of pulses not exceeding 15% and benchmarking to the lowest percentage of loss.

(c) State Agencies like MMTc, STc, PEC and NAFED have not faced any delays in shipments of pulses from Myanmar.

(d) to (f) Does not arise.

(g) Steps taken by the Government.

(i) Customs duty on import of pulses was reduced to zero on June 8, 2006 and the period of validity of import of pulses at zero duty has been extended from 31.3.07 to 1.8.2007 and further to 31.3.09.

(ii) A ban was imposed on export of pulses with effect from June 22, 2006 (except export of kabuli chana w.e.f. 7.3.07). The period of validity of prohibition on exports of pulses which was initially upto 31.3.07 was further extended upto 31.3.2008, vide DGFT Notification dated 9.3.2007.

(iii) As per initiative of Government the State agencies (NAFED, PEC Ltd, MMTc and STc) would target to import 1.5 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) of imports of pulses. Out of the total contracts of 12.23 lakh tonnes made by these agencies, 7.21 lakh tonnes have arrived up to 13.11.2007.

(iv) Forward Markets Commission (FMC) has on 23.01.07, directed the three National Exchanges,

namely (a) Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd., (b) National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Ltd., (c) National Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd., to delist all contracts of tur and urad and to close out all outstanding positions in all Tur and Urad contracts at the closing price on 23.01.07. FMC has also stated that no further contract shall be launched without its prior approval and permission already granted to launch contracts in Urad and Tur stands withdrawn.

- (v) An Expert Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Shri Abhijit Sen, Member, Planning Commission to study impact, if any, of the trading in forward markets on the prices of the commodities.
- (vi) Keeping in view the prevailing price situation, the Central Government had issued a Central Order dated 29.08.2006 under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to enable the State Governments to invoke Stock Limits in respect of wheat and pulses for a period of 6 months. By virtue of this Order, the State Governments/ UT Administrations have been empowered to take effective action to bring out the hoarded stock of these items to ensure their availability to the common people at reasonable prices. Government has, on 1.9.2007, extended the validity of the Central Order by another six months.

Indo-French Defence Cooperation

2308. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indo-French Defence High Level Committee has discussed various issues related to Defence Cooperation during a meeting held in the recent past;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of various issues on which both the countries have agreed; and

(d) the details of achievement of the strategic partnership established between the two countries since the agreement was signed?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):
(a) to (d) No, Sir. The 10th Meeting of Indo-French High Committee on Defence Cooperation scheduled to be held on October 29-30, 2007 in India, was postponed.

An Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the French Republic on Defence Cooperation was signed on 20th February, 2006 to promote cooperation between the two countries in the defence and military fields, defence industry, production, research and development, transfer of defence related technologies, joint exercises, training, exchange of visits of defence professionals etc.

[Translation]

Onion Cultivation

2309. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the steps being taken by the Government to encourage onion cultivation in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): For enhancing horticulture production including onion, two Centrally Sponsored Schemes namely National Horticulture Mission and Horticulture Technology Mission for North Eastern and Himalayan States, are being implemented in the country wherein assistance is provided to the farmers for quality planting material/seeds of elite cultivars, adoption of new technologies, integrated pest and disease management, integrated nutrient management and farm mechanization alongwith technical guidance for quality seed production to the growers through extension programmes, which help in enhancement of area, production and productivity of Horticulture crops including onion. Apart from above, assistance is also provided for area expansion of vegetable crops/spices including onion.

[English]

Production and Demand of Various Varieties of Silk

2310. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:
SHRI M. SHIVANNA:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the total production and demand of various varieties of silk in the country during the last three years and thereafter, State-wise;

(b) whether the production of various varieties of silk matches its demand;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to bridge the gap between production and demand of silk;

(e) whether the Central Silk Board (CSB) has set a target of Rs. 4500 crore silk exports during each year of the Eleventh Plan;

(f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon;

(g) the details of annual exports made by CSB during the Tenth Plan Period, year-wise;

(h) whether the Government proposes to hold silk exhibitions in the country particularly in metropolitan cities for promotion of silk export;

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

(j) the steps taken to protect the credibility of various silk varieties particularly Muga?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) Raw Silk Production for last three years and annual demand of raw silk in the Country is given below:

Year	Production of Raw Silk (M.T)			Estimated Demand of Raw Silk (M.T)
	Mulberry	Vanya (Non-Mulberry)	Total	
2004-05	14620	1880	16500	24000
2005-06	15445	1860	17305	25000
2006-07	16525	1950	18475	26000

State-wise and Variety-wise Raw Silk Production and demand for last three years are given in the enclosed Statement-I & II respectively.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Production of Raw Silk is less as compared to Demand. Reasons for the gap between

demand and supply is due to low productivity, confinement of production of silk mostly to the southern states, high cost of production and inputs, switching over of the farmers to other agricultural activities leading to reduction of area under mulberry cultivation and instable market etc.

(d) With a view to provide improved livelihoods and to increase income of the poor people in rural areas as also to increase the production of Raw Silk, an additional area of 26,000 hectares of mulberry plantations largely for production of BV mulberry silk is proposed to be raised during XI plan. In order to achieve the aforesaid targets during XI Plan, it is proposed to implement the modified Centrally sponsored Scheme viz. Catalytic Development Programme (CDP) through which support will be provided in the form of subsidy to the stakeholders of silk industry to develop Seed, Cocoon and Post-Cocoon sector. These Schemes will be implemented through the State Governments and NGOs with the aim to improve quality silk production and increasing the productivity.

(e) and (f) The XI plan target (year-wise) for silk goods export earnings is given below:

Year	Exports (Cr. Rs)
2007-08	3770.00
2008-09	3970.00
2009-10	4150.00
2010-11	4325.00
2011-12	4500.00

- * The Government is providing assistance to the Indian Silk Export Promotion Council, Mumbai for undertaking various export promotion activities both national and international.
- * Government has rationalized value addition/input-output norms specified under the EXIM Policy extended to exporters, the facility of duty free import of raw material under the Advance Licensing Scheme, import of capital goods at concessional rate of duty for export products.
- * For Technological up-gradation of the industry loan at 5% less than applicable rate, under the Technological Up-gradation Fund Scheme for the

Textiles sector is available inter alia to the silk sector.

- Import duty on silk machinery has been reduced to 10%.
- A production programme of high quality bivoltine silk to improve quality of Indian silk to international standards and its productivity & cost competitiveness is being pursued. Besides great thrust is being given for promotion of non-mulberry silks in the existing areas of North East and Jharkhand, expanding it to other areas like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar etc. Programmes are being implemented to improve technologies at all stages of the process of silk development, and diversify products with inputs for improvement of looms and designs such that they may expand the export share of the country.

(g) The Central Silk Board does not export the Silk goods directly. However, the details of the exports of silk goods during Xth plan are given in the enclosed Statement-III.

(h) and (i) The Indian Silk Export Promotion Council undertakes export promotion activities every year. The Council's annual Silk Week programme was held at Greater Noida Expressway during 22-26, February, 2007. The latest silk collection as per International seasonal Trends were at display at the various silk arena stalls. The Council also conducted a Seminar on Handloom Mark Scheme/ Scheme for Market Access Initiative and Market Development Assistance at NIFT Campus at New Delhi on 23rd January, 2007.

(j) In order to protect the credibility of Muga Silk variety, the Assam Government Science and Technology (S&T) Department (ASTEC), which is an autonomous Body has taken initiatives to get the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) mark for the shimmering golden yellow Muga silk, that is exclusive to Assam. The Geographical Indication (GI) mark on Muga silk was granted under the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act 1999. The GI tag for Muga silk is a milestone and would go a long way in preserving its quality and reputation in the global markets.

Statement I

State-wise Mulberry and Vanya Raw Silk production during last three years

(Unit: Metric tonnes)

State	2004-05					2005-06					2006-07				
	Vanya Silk					Vanya Silk					Vanya Silk				
	Mulberry	Tasar	Eri	Muga	Total	Mulberry	Tasar	Eri	Muga	Total	Mulberry	Tasar	Eri	Muga	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Andhra Pradesh	5084	16	10	—	5110	5375	20	27	—	5422	5526.00	1550	14.00	—	5555.50
Arunachal Pradesh	neg	—	4	0.1	4	1	neg	10	0.24	11	0.40	—	5.00	140	6.80
Assam	9	—	554	104	667	8	—	745	104	857	11.00	740.00	107.00	—	858.00
Bihar	8	8	15	—	31	3	14	3	—	20	4.00	11.00	1.30	—	16.30
Chattisgarh	2.3	120	1	—	123	3	90	2	—	95	4.03	110.00	3.10	—	117.13
Gujarat	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Haryana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Himachal Pradesh	12	—	—	—	12	16	—	—	—	16	17.00	—	—	—	17.00
Jammu and Kashmir	90	—	—	—	90	95	—	—	—	95	102.00	1.00	—	—	103.00

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Jharkhand	neg.	91	1	—	92	1	96	neg	—	97	1.00	120.00	0.20	—	121.20
Karnataka	7301.9	—	—	—	7302	747	—	—	—	7471	7883.00	—	—	—	7883.00
Kerala	8	—	—	—	8	12	—	—	—	12	14.00	—	10.00	—	24.00
Madhya Pradesh	14	14	—	—	28	23	16	—	—	39	30.00	16.00	—	—	46.00
Maharashtra	37	5	—	—	42	44	6	—	—	50	80.00	7.00	—	—	87.00
Manipur	54	3	431	0.1	488	48	3	235	0.06	286	70.00	3.00	374.00	0.02	447.20
Meghalaya	2.5	—	327	5.4	335	3	—	280	5.4	288	1.25	—	202.00	58.1	209.05
Mizoram	5	neg	3	0.1	8	6	neg	3.2	0.07	9	6.00	0.20	4.20	0.02	10.80
Nagaland	0.5	0.2	98	0.1	99	1	neg	130	0.18	131	1.25	0.15	115.00	0.02	116.00
Orissa	2	33	1	—	36	2	21	2	—	25	2.10	35.00	4.10	—	41.20
Punjab	4	—	—	—	4	4	—	—	—	4	4.00	—	—	—	4.00
Rajasthan	0.3	—	—	—	0	0	—	—	—	—	0.30	—	—	—	0.30
Sikkim	—	—	—	—	0	—	—	—	—	—	0.20	—	0.10	—	0.30
Tamil Nadu	443	—	0.6	—	444	739	—	neg	—	739	1125.00	—	—	—	1125.00
Tripura	4	—	—	—	4	4	—	—	—	4	5.00	—	—	—	5.00
Uttar Pradesh	9.5	2	—	—	12	19	3	0.5	—	23	25.00	4.00	4.00	—	33.00
Uttaranchal	9	4	0.6	—	14	14	5	neg	neg	19	14.00	0.15	—	—	14.15
West Bengal	1520.09	28	2	0.2	1548	155	34	4	0.2	1591	1598.00	27.00	6.00	0.20	1633 20
Total	14620	322.2	1438.2	110	16500	15445	288	1415	110	17258	16525	350	1485	115	18475

Source: DOS, of respective State.

—nil, Neg.—Negligible (Less than 50 kg.)

Statement II*State-wise estimated demand for Raw Silk*

Sl.No.	State	Estimated Demand of Raw Silk (M.Ts.)		
		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1500	1500	1500
2.	Karnataka	7000	7250	7500

1	2	3	4	5
3.	Tamil Nadu	1000	1500	1700
4.	Jammu and Kashmir	100	100	100
5.	Uttar Pradesh*	5500	5500	600d
6.	Bihar	100	150	200
7.	West Bengal	2000	2000	2000
8.	Assam	2000	2000	2000
9.	Others	4800	5000	5000
Total		24000	25000	26000

*Varanasi included

Statement III

Export Earnings from Silk-goods

Sl.No.	Item of Exports	2002-2003		2003-2004		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07 (P)	
		Crore Rs.	Mn. US\$	Crore Rs.	Mn. US\$	Crore Rs.	Mn. US\$	Crore Rs.	Mn. US\$	Crore Rs.	Mn. US\$
1.	Natural Silk Yarn Fabrics, Made ups	1654.96	342.00	1954.11	425.18	2008.33	446.99	2228.88	503.47	1933.52	427.30
2.	Readymade Garments	527.20	108.95	699.52	152.20	746.29	66.10	842.06	190.21	1164.81	25742
3.	Silk Carpets	96.13	19.87	120.22	26.16	123.65	27.52	103.36	23.35	124.00	2741
4.	Silk Waste	15.76	3.20	5.34	1.16	1.29	0.29	19.90	4.50	22.10	488
Total		2294.05	474.06	2779.19	604.7	2879.56	640.90	3194.20	721.53	3244.40	717.01

P: Provisional.

Source: Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics, Kolkata.

[Translation]

Review in Functioning of TRAI

2311. SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:
SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has reviewed the functioning of organizations like Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) to find out whether Government

is bearing losses and Private Sectors are benefiting from these organizations;

(b) if not, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) the provisions made by the Government to save these agencies from getting influenced by the Private Sector; and

(d) the reaction of the Government regarding the functioning of the said organizations under the said provisions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (d) The functioning of TRAI is subject to examination/review by various Parliamentary Committees like Standing Committee on IT, Committee on Subordinate Legislation, Committee on Papers Laid etc. Budgetary proposals and functioning of TRAI are being examined by Standing Committee on IT by way of oral evidence and soliciting written comments from TRAI. The regulations issued by TRAI are also being examined by Committee on Subordinate Legislation. Also the accountability of TRAI towards Parliament is ensured through the Annual Reports of TRAI detailing summary of its activity at the end of every financial year.

Moreover, by amendment in TRAI Act, 1997, the Government established the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) in May, 2000 to adjudicate any dispute:-

- (i) Between a licensor and a licensee;
- (ii) Between two or more service providers;
- (iii) Between a service provider and a group of consumers; and to hear and dispose of appeal against any direction, decision or order of TRAI.

Encroachment on Indian Nautical Region

2312. SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is large scale encroachment in the Indian nautical region situated in the Arabian Sea;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) There are no reports with the Government about large scale encroachment of Indian territorial waters in Arabian Sea.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard carry out regular surveillance and maintain their presence to prevent any encroachment in Indian territorial waters.

[English]

Export of Pulses

2313. SHRI P.C. GADDIGODAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether foodgrains like Maize, Jawar, Bajra are produced in Bagalkot District of Karnataka and exported to other countries;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the transport facilities accorded till date since last three years; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) As informed by the Government of Karnataka, in Bagalkot district of Karnataka, Jowar and Bajra are mainly grown for self consumption as these grains are staple food of the region, while Maize is consumed by poultry and starch industries.

(c) and (d) Such information are not maintained.

Revival of Cooperatives in Andhra Pradesh

2314. SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has sanctioned Rs. 173 crores to revive sick cooperative societies in Andhra Pradesh;
- (b) if so, the details of silk cooperative societies that are going to be revived with the above package;
- (c) whether Government has allocated Rs. 300 crores as per the recommendations of the Vaidyanaman Committee to revive sick cooperative societies in Andhra Pradesh; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) On the recommendations made by the Task Force headed by Prof. A. Vaidyanathan, the Government of India has approved the package for the revival of the Short-term Rural Cooperative Credit Structure. In respect of Andhra Pradesh, State Level Implementing and Monitoring Committee (SLIC) has compiled total claims of Rs. 2761.26 crore in respect of Primary Agriculture Credit Society (PACS) in all the 22 districts. SLIC recommended recapitalization assistance only in respect of PACS with recovery level of 50% and above as on 30 June, 2004. Recapitalization assistance has been released as given below:

Govt. of India Share	:	Rs. 423.64 crore
State Govt. Share		Rs. 79.65 crore
PACS Share	:	Rs. 65.80 crore
Total	:	Rs. 568.09 crore

[Translation]

**Training of Disaster Management
to Foreign Countries**

2315. SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether training on Disaster Management and Health Care is being provided to the Armed Forces of the African Countries; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) None of the Services have provided training assistance in disaster management to the Armed Forces of any African country. The Navy offers training courses in health care but no African country has availed such training till date. The Air Force has currently allotted a slot in the primary course in aviation medicine to Nigeria. In addition, 4 student officers from the Armed Forces of African countries namely Botswana (3) and Lesotho (1) are currently undergoing MBBS course at the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune.

Anusandhan Vikas Ratna to Private Companies

2316. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE:
SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDALIKRAO GAWALI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to give status of Anusandhan Vikas Ratna and Anusandhan Mini Vikas Ratna to some private companies on the lines of 'Raksha Udyog Ratna'; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) and (b) No, Sir. However, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is studying possibility of identifying industries, especially small and medium scale industries, who can become DRDO partners during product development, in highly specialized fields.

Project Proposals under NCLP

2317. SHRI PRAKASH B. JADHAO: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra has submitted any project proposals for Child Labour Education and Rehabilitation, under the National Child Labour Project;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of child labour likely to be covered and the amount of central aid sought during each of the last three years and the current year and the aid granted against the demand; and

(d) the reasons for delay in clearance of the proposals and grant-in-aid this year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) While State Governments submit proposals from time to time for sanction of projects under National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme, the projects are sanctioned by the Government on the basis of endemicity of child labour in the district, based on Census data. During the 9th Plan, Solapur and Thane districts of Maharashtra were covered under NCLP Scheme. During the 10th Plan, 11 more districts of Maharashtra, namely, Pune, Ahmadnagar, Sangli,

Kolhapur, Jalgaon, Nandurbar, Nanded, Nasik, Yavatmal, Dhule and Beed were included under the NCLP Scheme.

(c) Under the NCLP Scheme, the number of children presently covered in special schools in Maharashtra is 14800. The number of children covered and rehabilitated in last three years is 7619, 9478 and 7214 respectively. Expenditure incurred towards implementation of the Scheme in the State of Maharashtra during the last three years are Rs. 1.68 crore, 1.92 crore and 2.78 crore respectively.

(d) There has been no delay in the clearance of the complete proposals of the identified districts of NCLP received from Maharashtra State and the release of Grants-in-aid to these districts.

Grievances of Textile Workers

2318. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of major achievements of the Government in resolving the problems being faced by the textile workers in the country;

(b) whether the Government has chalked out any concrete plan to ascertain the grievances of the textile workers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN): (a) to (c) A Grievance Committee monitors the functioning of Public/Staff Grievances Redressal Machinery (PGRM) functioning in the Ministry of Textiles. Public/Staff grievances are also handled at attached/subordinate Offices.

To provide interim relief to textile workers rendered unemployed as a consequence of permanent closure of any particular portion or the entire textile unit, Government introduced the Textiles Workers' Rehabilitation Fund Scheme, w.e.f. 15th September, 1986.

Management Committees under the Workers Participation Scheme have been constituted in the National Textiles Corporation (NTC) units to discuss the suggestions/grievances of workers through their representatives in the Committees, and decisions are implemented thereon. Labour Welfare Officers have also

been appointed in NTC mills as per statutory requirements to deal with welfare as well as the grievances of the workers. The grievances of textiles workers in the British India Corporation (BIC) are resolved by the management in consultation with various Govt. Authorities and their representatives.

Hiring of Godowns

2319. SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Food Corporation of India (FCI) hired godowns under the Seven Year Guarantee Scheme from State Warehousing Corporations at higher rates during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the extent of losses suffered as a result thereof;

(c) whether the storage space so acquired by FCI remained idle; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the action proposed to be taken against FCI officials held responsible for the lapse?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir, Under Seven Year Guarantee Scheme, the Food Corporation of India hired godowns constructed directly by the State Warehousing Corporations (SWCs) and those got constructed by the SWCs through private investors during the years 2001 to 2004 in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar. FCI paid storage charges to CWC/SWCs at par with the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) till 2005. However, it came to notice during 2005, that in the case of godowns constructed by private investors, the SWCs had entered into agreement with the investors for rent at much lower rates. On examination of such cases, FCI restricted the rent in respect of private investors godowns to the amount agreed between the investors and SWCs plus maintenance charges plus actual preservation charges plus 15% supervisory charges.

(c) and (d) No Sir, Hundred percent utilization of each and every godown may not be possible as the

utilization of available storage space depends upon various factors viz. extent of procurement, receipt of stocks from the procuring States, off-takes under various schemes. However, the storage space so hired by the FCI has been utilized to the extent feasible to accommodate procured stocks as also to retain stocks for supplies in PDS/Other Welfare Schemes.

[*Translation*]

Rotten Foodgrains

2320. SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:
SHRI M. RAJA MOHAN REDDY:
SHRI V.K. THUMMAR:
PROF. M. RAMADASS:
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether huge foodgrains stocks are rotting in Government warehouses and in the godowns of Food Corporation of India (FCI) and are no more fit for human consumption;

(b) if so, the quantity of such foodgrains spoiled during each of the last three years and thereafter till date alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of corrective steps initiated to check recurrence of such wastages;

(d) whether responsibilities have been fixed for this poor maintenance; and

(e) if so, the action taken by the Government against the officers held responsible?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, sometimes foodgrains are damaged during storage due to exposure of stocks lying in open godowns, vagaries of weather, natural calamities, such as, flash flood, cyclone etc. Besides, stocks also get damaged during transit, multiple handling and long distance transportation due to their perishable nature. The quantity of damaged foodgrains in last three years and thereafter till date is as under:

Sl. No.	Year	Quantity (in lakh MT)
1.	2004-05	0.97
2.	2005-06	0.95
3.	2006-07	0.25
4.	From April 2007 to October 2007	0.32

(c) With a view to preserve the stocks in storage and to check recurrence of such wastages, the following steps are being taken by FCI:

(i) Monitoring the quality of foodgrains at the time of procurement and during storage.

(ii) Ensuring that all FCI godowns are constructed as per specifications and foodgrains are stored in scientific manner. Besides, regular periodic inspection of the stocks of foodgrains are carried out by qualified and trained staff.

(iii) Undertaking prophylactic and curative treatment of stocks regularly and issuing the foodgrains by following the principle of "First in-First out" (FIFO).

(d) and (e) Whenever instances of poor maintenance of stocks of foodgrains in the godowns are noticed, these are investigated and based on the investigation report, responsibilities are fixed and action is taken.

[*English*]

BIS Marking on Tyres

2321. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bureau of Indian Standards marking has been made/proposed to be made mandatory for tyres;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the views of the tyre industry were considered before finalizing the quality specifications and making them mandatory;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the agency/authority put in place for its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (f) There is a proposal to introduce mandatory BIS marking for tyres and tubes in consultation with the stakeholders including Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association. Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) is coordinating with all the stakeholders in the matter.

[English]

Census of Irrigation Projects

2322. SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the census of small irrigation projects was undertaken in 1986-87; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons for not undertaking such a census thereafter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes Sir. The census of Minor Irrigation projects was undertaken with reference year 1986-87.

(b) Minor Irrigation projects in the States are undertaken by various Departments and Organizations under different developmental schemes. A good number of projects are commissioned by the cultivators themselves with their own resources. In order to have a sound data base of Minor Irrigation projects in the country, first Minor Irrigation Census was organized by Ministry of Water Resources in collaboration with States/UTs with reference year 1986-87. In the Minor Irrigation Census, information is collected for 5 types of Minor Irrigation projects namely Dug wells, Shallow tube wells, Deep Tube wells, Surface flow and Surface lift schemes. The items on which information is collected are location of the project, ownership, source of finance, physical characteristics of the project, utilization status, reasons for under utilization, water lifting and water distribution devices used, culturable command area, irrigation potential created and irrigation potential utilized during reference period. The report of the first census was released in 1993. The report contains state-wise and district wise tables on number of schemes according to various characteristics.

After the first census, two more censuses of Minor Irrigation projects have been organized by the Ministry. The Second MI Census with reference year 1993-94 was completed and the Report was published in March 2001. The 3rd MI Census with reference year 2000-01 was launched in the year 2000 in 33 States/UTs. All India Report for the census was released in November 2005. The results of the 2nd and 3rd census are available on Ministry of Water Resources' website: www.mowr.gov.in.

The 4th MI Census with reference year 2006-07 has been launched in all States/UTs in the country. Currently the States/UTs are in the process of training/data collection.

[English]

Maintenance of NH-52 by BRO

2323. SHRI TAPIR GAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has taken over the maintenance of National Highway-52 (NH) which covers the States of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh;

(b) whether the condition of the section of NH-52, from Ruksin to Mahadevpur is poor;

(c) whether the Sisiri Bridge has got financial approval;

(d) if so, the details of construction work underway;

(e) the time by which the Bridge over Dibang River will be constructed; and

(f) the reasons for slow progress on section from Roing to Tezu of NH-52?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Due to heavy rain during recent monsoon, the road has been damaged and damages are under restoration.

(c) and (d) No, Sir.

(e) The bridge has been planned tentatively for completion by 2015.

(f) The works are progressed as per plan. However, the delay in completion of the stretch is due to involvement of number of major river gaps where construction of bridges can be progressed during fair weather only.

Repair and Renovation of Water Bodies

2324. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry had taken up a pilot scheme of repair, renovation and restoration of water bodies during the Tenth Plan period;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the success achieved so far in this regard; and

(c) the name of the districts where the scheme has been implemented, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government of India launched a Pilot Scheme on "National Project for Repair, Renovation & Restoration of Water Bodies directly linked to Agriculture" in January, 2005 with an estimated cost of Rs.300 crore to be shared by Centre and State in the ratio of 3:1 for implementation during the remaining period of Xth Plan. The objectives of the scheme were to restore and augment storage capacity of water bodies and also to recover and extend their lost irrigation potential. The water bodies having culturable command area of more than 40 hectares and upto 2000 hectares were included under the pilot scheme taken up in one or two districts of each State. The Scheme envisaged coverage of 1098 water bodies in 26 districts of 15 States with 0.78 lakh hectare increase in their irrigation potential.

(c) States and districts covered and central share released under the Scheme are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Sl. No.	Name of State	Name of District	No. of water bodies included	Estimated cost (Rs. in crore)	Central Share released (Rs. in crore)
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Mahabub Nagar	226	32.84	24.2600
		Anantpur	52	12.26	8.9925
2.	Chhattiegarh	Kabir Dham	10	2.236	1.6770
3.	Gujarat	Sabarkantha	17	6.5512	2.6540
		Banaskantha	25	7.6653	3.1000
4.	Himachal Pradesh	Mandi	13	1.0401	0.7801
5.	Jammu and Kashmir	Kupwara	22	3.0588	2.2950
6.	Jharkhand	Saraikela	22	2.7972	2.0990
		Palamu	38	8.5928	6.4450
7.	Karnataka	Gulbarga	116	35.537	26.5500
		Bangalore Rural	182	38.068	28.5510
8.	Kerala	Palakkad	10	1.36548	0.7900
		Pathanamthitta	13	1.3847	0.7160

1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Madhya Pradesh	Tikamgarh	5	3.923	1.4000
		Shivpuri	65	41.28	15.0000
10.	Maharashtra	Beed	32	38.8828	13.8310
11.	Orissa	Ganjam	68	12.82	9.6150
		Gejapati	59	6.01	4.5075
12.	Rajasthan	Ajmer	4	4.489	3.3700
		Pali	1	2.45	1.8400
13.	Tamil Nadu	Sivagangal	8	1.222	0.9180
		Villupuram	38	9.372	7.0245
14.	West Bengal	Uttar Dinajpur	15	4.9181	1.3050
		South-24 Paraganas	51	18.552	10.6100
15.	Bihar	Nalanda	1	1.18	0.2655
		Jamui	5	3.42	1.1340
Total	15	26	1098	299.9155	179.7301

Eradication of Child Labour

2325. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has sought Private Sector help through National Commission for Protection of Child Rights to effectively implement the ban on child labour;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Commission has also urged the Banks to stop credit facility to the companies utilising child labour; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Banking Sector thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) No, sir.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Safety Measures in Mines

2326. SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of persons died and injured in mine accidents during each of the last three years and thereafter, State-wise;

(b) whether the safety measures adopted by the Union Government are upto the international standards;

(c) if not, whether the Government proposes to take necessary steps for upgrading the existing safety measures being adopted in mines; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) The details of persons died and injured in mine accidents during each of the last three years

and thereafter, State-wise are given in the enclosed statement.

(b) to (d) Provision for safety of persons employed in mines are contained in the Mines Act, 1952, and the Rules and Regulations framed there under. These laws are reviewed from time to time so as to conform to the international standards.

Statement

Coal Mines

Year	State	No. of Persons	
		Killed	S/Injured
1	2	3	4
2004	Andhra Pradesh	14	447
	Assam	2	1
	Chhattisgarh	4	69
	Gujarat	0	2
	Jharkhand	30	156
	Jammu and Kashmir	0	3
	Madhya Pradesh	9	74
	Maharashtra	11	41
	Orissa	4	17
	Tamil Nadu	3	3
	Uttar Pradesh	2	5
	West Bengal	17	173
	All India	96	991
2005	Andhra Pradesh	11	800
	Assam	1	1
	Chhattisgarh	7	56
	Gujarat	1	1
	Jharkhand	49	92
	Jammu and Kashmir	0	3
	Madhya Pradesh	17	69

1	2	3	4	
	Maharashtra	5	28	
	Orissa	10	14	
	Tamil Nadu	1	3	
	Uttar Pradesh	2	4	
	West Bengal	13	67	
	All India	117	1138	
2006	Andhra Pradesh	19	564	
	Chhattisgarh	3	46	
	Gujarat	0	1	
	Jharkhand	75	51	
	Madhya Pradesh	15	50	
	Maharashtra	7	36	
	Orissa	2	20	
	Tamil Nadu	5	1	
	Uttar Pradesh	1	0	
	West Bengal	11	73	
		All India	138	842
	2007	Andhra Pradesh	11	414
Chhattisgarh		11	28	
Gujarat		1	0	
Jharkhand		23	42	
Madhya Pradesh		15	38	
Maharashtra		9	25	
Orissa		3	5	
Tamil Nadu		3	0	
Uttar Pradesh	2	1		
West Bengal	7	63		
	All India	85	614	

Note: Data for the year 2006 & 2007 are provisional.

Data for the year 2007 are upto 31.10.2007.

Non-Coal

Year	State	No. of Persons	
		Killed	S/Injured
1	2	3	4
2004	Andhra Pradesh	4	4
	Assam	1	28
	Chhattisgarh	6	19
	Goa	1	1
	Gujarat	1	6
	Himachal Pradesh	1	0
	Haryana	1	0
	Jharkhand	8	12
	Karnataka	1	57
	Kerala	1	0
	Madhya Pradesh	4	7
	Maharashtra	1	5
	Orissa	7	16
	Rajasthan	22	40
	Tamil Nadu	4	5
	Tripura	0	2
	Uttaranchal	1	1
	All India	64	203
2005	Andhra Pradesh	7	3
	Assam	1	11
	Chhattisgarh	1	17
	Gujarat	1	3
	Himachal Pradesh	1	0
	Jharkhand	5	7
	Karnataka	3	21
	Kerala	0	1

1	2	3	4
	Madhya Pradesh	0	7
	Maharashtra	3	2
	Orissa	13	8
	Rajasthan	10	30
	Tamil Nadu	6	3
	Uttaranchal	1	0
	All India	52	113
2006	Andhra Pradesh	7	2
	Assam	3	10
	Chhattisgarh	4	16
	Goa	9	0
	Gujarat	0	1
	Himachal Pradesh	3	0
	Jharkhand	3	9
	Jammu and Kashmir	1	0
	Karnataka	4	12
	Madhya Pradesh	1	4
	Maharashtra	1	6
	Orissa	8	6
	Rajasthan	19	17
	Tamil Nadu	8	2
	All India	71	85
2007	Andhra Pradesh	10	5
	Assam	2	11
	Chhattisgarh	3	15
	Goa	2	2
	Gujarat	1	2
	Jharkhand	4	1
	Karnataka	1	17

1	2	3	4
	Kerala	0	1
	Madhya Pradesh	4	2
	Maharashtra	0	2
	Orissa	8	5
	Rajasthan	11	13
	Tamil Nadu	1	1
	All India	47	77

Note: Data for the year 2006 & 2007 are provisional.

Data for the year 2007 are upto 31.10.2007.

Amendment in EPFO Rules

2327. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to amend the existing Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) rules restricting the use of unclaimed amount for its better utilisations; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

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

[*Translation*]

Supply of Fodder and Drugs

2328. SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased state:

(a) whether some State Governments particularly Rajasthan have approached the Union Government to supply fodder and drugs for animals;

(b) if so, the names of such States; and

(c) the reaction of Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (c) The Government has not received any specific proposal for supply of fodder and drugs from any of the State Governments, including Rajasthan.

Digging of Wells

2329. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Ground Water Board has commenced the work of digging wells in various States including Maharashtra particularly in the tribal areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to launch any scheme to convert the tribal belt of Maharashtra into the green belt; and

(d) if so, the time by which the said scheme is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), under the Ministry of Water Resources undertakes digging of exploratory boreholes throughout the country, including tribal areas of Maharashtra, under its Ground Water Exploration Programme. These exploratory boreholes are drilled to delineate aquifer zones worthy of ground water development with a view to ascertaining their yield characteristics.

In the State of Maharashtra, the CGWB has drilled 1768 exploratory boreholes, including 709 in tribal areas. The Ministry of Water Resources has no scheme to convert the tribal belt of Maharashtra into the green belt.

[*English*]

Bt. Cotton

2330. SHRI K.S. RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the area covered with Bt. Cotton production technology and conventional cotton seed, State-wise;

(b) whether the introduction of Bt. Cotton has led to an increase in yield per hectare;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the findings of the Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) study regarding the socio-economic impact of Bt. Cotton production on the lives of cotton grower in the country;

(e) whether the Government proposes to encourage farmers to take up production of quality Bt. Cotton in the country in order to get higher profits;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the steps taken to bridge the gap between the cost of production of Bt. Cotton and the support price given by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA):
(a) to (g) Bt. cotton is the only genetically modified crop released for commercial cultivation in India by Genetic Engineering Approval Committee of Ministry of Environment & Forest. Bt. Cotton seed of 167 hybrids is produced and marketed by 25 private seed companies at prices ranging from Rs. 750/- to Rs. 900/- per packet of 450 gms. The prices have been fixed by the Seed Industry in consultation with States. Cultivation of Bt. Cotton has led to significant increase in cotton production in the country. Area under Bt. Cotton has increased from 29,073 hectare in 2002 to 3.47 million hectare in 2006. Production of cotton has increased from 86.24 lakh bales of 170 kg. each in 2002 to 226.96 lakh bales in 2006.

Government is not implementing any programme to promote cultivation of Bt. Cotton. Minimum Support Price is fixed by the Government on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices. Details of area under conventional cotton and Bt. cotton in Bt. cultivating States during 2006 are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Area under conventional cotton and Bt. Cotton during 2006

(Area in lakh hectare)

S.No.	Name of State	Area under Conventional Cotton	Area under Bt. Cotton	Total
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2.92	6.80	972
2.	Madhya Pradesh	3.29	3.10	6.39
3.	Gujarat	19.90	4.00	23.90
4.	Maharashtra	13.22	17.48	30.70
5.	Karnataka	3.01	0.74	3.75
6.	Tamil Nadu	0.82	0.40	1.22
7.	Punjab	4.47	1.60	6.07
8.	Haryana	4.80	0.50	5.30
9.	Rajasthan	3.45	0.05	3.50
	Total	55.83	34.67	90.55

Internet Telephony Call Charges

2331. SHRI ABU AYES MONDAL:
SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether some organizations have proposed to bring down internet telephony call charges to 0.50 paise a minute;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to lower Internet Telephony call charges in the country;

(d) if so, whether this service will only be available to the users of MTNL Broadband only;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor;

(f) whether the Government proposes to broaden the use of Internet Telephony; and

(g) if, so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) While tariff for Internet Telephony Services comes under forbearance category and service providers have the flexibility to determine the tariff for the service, no such proposal has been received from any organisation.

(b) to (e) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

(f) and (g) It is the constant endeavor of the Government to broaden the use of Telecom services including Internet Telephony. However, no specific proposal pertaining to Internet telephony is under consideration at present.

[Translation]

Child Labour in Textile Industry

2332. SHRI TEK LAL MAHTO: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether several countries and European Companies have leveled allegations of continuing practice of child labour in the textile industry of the country;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) the action taken by the Government to check the use of child labour in the textile industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir. No such complaint has been received by the Government from any country or a European Company. However, one such instance has been reported in the media recently, where an International Company has reportedly cancelled orders from Indian suppliers on ground of use of child labour.

(b) and (c) Under the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986, employment of children is prohibited in certain specified hazardous occupations and processes, which include handloom & powerloom industry, cloth printing, dyeing and weaving, cotton ginning and processing, production of hosiery goods, zari making and jute textile manufacture, etc. Government is regularly monitoring the implementation of the Act by the State Governments, who are the appropriate authority for the implementation of the Act for the areas under their jurisdiction. The States are regularly conducting raids and inspections to check the use of child labour. Further, for the rehabilitation of child labour, Government is implementing the National Child Labour Project Scheme in 250 districts of the country.

Capacity Utilisation of Ordnance Factories

2333. DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:
SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:
SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production in the ordnance factories is not as per their installed capacity;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the production capacity of these factories alongwith their actual production during the last three years;

(d) whether the ordnance factories are unable to produce State-of-the-art technologies to meet the requirements of Armed Forces;

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

(f) the steps taken for modernisation/technological advancement of the ordnance factories?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) The capacity in Ordnance Factories is created based also on war time requirement projected by the Defence Forces. Actual production is based on Armed Forces annual requirements depending on stocks, training needs and threat perception. Therefore, capacity utilization in Ordnance Factories may not always be as per installed capacity.

(c) The value of total production in the Ordnance Factories during the last three years was Rs. 8,331.75 crores, Rs. 8811.59 crores and Rs. 8280.72 crores

respectively. A list of major items produced by Ordnance Factories and their production capacity enclosed as statement.

(d) and (e) Ordnance Factories manufacture products based on technology acquired from DRDO or Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) selected by Defence Forces and are capable of absorbing advanced technology.

(f) Modernization of infrastructure is a continuous process in ordnance factories. A capital investment of Rs. 1062 crores and Rs. 1446 crores has been made in 9th and 10th plan periods for modernization of plant and machinery.

Statement

Major Item Produced by Ordnance Factories

Sl.No.	Item	Unit	Capacity	Quantity supplied during					
				2004-05	% Utilisation	2005-06	% Utilisation	2006-07	% Utilisation
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Cartg. 7.62 mm SEQ Belt	Lakh	212	53	25	240.8	114	349.46	165
2.	Cartg. 5.56 mm Ball	Lakh	1430	2034	142	2079	145	1895.82	133
3.	RD. 23 MM SOHILKA AP/ T	No.	300000	5000	2	352000	117	611471	204
4.	RD. 23 MM SCHILKA HE	No.	18000	26405	147	15008	83	19504	108
5.	SHELL 105 MM BE SMOKE	No.	380000	201500	53	112584	30	60977	16
6.	RD. 30 MM HE/ 1 (FOR BMP-II)	No.	150000	100000	67	51505	34	50000	33
7.	RD. 30 MM HE/T(FOR BMP-II)	No.	350000	155000	44	156789	45	60096	17
8.	CARTG. 40 MM L-70	No.	50000	40000	80	100000	200	100000	200
9.	RD. 130 MM RVC	No.	180000	50000	28	55828	31	36446	20
10.	RD. 130 MM FVC	No.	175000	16074	9	12555	7	0	0
11.	SHELL 155 MM HE ERFB (BB)	No.	110000	52316	48	59500	54	40760	37
12.	RD. 125 MM HE	No.	36000	30000	83	17000	47	10900	30
13.	RD. 125 MM HEAT	No.							

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15.	RD 125 MM FSAPDS	No.	36000	20000	'56	0	0	670	2
16.	Bomb 81 MM Mortar HE	No.	350000	399500	114	328875	94	338301	97
17.	Bomb 81 MM Mortar PWP	No.	100000	7900	8	53733	54	70353	70
18.	Bomb 81 MM Mortar ILLG	No.	30000	5000	17	20000	67	28000	93
19.	Rocket 84 MM HE	No.	35000	31000	89	42579	122	35913	103
20.	Pocket 84 MM ILLG	No.	25000	38500	154	42627	171	42107	168
21.	Grenade NO. 36M With Detonator	No.	300000	360125	120	200000	67	450000	150
22.	Mine A/TK ND4C/4D	No.	60000	5000	8	40000	67	10000	17
23.	RD 105 MM TK SH Practice	No.	10000	4000	40	7587	76	5965	59.65
24.	Bomb 51 MM ILLG	No.	50000	106751	214	90112	180	62107	124.214
25.	Pocket 84 MM. TPT	No.	60000	136531	228	140000	233	152910	255
Weapon									
26.	5.56mm Rifle with CES	No.	80000	113316	142	112926	141	91245	114
27.	5.56mm LMG (F/B)	No.	5800	7500	129	30	0.52	1413	24
28.	RL84mm MK-3	No.	175	367	210	626	358	495	283
29.	105mm LFG	No.	154	36	23	8	5	30	19
B' VEHICLE									
30.	LPTA 713/32 2/5 T	No.	3000	4055	135	2638	88	1909	64
31.	Vehicle 5/7.5 Ton Stallion	No.	4000	4062	102	4662	117	2584	65
A'-VEHICLE									
32.	Tank T-72 M/MK(OE)	No.	120	57	48	62	52	65	54
33.	Tank T-72 M1/M1K (OH)	No.	70	53	76	80	114	120	171
34.	Tank T-90 (OE)	No.	100	77	77	49	49	0	0
35.	MBT Arjun	No.	30	6	20	18	60	24	80
36.	BMP-11 (OE)	No.	125	33	26	98	78	15	12
37.	CMT	No.	50	37	74	0	0	0	0
General Stores									
38.	Carrier Quad Cable	Km.	1800	6082	338	6000	333	1610	89
39.	Field Cables	Km.	30000	95872	320	90000	300	0	0

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Clothing Items								
40.	Jacket Combat Drill Disr.	No.	900000	615000	68	579400	64	808520	90
41.	Trouser Combat Drill Disr.	No.	700000	600000	86	582000	83	706000	101
42.	Socks Men OG	No.	2000000	1500937	75	133950	7	1500000	75
43.	Socks Men wool heavy khaki	No.	500000	50000	10	50000	10	140000	28
44.	Coat Combat ICK	No.	184140	90000	49	60262	33	20000	11
45.	Blanket Barrack	No.	450000	450000	100	517970	115	396080	88
46.	Coat Parka Shell outer	No.	159020	130000	82	70000	44	44834	28
47.	Coat Parka Liner Inner	No.	179020	93000	52	32370	18	30000	17
48.	Bag sleeping MK-IV	No.	110000	84320	77	135680	123	141500	129
49.	Mattress Kapok	No.	140000	70000	50	76630	55	80000	57
50.	Shirt Men angola Drab	No.	865000	595000	69	305323	35	404800	47
51.	Trouser serge BD	No.	600000	260000	43	300000	50	248760	41
52.	Jersey woolen V Neck OG	No.	500000	400000	80	180000	36	300000	60
53.	Vest Men FS OG	No.	500000	200000	40	300500	60	300000	60
54.	Jacket combat ICK	No.	500000	251000	50	229400	46	223520	45
55.	Boot DVS with Palin Toe	No.	500000	400000	80	565647	113	543870	109
56.	Durry	No.	150000	170000	113	315850	211	135946	91
57.	Net Mosquito Polyster	No.	390000	330000	85	343120	88	343710	88

Laboratories Closure

2334. SHRI JAI PRAKASH (Mohanlal Ganj): Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has issued directions to close the laboratories issuing AGMARK standard;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Union Government for safeguarding the interests of the employees working in such closed laboratories?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Agriculture has recently decided to close down five Regional Agmark Laboratories (RALs) at Guwahati, Patna, Bhubaneswar, Bangalore and Ghaziabad which were involved in testing check samples of articles marked as confirming to AGMARK Standards for detecting any AGMARK misgrading.

(b) The Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) of Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure on Work Measurement Study of the Directorate of Marketing &

Inspection had recommended in their report submitted in December, 2004 for closure of these RALs due to lack of sufficient workload with their Chemists. The Ministry of Agriculture has agreed to the recommendations and has decided to close down these RALs.

(c) There are 26 employees working in these five RALs and the Ministry has decided to redeploy them against vacant posts in other RALs after considering their choice of posting and to place surplus employees at the disposal of the Surplus Cell.

Water Management

2335. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:
SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR:
SHRI KIREN RIJJU:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received report of the Parekh Committee constituted for water management and ownership;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it has been suggested in the report to reduce subsidy to check over exploitation of water and to take action at those places where water level has reduced to alarming situation;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Committee has given suggestions to improve the situation of scarcity of water in drought affected areas; and

(f) if so, the steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (f) The Expert Group on Ground Water Management and Ownership constituted by the Planning Commission submitted its report to Planning Commission in September, 2007. The summary of the issues highlighted in the report is given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Summary of the issues highlighted in the Report of the Expert Group on Ground Water Management and Ownership

1. The first six Chapters have brought out the complexities involved in ground water management in the backdrop of the legal position and the international and domestic experience so far in handling the problem. We can summarize what emerges as follows:

- The rate of extraction of ground water is increasing and in many blocks exceeds the rate of recharge leading to lowered water tables. 28% of blocks are now semi-critical, critical or over exploited.
- The number of dark or over exploited critical is increasing rapidly as it has grown from 4% in 1995 to 15% in 2004.
- Since ground water is an open access common property resource, the tragedy of the commons where each user tries to maximise his/her own share winds up lowering everyone's share. When groundwater gets lowered, it increases costs for all as they need to deepen their wells and require more powerful motors.
- Artificial recharge can augment ground water supply and delay the crisis. Not all water recharged through such measures, however, is a net gain for the basin as a whole as augmented recharge upstream may lower availability of water downstream. Nonetheless, this redistributes water in favour of upland farmers who often do not benefit from irrigation projects.
- Artificial recharge generally requires community action. An important gain from successful project is that the community gets organised to behave in a cooperative manner. Such cooperation is critical for sustainable use of ground water.
- The experience of states with ground water legislation shows that by itself it is not very effective and requires community cooperation.
- International experience also indicates limitations of legal measures.

2. Given the domestic and international experience in ground water management, new initiatives to depart from the current system may be considered in the following areas:

- (i) Policy and legal environment,
- (ii) technical,
- (iii) electricity pricing and supply,
- (iv) incentives for efficient use,
- (v) cooperative management, and
- (vi) institutional changes.

National Bamboo Mission

2336. SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Bamboo Mission has been implemented in all the States for conservation of wood and protection of environment;

(b) if so, the achievements of the National Bamboo Mission till date;

(c) whether public partnership and Industrial participation is proving helpful in the implementation of the Mission; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The National Bamboo Mission of this Department has been implemented in 25 States in the country with an objective to promote the growth of the bamboo sector through area based regionally differentiated strategies and to increase the coverage of area under bamboo in potential areas, etc. So far, an amount of Rs. 98.93 crore has been released to various States and as per their initial reports, an area of 21234 ha. has been brought under bamboo plantation, 5217 ha. existing stock improved, 220 Nurseries established, 1199 farmers/entrepreneurs trained. Besides, State-level workshops/demonstration, etc. were conducted.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The partnership has been useful in setting up nurseries, raising bamboo plantations and training of farmers/entrepreneurs in bamboo cultivation.

[English]

Quality of Foodgrains

2337. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether quality check of foodgrain stocks of Food Corporation of India (FCI) is mandatory;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether certain States do not allow such mandatory checks;

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

(e) the steps taken/proposed to ensure regular periodic checks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Quality check of foodgrain stocks of Food Corporation of India (FCI) is mandatory. FCI issues detailed guidelines to their field functionaries regarding quality control measures to be taken at the time of procurement/acceptance of stocks of foodgrains. These instructions include sampling, inspection and super inspection at various levels.

(c) to (e) Some States like Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Punjab and Orissa had shown reluctance in allowing FCI staff to carry out quality checking of food stocks held by the State agencies procured under decentralized procurement scheme on the ground that necessary instructions in this regard had not been issued by their respective Governments. Government of Punjab had shown reluctance in quality checking by FCI staff on the plea that FCI is also one of the procuring agencies like State procuring agencies.

To ensure regular periodic checks of foodgrains procured by State Governments, guidelines had been formulated and issued to State Governments in 2002. These guidelines have been reiterated in September, 2007. These guidelines clearly envisage inspection of the stocks procured by State Government and their agencies by FCI.

Jobs to Handicapped Persons

2338. SHRI M. APPADURAI: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) The number of persons registered in different employment exchange and the number of handicapped persons out of them, State-wise;

(b) The number of persons, particularly handicapped out of the above provided with jobs during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(c) whether the reserved quota of the handicapped persons is being filled up regularly; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) The State-wise total number of persons registered and the number of handicapped persons out of them as on 31.12.2005 is given in the enclosed statement-I.

(b) The total number of persons and handicapped persons out of them provided jobs during last three years is given in the enclosed statement-II.

(c) and (d) Employment Exchanges sponsor candidates against vacancies notified by the employers. It is for the respective employer to fill up the posts as per the quota fixed.

Statement I

(In thousand)
As on 31.12.2005

Sl. No.	State/Union Territory	Total Number of persons registered including Physically handicapped	Number of Physically Handicapped persons registered
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2427.6	96.4
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	25.1	0
3.	Assam	1760.8	7.0
4.	Bihar	1461.8	13.3
5.	Chhattisgarh	988.5	10.6

1	2	3	4
6.	Delhi	671.4	7.2
7.	Goa	100.8	0.6
8.	Gujarat	854.6	21.0
9.	Haryana	1064.7	12.8
10.	Himachal Pradesh	911.3	11.6
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	116.0	1.0
12.	Jharkhand	1208.9	7.5
13.	Karnataka	1318.3	29.2
14.	Kerala	3628.6	46.4
15.	Madhya Pradesh	2160.9	25.3
16.	Maharashtra	3991.8	52.3
17.	Manipur	532.3	2.0
18.	Meghalaya	38.0	0.2
19.	Mizoram	34.4	0.3
20.	Nagaland	44.3	1.2
21.	Orissa	833.2	12.0
22.	Punjab	463.1	10.7
23.	Rajasthan	793.6	24.5
24.	Sikkim		
25.	Tamil Nadu	3681.2	73.3
26.	Tripura	399.7	2.3
27.	Uttarakhand	378.9	6.3
28.	Uttar Pradesh	1871.3	27.0
29.	West Bengal	7291.9	73.4
30.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	39.0	0.7
31.	Chandigarh	56.0	1.1
32.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	6.5	0
33.	Daman and Diu	10.6	0.1
34.	Lakshadweep	11.2	0.1
35.	Puducherry	171.4	1.8
Total		39347.8	578.9

Notes: *No Employment Exchange is functioning in this State.

0 Figures less than fifty.

Figures may not add up to total due to rounding off.

Statement II

Sl.No.	State/Union Territory	Total Placement including Physically Handicapped (In thousand)			Placement of Physically Handicapped (In Actual Number)		
		2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Andhra Pradesh	3.7	2.4	1.7	351	77	164
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	●	●	●	—	—	—
3.	Assam	0.6	0.2	0.4	1	3	—
4.	Bihar	0.6	0.1	●	8	6	—
5.	Chhattisgarh	1.6	0.9	2.2	10	—	—
6.	Delhi	0.4	0.3	0.1	9	41	1
7.	Goa	0.3	0.2	0.3	1	1	8
8.	Gujarat	64.9	64.9	92.9	408	431	659
9.	Haryana	4.3	3.4	3.5	1	10	14
10.	Himachal Pradesh	1.3	1.0	1.7	24	15	1
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	●	—	●	—	—	—
12.	Jharkhand	8.6	0.7	2.7	—	—	2
13.	Karnataka	2.9	1.6	1.7	56	21	23
14.	Kerala	7.3	7.5	9.7	1194	793	936
15.	Madhya Pradesh	1.9	1.6	1.7	25	5	6
16.	Maharashtra	14.0	12.8	15.0	167	216	151
17.	Manipur	●	—	—	—	—	—
18.	Meghalaya	●	●	0.3	—	—	1
19.	Mizoram	0.3	●	—	—	—	—
20.	Nagaland	0.2	●	●	—	—	—
21.	Orissa	1.8	1.3	2.0	14	12	24
22.	Punjab	3.2	2.7	2.1	11	6	20
23.	Rajasthan	2.3	3.4	7.7	107	95	142
24.	Sikkim*						
25.	Tamil Nadu	18.9	13.2	15.3	1284	1503	968

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
26.	Tripura	0.7	0.3	0.2	4	10	—
27.	Uttarakhnad	1.8	1.5	2.1	5	6	12
28.	Uttar Pradesh	2.6	1.7	1.6	21	17	5
29.	West Bengal	9.3	10.1	7.3	137	147	82
30.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0.4	0.1	0.1	1	—	—
31.	Chandigarh	0.5	0.3	0.2	21	9	—
32.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	●	●	—	—	—	—
33.	Daman & Diu	●	●	●	—	—	—
34.	Lakshadweep	0.1	●	—	—	—	—
35.	Puducherry	0.4	0.3	0.7	—	—	—
Total		154.9	132.6	173.2	3860	3424	3219

Notes: *No Employment Exchange is functioning in this State.

● Figures less than fifty.

Figures may not add up to total due to rounding off.

Programmes for Women

2339. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of agricultural activities/programmes in which women participate under various schemes in the country;

(b) the achievements made during the last two years;

(c) whether the Government has maintained any data of funds utilised by the implementing agencies;

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

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The women specific provisions under some of the important beneficiary oriented schemes of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation are given enclosed in the Statement.

(c) to (e) Separate data is not being maintained under most of the schemes. However, the implementing Agencies concerned have been requested to revise their Reporting Formats.

Statement

Women Specific Provisions under Beneficiary Oriented Schemes in Agriculture Sector

Sl.No.	Name of the Scheme	Provisions for Women Beneficiaries
1	2	3
1.	Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal (TMNE) and National Horticulture Mission	30% allocation

1	2	3
2.	National Food Security Mission	33% allocation for small marginal and women farmers.
3.	Integrated Scheme of Pulses, Oilseeds, Palm Oil and Maize (ISOPOM)	50% cost for sprinkler sets and pipes or Rs. 15,000/- whichever is less to small marginal SC/ST and women farmers
4.	Mini Mission-II of Technology Mission on Cotton	30% allocation
5.	Mini Mission of Jute Technology Mission	30% allocation
6.	Oil Palm Development Programme (OPDP)	50% of the cost for drip irrigation to small, marginal SC/ST and women farmers
7.	National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWSDPRA)	Mandatory participation of women in Watershed Committee, Watershed Associations and User Groups
8.	Support to States for Extension Reforms	30% allocation

Improvement in Customer Services

2340. PROF. M. RAMADASS:
PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the customer services of the Telecommunications Department is not satisfactory;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government has issued any guidelines to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited to improve customer services;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether there has been an increase in the number of cases about customer services in consumer courts;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government to check this increasing trend of customers' complaints?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No Sir, Customer services of Telecommunications Department is satisfactory.

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

(c) and (d) Sir, TRAI has pres prescribed Quality of Service (QoS) benchmark for basic, cellular and broadband services to provide efficient service to customer.

TRAI has also formulated Public Grievances Redressal Mechanism. All efforts are made to achieve the QoS parameters of TRAI.

(e) No, Sir. In fact, there is a decreasing trend of cases about customer services in consumer courts.

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

(g) The steps taken by BSNL and MTNL to check increasing trend of customers' complaints are given at Statement-I and Statement-II respectively.

Statement I***Steps taken by BSNL to check increasing trend of customers' complaints***

- Instructions have been issued to field units to monitor the performance personally and fix up the responsibility wherever their achievement is found to be poor/below benchmarks and take appropriate measures so as not to default on the benchmarks prescribed by TRAI.
- Customer Service Centers have been established at all important locations in the country with "Single Window Concept" to facilitate friendly interactions with the customers and to sort out all their telephone related problems and to meet their requirements in cordial atmosphere.
- Procedure to handle requests received at CSCs has been drastically simplified and powers have been delegated to CSC's staff to issue OB/ advice note immediately on receipt of application from the customer. However, the simplified procedure can only be implemented in areas where integrated commercial and billing software has been implemented which is being done gradually.
- The timings of opening of CSCs have also been extended and now most of the CSCs are working from 0800 hrs to 2000 hrs for all activities except cash counters.
- Phone-on-Phone service has been introduced in BSNLs Network in areas where telephone is available 'On Demand' for providing New Telephone Connections on the basis of phone calls received from prospective subscribers wherein the subscriber desiring to have a telephone connection will call a pre-designated number and furnish the details regarding name, address & mode of payment etc. on phone. On receipt of call a person designated for the purpose will visit the premises of the subscriber alongwith telephone instrument and a set of telephone directory and application form. He gets the form filled up and completes the internal and external fittings then and there. The phone is usually be energized within 48 hours.
- In order to acquaint the offices and staff with BSNL's new services, tariff plans and

development activities, monthly meetings have been introduced at SSA level which are to be attended by all the officers and staff who are working in outdoor plants, CSCs, Commercial, Marketing and TR Cells of the SSA. The representatives of Executive Associations and Staff Unions are also invited. The meetings are to be held on monthly basis preferably on every 2nd Saturday.

- Instructions have been issued for posting the persons at the CSCs only after screening by screening committee so that the staff and officers may be able to solve the problems of the customers intelligently in a pleasing manner.
- Instructions have been issued to field units to introduce "Welcome Call Services" wherein a telephone call is to be given to the new customer informing him of the indicator number allotted to him and also welcoming him to the BSNL Network. In addition, a separate written communication is also sent to the new customer alongwith a Telephone Directory.
- Forms for application for New Telephone Connection, Shift, Temporary Telephones, provision of Add-on Facilities have been simplified. These forms are available on the websites of respective circles.
- In order to avoid complaints of harassment by telecom staff from subscribers regarding denial of rebate on 'Shifting charges' where the internal wiring is done by customer himself, a column has been added in the form for shifting of telephone.
- In an endeavour to establish customer friendly relationship and to establish direct channels of communication with our valued customers, it has been decided that CGMs may organize periodical function, meets, get together etc. on quarterly basis with a view to have free and frank interaction with customers.
- Instructions have also been issued to install the cheque collection machines at places which are easily accessible to customer round the clock and seven days of the weeks so that the subscribers can pay the bills at any time as per their convenience.

- All phone mechanics who are posted in exchanges/RLUs/RSUs located in rural areas and out door phone mechanics in NCR towns, State capital towns and towns having competition in basic telephone service from other operators have been provided WLL (LM) Mobile phones so as to attend the faults quickly.
- The public can meet the senior officers in the field units any time during office hours on all working days whenever they are at the station, without any prior appointment.
- Customer Care Portal has been launched recently in most of the Circles.
- The matter is taken up with circles on regular basis and they are requested to improve their performance.

Statement II

Steps taken by MTNL to check increasing trend of customers' complaints

- MTNL has been a lot of measures to facilitate easy payment of telephone bills to meet all the segment of society viz. online, ECS, Master Card at selected petrol pumps, through Automated Teller Machines and easy bill centers etc.
- Loyalty schemes, special care of corporate customers.
- MTNL has also launched various CRM service such as automatic rent rebate, charge, change number announcement service, customer service management system etc.
- Simplification of commercial procedures.
- MTNL is operating call centers/help lines for customers to book their grievances.
- MTNL is revising tariff from time to time to suite all segments of society.
- Online booking of different services and complaints for PSTN, BB, GSM, CDMA(M).
- MTNL is having Sanchar Haats at Delhi and Customer Services Centers (CSCs) at Mumbai where customer can get various services like registration for new service, duplicate bills of cellular connections, bill payment, VCC cards etc.

- MTNL plans to commission convergent billing and CRM in the IVth quarter of 2007-08. The system provides one bill for all services to a subscriber. The system will also address customer request of services, tariff, complaint resolution etc.

Workers in Retail Sector

2341. SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of work force employed at present in the Retail Sector;

(b) the number of workers engaged by type of enterprises in the organised and unorganised Retail Sector, separately, State-wise;

(c) whether the self-employment in this Sector is increasing;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to give easy credit facility to small and medium retailer; and

(f) if so, the details of scheme prepared by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Reliable estimates of employment and unemployment are obtained through quinquennial labour force surveys conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation. Last such survey, for which results are available, was conducted during 2004-05. Estimated number of the work force employed in the retail trade (except of motor vehicles and motor cycles, repair of personal and house hold goods) as per usual status basis was estimated to be of the order of 33.51 million during 2004-05.

(b) State-wise percentage of work force employed in trade, hotels & restaurant (industry division 50 to 55) as per usual status basis during 2004-05 is given in the enclosed Statement.

(c) and (d) Estimated number of workers engaged in self employment for the economy as a whole has gone up from 21.0 crore in 1999-2000 to 26.1 crore in 2004-05.

(e) and (f) There is no such proposal to give easy credit facility to small and medium retailers. However, all Scheduled Commercial Banks including Public Sector Banks have been advised to fix their own targets to achieve a minimum 20% year-on-year growth in credit to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector.

Statement

Percentage of workers employed in Trade, Hotel & Restaurant (industry division 50 to 55 in organised and unorganised sector combined) as per usual status basis during 2004-05

Sl.No.	State/Union Territory	Percentage of workers employed in Retail Trade	
		Rural	Urban
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	6.6	24.7
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	2.3	23.2
3.	Assam	9.0	27.6
4.	Bihar	7.5	32.9
5.	Chhattisgarh	2.9	26.2
6.	Delhi	35.4	26.8
7.	Goa	20.7	23.1
8.	Gujarat	4.7	23.4
9.	Haryana	7.5	25.3
10.	Himachal Pradesh	4.3	24.9
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	5.0	21.5
12.	Jharkhand	4.8	24.1
13.	Karnataka	4.5	26.9
14.	Kerala	12.2	22.5
15.	Madhya Pradesh	4.0	25.4
16.	Maharashtra	4.7	23.1
17.	Manipur	6.6	20.0
18.	Meghalaya	5.5	15.2

1	2	3	4
19.	Mizoram	3.5	17.2
20.	Nagaland	4.9	40.4
21.	Orissa	6.7	24.0
22.	Punjab	6.4	28.0
23.	Rajasthan	4.1	22.5
24.	Sikkim	8.6	33.6
25.	Tamil Nadu	6.4	22.3
26.	Tripura	10.9	27.2
27.	Uttaranchal	4.4	26.9
28.	Uttar Pradesh	6.2	26.6
29.	West Bengal	9.5	23.2
30.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	11.9	18.2
31.	Chandigarh	19.8	17.0
32.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	6.7	28.2
33.	Daman and Diu	11.6	24.3
34.	Lakshadweep	2.1	6.0
35.	Pondicherry	10.6	20.3
All India		6.1	24.6

*As per usual status approach.

Unemployment rate is the percentage of unemployed with reference to Labour Force.

[*Translation*]

Terminal Markets

2342. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to establish modern markets in several States of the country to increase the export of fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of the States where these markets are proposed to be established alongwith quantum of export likely to be increased as a result thereof; and

(d) the amount likely to be spent on the said project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Government of India has launched a Scheme for setting up of Terminal Market Complexes under National Horticulture Mission which would establish forward linkages through wholesalers, distribution centres, retail cash and carry stores, processing units and exporters. This will, besides helping in developing better market linkages for the farmers, increasing farm income and bringing efficiency in the supply chain, indirectly help in increasing the export of fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers.

(b) The detailed Guidelines of the Scheme are given in the enclosed Statement.

(c) The State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan and Union Territory of Chandigarh have identified land at suitable locations for setting up of terminal markets. The State Governments of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Union Territory of Chandigarh have issued notices inviting Expression of Interest from the entrepreneurs. The modern infrastructure facilities for grading, storage and cold storage, as envisaged in the terminal market projects, would help in boosting the prospects of export of fruits, vegetables and flowers from the country but no quantification of expected increase in exports has been done under the Scheme.

(d) The amount likely to be spent on the project would be known only on finalization of bids on case to case basis.

Statement

Operational Guidelines for Setting up of Terminal Market Complex under National Horticulture Mission

1. Background

The National Horticulture Mission was launched during 2005-06 for the holistic development of horticulture by adopting an integrated approach duly ensuring backward and forward linkages including marketing. In view of the immense thrust being given to the development of horticulture and other allied sectors, production of related commodities is likely to see a quantum jump in the near

future. The high levels of production can be sustained only if there is adequate infrastructure for post harvest management and marketing. The NHM provides for setting up of different types of markets viz. Wholesale Markets, Rural Markets and Apni Mandis/Direct Markets. The present marketing system is characterized by a long, fragmented supply chain and high wastages. The system is also deficient in providing a fair share of consumer price to the producer and in ensuring high quality and hygiene of the produce. This call for an alternative marketing structure that provides multiple choices to farmers for sale of produce alongwith a comprehensive solution to meet key needs of the stakeholders. With this in view, the Terminal Markets (TM) have been conceptualized and introduced as a new item under the NHM, which will be implemented in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

2. Objectives

The main objectives of setting up Terminal Markets Complex (TMC) are:

- (i) To link the farmers to the markets by shortening the supply chain of perishables and enhance their efficiency and thus increase farmers income,
- (ii) Provide professionally managed competitive alternative marketing structures that provide multiple choices of farmers for sale of their agricultural produce,
- (iii) To drive reforms in the agricultural marketing sector resulting in accelerated development of marketing and post harvest infrastructure including cool chain infrastructure in the country through private sector investment.
- (iv) To bring transparency in the market transactions and price fixation for agricultural produce and through provision of backward linkages to enable the farmers to realise higher price and thus higher income to the farmers.

3. Sallent Features

- (i) The TMC will be set up in those States that undertake reforms in their laws dealing with agricultural marketing to provide direct marketing and permit the setting up of markets in private and cooperative sectors.

- (ii) The TMC would operate on a Hub-and-Spoke Format wherein the Terminal Market (the hub) would be linked to a number of Collection Centres (CC) (the spokes).
- (iii) The spokes would be conveniently located at key production centres to allow easy farmer access and the catchment area of each spoke would be based on meeting the convenient needs of farmers, operational efficiency and effective capital utilisation of the investment.
- (iv) TMC would establish backward linkages with farmers through the collection centres and forward linkages through wholesalers, distribution centres, retail cash and carry stores, processing units and exporters.
- (v) Collection Centres in the villages would integrate producers and retailers, processing units and exporters into the market system.
- (vi) An electronic auction system would be established to ensure transparency in price fixation and competition.
- (vii) The Scheme will attract and facilitate private sector investment in the agribusiness sector, by assisting the key stakeholders-entrepreneurs, producers, processing industry and exporters.
- (viii) Producers, farmers and their associations and other market functionaries from any part of the country may use the infrastructure and facilities of the TMC directly or through the collection centres.
- (ix) TMC would provide one-stop solution in terms of providing logistics support including transport services and cool chain facility.

4. Eligibility

TM project would be built, owned and operated by the selected Private Enterprise (PE) through Competitive Bidding process. PE includes individuals, Group of Farmers/Growers/Consumers, Partnership/Proprietary firms, Companies, Marketing Boards, Corporation, Co-operatives, Producer Organisations and Self Help Groups. The PE could also be a consortium of entrepreneurs from, *inter-alia*, agri-business, cold chain, logistics, warehousing, agri-infrastructure and related background.

5. Commodities

The commodities to be marketed by the TMC will include all perishables, *inter-alia*, fruits, vegetables, flowers, aromatics, herbs, meat, poultry etc. Non-perishables can also be handled in the TMC. However, the proportion of Non-Perishables shall not exceed 15% of the total through put of the market. Similarly, the proportion of non horticultural products within the perishable commodities shall not exceed 15% of the total through put of the market.

6. Location

The State Government will approve the number and indicative location of the TMCs based on the demand, economic viability, commercial considerations etc.

7. Roles and Responsibilities of the Stakeholders

The stakeholders involved are the Private Enterprise, State Government/State Horticulture Mission (SHM) and National Horticulture Mission (NHM). The State Government can participate in the equity of the project either in the form of direct investment or by offering the assets in the form of existing market/area (land) etc. However, the combined total equity of the State Government and NHM can not exceed 49% of the project equity. The details of the roles and responsibilities are given in the enclosed Annexure-I.

8. Selection of Private Enterprise

PE will be selected through competitive bidding process. The PE, based on their business plan, may seek the assistance in the form of equity to the maximum extent of 49% of the project equity and the enterprise requiring the least quantum of equity participation will be selected for implementing the project.

9. State level Coordination

The State Government would play a pro-active role and designate an officer at the level of Secretary to the State Government as Nodal Officer who will be the single contact point for the PE and other coordination work. The State Level Executive Committee of the State Horticulture Mission will coordinate all aspects relating to the TMC project. The Nodal Officer will also be nominated as a member of the SLEC for this purpose.

The functions of the Nodal Officer are given in the enclosed Annexure-II.

10. Procedure for approval of TMC project:-

- (i) The SHM shall appoint a reputed Financial Institution (FI) having project and financial appraisal capacity for each terminal market for assisting the Nodal Officer in the bidding process, evaluation, short-listing of the Private Enterprise, entering into agreements.
- (ii) The SHM will select FI for each terminal market by adopting a suitable procedure or from the panel of agencies approved by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation. The cost of engaging FI for the complete project will be borne from the Mission Management funds cost of the SHM.
- (iii) SHM will select the PE for each terminal market based on competitive bidding, following two-bid system. Initially, the interested PE will be technically short-listed based on their suitability as per the approved criteria. The financial proposals will be taken thereafter from the technically qualified enterprises.
- (iv) The Nodal Officer shall prescribe the scope of the project/throughput volumes/broad infrastructure to be created which will become part of the Request for Qualification (RFQ) Request for Proposals (RFP). In any case the PE is expected to providing minimum infrastructure facilities at the TMC/CC.
- (v) The PE shall have freedom to formulate the business plan and submit it along with the bid in response to the RFP. The business plan should meet the requirements prescribed for executing the project as given in the scope of the project for the prescribed throughput volumes for each TMC.
- (vi) The PE shall have freedom to compete for more than one TMC. However, the financial capability requirement will have to be in commensurate with the number of TMC they propose to implement. If the PE is bidding for more than one TMC, then they must give the order of priority which the PE would like to retain, if selected for more than one project. The allocation of the TMC will be based on the

financial capability and the order of priority indicated by the PE.

- (vii) The business plan/Detailed Project Report (DPR) submitted by the PE in response to the "RFP" shall be appraised by the FI both from technical and commercial angle.
- (viii) Based on the techno-economic evaluation of the PE responded to the RFP, the SHM will recommend the PE and the percentage/quantum of equity to be contributed from the Horticulture Mission funds. This recommendation along with detailed comparative statement of the bids received from the PE in response to the RFP, will be forwarded to Agricultural Marketing Adviser, Ministry of Agriculture after due approval of SLEC.
- (ix) The Executive Committee (EC) of the NHM will take a decision on the recommendations of the SHM and finalise the private participation and quantum of equity participation for each market.
- (x) The SLEC shall be the final authority for adjudicating the matters of technical qualification.
- (xi) The EC of NHM will be the final authority on selection of the Private Enterprise or on the quantum of equity participation.

11. Procedure for operationalising TMC

- (i) The Nodal Officer shall enter into an agreement called "Operation Management Development Agreement (OMDA)" with the selected Private Enterprise. The OMDA would specify the concessions to be provided by State (Concession Agreement), roles and responsibility, etc. of various players, etc.
- (ii) The Nodal Officer shall facilitate the clearances required for entering into OMDA with PE.
- (iii) The State Horticulture Mission may encourage the involvement of agri-clinics and agri-business centres under each collection centre that can play an important role in establishing the backward linkages and organizing the farmers.
- (iv) The PE shall take adequate precaution for segregating the facilities for handling perishable commodities and the meat in the TMC.

- (v) The SHM/State Government may provide land required for the TMC on lease/commercial rates/nominal rent as may be decided by the State so as to attract good PE for their TMC project. The State may also consider converting an existing market/APMC into a Terminal Market. In such case, the value of assets of the existing market can be evaluated and provided as an incentive or towards the equity participation in the project. If the State decides to participate in the equity either in the form of land or transfer equity as valuated, the Private Enterprise may bid for the balance amount of equity, the total of which shall not exceed 49%.
- (vi) An Independent Consultant (IC) will be appointed to each TM for monitoring the implementation of the TM. Selection and functioning of IC is detailed in DOMA. IC shall submit progress reports from time to time to the Nodal Officer. The Nodal Officer shall monitor the progress of implementation of the project through IC.
- (vii) There will be a nominee of the State Government in the Governing Body/Board of the PE implementing the terminal market project.
- (viii) The State Government shall ensure the involvement of the local Panchayati Raj Institutions in establishing the backward linkages to the collection centres.

12. Service Charges

The PE has full freedom to fix the service charges based on commercial and viability considerations. The service levels as prescribed in the OMDA agreement will have to be met by the PE.

13. Disinvestment of Government Equity

Disinvestment of Government equity will be done at an appropriate time at market/fair value as per the procedure prescribed by the Executive Committee of NHM.

14. Monitoring & Progress Reporting

The SHM will monitor the successful implementation of the Terminal Market Projects through the Nodal Officer. The Nodal Officer will take the help of PMA of each terminal market for this purpose. The State Horticulture Mission will submit monthly reports on the progress of

implementation of TMs to the Mission Director, National Horticulture Mission through the Joint Secretary (Agricultural Marketing) in the Ministry. They will also furnish a monthly progress report through web enabled progress monitoring system of NHM (www.nhm.nic.in)

15. General Awareness and Training Programme/ Project Development Facility

General Awareness, publicity and training of various stakeholders shall be taken up through Ch. Charan Singh National Institute of Agriculture Marketing, Jaipur and other National and State level Institutions or empanelled professional institutions. The Project Development may also be taken up through above arrangement.

Annexure I

Role and Responsibilities of the concerned agencies

For the successful operation of the Terminal Market Complex Projects, the role and responsibility of the concerned agencies in implementation and operation of the project is envisaged to be as follows:

(i) Role of the Private Enterprise

The Private Enterprise would have the following rights and obligations:

- (a) The enterprise would have to mandatorily provide the infrastructure facilities and services to be prescribed at the TM as well as CC complex in the 'Hub-and-Spoke' Format;
- (b) The Terminal Market (the hub) would be linked to a number of Collection Centres (the spokes). The Collection Centres would be located at key production centres to establish backward linkage with growers and to allow easy access to farmers for the marketing of their produce;
- (c) The enterprise would have the option to provide additional facilities to render complimentary services such as input supply, processing, agro machinery and equipments, durables etc.;
- (d) The enterprises would have the option to deal in non perishable commodities not exceeding the prescribed limits, at the terminal market complex in order to attain values and economic viability of the project;

- (e) The Private Enterprise would have the freedom to buy the commodities from the farmer directly or through the TM/CC;
- (f) The enterprise would facilitate the farmers in making direct supply to processing units, retail chain and exports, at their choice;
- (g) The enterprise would provide advisory services to farmers on inputs, prices, quality, multi-modal transport and exports;
- (h) Farmers would be free to sell their produce either through the CC/TM or the TM directly or to any other marketing channel not related with the project;
- (i) The enterprise would promote Farmers' Associations and progressively involve them in the operation and management of the CCs;
- (j) The enterprise would be responsible for the acquisition of land for setting up of the TM and the CCs and obtain necessary licenses, clearances and approvals of the establishment and operation of the market;
- (k) Investment from the Private Enterprise in the complex must be at least 51 percent of the project equity;
- (l) The enterprise would be free to collect user charges (determined by commercial considerations) from market participants and producers, for the infrastructure and services provided by it.

(ii) Role of the State Government

The State Government would play a pro-active role and designate, an officer of the rank of Secretary to the Government as Nodal Officer to function under an SLEC of the SHM for the purpose of terminal market complexes. The responsibility of the Committee would include.

- (a) Approval of the number and location of the terminal market complexes;
- (b) Approval of the bidding process and implementation modalities of the project;
- (c) Technical Financial appraisal of the detailed business plan of the complex;

- (d) Regulatory Clearances, issue of licenses and granting of permission for facilitating establishment and operation of market complexes and the collection centres;
- (e) Identification of land and when necessary provision of Government land for TM and CC;
- (f) Convergence with other development programmes for infrastructure support to TM/CC such as road connectivity, power and water supply;
- (g) May participate in the equity of the project either through direct funding, land/infrastructure support and/or transfer of existing market assets;
- (h) Selection of the Private Enterprise through an open, transparent competitive bidding process, and entering into Operation, Management, Development Agreement with the successful PE.
- (i) Ensure the involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in establishing backward linkages to the Collection Centres.
- (j) Encourage the involvement of agri-clinics and agri-business centres under each collection centre that can play an important role in establishing the backward linkages and organizing the farmers.
- (k) The Project will be awarded to the bidder with the request for least equity participation.
- (l) Make recommendations to Central Government for the release of equity and for its disinvestment.
- (m) Set up institutional mechanism for resolution of disputes, if any, arising out of the implementation of the terminal market complex.

(iii) Role of the Central Government (Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture)

The Central Government will support the project through participation in its equity capital. The terms for participation would be as follows:

- (a) Central Government would provide equity assistance upto 49% of project equity, returnable at market/fair value to be decided at appropriate time.

- (b) Central/State Government participating in equity capital will retain option to allocate on redemption, its equity in favour of farmers organizations feeding business to the market complex.
- (c) In the eventuality of farmers organizations not coming forward, the promoter of the enterprise will be given the option to buy back the Government equity capital at market/fair value to be fixed, at appropriate time.
- (d) Assist the State Governments in fixation of throughput per day and yearly handling capacity of the terminal market complex for the detailed project reports (DPR).

Annexure II

Rights and Obligations of Nodal Officer

Rights

1. Detail the rules of operation of the Terminal Market Complex.
2. Progress report on the development of the Terminal Market Complex.
3. Levying liquidated damages on the PE equivalent on delay in commencement of construction of such Mandatory Capital Project.
4. Levying liquidated damages on PE for the completion of any Mandatory Capital Project.
5. Progress and achievement of ISO within the defined time frame.
6. Collection of percentage of Revenue in the event of default of PE in achieving Objective Service Quality as per the Master Plan.

Obligations

1. Approve the Master Plan
2. Assistance in obtainment of Clearances for the PE
3. Assistance in obtainment of land by the PE
4. Provide regulatory facilitation for purposes of co-ordination between the aggrieved party and the concerned regulatory agency.

[English]

Auditing of Defence Purchases

2343. SHRI FRANCIS FANTHOME: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any mechanism to conduct auditing of the purchases, usage and outcome of equipment in the Armed Forces;

(b) if so, the findings of such audits of purchases for the last three years;

(c) whether equipment worth hundreds of crores remained unutilized by the Armed Forces as either the supply was substandard or not as per the specifications; and

(d) if so, the details of such items purchased by each of the three wings of the services?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) While audit of expenditure related to purchases is largely carried out by the Defence Accounts Department, Performance audit related to purchase, usage and outcome of equipment in the Armed Forces is carried out by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

(b) Findings of audit are reflected in various audit reports rendered by the Defence Accounts Department and the Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

(c) and (d) Procurements for the Armed Forces are carried out through a rigorous process of quality control and, therefore, equipment worth hundreds of crores does not generally remain unutilized by the Armed Forces wither on account of the supply being sub-standard or its not being as per the specifications.

Toxic Rice

2344. SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR:
SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether rice grown in West Bengal and in some other parts of the country has high proportion of toxic arsenic as reported in the *Hindustan Times* dated October 31, 2007;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the researchers from UK have recently conducted research in West Bengal and found poisonous chemicals in paddy fields; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken by the Government to protect agriculture from such poisonous chemicals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Rice grown in the arsenic contaminated areas of West Bengal, particularly in Haringhata, Chakdah blocks of Nadia district and Deganga block of district of 24 Parganas (North) has shown accumulation of arsenic in rice mentioned as under:

	Arsenic content (mg kg ⁻¹)	
	Rice dry matter	Rice grain
Pre-kharif rice	5.90-18.82	1.98-3.52
Boro rice	11.6-23.8	1.84-10.0

However, the risk of arsenic toxicity through rice is limited as much of the arsenic taken up by rice plant is accumulated in the hull, and aleuron layer and most of it, is lost while milling, polishing and after cooking rice.

(c) and (d) The UK group of researchers led by Professor Andrew Meharg, has concentrated their study in Bangladesh and found significant build-up of arsenic in Bangladesh soils through administration of arsenic contaminated groundwater in irrigation.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has initiated a network project entitled "Arsenic in food chain: cause, effect and mitigation." to deal with arsenic entry in food-chain through food, feed, fodder, livestock, fish, milk etc. and the effects in human physiology thereof, along with exploring possible mitigation options under the National Agricultural Innovation Project involving various centres including Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya, West Bengal. The arsenic toxicity is also being addressed through State Arsenic Task Force, Public Health Engineering Directorate and others.

Non-Functional Mobile Towers

2345. SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:
SHRI AVINASH RAI KAHNNA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the total number of mobile towers installed by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) across the country in the rural areas but remained non-functional for the last one year due to non-supply of radiation and other related equipments;

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

(c) whether these equipments have to be imported from outside and there is inordinate delay in supply from the respective companies;

(d) if so, the details of the total order put by the BSNL and MTNL and the number of towers required to be connected by these equipments;

(e) whether large number of villages are badly hit by such delay;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the time by when this entire process will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has taken advance action for creation of infrastructure for speedy rollout of BSNL's Mobile expansion projects. State-wise details of towers erected in advance are as follows: 201 towers in Karnataka circle, 22 towers in J&K circle, 15 towers in Assam circle, 193 towers in Tamil Nadu circle and 54 towers in Andhra Pradesh Circle.

(c) to (g) BSNL has already placed orders for around 8.0 Million additional capacities on successful bidder who sources some of the equipment from his foreign principals. It is expected to utilize all the infrastructure created within three months from receipt of equipment thereby extending services to villages planned for coverage against the tender.

Review of Performance of Mother Dairy

2346 SHRI ANANTA NAYAK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has reviewed the performance of Mother Dairy;

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof during the last three years;

(c) whether the Mother Dairy is considering any proposal to expand activities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof indicating the areas of expansion and the targets for the Eleventh Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (d) No Sir. Mother Dairy is a unit of Mother Dairy Fruit & Vegetable Pvt. Ltd. (MDFVPL), which is registered under the Companies Act, 1956. MDFVPL is a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). The Board of Directors of the MDFVPL are appointed by NDDB. Under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956, the performance of Mother Dairy is reviewed by the Board of Directors of the company. Since MDFVPL does not receive any budgetary support from the Government of India, targets for Mother Dairy are not fixed under the Eleventh Plan.

Indo-US Joint Military Exercise

2347. SHRIMATI JHANSI LAKSHMI BOTCHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Army will be conducting joint exercise with the United States Army in the American State of Alaska;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether another exercise with the United States troops is to be held, at the end of the year, in India; and

(d) the extent to which these exercises are helping the Indian Army?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There is no such proposal.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) These joint exercises contribute to enhancing the capability of our Armed Forces through exchange of best practices and procedures and exposure to advanced technology.

These exercises also increase the interoperability which would be of benefit during disaster management situations and peace keeping operations.

Import of Palm Oil

2348. DR. K.S. MANOJ:

SHRI S. AJAYA KUMAR:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding import of Edible Oil including Palm, Coconut and Soyabean during the last three years and thereafter indicating the quantum and price thereof;

(b) whether the import of Edible Oil has adversely affected the domestic oil industry and oil seed production;

(c) if so, the details thereof during the said period; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Details regarding import of Edible Oils including Palm, Coconut and Soyabean during the last three years are as under:

Sl.No.	Name of Edible Oil	Quantity in Lakh Tons (April-March)			Value in Rs. crores		
		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1.	Soyabean Oil	10.93	16.51	12.16	2955.01	3899.91	3103.68
2.	Palm Oil	35.03	24.49	27.66	7691.27	4563.41	5629.14
3.	Sunflower Oil	0.38	0.71	1.41	109.86	184.67	422.98
4.	Coconut Oil	0.13	0.04	0.15	40.87	11.46	51.86
5.	Other Oils	1.06	1.18	1.36	305.10	343.31	372.87
Total		47.53	42.93	42.74	11102.11	9002.76	9580.53

Source: DGFT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry

(b) No, Sir.

[Translation]

(c) and (d) Does not arise.

BSNL Towers

Refund of Loss

2349. SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a meeting was held between the officers of Ministry of Agriculture, Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED) regarding appointment of Maharashtra State Cooperative Cotton Growers Marketing Federation of India Limited (MSCCGMFL) as an agent of CCI in the State and get refund of their loss for Minimum Support Price (MSP) operation as that of CCI;

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof alongwith the reaction of the Union Government thereto; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) Yes, Sir. The meeting was held on 3.5.2007 in the Ministry of Agriculture.

(b) The Government has not considered the request.

(c) Question does not arise.

2350. SHRI BHUVANESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has proposed to set up Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) Tower at Jharkhandham, a major pilgrim place in Giridih district of Jharkhand;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for delay in setting up the said tower;

(d) whether there is any scheme to set up the said tower early;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. BSNL has planned to install a Mobile Tower at Jharkhandham, the famous pilgrimage in Giridih district of Jharkhand State during the current financial year.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(d) to (f) BSNL has planned to install Mobile tower at Jharkhandham by March, 2008.

[English]

Increase in Mobile Towers

2351. SHRI SURESH ANGADI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has taken any steps to increase Mobile Towers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of towers installed so far and the number of towers to be installed in this financial year, State-wise, location-wise; and

(d) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to increase the quality of mobile service provided by BSNL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, BSNL carries out procurement of equipment from time to time to increase number of towers in the country. Accordingly, BSNL floated a tender for 2G/3G COMBO Indian Mobile Personal Communication Service (IMPCS) network seeking expansion of GSM/UMTS based Cellular Mobile Network for a capacity of 45.5 Million lines to be rolled out in three phases.

(c) BSNL has installed 29,692 number of towers so far and it has a plan to install 5,881 numbers of towers in the country in this financial year. Details of towers installed/to be installed circle wise in the country are given in the enclosed Statement.

(d) BSNL is optimizing its GSM based Cellular Mobile network continuously for its performance. Monitoring of the network has been strengthened to ensure performance as per the QoS parameters prescribed by TRAI. GSM network of BSNL is also being progressively augmented to enhance, capacity, coverage and Quality of Service.

Statement

Circle-wise details of towers installed/to be installed in the country

Sl.No.	Name of Circle	No. of Towers installed in the country as on 31.10.2007	No. of Towers to be installed in this financial year
1	2	3	4
North Zone			
1.	Haryana	1,002	128
2.	Himachal Pradesh	504	350
3.	Jammu and Kashmir	516	150
4.	Punjab	1,452	146
5.	Rajasthan	1,982	105
6.	UP (E)	2,695	300
7.	UP (W)	1,197	70
8.	Uttaranchal	432	8
Sub Total		9,780	1,257
East Zone			
9.	A & N	49	28
10.	Assam	629	100
11.	Bihar	858	264
12.	Jharkhand	529	160
13.	NE I	248	44
14.	NE II	208	78
15.	Orissa	930	263
16.	West Bengal	1,165	292
17.	Kolkata TD	739	18
Sub Total		5,355	1,247
West Zone			
18.	Maharashtra	2,586	1,222

1	2	3	4
19.	Chhattisgarh	422	503
20.	Madhya Pradesh	1,245	507
21.	Gujarat	2,010	486
Sub Total		6,263	2,698
South Zone			
22.	Andhra Pradesh	1,841	259
23.	Karnataka	1,723	61
24.	Kerala	1,887	232
25.	Tamil Nadu	2,078	30
26.	Chennai TD	765	97
Sub Total		8,294	679
Grand Total		29,692	5,881

Theft of Strategic Information from Defence Establishment

2352. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:
SHRI JASUBHAI DHANABHAI BARAD:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some computer devices, containing strategic information, have been stolen from the premises of the Kanpur-based Defence Material Store Research Development and Establishment;

(b) if so, whether the cases of theft in Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) and other related organisations have increased during the recent past;

(c) if so, the number of such incidents reported in the country during the last one year;

(d) the action taken in each case; and

(e) the measures taken by the Union Government to check such incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) As per the preliminary information received from Defence Materials and Stores Research & Development Establishment (DMSRDE), Kanpur, the three computers stolen from its premises did not contain any strategic information.

(b) and (c) This is the only one theft case in DMSRDE and in all the related organisations in DRDO during the last one year.

(d) In DMSRDE incidence, the laboratory has constituted a committee to investigate into circumstances of theft and bring out the items and data lost. The laboratory has also filed First Information Report (FIR) to local police station for investigations as per preliminary report submitted by committee. Meanwhile, a Departmental/Vigilance inquiry has also been initiated.

(e) Remedial measures are put in place to ensure that such incidences do not take place in future.

[Translation]

Labour Housing Scheme

2353. SHRI KIREN RIJJU: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of houses constructed under Labour Housing Scheme during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(b) the funds allocated, released and utilised under the said scheme during the said period, State-wise;

(c) the total demand and availability of houses under the said scheme;

(d) the number of labourers provided houses under the said scheme; and

(e) the time by which the Government propose to allot the rest of the houses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) A statement of State-wise, total number of houses sanctioned and subsidy released to Beedi and Mines Workers for construction of houses under housing schemes is annexed.

(c) to (e) Central subsidy of Rs. 40,000/- per worker for construction of house is sanctioned under Revised Integrated Housing Scheme (RIHS)-2005 on the basis of completed proposals in all respect received from the workers or Co-operative Societies of workers or from the State Government concerned. A total number of 10330

applications for the construction of houses have been received and sanctioned during the current financial year i.e. 2007-08 (up to 31st October, 2007) involving a subsidy amount of Rs. 2066 Lakh. Sufficient funds under the scheme are available to meet the requirement during the current year.

Statement

State-wise number of houses sanctioned and subsidy released from 2004-05 to 2006-07 for construction of houses by Beedi & Mine workers

Sl.No.	Name of the State	No. of houses sanctioned 2004-05	subsidy released 2004-05*	No. of houses sanctioned 2005-06	subsidy released 2005-06*	No. of houses sanctioned 2006-07	subsidy released 2006-07*
1.	Andhra Pradesh	6993	97.85	10912	3864.36	11485	3347.72
2.	Tamil Nadu	674		—		2898	
3.	Bihar		9.98	1016	409.71	678	189.60
4.	Jharkhand	—		—		151	
5.	Madhya Pradesh	1359	21.96	60	29.98	225	134.99
6.	Chhattisgarh	18		—		—	
7.	Maharashtra	867	317.95	187	423.80	129	237.25
8.	Orissa	3672	353.91	43	438.01	1634	495.68
9.	Rajasthan	254	1.00	—	5.24	03	62.34
10.	Karnataka	513	306.46	—	149.66	1160	463.65
11.	Kerala	707		—		—	
12.	Uttar Pradesh	—	24.50	21	24.29	128	44.52
13.	West Bengal	903	99.87	1048	127.68	168	101.37
14.	Assam	—		—		91	
Grand Total		15960	1233.48	13287	5472.73	18750	5077.12

Note:- *Funds released during these three years also include subsidy released under erstwhile Integrated Housing Scheme in three installments on construction reaching at Plinth Level, Roof Level and Completion of construction in all respects and the stipulated period of 18 months is provided under the scheme.

*[English]***Maize for Poultry**

2354. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some States had requested the Union Government to release additional quota of Maize for poultry at a concessional rate;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has directed the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to release the said quota to the States; and

(d) if so, the quantum of Maize provided to the States particularly Karnataka from the additional quota?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. Requests for release of additional quota of maize for poultry at concessional rate were received from States like Chhattisgarh (8833 Metric Tonnes), Gujarat (5970 Metric Tonnes), Karnataka (1.0 lakh Metric Tonnes) and Madhya Pradesh (2100 Metric Tonnes). However, due to non availability of any surplus quantity of maize with the Food Corporation of India, the requests could not be acceded to.

(d) Question does not arise.

*[Translation]***Supply of Equipments**

2355. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has issued supply orders to various companies for the equipments and other material meant for increasing the telephone lines capacity of G.S.M., W.L.L. and basic telephones;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which the said material is likely to be supplied;

(d) the details of the capacity of various circles likely to be enhanced after receiving this supply, circle-wise;

(e) whether any other equipments have also been identified to improve the network; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) BSNL has issued purchase orders against 2G/3G Combo tender for a capacity of about 8 million lines of GSM mobile equipment to M/s Ericason for the circles as detailed in Statement-I. For other circles, the procurement process is in progress. The material supply shall commence from April, 2008 towards upto February, 2009.

As regards WLL equipment, 30.52 lakh lines Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) WLL equipment was ordered on M/s Indian Telephone Industries (21 lakh lines) and on M/s United Telecoms Limited (9.525 lakh lines) during November/December, 2006. Most of the equipment is already supplied and rest is likely to be received by December, 2007. Presently, the equipment is in various stages of installation and commissioning.

(d) Circle-wise capacities likely to be enhanced after receiving this supply is given in the Statement-I for GSM and at Statement-II for WLL.

(e) No, Sir.

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

Statement I**GSM Equipment: Circle-wise Capacities to be Enhanced**

Sl.No.	Name of circle	Capacity allotment under GSM expansion Project
1	2	3
North Zone		
1.	U.P. (E)	975,000
2.	U.P. (W)	480,000
3.	Uttaranchal	275,000
Sub Total		1,730,000

1	2	3
East Zone		
4.	A & N	95,000
5.	Assam	582,829
6.	Bihar	875,000
7.	Jharkhand	799,000
8.	NE-I	167,500
9.	NE-II	158,500
10.	Orissa	700,164
11.	West Bengal	849,862
12.	Kolkata TD	375,000
Sub Total		4,602,855
13.	Tamil Nadu	1,298,300
14.	Chennai TD	550,000
Sub Total		1,848,300
Grand Total		8,181,155

Statement II

WLL Equipment: Circle-wise capacities to be enhanced

Circle	Capacity
1	2
ANC	50000
AP	200000
BH	100000
CGH	100000
GJ	200000
HP	100000
J&K	50000
JKD	100000
KT	200000

1	2
MP	250000
OR	50000
PB	100000
RJ	200000
UAL	50000
KL	250000
KOL	100000
AS	50000
HR	50000
MH	300000
NE-II	50000
NE-I	2500
TN	100000
UPE	100000
UPW	100000
WB	150000
CH	50000
Total	3052500

*(English)***WLL Telephone Connections**

2356. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the problems being faced by the subscribers having Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) telephone connections in rural areas as the BSNL is not supplying the battery of WLL phones;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, BSNL has provided WLL telephone collections to the subscribers with Fixed Wireless Terminal (FWT) having either in-built batteries or 12V Switch Mode Power Supply (SMPS).

However, due to poor availability of A/C mains supply in the rural areas, the in-built battery of the subscriber terminals (FWT) does not get charged properly causing interruption of services of the customers.

(c) Following are the salient corrective steps taken in this regard:

- (i) SMPSs are being used with FWTs in rural areas to enhance the battery back up of FWTs wherever there is an A/C mains problem.
- (ii) Do's and Don'ts have been issued to subscribers to increase their awareness on proper use of FWTs so as to minimize FWT related faults.
- (iii) In-built batteries are being procured by BSNL to replace the faulty ones.

Pin Code for Speedy Postal Delivery

2357. SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Posts has started a unique 6-digit Pin Code for major bulk recipients of mail both individuals and establishments for its speedy delivery;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to extend the scheme all over the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In order to expedite delivery of mail addressed to the bulk recipients, a unique 6-digit Customer PIN Code can be allotted to bulk addressees. Mail bearing the customer PIN code is segregated at the level of Mail Business Centres/Mail Offices and directly delivered to

the customer. For this purpose, bulk addressees are identified by postal circles into two categories:

Category I Individual Bulk Addressees

Category II A group of bulk addressees, who reside in the same building, apartment block or colony; or have offices in the same premises.

Under the new scheme, mail for bulk recipients is processed separately which reduces the pressure on delivery post offices and expedites delivery of individual mail also.

(c) and (d) The scheme has been extended to the entire country.

Smuggling Activities in Gulf of Mannar Area

2358. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is increasing incidents of smuggling activities in the Gulf of Mannar area;

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

(c) whether the Government has any proposal to set up Naval Observation Post (NOP) in the area;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the NOP would be set up?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) As per reports received from Indian Coast Guard and Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue (Anti Smuggling) authorities, there is no increase in smuggling activities in Gulf of Mannar area.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (e) Government have established a 'Forward Observation Post' (FOP) of Indian Navy under 'Op Tasha' at Land's End with adequate naval personnel. In addition, Coast Guard along with Indian Navy carries out surveillance in order to prevent smuggling in the area.

Use of Fly Ash in Cement

2359. SHRI PRATIK P. PATIL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether some cement factories in Maharashtra are mixing fly ash received free from Thermal Power Station in the cement;

(b) if so, whether this practice is allowed under the present norms;

(c) if so, whether any assessment has been made regarding its impact on health and quality of construction; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) The use of fly ash in the manufacturing of cement is allowed under the provisions of the relevant Indian Standards as it enhances the quality and performance of cement/concrete. Fly ash is mostly used in the manufacturing of Portland Pozzolana Cement—Fly ash based as per Indian Standard IS 1489 (Part 1): 1991. There are eight manufacturers of above mentioned cement in Maharashtra having valid licence from Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

(c) and (d) Evaluation of Fly Ash from health hazard point of view is done by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board and Department of Atomic Energy. It has been confirmed that Fly Ash is not hazardous for the health. Atomic Energy Regulatory Board has no objection in the allowing these materials being used for construction purposes. The quality of construction, be it masonry work or concrete constructions, depends upon factors such as design, raw materials, constructional practices and supervision. Cement, being one of the raw materials, apart from fine aggregate, coarse aggregate, steel reinforcement etc., the quality of cement forms one of the several parameters for assuring quality of construction.

Export of Woolen Textile

2360. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Knitwear industry of India is making the recovery from the slump;

(b) if so, the details of sale orders received by woolen manufacturers during 2007-08 so far;

(c) the details of woolen textile exports of the country during 2007-08 as compared to corresponding period of previous year, Country-wise; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for the promotion of woolen export?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) It appears that Knitwear industry is facing problems of rupee appreciation against US Dollar like other export oriented business activities. The Government does not maintain data on the orders received by the woolen manufactures.

(c) The details of woolen exports of the country during April-June, 2006 and April-June, 2007 are:

(Value in Rupees Crores)

Products	April-June 2006	April-June 2007
Woolen, Yarns, Fabrics & Made-ups	97.50	86.55
RMG Wool	372.54	330.32
Total	470.04	416.87
% Decrease		11.31%

The details of country-wise export of woolen products are shown in the enclosed Statement-I.

(d) The steps taken by the Government for promotion of woolen exports are shown in the enclosed Statement-II.

Statement I

Details of country-wise export of woolen products

Commodity: RMG WOOL

(Values in US \$ Million)

Sl.No.	Country	June 2006	June 2007	% Growth	Apr-June 2006	Apr-June 2007	% Growth
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Aghanistan TIS	0.07	0.51	632.32	0.41	0.55	32.16
2.	Algeria					0.00	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.	Ameri Samoa					0.00	
4.	Angola					0.00	
5.	Argentina		0.03		0.03	0.11	283.24
6.	Australia	0.15	0.13	-15.73	0.33	0.32	-2.21
7.	Austria	0.06	0.01	-74.42	0.10	0.08	-24.21
8.	Aruba		0.00			0.00	
9.	Azerbaijan		0.00		0.00	0.00	-81.13
10.	Baharain IS	0.01	0.09	604.20	0.05	0.11	128.25
11.	Bangladesh PR	0.07	0.00	-98.13	0.07	0.00	-98.28
12.	Barbados		0.00			0.00	
13.	Belize					0.00	
14.	Belgium	0.15	0.46	203.83	0.62	0.76	22.46
15.	Bermuda					0.01	
16.	Bosia-Hrzgovin		0.00			0.00	
17.	Brazil		0.05		0.01	0.05	274.97
18.	Brunei		0.04			0.04	
19.	Bulgaria	0.02	0.02	-4.07	0.02	0.02	-16.47
20.	Cambodia					0.00	
21.	Cameroon		0.00			0.00	
22.	Canada	0.56	1.03	83.91	1.88	1.62	-14.17
23.	Cayman IS		0.00			0.00	
24.	Chile	0.00	0.07	3,744.75	0.01	0.10	1,190.77
25.	Taiwan	0.01	0.00	-78.67	0.02	0.01	-59.16
26.	China PRP		0.01		0.02	0.02	10.22
27.	Colombia	0.00			0.00		
28.	Congo P Rep.				0.01	0.00	-88.23
29.	Croatia	0.00	0.01	1,445.92	0.00	0.01	1,872.51
30.	Cyprus		0.00			0.01	
31.	Czech Republic	0.01	0.00	-79.11	0.04	0.01	-86.33

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
32.	Denmark	0.61	1.10	80.70	1.25	1.62	29.85
33.	Djibouti				0.18		
34.	Dominic Rep		0.00			0.01	
35.	Egypt A RP	0.06	0.25	344.28	0.25	0.52	105.65
36.	El Salvador	0.00			0.00		
37.	Estonia		0.01		0.01	0.01	3.33
38.	Ethiopia				0.00		
39.	Finland	0.39	0.23	-42.54	0.62	0.39	-36.96
40.	Fiji IS	0.02	0.03	91.93	0.24	0.08	-67.08
41.	France	3.34	4.35	30.25	7.08	7.94	12.19
42.	FR Guiana				0.00		
43.	Gambia					0.00	
44.	Georgia	0.00	0.00	-79.27	0.08	0.00	-89.71
45.	Germany	2.00	3.48	74.04	4.81	5.55	15.45
46.	Ghana	0.00	0.00	2,129.08	0.02	0.00	-77.92
47.	Gibraltar				0.00		
48.	Greece	0.07	0.18	173.05	0.12	0.26	119.94
49.	Guatemala				0.00		
50.	Hong Kong	0.07	0.07	9.03	0.32	0.71	123.23
51.	Hungary	0.04	0.02	-29.36	0.06	0.06	-5.11
52.	Iceland				0.01		
53.	Indonesia	0.01	0.00	-78.21	0.03	0.01	-78.16
54.	Ireland	0.06	0.14	159.06	0.10	0.18	74.80
55.	Israel	0.04	0.02	-43.45	0.25	0.08	-66.33
56.	Italy	2.35	2.85	20.88	4.44	4.79	7.85
57.	Jamaica	0.01	0.03	181.65	0.03	0.07	132.53
58.	Japan	0.11	0.39	249.77	0.75	0.83	9.62
59.	Jordan	0.03	0.00	-98.84	0.06	0.01	-73.77
60.	Kazakhstan	0.01	0.19	2,391.20	0.04	0.19	434.19

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
61.	Kenya	0.02	0.01	-70.68	0.05	0.04	-28.65
62.	Korea DP RP	0.01	0.01	0.58	0.01	0.01	-22.02
63.	Kyrgyzstan	1.02	0.02	-97.67	1.48	0.04	-97.52
64.	Korea RP	0.00	0.04	15,261.88	0.02	0.09	280.88
65.	Kuwait	0.01	0.11	1,080.61	0.12	0.27	127.51
66.	Latvia					0.00	
67.	Lebanon		0.01		0.04	0.01	-67.87
68.	Libya				0.03		
69.	Lithuania		0.00			0.00	
70.	Luxembourg				0.01		
71.	Macao				0.01		
72.	Madagascar		0.00			0.00	
73.	Malawi	0.00	0.00	335.42	0.00	0.00	334.52
74.	Malaysia	0.07	0.32	385.36	0.35	0.50	43.38
75.	Maldives		0.00		0.00	0.01	858.58
76.	Mali		0.00			0.00	
77.	Malta		0.00			0.00	
78.	Mauritius	0.02	0.02	-16.57	0.06	0.07	16.90
79.	Myanmar		0.00			0.00	
80.	Mexico	0.14	0.22	58.83	0.38	0.68	77.19
81.	Monaco	0.01	0.00	-39.28	0.01	0.00	-39.41
82.	Morocco	0.00	0.00	-70.51	0.00	0.03	728.62
83.	Namibia		0.01		0.01	0.01	9.00
84.	Nepal	0.00	0.00	-1.62	0.00	0.02	1,025.95
85.	Netherland	1.12	1.48	32.13	2.00	2.39	19.15
86.	Netherlandantial	0.03	0.11	346.48	0.09	0.24	155.11
87.	New Zealand	0.02	0.05	137.20	0.10	0.07	-30.99
88.	Niger		0.00		0.06	0.00	-97.74
89.	Nigeria	0.03	0.04	43.81	0.03	0.27	712.64

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
90.	Norway	0.11	0.08	-26.18	0.19	0.23	21.79
91.	Oman	0.07	0.01	-87.46	0.15	0.08	-41.87
92.	Panama Republic	0.03	0.05	82.01	0.08	0.05	-42.17
93.	Papua N GNA				0.00		
94.	Peru		0.00			0.00	
95.	Philippines	0.00	0.00	426.90	0.00	0.00	99.70
96.	Poland	0.10	0.04	-58.02	0.25	0.12	-51.93
97.	Portugal	0.04	0.10	161.03	0.07	0.14	121.49
98.	Qatar	0.00	0.01	571.15	0.03	0.04	25.47
99.	Reunion		0.00		0.01	0.00	-86.69
100.	Romania	0.00	0.04	1,480.13	0.01	0.05	259.75
101.	Russia	0.66	1.15	73.55	1.21	1.42	16.92
102.	Saudi Arab	0.58	0.85	45.58	1.48	3.43	131.20
103.	Senegal		0.00			0.00	
104.	Union of Serbia & Montenegro	0.02	0.01	-71.02	0.02	0.01	-49.36
105.	Slovak Rep.	0.00	0.01	166.05	0.01	0.01	16.33
106.	Singapore	0.04	0.05	21.63	0.07	0.10	-40.40
107.	Slovenia		0.00			0.00	
108.	South Africa	0.12	0.18	49.82	0.32	0.24	-24.72
109.	Spain	1.37	1.64	20.19	3.35	3.41	1.92
110.	Sri Lanka DSR	0.13	0.16	21.57	0.43	0.37	-15.16
111.	ST Vincent	0.00			0.00		
112.	Sudan				0.00	0.02	12,214.35
113.	Suriname	0.00	0.04	1,714.94	0.01	0.04	661.70
114.	Swaziland	0.00			0.00		
115.	Sweden	0.20	0.43	113.83	0.32	0.62	19.85
116.	Switzerland	0.05	0.07	35.60	0.26	0.15	-40.38
117.	Tajikistan	0.01			0.01		

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
118.	Tanzania Rep.	0.02	0.09	304.09	0.04	0.09	119.63
119.	Thailand	0.00	0.03	1,448.02	0.05	0.05	-0.33
120.	Togo	0.01	0.20	1,570.01	0.32	0.20	-37.81
121.	Trinidad		0.00		0.26	0.01	-95.51
122.	Turkey	0.08	0.13	75.10	0.42	0.24	-42.54
123.	Turkmenistan	0.02	0.04	122.10	0.02	0.17	609.68
124.	Uganda	0.00	0.00	-6.18	0.02	0.00	-77.49
125.	U Arab Emts.	0.09	1.70	56.94	4.20	4.97	18.25
126.	U.K.	2.69	4.36	62.27	7.14	7.89	4.65
127.	Ukraine	0.66	0.19	-71.97	1.44	0.33	-71.35
128.	U.S.A.	0.01	9.96	10.64	30.00	23.54	-21.55
129.	Uruguay	0.01	0.01	32.37	0.01	0.01	-7.19
130.	Venezuela	0.00			0.00		
131.	Vietnam Soc. Rep.				0.01		
132.	Virgin IS US				0.00		
133.	Yemen Republic	0.03			0.09	0.02	-79.93
134.	Congo D. Rep.		0.00			0.00	
135.	Zambia	0.00			0.00	0.12	5,606.66
136.	Zimbabwe	0.02			0.02	0.00	-86.99
137.	Unspecified		0.00			0.00	
Total		30.01	39.95	33.13	81.93	80.11	-2.22
Exchange Rate: (1 US\$ = Rs.)		45.0-561	40.7736		434708	41.2344	
<i>Commodity: Wollen Yarn, Fabrics, Madeups etc</i>							
1.	Afghanistan TIS		0.06			0.06	
2.	Australia	0.09	0.14	53.78	0.22	0.43	99.53
3.	Austria	0.02			0.10	0.02	-79.88
4.	Baharain IS		0.02		0.01	0.02	96.31
5.	Bangladesh PR	0.02			0.13	0.05	-64.54

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6.	Belgium	0.29	0.28	-5.27	1.10	1.00	-9.45
7.	Botswana		0.00		0.03	0.00	-92.50
8.	Bulgaria				0.00		
9.	Canada	0.08	0.09	9.30	0.18	0.26	46.66
10.	Chad		0.10		0.05	0.10	106.64
11.	Chile	0.13	0.05	-60.58	0.13	0.05	-60.66
12.	Taiwan	0.02	0.04	59.31	0.04	0.04	1.19
13.	China P RP	0.25	0.18	-29.19	0.63	0.52	-17.94
14.	Colombia		0.00		0.07	0.00	-99.77
15.	Congo P Rep	0.01			0.01		
16.	Costa Rica		0.02			0.03	
17.	Croatia					0.01	
18.	Cyprus	0.18			0.28		
19.	Czech Republic		0.04			0.04	
20.	Denmark	0.06	0.06	-3.06	0.06	0.06	4.74
21.	Dominic Rep.	0.10	0.01	-90.01	0.14	0.64	358.03
22.	Ecuador	0.03			0.03		
23.	Egypt A RP	0.03	0.03	11.57	0.06	0.82	1,338.76
24.	Ethiopia					0.01	
25.	Finland		0.06		0.00	0.05	4,060.43
26.	Fiji IS		0.00			0.00	
27.	France	0.17	0.02	-90.13	0.25	0.03	-86.98
28.	Germany	0.61	0.25	-58.70	1.61	0.59	-63.09
29.	Greece	0.01	0.02	105.88	0.15	0.04	-76.10
30.	Hong Kong	0.05	0.03	-28.26	0.10	0.07	-32.10
31.	Hungary				0.01	0.01	-14.14
32.	Indonesia	0.33	0.00	-99.08	0.43	0.22	-48.89
33.	Iran	0.13			0.20	0.00	-99.49
34.	Ireland				0.01		

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
35.	Israel		0.00		0.00	0.00	67.76
36.	Italy	1.29	1.49	15.71	4.07	3.85	-5.40
37.	Japan	0.46	0.43	-6.09	0.70	0.96	36.45
38.	Jordan				0.01	0.10	1,763.79
39.	Kazakhstan				0.00		
40.	Kenya	0.02	0.19	809.62	0.36	0.42	17.45
41.	Korea DP RP				0.00		
42.	Korea RP	0.00	0.00	645.55	0.04	0.01	-79.24
43.	Kuwait	0.00	0.02	405.01	0.00	0.04	891.07
44.	Latvia				0.00	0.00	5,920.99
45.	Lebanon	0.02			0.21	0.03	-83.89
46.	Liberia				0.09		
47.	Lithuania		0.04		0.00	0.04	1,680.00
48.	Malawi		0.01		0.04	0.01	-71.17
49.	Malaysia	0.15	0.07	-51.44	0.33	0.19	-43.22
50.	Maldives		0.00			0.01	
51.	Malta				0.01		
52.	Mauritius	0.00	0.01	602.14	0.01	0.01	-37.76
53.	Myanmar				0.02		
54.	Mexico				0.00		
55.	Mozambique	0.01			0.01	0.02	54.18
56.	Nepal	0.01	0.02	278.81	0.04	0.05	40.50
57.	Netherland	0.01	0.00	-74.54	0.03	0.07	120.33
58.	New Zealand	0.05	0.18	256.40	0.18	0.56	213.43
59.	Nigeria				0.01		
60.	Norway	0.02	0.00	-81.49	0.02	0.01	-72.49
61.	Oman	0.01	0.00	-70.98	0.02	0.04	99.96
62.	Pakistan IR				0.00		
63.	Panama Republic	0.06			0.12		

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
64.	Philippines		0.02			0.03	
65.	Poland	0.04	0.03	-31.07	0.11	0.07	-36.12
66.	Portugal	0.02	0.00	-84.05	0.03	0.09	175.56
67.	Qatar	0.02			0.06	0.00	-97.80
68.	Romania					0.01	
69.	Russia				0.00		
70.	Saudi Arab	0.09	0.03	-62.28	0.45	0.14	-67.46
71.	Slovak Rep.					0.01	
72.	Singapore	0.06	0.00	-94.18	0.19	0.00	-98.18
73.	Slovenia		0.00		0.01	0.00	-86.76
74.	South Africa	0.02	0.24	1,068.09	0.13	0.35	167.02
75.	Spain	0.14	0.07	-47.57	0.87	0.49	-43.75
76.	Sri Lanka DSR	0.34	0.10	-71.53	0.71	0.18	-74.46
77.	Sudan	0.56			0.63	0.84	33.73
78.	Sweden	0.18	0.08	-59.01	0.23	0.14	-40.10
79.	Switzerland	0.04			0.05	0.00	-98.16
80.	Syria	0.12			0.12	0.06	-49.39
81.	Tanzania Rep.	0.00			0.00	0.00	1,192.82
82.	Thailand	0.00	0.05	1,168.82	0.05	0.05	1.06
83.	Tunisia	0.25	0.07	-71.30	0.29	0.23	-22.28
84.	Turkey	0.06	0.12	111.02	0.08	0.27	221.50
85.	U Arab Emsts.	0.31	0.20	-34.20	0.52	0.36	-31.12
86.	U.K.	0.83	1.68	102.50	2.27	4.21	85.27
87.	Ukraine	0.01			0.01		
88.	U.S.A.	0.76	0.45	-41.55	2.02	0.95	-52.71
89.	Venezuela				0.00		
90.	Vietnam Soc. Rep.	0.04	0.68	1,463.94	0.14	0.81	477.19
91.	Yemen Republic		0.00		0.09	0.00	-95.52
92.	Zambia					0.01	
93.	Unspecified				0.03		
Total		8.67	7.83	-9.75	21.44	20.99	-2.11
Exchange Rate: (1US\$ = Rs.)		45.0561	40.7736		45.4708	41.2344	

Statement II

Details of various steps taken by the Government for the growth of textiles industry:—

- (i) 100% Foreign Direct Investment is allowed in the textiles sector under the automatic route.
- (ii) The Government has de-reserved readymade garments, hosiery and knitwear from the Small Scale Industry (SSI) sector.
- (iii) The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) has been made operational from 1.4.1999 to facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of the sector. The TUFS has been extended beyond 31.3.2007 and has been modified in consultation with the industry and approval of the Competent Authority w.e.f. 1st November 2007. The Scheme is now in operation.
- (iv) A new "Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks" has been formulated by merging this "Scheme for Apparel Parks for Exports" and the "Textiles Centre Infrastructure Development Scheme", in order to expand the production base of the textiles and garment sector.
- (v) The fiscal duty structure has been generally rationalised to achieve growth and maximum value addition within the country. Except for mandatory excise duty on man-made filament yarns and man-made staple fibres, the whole value addition chain has been given the option of excise exemption.
- (vi) The import of specified textiles and garment machinery has been allowed at a concessional rate of customs duty to encourage investment and to make our textiles product competitive in the global market. The cost of machinery has also been reduced through fiscal policy measures.
- (vii) The Duty-free import of 21 items of trimmings and embellishment items is allowed to garment exporters. This can be upto 3% of their actual export performance during the previous year.
- (viii) For the speedy modernisation of the textiles processing sector, Government has introduced, w.e.f. 20.4.2005, a credit linked capital subsidy

scheme @ 10% under TUFS, in addition to the existing 5% interest reimbursement.

- (ix) In 2004-05 Budget, the entire textile sector, except for man-made fibre and filament yarn was provided optional exemption from excise duty. In 2005-06 Budget, Central Value-added Tax (CENVAT) on Polyester Filament Yarn has been reduced from 24% to 16%. These modification in fiscal levies aim at attracting more investments for modernization of textiles sector.
- (x) To facilitate import of state of the art machinery to make our products internationally competitive in post quota regime, in 2005-06 Budget, the customs duty on textile machinery has been brought down to 10% except 23 machinery appearing in List 49 which attracts Basic Customs Duty (BCD) of 15%. The concessional duty of 5% continues to be at 5% on most of the machinery items.
- (xi) Government has launched the Debt Restructuring Scheme w.e.f. Sept., 2003 with the principal objective to permit banks to lend to the textile sector at 8-9% rate of interest.

Committee on Crop Insurance

2361. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether C.P. Swarnkar Committee set up for Optional Crop Insurance Scheme has submitted its report to the Government;

(b) if so, the recommendations of said Committee; and

(c) the action being taken by the Government on these recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) A Working Group under the Chairmanship of Shri C.P. Swarnkar, constituted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to examine the procedures and processes for Agricultural Loans has already submitted its report to the RBI. The major recommendations of the Group are regarding further simplification of the procedures and

processes for availing agricultural loans. A reference has also been made for making the crop insurance scheme optional to the farmers. The RBI has already implemented some of the recommendations. These are: dispensing the requirement of 'no due' certificate for small loans up to Rs. 50,000/- acceptance of certificate issued by local administration/panchayati raj institutions regarding cultivation of crops in case of landless cultivators and setting up of credit counseling centres for farmers.

Cess on Exploitation of Ground Water

2362. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the bottled water industry which uses the ground water as its sole raw material pays only a negligible amount as cess on water;

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

(c) whether there is any proposal to hike cess on such units utilising ground water;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) As per information received from the Ministry of Environment & Forests, water cess is levied and collected by the State Pollution Control Boards for prevention and control of water pollution. Differential rates of cess are collected depending upon the use of water, the rate being higher where pollution load is expected to be more, which results in higher cost of pollution abatement and varies from 2 paise/kilolitre for domestic purposes to 30 paise/kilolitre for industrial purposes.

(c) to (e) The Ministry of Water Resources has no proposal for imposition of higher rates of cess on bottled water industry using the ground water as raw material.

[Translation]

Sugar Export to Bangladesh

2363. SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:
DR. DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the export of sugar to Bangladesh has been declining during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor, indicating the quantity exported and foreign exchange earned during the said period, year-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to promote export of sugar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) No Sir, As per information received from the Directorate General of Commercial intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S), Kolkata, the total quantum of sugar exported to Bangladesh and its value during the last three years were as under:

Financial year	Quantity Exported (in M.Ts)	Value (in lakh Rs.)
2004-05	8204	867.93
2005-06	54695	9377.68
2006-07	272216	42025.89

(c) The Central Government vide Notification No. S.O. 1310(E) dated 31st July, 2007 have dispensed with the requirement of obtaining export release orders from the Government for export of sugar, except for exports to the member countries of European Union and United States, for a period up to 30th September, 2008. Further, the Central Government has announced export assistance to sugar mills to defray expenditure on internal transport, marketing and handling charges and ocean freight Charges on exports of sugar made on or after 19th April, 2007.

Telephone Exchanges

2364. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE PATIL:
SHRI KASHIRAM RANA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether many parallel telephone exchanges are operating in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons for their unchecked operation;

(c) whether the officials of the Department of Telecommunications are involved therein; and

(d) the quantum of revenue loss caused by these parallel telephone exchanges in the country every year during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. Some illegal telephone exchanges have been found to be operating in the country.

(b) 300 such exchanges have been found to be operating during the period from 2004-05 to 2006-07.

Break up of the cases is as below:

2004-2005	—	80
2005-2006	—	170
2006-2007	—	50

All these exchanges have been unearthed, raided and closed. Vigilance Telecom Monitoring Units of Department of Telecommunications, with the help of law enforcement agencies constantly endeavor to curb such grey market telecom setups in the country.

(c) No official of the Department of Telecommunications was found involved.

(d) Quantum of national revenue loss due to 'parallel telephone exchanges' is assessed to be

2004-2005	—	Rs. 73,72,03,448
2005-2006	—	Rs. 116,29,68,369
2006-2007	—	Rs. 10,35,66,321

[English]

Communication Network in Rural Areas

2365. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:
SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLBHANENI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the steps taken by the Government to take communication network to the remotest villages of the country during the last three years;

(b) the percentage of rural areas covered so far by the communication network in the country;

(c) whether any efforts made by the Government during the last two years to improve the profits of public sector communication networks in comparison to the private mobile operators;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The steps taken by the Government to take communication network to the remotest villages of the country during the last three years are as follows:-

- (i) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) Support for provision of Village Public Telephone (VPTs) in 66,822 unconnected villages in the country.
- (ii) Support from USOF for the innovative scheme of Sharing of infrastructure by USO Fund to set up 7,871 number of infrastructure sites (in 500 districts) spread over 27 States for provision of mobile services in the specified rural and remote areas, where there is no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage.
- (iii) USOF support for provision of Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) in 1685 commercially unviable Short Distance charging Areas (SDCAs).
- (iv) Replacement of Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) VPTs.

(b) Under Bharat Nirman Programme, USOF has entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in November, 2004 for provision of Village Public Telephone (VPTs) in remaining 66,822 unconnected villages in the country. This excludes villages having population less than 100, lying in thick forests/naxalite affected areas. As on 30th September, 2007, out of 66,822 unconnected eligible villages, 50,520 villages have been provided with VPT facility and the remaining 16,302

villages will be provided with VPTs by June, 2008 resulting in 100% coverage of eligible villages with VPTs.

(c) to (e) Government is providing support to the endeavours of BSNL/MTNL for steering their growth agenda.

[Translation]

Competitiveness of Textile Industry

2366. SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA:
SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Textile Industry is lagging far behind in the Competitive Global Market;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor alongwith the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the necessary steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) to (c) As per data generated by the DGCIS, India's textiles and clothing exports during 2006-07 were of the value of US\$ 18729.93 million, as against exports valued at US\$ 17520.07 million during the year 2005-06, registering a growth of 6.91% DGCIS's latest provisional foreign trade's statistics indicate that India's exports in the first quarter of this financial year registered a decline of 14% in US\$ terms compared to the corresponding period of the preceding financial year. The textiles industry is attributing this decline mainly to the appreciation of Indian Rupee vis-a-vis US Dollar. Government has announced following steps to strengthen and support the textiles industry:—

- (i) DEPB rates were enhanced by 3% for 9 sectors including textiles (also handlooms), RMGs and handicrafts. For other items, DEPB rates were enhanced by 2%.
- (ii) ECGC premium reduced by 10%.
- (iii) Amount of Rs. 600 crore released for clearing arrears of CST reimbursement and terminal excise duty.
- (iv) Duty drawback rates enhanced by 10-40% of the existing rates.

(v) Subvention on credit rate allowed upto 2%.

(vi) Refund of service tax paid by exporters on services linked to export of goods.

(vii) The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) has been made operational from 1.4.1999 to facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of the sector. The TUFS has been extended beyond 31.3.2007 and has been modified in consultation with the industry and approval of the Competent Authority w.e.f. 1st November 2007. The Scheme is now in operation. For the speedy modernisation of the textiles processing sector, Government has introduced, w.e.f. 20.4.2005, a credit linked capital subsidy scheme @ 10% under TUFS, in addition to the existing 5% interest reimbursement.

(viii) The fiscal duty structure has been generally rationalised to achieve growth and maximum value addition within the country. Except for mandatory excise duty on man-made filament yarns and man-made staple fibres, the whole value addition chain has been given the option of excise exemption.

(ix) The import of specified textiles and garment machinery has been allowed at a concessional rate of customs duty to encourage investment and to make our textile product competitive in the global market. The cost of machinery has also been reduced through fiscal policy measures.

(x) The Duty-free import of 21 items of trimmings and embellishment items is allowed to garment exporters. This can be upto 3% of their actual export performance during the previous year.

(xi) In 2004-05 Budget, the entire textile sector, except for man-made fibre and filament yarn was provided optional exemption from excise duty. In 2005-06 Budget, Central Value-added Tax (CENVAT) on Polyester Filament Yarn has been reduced from 24% to 16%. These modifications in fiscal levies aim at attracting more investments for modernization of textile sector.

(xii) To facilitate import of state of the art machinery to make our products internationally competitive in post quota regime, in 2005-06 Budget, the

customs duty on textile machinery has been brought down to 10% except 23 machinery appearing in List 49 which attracts Basic Customs Duty (BCD) of 15%.

[English]

Export of Man-made Textile Fibre

2367. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH:
SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity and value of man-made textile fibre exported during each of the last three years, Country-wise; and

(b) the steps taken by the Government to boost the export of man-made textile fibre?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) The value of man-made textiles fibre exported during 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 was of the order of Rs. 9214.25 crore, Rs. 9029.91 crore and Rs. 10684.16 crore respectively. Man-made textiles fibre was exported to over a hundred countries during these three years. Depending on the type of fibre exported the exports were in various units such as Kgs., Square Metres or numbers.

(b) Various steps have been taken by the Government for the growth of textiles industry, which include:—

- (i) 100% Foreign Direct Investment is allowed in the textiles sector under the automatic route.
- (ii) The Government has de-reserved readymade garments, hosiery and knitwear from the Small Scale Industry (SSI) sector.
- (iii) The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) has been made operational from 1.4.1999 to facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of the sector. The TUFS has been extended beyond 31.3.2007 and has been modified in consultation with the industry and approval of the Competent Authority w.e.f. 1st November 2007. The Scheme is now in operation. For the speedy modernisation of the textiles processing sector, Government has introduced, w.e.f. 20.4.2005, a credit linked

capital subsidy scheme @ 10% under TUFS, in addition to the existing 5% interest reimbursement.

- (iv) A new "Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks" has been formulated by merging the "Scheme for Apparel Parks for Exports" and the "Textiles Centre Infrastructure Development Scheme", in order to expand the production base of the textiles and garment sector.
- (v) The fiscal duty structure has been generally nationalised to achieve growth and maximum value addition within the country. Except for mandatory excise duty on man-made filament yarns and man-made staple fibres, the whole value addition chain has been given the option of excise exemption.
- (vi) The import of specified textiles and garment machinery has been allowed at a concessional rate of customs duty to encourage investment and to make our textiles product competitive in the global market. The cost of machinery has also been reduced through fiscal policy measures.
- (vii) Duty-free import of 21 items of trimmings and embellishment items is allowed to garment exporters. This can be upto 3% of their actual export performance during the previous year.
- (viii) In 2004-05 Budget, the entire textile sector, except for man-made fibre and filament yarn was provided optional exemption from excise duty. In 2005-06 Budget, Central Value-aided Tax (CENVAT) on Polyester Filament Yarn has been reduced from 24% to 16%. These modifications in fiscal levies aim at attracting more investments for modernization of textile sector.
- (ix) To facilitate import of state of the art machinery to make our products internationally competition post quota regime, in 2005-06 Budget, the customs duty on textile machinery has been brought down to 10% except 23 machinery appearing in List 49 which attracts Basic Customs Duty (BCD) of 15%. The concessional duty of 5% continues to be at 5% on most of the machinery items.
- (x) Government has launched the Debt Restructuring Scheme w.e.f. Sept., 2003 with the principal objective to permit banks to lend to the textile sector at 8-9% rate of interest.

*[Translation]***Procurement of Wheat**

2368. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to formulate any scheme for procuring wheat on the lines of private companies during the ensuing wheat procurement season for the Public Distribution System and other schemes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to permit Government agencies to buy wheat directly from market and farmers like private companies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Under the existing Policy of Foodgrains Procurement, the Central Government extends price support to wheat through the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and the State Agencies. The wheat conforming to the prescribed specifications offered for sale at specified centers is bought by the public procurement agencies. The farmers have the option to sell their wheat either to FCI/State Agencies at Minimum Support Price or in the open market, as is advantageous to them.

(c) and (d) FCI and State agencies procure wheat from farmers at Minimum Support Price. The Government has permitted Food Corporation of India (FCI) for direct procurement of wheat from farmers in FCI depots during Rabi Marketing Seasons (RMS) 2006-07 and 2007-08. FCI has been further instructed to give an incentive of Rs. 10 per quintal to the farmers for direct procurement of wheat in FCI depots.

Training to Soldiers on Bomb Disposal

2369. SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of centres providing training to the soldiers in regard to bomb disposal in the country as on date place-wise;

(b) whether the remains of the exploded bombs are pilfered from these centres;

(c) whether the Government has suffered loss to the tune of crores of rupees owing to certain incidents of thefts in these centres during the last three years;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the number of deaths caused in the process; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to check this theft?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) Elementary training on bomb disposal and on countering improvised explosive devices is conducted at the Engineering Training Centres located at Bangalore, Roorkee and Kirkee (Pune). Specialised training on bomb disposal and on neutralizing unexploded bombs is conducted at College of Military Engineering, Pune.

(b) to (e) This training is being conducted on cut-models and dummies only. No unexploded bombs are transported to or stored in these training establishments. Hence, the question of pilferage does not arise. No death has taken place at these centres.

*[English]***I.T. Professionals**

2370. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that Indian IT professionals are among the lowest paid globally;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) As per Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC), High quality of IT services clubbed with the competitive

cost has made India as the most preferred destination for IT services & Business Process Outsourcing (BPO). Therefore, while the Indians IT professional are paid competitively, it is also a fact that the low cost of service provided by the Indian IT professional is one of the advantage of outsourcing to India.

(c) ITES-BPO sector is de-licensed and the operations are governed by a mutual agreement between the parties. The wages of IT professionals are decided based on several factors, which include: business considerations, market forces depending on demand and supply.

[Translation]

New Schemes for Eradication of Unemployment

2371. SHRI MAHAVIR BHAGORA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the measures taken to check increasing unemployment have failed to achieve their targets;

(b) if so, whether the Government has noticed any decline in employment generation during the last three years;

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

(d) whether the Government proposes to formulate job oriented schemes/new schemes to create more employment opportunities in the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) to (c) According to the last two quinquennial surveys conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation, on usual status basis, the employment opportunities have increased by 62.1 million during the period 1999-2000 to 2004-2005.

(d) and (e) Keeping in view incidence of unemployment, both in urban and rural areas, Government has been implementing various employment generation and poverty alleviation programmes/schemes. Some of these are: Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY); Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY); Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP); Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY) and Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY).

Besides, recognizing the serious problem of unemployment, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted on 7.9.2005. NREGA provides for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. It was implemented in 200 identified districts in the country in its first phase with effect from 2.2.2006 and has been extended to 130 more districts in the second phase w.e.f. 1.4.2007. However, the Government has now decided to extend the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) to the rural areas of all the remaining districts in the country including the Union Territories with effect from 1.4.2008. During the current financial year, a total number of 2.11 Crore households have been provided employment up to October, 2007.

Misuse of Oxytocin Injection

2372. SHRI CHANDRA MANI TRIPATHI:
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the use of banned oxytocin injection to increase the production of milk, fruits and vegetables which are causing various types of diseases; and

(b) if so, the details alongwith the steps being taken to check the sale of such milk, fruits and vegetables?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) The drug Oxytocin is not banned for sale in the country as it is considered essential drug in medical practice both in human and veterinary field. The Union Government is aware of the reports about use of Oxytocin injection by some farmers to increase the production of milk, fruits and vegetables in few isolated cases from some parts in the country. However, there is no scientific data which indicates that Oxytocin can increase the production of milk, fruits and vegetables and cause various types of diseases.

*[English]***BSNL Tower**

2373. SHRI P.C. GADDIGOUDAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the BSNL tower situated at various places in the country especially at Kerur in Badami TQ is functioning beyond its capacity;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to solve this problem;

(d) whether the Government is planning to place additional towers in those areas;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(g) the time by which the work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) based cellsite of BSNL at Kerur in Badami Taluka is working within the capacity. At Kerur, working connections are around 266 against radio capacity of 500 lines. However, BSNL had 3, 10, 34, 328 GSM based BSNL subscribers in the country as against radio network capacity of 2, 97, 18, 822 lines as on 31.10.2007.

(c) At Kerur, BSNL is also augmenting its GSM based cellular Mobile Network progressively for enhancing coverage, capacity and Quality of Service.

(d) and (e) BSNL has target to augment its cellular mobile network by 88.5 lakh lines in the country including 5.39 lakh lines in Karnataka State during current financial year.

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

(g) The targets stated in (d) and (e) above are likely to be completed by March, 2008.

Shortage of Skilled Manpower in Textile Sector

2374. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO:
SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL:
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:
SHRIMATI NIVEDITIA MANE:
SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH:
SHRI EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated a new scheme for providing more incentives to the textile industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the textile industry is facing shortage of trained labour/skilled manpower;

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

(e) whether there is any proposal to establish new institutes in order to train workers on public-private partnership model; and

(f) if so, the details thereof alongwith the time by which these institutes are likely to be established?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) and (b) An Action Plan drawn up recently for the growth of textile industry has identified following thrust areas:

- Apparel & Garments;
- Fibre Availability;
- Manpower Development;
- Textile machinery; and
- Technical Textiles.

Necessary action to implement the Action Plan has since been initiated in consultation with the Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, etc. Some new initiatives, viz. Scheme for Market Development and Product Diversification, Manpower Development Scheme-known as the "Neighbourhood Apparel & Textile Training Institutes for Job Assurance (NATIJA)", Creation of Investment Regions, Technology Mission on Technical Textiles, etc., have since been proposed. However, no further details are available.

(c) to (f) A statement is annexed:

Statement

The textiles have been recognized as a thrust area for growth during the Eleventh Five Year Plan due to the sector's potential to boost productivity, employment and investment. Thus, it is projected that an additional 12 million jobs will be created (5 million for skilled employees and 7 million for semi-skilled employees). This, in turn, will create the need for an enlarged training and educational infrastructure. The Scheme of Neighbourhood Apparel & Textile Training Institutes for Job Assurance (NATIJA) has been formulated for establishing a network of employment-linked training facilities in basic garment manufacturing technology. The Scheme is designed to meet the projected demand of 4 million trained workers required in the garment industry over the next 5 years. This Scheme is to be operated at regional and sub-regional level across the country on Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. The existing ITIs/Polytechnics and other such institutes could be considered for locating such centres in the initial phase. Creation of new training centres may be considered subsequently to meet the demand, as and when required. However, no time frame in this regard can be indicated at this stage.

Food Management

2375. SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether problems are being faced in the ensuring food security in the country due to lack of co-ordination among different organisations involved in food management;

(b) if so, the details thereof and steps taken to ensure perfect co-ordination among various organisations;

(c) whether a special task force on food safety has been set up or is proposed to be set up; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE

MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) No Sir. The Government ensures effective coordination amongst different organizations involved in food management and food security.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Question does not arise.

Reduction In Prices of Computers

2376. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to encourage the use of computers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and steps taken thereon; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to cut down the prices of computers in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) To encourage the use of computers in the country, instructions had been issued by Planning Commission to the States as well as Central Ministries for earmarking an amount exceeding 2-3 per cent of Ministry/Department's budget for initiatives relating to furthering the use of information technology, including training, acquisition of hardware etc.

The National Informatics Centre (NIC), Department of Information Technology has also acted as a catalyst in promotion of e-governance applications in the country. These applications require computers for their implementation. The efforts of NIC over the years have lead to the promotion of use of computers in the Central and State Government Departments.

(c) The Government is facilitating the Industry to make available computers at affordable prices in the country. The Government has taken a number of steps for promotion of Electronics/IT hardware manufacturing and cutting down the prices of electronics hardware, including computers. These are listed at enclosed Statement.

Statement*Steps taken by the Government for promotion of Electronics/IT Hardware Manufacturing***1. Foreign Direct Investment**

- Approvals for all foreign direct investment upto 100% in the Electronics/IT Hardware manufacturing sector are under the automatic route.

2. Customs Duty

- The peak rate of customs duty has been reduced from 35% in 2001-02 to 10% in 2007-08. Customs duty on 217 Information Technology Agreement (ITA-1) items has been abolished from 1.3.2005.
- All goods required in the manufacture of ITA-1 items have been exempted from customs duty subject to Actual user condition.
- Customs Duty on specified raw materials/inputs used for manufacture of electronic components and optical fibres/cables is 0%.
- Customs duty on specified capital goods used for manufacture of electronic goods is 0%.

3. Excise Duty

- Excise duty on computers is 12%, whereas the median rate for most items is 16%.
- Microprocessors, Hard Disc Drives, Floppy Disc Drives, CD ROM Drives, DVD Drives/DVD Writers, Flash Memory and Combo-Drives have been exempted from excise duty.

4. Export Promotion Capital Goods scheme (EPCG)

- Export Promotion Capital Goods scheme (EPCG) allows import of capital goods on payment of 5% customs duty.
- The export obligation under EPCG Scheme can also be fulfilled by the supply of Information Technology Agreement (ITA-1) items to the DTA provided the realization is in free foreign exchange.

5. Supplies of Information Technology Agreement (ITA-1) Items and notified zero duty telecom/electronic items in the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA)

- Supplies of Information Technology Agreement (ITA-1) items and notified zero duty telecom/electronic items in the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) by Electronics Hardware Technology Park (EHTP)/Export Oriented Unit (EOU) units are counted for the purpose of fulfillment of positive Net Foreign Exchange Earnings (NFE).

6. Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

- Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are being set up to enable hassle free manufacturing and trading for export purposes.
- Sales from Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) to SEZs are being treated as physical export. This entitles domestic suppliers to Drawback/DEPB benefits, CST exemption and Service Tax exemption.
- 100% Income Tax exemption on export profits available to SEZ units for 5 years, 50% for next 5 years and 50% of ploughed back profits for 5 years thereafter.

7. Second hand capital goods

- Second hand capital goods are freely importable.

8. The Foreign Trade Policy for Electronics & IT products has been liberalized**9. Simplification of Procedures**

- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) has been implemented by customs and is under implementation by central excise. Applications related to Foreign Trade like IEC Code, EPCG, advance Licence, etc. can be filed electronically with the DGFT.

10. Expenditure incurred on in-house R&D

- Weighted deduction of 150% of expenditure incurred on in-house R&D in case of a company engaged in the business of electronic equipment, computers and telecommunication equipment is available under clause (1) of sub-section (2AB) of Section 35 of the Income Tax Act.

Mobile Number Portability

2377. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWASI:

SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN:

SHRI UDAY SINGH:

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY:

SHRI RAKESH SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to introduce number portability for mobile services in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the companies would not take additional charge from the subscribers for the said facility;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the time by which the said scheme likely to be started;

(f) the reaction of the private sector telecom companies in this regard; and

(g) the extent to which the mobile consumers are likely to be benefited in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) On 12.11.2007, Government has in-principle accepted the recommendation dated 8.3.2006 of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Mobile Number Portability (MNP) and has decided to introduce mobile number portability in the four metro cities namely Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata in the initial phase.

(c) and (d) TRAI issues Telecom Tariff Orders (TTOs) from time to time. Therefore, the fee likely to be levied on the customer for availing MNP facility will be decided by TRAI in due course of time.

(e) MNP Facility is likely to be available to the mobile

subscribers of the four metro cities by the fourth quarter of 2008.

(f) Most of the private sector telecom companies have welcomed the Government's decision of introduction of MNP. However, some of the private sector telecom companies is in favour of introduction of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) and Fixed Number Portability (FNP) at the same time in all parts of India.

(g) Mobile Number Portability will enable a mobile subscriber to change his service provider within the same service area based on his choice, while retaining his mobile number. Besides this, MNP will increase the level of competition between service providers for retaining their subscriber resulting in better customer services, network coverage, and service quality.

[Translation]

Jute Advisory Board

2378. SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has recently constituted Jute Advisory Board and Jute Manufactures Development Council;

(b) if so, the details and the compositions of the said Board and Council;

(c) the number of members from non-jute growing States in the said Board and Council;

(d) the reasons for taking members from non-jute growing States; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to protect the interests of jute industry in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details and composition of the Jute Advisory Board is as given below:—

(i)	Jute Commissioner, Government of India, Kolkata	Chairman 1
(ii)	Joint Secretary, In-charge of jute, Ministry of Textiles (or his nominee), New Delhi	Member 1

(iii)	Agriculture Commissioner Deptt of Agriculture & Cooperation, New Delhi	Member 1
(iv)	Director, Directorate of Jute Development, Kolkata	Member 1
(v)	Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Jute Corporation of India Ltd. (JCI)	Member 1
(vi)	Director, Central Research Institute for Jute and Allied Fibres, Ministry of Agriculture	Member 1
2.	Representatives of State Governments of jute growing States	4 Members
3.	Growers' Nominees from jute growing States	4 Members
4.	Representatives from Jute Associations	2 Members
5.	Non-official Members	16 Members
		Total: 32 Member

The details and composition of the Jute Manufacturers Development Council is as given below:—

1. (i)	Secretary, Ministry of Textile, New Delhi	—	Chairman-1
(ii)	AS & FA, Ministry of Textiles, New Delhi	—	Member-1
(iii)	Jute Commissioner, Kolkata	—	Member-1
(iv)	Joint Secretary (Jute), Ministry of Textiles	—	Member-1
(v)	Representative of Ministry of Agriculture, Deptt. of Agriculture and Co-operation	—	Member-1
(vi)	Representative of Ministry of Finance, Deptt. of Revenue	—	Member-1
(vii)	Representative of Ministry of Commerce and Industry	—	Member-1
(viii)	Representative of Ministry of Consumer Affairs Food and Public Distribution	—	Member-1
2.	Representative of State Governments of jute growing states	—	5
3.	Representative of the producers of Jute Manufacturers	—	4
4.	Representative of the Exporters of Jute Manufacturers	—	2
5.	Grower's Nominee	—	3
6.	Worker's Nominee	—	3
7.	Experts in Technological Research, Marketing or Agricultural Economics of jute	—	5
8.	Special Invitee	—	1

(Total (32))

(c) There are 13 members out of 32 members from non jute growing states in the Jute Advisory Board. In the Jute Manufactures Development Council there are two members out of 32 members from non-jute growing states.

(d) Though, jute is grown in limited number of states of India, jute is used and traded in all the states of India. Hence, in order to give effective and wider representation to various activities connected with jute manufacturing and processing, members have been included in the Board and Council from the non jute growing states.

(e) The Central Govt. has been taking several steps to protect the interest of jute industry in India viz. Protections in the form of Compulsory Packing under the JPM Act, 1987, Technology Up gradation Funds Scheme (TUFS), and recently launched Jute Technology Mission which consists of various schemes for overall development of jute sector.

Pending Industrial Cases

2379. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of industrial disputes pending in the country particularly in Industrial Tribunal of Delhi and Mumbai, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government has fixed any time limit for speedy disposal of such pending cases;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government proposes to appoint more Presiding Officers in Delhi and Mumbai in view of the increasing number of industrial disputes; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) As per the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 an Appropriate Government can set up Labour Courts and Industrial Disputes arising in the Central Sphere, Central Government is the Appropriate Government for setting up the Central Government Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Courts (CGIT-cum-LCs). The details of the State Labour Courts are not centrally

maintained. There are 22 CGIT-cum-Labour Courts in different parts of the country. The details of the number of cases pending in the CGITs-cum-LCs, including the CGIT-cum-LCs at Mumbai and Delhi are given in the enclosed Statement.

(b) and (c) While referring Industrial disputes for adjudication to CGIT-cum-Labour Court, a time limit of three months is specified for submitting the award in terms of sub section 2A of Section 10 of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

Proviso to sub Section 2A of Section 10 of the said Act further provides for extension of above time limit by the Labour Court, Tribunal or National Tribunal on the request of parties to an industrial dispute, jointly or separately.

(d) and (e) There is no such proposal at present.

Statement

Sl. No.	Name of CGIT-cum-LC	Pendency as on 31.10.2007	
		Cases*	Applications**
1	2	3	4
1.	Mumbai I	215	124
2.	Mumbai II	418	463
3.	Dhanbad I	1782	560
4.	Dhanbad II	991	37
5.	Asansol	645	65
6.	Kolkata	298	102
7.	Chandigarh I	843	105
8.	New Delhi I	541	398
9.	Kanpur	566	162
10.	Jabalpur	1466	403
11.	Chennai	283	36
12.	Bangalore	364	78
13.	Hyderbaad	931	198
14.	Nagpur#	879	21

1	2	3	4
15.	Bhubneshwar	395	119
16.	Lucknow	368	29
17.	Jaipur	254	37
18.	New Delhi II	283	76
19.	Guwahati	29	7
20.	Ernakulam	195	27
21.	Ahmedabad	2028	1583
22.	Chandigarh II	877	135
Total		14651	4765

*Cases: Cases are those that are referred under Section 10 of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 to the CGIT-cum-Labour Courts for adjudication consequent upon the failure of conciliation made by the RLC (C)s or the ALC (C)s.

**Applications: Applications are those that are filed by the workers directly under Section 33-A and 33-C of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 before the CGIT—cum-Labour Courts.

#upto 28.11.2007

[English]

Recommendations of A.V. Singh Committee

2380. SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of recommendations made by A.V. Singh Committee on reforms in the Armed Forces;

(b) whether the report recommended for creation of more top level positions in all the three forces;

(c) if so, the details of increase in positions recommended by the A.V. Singh Committee in all the three forces, Force-wise;

(d) whether the Army is demanding more positions than the committee recommended; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) to (e) Review of the creation of posts and restructuring of the cadres in forces is an ongoing and continuous

process. Mechanisms exist in all the three Services to address issues of stagnation.

In May 2001, Army Hqrs had forwarded a paper to the Ministry of Defence drawing attention to certain shortcomings and imbalances in the organizational structure of the officers cadre with the aim of achieving optimal combat effectiveness by bringing down age profile of Battalions/Brigade Commanders and to make the organization more effective in fulfilling individual career aspirations of the officers.

Ministry of Defence set up a committee to examine proposals of Army Hqrs on 16th July 2001, under the Chairmanship of Shri Ajay Vikram Singh, the then Special Secretary with representatives of all the three Services. The Committee (AVSC) submitted its report in January 2003. The Raksha Mantri gave in 'principle' approval to the recommendations of the Committee in September 2003. The Committee identified two interrelated issues viz, high age profile and career stagnation.

AVSC had recommendations pertaining to non-select ranks have already been implemented with effect from December 2004. Restructuring of the cadre amongst all the three services is reviewed from time to time.

Certain recommendations pertaining to non-select ranks have already been implemented with effect from December 2004. Restructuring of the cadre amongst all the three services is reviewed from time to time.

Production of Groundnut

2381. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production of groundnut, mustard and sunflower had declined;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details regarding imports alongwith other innovative measures to ensure self sufficiency in oil seeds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The production of Groundnut, Rapeseed and Mustard and Sunflower declined in 2006-07 as

compared to 2005-06 as presented in the table below:

Crop	(Lakh Tonnes)	
	2005-06	2006-07*
Groundnut	79.93	49.09
Rapeseed & Mustard	81.31	70.97
Sunflower	14.39	11.78

*4th advance estimates released on 19.07.2007

(c) India imported 4.29 million tonnes of edible oils in 2005-06 and 4.22 million tonnes in 2006-07. In order to increase the production of oilseeds in the country, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize" (ISOPOM) is under implementation since 01.04.2004. Under this scheme, assistance is provided for Production of breeder seed, foundation seed and certified seed, crash programme for quality seed production, distribution of certified seeds and Minikits, infrastructure development, Integrated Pest Management. Besides, front line demonstrations on improved production technologies in oilseeds are conducted through Indian Council of Agricultural Research as a transfer of technology effort among the farmers.

Losses to Cotton Crops

2382. PROF. M. RAMADASS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the standing cotton crop has been damaged in many States and the farmers have suffered huge losses;

(b) if so, the details thereof, indicating the loss suffered, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any survey in this regard;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to provide financial assistance to the affected States;

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

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per information received from the various cotton growing states, the standing cotton crop has been damaged in four States. Cotton crop was damaged to some extent in Punjab due to mealy bug, tobacco caterpillar coupled with high temperature and long dry spell, while in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra, the cotton crop was damaged due to heavy rains/floods during Kharif season.

Areas of cotton crop affected was 33603 hectare in Maharashtra, 2952 hectare in Andhra Pradesh, 10500 hectare in Punjab and 34485 hectare in Karnataka. The losses were estimated above 50% in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, while in Punjab, 5-7% loss in yield was estimated.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The losses have been estimated by State Governments.

(e) and (f) The financial assistance to the affected farmers in Andhra Pradesh has been provided as per norms of Natural Calamity Fund Scheme but no assistance has been given in Punjab due to negligible loss to cotton crop. The financial assistance to the farmers in Maharashtra and Karnataka is to be given by the Government as per norms of assistance.

(g) Question does not arise.

Procurement of Intelligence Gathering Equipment

2383. SHRI FRANCIS FANTHOME: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Air Force is in the process of acquiring highly sophisticated intelligence gathering equipment to be fitted in fighter aircraft; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the options available in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Acquiring intelligence gathering equipment for the Air Force is an on-going process. It would not be in the interest of national security to give further details.

Cadre Review in MES

2384. DR. K.S. MANOJ:

SHRI GIRIDHARI YADAV:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred question No. 2313 dated August 17, 2006 regarding cadre review of Administrative Cadre and state:

(a) whether the examination of cadre review of Administrative Cadre in Military Engineering Services (MESs) has been completed and finalised;

(b) if so, the details alongwith salient features thereof;

(c) the steps taken to implement it;

(d) whether the orders for bringing the civilian officers and Army officers of MES at par are under consideration of the Government; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and reasons for delay?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) The examination of the Cadre Review of Administrative Cadre in Military Engineer Services (MES) is not complete.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) Question does not arise.

(d) There is no proposal under consideration of the government to bring the civilian officers and Army officers of MES at par.

(e) Question does not arise.

Export of Arms by Ordnance Factories

2385. SHRI KULDEEP BISHNOI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to increase export of arms and ammunitions by Ordnance Factories and the achievements made therein during 2006-07 and 2007-08;

(b) the items exported and the countries to which exported alongwith the value thereof during the said period;

(c) whether any complaints were received about the quality of arms and ammunitions so exported;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon;

(e) whether the Government proposes to set up an institution for marketing of the products of Ordnance Factories at the global level; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Various steps taken to increase export of arms and ammunitions include:

- Introduction of online response through dedicated e-mail.
- Provision of e-mailable and printable product CD.
- Continuous product promotion in Military technology & Janes International Defence Review Magazines.
- Participation in International exhibitions.

Achievements:-

Export worth Rs. 28.38 Cr. has been achieved during 2006-2007 and Rs. 9.37 Cr. during 2007-2008 (till date).

(b) The Ordnance Factory Board has been exporting some of their products for several years after meeting domestic requirements. Products are exported mainly to countries in Asia, Europe and Africa and include spares of rifles and guns, clothing items, parachutes and accessories, ammunitions, mine-protected vehicles.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Not applicable.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir, there is a proposal to set up Ordnance Factories Marketing Corporation under the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), Department of Defence Production for marketing of the products and services of OFB for Civil market in India and Export and to develop new business areas.

*[Translation]***Jobless due to closed Industrial Units in Rajasthan**

2386. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of workers/labourers affected due to closure of industrial units and factories in the country during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government proposes to take any steps to provide alternative employment to jobless workers/labourers and to revive closed industrial units/factories;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the outstanding dues, insurance claims and other arrears of the workers of said closed units/factories have been paid by the owners; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor alongwith the details of such dues and the time by which such dues are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Statement enclosed.

(b) and (c) Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana was introduced by Employees State Insurance Corporation for their subscribers to provide unemployment allowance to the insured persons who have been rendered unemployed involuntarily due to the closure of the factory/ establishment, retrenchment or permanent invalidity arising out of non-employment injury with effect from 1.4.2005. Upto 31.10.2006 payment of Rs. 93.13 lakh was made in 755 cases.

(d) and (e) The data is not maintained centrally for all such units.

Statement

State-wise number of closures and workers affected 2005, 2006 and 2007

Source: Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour & Employment

Sl. No.	Name of the States/UTs	2005		2006 (P)		2007(P) (Jan. to Sept.)	
		A	B	A	B	A	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Assam	—	—	—	—	*	*
2.	Andhra Pradesh	1	92	—	—	—	—
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	—	—	—	—	—	—
4.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—
5.	Bihar	—	—	1	14	—	—
6.	Chandigarh	—	—	—	—	—	—
7.	Chhattisgarh	—	—	—	—	*	*
8.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	—	—	—	—	*	*
9.	Daman and Diu	—	—	—	—	*	*
10.	Delhi	—	—	—	—	—	—
11.	Goa	2	120	1	100	—	—
12.	Gujarat	7	280	4	430	—	—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13.	Himachal Pradesh	—	—	1	10	—	—
14.	Haryana	2	21	3	118	2	114
15.	Jammu and Kashmir	—	—	3	54	—	—
16.	Jharkhand	1	350	*	*	*	*
17.	Kerala	3	215	5	121	—	—
18.	Karnataka	8	329	5	379	1	4
19.	Lakshadweep	—	—	—	—	—	—
20.	Maharashtra	—	—	*	*	*	*
21.	Madhya Pradesh	—	—	—	—	—	—
22.	Mizoram	—	—	—	—	—	—
23.	Meghalaya	—	—	—	—	—	—
24.	Manipur	—	—	—	—	—	—
25.	Nagaland	—	—	—	—	—	—
26.	Punjab	1	25	—	—	—	—
27.	Pondicherry	—	—	2	11	—	—
28.	Orissa	—	—	—	—	1	10
29.	Rajasthan	—	—	—	—	—	—
30.	Sikkim	—	—	*	*	1	49
31.	Tamil Nadu	*	*	*	*	*	*
32.	Tripura	47	2346	127	3681	2	344
33.	Uttarakhand	—	—	1	77	1	43
34.	Uttar Pradesh	14	1117	10	1269	4	139
35.	West Bengal	—	—	5	925	1	20

A = Number of Units Closed

B = Number of workers affected

— = Nil

* = Not available

(P) = Provisional

Note:- The information for the years 2006 and 2007 is based on the returns/clarifications received in the Labour Bureau till 9th July, 2007.

*[English]***Centrally Sponsored Schemes**

2387. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government proposes to merge/scrap some Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the agriculture sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor and its likely impact on the farming community;

(c) whether the Government proposes to launch an integrated scheme for the agricultural sector in place of the existing schemes;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) There is no proposal to launch an integrated scheme for the agricultural sector in place of the existing schemes.

(e) There is an existing Centrally Sponsored Scheme, namely, Macro Management of Agriculture, under which several schemes have been subsumed. Besides, there are separate schemes for specific areas requiring special focus.

Candidate Under Sports Quota

2388. SHRI PRATIK P. PATIL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Maharashtra Postal Circle has not selected or appointed and candidate under sports quota during the years 2000 to 2004; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Closed Jute Mills

2389. SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether many jute mills in the country have been closed down during each of the last three years and thereafter, State-wise;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether many of the workers have rendered jobless as a result thereof;

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

(e) whether there is any proposal to revive the closed jute mills and rehabilitate the workers who have lost their jobs;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the funds allocated for the purpose during the Eleventh Plan Period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A Statement regarding closure of jute mills and the reasons thereof during the last 3 years is enclosed.

(c) and (d) No Sir. During last three years, out of 28 mills closed down, 27 mills have reopened. Only one mill *i.e.* Nuddea jute mill in West Bengal is still under closure which employs about 3400 workers.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. There are 12 jute mills which are closed down, out of which 6 mills are in Public Sector and 6 mills are in Private Sector. Out of 6 Public Sector mills under National Jute Manufacturers Cooperation (NJMC), there is a proposal to revive 2 mills in West Bengal *i.e.* Kinnison & Khardah as per Cabinet approval. In addition to the above, one Mill RBHM, Katihar, Bihar is also proposed to be revived under Public-Private Partnership. All the workers of these 6 mills including under revival have taken VRS and all their dues are settled.

(g) At present, no funds have been allocated for revival of NJMC Mills as the revival scheme is yet to be approved by Appellate Authority for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (AAIFR).

Statement

List of closed jute mills during the last three years and the reason of closure along with the date of re-opening

Sl.No.	Name of Jute of Mill	State/Union Territory	Date of Closure	Reopened on	Reasons
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Kamarhatty	West Bengal	20.05.04	25.08.04	Suspension of work due to labour unrest
2.	Bally	-do-	03.03.04	09.08.04	-do-
3.	Vijayshree	-do-	20.05.04	20.08.05	-do-
4.	Auckland	-do-	16.05.04	05.08.04	-do-
5.	RDB	-do-	15.05.04	01.07.04	-do-
			23.07.06	07.08.06	
			05.08.07	11.08.07	
6.	Ganges	-do-	19.08.04	24.08.04	-do-
7.	Dalhousie	-do-	25.08.04	30.08.04	Suspension of work due to labour unrest
8.	Naihati	-do-	10.07.04	16.07.04	-do-
9.	Loomtex (Titagarh)	-do-	21.05.04	06.09.04	-do-
10.	Mohan	Chhattisgarh	18.07.04	August 2006	-do-
11.	Tepcon	West Bengal	22.05.04	14.12.04	-do-
12.	Northbrook	-do-	27.03.05	5.08.05	-do-
13.	Empire	-do-	06.08.04	16.08.04	-do-
14.	Reliance	-do-	02.05.04	16.07.05	-do-
15.	Kanknarrah	-do-	01.08.05	08.08.05	-do-
16.	Winsome	Bihar	N.A.	18.08.05	-do-
17.	Shri Gourishankar	West Bengal	05.05.05	10.09.05	-do-
18.	India Jute	-do-	27.01.06	31.01.06	-do-
19.	Alliance	-do-	05.02.06	28.02.06	-do-

1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	Budge Budge	West Bengal	02.05.06	21.08.06	Suspension of work due to labour unrest
21.	Calcutta Jute	-do-	28.04.06	24.08.06	-do-
22.	Hoogly (Projects)	Andhra Pradesh	22.02.06	25.07.06	-do-
23.	Naffarchand	West Bengal	19.05.06	27.08.06	-do-
24.	Kanknarrah	-do-	20.05.06	9.07.07	-do-
25.	Gourishankar	-do-	06.07.06	19.08.06	-do-
26.	Winsome	Bihar	25.09.06	24.10.06	Look out
27.	Bharat Jute	West Bengal	20.09.06	23.09.06	Natural Calamity (Rain logging in and around the mill premises
28.	Nellimarlah	Andhra Pradesh	08.05.06	30.11.06	Suspension of work due to labour unrest

Collusion Among GSM Operators

2390. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are allegations of a collusion among the GSM operators in the country over the recent increase in both voice tariff and SMS rates;

(b) if so, whether there are allegations that STD tariffs had been increased despite the reduction in access deficit levy recently;

(c) if so, whether the GSM operators had failed to reduce roaming rates recently even as BSNL, MTNL and CDMA operators did so;

(d) if so, whether TRAI has been asked to probe these allegations and take punitive regulatory action against GSM operators; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) In the recent past, three GSM mobile operators increased call charges and SMS charges in several service areas. TRAI has received

representation from consumer organizations alleging collusion among GSM operators. It was also alleged that STD tariffs had been increased despite the reduction in Access Deficit Charges (ADC).

(c) TRAI had notified revised ceiling tariff for National roaming service to be effective from 15.2.007. The revised tariffs were lower to the extent of 22% to 56% compared with the then prevailing market rates. This is in addition to the savings to the customers on account of abolition of rentals. As per records available with TRAI all the GSM operators have reduced the roaming tariff effective from 15.2.2007.

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

Water Crisis In Reservoirs

2391. SHRI G.M. SIDDESWARA:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":
DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the water stored/conserved in various reservoirs of the country during the current year is lower than the average quantity of water stored in the reservoirs;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor indicating the reservoirs having lower than average water stored therein, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to ensure that the water crisis does not aggravate in such areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Central Water Commission (CWC) monitors the storage position of 81 important reservoirs in the Country on weekly basis. As per their record, at the end of Monsoon Session *i.e.* on 30.9.2007, the total live storage in these reservoirs was 124.152 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM) which was 124% of the last 10 years average live storage of these reservoirs. Thus at the end of Monsoon Session over all storage position in these

reservoirs was better than the average storage. However out of these 81 reservoirs, 12 reservoirs had live storage less than the last 10 years live storage. The details of these reservoirs are given in the enclosed Statement. The storage in the reservoirs depends upon the rainfall in the catchment and water utilized from the reservoir.

(c) Water being a State subject, the responsibility of survey and investigation, planning development funding, execution and management of all type of water resources projects & reservoirs to harness the water resources within the States rests with the concerned State Governments.

To over come the scarcity situation in future, Government of India is promoting the strategies for optimization of water use efficiency, water conservation and conjunctive use of surface and ground water.

Statement

Sl.No.	Name of Reservoir	State	% of this years live storage to average live storage of last 10 years
1.	Sriramsagar	Andhra Pradesh	82
2.	Gobind Sagar (Bhakra)	Himachal Pradesh	99
3.	Pong Dam (Beas)	Himachal Pradesh	80
4.	Vani Vilas Sagar	Karnataka	30
5.	Gerusoppa	Karnataka	91
6.	Bargi	Madhya Pradesh	96
7.	Minimata Bango	Chhattisgarh	69
8.	Yeldari	Maharashtra	81
9.	Upper Tapi	Maharashtra	93
10.	Vaigai	Tamil Nadu	94
11.	Matatila	Uttar Pradesh	56
12.	Rihand	Uttar Pradesh	44

[*Translation*]

NCDC Assistance for Setting up of Cold Storages

2392. SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:
DR. DHIRENRA AGARWAL:
SHRI M. ANJAN KUMAR YADAV:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the norms fixed for National Cooperative Development Corporation to provide financial assistance to State Governments for establishment of pre-cooling and cold storage projects by cooperatives for storage of potatoes and other fruits and vegetables;

(b) the total funds provided to the States for this purpose during the last three years, State-wise, year-wise;

(c) the achievements made in regard to establishment of pre-cooling and cold storages in these States during the above period;

(d) whether the Government has monitored the proper utilization of the Central funds; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The Government provides financial assistance to the State Government through National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) for establishment of pre-cooling and cold storage projects and its capacity expansion, modernization and rehabilitation in the cooperative sector under the Scheme "Capital Investment Subsidy for Construction/Modernization Expansion of Cold Storages and Storages for Horticulture Produce" of National

Horticulture Board. Assistance is provided as credit linked back ended capital investment subsidy @ 25% of the total project cost with a maximum limit of Rs. 50 lakh for general States and @ 33.33% with a maximum limit of Rs. 60 lakh for North-Eastern (NE) States, for setting up/capacity expansion of cold storages of 5000 metric tonnes. NCDC also provides 65% (56.67% for NE States) of the project cost as a loan for such proposals which are technically feasible and economically viable. The balance 10% is borne by the beneficiary cooperative society.

(b) and (c) The total funds provided to the States and the physical achievement is given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(d) and (e) The NCDC monitors the assisted project through periodic progress report and reimburses the amount to the State Governments/Societies based on the expenditure incurred by the beneficiary cooperative institutions. The details of the projects already assisted are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

Statement I

Details of Funds provided and the Achievement for last three years State-wise

State	Year			Total
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	
1	2	3	4	5
Madhya Pradesh	68.03	16.47	50.00	134.50
West Bengal	567.26	369.79	343.90	1280.96
Bihar	77.12	50.00		127.12
Maharashtra	172.52	34.47		207.00
Jharkhand			50.00	50.00
Tripura			43.28	43.28
Andhra Pradesh			38.00	38.00
Total				1880.86

Achievement (No. of Units)

Madhya Pradesh	1*	1
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1	2	3	4	5
West bengal	7	5	1	13
Bihar	1*			1
Maharashtra	1			1
Tripura			1	1
Total				17

*Modernization of existing cold storage.

Statement II

(A) State-wise details of cold storages (assisted for establishment)—Sanctioned and Installed

(As on 31.3.2007)

Sl.No.	State	Sanctioned		Installed	
		No.	Capacity (tons)	No.	Capacity (tons)
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2	8000	1	1000
2.	Assam	1	1000	1	1000
3.	Bihar	20	59850	20	59850
4.	Gujarat	3	3200	3	3200
5.	Haryana*	5	15000	4	12000
6.	Himachal Pradesh	1	1000	1	1000
7.	Jammu and Kashmir	3	3400	3	3400
8.	Jharkhand	1	5000	—	0
9.	Madhya Pradesh	23	85400	23	85400
10.	Karnataka	5	7800	5	7800
11.	Maharashtra	4	7000	3	4000
12.	Nagaland	1	1000	1	1000
13.	Orissa	21	36170	19	28670
14.	Punjab	16	22300	16	22300
15.	Rajasthan	3	6000	3	6000
16.	Tamil Nadu	2	3750	2	3750

1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	Tripura	1	2000	1	2000
18.	Uttar Pradesh	95	282600	95	282600
19.	West Bengal	70	254200	59	247950
20.	Chandigarh	1	1000	1	1000
21.	Delhi	1	2500	1	2500
Total		279	806170	262	776420

*One 3000 tons CA store to be established by Govt. of Himachal Pradesh through HIMFED at Rai, distt-Sonapat (Haryana)

(B) State-wise details of cold storages (assisted for capacity expansion)—Sanctioned and Installed

(As on 31.3.2007)

Sl.No.	State	Sanctioned		Installed	
		No.	Capacity (tons)	No.	Capacity (tons)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1	5000		
2.	Bihar	3	8000	3	8000
3.	Gujarat	1	1800	1	1800
4.	Madhya Pradesh	9	22250	9	22250
5.	Orissa	3	4000	3	4000
6.	Punjab	1	2000	1	2000
7.	Tripura	1	3000	1	3000
8.	Uttar Pradesh	1	2000	1	2000
9.	West Bengal	15	77800	14	72800
Total		35	125850	33	115850

Krishi Vigyan Kendras

2393. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE PATIL:
SHRI V.K. THUMMAR:
PROF. PREM KUMAR DHUMAL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Krishi Vigyan Kendras functioning in the country as on date, State-wise;

(b) the amount spent on the said Kendras during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(c) the role and responsibilities of the said Kendras;

(d) whether the Government has reviewed the works undertaken by the said centres;

(e) if so, the outcome of the said review; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) As on date, the number of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) sanctioned in the country is 558. The State-wise details are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(b) During the last three years (2004-05 to 2006-07) an amount of Rs. 66105.87 lakh was provided to the KVKs. The State-wise details of each of the last three years are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

(c) The activities of the KVK include assessment, refinement and demonstration of technology through on-farm trials and frontline demonstrations, and improving the knowledge and skills of farmers and extension personnel. Various extension programmes are taken up by the KVKs to create awareness of improved technology among the farmers. Seeds and planning materials produced in the KVKs are also made available to the farmers.

(d) to (f) The activities of the KVKs for the period of 2000-01 to 2004-05 have been reviewed by a Quinquennial Review Team. The major areas of considerable impact noted by the Team include Crop Production, Seed Production/Replacement, Integrated Pest Management, Natural Resource Management, Livestock Production and Management, Fisheries, Information and Communication Technology, Entrepreneurship Development, and Use of Innovative Extension Approaches. The major recommendation made by the Team include Policy issues, Financial Systems and Procedures. Programme Planning and Execution, and Capacity Building.

Statement I

Details of KVKs in the Country

Sl.No.	State/Union Territory	No. of KVKS
1	2	3
1.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1
2.	Andhra Pradesh	22
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	12
4.	Assam	20

1	2	3
5.	Bihar	37
6.	Chhattisgarh	14
7.	Delhi	1
8.	Goa	2
9.	Gujarat	24
10.	Haryana	18
11.	Himachal Pradesh	12
12.	Jammu and Kashmir	14
13.	Jharkhand	21
14.	Karnataka	26
15.	Kerala	14
16.	Lakshadweep	1
17.	Madhya Pradesh	47
18.	Maharashtra	33
19.	Manipur	8
20.	Meghalaya	5
21.	Mizoram	8
22.	Nagaland	8
23.	Orissa	29
24.	Pondicherry	2
25.	Punjab	17
26.	Rajasthan	32
27.	Sikkim	4
28.	Tamil Nadu	29
29.	Tripura	4
30.	Uttarakhand	13
31.	Uttar Pradesh	63
32.	West Bengal	17
Total		558

Statement II*Details of Funds provided to KVVs during last three years (2004-05 to 2006-07)*

Sl.No.	State/Union Territory	Funds Released (Rs. in lakh)			
		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andaman and Nicobar Island	50.30	45.90	41.35	137.55
2.	Andhra Pradesh	798.67	1002.39	878.77	2679.83
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	98.50	75.59	150.05	324.13
4.	Assam	459.10	424.66	898.20	1781.96
5.	Bihar	974.22	1084.29	1257.04	3315.55
6.	Chhattisgarh	302.35	424.79	382.89	1110.03
7.	Delhi	8.10	25.85	37.10	71.05
8.	Goa	68.85	79.64	54.90	203.39
9.	Gujarat	410.05	796.70	871.05	2077.80
10.	Haryana	681.30	799.54	761.47	2242.31
11.	Himachal Pradesh	677.78	728.62	697.65	2104.05
12.	Jammu and Kashmir	321.00	787.69	629.95	1738.64
13.	Jharkhand	410.23	866.93	1704.33	2971.55
14.	Karnataka	823.19	976.34	1419.65	3219.18
15.	Kerala	539.35	680.10	533.67	1753.12
16.	Lakshadweep	21.20	33.90	23.35	78.45
17.	Madhya Pradesh	1131.44	1838.10	1628.27	4597.81
18.	Maharashtra	1310.14	1411.90	1451.90	4173.94
19.	Manipur	216.40	312.50	334.60	863.65
20.	Meghalaya	175.30	110.00	85.35	370.65
21.	Mizoram	181.87	445.02	841.09	1467.98
22.	Nagaland	80.10	161.70	334.15	575.95
23.	Orissa	775.38	994.35	1292.77	3062.50
24.	Pondicherry	86.20	90.77	74.55	251.52
25.	Punjab	513.44	774.72	692.15	1980.31

1	2	3	4	5	6
26.	Rajasthan	1198.40	1678.72	1392.64	4269.76
27.	Sikkim	53.30	63.45	43.85	160.60
28.	Tamil Nadu	903.90	1362.90	1681.32	3948.12
29.	Tripura	65.10	102.70	67.60	235.40
30.	Uttarakhand	462.75	1187.45	828.63	2478.83
31.	Uttar Pradesh	1815.31	3623.38	3810.96	9449.65
32.	West Bengal	465.53	706.97	1238.26	2410.76
	Total	16078.75	23897.55	26139.51	66105.87

[English]

Grievances of PDS Beneficiaries

2394. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment has been made regarding the performance of the Public Distribution System (PDS) in providing food to the poor, so far;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any survey has also been conducted to ascertain the grievances of the people dependent on PDS;

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

(e) the steps taken to redress their grievances?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (e) The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the Joint responsibility of the Central and the State Government wherein the Central Government is responsible for procurement of foodgrains (rice & wheat), storage and their transportation upto the Principal Distribution Centres of FCI, and the State Governments are responsible for identification of beneficiaries, issuance of ration cards to them and distribution of foodgrains through a vast network of 4.92 lakh Fair Price Shops scattered all over the country.

No survey specifically to ascertain grievances of the people dependent on PDS has been conducted. However, to get independent feedback, the Department got conducted studies by PEO (Planning Commission) and ORG Marg in 2005. These studies reported diversion of foodgrains, exclusion and inclusion errors in identification of BPL families and non-viability of functioning of Fair Price Shops.

Based on findings of these studies of TPDS, a Nine-Point Action Plan is already under implementation by States and UT Governments. Its implementation is monitored by the Central Government. Additionally, a revised Citizens' Charter has been issued recently for adoption and implementation by State/UT Governments for facilitating use by citizens under provisions of Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 in relation to functioning of TPDS.

[Translation]

Allotment of PCO Booths

2395. SHRI HARISINH CHAVDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether P.C.O. booths could not be allotted to several people owing to non-compliance of formalities despite the application for P.C.O. booths;

(b) if so, details of these formalities alongwith the reasons for not viewing these formalities at the time of filing of application by the applicant; and

(c) the reasons of the Government thereto alongwith the remedial measures taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The following formalities are to be completed by an applicant for allotment of PCO booths in BSNL.

- (i) Submission of completed application along with self attested photograph of the applicant.
- (ii) Submission of proof of identity.
- (iii) Submission of proof of residence.

Earlier, the applications of PCO booths were being simply received at the counter and sent to Commercial Officer for examination. This procedure used to result in delays in allotment of PCOs.

As per the revised procedure, all the documents are to be examined at the time of submission of application itself by the concerned staff.

[English]

Online Redressal of Grievances of Personnel

2396. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an online redressal forum for officers and soldiers to express their grievances anonymously has been started for personnel of the Indian Army;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the manner in which the said online forum functions; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to set up similar system/forum for Indian Navy and Indian Air Force?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) to (d) There is no exclusive online redressal forum for officers and soldiers grievances anonymously in the Forces. Detailed procedures to process the grievances of personnel through Command/Staff Channel in the Army, Navy and Air Force are nevertheless, in place.

However, there is a forum called 'Dreamer's Club' on official Army Website on internet, where every officer and Person Below Officer Rank (PBOR) can share innovative ideas and can also participate in discussion. The disclosing of identity is optional. The suggestion and ideas are analysed in detail at the highest level on regular basis and suitable corrective actions are taken to improve the existing system and processes.

Besides, in the Indian Air Force intranet any personnel may send his comments, suggestions and inputs with absolute confidentiality to the Chief of Air Staff on matters pertaining to the Air Force. Such comments, suggestions and inputs are examined and deliberated upon at appropriate levels and suitably replied.

[Translation]

Promotion of Horticulture and Vegetative Crops

2397. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has evolved any scheme to promote horticulture and vegetative crops in the country and especially in tribals and hilly areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of funds spent by the Government on the said schemes, State-wise during the last two years, till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India has been implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal" (TMNE) for promotion of horticulture in the country especially in tribal and hilly areas. The main objective of the Mission is for Integrated Development of Horticulture through promotion of commercial cultivation of horticultural crops including fruits, vegetables, flowers, spices, plantation crops, medicinal and aromatic plants. Besides, Ministry of

Agriculture is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "National Horticulture Mission" (NHM) for promotion of horticulture in all other States and Union Territories including Tribal areas which are not covered under TMNE scheme.

Under these schemes, assistance is provided for production and distribution of quality planting material of

elite cultivars, area expansion adoption of new technologies, integrated pest and disease management, post harvest management, value addition, marketing, etc.

(c) Details of State-wise release of funds under these schemes for the last two years, till date are given in the enclosed Statement-I and II.

Statement I

State-wise release of funds under CSS on Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal for the last two years, till date

(Rs. in lakhs)

States	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
A. Production related programmes under Mini Mission-II			
Arunachal Pradesh	1300.00	1612.90	1875.00
Assam	1300.00	1400.00	1509.98
Manipur	1500.00	1700.00	1384.00
Meghalaya	1700.00	2000.00	1713.00
Mizoram	1800.00	3200.00	1650.00
Nagaland	1700.00	2356.00	1875.00
Sikkim	1800.00	2331.00	700.00
Tripura	1500.00	1400.00	337.72
Jammu and Kashmir	1550.00	2933.00	1200.00
Himachal Pradesh	1100.00	4000.00	1800.00
Uttaranchal	1100.00	4000.00	1800.00
B. Technology development, PHM, marketing and processing under Mini Mission-I, III & IV (Project based)			
	2389.21	1539.00	1519.34
Total	18739.21	28471.90	17364.04

Statement II*State-wise release of funds under CSS on National Horticulture Mission for the last two years, till date*

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl.No.	State	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
1.	Andhra Pradesh	4420.96	7500.00	7226.33
2.	Bihar	3100.00	3500.00	269.72
3.	Chhattisgarh	2367.83	5500.00	4253.48
4.	Goa	315.20	200.00	3.19
5.	Gujarat	3239.28	2577.03	1646.69
6.	Haryana	1050.00	3480.00	2245.98
7.	Jharkhand	3030.00	4000.00	0.00
8.	Karnataka	4455.17	8448.25	935.21
9.	Kerala	3533.98	7959.53	512.82
10.	Madhya Pradesh	2839.77	4291.75	4045.75
11.	Maharashtra	8260.28	14492.70	8731.98
12.	Orissa	3611.91	4450.00	3365.91
13.	Punjab	2868.82	1150.00	2162.89
14.	Rajasthan	2259.57	3837.93	2264.45
15.	Tamil Nadu	3891.67	6450.00	5076.00
16.	Uttar Pradesh	5340.25	1500.00	6530.67
17.	West Bengal	4035.31	4600.00	203.13
18.	Delhi	—	300.00	—
19.	Lakshadweep	—	63.00	—
20.	Andaman and Nicobar	—	85.00	—
Total		58620.00	84385.19	49474.20

Construction of Building for Telephone Exchanges

2398. SHRI SUBHAS SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the buildings constructed for the telephone exchanges by the Government and the expenditure incurred thereon during each of the last three years, State-wise and location-wise;

(b) whether the construction of some buildings for telephone exchanges is continuing in Delhi at present;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the estimated expenditure likely to be incurred thereon; and

(e) the time by which this construction is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Export of Meat

2399. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the meat exported during each of the last three years and thereafter; and

(b) the steps being taken to promote the export of meat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The details of the meat exported during the period 2004 to 2006-07 are given in the enclosed Statement.

(b) The Government has taken the following steps to promote export of meat:—

(i) Standards have been laid down for export of meat and meat products under Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963.

(ii) The abattoirs and meat plants engaged in export of buffalo and sheep/goat meat are required to be compulsory registered with Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (Ministry of Commerce & Industry) under Directorate General of Foreign Trade Notification 12/(2004-2009) dated 21st December, 2004.

(iii) Efforts are made for opening up new markets for meat products by participation in various trade fairs to create awareness about products which India offers.

(iv) Financial assistance has provided for development of infrastructure and technology to the export oriented abattoirs and meat units, implementation of international quality system such as Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and Indian Standard Organisation-9000, setting up of in-house quality control laboratories, conducting surveys and feasibility studies, market development and packaging development etc.

(v) Development of infrastructure on the veterinary services like setting up of the animal quarantine and certificate services at Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai to prevent the ingress of disease, setting up National Institute of Animal Health, Baghat for monitoring the quality of vaccines in the country and setting up of one central and five regional disease diagnostic laboratories.

(vi) Government of India is implementing disease control activities by providing the assistance to States for control of animal diseases including control of Foot and Mouth Disease.

(vii) India has successfully eradicated Rinderpest and Contagious Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia (CBPP) disease considered impediments in meat export earlier.

Statement*The details of Export of Meat during the years 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07*(Quantity in Metric Tonnes)
(Value in Rupees Crore)

Products	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Buffalo meat	337778	1774.52	459938	2629.57	494111	3211.70
Sheep/Goat meat	9024	81.27	7178	80.37	5482	63.04
Poultry meat	1317	5.91	463	2.49	382	2.17

Eleventh Defence Five Year Plan

2400. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Defence has formulated the Eleventh Defence Five Year Plan for the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the present status of the Eleventh Defence Plan;

(d) the details of the uncompleted projects of Tenth Defence Plan put in the Eleventh Defence Plan;

(e) whether the Government has considered the reasons responsible for such uncompleted projects while formulating the Eleventh Defence Plan; and

(f) if so, the details of the steps taken by the Government to complete all proposals placed in the Eleventh Defence Plan?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) The Ministry of Defence has formulated the Eleventh Defence Five Year Plan covering the period 2007-2012.

(b) The Plan covers the anticipated requirement of the three Services, Ordnance Factories and Defence Research & Development for the Plan period both under Revenue and Capital heads, including modernization of Defence Services.

(c) The Plan projections are under active consideration in consultation with the Ministry of Finance.

(d) Projects related to procurements, etc. are generally long-term projects, at times spanning two or more plan periods. Generally, the on-going projects at the end of the Tenth Plan period have been carried forward to the Eleventh Plan.

(e) and (f) The reasons for delay in completion of projects remains under constant focus. Various steps have been taken to expedite the process. These include revision of Procurement Procedures in 2006, Enhancement in the financial powers of the Raksha Mantri and delegation of powers for Capital expenditure upto Rs. 30 crores to the Services.

Egg Scam In Armed Forces

2401. SHRI ADHALRAO PATIL SHIVAJIRAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Egg Scam has taken place in the recent past in Northern Command of Army;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

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

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the loss incurred to the exchequer due to the said scam?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) A case for supply of underweight eggs has been reported in the recent past in the Northern Command of Army.

(b) The weight of an egg was indicated as 40 grams in the contract document instead of 48 grams in contravention of the stipulated norms in execution of contract for Eggs Fresh in Northern Command for the years 2004-2005 to 2006-2007.

(c) to (e) Show Cause notices have been served to all the 15 officers.

Storage and Transit Losses

2402. SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA:
SHRI ANANTH KUMAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether heavy expenditure is incurred on transportation of foodgrains to storage godowns and from

thereto distribution centres;

(b) if so, the details thereof during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the foodgrains are also reported to have been lost during transportation and storage;

(d) if so, the total quantity and value of foodgrains so lost during the said period; and

(e) the measures taken by the Government to check the such wasteful expenditure and loss of foodgrains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details of expenditure incurred by Food Corporation of India (FCI) on transportation of foodgrains to storage godowns and from thereto distribution centres during the last three years is as under:-

(Rs. in lakh)

Particulars	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07 (Provisional)
Railway freight	257957.71	257982.47	263219.43
Lorry freight	36196.28	40098.25	43045.75
Steamer freight	730.70	702.20	885.86
Transport subsidy to Hill States	11216.63	5001.12	968.77
Demurrage/Diversion charges etc.	3146.15	3952.17	2848.70
Total	309247.47	307736.21	310968.51
Internal movements	3595.34	2897.29	2126.51
Grand Total	312842.81	310633.50	313095.03

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The details of storage and transit losses for FCI on all India basis for the last three years are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(e) The measures taken by the FCI to reduce storage and transit losses are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

Statement I

The details of storage and transit losses of FCI on all India basis for the last three years are as under:

(Qty. in lakh MT/Value in Rupees in Crore)

(a) Storage Losses

Year	Quantity lost	Value of loss	Total quantity issued	Percentage of loss to total quantity issued
2004-05	1.46	156.37	762.02	0.19%
2005-06	1.17	133.87	734.94	0.43%
2006-07(P)	1.30	152.84	425.05	0.32%(BE)

(b) Transit Losses

Year	Quantity lost	Value of loss	Total quantity issued	Percentage of loss to total quantity issued
2004-05	1.83	149.93	382.77	0.48%
2005-06	1.51	143.00	355.98	0.16%
2006-07(P)	1.25	130.09	255.46	0.49% (BE)

(P)-Provisional

(BE)-Budget Estimates

Statement II

Measures taken by FCI to reduce storage and transit losses

- Physical measures like installation of barbed wires fencing of the boundary walls, provision of street lights for illumination of godowns and proper locking of the sheds are taken to secure the godowns.
- Security staffs of FCI as well as other Agencies like Home Guards, Special Police Officers are deployed for safety of the stocks.
- Deployment of Central Industrial Security Force and State Armed Police has been done at some depots/godowns, which are vulnerable.
- Security Inspections as well as surprise checks of the Depots are also conducted from time to time at various levels to detect and plug the security lapses.
- Adoption of 50 kg packing to avoid use of hooks.
- Double line machine stitching of bags.
- Periodical prophylactic and curative treatment of stocks, as prescribed.
- Streamlining of procedure and documentation for transparency and accountability in operations at each level.
- Special Squad checking at selected rail-heads, transshipment and destination/dispatch centers.
- Identification of vulnerable points.
- Inspection of Depots by Senior officers of the HQs, Executive Directors (Zones)/General Managers (Regions)/Area Managers.-
- Inspection and monitoring of calibration of weigh-bridges.
- Maintaining priority list for issue of stocks observing the FIFO principle.

14. Proper weighing and accounting at the time of receipt and issue.
15. Undertaking pre-monsoon fumigation.
16. Improvement in dunnage material.
17. Movement of foodgrains from one place to another by safe means *i.e.* covered wagons etc.
18. Ensuring proper quality checking of foodgrains at the time of procurement.
19. Ensuring that all FCI owned godowns are constructed and maintained on scientific lines for storage of foodgrains.
20. Insuring transit losses in movement of foodgrains by rail.
21. Providing escorts while transporting foodgrains from Depot to Rail head & vice-versa.
22. Transfer of officials whose integrity is found doubtful as per extant instructions.

Besides, the following other preventive measures are also being taken by FCI for reducing storage and transit losses:

- (a) Component-wise analysis of storage losses, *i.e.* losses occurring due to loss of moisture/theft and pilferage/other reasons.
- (b) Detailed analysis of transit losses for identification of areas of improvements.
- (c) Analysis of reasons leading to delay in carrying out investigations in storage and transit losses.
- (d) Monitoring/reviewing of storage and transit losses at higher levels in the FCI Headquarters in consultation with Chief Vigilance Officer.

New Textile Policy

2403. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has formulated any New Textile Policy in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent of which the New Textile Policy is likely to benefit the textile industry and textile workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) The National Textile Policy-2000 was announced in the year 2000. There is no proposal to formulate a new National Textile Policy.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

[Translation]

Export of Knitwear

2404. SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the measures taken by the Government to achieve the knitwear export target fixed during each of the last three years and thereafter;

(b) whether the Government proposes to improve and develop the infrastructure to compete with China, Japan and other countries in global market; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and alongwith the funds allocated for the purpose during the Eleventh Plan Period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) to (c) The Government has taken a number of measures for enabling the textiles industry, including the knitwear industry, to achieve the export targets. These include extension of the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme for modernization of machinery and acquiring state of the art technology and the Scheme for Integrated Textiles Parks for equipping the industry with world class infrastructure. The Working Group on Textiles and Jute industry has recommended an outlay of Rs. 3000 crores for the Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks during Eleventh Five Year Plan. An outlay of Rs. 450 crore has been provided for the Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks during 2007-08.

In addition, the Government has extended a package of concessions to the textiles sector which include enhancement in duty drawback rates and DEPB rates. Government is also providing funds to the sector under Market Development Assistance Scheme and Market Access Initiative Scheme, whereby funds have been

provided to the knitwear sector for promotional activities and for reimbursement to exporters for participation in trade fairs and exhibitions abroad.

Fish Production

2405. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the fish production in the country particularly in tribal areas of Maharashtra during each of the last three years; and

(b) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken to increase fish production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The Fish Production in the country particularly in tribal areas of Maharashtra during the last three years is as follows:

(in '000 tonnes)

Year	In the Country	In the tribal areas of Maharashtra
2004-05	6305	19.34
2005-06	6572	21.87
2006-07 (Provisional)	6754	21.15

(b) Most of the Tribal area of Maharashtra is in inland fisheries sector and there are eight fish seed farms in the tribal areas. These farms are being renovated by the Government of Maharashtra to increase the fish seed production for proper stocking of fish seed in the reservoirs/tanks of the area and apart from this assistance are being given to Fisheries Cooperative societies. The Government of India also through various Centrally Sponsored and Central Sector Schemes provides financial assistance to the State Governments for development of fisheries. In addition to this, National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) has been set up to increase the fish production in the country.

[English]

Cattle Research Centres

2406. SHRI KISHANBHAI V. PATEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the locations of cattle research centres functioning in the country to develop high breed of various species of cattle, State-wise;

(b) the details of the various programmes being run to encourage and to train the cattle breeders in the country particularly in Gujarat, State-wise;

(c) whether these programmes are inadequate keeping in view of the number of cattle breeders of various species in Gujarat;

(d) if not, whether the Union Government proposes to increase the number of such programmes; and

(e) if so, the details of the schemes and proposals submitted by the Government of Gujarat to the Union Government during each of the last three years and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Details of the cattle research centres functioning in the country to develop high breed of cattle are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(b) to (e) Farmer awareness and training programme in management of dairy animals and health care is covered as a subcomponent under various schemes of the Department viz. National Project for Cattle and Buffalo Breeding (NPCBB), Assistance to State for Control of Animal Diseases (ASCAD), Central Cattle Breeding Farm (CCBF) Dhamrod, and Central Herd Registration Schemes (CHRS) Ahmedabad. These schemes are being implemented throughout the country particularly in Gujarat. In addition to this, training of farmers and para veterinary personnel is also being conducted by research institutes in management practices, health care and artificial insemination. Details of the funds released to Gujarat under Centrally Sponsored schemes during last three years are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

Statement I**Details of the Cattle Research Centres under Indian Council of Agricultural Research**

Sl.No.	Name of Research Centre	Location
Research Institutes		
1.	National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI)	Karnal, Haryana .
2.	Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI)	Izatnagar, Bareilly
3.	Project Directorate on Cattle (PDC)	Meerut, UP
All India Coordinated Research Projects (AICRP) on Cattle with Head Quarter at PDC		
1.	Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Science University	Ludhiana, Punjab
2.	Choudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University, Hissar Haryana	
3.	Kerala Agricultural University	Mannuthy, Thrissur, Kerala
4.	BAIF Research Foundation	Urulikanchan, Pune, Maharashtra
5.	43 Military Dairy Farms spread across the country Agra, Lucknow, Bareilly, Jhansi, Allahabad, Merrut & Kanpur	Uttar Pradesh (7)
	Jabalpur, Gwalior & Mhow	Madhya Pradesh (3)
	Namkum	Jharkhand (1)
	Dehradun & Pithoragarh	Uttarakhand (2)
	Ambala & Birdhantori	Haryana (2)
	Jalandhar, Ferozpur, Bisamgwal, & Pathankot	Punjab (4)
	Kirekee, Belgaum, Deolali, Pimpri & Ahmednagar	Maharashtra (5)
	Seccunderabad	Andhra Pradesh (1)
	Bangalore	Kamataka (1)
	Panitola, Binnaguri, Bengdubi & Pannagarh	West Bengal (4)
	Dimapur	Nagaland (1)
	Missamari, Dagshai, Guwahati, Jorhat, & Massimpur	Assam (5)
	Dalhousie & Yol	Himachal Pradesh (2)
	Udhampur, Srinagar, Jammu, Rajouri & Karu	Jammu & Kashmir (5)

Note: Figure in parenthesis is No. of farms in the State.

Statement II

Details of the funds released to Gujarat during last three years under Centrally Sponsored schemes having farmers training programme as subcomponent

(Rs. in lakh)					
Sl.No.	Name of the Scheme	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total
1.	National Project for Cattle and Buffalo Breeding	279.70	703.25	100.00	1082.95
2.	Assistance to State for Control of Animal Diseases	439.37	293.00	455.00	1187.37

Assistance to Sugarcane Growers

2407. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Maharashtra Government has urged the Union to provide assistance to farmers whose sugarcane remains uncrushed;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the Union Government has also received requests from some States to purchase the excess sugar at levy price and offer it to SAARC countries as aid to assist the factories and farmers facing problems due to excess production;

(d) if so, whether the matter was taken up with other concerned Ministries/Departments;

(e) if so, the reaction of the said Ministries/Departments thereto; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Shri Vilasrao Deshmukh, Chief Minister, Maharashtra requested Government of India to provide a matching financial assistance of Rs. 25,000/- per hectare of standing cane crop at the end of crushing season 2006-07, similar to that of the State Government.

He has been intimated that there is no provision with the Central Government to grant such financial assistance to cane growers/farmers for standing cane crops left uncrushed at the end of crushing season. However, the request from Chief Minister, Maharashtra had been considered by the Central Government while deciding the relief measures for the sugar industry and sugarcane farmers.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir.

(e) and (f) The request has already been considered by the concerned Ministries/Departments of Central Government while deciding on the relief measures for the sugar industry and sugarcane farmers.

Task Force on IT and IT-Related Services

2408. SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Task Force of the Information and Technology (IT) Department has recommended for allocation of 2-3% of Planned Budget of every Department be spent on IT and IT-related services;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the proposal has been forwarded to the Planning Commission for its approval; and

(d) if so, the present status of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (d) The Planning Commission, based on the recommendations of the High Powered Committee for improving administrative efficiency by using IT, has requested all Central Line Ministries/Departments to make provisions of 2-3 percent of their Plan/Budget for Programmes/Schemes relating to IT applications. It had also been conveyed to the Departments/Ministries that they could incur expenditure of an amount exceeding 2-3 percent of their budget (Plan or non plan) for initiatives relating to IT including training, acquisition of hardware, software as well as development and maintenance of software. It was also clarified by the Planning Commission that this does not entail any additionalities by way of budgetary allocations.

Survey of Fisheries

2409. DR. K.S. MANOJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the survey of fishermen and fishing vessels have been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether socio-economic status of fishermen has been assessed during the survey;

(d) if so, whether statistical analysis of the data is prepared; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Govt. of India has carried out Marine Fisheries Census 2005, in all the maritime States/Union Territories. As per census there are 3322 marine fishing villages having 7.65 lakh households in India. Out of total population of 35.75 lakh dependent on marine fisheries 56.76% people have received some education; 25.23% people engaged in active fishing and 21.45% persons are engaged in fisheries allied activities. There are 2,43,939 crafts including 59,743 mechanized boats, 76,748 motorized boats and 1,07,448 non motorized boats engaged in the marine fisheries sector of the country.

(c) Yes, Sir. Information on family size, religion, caste and education level along with the details of craft and

gear owned by the fisher folk and the craft available in fisheries in each fishing village has been collected.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The primary information is processed and fishing village-wise information is available in the published Marine Fisheries Census Report 2005 for maritime states/UTs.

[*Translation*]

Development of IT in Indian Languages

2410. PROF. PREM KUMAR DHUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to develop Information Technology (IT) in Indian languages;

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

(c) whether any special cell or working group has been set up in this regard;

(d) if so, the details of their capacity and financial arrangements at present;

(e) whether any action plan, is already in operation for the promotion and Development of Hindi in order to establish it in the field of I.T. and to make it more popular; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The details are given in the enclosed Statement-II.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) The details are given in the enclosed Statement-III.

Statement I

Department of Information Technology initiated "Technology Development for Indian Languages (TDIL) Programme" with the objective of making available the software tools for information processing in 22 constitutionally recognized languages.

Under the National Roll-Out Plan for Indian Language Technologies, CDs containing Software tools and fonts are being released in public domain for wider proliferation of benefits of Language Technology to masses. This will help common people to take benefit of the IT, in their own languages and to help developers to build advanced solutions. So far CDs containing software tools and fonts for Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Assamese, Oriya, Urdu and Punjabi languages have been released. Software tools and fonts for other languages are being consolidated/developed for release. The released software tools can be downloaded from <http://www.ildc.in> website.

These CDs were brought out as a outcome of the research activity at R&D centres for Indian languages spread across the country which include various premier academic and research organizations such as IITs, IITs, IISc Bangalore, CDAC and some universities.

Development projects in consortium mode have been initiated in the area of Machine Translation, Cross Lingual Information Access and Character Recognition. These projects address 26 language pairs for machine translation & Indic scripts for Optical Character Recognition and are being implemented by 26 institutions across the country.

Statement II**TDIL Programme**

The TDIL is a programme with vision as "Enabling masses to build knowledge society"; to develop information processing tools to facilitate human machine interaction in Indian languages and to create and access multilingual knowledge resources/content.

A number of initiatives have been taken towards development of software tools and technologies for Indian Languages under the Technology Development for Indian Languages (TDIL) programme.

Capacity of the TDIL Programme

The language technology (LT) development activities are being implemented through various academic and R&D institutions across India. The TDIL programme is being technically evaluated and monitored by TDIL Working Group and Project Monitoring & Steering Groups consisting of experts drawn from academia, industry, R&D organizations and Government.

Financial Arrangement

The present financial year (2007-08) budget for the TDIL Programme for funding various R&D projects for development of language technologies is Rs. 1100.00 Lakhs including Rs. 200.00 Lakhs for the North-East region.

Statement III

Department of Information Technology is engaged in development of software tools & technologies for Indian Languages including Hindi.

1. The various software tools developed under the Programme are being released in public domain for benefits of Information Technology to people. The CD released for Hindi contains the following Software Tools and fonts:

Fonts with keyboard drivers; Fonts Code Converter; Bharateeya Open Office; Firefox browser; GAIM messenger; COLUMBA-Email client; Hindi OCR; Assan Typing Tutor for Hindi and English; Integrated Word Processor; Dictionary: English-Hindi; Spell checker; Transliteration tool and Text to Speech system.

2. Under "Content Creation and IT Localization" project, e-content in Hindi., of approximately 16000 HTML & Dynamic pages in the domains of health, education, tourism and agri-business have been developed and uploaded on internet.
3. Dynamic National Train Enquiry System website of Indian Railways (<http://www.trainenquiry.com>) has been localized in Hindi.
4. Development projects for English to Hindi and Hindi to Indian Languages (seven bidirectional pairs) Machine Translation system in specific domains have been initiated.

5. Software for Hindi teaching through various languages have been made available.
6. Mantra-Rajbhasha for Machine Translation system for administration & finance domains have been developed.
7. Pravachak-Rajbhasha (Text to Speech System) and Shrutlekhan-Rajbhasha (Speech to Text System) for Hindi have been developed.

[English]

Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana

2411. SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has introduced Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana for the benefit of artisans and their families;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the number of persons benefited under the Scheme, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government proposes to set up Extension Centres of National Institute of Fashion Technology in various parts of the country;

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

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. the Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swashtya Bima Yojana scheme provides for a medical cover of Rs. 15000/- including cashless facility & OPD etc., to an artisanal family of four comprising self, spouse and two children. Out of the total annual premium of Rs. 1001 plus service tax, the Government of India contribution is Rs. 801/- plus service tax for General Category artisans and Rs. 901/- plus service tax in case of artisans belonging to SC/ST/BPL & NER. The general category artisan contributes Rs. 100/- towards the annual premium. Besides, the insured artisan is given an insurance cover of Rs. 1.00 lakh for accidental death/permanent disability. State-wise details of artisanal families covered till date are given in the enclosed Statement.

(c) Government does not propose to set up any extension center of NIFT in the country. In fact, instead of extension center establishment of full fledged centers of NIFT is done.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Statement

State-wise details of Artisanal Families Covered Till Date

Sl.No.	State	Total families
1	2	3
1.	Goa	318
2.	Gujarat	6,280
3.	Madhya Pradesh	1,149
4.	Maharashtra	987
5.	Arunachal Pradesh	170
6.	Assam	2,894
7.	Bihar	1,654
8.	Chhattisgarh	242
9.	Jharkhand	1,342
10.	Manipur	3,487
11.	Meghalaya	184
12.	Mizoram	150
13.	Nagaland	925
14.	Orissa	2,611
15.	Sikkim	123
16.	Tripura	441
17.	West Bengal	3,343
18.	Delhi	439
19.	Haryana	822
20.	Himachal Pradesh	1,130
21.	Jammu and Kashmir	1,710

1	2	3
22.	Punjab	687
23.	Rajasthan	2,777
24.	Uttar Pradesh	4,945
25.	Uttarakhand	2,269
26.	Andhra Pradesh	3,865
27.	Karnataka	1,422
28.	Kerala	1,604
29.	Pondicherry	180
30.	Tamil Nadu	3,549
Total		51,919

Establishment of Aerospace Command

2412. SHRI K.C. PALLANI SHAMY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Air Force has any proposal to establish an Aerospace Command;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which it would be established?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) to (c) There is so far no decision of the Government to set up Aerospace Command.

Employment Opportunities In Unorganised and Organized Sector

2413. SHRI G.M. SIDDESHWARA:
DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the increase overall employment in the country has been less than the growth in manpower;

(b) whether the employment generation is rising in the unorganised sector as compared to that in the organised sector;

(c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken by the Government for employment generation in organised sector;

(d) whether the schemes for employment generation in organised and unorganised sector have been reviewed recently; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Reliable estimates of labour force in the country are obtained through quinquennial labour force survey conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation. The last such quinquennial survey, for which results are available, was conducted during 2004-05 according to which the annual rate of growth of employment has been 2.95% as against 2.97% growth in labour force during 1999-2000 and 2004-05.

(b) The employment in the unorganised sector has increased to 432.66 million in 2004-05 from 369.6 million in 1999-2000 whereas employment in the organised sector has declined to 26.44 million in 2004-05 from 27.96 million in 1999-2000.

(c) to (e) The approach paper to 11th Five Year Plan envisages creation of 70 million job opportunities (65 million in non agricultural sector). It also provides a framework to restructure policies to achieve a new vision based on faster, more broadbased and inclusive growth. It aims at making employment generation an integral part of the growth process and devise strategies to accelerate not only growth of employment but also wages of the poorly paid. It also suggests that the 11th Plan should aim at raising the rate of growth of Industrial sector to 10% and manufacturing growth to 12% per annum and also place a special emphasis on infrastructure and skill formation.

[Translation]

Financial Package to Handloom Sector

2414. SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGE
PATIL:
SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a High Level Committee has recommended a financial package for the development of Handloom Sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the reasons for delay in taking decision on this package; and

(d) the number of meetings held by the said Committee since its inception?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Honorable Prime Minister had convened a meeting on 16th May, 2006 to review serious problem relating to the handloom sector. In his speech, Honorable Prime Minister at a function to launch the Handloom Mark on 28th June 2006, also advised the Textile & Finance Minister to look at the problem of debt which is afflicting handloom Cooperatives so that this can be rescheduled or cooperatives recapitalized in a manner similar to that done for cooperative banks through the Vaidyanathan Committee.

To address issues relating to credit to the handlooms sector, a meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Textiles) on 21st August 2006 and it was decided to constitute a Committee comprising the MD, NABARD, as Convener and Representative of Indian Banking Association (IBA)/Reserve Bank of India (RBI)/National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT)/Secretary (Handlooms) Govt. of Orissa/Tamil Nadu/Uttar Pradesh/Assam/Kerala/Karnataka/West Bengal/Andhra Pradesh and Representative of National Association of State Corporative and Additional Development Commission for Handlooms.

(d) The first meeting was held on 1st September, 2006, which was chaired by MD, NABARD and had submitted the total budget for implementation of the Handloom Weavers' Financial Package for Handloom for Rs. 1295 crore. Out of this, the Government of India's share would be Rs. 1155 crore, State Government's share Rs. 130 crore and NABARD's contribution would be Rs. 10 crore.

On 06.11.2006 the Financial Package Proposal was sent to Ministry of Finance for their approval. Ministry of Finance on 02.02.2007 had, *inter-alia*, suggested that the State Government bear the large share of responsibility.

On 10.04.2007 a meeting was convened to discuss the Legal & Institutional reforms in cooperative credit structure for Handloom Sector with Secretary in-charge of Handlooms of major States *i.e.* Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Assam, etc. In this meeting it was also decided that the Central Government's share in the package should be Rs. 936.25 crores, State Government's share should be Rs. 348.75 crore and NABARD's contribution should remain at Rs. 10 crores.

On 23rd May, 2007 the draft Committee on Non-Plan Expenditure (CNE) note was circulated to Ministry of Finance, Planning Commission and Prime Minister's Office.

Ministry of Finance vide ID note dated 31.10.2007 has suggested reformulating the proposal incorporating their suggestion in the proposal of Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).

Children Working in Restaurants and Hotels

2415. SHRI HARISINH CHADVA:
SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any comprehensive policy for the children working as domestic help in Dhabas and Restaurants/Hotels;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds allocated, released and utilized under the said policy during each of the last three years and thereafter, State-wise; and

(d) the number of children benefited from this policy during the said period, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Government is following the National Policy for elimination of child labour since 1986. It envisages strict enforcement of law, project based plan of action for rehabilitation of child labor and covering their families under other developmental schemes of the Government. Under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, employment of children is prohibited

in 15 occupations and 57 processes including the two occupations viz. employment of children as domestic servants and in dhabas, restaurants, etc., which have been prohibited with effect from 10.10.2006. For the rehabilitation of child labour withdrawn from work, Government is implementing the National Child Labour Project Scheme. Under the Scheme, the children withdrawn from work are put in the Special Schools where they are provided education, vocational training, nutrition,

stipend and health care so as to mainstream them in the formal system of education.

(c) The details of expenditure under NCLP Scheme State-wise during the last three years are given in the enclosed Statement-I.

(d) The number of children benefited from NCLP Scheme State-wise during the last three years is given in the enclosed Statement-II.

Statement I

Expenditure of last three years under NCLP

(in Rupees)

Sl.No.	Name of States	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1.	Andhra Pradesh	232220831	211610829	141635611
2.	Assam	686500	12468000	12403500
3.	Bihar	28205834	43386910	142679960
4.	Chhattisgarh	23080814	36857738	31107540
5.	Goa	592000	0	0
6.	Gujarat	21535000	4404800	15549200
7.	Haryana	458500	1718000	0
8.	Jammu and Kashmir	458500	592000	0
9.	Jharkhand	19285773	37280078	18382939
10.	Karnataka	33101388	50651674	52567717
11.	Madhya Pradesh	44521226	36826745	29409567
12.	Maharashtra	16848418	19255655	27828784
13.	Orissa	131264355	134419118	110792590
14.	Punjab	18404902	15528577	9020900
15.	Rajasthan	44303713	68613939	116269919
16.	Tamil Nadu	72462692	98404201	62730916
17.	Uttar Pradesh	70736376	151892537	186647881
18.	Uttarakhand	61368	592000	0
19.	West Bengal	74236099	83128311	99140687
	Total	813082789	1007631112	1056167711

Statement II*Number of Children mainstreamed under NCLP Scheme (9-14 years)*

Name of the State	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Andhra Pradesh	20341	9217	38186
Assam	*	*	*
Bihar	*	545	*
Chhattisgarh	549	540	*
Gujarat	480	3885	*
Jharkhand	2018	1411	90
Karnataka	1254	1319	0
Madhya Pradesh	*	*	2824
Maharashtra	7619	9478	*
Orissa	466	1290	1781
Punjab	2756	1559	*
Rajasthan	5301	2197	*
Tamil Nadu	3248	*	4193
Uttar Pradesh	3429	5876	*
West Bengal	47461	37317	*
Total	94922	74634	47074

*Information is awaited from the State Government.

[English]

Information on GM Foodcrops

2416. SHRI SUGRIB SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether as per the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), countries who have approved the use of genetically modified crops should share information to reduce risks of disruption to the global food trade;

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

(c) whether any guidelines have been issued by FAO in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (e) According to the FAO, information sharing concerning food safety assessments of foods derived from biotechnology was recently discussed at the Seventh Session of the Codex *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology (held in Chiba, Japan, 24-28 September, 2007). Subject to the final approval of codex Alimentarius Commission, Task

Force proposed that FAO maintain a publicity accessible central data base containing relevant information to food safety assessments of recombinant-D.N.A. plants, utilizing the existing International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health. It was agreed that Codex Members should make information available to this database, which will facilitate rapid access by importing Codex Members to additional information relevant to the assessment of food safety assessment in situations of low-level presence of recombinant-DNA plant material in foods. Copy of the guidelines in this regard is enclosed as statement.

According to the WTO regulation any country introducing standards for a new category of food or modifying any parameter in the food is required to intimate to the WTO, which can be accessed by any country notified by the WTO. Furthermore, detailed information on the rationale of such notification could be obtained from the country introducing the regulation through the SPS enquiry point. Every country has got its sovereign right to ensure safety of food in order to protect health of its consumers. Therefore the safety evaluation of the GM food is given due consideration before considering the trade implications.

Statement

To: Members of FAO, Codex member countries and observer organizations, other interested parties

From: System Manager
International Portal on Food Safety, Plant and Animal Health
Vaile delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy

Subject: Request for the provision of information to the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health: Food safety assessments of recombinant-DNA plants

Background

The Seventh Session of the Codex *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology (Chiba, Japan, 24-28 September, 2007) considered the Proposed Draft Annex: Food Safety Assessment in Situations of Low-level Presence of Recombinant-DNA Plant Material in Food¹. Section 3 of the Proposed Draft Annex provides for data and information sharing on recombinant-DNA plants authorized in accordance with the Codex Plant Guideline².

In this connection FAO proposed a database and data entry mechanism designed to facilitate the publication of food safety assessment information, as detailed in the Proposed Draft Annex. Through the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health (IPFSAPH-www.ipfsaph.org), FAO will maintain a publicity accessible central database containing relevant information to food safety assessments of recombinant-DNA plants.

In view of the possible adoption of the above annex by the 31st Session of the Commission, the FAO/IPFSAPH Secretariat has already initiated finalisation of this database and would like to inform Members of FAO, as well as other interested parties, of the modalities of providing relevant information, as noted in paragraph 80 of the Report of the Task Force (ALINORM 08.31.34³), and invite their cooperation.

Process to complete database construction

Four tasks are envisaged to complete this work:

1. Initial manual data entry by FAO/IPFSAPH Secretariat of all existing food safety assessments of recombinant-DNA plants in food (expected to be completed by end November 2007);
 2. Request by FAO/IPFSAPH for conformation by members of FAO of the accuracy of the food safety assessment data relating to their country as entered in the database;
 3. Once national data has been checked and approved the database will be made publicity accessible.
- Please note that relevant Members of FAO shall be notified of the timing and details of task 2 at a later date, once task 1 has been completed by FAO/IPFSAPH.
4. Following publication of the data, all new food safety assessments of recombinant-DNA plants in food should be made available to FAO/IPESAPH for entry into the database.

¹ ALINORM 08/31/34 Appendix IV

² The existing Codex Plant Guideline is available at www.codexalimentarius.net/download/standards/10021/CXG045e.pdf

³ ALINORM 08/31/34 is available at www.codexalimentarius.net/download/report/693/al31_34e.pdf

Provision of food safety assessments of recombinant-DNA plants

Once the database is in production and publicly accessible, Members of FAO and other interested parties will be requested to provide information concerning new and reviewed food safety assessments to FAO/IPFSAPH via the email account IPFSAPH-Safety-Assessment@fao.org. containing the following information:

- A URL link to the location of the food safety assessment (FTP or HTTP), or provision of the food safety assessment as a file attachment (PDF or DOC format);
- Full contact details of the competent authority(ies) responsible for the food safety assessment, and of the product applicant;
- URL links to information on the same product in other databases maintained by relevant international organizations, as appropriate;
- Details on where detection method protocols and appropriate reference material (non-viable, or in certain circumstances, viable) suitable for low-level situation may be obtained, as appropriate.

In the meantime, Members of FAO and other interested parties are encouraged to nominate contact point(s) regarding food safety assessments of recombinant-DNA plants and submit their email address(es). Those wishing to submit email contact details are kindly requested to send them to IPFSAPH-Safety-Assessment@fao.org. This will help facilitate the alerting of new information both to and from FAO/IPFSAPH.

If required further information and clarification on the above can be obtained directly from the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health via:

Mr. Julius Jackson
System Manager
International Portal on Food Safety, Animal
and Plant Health
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
and
IPESAPH-Helpdesk@fao.org

[Translation]

Seed Research

2417. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of National Seed Research and Training Centres at present, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government proposes to open new training centres in various States, particularly in tribal and hilly regions; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The Government of India has established the National Seed Research & Training Centre at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. It has been notified as Central Seed Testing Laboratory under sub-section (1) of Section 4 of the Seeds Act, 1966 for seeds other than Bt. Cotton seeds to carry out the functions prescribed under the Seeds Act, 1966. The National Seed Research & Training Centre also undertakes training in seed quality and seed testing. The laboratory of the Central Institute of Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur has also been notified as the Central Seed Laboratory for ascertaining the presence or absence of Cry. 1 AC gene in cotton seeds and to act as referral laboratory for Bt. Cotton seeds.

There is no proposal to set up new training Centres. However, the States have been provided with financial assistance to strengthen seed quality regulation infrastructure.

Illegal Beef Trading

2418. SHRI SUBHASH SURESHCHANDRA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether illegal trade of beef on large scale is going in Delhi and other places of the country,

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether beef is being sold illegally in hotels/guest houses;

(d) if so, the action being taken against the owners of such hotels/guest houses in Delhi and other States in the country alongwith steps taken to check illegal beef trading and number of persons held responsible for such trade during the last three years; and

(e) the action taken or proposed to be taken against such owners/persons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) A complaint in regard to processing/storage of cow meat in processing plant/cold storage in Delhi was received in April 2005. Out of six samples tested at the Sriram Institute for Industrial Research, Delhi, five were found positive for beef. Accordingly, First Information Report was lodged against the concerned persons at the Police Station. The matter is sub judice. No complaint of illegal trade of beef were received in 2006 and till date in 2007.

(c) and (d) No complaints regarding illegal sale of beef in hotels/guest houses in Delhi have been received.

(e) Slaughter of animals & sale of meat is a State subject. The State Governments have formulated rules in this regard, which provide for appropriate penalties.

[English]

Scarcity of Water for Irrigation

2419. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a scarcity of water for irrigation in various States;

(b) if so, the details in this regard as on date, State-wise;

(c) the funds allocated for the said purpose during 2006-07 and 2007-08; and

(d) the details of the steps taken by the Government to deal with the problem of scarcity of water for irrigation in the country during the coming years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN

YADAV): (a) The average annual water availability in the country has been assessed as 1869 billion cubic metre (BCM). It is estimated that owing to topographic, hydrological and other constraints, the utilizable water is 1123 BCM.

The National Commission for Integrated Water Resources Development Plan in its report has made an assessment for water requirement for various sectors. As per the report, 629 BCM of water is being utilized for diverse purposes including irrigation for which 524 BCM of water is being utilized. The estimated total water requirements for the years 2010, 2025 and 2050 are 710 BCM, 843 BCM and 1180 BCM and that for irrigation are 557 BCM, 611 BCM and 807 BCM respectively. The availability of water in the country as a whole is considered adequate to meet the present level of demand of water for irrigation.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Allotment of Defence Lands for Commercial use

2420. SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Defence allots the land under its control to the private parties for commercial purposes;

(b) if so, the rules framed in this regard;

(c) whether some private parties are misusing the land allotted to them; and

(d) if so, the action taken by the Government to check such practices during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) The allotment of Defence land to private parties for commercial purposes is permissible under the Cantonment Land Administration Rules 1937. There are some instances where private parties have misused land allotted to them. Whenever instances of misuse come to the notice, action is taken under various statutory provisions of the Cantonments Act and the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971.

Number of Employee in IT Sector

2421. SHRI G. KARUNAKARA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of people are employed in the Information Technology (IT) Sector mainly in Call Centres, BPOs, Software Development etc.; and

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years as on date, Year-wise, indicating their percentage vis-a-vis total workforce in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) the details of people employed in IT sector are as follows:

Sl.No.	Sector	Financial Year (2004-05)	Financial Year (2005-06)	Financial Year (2006-07)
1.	IT Services	297000	398000	562000
2.	ITES-BPO	316000	415000	545000
3.	Engineering and Services R&D and Software Products	93000	115000	144000
4.	Domestic Market (including user organizations)	352000	365000	378000
Total		1058000	1293000	1630000

As per census statistics of India (2001) the total workers in India was 402,234,724. At present IT workforce is less than 0.5% of the total workforce.

[*Translation*]

Mother Dairy Booths

2422. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details and location of fruits and vegetables plants of Mother Dairy functioning in Delhi at present;

(b) the details of employees including Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/Other Backward Classes working in these plants, plant-wise;

(c) whether the norms prescribed for reservation are being followed in these plants;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the reserved vacant posts in these plants are likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The Fruit & Vegetable Unit of Mother Dairy, Delhi is located in Mangolpuri.

(b) Category-wise details of employees belonging to the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/Other Backward Classes are as under:-

Category	No. of employees
Scheduled Castes	47
Scheduled Tribes	4
Other Backward Classes	15
Others	392

(c) to (e) Mother Dairy has informed that the guidelines issued by Government of India with regard to the reservation policy are being followed. Efforts were made to recruit fresh SC/ST/OBC candidates through campus interviews conducted in different agriculture universities and otherwise also. Out of the 18 candidates

recruited as Executive Trainee/Trainee, 8 belong to the reserved categories (ST-1 and OBC-7).

[English]

Allocation of Spectrum

2423. SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Telephone Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and the Department of Telecom are demanding that all GSM operators be made to pay for additional spectrum allocated to them beyond 6.25 MHz. prescribed in the licence;

(b) if so, whether the technology that is currently used for all mobile services in the country is 2G;

(c) if so, whether DoT has constituted an Internal Committee to take a re-look at 2G-spectrum allocation procedure;

(d) if so, whether currently 2G spectrum is given to operators for free, but linked to their meeting the prescribed subscriber norms;

(e) if so, whether the 2G allocations to all operators is likely to be suspended until the Committee comes out with its report; and

(f) if so, the time by which the panel is likely to submit its recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (f) GSM operators have been licensed to provide mobile services in the country using 2G technology and are given initial spectrum for launching the service. With the growth of service, additional spectrum is allotted to the operators based on the subscriber criteria, and they are required to pay increased revenue share for additional spectrum. A committee has been set up to recommend the revision of subscriber based spectrum allocation criteria for allotment of 2G spectrum. However, the subscriber based criteria is sub-judice in Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT).

Evaluation of Employees Pension Scheme, 1995

2424. DR. K.S. MANOJ:
SHRI P.C. THOMAS:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of pensioner and amount accumulated in Pension Fund of Employees pension Scheme, 1995;

(b) the date on which the said scheme was last evaluated;

(c) whether the Government proposes to re-evaluate the scheme and revise the benefits in view of change in cost indices;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the commutation benefits to the pensioners has been withdrawn in the changed pension scheme;

(f) if so, whether the Government proposes to revert back to the original Employees Pension Schemes, 1995; and

(g) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) The number of pensioners as on 31.03.2007 is 26,53,181 and the amount accumulated in Pension Fund is Rs. 80,776.22 crores, at face value (provisional).

(b) Last valuation i.e. 6th valuation was completed on 31.03.2004.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) and (g) Does not arise.

Withdrawal of Money

2425. SHRI PRATIK P. PATIL:
SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of frauds and fraudulent withdrawal of money from Post Offices in the country particularly in Punjab has been reported during the last three years as on date; State-wise;

(b) the details of amount lost through such frauds;

(c) the number of officials found guilty in this regard;

(d) the actions taken/being taken by the Government against them; and

(e) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to prevent the fraudulent withdrawal of money from the Post Offices in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) The State-wise details including that of the State of Punjab of number of cases of frauds and fraudulent withdrawals of money reported during last three years, amount lost in such cases and number of officials found guilty therein is given in the enclosed Statement.

(d) 1756 officials were placed under suspension/put off duty, 629 officials were dismissed/removed from service, 105 officials were compulsory retired from service. Punishment of recoveries from pay have been awarded to 1891 officials and 1549 officials have been awarded with other punishments. Disciplinary cases against 1947 officials are under process. The cases have also been reported to police and CBI as per the prevailing instructions of the Department.

(e) Besides the regular Administrative, Internal Check and Audit Inspections of fixed periodicity, the Central Checking Squads at Regional, Circle and Postal Directorate levels keep a tight vigil over malpractices by surprise visits to Post Offices. Further, a number of preventive measures such as (i) supply of web enabled 'Negative List' of lost/stolen Cash Certificates for verification before payment, (ii) involvement of Administrative Offices in verification of requests for encashment of Cash Certificates received for payment at office other than the office of issue, (iii) payment of maturity claims of Post Office Savings Bank (POSB) by account payee cheque for all cases of Rs. 20000/- and above, (iv) banning of Authorized Agents as messengers in POSB payments, (v) strict implementation of tenures, banning repeat tenures in the same office and special integrity checks for officials manning single handed Post Offices, (vi) second inspection of 'bad offices' by officers not from the same Sub-Division, (vii) controlling access of unauthorized persons including Authorized Agents to internal working areas of Post Offices and strengthening the computer access security through stricter regime of custody of passwords, etc. are already introduced.

Statement

State-wise details of number of cases reported during last three years, amount lost in such cases and number of officials found guilty therein

Name of State	No. of cases reported during last three years years, as on date	Amount of loss in the cases	Number of officials found guilty
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	332	35372568.01	552
Assam	117	23828933.00	124
Bihar	34	100792237.95	677
Chhattisgarh	53	5448840.90	74

1	2	3	4
Delhi	21	29903854.00	135
Gujarat	119	13154251.90	170
Haryana	48	3425198.15	154
Himachal Pradesh	57	1480383.65	80
Jammu and Kashmir	22	1667446.00	24
Jharkhand	7	621379.25	7
Karnataka	500	35885651.70	517
Kerala	199	9362131.02	192
Maharashtra	202	10578974.45	268
Madhya Pradesh	163	20300000.00	325
Arunachal Pradesh	7	1958236.00	92
Manipur	7	12510593.00	19
Meghalaya	3	395705.00	3
Mizoram	4	1693307.00	4
Nagaland	6	1902634.00	15
Tripura	6	1559197.00	21
Orissa	63	4523360.74	63
Punjab	87	23800553.91	133
Rajasthan	113	12241913.85	153
Tamil Nadu	617	29218193.87	685
Uttar Pradesh	254	183915655.00	659
Uttarakhand	48	2385573.90	68
West Bengal	99	974300000.00	132
Total	3188	1532206773.25	5346

[Translation]

Export of Food Products

2426. SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to launch a comprehensive campaign for augmenting the export of Agriculture and processed food products to the Gulf countries;

(b) if so, whether any assessment has been made regarding the demand of said products in the Gulf countries;

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

(d) the steps taken by the Government for giving boost to export to the said countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) Third India-Gulf Cooperation Council Industrial and Investment Conference held in Mumbai in May 2007 identified agriculture as an important area of partnership between India and GCC countries. An Indian delegation led by Chairman, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) visited Saudi Arabia, UAE and Oman in September 2007 to assess the potential for export of agro-products and to attract investment from these countries into the Indian Agri-business sector. It was concluded that to enhance growth in Agricultural trade there was a need for brand promotion of premium Indian products apart from taking other steps. APEDA participated in selected exhibitions in Gulf countries to promote Indian Agricultural and processed food products. Other steps taken for giving boost to agricultural exports include Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojana, promotion of Agri Exports Zones (AEZ), dissemination of information, financial assistance to registered exporters for market development and for quality development.

Dhariwal Mills

2427. SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating to revive Lal Imli and Dhariwal Mills;

(b) if so, whether the Government has forwarded a proposal in this regard to Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR);

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of BIFR thereto; and

(d) the time by which the said scheme is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN): (a) to (d) The two woollen units of British India Corporation (BIC) namely

Cawnpore Woollen Mills *i.e.* Lal Imli and New Egerton Woollen Mills *i.e.* Dhariwal, are functioning at present. The Board for Industrial and Financial Restructuring (BIFR) had sanctioned a Rehabilitation Scheme in December, 2002 for revival of BIC Ltd. However, it could not be implemented within the stipulated time period. Also, a number of factors like technical, financial and legal, involved in the scheme had changed in the time span. In view of these, the BIFR directed to submit draft of Modified Rehabilitation Scheme (MRS) in its hearing held on 28.11.2005.

The MRS, as directed by BIFR was prepared by the Operating Agency (OA), *i.e.* Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) in consultation with the company and submitted to BIFR for its consideration and approval. Presently the scheme is under consideration of BIFR. Details of MRS are given in the enclosed Statement.

Statement

Salient features of MRS of BIC Ltd. as submitted to BIFR

The said MRS proposes the following features broadly:

- (i) Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) to 772 surplus employees with an expenditure of Rs. 60 Crores. Govt. will provide these funds as grant.
- (ii) Govt. grant for payment of salary & wages amounting to Rs. 25 Crores per annum for two years *i.e.* the implementation period of the Scheme.
- (iii) Conversion of interest bearing Govt. loan of Rs. 19.80 Crores with interest accrued thereon upto 30.09.2007 *i.e.* the cut off date and Rs. 37 Crores interest free loan into grant.
- (iv) Waive off of Rs. 2.13 Crores Guarantee Commission outstanding as on date.
- (v) Interest free Govt. loan Rs. 47.35 Crores for payment of conversion charges of leasehold land into freehold.
- (vi) The Company will sell its surplus assets of the value Rs. 116 Crores approx in the years 2007-08 and 2008-09.

- (vii) The Company will be converted from loss making to profit making in the year 2011-12. The net worth of the Company will become positive in the year 2008-09.
- (viii) The Company has planned to open retail outlets throughout the country. After implementation of the proposed Scheme, the two units of BIC, namely, 'Lal-imli, Kanpur and 'Dhariwal' at Punjab will become most modernised units of woollen sector.

Reduction in Rate of Postal Material

2428. SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme to protect the Postal System keeping in view the challenges being faced by private courier companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to reduce the tariff on telegram, price of post-card and inland letter; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) There is a proposal to amend the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 which *inter-alia* envisages registration of private couriers. The proposal is at conceptual stage.

(c) and (d) Presently, there is no proposal to reduce the tariff on telegram, price of postcard and inland letter card.

Foodgrain based schemes for homeless

2429. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the schemes being run to provide foodgrains for homeless people in the country;

(b) whether the Government had made assessment about the working and impact of these schemes;

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

(d) the steps taken by the Government to make these schemes more effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Following are the Schemes which provide foodgrains for homeless people are:

(1) Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY): Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) was launched in December, 2000 for the poorest of the poor families, from amongst BPL families covered under TPDS in the States and Union Territories. These families are issued foodgrains at highly subsidized rate of Rs. 2/- per kg. for wheat and Rs. 3/- per kg. for rice. The States/UTs are required to bear the distribution cost, and make available foodgrains to the beneficiaries at the price fixed by Government of India as above. The scale of issue is 35 kg. per family per month with effect from 1st April, 2002.

(2) 5% of BPL allocation of Hostels/Welfare Institutions: With a view to meet requirement of Hostels/Welfare Institutions viz. N.G.Os/Charitable Institutions which help shelter less/homeless poor and other categories not covered under TPDS or under any other Welfare Scheme, an additional allocation of foodgrains (rice and wheat) equal to 5% of the BPL allocation of each State/UT is made to States/UTs at BPL rates. This Scheme was introduced during 2002-03.

(3) Annapurna Scheme: For indigent senior citizens of 65 years of age or above who though eligible for old age pension under the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) but are not getting the pension, are covered and 10 kgs. foodgrains per person per month are supplied free of cost under this scheme. Implementation of the Scheme is done by States/UTs.

(b) and (c) While evaluation of AAY along with TPDS was covered in the study done by ORG MARG, for the other two schemes no specific evaluation studies have been taken up. The ORG MARG report mentioned that more than 90% of AAY families were dependent on ratio

shops for foodgrains, foodgrains earmarked for AAY were intact and sold as per prescribed issue prices, and 85% AAY households lifted rice under the scheme.

(d) Improvement of implementation of AAY is being attempted as part of 9-Point Action Plan for strengthening of TPDS (Statement annexed). Implementation of the other two welfare schemes is periodically reviewed by the Government with State Governments/UTs Governments.

Statement

Action Plan for Strengthening of TPDS

- (i) Continuous review of the BPL and AAY lists to eliminate bogus ration cards and to ensure coverage of only eligible BPL and antyodaya families.
- (ii) Ensuring leakage-free and diversion-free distribution of PDS commodities, regular inspection by different levels of functionaries, strict action against guilty persons/agencies.
- (iii) Involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in PDS operations-PRI representatives on Advisory Committee, running of fair price shops by Panchayats and effective representation of Panchayati Raj representatives on Vigilance Committees.
- (iv) Ensuring transparency in working of PDS, display of BPL and AAY lists by fair price shops, observance of notified timings by fair price shops.
- (v) Use of Information Technology, Computerization of TPDS operations, display of fair price shop-wise and district wise allocations of PDS commodities on web-sites for public scrutiny.
- (vi) Carryout door-step delivery of PDS commodities to fair price shops.
- (vii) Ensuring timely availability of and issuance of foodgrains by fair price shops.
- (viii) Creating awareness among public about PDS operations, training Vigilance Committees of intricacies of PDS operations.
- (ix) Making fair price shops financially viable entities-allowing them to sell non PDS items etc.

[English]

Relocation of Parking Space in Lansdowne Cantonment

2430. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT "BACHDA": Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some development work for parking purposes is underway at Sadar Bazar under Lansdowne-Cantonment, Uttarakhand;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether all procedural formalities have been completed for this project;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether some residents have filed petition against the aforesaid parking slot and have requested for its relocation; and

(f) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken to remove the parking slot from there?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

(a) and (b) The work for widening of road side berm and repairing of nullah was undertaken and completed by Cantonment Board, Lansdowne recently near Sadar Bazar on Lansdowne-Kotdwara road for creation of space for temporary parking of vehicles to reduce congestion.

(c) and (d) The work has been executed after meeting all the procedural formalities like making necessary budget provision, approval of Cantonment Board after tendering action etc.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) It has not been found feasible to relocate the parking site since there is no suitable alternate site available nearby.

[Translation]

Pending Cases of EPF

2431. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases lying pending in the concerned department as well as in the Tribunal regarding Employees Provident Fund in the country, State-wise;

(b) the details of amount lying held up for payment against these pending cases, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any investigation about the role of officials responsible for delay in this regard;

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

(e) the steps taken by the Government for speedy disposal of the said cases; and

(f) the extent of success achieved by the Government through the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) The details of cases pending under section 7A of the Employees Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 as on 31.03.2007 are given in the enclosed Statement-I. The details of cases pending under section 14B of the Act as on 31.03.2007 are given in the enclosed Statement-II. The details of cases before Employees' Provident Fund Tribunal is being collected and would be laid on the Table of the House.

(b) Amount in such cases can be determined only on conclusion of cases under section 7A & 14B of the Act.

(c) No, Sir.

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

(e) and (f) Progress of the pending cases is regularly monitored by the Head Office of Employees Provident Fund Organisation. Standing Counsels have been impressed upon to get expeditious disposal of the cases and prayers are made to the courts accordingly. The courts dispose of the cases filed before it in accordance with the due procedure.

Statement I

Assessment cases under section 7A of the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 as on 31.03.2007

Sl.No.	Name of Region	Cases Pending
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1376
2.	Bihar	979
3.	Chhattisgarh	233
4.	Delhi	596
5.	Goa	67
6.	Gujarat	1038
7.	Haryana	794
8.	Himachal Pradesh	147
9.	Jharkhand	365
10.	Karnataka	1120
11.	Kerala	1308
12.	Madhya Pradesh	658
13.	Maharashtra	2745
14.	North Eastern Region	203
15.	Orissa	624
16.	Punjab	1133
17.	Rajasthan	510
18.	Tamil Nadu	1347
19.	Uttar Pradesh	1669
20.	Uttaranchal	234
21.	West Bengal	1650
Total		18796

Statement II

Assessment cases under section 14B of the Act as on 31.03.2007

Sl.No.	Name of Region	Cases Pending
1.	Andhra Pradesh	809
2.	Bihar	272
3.	Chhattisgarh	103
4.	Delhi	781
5.	Goa	97
6.	Gujarat	962
7.	Haryana	313
8.	Himachal Pradesh	16
9.	Jharkhand	241
10.	Karnataka	551
11.	Kerala	23
12.	Madhya Pradesh	193
13.	Maharashtra	2581
14.	North Eastern Region	72
15.	Orissa	354
16.	Punjab	1200
17.	Rajasthan	231
18.	Tamil Nadu	53
19.	Uttar Pradesh	566
20.	Uttaranchal	8
21.	West Bengal	294
Total		9720

[English]

Criteria for Fixation of Retirement Salary

2432. SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria fixed for fixing the pay of workers on retirement under the Employees Pension Scheme, 1995;

(b) whether under the said criteria the emoluments drawn by the employees is not considered leading to a big loss to the said employees;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there is any proposal to change the said criteria to improve the living condition of the said employees; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) For fixing monthly member pension, average of the pay for last 12 months on which contribution towards pension fund is paid or payable is taken into account.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) Does not arise.

**Rehabilitation and Health Insurance
for Textile Workers**

2433. SHRI K.S. RAO: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any recommendations regarding rehabilitation and health insurance of textile workers;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to operationalise these recommendations;

(c) whether the Government proposes to change the eligibility criteria for the said scheme by removing the unrealistic and anti-worker provisions; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government has received the following recommendations:—

(A) In respect of rehabilitation of Textiles workers

- (i) Removal of ceiling on the wages under Textile Workers' Rehabilitation Fund Scheme (TWRFS); and
- (ii) Those workers of public and cooperative sector textile mills how are not covered under social security provisions, should also be covered under TWRFS.

The Government has found that the removal of the criteria of a wage ceiling without adequate budgetary support will prove counter-productive to the targeted section of textiles workers. As regards the coverage of the workers of public and cooperative sector textile mills which are not covered under social security provisions these are the responsibility of the concerned State Governments.

(B) In respect of health insurance of textile workers

- (iii) To increase the ceiling of Rs. 15,000/- per family under Health Insurance Scheme to the least Rs. 1,50,000/- per annum per family under general medical facilities.
- (iv) The areas of critical care like cancer bye-pass surgery, brain surgery etc. should also be brought within the ambit of the Scheme. The ceiling of proposed Rs. 1,50,000/- per annum should not, however, apply in such cases.

The Handloom Weavers' Comprehensive Welfare Scheme with the components of Health Insurance Scheme and the Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana has been approved by the Government. The steps taken to operationalize the recommendations and enhance the benefits, as far as possible, are as under:-

Sl.No.	Earlier Benefits	Benefits from 01.10.2007
(i) Natural Death	Rs. 50,000/-	Rs. 60,000/-
(ii) Accidental Death	Rs. 80,000/-	Rs. 1,50,000/-
(iii) Total Disability	Rs. 50,000/-	Rs. 1,50,000/-
(iv) Partial Disability	Rs. 25,000/-	Rs. 75,000/-

If the critical illness benefits are included in the scheme with existing benefits, then the amount of premium

will have to be enhanced by Rs. 4/- per thousand (*i.e.* about Rs. 400/- per Rs. one lakh) which consequent will result in raising the premium substantially from the current rates and thus additional burden on the weavers.

(c) and (d) No change is proposed in Textile Workers' Rehabilitation Fund Scheme (TWRFS) in the eligibility criteria are neither unrealistic nor anti-worker.

The eligibility criteria of the Health Insurance Scheme is under implementation and has been revised as part of the Welfare Scheme for workers in the sector. The details are as follows:-

- (i) During the 10th Five Year Plan only handloom weavers were eligible for the benefit of Health Insurance Scheme (HIS). However, during the 11th Plan the scope of the scheme has been enhanced to cover ancillary handlooms workers also *i.e.* like those engaged in warping, winding, dyeing, printing, finishing, sizing, Jhala making, Jacquard cutting etc. in addition to the other handloom weavers.
- (ii) The scheme shall give health benefits to handloom weavers & the ancillary weavers and their families of four including spouse and two children.
- (iii) A substantial part of the funds has been allocated to cover the weavers of North Eastern Region in both the schemes *i.e.* Health Insurance Scheme & Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana.
- (iv) Special attention is being paid to ensure that eligible women and SC/ST and OBC's so get the benefit of these schemes.
- (v) The scheme will cover the weaver upto the age of 80 years.
- (vi) The weavers belonging to the State Handloom Development Corporations/Apex/Primary Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Societies will be covered under the Scheme. Weavers outside co-operatives can also be covered under the scheme on a certificate from the State Directorate of Handlooms that they are fulfilling the eligibility condition.

*[Translation]***Training of Officers Abroad**

2434. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE:
SHRIMATI BHAVANA PUNDALIKRAO GAWALI:
SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Information Centre (NIC) has any policy in regard to sending Indian Officers abroad for training;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether middle level officers are also being sent abroad for the said purpose;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) National Informatics Centre (NIC) is providing backbone e-governance network (NICNET) and technical support to the Central Government Departments, States, UTs and District Administrations in the country for Internet, e-mail, file transfer, database development, e-governance applications development, office automation, capacity building, consultancy, hosting and databases access. For providing above service, NIC technical personnel needs to keep pace with the fast developments in IT in various specialized areas such as Cyber security, data communication, data storage, video conferencing etc. Accordingly NIC nominates its officers at various levels for training abroad in the specialized areas of relevance to NIC's priorities and futuristic technologies offered by various International Agencies.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The middle level officers sent abroad for training during the last one year is given at enclosed Statement.

(e) Does not arise.

Statement*Details of Middle Level Officers of NIC on Training Abroad*

Sl.No.	Name of the Officer and E. Code	Designation	Place of Posting	Place of Visit and period of visit	Purpose
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Smt. Seema Khanna (4051)	Scientist-D	New Delhi	Pittsburg, U.S.A. (09.07.06 to 26.07.06)	To attend the Training Programme at Carnegie Mellon University, USA for Masters Trainers under Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) Project
2.	Shri Shyam Sunder (4283)	Scientist-D	New Delhi	Singapore (24.07.06 to 04.08.06)	To attend two weeks training programme on Enterprise class storage systems at M/s Hitachi Data Systems, Singapore
3.	Shri Anil Dhotre (4641) Prc	Scientist-C	New Delhi	Singapore	-do-
2437. S	Shri Anil Dhotre (4641) Prc	Scientist-D	New Delhi	Singapore (22.08.06 to 04.09.06)	To attend Singapore Cooperation Training Award—Information Technology Management

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1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Shri Rajesh Mishra (3669)	Scientist-D	New Delhi	Pittsburgh, (02.10.06 to 18.10.06)	To attend the Training Programme at Carnegie Mellon Trainers under Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) Project
6.	Shri Anil Kumar Jha (4571)	Scientist-C	New Delhi	-do-	-do-
7.	Shri T. Pechimuthu (4623)	Scientist-C	New Delhi	Sydney and Singapore (09.10.06 to 17.10.06)	To attend IBM technical training and visit to a mission critical APP
8.	Smt. Seema Khanna (4051)	Scientist-D	New Delhi	California, USA (18.11.06 to 25.11.06)	To attend programme on deployment of Anti-Virus and Anti Spamming techniques
9.	Shri Anil Choudhury (4047)	Scientist-D	New Delhi	Japan (19.08.07 to 01.09.07)	To attend course on "Emergency Network Implementation Technology organized by JTEC
10.	Shri Dayanand Saha (4287) Shri K.P. Sharan (0889) Shri J.L. Ravindran (3778)	Scientist-D Scientist-D Scientist-D	New Delhi	Aethra, Italy (28.11.2007 to 02.12.2007)	To participate in the Training course on the empanelled systems

[English]

Ban on Recruitment in Telecom Department

2435. SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has imposed a ban of fresh recruitment in the Telecom Department;

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

(c) the number of posts lying vacant and since when these posts are lying vacant, Circle-wise; and

(d) the time by which the vacant posts are likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Telecom services are provided by two PSUs under DoT, namely Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahangar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL). These PSUs have their own policies on fresh recruitment.

Approval of the General Budget of Societies

2436. SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH:
SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be state:

(a) whether the Kendriya Bhande societies registered under Multi-State C

Act, 2002 failed to get their annual budget approved by their general bodies in contravention of the rules under the said Act making such approval mandatory;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor alongwith the action proposed to be taken against the management of such societies;

(c) whether the Government has made for proposes to make any exception to the said rule by authorising the Board of Directors/Executive Committee to approve the budget; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) As per the provision of sub-section (1) (g) of section 39 of the Multi State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) Act, 2002, the Board of every Multi-State Cooperative Society shall within six months after the close of the cooperative year, call the Annual General Body meeting to approve, inter-alia the Annual Budget of the Society. As reported by the Kendriya Bhandar, the Annual Budgets of the Kendriya Bhandar have not been approved by their General Body, since 2002-03 and onwards owing to the provision of bye-law No. 22(r) of Kendriya Bhandar which provides that Board shall exercise the powers to approve the Annual and Supplementary Budget of the society. However, Kendriya Bhandar has informed that the Annual Report, Audited Report and Audited Statement of Accounts of Kendriya Bhandar have been approved by their General Body since 2002-03. It has been further reported that the annual budget of Kendriya Bhandar for the year 2008-09 will be placed for consideration/approval of its general body during May, 2008 as decided in its annual general body meeting held on 30.9.2007. All the Multi-state co-operative societies including Kendriya Bhandar have been advised to strictly comply with the provisions of section 39(1) (g) of the MSCS Act, 2002.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Production of Ethanol from Sugarcane

2437. SHRI K.S. RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated demand and production of Ethanol during the next three years;

(b) whether the Government has initiated steps to make changes in Sugarcane Control Orders, 1955 to allow production of Ethanol directly from Sugarcane; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The estimated demand of ethanol during the next three sugar seasons (October-September), considering 5% ethanol blending during 2007-08 and 10% from 1.10.2008, will be about 3.0 million kilo litres.

Production of ethanol in India is basically from the molasses produced from sugarcane. Therefore, production of ethanol is dependent on production and crushing of sugarcane. As per the available estimates for production of sugarcane during 2007-08 at 345.6 million tons, production of rectified spirit/alcohol/ethanol by the sugar industry from molasses may be estimated at 2.6 million kilo litres.

(b) and (c) The Government has approval to allow sugar factories to produce ethanol directly from sugarcane juice. Accordingly, the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966 is being amended and the process is likely to be completed within three months.

[Translation]

Strike in BSNL

2438. SHRI RAGHUVVEER SINGH KOSHAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the employees of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and observed one day strike in July, 2007;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the objectives and demands of the employees;

(d) whether the Government has made any announcement or has taken any action in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Joint Forum of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited Unions and Associations of non-Executives and Executives had given one day strike notice on 11th July, 2007.

(c) The Joint Forum had given strike call against the non-issue of Purchase Order for 45.5 Million GSM lines (2G+3G) for Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited.

(d) and (e) As per the negotiations with the joint Forum, the modalities for purchase orders for GSM lines (2G+3G) were finalized and the advance purchase orders were issued.

Labour Courts and Tribunals

2439. SHRI JIVABHAI A. PATEL:
SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Labour Courts and Tribunals functioning in the country as on date, State-wise;

(b) whether a large number of cases are pending in courts for more than ten years as on date;

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

(d) the steps taken by the Government for speedy disposed of said cases; and

(e) the extent of success achieved by the Government through the steps taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) to (c) As per the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 an Appropriate Government can set up Labour Courts and Industrial Tribunals for resolution of Industrial Disputes. In respect of Industrial Disputes arising in the Central Sphere, Central Government is the appropriate Government for setting up the Central Government Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Courts (CGIT-cum-LCs). The details of State Labour Courts in all the States are

not centrally maintained. There are 22 CGIT-cum-Labour Courts in different parts of the country. The details of number of cases pending for more than ten years in respective CGITs-cum-Labour Courts are given in the enclosed Statement.

(d) and (e) Five new CGITs have been set up during X Five Year Plan, thereby, increasing the number of CGITs from 17 to 22. A new plan scheme of 'Holding of Lok Adalat as an alternative Grievance Redressal Mechanism' has also been introduced during X Five Year Plan. The steps taken by the Government has resulted in disposal of more number of cases. At the same time, there has been increase in awareness among workers with respect to their rights.

Statement

Sl.No.	Name of CGIT-cum-LC	Pendency for more than 10 years	
		Cases*	Applications**
1	2	3	4
1.	Mumbai I	9	4
2.	Mumbai II	3	1
3.	Dhanbad I	560	0
4.	Dhanbad II	46	5
5.	Asansol	78	9
6.	Kolkata	24	75
7.	Chandigarh I	736	97
8.	New Delhi I	99	0
9.	Kanpur	13	2
10.	Jabalpur	468	227
11.	Chennai	0	0
12.	Bangalore	12	1
13.	Hyderbaad	0	0
14.	Nagpur	0	0
15.	Bhubneshwar	0	0
16.	Lucknow	0	0
17.	Jaipur	0	0

1	2	3	4
18.	New Delhi II	0	0
19.	Guwahati	0	0
20.	Ernakulam	0	0
21.	Ahmedabad	192	171
22.	Chandigarh II	0	0
Total		2240	592

*Cases: Cases are those that are referred under Section 10 of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 to the CGIT-cum-Labour Courts for adjudication consequent upon the failure of conciliation made by the RLC(c)s or the ALC(c)s.

**Applications: Applications are those that are filed by the workers directly under Section 33-A and 33-C of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 before the CGIT-cum-Labour Courts.

12.00 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

I beg to lay on the Table—

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:-

(a) (i) Statement regarding Review by the Government of the working of the Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited, Hyderabad, for the year 2006-2007.

(ii) Annual Report of the Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited, Hyderabad, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 7555/2007]

(b) (i) Statement regarding Review by the Government of the working of the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited, Kolkata, for the year 2006-2007.

(ii) Annual Report of the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited, Kolkata,

for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 7556/2007]

(c) (i) Statement regarding Review by the Government of the working of the Goa Shipyard Limited, Goa, for the year 2006-2007.

(ii) Annual Report of the Goa Shipyard Limited, Goa, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 7557/2007]

(d) (i) Statement regarding Review by the Government of the working of the Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007.

(ii) Annual Report of the Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 7558/2007]

(e) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Bangalore, for the year 2006-2007.

(ii) Annual Report of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Bangalore, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 7559/2007]

(f) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Bharat Dynamics Limited, Hyderabad, for the year 2006-2007.

(ii) Annual Report of the Bharat Dynamics Limited, Hyderabad, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 7560/2007]

(2) A copy of the Cantonment Electoral Rules, 2007 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. S.R.O. 5(E) in Gazette of India dated the 21st August, 2007 under sub-section (3) of Section 31 of the Cantonments Act, 2006.

- (3) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (2) above.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7561/2007]

- (4) A copy of the Annual Administrative Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Cantonment Boards for the year 2007-2008.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7562/2007]

- (5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Aeronautical Development Agency, Bangalore, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.

- (ii) Statement regarding review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Aeronautical Development Agency, Bangalore, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7563/2007]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN): On behalf of Shri Shankersinh Vaghela, I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (i) Review by the Government of the working of the National Handloom Development Corporation Limited, Lucknow, for the year 2006-2007.
- (ii) Annual Report of the National Handloom Development Corporation Limited, Lucknow, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7564/2007]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): On behalf of Prof. Saif-ud-din Soz, I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (i) Statement regarding review by the Government of the working of the Water and Power Consultancy Services (India) Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

- (ii) Annual Report of the Water and Power Consultancy Services (India) Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7565/2007]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): On behalf of Shri Oscar Fernandes, I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy of the Statement (Hindi and English versions) on Convention No. 187 and Recommendation No. 197 concerning the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 95th session held in Geneva, in June, 2006.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7566/2007]

- (2) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Instructional Media Institute, Chennai, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.

- (ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Instructional Media Institute, Chennai, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7567/2007]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7568/2007]

- (2) A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (Hindi and English versions) between the ITI Limited and the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology for the year 2007-2008.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7569/2007]

- (3) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (i) Review by the Government of the working of the ITI Limited, Bangalore, for the year 2006-2007.
- (ii) Annual Report of the ITI Limited, Bangalore, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7570/2007]

- (4) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Pune, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Pune, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7571/2007]

- (5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER), Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Society for Applied Microwave

Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER), Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7572/2007]

- (6) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the DOEACC Society, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the DOEACC Society, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7573/2007]

- (7) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology (C-MET), Pune, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology (C-MET), Pune, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7574/2007]

- (8) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Software Technology Parks of India, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Software Technology Parks of India, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7575/2007]

- (9) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the ERNET India, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the ERNET India, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7576/2007]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): On behalf of Shri Kantilal Bhuria, I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation of India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation of India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7577/2007]

- (2) A copy of the Notification No. G.S.R. No. 505(E) (Hindi and English versions) in Gazette of India dated the 25th July, 2007 specifying the machines mentioned therein as dangerous machine, issued under section 3 of the Dangerous Machines (Regulation) Act, 1983.
- (3) A copy of the Dangerous Machines (Regulation) Rules, 2007 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 506(E) in Gazette of India dated the 25th July, 2007 under sub-section (2) of section 36 of the Dangerous Machines (Regulation) Act, 1983.
- (4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (2) and (3) above.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7578/2007]

- (5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7579/2007]

- (6) A copy of the Fruits and Vegetables Grading and Marking (Amendment) Rules, 2007 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 171 in weekly Gazette of India dated the 12th August, 2007, under sub-section (3) of section (3) of the Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marketing) Act, 1937.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7580/2007]

- (7) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Karnataka Cashew Development Corporation Limited, Mangalore, for the year 2006-2007.

- (ii) Annual Report of the Karnataka Cashew Development Corporation Limited, Mangalore, for the year 2006-2007, along with the Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7581/2007]

- (8) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, Hyderabad, for the year 2006-2007.

- (ii) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, Hyderabad, for the year 2006-2007, together with audit report thereon.

- (iii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, Hyderabad, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7582/2007]

- (9) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working

of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7583/2007]

- (10) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7584/2007]

- (11) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of Section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (a) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the State Farms Corporation of India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.
- (ii) Annual Report of the State Farms Corporation of India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7585/2007]

- (b) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the National Seeds Corporation of India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.
- (ii) Annual Report of the National Seeds Corporation of India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7586/2007]

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under section 39 of the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986:—

- (i) The Bureau of Indian Standards (Advisory Committees) Amendment Regulation, 2007, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 690(E) in Gazette of India dated the 1st November, 2007.
- (ii) The Bureau of Indian Standards (Recruitment to Scientific Cadre) Amendment Regulations, 2007, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 718(E) in Gazette of India dated the 15th November, 2007.
- (iii) The Bureau of Indian Standards (Certification) Amendment Regulations, 2007, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 577(E) in Gazette of India dated the 6th September, 2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7587/2007]

- (2) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under section 50 of the National Dairy Development Board Act, 1987:—

- (i) The National Dairy Development Board Workmen (Appointment, Pay and Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations, 2007 published in Notification No. DEL: NDDB in Gazette of India dated the 24th April, 2007.
- (ii) The National Dairy Development Board Officers (Appointment, Pay and Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations, 2007 published in Notification No. DEL: NDDB in Gazette of India dated the 24th April, 2007.
- (iii) The National Dairy Development Board Officers (Administration of Fund, Accounts and Budget) (Amendment) Regulations, 2007 published in Notification No. DEL: NDDB in Gazette of India dated the 5th September, 2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7588/2007]

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Wool and Woollens Export Promotion Council, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Wool and Woollens Export Promotion Council, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7589/2007]

- (2) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Central Wool Development Board, Jodhpur, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Central Wool Development Board, Jodhpur, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7590/2007]

- (3) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Jute Industries Research Association, Kolkata, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Indian Jute Industries Research Association, Kolkata, for the year 2005-2006.

- (4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7591/2007]

- (5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Bombay Textile Research Association, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Bombay Textile Research Association, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7592/2007]

- (6) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the South India Textile Research Association, Coimbatore, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the South India Textile Research Association, Coimbatore, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7593/2007]

- (7) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Textiles Committee, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Textiles Committee, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7594/2007]

- (8) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Apparel Export Promotion Council, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Apparel Export Promotion Council, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7595/2007]

- (9) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Powerloom Development and Export Promotion Council, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Powerloom Development and Export Promotion Council, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7596/2007]

- (10) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Cotton Textiles Export

Promotion Council of India, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council of India, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7597/2007]

- (11) A copy of the Central Silk Board (Amendment) Rules, 2007 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 632(E) in Gazette of India dated the 26th September, 2007 under sub-section (3) of Section 13 of the Central Silk Board Act, 1948.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7598/2007]

- (12) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Jute Corporation of India Limited, Kolkata, for the year 2006-2007.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Jute Corporation of India Limited, Kolkata, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7599/2007]

- (13) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Centre for Jute Diversification, Kolkata, for the year 2005-2006, along with Audited Accounts.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Centre for Jute Diversification, Kolkata, for the year 2005-2006.

- (14) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (13) above.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7600/2007]

- (15) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Wool Research Association, Thane, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Wool Research Association, Thane, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7601/2007]

- (16) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Institute of Textile Management, Coimbatore, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Institute of Textile Management, Coimbatore, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7602/2007]

- (17) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Northern India Textile Research Association, Ghaziabad, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Northern India Textile Research Association, Ghaziabad, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7603/2007]

- (18) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Synthetic and Art Silk Mills' Research Association, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Synthetic and Art Silk Mills' Research Association, Mumbai, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7604/2007]

- (19) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Ahmedabad Textile

Industry's Research Association, Ahmedabad, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association, Ahmedabad, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7605/2007]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): On behalf of Shri Jay Prakash Narayan Yadav, I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

(i) Review by the Government of the working of the Andhra Pradesh State Irrigation Development Corporation Limited, Hyderabad, for the year 2003-2004.

(ii) Annual Report of the Andhra Pradesh State Irrigation Development Corporation Limited, Hyderabad, for the year 2003-2004, along with Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7606/2007]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): On behalf of Dr. Akhilesh Prasad Singh, 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 9 of the Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982:—

(i) The Sugar Development Fund (Third Amendment) Rules, 2007 published in

Notification No. G.S.R. 699(E) in Gazette of India dated the 8th November, 2007.

- (ii) The Sugar Development Fund (Second Amendment) Rules, 2007 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 697(E) in Gazette of India dated the 7th November, 2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7607/2007]

- (2) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Central Warehousing Corporation, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007, along with Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Central Warehousing Corporation, New Delhi, for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT 7608/2007]

12.03 hrs.

MESSAGES FROM RAJYA SABHA

[English]

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report the following three messages received from the Secretary General of Rajya Sabha:—

(i) "In accordance with the provisions of sub-rule (6) of rule 186 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to return herewith the Appropriation (No. 4) Bill, 2007, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 29th November, 2007 and transmitted to the Rajya Sabha for its recommendations and to state that this House has no recommendations to make to the Lok Sabha in regard to the said Bill."

(ii) "In accordance with the provisions of sub-rule (6) of rule 186 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to return herewith the Appropriation (No. 5) Bill, 2007, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 29th November, 2007 and transmitted to the Rajya Sabha for its

recommendations and to state that this House has no recommendations to make to the Lok Sabha in regard to the said Bill."

- (iii) "In accordance with the provisions of sub-rule (6) of rule 186 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to return herewith the Appropriation (Railways) No. 4 Bill, 2007, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 29th November, 2007 and transmitted to the Rajya Sabha for its recommendations and to state that this House has no recommendations to make to the Lok Sabha in regard to the said Bill."

12.03 $\frac{1}{4}$ hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC UNDERTAKINGS

23rd Report

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Sir, I beg to present a copy of the Twenty-third Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Public Undertakings on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 17th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on "GAIL (India) Limited-A Comprehensive Examination."

12.03 $\frac{1}{2}$ hrs.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR

25th Report

[English]

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY (Nalgonda): Sir, I beg to present a copy of the Twenty-fifth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Labour on "The Unorganized Sector Workers' Social Security Bill, 2007."

12.04 hrs.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Statements

[English]

SHRI SUDHANGSHU SEAL (Calcutta-North West): Sir, I beg to lay on the table a copy each (Hindi and English versions) of the following Statements:—

- (1) Statement showing Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 16th Report (14th Lok Sabha) of the Committee relating to the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their 8th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on 'The Delhi Development Authority (DDA)';
- (2) Statement showing Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 18th Report (14th Lok Sabha) of the Committee relating to the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their 14th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2006-2007) of the Ministry of Urban Development'; and
- (3) Statement showing Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 19th Report (14th Lok Sabha) of the Committee relating to the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their 15th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2006-2007) of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation'.

12.05 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS

10th, 11th and 13th Reports

[English]

SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY (Visakhapatnam): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each (Hindi and English

versions) of the Statements of the Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas showing further action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in Chapter I and Chapter V of the following Reports of the Committee:—

- (1) 10th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 6th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on 'Pricing of Petroleum Products';
- (2) 11th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 7th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on 'Exploration of Oil and Natural Gas including Coal Bed Methane'; and
- (3) 13th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 9th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2006-07) of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas'.

12.05½ hrs.

COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

14th Report

[English]

SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH (Karol Bagh): Sir, I beg to present the Fourteenth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Empowerment of Women (2007-08) on the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Sixth Report of the Committee (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject 'National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Caste Students for Higher Studies Abroad'.

12.06 hrs.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

- (i) Status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 19th Report of Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

pertaining to the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Sir, I beg to lay on the statement on the status of implementation of recommendation contained in the 19th Report of the Standing Committee on Food and Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs) in pursuance of direction 73A of the hon. Speaker, Lok Sabha Bulletin—Part II dated 1st September, 2006.

A statement indicating the Action Taken/status of all the recommendations contained in the 19th Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution is annexed. It may be noted that the report contains 29 recommendations. These recommendations have been carefully examined by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs). All the 29 recommendations have been accepted and action taken thereon has been indicated.

The Action Taken replies have been sent to the Lok Sabha on 26th July, 2007.

12.06¼ hrs.

- (ii) Status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 26th Report of the Standing Committee on Information Technology on Demands for Grants (2005-06) pertaining to the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology**

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): Sir, I beg to lay a statement regarding the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 26th Report of the Standing Committee on Information Technology on Demands for Grants (2005-2006) pertaining to the

*Laid on the Table and also placed in Library. See No. LT 7608/2007

**Laid on the Table and also placed in Library. See No. LT 7610/2007

Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

12.06¹/₂ hrs.

(iii) Status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 39th Report of the Standing Committee on Information Technology on Demands for Grants (2006-07) pertaining to the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): Sir, I beg to lay a statement regarding the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 39th Report of the Standing Committee on Information Technology on Demands for Grants (2006-2007) pertaining to the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

12.06³/₄ hrs.

(iv) Status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 41st Report of Standing Committee on Information Technology on Demands for Grants (2006-07) pertaining to the Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology**

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): Sir, I beg to lay a statement regarding the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 41st Report of the Standing Committee on Information Technology on Demands for Grants (2006-2007) pertaining to the Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

*Laid on the Table and also placed in Library. See No. LT 7611/2007.

**Laid on the Table and also placed in Library. See No. LT 7612/2007.

12.07 hrs.

(v) Status of Implementation of the recommendations contained in the 44th Report of Standing Committee on Information Technology on Demands for Grants (2007-08) pertaining to the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): Sir, I beg to lay a statement regarding the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 44th Report of the Standing Committee on Information Technology on Demands for Grants (2007-2008) pertaining to the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

12.07¹/₂ hrs.

(vi) Status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 45th Report of Standing Committee on Information Technology on Demands for Grants (2007-08) pertaining to the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology**

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): Sir, I beg to lay a statement regarding the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 45th Report of the Standing Committee on Information Technology on Demands for Grants (2007-2008) pertaining to the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

*Laid on the Table and also placed in Library. See No. LT 7613/2007

**Laid on the Table and also placed in Library. See No. LT 7614/2007

12.08 hrs.

- (vii) Status of Implementation of the recommendations contained in the 27th Report of Standing Committee on Railways on Demands for Grants (2007-08) pertaining to the Ministry of Railways*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): Sir, I beg to lay a statement on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 27th Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways in pursuance of Directive 73-A of the hon. Speaker, Lok Sabha issued vide Lok Sabha Bulletin-Part II, dated 1st September, 2004.

The 27th Report of the Committee on Demands for Grants 2007-2008 presented to the Lok Sabha on 26.4.2007 contained 18 recommendations and Action Taken Notes thereon were furnished to the Committee on 25.10.2007 (English and Hindi versions).

Statements showing details of all the recommendations contained in the report and implementation status thereof are enclosed. Since the statements are voluminous, I request that the same may be taken as read.

—————
...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: We will now take up the Calling Attention—Item No. 21.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI (Bhadrak): Sir, I have given a notice on breach of privilege. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have received your notice of question of privilege of 1st December, 2007 against Shri Ajay Maken, Minister of State in the Ministry of Urban Development for allegedly going to the Press against my observation made in the House on 29th November, 2007. This matter is under my consideration.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Thank you, Sir.

*Laid on the Table and also placed in Library. See No. LT 7615/2007

12.09 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Situation arising out of violence during and after the recent demonstration by All Adivasi Students Association of Assam (AASAA) on 24 November, 2007 at Guwahati and steps taken by the Government in this regard*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, we will take up Calling Attention—Item No. 21.

May I make a request to the hon. Members?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please cooperate. Just wait.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, we have given a notice. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is a matter which was sought to be raised during the period after the Question Hour and large number of hon. Members had given notices. I felt it was an important matter because almost all sides of the House were agitated. I am thankful to the hon. Minister for responding to my request to convert it into a Calling Attention. I am thankful to him for his cooperation.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Ajoy Chakraborty, I have not yet called you.

I will try to accommodate all the hon. Members as I have assured, who had given notices on that day, even few more. But I earnestly appeal to all sections of the House to please cooperate with the Chair and try to finish it as briefly as possible.

Shri Ajoy Chakraborty.

SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY (Basirhat): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

*Laid on the Table and also placed in Library. See No. LT 7616/2007

"Situation arising out of violence during and after the demonstration by All Adivasi Students Association of Assam (AASSA) on 24th November, 2007 at Guwahati and steps taken by the Government in this regard."

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): Sir, I had earlier made a statement on this issue in this august House on 27th November 2007 on the basis of information made available to us by the State Government. A copy of that statement is attached herewith. I would like to draw the attention of the House to some of the developments, which have taken place since then.

The Government of Assam has decided to institute a Judicial inquiry under the Commission of Inquiries Act to be headed by Justice (Retd.) R.K. Manisena Singh to enquire into the incident of Group clashes that broke out as a consequence to the procession taken out by the All Adivasi Student Association of Assam. Three persons have been arrested, and a separate case has been registered against them for outraging the modesty of a tribal girl. The State Government has decided to give Rs. 1 lakh to the girl whose modesty was outraged during the incident. I had received a letter from the hon. Chief Minister, and he has said in that letter that the Government of Assam has decided to bear the expenses of the girl's education throughout her life, and then give her one employment also.

The District Magistrate and the Senior Superintendent of Police, Guwahati City have been transferred. The Officer-in-Charge of the Basistha Police Station has been transferred, and one Sub-Inspector of Police has been suspended for negligence of duties. Of the total number of 242 persons who were injured in the incident, at present 123 persons are undergoing treatment at Guwahati Medical College Hospital. Again, I am informed by the hon. Chief Minister that the expenses required to be borne for this kind of treatment will be borne by the State Government.

The State Government has alerted the District Administration of all the districts having mixed population of Adivasis and Non-Adivasis to take adequate preventive and precautionary measures so that there is no ethnic flare up in the State. Mobile patrolling has been intensified in the areas where there is a mixed population of Adivasis and Non-Adivasis with the instruction to keep watch on the mischief mongers and vested interest groups who

may try to exploit the situation. Peace Committees have been activated in all the districts to maintain peace and harmony, and the situation is under control.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has also advised the State Government that appropriate measures be taken so that an environment of peace and normalcy can be restored. The situation is being closely and continuously watched and monitored.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, I know that you had immediately responded and made a *suo motu* statement. But I have allowed this Calling Attention in view of the sentiments expressed by all sides on this issue.

Shri Ajoy Chakraborty.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY: Hon. Speaker, Sir, I convey my thanks and gratitude to you, on behalf of all my colleagues and myself, for allowing us to discuss this important subject.

MR. SPEAKER: Please cooperate.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY: Sir, the State of Assam is the eldest sister of the seven sisters. Assam has been suffering with a lot of problems including the problem of insurgency. Assam is an old ground of extremists and ultras who disturb the peace and tranquility of the State of Assam.

A new situation has arisen since 24th November 2007. All of us know that thousands and thousands of Adivasis—most of whom are workers of tea garden and some students also—have demonstrated in the city of Guwahati for fulfilling their just demands. In the meanwhile, the situation became turbulent. There was a clash between two groups of people. That incident was later reported in the electronic and print media saying that more than 20 people succumbed to injuries. However, the *suo motu* statement made by the hon. Minister of Home says that only one person succumbed to injuries. We respectfully differ from this statement of the Minister. Not only that, an unhappy, untoward and shameful incident took place on the streets of the city of Guwahati, one of the important places of our country. An *adivasi* girl was molested, her modesty was outraged, and she was run after for fear in a naked position.

MR. SPEAKER: Let us not narrate the incidents. It is not good for the country as a whole.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY: Yes, Sir, it is not good for the country as a whole. Thereafter, the All Assam Adivasi Students union called a 36 hour *bandh* all over Assam. The situation became turbulent and it turned grave. One person succumbed to injuries and several other were also injured. In Assam there is a difference between two groups of people. We should do our duty cutting across the party lines and help the State Government and the Government of India to maintain peace and tranquility and brotherhood. For the sake of the unity of the country, all of us should act accordingly and save the sovereignty and unity of the country. The hon. Minister in his statement said that only one person succumbed to injuries in the 24th November incident. But there have been reports that more than 20 people succumbed to injuries. What is the actual fact? Was it one person or more than 20 people who succumbed to injuries? Secondly, in view of the demand of the Adivasis to include them as a Scheduled Tribe in the State of Assam, is the Government of India going to issue instructions to the State Government of Assam to include them in the list of Scheduled Tribes? Thirdly, has any high-level officer from the Home Ministry, including the hon. Home Minister or the State Home Minister, rushed to the spot, discussed the situation with the State Government authorities to maintain peace and tranquility in the State of Assam? Has the Government inquired into the matter to find out whether any insurgent group or any vested interest group was behind this incident? I ask the hon. Home Ministry as to whether payment of compensation of one lakh rupees will cover the lost prestige of a woman?

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Shri Ajoy Chakraborty Ji, please tell us to what is your demand.

[English]

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY: It is not a question of Rs. 1 lakh or Rs. 10 lakh. The question is that such a shameful incident has taken place in the country which cannot be covered by any amount of compensation.

MR. SPEAKER: Do not be guided by other hon. Members.

[Translation]

*SHRI SANSUMA KHUNGGUR BWISWMUTHIARY (Kokrajhar): I thank you Sir, for giving me an opportunity

to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Home Minister to the volatile situation arising out of violence during and after the demonstration by AAASA on 24th November, 2007 at Beltola in Assam. I would like to inform the House that on 24th November some processionists under the aegis of All Assam Adivasi Students Association indulged in vandalism and violence in Beltola in Guwahati as a result of which in a counter attack they were beaten up and tortured mercilessly. Even a girl was also stripped of her clothes. I condemn this incident which has tarnished the image not only of Assam but also of our country as a whole.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: All these are no record. Please put your clarificatory question.

[Translation]

*SHRI SANSUMA KHUNGGUR BWISWMUTHIARY: On 28 November, 2008, a Bengali marriage party while travelling from Siliguri to Basugaon in Kokrajhar district was attacked by some Adivasi extremists. The terrorists poured petrol on the bus and set it on fire. The newly married couple was very badly injured in this incident and they were admitted to a hospital at Kokrajhar town. The handyman of the bus Shri Khandan Basumatary was severely injured and is still battling for life in a hospital in Kokrajhar. Sir, I am showing you the photograph of the injured persons. This is a very horrible situation. ... (Interruptions)

Yesterday, I visited Beltola in Guwahati where the incident had taken place. The people of the area told me that the Assam Government's contention that they didn't know that the All Assam Adivasi Students Association would hold a rally is very surprising. The people told me that....

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Do not make allegations against the State Government *per se*.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is the problem of allowing such matters.

... (Interruptions)

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Assamese.

[*Translation*]

*SHRI SANSUMA KHUNGGUR BWISWMUTHIARY: On the 24th November an MLA went to the Headmaster of the South Beltola High School and forced him to grant permission for the rally. But the Headmaster didn't grant the permission at the initial stage. One minister's name was also mentioned in this connection. If an MLA of a ruling party was seeking permission to hold the rally and a Minister was also involved there and if some policemen and a magistrate were present there, how can the Government of Assam say that they didn't know that a rally was going to be held there? I therefore would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Home Minister to take appropriate steps in this regard. Sir, I consider it to be highly deplorable that despite strong opposition from the tribal people of Assam, the Government is trying to accord ST status to six ethnic groups. My appeal to the Government is that until and unless the local tribal people agree with the Government of India and the Assam Government in the matter of according ST status to the communities, no decision should be imposed upon the tribal people of Assam. In the year 2002 when the ST list was revised, at the national level, five new tribes in Assam were also included. But reservation quota for the tribal was not increased proportionately. At the national level also around two hundred new tribes were enlisted as scheduled tribes but their reservation quota still remains the same at 7.5% only.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: This is not Assam Assembly. I will not permit such detailed matters to be raised in the House.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This is very unfortunate. Please put your question.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question? You have to listen to the Chair also.

SHRI SANSUMA KHUNGGUR BWISWMUTHIARY: At present, fourteen Scheduled Tribes are there in Assam. ...(*Interruptions*) Even then, the existing reservation quota

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Assamese.

for STs is only 10, which should have been enhanced following the increase of the number of Scheduled Tribes. ...(*Interruptions*) Even in the USA, till today, 350 Tribes have not been recognized by the Federal Government authorities. In such a situation, any kind of unilateral policy decision with regard to the granting of the Scheduled Tribes status to other groups of people in relation to Assam should not be imposed on the existing original tribal people at the cost of their indigenous rights. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Kiren Rijju, put only a question. I have got a number of names. This is not a time to make speeches.

SHRI KIREN RIJJU (Arunachal West): I extend my gratitude for your thoughtful consideration on the issue. The same thing is expected from the Government and the Home Minister has been kind enough to oblige. Though the statement he made on 27th of last month was belated, I welcome it.

The hon. Home Minister has given information about the details of what happened; I do not dispute much on those facts, except this—when the All Adivasi Students Association of Assam had applied to the District Magistrate for holding Gana Samabesh Rally at Beltola, Guwahati on 24th November 2007, permission was not granted. If the permission was not granted to hold a particular rally, how come there were only four police constables and one Assistant Sub-Inspector?

MR. SPEAKER: These are matters of the State Administration. Since certain issues were involved, the hon. Home Minister came here and made a *suo motu* statement, in view of the feelings expressed across the House. I said that I would turn into a Calling Attention so that you can put a few questions and seek clarifications. That is the rule.

SHRI KIREN RIJJU: My question will be related to the Central Government only.

MR. SPEAKER: Please do it. You are very well articulate; I know that. Please do it.

SHRI KIREN RIJJU: Thank you. When the procession went near the entrance gate of the MLA Hostel, the problem started. My question to the Home Minister is this. Guwahati is a very sensitive area; everyone knew this. It is the Capital of Assam; and it is

[Shri Kiren Rijju]

the Constituency of the hon. Prime Minister. Day before yesterday, the Chief Minister of the State had admitted. ...*(Interruptions)* Yes, the whole of Assam is the Constituency of the Prime Minister. ...*(Interruptions)* I am just responding to them.

MR. SPEAKER: In every matter, politics is not necessary.

SHRI KIREN RIJJU: The Chief Minister had himself admitted that there had been a lapse on the part of the State Government, what action the Government of India will take? This is a very serious issue. The Chief Minister, on record, admitted the mistake. Now, the State Government, as the Home Minister said, decided to set up a judicial inquiry. I had demanded CBI inquiry before that. That will lead to getting the culprits who are responsible for the incidents on the 24th. But what will be the political action? We have to take moral responsibility somewhere.

Madam Sonia Gandhi is also sitting here. I would like to put a question through you, Sir, to the hon. Home Minister to please discuss with his leadership also on what political action we have to take, because the incident that happened on that day in Guwahati is not merely a law and order situation. It was a deliberate attempt on the part of the State Government.

MR. SPEAKER: No. I would not allow allegations against a State Government. There is nobody to reply them.

SHRI KIREN RIJJU: This is not an allegation also. The hon. Home Minister said that one person succumbed to the injuries. I challenge that statement of the Home Minister. The AASAA has reported that there were 12 deaths. Where are those 12 dead bodies? Please reply as to the exact number of deaths took place on that day and subsequently. They have published the list also of 40 missing persons. Where are those 40 missing persons? When the list was produced before the State Government and the Press, the hon. Home Minister is totally running away from the fact and reporting just one death. How can he be so far away from the truth?

MR. SPEAKER: No. No more questions. You are misutilizing the opportunity.

SHRI KIREN RIJJU: My last question is this. It has been published in the newspaper with photographs that

during that violence, the photographs of NSUI activists were also published. That shows the involvement of the political groups during the clash. I want the hon. Home Minister to come clean on that.

I want to end my remark with a demand that there must be a CBI inquiry immediately.

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry; I will not allow this.

(Interruptions)...*

MR. SPEAKER: No more. Please cooperate. Shri Sonowal, please put a clarificatory question.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL (Dibrugarh): First of all, I am thankful to you, on behalf of the people of Assam, for allowing this sensitive matter to be discussed in this august House. As you all know, the incident took place in Beltola, in the heart of the Capital city of Assam on 24th November. I do not want to elaborate the incident in detail...*

MR. SPEAKER: It will not be recorded. I request all of you, this is not Assam Assembly. There is nobody on behalf of the Assam Government to reply.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL (Dibrugarh): Sir, I will have to address to the things happening in reality. ...*

MR. SPEAKER: This is the trouble. We cannot keep ourselves within limits.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: Sir, it was not my *bhashan*. It was the *bhashan* of the hon. Chief Minister of Assam. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You may ask the question as to what you want the Central Government to do in this matter.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: Sir, he had admitted twice that the present Government. *

MR. SPEAKER: You are only entitled to ask what the Central Home Minister can reply.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: Yes, Sir, through you, I am addressing the Central Home Minister. Our submission is, in these circumstances people of Assam are suffering from fear psychosis. ...*

MR. SPEAKER: Bring it to me. I will go through it.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: In order to restore democracy, to bring back peace and tranquility to the State. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry. This will not go on record.

(*Interruptions*)...*

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: The Government of India will have to take strong measures and have to intervene constitutionally because the Government of Assam has miserably failed. In these circumstances, the Government of India cannot keep a mum and sit as a mere spectator. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This will be deleted.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: Assam, being the home State of the hon. Prime Minister of the country. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Different approach cannot be given just because the hon. Prime Minister represents that State.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: This is my humble submission, Sir. I have every right to make my submission. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No. Subject to rules and subject to the Chair's direction.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: Yes, Sir. I have two specific questions to ask. Under these circumstances what will be the constitutional role of the Government of India to restore peace, democracy and also to bring back peace and tranquility to the State of Assam.

The unanimous decision of the Assam Assembly, about two years back, was to give tribal status to the six communities that those six communities are not expecting that they are going to get the tribal status from the Government of India. On the one hand, the Government of Assam is promising to give those six communities the

tribal status without affecting the existing tribals in the State. What would be the role of the Government of India to give tribal status to these six communities, that is, Mottock, Moran, Ahoun, Chutia, Rajbhanshi, tea communities including adivasis.

Thirdly, the present situation is very much volatile and very much tense. Let me inform you, last night also an incident took place in which three of the adivasi boys were seriously injured due to the firing of the Assam Police battalion in Tinsukhia district. A few days back a boy named Samanta Gohain at Chabaua was killed due to. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You are expanding the scope of this.

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL: Now, the situation is such that the Central Government will have to intervene and I believe, as the Chief Minister ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Arun Kumar Sarma.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry. Nothing more will be recorded. You are going much beyond the scope.

(*Interruptions*)...*

MR. SPEAKER: This is not Assam Assembly. I will not permit it.

Dr. Arun Kumar Sarma, please put a clarificatory question...

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (Lakhimpur): Thank you hon. Speaker, Sir, for allowing this debate.

MR. SPEAKER: It is not a debate.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Calling Attention, Sir.

First of all, I would like to associate with other Members in condemning the incident in which a woman was assaulted. She was insulted in a public place. She had to run without clothes in a public place. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Let us not go into all this.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: This incident took place

MR. SPEAKER: If you deliberately bring these matters then I will have to delete all these.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Sir, I will put the questions now.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. Do it. We are discussing in the House of Commons, Parliament of India where there is Central Government. Now the Central Minister has responded. So, you should put questions which he can answer and not the Chief Minister of Assam.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Sir, as per your advice, I will now put the questions.

MR. SPEAKER: Please do it. You are a very responsible Member.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Sir, first of all, the hon. Minister has stated about the judicial inquiry declared by the State Government. Another news item in Assam says that subsequently the Assam Government has also declared that it will be inquired by the CBI. I want him to specifically clarify this issue. ...* I would like to know whether it is a fact. The Central Government should find out the reality of the situation. ...*

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, this is not permitted. You are entitled to ask one clarificatory question on his statement.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Sir, I want to know from the hon. Home Minister whether the Government will send a Parliamentary Delegation or an all party delegation to see the situation for themselves and report the House in the next Session. That is my suggestion.

Fourthly, the AASAA has alleged that more than 60 people are missing and 20 people are feared to be dead. What is the actual fact about it? It is because the Government has mentioned that only one person died. I also want to know from the Government how it is going to respond to the situation to see that there is no communal divide in Assam? How the Central Government is going to intervene in the matter.

I want to ask one more question about the permanent solution of the issue. There is a demand for the Scheduled Tribe status by six communities which is a

long pending demand and the Assam Assembly has recommended this. In this august House also, a Joint Select Committee was formed in 1996. In 1997, the Joint Select Committee had submitted a report with a specific recommendation about six communities, namely, Mottack, Moran, Ahom, Chutia, Rajbongshi and Tea Garden communities.

MR. SPEAKER: You are making the same repetition.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Sir, I am just mentioning the recommendation of the Joint Committee because it has given a very specific recommendation that without jeopardizing the existing reservation facilities enjoyed by the already notified Tribes, a separate tribal quota should be created for Assam so that this problem can be solved once and for ever.

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing more will be recorded. You are entitled to ask one question but you have already asked ten.

*(Interruptions)...**

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Sir, it is an Assam issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Just because it is an Assam issue, shall we not follow the rules?

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Sir, it is a very sensitive issue.

MR. SPEAKER: That is why, I have permitted it. Please do not misuse the opportunity.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Sir, if you kindly allow, I want to make the last point. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Central Government is taking any initiative to bring all the organizational leaders for a dialogue so that a lasting solution can be found out on this issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, all of you are fully aware of the rules but because of the sensitive nature and because a large section of the House was agitated, I have gone out of the rules and out of my way to try to help for the solution of the problem and not to make it more complex. Therefore, it is expected in such sensitive national issues that the Members should take up that approach. As a very special case, not to be treated as

a precedent in future, as I had indicated, I am going to call those hon. Members who had taken the trouble of giving notice. Therefore, please cooperate. You are only entitled to ask one clarificatory question each. Please cooperate so that, in future also, if such situations arise, the Chair can cooperate. Otherwise, if there is no cooperation, we have to go strictly by the rules.

[Translation]

SHRI HEMMAL MURMU (Rajmahal): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want to go deep of the incident which took place last month on 24th in Baltola, Guwahati, because this is very sensitive and heart-rendering incident. I outrightly condemn it. The real issue is as to why such an incident frequently takes place only in Assam. I would like to go towards the main points. It was also mentioned in the statement of the hon'ble Home Minister that day that the tribals of the State who are tea tribals or ex tea tribals, have lost their identity. Their own language, culture and territory are still intact with then even then they are being called tea tribals and ex tea tribals which is not justifiable. Why should they not be included in the list of Scheduled Tribes by calling them Assamese tribals? Hon'ble Home Minister has raised this thing and referred to RGI, repeatedly. RGI is not a competent authority to deliver proper decision. Central Government is the appropriate authority. When the Assam Government while passing resolution in Legislative Assembly in 2004 had sent its proper report and memorandum after some objections raised by RGI in 2007, then, the Central Government should have taken decision on the basis of that report because RGI is not the final authority. If the Central Government has the will power.

MR. SPEAKER: You may please ask the question.

SHRI HEMMAL MURMU: My question is as to by when the Government would take steps to include them in the list of Scheduled Tribes.

[English]

SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA (Guwahati): Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

MR. SPEAKER: You are getting this opportunity because you have given notice for it.

SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA: Sir, this incident occurred in my constituency. I condemn this deplorable incident that

had taken place. But since the statement of the hon. Home Minister does not reflect some of the aspects of the incident, I would like to mention a few points. While admittedly there was an attack on the processionists, I would like to know from the hon. Home Minister if it is not a fact that many of the local people had tried to help the processionists and tried to prevent hooliganism and even tried to protect those who were subjected to various kinds of assaults. If only a negative picture of the incident is painted, then the whole idea becomes one sided. The fact is that in Assam the place of women as a whole in exceptionally reverential as compared to many other States. We condemn this incident. But let this incident be taken as a single isolated incident.

Sir, secondly I would like to mention here that instead of going in for blaming one another, it is very important that we should try to reduce the tension that is prevailing there so that this incident does not become a cause for further tension. That should be our combined approach.

Sir, in this connection I would like to submit before this august House that the blame that is being put on the Congress party by some of the Members from the Opposition are totally unfounded. I would like to know if it is not a fact that the ...* Government in Assam in 1999 had opposed giving the Scheduled Tribe status to this group. Again, in 2003 the then ...* Government did not accord the Scheduled Tribe status to this Group. ...*(Interruptions)* Therefore, there should not be any politicization of this issue. It is an extremely sensitive issue. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, you made allegations against them. In spite of my requests you made continued allegations and now you are not willing to hear them. This is not fair.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA: Sir, I have not brought any allegations. We must have a healing touch. We must see that the pluralistic character of the Assamese society remains intact and this incident should be treated as an isolated single incident.

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded. All those interruptions are not to be recorded.

(Interruptions)...

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Mr. Speaker, Sir, there was a programme in Assam organized by the Adivasi Student Association. The State Government had prior information about it. This painful incident could have been averted so it should be strongly condemned.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs had earlier made a statement in the House following the incident of 24th November that the rest of the people excluding the then injured persons would be discharged in the forenoon of 26th November, 2007. I would like to tell him that he must have information about the situation prevailed in hospital and the number of person who were discharged from there. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to make one more submission that on one hand such an incident is happening, while on another hand the news regarding killing of Hindi speaking people in Assam is appearing very rapidly in newspapers. This is very serious issue and this has also been raised so many times in the House with your permission. This country is one and the people go to various parts of the country to earn their livelihood. Definitely, those kinds of incidents are the matter of concern. While such an incident has taken place, the incidents of killing Hindi speaking people in Assam are reported regularly, so that the State Government should make an effort to prevent them and there should not be recurrence of such incidents in future, this is what I would like to say.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Prabhunath Singh—not present.

SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN (Tripura East): Sir, I condemn the incident that has happened during the procession in Guwahati. The participants who are injured in the procession are being treated in the hospital now. They belong to other States. The communities to which they belong to are being recognised as Scheduled Tribes in other States. Will the people who are injured, admitted in the hospital and who belong to Scheduled Tribes of other States, be recognised as Scheduled Tribes in Assam also? I want to know on this point from the hon. Minister.

[Translation]

DR. RAMESHWAR ORAON (Lohardaga): Mr. Speaker, Sir, many things have been cleared by the statement of the hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs, but

there are still some things which are yet to be cleared. I would like to ask a question about them. Yesterday I was reading the statement of the Assam's Chief Minister. He has said that the people are demanding CBI probe, so he will get it probed by CBI. But, this thing did not appear in the statement of hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs. We would like to know whether this incident will be investigated by CBI or not.

Sir, another thing which did not appear in it is that the Chief Minister himself has said that the people had met him and they told him that 30 persons were still missing and the search was on to trace them. This point should have been included in the statement of hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs, stating as to who are these 30 persons and what progress has been made so far in their search.

Adivasis of this State are definitely called as Adivasi, but, in fact, they have not been accorded the status of Adivasi even today. Their demand is that they should be given the status of Adivasi. They have migrated from Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa, but their language, culture and traditions are still intact. I would like to know as to by when the Government of India will accord them the status of Adivasi.

The fourth point that was mentioned in her statement was that, the rape victim has stated that she would not accept money, she has lost her honour and that honour will be restored only if her demand of declaring her community a schedule tribe is met.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Tarit Baran Topdar—not present.

[Translation]

SHRI RUPCHAND MURMU (Jhargram): Mr. Speaker, Sir, after Guwahati, incident in Assam on 24th, Shri Joachim Baxla, RSP MP and myself had visited that place on 27th. We visited the two big hospitals, JMC and MMC to see the injured people admitted there. We came to know that newspapers also had reported that more than three hundred people were injured, but factually more than four hundred people were injured. The site of incident is near the security zone capital complex. What should I say in this regard, the State Government is responsible for it. It is failure of both local police and civil administration. The Adivasis had staged a protest

and demanded that they should be given ST status, they should be treated as tribals. They are called tribals but till now they have not been given tribal status. The Adivasi people from Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal had migrated to this place during the British time. I am also an Adivasi, but they have not been accorded ST status there. Just now hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs has said that they have lost their identity, but it is not so. They are tribals like us. Their language, economic condition, education and social status is like us. I demand that the Government should accord ST status to them.

SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I went to Assam on 25th after the incident of 24th and I closely observed the circumstances of the incident. I have met people and listened to them. Entire country and myself are distressed over the incident and I condemn it. According to me there is a tribal research department in every state for identifying tribals. That Department conducts survey to identify tribals. It is a very easy process. The Chief Secretary there had handed over me a document, in which it has been said that the Assam Government had sent recommendation in regard to according scheduled tribe status to them many a times. The Assam Government had sent recommendation in regard to according scheduled tribe status to 102 castes and had asked RGI to point out the shortcomings so that those shortcomings may be removed. It appears that there is a communication gap somewhere, due to which this work is not being completed. The hon'ble Minister has stated in his reply that the State government had given compensation or award, whatever you may call it, of Rs. one lakh in stripping case. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Nobody has called it an award.

SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Sir, this is sentimental. I would like to tell that status of scheduled tribe should be accorded to them. Since they are already Adivasis. After ascertaining the facts they should be accorded ST status. I would like to know the time by which it would be done.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Joachim Baxla—not present.

Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan'—not present.

Shri Narayan Chandra Borkataky.

(English)

SHRI NARAYAN CHANDRA BORKATAKY (Mangaldoi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you.

While associating with what my colleagues from Assam have said, I urge the House to pass a Resolution condemning this incident in Assam. Actually, I am not in good health. Even then, I am coming to speak a few words considering the gravity of the situation.

MR. SPEAKER: You can sit down if you are not in good health.

SHRI NARAYAN CHANDRA BORKATAKY: The Speaker has ruled us not to say anything about Assam Government.

MR. SPEAKER: Not critical because there is nobody to reply on their behalf. This is a well established system.

SHRI NARAYAN CHANDRA BORKATAKY: But, through reference, I am telling you that Beltola is around 3 kilometres away from the State capital and 2 kilometres away from my residence. The area is actually a business area now-a-days. The road is full of shops and establishments. So, whether the rally was permitted or not is a different thing, but there was enough information that the rally coming up. Only one magistrate and 12 constables were not enough. They should have been more alert to such a situation. I want to know from the hon. Home Minister whether the Central Government had got any intelligence information regarding the whole incident. Secondly, there was a contradiction from the State Government and the Central Government regarding giving the status of Scheduled Tribes to 6 communities and particularly adivasis and tribes people of Assam. So, the Central Government should come up very clear about the latest considered decision in view of the State Assembly's recommendation so that such incidents can never happen.

Assamese people are actually very peace-loving people. All communities with different languages, castes, religions were living in harmony. Of late, it has receded. This harmony is not observed at all. Every day, there is an incident. Even today morning, there was an incident in Sibsagar where reportedly police had to resort to firing.

MR. SPEAKER: Kindly put your question.

SHRI NARAYAN CHANDRA BORKATAKY: I would like to know whether the Government is contemplating to restore peace and harmony in Assam or thinking of sending an All-Party Parliamentary team. I would like to urge upon the Hon. Home Minister, through you, that immediate restoration of peace is very important. Some stray incidents here and there are going on. Two days back, it happened in Sonitpur district. Today it is Sibsagar district. As my colleague was just telling, it happened in Tinsukia district. So, these things have to be stopped once and for all and Peace Committee should be formed, if required, involving all parties. The Government of India should take initiative and the Government of India cannot be a silent spectator here.

Thirdly, is a CBI inquiry actually going to be initiated?

MR. SPEAKER: It has been asked.

SHRI NARAYAN CHANDRA BORKATAKY: If it has been asked, I am only questioning it because Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam has told that he also wants a CBI enquiry. At the same time, he is telling that a judicial enquiry is also necessary. I think a CBI inquiry is very important. I do not have any disregard for the judicial inquiry, but CBI inquiry is more important because they can find out the culprits. It is very important. So, these are my three questions.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Lalit Mohan Suklabaidya. Only clarificatory questions.

SHRI LALIT MOHAN SUKLABAIDYA (Karimganj): Sir, first I agree with all of my Opposition friends in condemning the incident. As my friends from the Opposition were saying, this incident happened due to lapse on the part of Government. But, once the incident occurred, immediately the Government sent their force. Once it was confirmed, the curfew was imposed.

13.00 hrs.

After that, a judicial inquiry was ordered. The point is, our Chief Minister took all actions to pacify the situation and the situation is coming back to normal step by step. In this scenario, one of my Opposition friends from the BJP wanted the resignation of the Chief Minister. I do not know how he is saying all these things. May I ask one question? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Don't ask him. You ask the hon. Minister.

SHRI LALIT MOHAN SUKLABAIDYA: I am asking the hon. Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Don't record anything.

(Interruptions)...

SHRI LALIT MOHAN SUKLABAIDYA: Sir, in 1996, 198 people were killed in a clash between Adivasis and Non-Adivasis in Kokrajhar. I would like to know whether the then Chief Minister resigned at that time. ...*(Interruptions)* I would also like to know whether ST status was proposed to be given to these six communities by the Congress Chief Minister in 1993. In 2002, the NDA Government declared 142 communities as Scheduled Tribes, but these six communities were not included. At that time, the AGP ally was in power and in the Centre, the NDA was in power, but they did not include these communities. ...*(Interruptions)*

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: The question is whether this Government is going to do or not. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN (Dhubri): Yes, this Government is doing. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will call you Mr. Hussain. Please don't bother.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Rijju, you are very much excited today. I have given you the fullest opportunity. Please give similar courtesy to other Members also.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Suklabaidya, please put your question.

SHRI LALIT MOHAN SUKLABAIDYA: Sir, now our Chief Minister has already approached the Government of India and to the best of my knowledge, the Government of India is contemplating to think over the matter carefully once again. If they are given the ST status, then all their aspirations will be fulfilled and peace will be restored once and for all.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Fuggan Singh Kulaste—Not present.

SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will confine myself to just one question and that is regarding reservation. The adivasi people have been agitating for the last 20 years and AASAA and the student organisation, is agitating for 10 years. The Congress Government and the Indian National Congress have been trying hard to give ST status to these six communities namely, Adivasi, Koch Rajbongshi, Tai-Ahom, Moran, Matak and Chutia.

Now, in the Statement of the hon. Home Minister, in paragraph 2 on page 2, he has mentioned that the then Government of Assam also initially consistently opposed giving them ST status. I want a clarification regarding this statement. ...*

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: This is wrong. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I will delete that.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN: This is Home Minister's statement. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You mentioned about the then Government.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please take your seats.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Sarma, I have said that it will be deleted. I will say that no name will be included.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This is the danger of bringing the State matters into the House of People. I have been repeatedly suggesting that. I generally do not agree, but since all sections of the House were so agitated, I felt let there be some opportunity and I must thank the hon. Home Minister that immediately he responded earlier also and today also, although this type of Calling Attention has never been held to my knowledge of 38 years in this House. I am trying to accommodate everybody. Those

who have given notices, I am committed to it. But please cooperate. If you call it an important issue, it should be discussed in an important manner, and in a responsible manner.

SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN: Sir, I have every right to have a clarification on what the hon. Minister has stated here in his statement. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Here the Opposition is for the sake of Opposition only.

SHRI ANWAR HUSSAIN: Sir, my question is whether it is true that in 1997 the then Government refused to give the ST status of Kochi Rajbongshi tribe and whether it is also a fact that the then Government of 1999 refused to give ST status to the adivasi people of that area.

In 2003, almost 142 communities were granted ST status. I would like to know from the hon. Home Minister why Adivasi, Koch Rajbongshi, Tai-Ahom, Moran, Matak, and Chutia were not given that status in 2003.

Lastly, in 1996, 198 adivasi people were killed. At that time the same Government was there in Assam and the same Government was there at the Centre. Now, this time only one person was killed. In the previous case when so many people were killed, no resignation was demanded then why this time resignation is being demanded. I would like to know this from the hon. Home Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, 14 hon. Members have participated, five hon. Members have been absent. Now, I call the hon. Minister.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No, this is not a debate.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No, you have not given notice.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Today's notice is meaningless. Even , not before the start of the Session.

...(*Interruptions*)

*Not recorded.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, before the hon. Minister replies, my prayer to you and to the House is that there is one legislation listed today in the name of the hon. Petroleum Minister and in the Agenda Paper at 2 o'clock, there is a debate on Judiciary and Legislature Harmony. My appeal to you, subject to the approval of the House, is that a very important legislation, which has been passed by Rajya Sabha, is there and if you kindly suspend the Lunch Hour, we can go ahead with the debate after the legislative business and that we can dispose it off today. This is my appeal to you and we shall abide by your decision.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): We agree with that. Sir, you allow both of us.

MR. SPEAKER: This conditional agreement does not matter.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have received another 6-7 notices.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, sorry. Hon. Minister, please.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, I will be very brief.
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Whatever you may say, I will not allow.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Fourteen hon. Members from all sides have participated.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, I will not allow.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, I will take only one minute. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Sir, I will take only half-a-minute. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry, in spite of the hon. Minister's request, I will adjourn the House and go away.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, I will not allow.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, today's notice will not do. Some principle, some rule, some procedure has to be followed. I have gone completely out of my way to allow those who have given notices on that day.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, sorry.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister.... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, sorry, Mr. Tripathy, you know the rules very well.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Do not write. Only hon. Minister's statement will be recorded.

(Interruptions)...*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Athawale, please take your seat. This is not a free for all.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): Sir, the entire House has condemned the incident and what had happened to the girl over there. We would also like to say that what happened in Assam that day is condemnable and it should never happen to any person anywhere in the country.

I would like to submit that the information which I have given and which I am going to give is the information received by us from the State Government. It is on the basis of the information provided to us, we are giving this information to this House.

A question was asked how many people succumbed to the injuries. One hon. Member said 20 members

*Not recorded.

succumbed to the injuries; another hon. Member said 18 members succumbed to the injuries. The information which we have received from the State Government indicates that such allegations were made, but when inquiries were done, it was found that that number was not correct and that number came down to a very small number. So, the information as to the number of persons having been killed in that incident given by the hon. Member does not appear to be correct. But, I am giving this information on the basis of the information which is given to me. The information which is authentically communicated to us is that only two members have died in that incident.

The second question which was asked related to the inquiry by CBI.

MR. SPEAKER: The House has agreed that there will be no luncheon recess today.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: The procedure which is followed in ordering the inquiry by CBI is this. If the State Government writes to the Union Government asking that the inquiry should be done by CBI, or if a court says that the inquiry should be done by CBI, the CBI inquiry is ordered. Otherwise, only the cases which relate to the Union Government are inquired into by CBI. If any such request is made by the State Government, we generally do not refuse to accept that request and look into the matter. But one fact which should be borne in mind by all the hon. Members over here is this. We are asking many cases to be referred to CBI. CBI is getting over-burdened and, and the manpower available with CBI is also limited. The result is that if a matter is referred to CBI, a very long time is taken to investigate into the matter, and the results are not easily available. That should be borne in mind by all the hon. Members.

Another question was asked relating to the involvement of the terrorist organizations in that area. I would like to submit that the information which is available indicates that some terrorist organizations are trying to find out the issues on which the agitation can be started by the people. They are trying to find out the areas where the agitations can be started. When an occasion comes, they make use of these issues and these areas and start the agitation. In this case, Assam, is an area where there are some issues which are faced by the State Government, the Union Government, and by all of us. We would not be surprised if the terrorist organizations working in that area are trying to make use of this situation to create problem for the people over there, for the State Government over there and for all of us here.

Sir, the fourth question which was asked related to the fact whether the Government of India would like to include these tribes into the List of Scheduled Tribes or not. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: This is the most important one.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, I would like to say that we shall have to understand that the Home Ministry will be replying to the issues relating to law and order, and as to the inclusion of the tribes in the List is concerned, it is the Tribal Ministry which looks into it. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, you see what the Home Minister is replying. He is speaking on behalf of the Government. He says that the other Ministry will reply. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record except the Home Minister's reply.

(Interruptions)...

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Let me complete my reply. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I am also learning a lesson the day end of my life not to trust anybody. Please take your seat.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Let me complete, and if you are dissatisfied with my reply, then you can ask permission from the Chair and ask the question, and after that I will reply to it. Before I complete my sentence, you get up and you are trying to just disturb the House also.

I was trying to say as to what is done by which Ministry. I was trying to explain the procedure which is followed in this respect. The procedure followed is that the State Government makes a recommendation to the Union Government to include a particular tribe in the List of Scheduled Tribes. On the recommendation of the State Government, the matter is referred to RGI, that is, the Registrar General of India, and the Registrar General of India finds out as to the number of people belonging to

*Not recorded.

[Shri Shivraj V. Patil]

that tribe and then says whether enough number of people are there or not. Then, the matter goes to the Scheduled Tribes Commission, and the Scheduled Tribes Commission applies its mind to this issue to find out whether that tribe should be included in the List or not. Later on, the matter goes to the Tribal Ministry, and the Tribal Ministry moves a paper to the Cabinet and the Cabinet decides whether it has to be done or not. What is wrong if I am explaining this thing to you? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

*(Interruptions)...**

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Tripathy, suddenly you are getting agitated. That is his statement. You cannot intervene in this manner.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Not one word of Shri Tripathy will go on record.

*(Interruptions)...**

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: This will lead nowhere. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is very unfair.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: This will lead nowhere. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You need not respond to him.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, what I was trying to say is that there was a Committee, Lokur Committee, appointed, and the Lokur Committee laid down the procedure which have to be examined to include a particular tribe in the List of Scheduled Tribes. The criteria given by the Lokur Committee are: whether primitive traits are geographically isolated or not; their shyness, if they are shy or not; and their economic condition. These are the criteria which have to be applied to the Tribes, to find out whether they can be included in the List or not. Now, this is the Report given by the Lokur Committee, and that kind of criteria is applied.

Sir, I am sorry to say that the State Government in Assam has been giving different kinds of reports. In 1978, they said, do not include it. In 1999, they have said, do not include it. I have a letter. This is a copy that is with me. If you include it. ...*(Interruptions)*

Please do not disturb me. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, this is in 1999.

MR. SPEAKER: This is an important matter. The Home Minister of India is replying and you have not got the patience to hear him.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

*...(Interruptions)**

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: It says that if the tea tribes are included, ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR (Bangalore South): Can I say, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER: Unless he yields, I cannot compel him.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I am not yielding. He can ask a question if he wants. But he cannot disturb. He should not be allowed to disturb me like this.

MR. SPEAKER: All right. If you are not yielding, I am not asking him to intervene.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I will write down the name.

This letter says that if these tribes are included in the List, the tribes living in that area will suffer and so do not include. This is what they have said. Now, you are saying that this has happened, that had happened and the other thing had happened. So, the recommendations given by the State Government are not consistent. Then the recommendations came here. They have said in the recommendation also though these criteria are not fulfilled, yet they should be included in the list. Now, this is what they have said. So, in view of

*Not recorded.

*Not recorded.

these facts, the present Government in Assam and we hear and all of us sitting here and the people in the country, have to take a decision as to how to handle this decision. The present Government is asking us, please try to help them. In what fashion you can help them, let us sit together and decide. That is the stand the Government of India is also taking with respect to the tribes, the people belonging to the tribes coming from Assam, the people belonging to any tribes coming from any country, because the tribal people are the people who are economically the most backward. They should be helped the most by the country as a whole. That is the kind of attitude we are adopting. If this is the problem, if this is the situation and if the State Government is trying to help and if the Union Government is trying to help, then we shall have to understand that.

You are all responsible Members of this august House. You advise us as to what is to be done. Supposing we include and if the people who are already there in the List are objecting to it, then there will be a problem. One of the hon. Members got up and said, I object to it. There are so many other organizations. So, this is a problem which has to be dealt with and we, as responsible persons, have to take a balanced act and we have to help really those people. They are the people who need the help the most in the country as a whole.

If we do not help them, we would be committing the mistake. Our intention is to help them. But as to how it can be helped, we shall have to find out. We have to find out in what fashion it has to be done. They have suggested, even the Government has suggested that 'look, do not affect the interest of the people who are already in the List and yet you include these people. The number of tribes, which is given to us, is not only four but it is 97. I have the number. It is 97. That is the number with me. If you have to include 97 tribes in the List, it is going to create some problem and we shall have to solve this problem and we would like to solve this problem.

We would like to consult you. We would like to consult the State Government which is, very, very considerate to the people over there. We would like to take a stand for all the tribal people in the country to help them. This is our attitude. This is our policy.

This policy will be decided by the Cabinet and not by the Home Ministry and the Tribal Ministry. But we will decide it in the Cabinet. I am not saying 'yes' or 'no'. But you should understand that the matter has to go from one Ministry to the Cabinet and from one Ministry to the Parliament. We are not allowed to come here and speak for the Tribal Ministry. I can speak only for the Home Ministry and not for the Tribal Ministry. It is the problem. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: No, I am sorry. Nothing will be recorded.

(Interruptions)...

MR. SPEAKER: He has not yielded. I cannot compel. All of you please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. Please take your seats.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, then I will close this discussion. I will close this discussion if this is happening.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister, you address the Chair.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KIREN RIJJU: The Minister's reply is not satisfactory. He has denied a CBI inquiry. He has not made any promise. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: We are walking out in protest of hon. Home Minister's reply which is unsatisfactory. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is not right. What you do is up to you. The Minister has not even finished his reply. Mr. Minister, please continue. Nothing will be recorded except the walk out.

(Interruptions)...

13.26 hrs.

*(At this stage, Shri Ananth Kumar, Shri Kiren Rijju,
Shri Braja Kishore Tripathy, Shri Prabhunath Singh and
some other hon. Members left the House.)*

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded except the hon. Home Minister.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, this is very unfortunate.

MR. SPEAKER: I think so. In future I will have to consider it very seriously.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: This is such a complicated and important issue and yet the hon. Members are not willing to share their wisdom with us in order to solve this problem. They are just taking a political stand and walking out by making false statements. The hon. Member says that I have denied a CBI inquiry which I have not done.

MR. SPEAKER: That is an incorrect statement.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: If they make a false statement on the floor of the House itself, what they might be saying outside, one can understand.

Sir, the problem is complicated but it has to be solved by the country. The Government of India, the State Government, our Party leaders and ourselves will apply our mind to see that the problem of the tribals in Assam as well as in other States is solved in such a fashion that the best help can be given to them to see that they improve their economic and social conditions. This is what I have to submit.

MR. SPEAKER: Matters under Rule 377 shall be taken up after Item No. 23, if there is time left. Matters of Urgent Public Importance shall be taken up after the end of the scheduled business.

Item No. 23. Hon. Minister Shri Murli Deora.

13.28 hrs.

RAJIV GANDHI INSTITUTE OF PETROLEUM TECHNOLOGY BILL, 2007

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL
GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to declare the institution known as the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology to be an institution of national importance and to provide for its incorporation and matters connected therewith, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

I would like to apprise the hon. Members about the need of setting up of Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology and its declaration as the "Institute of National Importance". The year 1999 witnessed the advent of the New Exploration Licensing Policy for oil exploration. This policy has evoked great enthusiasm among foreign companies as well as Indian private and public sector companies for acquiring exploration acreages in India. As on date, only 30 per cent of the sedimentary basins in India have been explored. It is planned to increase the exploration coverage to an extent of 100 per cent by the year 2015. In this context, apart from technology, availability of adequate number of qualified personnel would be a prime requirement in the coming.

In a recent study conducted by consultant Price water house Coopers for Petrofed, it is estimated that the gap between the availability and requirement of trained manpower in the field of petroleum technology in India would be about 36,000 by the year 2019. To substantially meet the shortfall of trained manpower in the petroleum sector, it has been decided by the Government to set up Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology at Jais, Uttar Pradesh.

13.30 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

The Institute is designed to serve as the fountainhead for the nurturing of world class technical human resources capable of serving as the leaders and innovators of tomorrow in the field of Petroleum Technology. To start with, the Institute will commence its academic operations by admitting students in basic undergraduate courses from the academic year 2008-09, that is next year.

The total estimated capital cost of the project is Rs. 435 crore which would be met partially through budgetary support of Rs. 285 crore and Rs. 150 crore from Oil Industry Development Board. The total estimated recurring expenditure of Rs. 260.58 crore would be met from the accrual of interest on Endowment Fund of Rs. 250.00 crores to be created with the contribution of Oil Public Sector Undertakings, student fees, donations and other earnings of the Institute. The Institute is envisaged to be self sufficient by the year 2015-16.

It is proposed that the Institute would have a high degree of autonomy in terms of its academic, administrative and financial functioning. This would have legal empowerment in its own right to enable it to grant degrees and other academic distinctions and titles. Furthermore, it is envisaged that the Institute would enjoy the patronage and support of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas of Government of India. It is in the interest of the nation that the Government nurture the Institute in its nascent and crucial stage of development to enable the Institute to launch and run its programmes without compromise and set up world-class infrastructure while offering courses of a high standard. In the absence of the status of the "Institute of National Importance", it would not be possible to attract eminent faculty members and meritorious students.

In view of the proposed mode of establishment of the Institute as outlined above, it is proposed that Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology be incorporated as an 'Institute of National Importance' through an Act of Parliament having a governance structure as well as legal empowerment to grant degrees in a manner similar to that enjoyed by the NTs.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to declare the institution known as the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology to be an institution of national importance and to provide for its incorporation and matters connected therewith, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

SHRI KIREN RIJIJU (Arunachal West): Thank you, hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, for giving me an opportunity to speak on a very important Bill, which has been tabled by the hon. Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas for the establishment of the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology to be established in Jaish District in Uttar

Pradesh. I compliment the hon. Minister for this Institute which is truly an Institute of national importance. Before I come to the subject.

[Translation]

I would just like to tell the hon'ble Member that the issue is not of Institute Bill, but the way he has performed, after taking charge of the Ministry of Petroleum and I understand that the entire House is unanimous that while keeping the interest of people in mind the hon'ble Minister has taken a very good decision by not hiking the prices of petrol, diesel, LPG and kerosene, despite rise in oil prices in international market. Otherwise also, I admire the hon'ble Minister a lot, as he speaks less and works more and does his work diligently. Whenever we meet in consultative committee meeting, I repeat this statement there also.

While coming to the subject, I would just like to say that I do not oppose establishment of the Institute in Uttar Pradesh. Had this institute been established at a place which has been a hub of petroleum related activities, as stated in the objective, it would have proven far more beneficial. I would like to refer to its history that the record of exploring gas and oil reserves by Indian Petroleum Engineers is not enviable. The record of our engineers in regard to exploration of oil and gas reserves is very dismal because our education is very theoretical. Our engineers need practical training even after passing out of engineering college, because the syllabus of engineering colleges is theoretical. Therefore, unless theoretical teaching mechanism is changed into practical mechanism, we will not be able to achieve in the near future the objective behind setting up of the institute. Our institutes, of higher learning like IIT, IIM and the proposed Rajiv Gandhi Petroleum National Institute of Technology being discussed here, suffer from this major shortcoming that the system of learning has remained unchanged. Our teaching system has always been based on theory. I am afraid that by establishing this institute in Uttar Pradesh, we will be able to provide only theoretical knowledge to the students. The graduate engineers of this Institute will have to go America, Middle East or European countries for gaining practical experience.

I would like to submit to the hon'ble Minister that I am not opposing the establishment of this institute in Uttar Pradesh, but alongwith it, I would like to state that this institute is not going to fulfil our requirement. Therefore, he should immediately take a decision of

[Shri Kiren Rijju]

establishing this Institute at a place, where it is required most, particularly in the north-eastern States. Till 1951, we were recognized by the name of Assam. First of all our State has given petrol to this country. Had the Government taken a decision to open this kind of institute over there, it would have been the biggest gesture, and the people over there would have been benefited why it always happen that our people from north-east have to travel to Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Uttar Pradesh etc. for higher education. The day should arrive when people go to Arunachal Pradesh, Assam for higher education and even a person from Delhi should be heard saying that he is going Arunachal Pradesh or Assam for higher education. Why is this that only the people from North-East have to go to other States for getting education? All of us belong to the same country, therefore we should get equal treatment. I expect from the hon'ble Minister that he will give something very soon to us also. Last time during the discussion on Petroleum Regulatory Authority, I had requested the hon'ble Minister to set up one of its branch in North-East. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, please conclude.

SHRI KIREN RIJJU: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is no other member from our party, therefore give me all the time allotted to my party.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Rawatji is sitting here, he wants to speak. Otherwise also, I have got only one hour to get this bill passed.

SHRI KIREN RIJJU: I will not take much time, but conclude in five minutes.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you should conclude your speech within next two minutes.

[Translation]

SHRI KIREN RIJJU: Looking at the trend of petrol consumption in the country, one would find consumption of petrol is rising in India. We are at 6th place among the petrol consuming countries in the world. The per day consumption of petrol is 20.5 million barrel in America, 6.5 million barrel in China, 5.4 million barrel in Japan, 2.6 million barrel in Germany, 2.6 million barrel in Russia and 2.3 million barrel in India. The figures of Canada, Brazil, South Korea and France etc. are also available.

We are at sixth place. The way our population is rising and economy is growing our petroleum consumption is going to increase in coming days.

[English]

it is to nurture and promote quality and excellence in education and research in the areas of petroleum and hydrocarbon.

[Translation]

We are lagging far behind in research, particularly in upstream research. Upstream means discovery which is most important. While acknowledging the importance of refinery and research I would like to say that we must pay attention towards upstreams research.

At the same time, I would also like to say about admission in the institute which is being established. There should be a provision for admission of the students of the North East in this institution. There can be a provision of reservation for them. But I will not raise this issue at this juncture. I would like to request the hon'ble Minister that he should pay attention towards it also. Besides this, petroleum engineering should be introduced as a course in all the IITs and the National Institutes of Technology. I would like to request the hon'ble Minister that efforts should be made to introduce petroleum technology as a subject in the North East Regional Institute of Science and Technology at the earliest.

With these words, I extend my thanks and strongly support this Bill.

[English]

SHRI K.S. RAO (Eluru): Sir, I congratulate the hon. Minister for bringing this Bill, which should have come years back. The need for training world class technicians and engineers in this country is extraordinary. The reason being not only our country has brought in new exploration policy giving option or competition to both domestic as well as multinational companies our own areas to explore, tremendous amount of opportunities are there even to work outside the country.

As a Member of the Consultative Committee of Petroleum I have been asking since three years, even earlier Petroleum Ministers also. The potential outside the country is unimaginable. There is a need for us to send

our people. We have the maximum number of technological manpower in the world but why do we forget the hydrocarbons? We all agree that the availability of hydrocarbons in this country is very little. Even today we are importing almost 75 per cent of our oil requirement from outside the country spending a lot of foreign exchange, possibly more than Rs. 3,00,000 crore. The potential for refining in this country is also very good. So, this has been brought keeping these things in mind, not only our requirement in this country but also to send manpower outside the country. I have suggested many times to the hon. Minister that we have got about 270 billion dollars of foreign exchange reserves. We are not putting them to use till today. We have got ample opportunity for it to be used by our oil companies; ONGC, Indian Oil Corporation or others who have got expertise, manpower and who can go to the other countries, participate in the bid, secure some of the oil blocks there and that will be a permanent source of oil for us for years to come.

China is going left and right, in most of the Afro-Asian countries. We are not able to compete with them. One of the reasons might be that we are not that courageous to invest and we do not have enough technical manpower which can guide them to take the risk and go. Prices are going up substantially. If we have to take the price increase, from 30 to 100 dollars, what would have been the benefit had we secured oil blocks year back outside the country? We could have made lakhs and crores from that apart from getting oil. We have lost that opportunity. At least now, by bringing this institute we can make world class experts in petroleum technology. We are not only providing employment but also bringing income to our country and in turn exploring oil.

The hon. Member from the Opposition was admiring the Minister and the reason being in spite of the hike from 30 to 90 dollars, the Minister has not increased the price of oil, more particularly the price of kerosene and cooking gas being supplied to the poor people. This has been admired by everybody though the tension on the Minister perhaps is extremely high that he might not be able to contain it as the newspaper says that most of our domestic companies losing about a lakh crore because of not increasing the price in tune with the hike in international prices of petrol and gas. We appreciate him and more particularly there were not even major allegations in regard to inadequate supply of gas, petrol, diesel, etc. including kerosene and cooking gas in spite

of the fact there was Deepawali also. Normally, the entire papers will be filled up saying that there is lack of gas, inadequate supply of gas, there was queue for cylinders and kerosene. All those things have not come out in newspapers. Obviously, it means he could cater to the demand sufficiently well. There may be shortage and there may be upsurge in one place or two places but certainly not throughout the country for which we have to admire him. We cannot leave without admiring him in this context.

It is said that there would be shortage of 36,000 people by 2010. I am of the opinion that this is only in regard to domestic requirement. When it comes to the question of sending our people outside, we are providing employment and we are earning foreign exchange and we will get oil. Therefore, so many benefits are there. I would request the hon. Minister to take that also into account and increase the capacity of the Institute so that we can produce more number of technologists and experts. He should not be contended with it.

My suggestion to him is that the country has lost enormously by not concentrating on research and development. So, in this case, he must also take up research and development right from day one.

On many occasions, the problem is with the question of availability of competent teaching staff. I have seen that he is already outsourcing staff from advanced countries where there is expertise in latest technology. I support him but he should not hesitate to bring top class teaching staff from outside the country even if it costs very heavily so that our people can pick up in less than one or two years. So, I would request the hon. Minister to concentrate on research and development.

In this Bill, he has said that the most concentration is only on degree, post-graduation, research and diploma also. But there must be some skilled people also. Certificate courses also are to be started so that we can train a large number of skilled workers without whom we cannot succeed. He has done good thing by starting the Institute but he must also encourage some of the industrialists in this country to manufacture the equipment and machinery like rigs. Now the prices of rigs in the international market have gone up manifold. That is one reason why our companies are not able to compete with them but if the same manufacturing were to be taken up in this country, we will compete very easily and we will get any number of blocks outside the country. We will get oil also. So, that also is to be taken care of.

[Shri K.S. Rao]

Finally, in Andhra Pradesh, now KG basin is giving a lot of gas and oil. So, he must keep that into his mind and give importance or preference to the experts that are coming from Andhra Pradesh in giving seats in this Institute. Though, it is located in Uttar Pradesh, we have no objection to it yet that also has to be taken into account.

With these few words, I support and admire him. I wish that this Bill should have been brought long ago. However, now it has been brought but he must concentrate entirely on seeing that it starts right from the academic year of 2008-09 with big numbers.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Sir, this is a welcome step that the Government has proposed to set up an Institute of national importance to cater to the growing needs of technical people in the area of hydrocarbons.

The Price Waterhouse study mentions that we may have a shortage of no less than 6000 trained people by the year 2019 and also taking into account the great potential which we have and the under-utilization of our exploration possibilities in the domestic areas, I think it will go a long way to serve the purpose and to fulfill the needs. What I want to emphasize is that not an Institute of national importance but down below at the school level, ITI-level, polytechnic level, if you do not have enough skilled people, the scenario is not going to change very much. Though the Government has proposed to set up a number of ITIs, yet we find that there is a very big shortage of skilled people in the country, including in the field of hydrocarbons.

Secondly, even though graduates are passing out of the engineering colleges and other Institutes, only a meagre 53 per cent of them are finding employment in the job market. This is an admission which has been made by important people and even the former President of India had commented upon it. How many of these graduates are employable? Now the finishing schools at various parts of the country are coming up and a host of other steps also are being taken to improve upon the situation. The key question is how to integrate these institutes of national importance with those of the ITIs and such other institutes down below. It requires to be studied at the school level. The Government would have to keep in mind the concerns of energy security. We would have to explore the relevant areas to meet up this gap and find ways as to how to have the national grid

and gas and how we can integrate the sources of gas, coal, oil and other sources. Short of skilled people is a big problem in the area of hydrocarbons.

Retention of skilled people is another big problem. We find in our Public Sector Undertakings that competent people are leaving because a much higher salary is being offered, attractive packages are being offered by the private sector. The hon. Minister of Science and Technology and also the hon. Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas has repeatedly mentioned that we need to address this issue. I do not know as to what the Sixth Pay Commission would recommend in this regard. But the situation as it is today is that competent people are leaving the Public Sector Undertakings to take up job in the private sector.

Thirdly, I would refer to the question of technology. Take for example the exploration technology. We are now satisfied with a two-dimensional technology. But unless we have the sophisticated three-dimensional technology, which involves, of course, a lot of investment and also highly technical people, things are not going to improve much. In the field of oil diplomacy we are having a sort of aggressive investment in joint sector in Africa, in Russia, in West Asia and in very many other countries. In such a scenario, there is a requirement for skilled people, professional people. This is a welcome step that the Government proposes to take.

The problem we face today is not only of retention of talent, but also of attracting talents. We do find today that even ordinary engineering graduates those who have specialised in the petroleum sector are tempted to join the financial sector, the IT sector because of a severe distortion in the job market. Attractive salaries are being offered to them by these sectors. In this backdrop, I think, the Government should attempt to address this basic issue of how to attract and retain the talents.

Sir, I have only two to three points to make. It is not clear in the Bill as to how the selection of the President would be made. It has been mentioned that a Committee will be framed. Who will be the members of that Committee? How will the composition of that Committee be selected? What will be the criteria? What will be the qualification of the President? Would he be a political appointee? Then there is the question of autonomy. What kind of autonomy will be accorded to this institute? If you look at the IIMs and the IITs, you would find that there has always been interference with the autonomy of

these institutions. This is being given effect to by an Act of Parliament. So, what would be representation of the Parliament? In case of the IITs and other national institutes, there are always two Members from the Lok Sabha and one Member from the Rajya Sabha represented in these institutions. But there is no such provision made here. I think, this legislation has been framed in hurry and haste. I could have made a number of observations on this. There has been a reference to the course here. There is also a mention about the Senate, the Board etc. What is the relation between the Board and the Senate? If we take the experiences of our universities, then we can say that managing the faculty would not be easy because faculty is a big problem in the IITs.

In such an area of petroleum technology, it is not easy to run a National Institute. I think the Government has not been able to apply its mind fully about the knitty-gritties. Due to constraint of time, I am not elaborating the problems. But I find a lot of lacunae in the Bill itself. I could have observed about the deficiencies, about the President, the quality of members, etc. It is mentioned about Kanpur. Why is it only Kanpur? Is it because it is in Uttar Pradesh? There are courses in other IITs. Why are you limiting only to Kanpur IIT? In such a manner, there are so many things which are not mentioned or which are mentioned inadequately. I think the Government should address this issue very briefly. ...*(Interruptions)*

As regards the President, who will be the President till the statute is framed? It should be part of the Act. What is the qualification? About the representation of Parliament, it should be mentioned here. What about the courses, about the integration of institutes of excellence down below and how to integrate it from the school level upto the research level? If we cannot do it, it will not serve the purpose for which it is being set up.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): I am thankful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak on Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology Bill, 2007. This is an institute of national importance being set up at Rai Bareilly, Jayas in Uttar Pradesh; I, therefore, strongly support this Bill. It is very commendable that the Institute will confer graduate, master's and doctorate degree in engineering and technology, management, Science and arts in the field of Petroleum and hydrocarbon. Hostel and other facilities have also been provided for students.

You are going to start it in the year 2008-09. 11th Fifth Year Plan is going to start and in the beginning, the funds of Rs. 285 crores are being provided to it; so this is also the reason that I strongly support this Bill. It has been seen that there is an acute shortage of refineries and drilling activities in the field of petroleum even today in the country. This Institute will give new impetus to this programme. This Institute will try to provide the trained manpower in the petroleum sector by developing human resource. With the creation of this Institute, the oil sector will produce the expert engineers who would have specialization in petroleum technology as a result of which it will remove the problems of petroleum products in the country. Wherever this kind of institutes exist, there will be all round development in the field of petroleum technology. This institute because of its location in Rai Bareilly, Jayas will facilitate the highly trained teachers from the nearby prestigious institutes like IIT, Kanpur, Kharagpur, IIM, Lucknow to visit this institute for teaching.

13.59 hrs.

[SHRI VARAKALA RADHAKRISHNAN in the Chair]

[Translation]

Further, this institute will have added advantage for its being located in the proximity to airstrip as a result of which there will be frequent visits of the scientists and experts to this institute. While the Government is taking concrete steps for starting this particular course as well as increasing the number of seats for the admission of students in IIT Institutes, the institutes like Indian Institute of Petroleum, Dehradun or Indian school of Mines, Dhanbad will get help not only in upgrading their status but also in enhancing their basic infrastructural facilities, apart from increase in number of students in IIT courses in the beginning.

14.00 hrs.

At the same time, there will be a check on migration to multinational companies despite all kinds of tempting offers made to the students passing out from such institutes and, thus, it will prove to be effective. A proper representation should be given in the Board of the Institute to the member of Parliament and the Public representatives in consonance with their status. This practice should be followed in this institute on the lines of other institutes.

[Shri Shailendra Kumar]

With these words I strongly support the Bill introduced by the hon'ble Minister and conclude my speech.

[English]

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY (Dhenkanal): Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity.

No doubt, we all agree with the hon. Minister when he said that this Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology will be an Institute of national importance. At the outset I would like to suggest that, had the name been the Indian Institute of Petroleum Technology, it would have been proper because that would have honoured the late Smt. Indira Gandhi, as it falls in her constituency. However, we support this Bill.

As I was telling our leader Shri Braja Kishore Tripathy and my colleague, Shri B. Mahtab, a time has come for trained personnel to be created in this country. Indigenously trained personnel have to be of world standard. But a few points should have been taken care of in this Bill because those have been bones of contention in the ruling Party or the Party that heads the UPA. We all know about it.

If this Institute is to have a good calibre of international level, then it should have most probably, preferred international collaboration also. For instance, we could have taken the cooperation of companies, like Petronas, British Petroleum and Exxon and got international faculty, as well as international students who could have come and studied here. When Indian students study along with international students, when they have the reach and the access to international faculty, then the standard of education or training of those technical personnel would definitely be much better.

We all know that when Iraq withdrew from Kuwait, in the first war, they set oil wells on fire. It took Kuwaitis, along with European and American aid, many months, to douse out those flames. That means, even a simple thing, like putting out an oil well fire also requires a high level of technology. There are just a few personnel in this whole world, who can give that kind of technology. So, when it comes to oil sector, it is not only the question of exploration, but even things, which look so simple, but complex, like putting out fires, need technical personnel which this Institute should definitely address.

Man-power that we create in this country should not only be limited to this country but should be exported abroad also. But we should be careful. We have seen in the case of IITs and other institutes of excellence, they take advantage of the Indian society, they take advantage of Indian tax payer. The moment they pass out of these institutes, they immediately go abroad.

Here, it is not clear what would be the duration of the course or what level of education the students need to have, to get into this Institute. But, as and when it gets specified, I would suggest that a contract should be signed by all indigenous students that after passing out from this Institute, they will mandatorily serve for a certain period within the country. It is very important and I think the hon. Minister, in this very well thought out measure of his, will kindly consider this point also. In his speech, he said that there is a requirement of about 36000 people by 2019 and this survey has been done by some foreign agency. But, I feel that it is a very conservative estimate and I think that the actual requirement will be much more. Like some of the senior MPs have pointed out earlier, it is befitting that institutes of this level should have the local MP, whoever the MP at a particular time, in the Board so that the Board gets the people's face. Parliament should always insist on having the local MPs in PSUs and in educational institutes so that the level of excellence is retained. Of course, everybody has given kudos to the Minister for controlling the petroleum prices. We, from Biju Janata Dal, also join in this chorus. We also congratulate him for his exemplary success in controlling petroleum product prices within India whereas they have been spiralling up all over the globe. But, along with this I would suggest to him that a similar institute, maybe with a different name like the one I suggested, Indian Institute of Petroleum Technology, could be set up in either in the North-east or in Orissa, as was suggested by my hon. colleague, where we are find that there is oil in the Mahanadi Basin and there is oil also in the Krishna-Godavari Basin also.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY: All along the eastern coast also, there is a lot of find. So, to facilitate the students from that part of the country, an institute could be set up in Orissa which would cater to that part.

Sir, it is a known fact that anybody who controls hydrocarbon value chain also controls the future of the country. India today cannot afford to remain isolated and

we cannot afford to go half way in our efforts to modernize. Therefore, in the field of petroleum alongwith other fields, it is necessary that we really concentrate on setting up institutes of international standards. If the Government is investing so much money, it should consider having more institutes. I have gone through this Bill and I find that it has not been clarified in it as to how many students will be churned out every year. The Minister should clarify to the House that if you keep 2019 as a target to produce 36000 trained personnel, then what will be the annual output of trained personnel. I would again congratulate the Minister for thinking and bringing forth this exemplary Bill and we hope that apart from Raebareli, whose importance all of us definitely understand, he would also consider that Orissa is another ideal place where he can set up another such parallel institute.

SHRI K.C. CHANDRAPPA (Trichur): I understand in this area of petroleum, we should have concentrated much earlier. We are developing personnel who will be technologically competent. Now, Sir, when we are making an institute of national importance, the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology, first I would like to support the idea given by my previous speaker, Shri Rupchand Pal.

After all, we are all enacting a legislation by which we are taking a new step, which is a big step. Now, that institution should have accountability to Parliament. In Thiruvananthapuram, Sree Chitra Thirunal Institute of Technology is there by a Central Act. In that institute's governing body, two Members of this House and one Member of Rajya Sabha are there. It is not necessary that they should be local Members, but Members of Parliament are represented in the governing body of that institute. In this Bill also, that provision should be included. I think it will ensure accountability of this institute to Parliament.

Secondly, I would like to say that the demand raised by Shri Kiren Rijju from Arunachal Pradesh is very justified because that part of the country is where we have started oil prospecting and exploration and that part of the country is also comparatively backward. I think there is one institute which the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is running in Guwahati which is an academic institute to train personnel in this field. Instead of creating a new institute there which will be difficult, if that institute is raised the same way as an institute of national importance, it will go a long way to meet the demand of the people belonging to that region. As far as I

understand, the institute which is there at Guwahati is an institute of repute and the hon. Minister must be knowing it better. So, that point may be considered.

Sir, I am not going into the details now. This Bill must have been prepared in a hurry. Though the cause is great, this Bill needs a lot of changes in relation to faculty, in relation to senate and all that. So, I would request the Minister that he may go through it more thoroughly and come forward with some more amendments in the days ahead. That will help this institute and also the purpose for which he is creating it today.

We are trying to step up our activities in the area of hydrocarbon and that should also include new exploration and new prospecting. It was reported long back and the Government of Kerala Government also requested the Ministry long back that in the Malabar Coast, especially near Kochi, like Bombay High, there is a great possibility of oil prospects and exploration. If we can find oil deposit there, explore the possibility and do the prospecting, then, probably, it will be a big deposit that we are going to find out as we have done in the case of Godavari Basin. This is the area where the biggest rivers of Kerala are flowing. That should also find a place in the future plans of the Ministry.

Then, as it was pointed out, when we make an institute of excellence, it should be supported from down below. Otherwise, this institute of excellence will remain rootless. Now, the Government has a programme of developing 500 IITs with the World Bank assistance. So, in those institutes wherever it is required, if the syllabus of hydrocarbons is also included, then the Government may get trained personnel who may come to this institute or their talents will be made use of elsewhere.

So, I wish all well to the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology. I congratulate the Minister for bringing this Bill and I hope he will agree with the few suggestions which we are making which will strengthen the Bill further and make this institute stronger.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology Bill, 2007 presented by the hon'ble Minister and I extend my thanks to the Minister for, this, but I would like to say that Uttar Pradesh already has a very big Institute at Dehradun in the name of K.D. Malviya. So, my submission is whether Uttar Pradesh or the country is known by only Raebareli and Amethi, while

[Prof. Rase Singh Rawat]

the institute like this is already located there. It appears that the reason for setting up of this institute in that area is the Chairman of UPA who represents Raebareilly and a few days back another Institute was inaugurated in Amethi. We do wish that UP should prosper and more and more institutes of this nature be established there. We are not jealous about that. My only submission to the hon'ble Minister is that it would have been more meaningful, had this institute been set up at a place where petrol and natural gas are produced.

Hon'ble Rajiv Gandhi was Prime Minister of this country, he was young; he had done a very good job and we commend it, but perhaps we forgot the big leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. Each and every work is named after Rajiv Gandhi, for example, Rajiv Gandhi Rural Electrification Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Drinking water Scheme etc. Such a trend is not proper, I may be pardoned but I consider it my duty to express my feeling.

As far as the establishment of this Institute is concerned, it is an institute of national importance and like our colleagues, I would also request that it should have some representatives from amongst the Members of Parliament—two from Lok Sabha and two from Rajya Sabha—in that institute. Three wings—Governing Body, General Council and Senate have been constituted making provisions as to how they will establish mutual coordination. The hon'ble Minister has said that the Comptroller and Auditor General will have the right to examine its accounts and every year the report will be presented in the House; that means it will be accountable to the House. So, my request is that there must be some representatives from the Parliament in the General Body and the Governing Body of the Institute.

Through you, I would like to make a submission that big oil reserves have been found in Jaisalmer, Barmer and Jalaun in Rajasthan. ONGC has also found big oil reserves there. Earlier, the Keyam Company had also found oil reserves. I think, it will be useful if the Branches of such Institutes are established in the backward and bordering state like Rajasthan.

In clause eleven, it has been mentioned that the institute will be opened for all men and women irrespective of their clan, caste or community. There will be no

discrimination on this account. There will be no precondition of religious faith or belief for enrolment of students or for making appointment of teachers and staff. It is a commendable clause. However, mention of State would have been better, because we want to make it an institute of national importance so that eminent scholars and experts from within country and abroad may join its faculty and meritorious students may get admission and acquire competence in the field of hydrocarbon and petroleum research. For drilling of oil, new blocks are being auctioned by the Government to the private and public sector companies so that oil may be extracted. It is said about our country that there are several oil reserve areas in the country which are yet to be explored. Earlier we hired Russian experts for Bombay High because in the event of any technical problem, we suffer in the absence of experts in our country. Now, I feel that this institution will cater to our national needs. Our country is a developing country so such institutes are extremely necessary for our country. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to you that you have introduced this Bill.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to add one more thing as to whether the Government have conducted any study about other such foreign institutes at the international level before setting up of this institute, so that international standard norms may be followed at this institute in terms of infrastructure or expertise so that we may not lag behind any country. As our Government have said that our ONGC or IOC officials are doing drilling or exploration work in Sudan, Uzbekistan or Central Asia or inside Africa in collaboration with Russia. Then, at least this national institute will be of international standard. The arrangements should be made in this institution so that people from other countries of the world may come here to acquire expertise in the field of petroleum and natural gas.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government have fixed a time limit of 5 years and Rs. 285 crore will be spent for this proposal in the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Rs. 44 crore in 2007-08, Rs. 81 crore in 2008-09, Rs. 69 crore in 2009-10 and Rs. 60 crore in 2010-11 will be released. Till it is completed there will be a cost over run. The expenditure on establishment, machines, faculties of various departments and the appointments will increase. The funds for this purpose will be arranged from the public sector undertakings. Their experts will be represented in the general body. It will be better if its execution is expedited.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to submit that the oil fields are found in Rajasthan as well. The Government and ONGC intend to set up oil refinery there. Presently the refineries have been set up in those areas also where there is no oil however the claim of Rajasthan is justified that at least one refinery should be set up there as oil field has been found and more and more such oil field are likely to be found there in future as well. Rajasthan should get 50 per cent royalty on the petroleum products produced in the State.

With these words, I support the Bill.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri Adhir Chowdhury. Please be brief.

This Bill has already been discussed in the Rajya Sabha, and no new things are brought in. We are confined to the constitution of a new set up. That is all. A Council, President and Office-bearers have to be instituted as per the provisions of this Bill. It is a normal routine matter. That is the purpose of this Bill. There is no scope for a lengthy discussion on this.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY (Berhampore, West Bengal): Sir, I always abide by your directions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, please start now.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, at the outset I must appreciate lavishly our hon. Minister who is in-charge of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Murlidhar Deora ji as he has taken the initiative to pilot this Bill under the nomenclature 'Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology Bill, 2007'.

Sir, the Institute is still conducted from a rented house, and by an Act of Parliament it will be rendered as an institute of national importance.

Some of the Members are opposing the name of the institution as it is named after Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Sir, nothing can be parochial and myopic than opposing the idea of an institution to be named after Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Rajiv Gandhi denotes modern India, who had dreamt 'our India is great'. Rajiv Gandhi represents a new vision of our country. Rajiv Gandhi represents the integrity of our nation who laid his life for the sake of our country and for the integrity of our country. Here, in this House if we

oppose an institution to be named after the great Rajiv Gandhi, then it is really a shameful episode for us.

The Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology Bill, 2007 has already been passed in the Rajya Sabha. As you know, energy is considered to be a formidable weapon in the world. We are facing the problem of energy security because more than 70 per cent of our energy is used to be imported from foreign countries. Our economy is growing by leaps and bounds and to accommodate the growth of our economy, we need more energy in the coming future, in the near future. Already, we have made vigorous attempt to carve out our equity in the foreign oilfields, namely Africa, Middle-East and other countries. It is because we want to be self-sufficient in energy sector.

India is still producing the second largest number of technical personnel in the world after the USA. Insofar as IT is concerned, we have invaded the Silicon Valley in USA which is recorded as the Mecca of information technology. But still in spite of having a Hydrocarbon Vision, we do not have the requisite infrastructure, the required technical personnel to deal with the rising demand in this sector. Already, the Minister has admitted that only 30 per cent of sedimentary basin has so far been explored.

The Natural Exploration Policy has already been adopted in the year 1990 and already a number of blocks have been offered to various entrepreneurs for the exploration of energy. It is appreciable to note that ONGC, Bharat Petroleum, Hindustan Petroleum—all have been included in the *Forbes' Fortune* 500 List.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, please conclude.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: So, we have the potentiality. But we need more technical personnel and also in view of the fact that now the world is progressing towards outsourcing.

If you see Iran or even Iraq, their oilfields are plenty but they do not have the required oil refinery mechanism. As a result, technical personnel from China and other countries are being hired by those countries for developing their refinery sector. Therefore, if we are able to produce more personnel through this Institute, namely, the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology, then we will also be able to export our human resources, our demographic dividend to other countries to earn more equity.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. Your time is over. We have already taken the time allotted for this Bill. It is already 2.30 p.m.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: This institute, the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology, is being given the status of an institution of national importance. I would request that more institutes of this kind be set up in various parts of the country.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please wait. It is already 2:30 p.m. So, the time allotted for the Bill is over. If the House agrees, we can extend the time for the Bill by fifteen minutes. What is the sense of the House? I presume that you all agree to it.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Sir, can it be completed within fifteen minutes?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, Let us extend the time by half an hour.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: I do not think it will be enough. ...*(Interruptions)* There is no speaker from our party now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would inform the House that we have a very important discussion under Rule 193 regarding the relationship between the three pillars of our Constitution. That has been pending for a long time. That is a very important discussion. We should not curtail the time of that discussion. That is my view.

Please conclude, Shri Chowdhury. This does not mean that you can continue to speak. My dear friend, if you do not cooperate how can the proceedings of the House be conducted? You belong to the Treasury Benches. I can understand the members of the Opposition doing it.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: I will conclude, Sir.

Sir, we should follow the New Exploration Licensing Policy very vigorously. To do that, we need more competent personnel. This kind of an institute will produce more competent personnel. However, I would request the hon. Minister to set up more institutions like this in different parts of the country. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have to conclude now.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Shri Adhir Chowdhury, please conclude.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Yes, Sir. I would urge upon the hon. Members. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Parliamentary Affairs Minister is also having no control over you.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY: Sir, the Bill has the provision of an Endowment Fund. So, I request all the Members to donate one month's salary to that fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chowdhury, please be at least under the control of the Minister concerned.

Mr. Minister, thank you. Your intervention is required in such cases. I can manage it but your intervention is welcome.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (Idukki): Sir, I rise to support the hon. Minister especially because the hon. Minister and the Ministry is trying to establish a centre of excellence in the country in the name of the late Prime Minister.

The Bill says that this institute will impart courses starting from B. Tech. to Ph.D. programmes. We have any number of engineering colleges in the country and every day new engineering colleges are coming up. Why should the Ministry not direct these engineering colleges to start B. Tech. and M. Tech. courses in this area of hydrocarbons, exploitation and exploration and restrict the function of this Institute especially for doctoral programmes to make it an exclusive centre of excellence where we can train people?

This institute is coming up in Uttar Pradesh. Section 10 speaks about the Board of Governors having the power to establish campuses and academic centres at any place within or outside India. We can have two regional centres—one in the North-East and one in the South—along with this institute. Kerala does not claim any special expertise in this field but we have a lot of people working in the Gulf in oil companies. We can attach one regional centre to probably the Cochin University of Science and Technology and another regional centre can be set up in the North-East which is traditionally known for oil deposits.

So, the hon. Minister himself has said that. Regarding the policy, we have only exploited or explored 30 per cent of the sedimentary deposits. Our target is to make it 100 per cent by 2015. I would like to very humbly ask whether it is prudent to do that because the big powers, namely, the USA, Russia and China have vast deposits. They are keeping those deposits in store and importing oil from, especially, the Gulf countries. We all know that oil is so vital and important. The Club of Rome three decades back have predicted that the carbon deposits are exhaustible. Once this is over, if we exploit fully, then what is going to happen? What would be our position in the world as far as this very vital product is concerned?

In our import bill, 70 per cent goes for import of oil. Crude oil prices almost touched 100 dollars a barrel. We are yet to explore our deposits. As the hon. Chandrappan has pointed out, we have huge deposits. ...*(Interruptions)* and we have been talking about it for long. Nothing has happened so far. I have been in the front and also from the back. I am forced to conclude. I think, I will have to conclude now. So, I support the Bill, and once again congratulate the hon. Minister.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMESH DUBE (Mirzapur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology Bill, 2007.

14.35 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

I would like to welcome the hon'ble Minister, Shri Murti Deora. I know that he is a minister of progressive ideology and has introduced a good proposal that is the need of the modern age, however, I welcome this proposal also because the institute is proposed to be set up in Uttar Pradesh.

I would like to submit one more thing that Uttar Pradesh is a big state that should not be confined to only Amethi and Raebareilly. There are other backward areas, districts in Uttar Pradesh where such institutes are required to be set up. I would like to submit that there are other backward areas in eastern Uttar Pradesh, particularly like Mirzapur, Robertsganj where the Government should ponder to set up such institutions.

This is my request.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Braja Kishore Tripathy, will you speak something? You have asked for two minutes.

[English]

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (Puri): Hon. Speaker, Sir, we are discussing the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology Bill, 2007. The objective of this Institute of national importance is to nurture and promote quality and excellence in education and research in the area of Petroleum and Hydro Carbon and to provide for programmes and courses of instructions and research leading to the award of Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral degrees in engineering and technology, management, science and arts in the area of petroleum and Hydro Carbons.

This Institute will cost about Rs. 861 crore. The decision to set up this Institute in the constituency of Mrs. Gandhi has raised objections from most Members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas. The Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Janardhan Reddy, including other Members, were of the view that the Petroleum Ministry should have first explored the possibility of introducing a specialized course in any of the Indian Institute of Technology or at the Indian Institute of Petroleum at Dehradun. There is an Institute of the Petroleum Ministry in Dehradun. They could have expanded this Institute without setting up of an Institute like this. This proposed Institute is named after the memory of late Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhiji, and it is in the constituency of Shrimati Sonia Gandhiji—I do not have any objection. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: No constituency is marked for any name; it belongs to the Election Commission of India.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Anyway, at the moment, the posts of Chairman and Registrar of the Institute should be filled with anybody from the family so that the entire objectives of this Government would be fulfilled.

I would also like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to some of the issues—Orissa is always demanding for a Central Institute like IIT or IIM or a Central University to be set up in Orissa, but it is not taken care of yet. Secondly, the work at the Paradeep Refinery is going on for the last 8-9 years, but it is not

[Shri Braja Kishore Tripathy]

progressing at the expected level. So, on two things, I am drawing the attention of the hon. Minister—he should expedite the Paradeep Refinery work and the Government should also consider setting up a Central Institute like IIT or IIM in Orissa.

DR. M. JAGANNATH (Nagar Kurnool): Sir, I support the Bill on my own behalf and on behalf of my Party.

This Bill is to set up an Institute of national importance. As such, even after 60 years of Independence, we do not have any such institute which matches the international standards. Though we have courses on chemical technology in some of the universities as a part of the faculty, but we do not have a full-fledged one.

Even after 60 years of Independence, the indication is that we are falling short of nearly 30,000-40,000 officers in the petroleum and natural gas side, to meet the needs of the country. It is a very said thing. At least, now a realization has started in the Government. We do not have expertise, when there is blow out of the wells and fire accident takes place, to douse the fire; we have to depend on foreign nationals. By the time, they come here, a lot of damage would have been done.

When coming to the location of the proposed Institute, it is not justified to have this institution in a place like Rae Bareilly. Previously also, many of the Prime Ministers came from this Constituency and the Constituency would get developed on its own. Apart from that, according to the indications, there are no petroleum deposits in that area and no drilling activity is going on there. So, it is not going to help the institution much. Had this Institute been located at a place like Krishna-Godavari Basins where we have the richest petroleum and natural gas deposits are found recently in Bombay High or Gujarat, it would have served the purpose better.

In Rae Bareilly, where the Institute is proposed to be set up, we can only impart the theoretical part. However, the practical aspect will not be taken care of there. If we want to impart practical training to the students there, we have to take them to either Krishna-Godavari Basins or to Bombay high or Gujarat which will cost a lot of money to the Government exchequer. So, this could have been avoided, if the Institute had been set up at those places, where drilling activities are going on.

I am not objecting to this, but I request the Government—since this is an Institute of national importance, it could be set up anywhere in the country—to pay heed to this. I support the Bill, in any case. Even the Standing Committee supported this. My plea to the Government is that having only one such Institute is not sufficient to cater to the needs of the country. I request the Government to propose such Institutes at least one in each region like North, South, East and West.

Coming to the SC/ST aspect, I am very happy that a provision had been made in the Bill itself to take care of the issues relating to SCs and STs, as per the Constitutional provisions. ...*(Interruptions)* If we look at the fee structure and the courses, nowadays, in spite of the best efforts, the candidates belonging to the SCs, STs and OBCs, are not being given seats under one pretext or the other, depriving them of the latest technology.

My request to the Government is that it should see that the constitutional provisions are strictly implemented. The students belonging to those categories should be taught free of cost.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): Thank you very much. I am very grateful to the Members who have participated in the discussion and have offered good suggestions. It will not be possible for me to reply all the suggestions given at this moment but I assure all those who have given the suggestions they will be receiving a letter from me within eight or ten days classifying what is possible and what is not and why it is not possible.

I am grateful to the first speaker, Shri Kiren Rijju. He always speaks good of us. ...*(Interruptions)* Assam Renewal Project worth Rs. 2000 crore is being implemented by the ONGC. I hope you know that. The old wells in Assam have dried and we are having a great difficulty to explore oil from there. What is to be done is to have this new programme. This is very much there. You do not worry. We are taking care of it.

The other friend made a very good suggestion. What our country is doing for exploring oil in other countries? Last week I was in Russia, Moscow. One month earlier we were in Sudan. There are 15 countries around the world with which we are sharing the blocks, like Sakhalian in Russia, which is one of the biggest blocks in the world. We have 20 per cent share and other countries

have 80 per cent of the share. I do not want to burden you with all these details but more than 8 million tonne of oil we are getting through this system. We are trying to see that we deal with more and more countries like Iran, Iraq, Damascus and Syria. I have personally gone there. We are trying to see that we get these blocks. They will be cheaper and more assurable. We are doing very well.

One of the friends suggested that we should not take help from overseas countries. We are taking the help of Exxon and Savron. There was a time when they thought that there was no oil or gas in India but Krishna Godavari field of Andhra Pradesh has proved that there is lot of oil and in case they bid they are going to make thousands of millions of dollars. We have NELP-6. I can tell you more than 8-9 billion dollars of investment will come to India when NELP-1 and NELP-2 will grow. This is the treasure of the country and the people will enjoy it.

My friend has talked about Orissa just now. In Orissa Indian Oil Corporation is setting up Paradeep Refinery. I went there myself. There is no problem at all. The Chief Minister of that State, Shri Naveen Patnaik is doing his best to help us. We are talking about Orissa Refinery. I have personally sent some people to Orissa to put a steel factory there because so much of iron ore is there. Not only South Korean factory, I am talking of other steel manufacturers who went to see Shri Patnaik. We are here to see that we help them. Shri Mahtab and Shri Sathpathi know who these people are. I am very sure that we are able to get not only one South Korean but other steel plant because there are so much of Iron ore and so much other facilities available there. They will do that. We do not consider whether there is Congress Government or. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Do not respond to him. Mr. Minister, please address the Chair.

SHRI MURLI DEORA: Sir, I would like to draw your attention to the current projected annual under recoveries of this sector, which is Rs. 69,753 crore. It is the Government which is bearing this. As rightly said, we have not increased even one Rupee. You cannot get anywhere in the world Rs. 9 a litre kerosene. Still we are trying to see that we do not increase the price. You may be reading the newspaper. LPG, Kerosene and diesel—some of them are the cheapest available in India, which are not available anywhere in the world. It is because we want to see that the common man.

[*Translation*]

Common man should be benefited and may not suffer.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to submit to other Members that after going through the points and suggestions of the Members, I will make a reply. I would like to submit one thing to Rawatji. Every time, he cooperate very much in our Committee. I would like to submit in regard to Rajasthan refinery he was talking about that the refineries were to be set up in Bina (Madhya Pradesh), Paradeep (Orissa) and Bhatinda (Punjab), however, the British Petroleum which was the collaborator of Bhatinda refinery left the project. You may ask the Chief Minister of Punjab. We invited Shri Mittal, a new person from London and now work on the Bhatinda refinery will be started. There is no Congress Government in Punjab, despite that we have not excluded Punjab. Whether it is Punjab, Orissa or Rajasthan, we believe that the entire country is one. Do not say that Rajasthan is yours and Delhi is ours, all is yours. If you are not elected then you will start abusing. If you do not mind, I would like to say one thing. ...(*Interruptions*)

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): I was submitting about the right of Rajasthan.

SHRI MURLI DEORA: You know that I, myself, belong to Rajasthan. There is a very senior leader of Rajasthan who is of the opinion that there is no need to set up a refinery in Rajasthan. Whether it is Rajasthan, Delhi, or any other place, we will undertake the work wherever production is feasible and it may generate employment for the people.

With this, I would like to extend my thanks to you and request that the Bill be passed.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Bill to declare the institution known as the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology to be an institution of national importance and to provide for its incorporation and for matters connected therewith, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the House will take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is:

"That clauses 2 to 40 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 to 40 were added to the Bill.

*Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title
were added to the Bill.*

SHRI MURLI DEORA: I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That the Bill be passed."

There is time for everything. This is the third reading. I am giving you an opportunity. Otherwise, no hon. member can speak twice on one subject. You know that.

SHRI KIREN RIJIJU: Sir, because of lack of time, I could not mention one important thing regarding health, safety and environment. Are you going to include health, safety and environment in the curriculum of this Institute?

SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA: Sir, when this Bill was being considered, all the Members had given a suggestion that, at least, one campus of this Institute should be there in Assam. Will the Minister consider this or not?
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Why not West Bengal?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You have spoken already. I would not allow this. There is a limit to it.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: The Minister has said that he will reply to everybody within ten days. What more will he say? *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You have made that point. There is no need to repeat it.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Please speak about only two hon'ble Members.

[English]

SHRI MURLI DEORA: Sir, what Shri Rijiju is suggesting, is already included.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: The views of all have been included.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

14.54 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Matters under Rule 377 listed in today's List of Business may be treated as laid on the Table of the House.

- (1) Need to accord priority for conversion of metre gauge railway line to broad gauge line in Saurashtra region of Gujarat

[Translation]

SHRI V.K. THUMMAR (Amreli): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Saurashtra region of my home state Gujarat is being neglected in terms of developmental work in railways and provision of amenities therein and it is on account of this that most of the railway lines in Saurashtra are of metre gauge and due to this the people of Saurashtra are not getting direct railway service to other parts of India. Most of the areas of Saurashtra fall in the coastal region where import and export of goods can be held but it is on account of lack of goods trains from Saurashtra to other parts of the country that the optimum utilization of these coastal areas are not being done. It is on account of

*Treated as laid on the table of the House.

lack of railway facility that neither the ports of Saurashtra nor the marine products are being developed which have immense potentials in Saurashtra. Sanction for only one work related to the conversion of metre gauge line into broad gauge between Dhasa to Jetalsar in my Parliamentary constituency has been given, however, the pace of work is slow and on account of this the traffic on this route has been disturbed and people are facing inconvenience.

So, I would like to request you that priority may be given for the conversion of metre gauge into broad gauge railway line in Saurashtra.

(ii) Need to launch campaign for prevention of AIDS among women

[English]

SHRIMATI JHANSI LAKSHMI BOTCHA (Bobbili): Never before has humanity faced a disaster on such a scale as HIV/AIDS. The disease has killed around 30 million people. If the pandemic continues unchecked, there will be 45 million new infections by 2010 and nearly 70 million deaths by 2020. Prevention of infection and care for the infected are the key elements of today's massive fight against HIV.

Women in developing countries are disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS because they face systemic and persistence discrimination. Nearly 40 percent of those now contacting the HIV virus are women, including housewives. As per one report of UN, in rural India, less than half of women have not heard of AIDS, let alone how to protect them from HIV infection.

Culturally, women face significant barriers in getting support if HIV positive, while the burden they bear as care providers often leaves them in poverty.

Too little money is spent on the development of female-centered prevention methods such as microbicides and female condoms. Research shows that 2.5 million HIV infections might be prevented if just 20 per cent of women in power countries could regularly use a microbicides.

Keeping these facts in view, in our country, now it is high time to launch campaigns to focus more on women in prevention of AIDS. HIV/AIDS test should be made mandatory before marriage for both men and women.

Effective economic rehabilitation of these HIV infected women will go a long way in dreaming world without AIDS.

(iii) Need to enhance the strength of judges with a view to reduce the pendency of cases in the courts

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (Palani): I want to bring to the kind notice of this august House about the pathetic situation of Judicial System in this country.

As many as 37.1 lakh cases are pending in 21 High Courts and 2.48 crore cases are pending in Lower Courts. During 1999, it was 27.5 lakh and 2 crores respectively. The public are spending their whole life and money to get remedy in the courts. These pendencies are due to large scale vacancies in the Judiciary and inadequacy of infrastructural facilities particularly in lower judiciary. The sanctioned strength in 21 High Courts are 792 and working strength is 586. It constitutes 26% out of the sanctioned strength of 15,399 Subordinate Judges in the country, the working strength is 12,368. The existing vacancies accounting to 24%. The judicial officers in Subordinate Courts are getting very low salary and not provided with facilities like any residential quarters and vehicles, etc. The salaries of the Judicial Officers should be raised to ensure efficient functioning of judiciary. To reduce the pendency of cases, the existing vacancies are required to be filled at the earliest and the strength of judges has to be increased by appointing nearly 10,000 judges in Lower Judiciary to clear backlog cases within 2 years. The salary of Subordinate judicial Officer starts with Rs. 9,000/- and Rs. 35,000/- for High Court Judges. It is very low. This has to be increased to a minimum of Rs. 25,000/- and Rs. 60,000/- respectively. Through Central Assistance scheme, adequate funds should be allocated to provide infrastructural facilities like court complexes, residential quarters for Judicial Officers and Bar Rooms for lawyers.

I shall, therefore, urge upon the Government to take immediate steps to reduce the pendency of cases by filling all pending vacancies and appointing more Judges in all the courts in the country.

(iv) Need to carve out a new state of Harit Pradesh from the Western Parts of Uttar Pradesh

[Translation]

SHRI SURENDRA PRAKASH GOYAL (Hapur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, as is known that even after the carving out

[Shri Surendra Prakash Goyal]

of the Uttarakhand State, Uttar Pradesh is the biggest state even now which has 80 Lok Sabha seats and 403 Legislative Assembly seats. From the point of view of development, some parts of the state are as developed as Delhi, Haryana and Punjab; however, most of its parts are in the same condition as they were 60 years back, which are very backward and undeveloped. Education, health, roads, power, drinking water and railway facilities are extremely essential for the basic development of the State, however, most of the parts of the state are even today deprived of these basic facilities. This area is very weak from the political and administrative point of view. The division of the state has become quite essential for the development of the entire region. The capital and the seat of high court of Uttar Pradesh are far away from the Western Uttar Pradesh. The people have to visit Lucknow on account of official works and to get justice from the Allahabad High Court while on one hand one has to spend more money, on the other hand, it takes too much time. The poor people of Western Uttar Pradesh fail to gather courage to approach the High court. So, I strongly demand for the carving out of a new state of Harit Pradesh from the Western Parts of Uttar Pradesh.

Through you, I would like to request the Government that a new state of Harit Pradesh from the Western parts of Uttar Pradesh should be carved out by way of reorganization of the State of Uttar Pradesh so that proper development may be ensured in the smaller states.

(v) Need to generate electricity using Coal Bed Methane in Nagaur, Rajasthan

SHRI BHANWAR SINGH DANGAWAS (Nagaur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, at present the country is facing acute shortage of electricity. With the rise in consumption, population, industry and agriculture sector, its shortage will be felt more. Hydro-electricity is the cheapest power in the world and next cheap method of generating electricity is by burning coal to generate gas and that gas is used for generating electricity. The low quality grade coal is used for this purpose and its mining is very costly. Electricity generation by using gas derived from this process has been started in Gujarat.

Coal India Ltd. have dug such wells in Nagaur district near Medta. I would like to urge that electricity generation should be started by using gas extracted from these wells, so that power shortage in the entire country including Rajasthan may be solved.

(vi) Need to regularize the services of volunteers trained by Sashastra Seema Bal in Gorilla warfare in Uttarakhand

SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' (Almora): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the services of volunteers trained by S.S.B. are being regularized in north-eastern states and pension and other financial benefits are being given to those who have crossed the recruitment age.

The volunteers trained by SSB in Uttarakhand who are also called Gorillas are sitting on a dharna at Janta Mantar to press their demand that their services should be regularized and they should be given pension and other financial benefits on the lines of north-eastern States.

I had also raised the demand of volunteers trained by SSB in Uttarakhand on 23.8.2007 in the House, but volunteers are very agitated due to non-acceptance of their demand by the Government. Therefore, I would like to urge the Government to regularize the services of volunteers trained by SSB in Uttarakhand and also provide them pension and other financial benefits.

(vii) Need to restore the original quota of PDS in Madhya Pradesh

SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE (Mandla): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards a very big problem of Madhya Pradesh. The Union Government has reduced the quota of ration given under Public Distribution system to Madhya Pradesh due to which the Adivasi families living in tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh are facing great inconvenience. Madhya Pradesh is a tribal dominated area and the people are agitated due to reduction in ration quota by the Union Government.

Therefore, I would like to request the Union Government of Food to keep the situation of tribal areas of State in mind and release the full quota of foodgrains so that the tribal families living in tribal areas like Mandla, Jhabua, Dhar, Badawani, Baitul, Sidhi, Shahdol, Umaria, Annupar, Siwani, Balaghat, Chhindwara, Katni, Panna Chhattarpur, Ratlam and Khandva may get full quota of ration.

(viii) Need to include 'Angika' language in the Eighth Schedule to the constitution

SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN (Bhagalpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Angika' language spoken in my parliamentary

constituency Bhagalpur should be included in the eighth schedule because 'Angika' language is not only spoken in Bihar and Jharkhand, but also in Bengal, Assam and Orissa etc. It is spoken by around three crore people. This language has been in use for about 100 years now in Kosi area, Bhagalpur, its neighbouring areas and Santhan Pargana of Jharkhand. In ancient times, Angika language was having its own script and Angika language has got literary status in the country. The literary history of this language is very rich. Eighth century poet Sarah (Sarahapa) is the topmost poet of Angika language. Sarahapa is known as the first poet of this language. Sir, this language inherits the tradition and heritage of the country, because my parliamentary constituency, was known as 'Ang Desh' during Mahabharata era, which was gifted to 'Karna' by Duryodhana. At that time Bhagalpur was the State capital of 'Ang Desh'. Since then the tradition and heritage of the country are inherent in the 'Angika language'. This language is very popular in my parliamentary constituency, Bhagalpur and its neighbouring areas. Sir, Maithili is spoken in Bihar and it holds a specific position over there. Similarly, 'Angika' language is also spoken in Bhagalpur and large parts of the State. Please include this language in the eighth schedule of the constitution.

(ix) Need to give an early approval to the water projects under JNNURM for supply of drinking water in Ajmer, Rajasthan

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Mr, Speaker, Sir, the projects of Ajmer and Pushker in my State have been identified for expansion/restructuring under the Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission. There is a scheme under this Mission aimed to channelise water from Beesalpur Dam and this scheme has been divided into two parts.

1. Part A : Transmission part
2. Part B : Distribution part

The construction of reservoir of one day's demand capacity and transmission in main Ajmer are included under the transmission part of the scheme. The Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India has given sanction of Rs. 188.73 crore for the cost of this project and it is under construction. The first instalment of Rs. 27.00 crore has been spent under this project and work is in progress under the second instalment of Rs. 51.50 crore.

A project costing Rs. 182.00 crore for providing drinking water supply in Ajmer was formulated and was presented for approval before the Union Ministry of Urban Development. At present, this project is pending before the Central Public Health, Environmental, and Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO) for technical approval.

I would like to request the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India to allocate funds after giving technical approval without any delay for water supply project so as to make proper arrangement for addressing the drinking water problem of lakhs of citizens of Ajmer which is an important city from historic, cultural, religious and educational points of view.

(x) Need to give compensation to dependents of security personnel who laid down their lives in counter insurgency operations, at par with martyrs of Kargil

[English]

SHRI SWADESH CHAKRABORTY (Howrah): The 1.13 million Army has sought a "uniform welfare package" from the Government for "all battle casualties" at par with the "much higher" amounts given to the next of kin of the 527 soldiers killed and the around 1,400 wounded during the Kargin conflict.

The Army has raised this issue in the past also but to no avail, with the Government drawing a distinction between casualties in war and those arising out of counter-insurgency operations on the basis of "different levels of risk", "intensity of action" and the like.

The family of a soldier killed during Kargil got around Rs. 19.30 lakh, which included a Rs. 10 lakh ex-gratia amount from the Union Government and other special benefits, but in other operations, including the relentless counter-insurgency ones in J&K and the north-east, the amount for 'fatal' cases roughly works out to be around Rs. 8 lakh.

The soldiers injured during the Kargil operations got Rs. 3 lakh to Rs. 6 lakh, as ex-gratia payment, depending on the percentage of disability, which further went up with special benefits. In other operations, the ex-gratia figure stands at Rs. 1 lakh. As such there is disparity in the quantum of compensation.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to ensure "uniform welfare package" to all patriotic soldier who laid down their lives.

(xi) Need to take suitable action on the demands of employees working in Regional Rural Banks

SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE (Serampore): The Joint forum of Gramin Bank Unions have been agitating for a pretty long time to press for their demands viz.

1. Implementation of Banking Pension Settlement, 1993 and 1994 in RRBs.
2. Parity with Sponsor Banks in payment of all other allowances and benefits/service conditions also as per direction of Hon'ble Supreme Court.
3. Continuance of compassionate appointment scheme 1982 in RRBs.
4. Proper and uniform Manpower Planning, Recruitment and Promotion Policy in RRBs.

They have met Hon'ble Labour Minister and the Principal Secretary of the Department of Finance. Myself have also taken up the matter with the Labour and Finance Minister but it is a matter of deep regret that till date the Department of Finance is sitting tight over the issue. On 27th November the employees and officers of the Gramin Bank Unions staged a day long Dhama at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi to press their demands.

I would request the Hon'ble Finance and Labour Minister to look into their genuine grievances and come forward to settle the demands in no time.

(xii) Need to expedite the setting up of Rail Coach Factory (Repairing & Maintenance Unit) at Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRA PAL SINGH (Jhansi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Jhansi Railway Station was inaugurated on 1st January, 1889 and the Divisional Railway Office has also been set up this year itself. Today, it is known as the most important and biggest divisional rail office of the North Central Railway. With the efforts of the local public representatives a new Rail coach Repairing factory is proposed to be set up by the Railway administration at Jhansi. Jhansi division of Bundelkhand region has always been the victim of political interference. Due to inadequate employment opportunities in this region the educated people are migrating from there. Despite the fact that Jhansi division is one of the oldest and biggest

divisions of North Central Railway, it could not have the proper development with regard to Railways. There is a lot of land owned by Railways lying vacant here. The cheap labour is available there. It has all transportation facilities, but in spite of all these things, there is acute shortage of industries here.

From reliable sources it has come to the notice that an effort is being made for shifting the proposed new Rail coach repairing factory from Jhansi to another place due to which there is a great resentment among the people of this area and the local people have started agitation against it.

Through the House, I would urge the hon'ble Minister of Railways that he may get the work of construction started at the earliest for the setting up of the proposed Rail Coach Repairing Factory at the land identified and provided by the Railway Administration at Jhansi in order to abolish the regional imbalance and solve the problem of unemployment there.

(xiii) Need to shift the railway gate at Basrai in Etawah, Uttar Pradesh

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA (Etawah): Mr. Speaker, Sir, through the House, I would like to draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister of Railways to the shifting of Basrai railway gate from its original place to the east in my constituency Etawah for which approval has already been accorded, but no work has been started so far in this regard due to which the common people have to face a lot of problems. I assure the hon'ble Minister of Railways that after shifting the aforesaid gate to the east I will get the link road constructed with my MPLAD fund. I, therefore, request the hon'ble Minister of Railways to get the work of shifting the railway gate started at the earliest so that the redressal of the public problem could be made.

(xiv) Need to start developmental work in Patna and Bodhgaya under Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): Mr. Speaker, Sir, no work has been started so far for the development of Patna and Bodhgaya under Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). Bihar is already a backward state and in the same way the problems of Patna city are worsening. The population of this city is

increasing day-by-day. In comparison to the population, development work in Patna is negligible. Problems like sewerage, drinking water, roads, drainage, power, garbages are already there, and the Government does not have any programme to solve them. When Patna was brought under the Programme of JNNURM, there were some rays of hope among the residents of Patna that their problems would be solved since the scheme was of the Central Government. Now, there is uncertainty in this regard also.

Through this House, I, therefore, would like to draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister of Urban Development towards it and submit that he may get these problems solved by paying special attention to the development works in Patna and Bodhgaya and make proper arrangements to get these works started at the earliest under JNNURM.

(xv) Need to include Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh under Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission

SHRI RAMESH DUBE (Mirzapur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, my parliamentary constituency Mirzapur-Vindhyachal and Ashtbhuja are important tourist places of India. Here, the shrine of Vindhyachal Mata has its own importance. Pilgrims visit this place in large number from various parts of the country. The main problem of this city is shortage of drinking water. The population of this city is more than ten lakh. I would request the hon'ble Prime Minister and the Minister of Urban Development to solve the problem of drinking water in this historical place where the number of tourists is increasing day by day and the UP Government has declared it a tourist zone.

It is, therefore, requested that the Central Government should include Mirzapur under Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission in order to solve this dreadful problem of drinking water in Mizapur-Vindhyachal.

(xvi) Need to grant licences to Sugar Mills in Maharashtra

SHRI TUKARAM GANPAT RAO RENGÉ PATIL (Parbhani): Mr. Speaker, Sir, licences of many sugar mills have been cancelled in my State Maharashtra on 19th May, 2007. In this connection the Central Government have not mentioned any reason. Keeping in view the production of Sugarcane in Maharashtra, sugar mills are required to be there in operation. There was no crushing of sugarcanes for want of these sugar mills. The people

had to burn the sugarcanes and the Government had to pay compensation at the rate of Rs. 25000/- per hectare. Sugar mills have played a pivotal role in the development of Maharashtra and prosperity of the farmers of the State. Nothing has been told about the policy of the Government in this regard. There is an urgent need to grant licences for setting up new sugar mills. So, all the process may be carried out in this regard so that the sugar mills could be set up at the earliest in the interest of farmers.

The Government are requested, through the House, to grant licences to sugar mills at the earliest so that crushing of sugarcanes could be started in Maharashtra.

(xvii) Need to provide moderns health care services in Hospitals situated in the tea estates of Assam

[English]

SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL (Dibrugarh): Diarrhoea and Gastroenteritis have affected more than 5000 families all over the state of Assam. There are reports of more than 100 deaths in the tea garden areas of Assam. In most of the areas Diarrhoea and Gastroenteritis have reached epidemic form in the recent days. The state of affairs has been continuing every year.

Earlier the Government of India declared 'Health for All' by 2000. Unfortunately, the slogan for health care services remained only in the newspapers, most particularly in Assam. The tea garden hospitals are not under the purview of the State Government.

I urge upon the Hon'ble Health Minister to urgently look into the matter and initiate steps to bring the hospitals in the tea garden areas under one umbrella so that these unfortunate people get modern health care services and pure drinking water facilities in these days of globalized health care services to each and every human being all throughout the world as propagated by the WHO.

(xviii) Need to set up a Cashew Board with headquarters in Kochi, Kerala

DR. SEBASTIAN PAUL (Emakulam): Steps for the establishment of Cashew Board under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, with headquarters in Kochi, may be expedited or, as an alternative, a Cashew Export Development Authority may be established by merging the Directorate of Cashew & Cocoa Development and the Cashew Export Promotion Council, both situated in

[Dr. Sebastian Paul]

Kochi. Kerala is a major producer of raw cashew nuts and more than 90% of the cashew exports and raw cashew imports is through Cochin Port. If domestic production of raw cashew nuts could be increased to the level of 10 lakh tonnes per day, it will fetch a minimum foreign exchange earning equivalent to Rs. 2,600 crores. Though our export earnings from cashew kernels and allied products during 2006-07 was Rs. 2,465 crores, the net foreign exchange earnings stood at Rs. 653 crores because of import of raw cashew nuts valued at Rs. 1,812.

14.55 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Need to harmonious functioning of three organs of State—Legislature, Judiciary and Executive

[English]

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (Panskura): Hon. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I must thank you profusely for allowing to raise this discussion in the House, thought belatedly. It is an important issue. It relates to the Constitution, provisions of the Constitution, functioning of the different organs of the State, the harmony and disharmony, the way in which we are running the Parliament and whether the Parliament is doing its job. It also relates to judiciary broadly.

Sir, the harmonious functioning of the three organs of the State as envisaged by the Constitution of India has of late become a matter of deep controversy, not that the concept is being challenged, but the point is that the harmony is in jeopardy in my humble view and that is why the subject needs to be discussed and deliberated upon to reiterate the respective role of the organs of the State to find out the implications of separation of power and to identify the centrality of the will of the people as expressed through the elected Members in the popular House.

Sir, if judicial over-activism is a matter of concern, it is, of course a matter of concern. Let us also admit very frankly that there is growing cynicism and growing criticism about the way the Parliament, the great institution of Parliament, seeks to function today. Therefore, there is need for introspection collectively by the Parliament as to find out if there is anything wrong that we must admit.

Sir, I must say that there are instances of popular approval of judicial intervention to restrain the arm of the State from doing something or to compel the Executive to do something. Therefore, the complexity of the matter, in any case, should not be over simplified and underestimated. I must confess before this august House that I am second to none in holding high the lofty role of the Judiciary. I am proud about the way the Judiciary is discharging its duties and obligations to the nation.

Sir, coming to the subject I must admit and frankly I admit that there is an inherent danger, underlying the word 'inherent danger', a potential danger of concentration of excessive power in either of the arms of the State. There is a possibility. Hence, there is a need for checks and balances in the constitutional governance of the country and also in the political regime. Separation of power is a part of the Indian Constitution. It has almost become a characteristic and the doctrine of separation of power is inseparable from the process of evolution of democracy in the country. I believe, as you also believe being an eminent jurist, that the doctrine of separation of power is an effective safeguard against aberrations that any of the arms of the State may perpetrate today, tomorrow or the day after. The vital question is the way in which the Fathers of the Indian Constitution conceived it, the way in which the first Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru had visualised—the three organs of the State must have a joint participatory role. No exclusive primacy has been given to any of the arms of the State. It is also true that the popular will of the people finds a central place in the understanding of those who framed the Constitution.

15.00 hrs.

Centrality of the will of the people is expressed very eminently in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. On the question of separation of powers, if I go a little further, let me begin by saying and I wish the House gives undivided attention to the most important question and the treasury bench is likely to cooperate with the discussion. Shri Bhardwaj, this is our concern for harmony.

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): I am listening very carefully. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: On the question of separation of powers, let me quote, to begin with, the former Chief Justice, Shri J.S. Verma. He aptly said:

"The sovereign will of the people finds expression through the chosen representatives of Parliament."

Therefore, the centrality of the question lies in the expression of the will of the people through the elected representatives who are there in the popular House. Sir, the preeminent position has been accorded to the Legislature is just to enable it to make laws, and to amend the Constitution and, if and when necessary, to ensure accountability of the Government to Parliament and lastly, to exercise control over the spending of the federal finance. These are the four vital functions that the Legislature is called upon to do under the provisions of the Indian Constitution. At the same time, while saying so, I say that the Constitution provides for an independent, neutral, effective Judiciary and judicial system. For what? For (1) interpreting the Constitution, (2) to do the judicial review (3) to act as the custodian of the rights of the people and (4) to uphold the Constitution. That is the fundamental task of the Judiciary.

Judicial system is a review of any act of Parliament or any action of the Executive to find out whether it is in consonance of with the provisions of the Constitution, whether it is within their competence, whether it impinges upon the fundamental rights of the people and whether it is in consistent with the mandatory provisions of the Constitution.

MR. SPEAKER: Not any and every act of Parliament.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Sir, I am coming to that. I am speaking in a generalized way. At the same time, I must say with, all my emphasis, that Judiciary is not the Third Chamber. Indian Parliament has two Chambers. Judiciary cannot act as the Third Chamber. Sir, the essential point is, how those who framed the Constitution had looked at the problem. There can be no basic quotation to understand the minds of those who framed the Constitution except to speak of the first Premier of the Republic of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He was very cogent, very vivid and very concrete. What did he say? He said: "No Supreme Court, no Judiciary can stand in judgment over the sovereign will of Parliament representing the will of the entire community." This is what the Prime Minister of India had said when the Constitution was being enacted. Is that the situation now? Is this the situation which exists today?

The pointed question has been supplemented by many other luminaries in the legal world. Justice S.R. Das, one of the foremost former judges of India, who is

no more, had said, "Constitution had preferred supremacy of legislation to that of the Judiciary." There is no end to quotations. I will quote a few to clear the idea. It looks as if the Parliament is secondary and that somebody else is primary. Justice Krishna Iyer, who still lives, has said: "Court cannot act as a Third Chamber." Justice Katju—all of you are acquainted with the name—said: "I do not subscribe to the view that judiciary is running the Government". What is happening today? Is it not true that somebody else is running the Government, except the Government itself? Is it not true that somebody else is making the law, except the Parliament? Therefore, I feel constrained to raise the issue before the august House, to draw the attention of the entire nation, to say that the constitutional harmony is in jeopardy. Fall S. Nariman, one of the living theoreticians on the subject, said: "The constitutional scheme, social, economic and political aspects of justice are left to the law-makers."

Of late, I am sorry to say that there have been a number of cases of judicial over-activism, which is not entirely within the domain of judicial review and could be construed as judicial over-activism. If I refer to some of the violations, you will kindly understand the limit the judicial over-activism has reached in this country. Justice Verma has pointed out some violations in his lecture recently. I seek the indulgence of all my colleagues who are here in this House to kindly listen in detail. This is the list of violations that Justice Verma has made in his speech. He said that judiciary has intervened to question the mysterious car razing down Tuglak Road, Delhi. Even the Bench takes note of a mysterious car running about in Delhi! This is the point to which the problem has reached. Judiciary raises questions about allotment of a particular bungalow to a judge and about specific bungalows for Judges Panel. It intervenes in monkey menace, stray cattle on the streets, cleaning of public conveniences, levying congestion charges at peak hours in the airports with heavy traffic. There is misuse of contempt of judicial system. Should I laugh or cry? Should the House think where the Constitution has gone? The power of contempt of judicial system is being applied to force railway authorities to give reservation to a particular person or to a group of persons.

This is one side. On the other side is a comment made by a former Justice from the Bench. I do not want to disclose his name. From the Bench he is reported to have said: "The Legislatures in India has not done anything worthwhile in the last thirty years." Just reconcile the view of Justice Verma with the views expressed by

[Shri Gurudas Dasgupta]

a member of the Bench, saying that we had done nothing during the last thirty years. Justice Srikrishna has observed in a lecture, "In the name of judicial activism, modern judges in India had abandoned the traditional role of a neutral referee and have increasingly resorted to tipping the scales of justice in the name of distributive justice." These are only a few quotations that I thought it necessary to bring to your notice.

I raise a question. Government is accountable to the Parliament. Parliament is accountable to the People. To whom is the Judicial System accountable? Accountability is a basic tenet of democracy. There cannot be a free-for-all. There cannot be: "I do what I wish to." If accountability is a concept, Parliament is accountable to the people, Government is accountable to Parliament, what is the accountability of the Bench? To whom is the Judicial System accountable? I answer with humility that the Judiciary is accountable to the Constitution. Indian Constitution is a written Constitution. It is not a British Constitution which runs by conventions. It is a written Constitution.

There is a trend, I say, with dismay. There is a trend of over-activism trespassing the boundary of the constitutional propriety, seeking to tamper with the sovereignty of Indian Parliament.

My last quotation is of 14th April, 2007. It is a recent Judgement of April 14, 2007. The Supreme Court, while delivering a judgement observed:

"Court cannot interfere with Government policies on the ground that a better fairer, wiser alternative is available. Legality of the policy and not the wisdom or soundness of the policy is the subject of Judicial Review."

It is absolutely clear. But there is a digression, there is a violation. There is crossing of the road. There is breaking up the barrier. Despite this categorical statement of the Supreme Court, Judicial wisdom does not always prevail. That is my complaint.

There are two points and two aspects. Number one, there is a call of Judicial over-activism. There is a call for us to think. There is a not which you may consider. There is a problem which you must ponder over-Judicial over-activism. Is it not true, hon. Speaker, Sir, that there should be a little criticism, a little self-criticism by the Members of Parliament? Is it not true that we should

sincerely deliberate upon the way in which we are functioning? How is it relevant? It is relevant because if the Parliament does not function in the way it is supposed to function, if the parliamentary values are devalued, if the Parliament loses its vitality, if there is parliamentary delinquency, deliberately I coin the expression "if there is parliamentary delinquency", if Parliament Sessions are interrupted off and on, if going to the Well becomes a practice, if violation of norms and rules becomes a pass time, if the exalted Office of the Speaker is brought down to controversy, then, Sir, I must say with a heavy heart that Parliament loses its dignity. We stoop low in the eye of the people. There is a growing criticism about the Parliamentarians and Parliament. If the parliamentary system is tampered with, the Judicial over-activism pokes its nose and interferes more frequently.

Recently, there has been arrest of four journalists. Of course, they were let off by the higher Court, but they were arrested. What for were they arrested? They had given a true picture, unchallenged picture and account about corruption in the Judiciary. The report was not challenged. But, the particular court or the particular State ordered for the arrest as if the honour of the court had been violated. Speaking the truth is a violation. If an untruth is spoken, they can be hauled up. But, for speaking the truth, they were harassed and arrested.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: They were not arrested. It is on the record.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: They were hauled up. I am using word 'hauled up'. Hauled up is not being arrested. They were hauled up. I am saying, "They were hauled up." I change my words, "They were hauled up." I agree.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: There was a petition in Delhi High Court and they were convicted of contempt and ordered to some punishment. ...*(Interruptions)* You said that they were arrested. An arrest is something different from what happened. ...*(Interruptions)*

15.17 hrs.

[SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV *in the Chair*]

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: You did not allow me to finish, my dear friend. They were arrested, they were tried and they were convicted. I am right. Am I? ...*(Interruptions)* You do not want to listen to me. A

Minister should have a little more patience. We are not to learn from you. You are also to learn from us. Anyway, the question is that they were arrested; they were tried and they were convicted. After that, they were let off. It is a most unfortunate thing. It is an extreme case of the misuse of the contempt power. Another thing I am saying is about this Parliament. For months, we are not being able to discuss the question of price rise. Supposing, tomorrow a person goes to Supreme Court and files a IPL suggesting that since the Government has failed, the Parliament did not discuss this issue. Hon. My Lord, you ask the Government to immediately issue orders to contain the price rise. What will he say? If this is done, it will be done because we failed. While judicial activism is a reality, the failure of Parliament is also a reality. Sir, I raised this issue. Let there be discussion. Let us put the record straight. Let us know what the constitutional position is. Let us know our limitations. Let us know what the boundary of judicial activism is and let us know how to work in harmony. I want harmony between three organs of the State. I plead for harmony between the functioning of the three organs of the State. I want Constitution to be upheld. I want the courts not to interfere in the job that the Parliament is to do. I want Parliament to function so that no opportunity is given to the Judiciary to intervene. We need an effective Parliament. We need an independent Judiciary. We want an efficient Executive also.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (Balasore): Mr. Chalman, Sir, I am very happy that you are in the Chair when I am speaking.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Could you please yield? I missed a point.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Yes.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Sir, I am sorry, I had not made one point very clear that it is the failure of the Executive which draws the attention of the Judiciary and Judiciary is given the opportunity to intervene. Therefore, the Executive must also function in a flawless way conducive with the provisions of the Constitution.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Sir, the subject of today's discussion under Rule 193 is: "Need for harmonious functioning of three organs of the State, that is, Legislature, Judiciary and Executive". I listened with rapt attention what hon. Member Shri Gurudas Dasgupta said and it was a very expected speech. There was nothing which we did not earlier deliberate outside the Parliament

and there was nothing which we did not know. I very much anticipated what he will say and so I have also come prepared just to give vent to my feelings, contradicting basically what he generally said.

He basically made two or three points. He said that the Judiciary is overactive. That is what he said. He also said that probably there is concentration of excessive power in one organ of the State and that is basically—he did not say so, but he meant—the Judiciary. Lastly, the most important point of his argument was that the Judiciary cannot stand on the sovereign will of the Parliament and the sovereign will of the Parliament is represented by Members of Parliament because they are the representatives of the people. By saying so, he means that because Members of Parliament or Members of Legislature are being elected by the people, their voice is the *vox populi* or the will of the people.

Sir, I will give you one example here. If that be the case, I would like to refer to one Assembly election held long back. In 1983, there was an Assembly election in Assam where only 5 per cent of the people came and voted. Around that time, there was also another election in Punjab. There also, hardly 5 per cent people came and voted, but there was an Assembly, there was a Chief Minister, there were Ministers and there were MLAs. When only 5 per cent people come and vote, if anybody who has got elected in that election, he might have not 2 per cent or 3 per cent of the votes polled. If he says that he represents the will of the people and what he says is supreme, should anybody believe that or should we believe that? Otherwise, you forget those elections in Assam and Punjab. Take the case of this 14th Lok Sabha. How many of us have been elected by getting more than 50 per cent of the votes?

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: I got.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: I know. Some of us have got. I also got around 55 per cent votes, but there are not many. Hardly 20 to 30 Members, out of the total of 543 elected Members of this House, might have won with a majority of votes. So, how can we claim that we actually represent the *vox populi*, the majority opinion of the country?

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: If you do not mind; I am not interrupting; I would just like to say—this is not my statement; this is the statement of the former Prime Minister of India on the floor of the House—that no

[Shri Gurudas Dasgupta]

Supreme Court, no Judiciary can stand in judgement over the sovereign will of Parliament

It is not me; it is Nehru. It is not me; it is the former Chief Justice. A number of Justices have said like this. It is not me. I have only quoted them.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: In a democracy, I have got my free voice. It is because the former Prime Minister of the country, the former Chief Justice of the country has said so; so I must go by that; I do not concede to that point. I concede to what I feel, and I feel what I said.

In countries with written Constitutions, the reach of the Judiciary is almost unlimited. Let us take the example of the mother of Parliamentary democracy, UK. UK does not have a written Constitution. It has no written Constitution. Then how does the country run? What is the law; what is the Constitution in UK? In UK or in most of the countries, the law is what the court says it to be. It is the convention, it is the judicial review, it is the judicial interpretations which define the contours of law.

Let me put a question. There are three organs under this Constitution, namely, Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. Cannot there be a conflict between these three organs? Is it not possible? In a family, all the time, conflicts arise between brothers and sisters, father and son and between everybody. If any conflict arises in between these three organs of the Constitution, who will decide what is correct and what is not? Who will decide it? It is the Constitution which has fully settled it. The Constitution has categorically told and settled that it is the Judiciary, it is the Supreme Court, which will settle everything. Whatever the Supreme Court says is final, and we will have to go by that.

Hon. Gurudas Dasgupta ji raised one point. He said that the Chair of the Speaker is being undermined. That is what he says. Sometimes it could be interpreted to be so because time arises when whatever the Speaker says is contradicted by the supreme court. I will not take the name, but there was one speaker in one of the North-Eastern States in India, in Manipur. The Speaker said:

"I will become the Chief Minister and I will recognize only those MLAs who will support me. There are

many of the Members who will not support me as a Chief Minister; I will expel them as Members."

SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA (Guwahati): Mr. Chairman, Sir, this refers to the Speaker of an Assembly of a State who is not here to defend. It should not be permitted here.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Sir, I have not taken any name.

SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA: You have said: "a Speaker of Mizoram".

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Deliberately, I have not taken any name I know that I cannot take names. Sir, if such a thing happens anywhere, can we say that what the Speaker has done is supreme and no court can intervene on it?

Take the example of Jharkhand. What had happened there? The Government of the day was asked to take the majority opinion of the House but the Speaker did not allow that. Can we say that whatever the Speaker had done was supreme and nobody could contravene or intervene into it? Rather, we are lucky that there is the Supreme Court in this country which can intervene and save us. Otherwise, most of the times, the so-called Speakers, the so-called Executive and the so-called Government could create such an intolerable situation for the Opposition and also for the common man in this country and it would have been very difficult to remain in the country.

We had an Emergency. At that time, this House—it was elected only for five years—had passed a Resolution saying that the tenure of the House had been extended to seven years. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Not seven years, six years. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: The Resolution was for extending the tenure to seven years but the House was dissolved after six years. ...*(Interruptions)* Anyway, even if it was for six years, I would like to know whether the House had the power and authority to extend its own tenure and then say that this was the sovereign will of the people. then, a time will come where this House will pass a Resolution that anybody who has been once elected will remain the Member of Parliament till his death,

and then we will say this is the supreme will of the people. So, my point is that it is always better that there should be an arbitrator.

Sir, I agree with some of the points raised by Shri Gurudas Dasgupta. Sometimes the Judiciary unnecessarily intervenes into the governmental activities. Hon. Shri Gurudas Dasgupta has mentioned that the judiciary has intervened into the allotment of bungalows, running of the car, stray cattle, levying concessional charges and things like that. Must of the times, the court should not intervene. On most of the occasions, somebody goes and files a PIL in the court. While replying to the PIL, the court sometimes intervenes and passes judgments like this. *...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Swain, 5 members are yet to speak from your party.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: No, only 2-3 Members are there. If you don't want me to speak, I am ready to sit.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am the Member speaking from the principal opposition party.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Swain, You can take the full time of your party, if your party authorizes you for this.

[English]

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Okay, this is the end of my speech.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will give you full time of our party if you want to speak.

[English]

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Sometimes...*

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, you cannot pass such remarks for the Chair.

*Not recorded.

[English]

Shri Swain, this is not fair. You cannot make such a remark towards the Chair. How can you make such a remark towards the Chair?

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You want to establish a new precedent in the House. This is not fair.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (Sriperumbudur): We are enjoying your speech. *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Okay, Sir. This is the end of my speech. You allow them to speak. *...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you do not want to speak, then, the hon'ble Members authorized by your party will get opportunity to speak. If you want to speak, your party will not get more time. We were allowing you. You yourself do not want to speak.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, how you spoken about second or third speaker, that would have been different thing....*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You may speak. You can take the time of your party. If the chief whip of your party gives in writing that the entire time allotted to your party has been given to you then I do not have any problem. We are here on this Chair to do justice, however, your remarks are very unfortunate. It is a seat of justice. The opposition, ruling party and the other Members, all are equal before it. I am sitting on the seat of justice. There is not even a slightest possibility of partiality.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN:*

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is justice but the remarks that you have made are unprecedented and unfortunate. This cannot be permitted.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: *

*Not recorded.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): We are supporting you to speak in this discussion under rule 193. But you should not remotely even try to question the authority, *bona fide* of the Chair. That is the paramount parameter of Parliamentary democracy and this august House. My dear colleague and friend from the Opposition, Mr. Kharabela swain is one of the knowledgeable and intelligent parliamentarians. I hope he will carry it.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: What you said, I agree with you. I also expect that the first speaker from the principal Opposition Party should be given some time.

Sir, my point is that in 1973 there was one Kesavananda Bharati case. in the Kesavananda Bharati case, the Supreme Court decided that the basic structure of the Constitution cannot be altered by the Parliament. Later on, again it was challenged. No, how can the Supreme Court, how can the Judiciary intervene into the law passed by the Parliament? But again the Full Bench of the Supreme Court said that it did not want to alter the judgement of the Kesavananda Bharati case and it remains all the time. Till now it remains that the basic structure of the Constitution cannot be even infringed and changed by this Parliament itself. That is why, I say that there is nothing wrong. There is nothing wrong with regard to the judicial review and judicial interpretation of the law.

As a Member of the Opposition, I feel that had there been no Supreme Court, no independent judiciary in this country, the IMDT Act would have continued by now. It was later on made null and void by the Supreme Court. Probably, for the vote bank politics, the reservation on religious line would have continued had there been no judiciary in this country.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: My dear friend, give me half a minute.

I just support you. But I remind you to expand your speech and wisdom. Is it also fair giving an affidavit before the Supreme Court and then violate it in the case of demolition of the Mosque in Ayodhya?

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): What have you done about Ram Setu? The Union Government first filed the Affidavit then withdrew it.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: No cross-talks, Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat. I am not allowing cross-talks.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Had there been no judiciary in this country, the CBI would have been only a department under this Government. I need not interpret what the CBI is doing now-a-days but it would have been a department under this Government had there been no judiciary.

Many of the hon. Ministers in this UPA Government who are having so many cases against them, I am not naming them, would have gone scot-free because they are in the Government. All their cases would have been closed. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (Palani): What have you done then? ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing else will go on record except the speech of Shri Kharabela Swain.

(Interruptions)...*

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: He is a very good friend of mine. He knows what happened to that case. He will know it himself. I need not explain. He is a very good friend of mine. He is a legal luminary also. He is the President of the Bar Council of India. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Swain, please address the Chair.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Yes, Sir. Had there been no judiciary, probably, everything, every law in this country that would have been passed, because of vote bank politics, would have been put in the Ninth Schedule. The reservation policy would have been made for perpetuity. Had there been no judiciary, this would have happened in this country. I do not know how many 'Nandigrams' would have taken place inside this country had there been no judiciary. That is the only hope. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI ANIL BASU (Arambagh): You are forgetting Godhra. ...(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. Nothing else will go on record.

(Interruptions)...

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: You take the example that we are saying. This House and the Assemblies reflected the will of the people. Most of the time, the so-called will of the people, they go for declaring 'Bandhs' for two days or three days when nobody can move anywhere, nobody can go anywhere. Even the judges cannot go anywhere. Had there been no judiciary, probably some of the political parties would have declared the 'Bandhs' day in and day out. Because there is a judiciary, that is why at least the people of the country have got respite. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA: Nobody is objecting to judiciary. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let there be no running commentary.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: But, Sir, I also agree to a point that there is a *Lakshman Rekha* which the judiciary should not overstep. I also agree to that point. There are many-many things which hon. Member Shri Gurudas Dasgupta has mentioned. I also very strongly believe that the judiciary should not poke its nose into it and it should be totally left to the Executive.

Sir, I will take three to four more minutes only. Last week, in the Lok Sabha Television, there was a panel discussion where the former Solicitor-General of this country Shri Andhyarjuna and myself were there. The people were also allowed to put questions to us. In the debate, within the panel discussion for about an hour, about ten people put the questions to us over telephone. There was not a single person who has supported the contention of Shri Gurudas Dasgupta. All of them asked that-if we fail to get justice from the Government and even from the Opposition Parties, they do not rise our voice; where do we go. It is the judiciary which is our last resort which is the dispenser of justice. Then, why are you objecting to that?

All these questions were put to me and to the former Solicitor-General of this country. I agree with hon. Member Shri Gurudas Dasgupta when he said that because the

Executive has failed to dispense justice, the Legislature has also failed, that is why the people are compelled to go to the court to seek justice.

Somebody, after his retirement, may not get his pension for about five years or ten years. He would have gone to everybody, every officer. Nobody would have listened to him. Then, what would he do? He would naturally go to these courts. Probably, sometimes, the courts given them some relief, some justice. We will have to really think of that also as to why this happens.

Last but not the least, I also very strongly feel that there is no accountability of the judges of the High Court and Supreme Court. If some judge is corrupt at the lower level of judiciary, then some action could be taken against him or her. Who can take action against a judge in the High Court or the Supreme Court if the same thing happens with them? All of you know that the only action that can be taken is through the process of impeachment, and you know that this process is totally impossible to be carried out. In the independent history of this country only once the process of impeachment was brought in this country, and I do not have narrate how it was defeated as everybody knows about it. It is simply impossible to take any action against a High Court or a Supreme Court judge if he or she is corrupt.

Therefore, I appeal to the Government that the Judicial Inquiry Act must be passed. The judges should not appoint judges in this country, and there should be some mechanism to go into the corrupt charges of the judges of the High Court and Supreme Court, so that there shall be a level-playing field. The judges who dispense justice to others should not be kept above the law themselves. They are interpreting the law, but they should not be kept above the law.

Finally, I would like to state that Judicial Review and Judicial Activism is good to a great extent for this country, but still it should not cross the *lakshman rekha* by intervening in each and every small affair. There should be a mechanism, which should go into the corruption charges against the judges of the High Court and the Supreme Court.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO (Parvatipuram): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I rise to speak in a discussion that is very vital for the continuance of our Parliamentary system or our democratic system. But before I get into the main points, I would first of all

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like to dispel certain observations, which were made by my colleagues who spoke before me. I do not mean any offence, but the record has to be set straight.

My colleague who preceded me, namely, hon. Member Shri Swain, went into the percentage of votes that a Member got. This is certainly not an occasion for hurling charges at one another. We are discussing as to how we should make the Constitution function smoothly; how the three Organs of the State should coordinate with each other; and how there should be a harmonious relationship. Therefore, I do not think that getting into petty matters and hurling charges is going to help us in any manner. We all know that we follow the first-past-the-post system, and our country has followed the electoral system since 1952. There is no provision in the Constitution to make votes compulsory whether it is 5 per cent votes or 50 per cent votes, neither does our Constitution say that one has to get a majority of votes to get elected.

For instance, this provision is available in the French Constitution, but that is not so in our Constitution. Irrespective of whether you have got 50 per cent votes or 5 per cent votes or 100 per cent votes, the fact remains that once you are declared elected, then you are the representative of the people. If my hon. colleague feels that it is not so and it is not in accordance with the principles that he believes in, then there is no need for us to be here at all. All of us might as well wind up and go home. What will be the relevance of Legislature or Parliament if one is going to downsize ourselves by saying that we have no relevance since we have not got a sizeable percentage of votes-which is not required. If it is so, then the Parliament is not relevant and none of the Assemblies are relevant. If he feels like raining these kinds of argument, then he should bring the same in another form of electoral reforms and then say that there should be 51 per cent votes polled by every candidate or a minimum number of votes polled to declare a candidate elected before he is given a certificate. But as long as the present system continues, it will continue, and we shall continue to be the Members of Parliament or of legislatures with the same powers and position that the Constitution has accorded to us.

My other colleague, Shri Dasgupta who initiated the debate said that certain organs of the State had failed. Therefore, the judiciary had started this business of judicial activism or encroachment. If one organ fails, it does not give license to another organ to take over. If the Judiciary

fails, will it give a license to Parliament tomorrow to issue judgments or will the Executive tomorrow go and sit in the Bench or come here to Parliament to pass Bills? So, if something goes wrong with the system or if there is an aberration, you have to correct it. You have to take remedial measures to see that that is set right. You cannot upset the entire scheme of things which has been set by the founding fathers of our Constitution.

My colleague Shri Swain said that in UK, judicial pronouncements were the last word. I am sorry that as a student of political science, I would like to set the record straight I still remember what I studied 30 years ago; I would like to very humbly submit to this House that after all the British Constitution is an unwritten Constitution. It is a Constitution which is based on precedents, on conventions, on charters, and on legal pronouncements, but the powers of Parliament is absolute. So, the supremacy of Parliament is absolute as far as UK is concerned.

This is the case generally in a unitary system of Government. In UK, they have a unitary system; in a unitary system, Parliament has paramount and overriding powers, and even legal pronouncements can be struck down or can be vetoed by Parliament. We opted for a written Constitution, with separation of powers. We took examples of other Western democracies which have had this experience.

The concept of separation of powers goes back to the 18th Century. Political philosopher, Montesquieu said that separation of powers will ensure that the liberty of a person is not in jeopardy. Taking clue from what had happened in various other countries of the world, we opted for a written constitution. Generally a written constitution is there only where there is a federal system of Government. In America, they have a federal system; in the erstwhile Soviet Union, they had a federation of unions. ...*(Interruptions)* I stand corrected. I would like to be interested as far as my thought is concerned. I am saying that the USA and the erstwhile USSR have written Constitutions. Generally in a pure federal setup with a written Constitution, the power to secede is also generally there. It is not a pure federation where there is no power to secede. Ours is actually what we have been referred to as a quasi-federal system of Government. Out of experience, I would say that ours is more of a quasi-unitary system of Government because of Concurrent List, because of certain overriding powers of the Centre and ours has evolved into being more of a quasi-unitary

system of Government where the Centre has certain precedence over the States.

In this scheme of things, the separation of powers had taken place in our Constitution. Therefore, in India, according to our Constitution, Parliament has been accorded the status of being the supreme legislative body of the State. I do not think, anybody questions that. This status has been accorded to us a pre-eminent position in the Constitution to Parliament as the supreme legislative-making body.

If absolute supremacy is not there for Parliament, certainly the Judiciary is also not supreme. They have a role to play here. I agree with my colleague when he said that they have a power to review. They have a power to interpret also. But what is interpretation and what is review is a question that we have to answer ourselves.

I was going through some of the debates of the Constituent Assembly, and the discussions relating to Parliament in the Constituent Assembly. In those debates, it was observed that no Supreme Court, no Judiciary can stand in judgment over the will of the Parliament, representing the sovereign will of the people.

So, first of all, we have to ask ourselves a question as to whether we believe in the sovereignty and the will of the people or not. In a democracy, if the sovereign will of the people does not come first in respect of the judiciary or Parliament or whatever. After all we are claiming the kind of legislative powers we have because that right has been vested in us by the people. But ultimately sovereign right rests with the people and the composition of Parliament can be changed. They have the composition of Parliament when they get an opportunity once in five years. It is the people who are sovereign in a system which we have nurtured over the last 60 years. So, this concept of absolute supremacy of judiciary is certainly alien to our scheme of things. I would hasten to add, at the same time, that certainly our Parliament does not have absolute power but each one is sovereign in its own domain. So, the judiciary is sovereign and they have the last word as far as judicial review is concerned and as far as interpretation is concerned and the Parliament has the supreme right as far as legislative powers are concerned. So, each one has a role to play in our scheme of things.

Sir, I would like to just remind you of one incident which I am sure many Members of this august House would be aware of. In our early years after Independence when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister, he had to amend the Constitution of India to implement land reforms in this country. If someone questioned land reforms and if the Constitution was against it or if judges did not want it, then we would not have land reforms, I have no answer to that kind of contention. But otherwise, even for land reforms—at that stage in a welfare State, in a State which had committed to a certain pattern to bring about an egalitarianism in all sections of our society—ultimately Parliament had to make that constitutional amendment to enable land reforms to come.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: Sir, I would like to add to it. Let me take the House into confidence. Shri Gurudas Dasguptaji named Nehruji. The remarks which follow from Nehruji were exactly the same in Kameshwar Singh's case. When land reforms were struck down in Bihar, Nehruji came to Parliament, which was provincial Parliament then, and he sought first amendment of the Constitution on this very plea that no Supreme Court can come between my people and me because we have made promises during the freedom struggle that we will distribute land and the resources of the State as our socialistic pattern of our society. Exactly, this was the word which Panditji used in this august House during land reforms discussion. It was not an absolute decree against the judiciary but he asserted it.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Let us not pre-pono the debate. I had quoted the former Prime Minister in a way I believe it to be right and whether it is absolute or relative, it is a matter of difference.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: It is not out of context to quote Nehruji. Nehruji spoke of land reforms.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: That is the issue. You do not qualify the statement. Hon. Minister is not a person to interpret Nehruji. At least, that is not I am going to accept.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: I am not fighting with you. Why are you in such a bad mood today?

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Minister for his intervention.

[Shri V. Kishore Chandra S. Deo]

The Supreme Court had observed that the concept of separation of power is a basic feature of the Constitution. These days we talk about the basic structure of the Constitution. Though the basic structure is not yet specified in absolute terms, the Supreme Court has held that the concept of separation of powers is a basic structure of the Constitution. If that is so, each organ has to function within the separate area of functioning into which no other organ can intervene. If separation of power is the basic structure of the Constitution then the separation should not allow the Legislature to go and encroach upon the realm of the judiciary and *vice versa*.

16.00 hrs.

This is applicable to the Judiciary also, not only to us alone. Therefore the Supreme Court, if they have to stand their own word that the concept of separation of powers is itself a part of the basic structure of the Constitution, then I think, it should be for their Lordships to set that example first.

Sir, there have been several instances recently which have brought this friction between the Judiciary and the Legislature to the fore. I do not want to go into the details. Some of them have been given by my immediate predecessors, like Shri Swain and Shri Gurudas Dagupta. They have quoted some of the instances. There have been cases where the courts have been issuing notices to the Presiding Officers of the Legislatures and Parliament. Hon. Speaker of the Lok Sabha had received, on one occasion, one notice from the Supreme Court. After that a meeting of the Presiding Officers of all the Legislatures of the country was called and a unanimous decision was taken by all the Presiding Officers, belonging to all political parties, that such notices should not be accepted by the Presiding Officers of Parliament.

Sir, you may recall in incident that a court once directed the Speaker to send in a sealed cover to the court a report of a Standing Committee even before it was tabled in Parliament. If there could be contempt of the court, is there no contempt of Parliament? Would their Lordships like if both the Houses of Parliament were to pass a Resolution asking the courts to send a judgement in a sealed cover before it was delivered in a court of law? Therefore, we will have to counsel restraint. It is only out of respect for one another and it is after we realise our limitations that we can make the system work. Any game can be played only if one follows the rules. democracy is a system and our Constitution, as

many of our Members feel, is supreme. I am not saying no, but then you have to go by the rules and spirit of the Constitution. There are specific clauses in our Constitution. I do not want to quote them. There is article 105(2); there is article 122; there is article 121 which actually gives certain immunities to the Members of Parliament in their functioning over here and also to officers who help them in this work. These have been given by the founding fathers of the Constitution not for nothing, but unfortunately there is a feeling that MPs enjoy all kinds of privileges, which is not correct. These privileges relate only to the functioning as a Parliamentarian for work concerning Parliament and not for other personal matters which is outside the purview of their parliamentary activities.

Sir, just now my colleague quoted the instance of Jharkhand. The point is whether it is Jharkhand or whether it is UP, is it the job of the Supreme Court to direct the Legislatures about how the proceedings should take place and whether a video camera should be installed and whether everything should be recorded over there? This is the job of the Legislature. The hon. President issues Summons as head of the Legislature in our constitutional scheme of things. Here you have a court issuing directions in UP and Jharkhand, fixing the agenda for the House and also giving instructions for video recording of the proceedings. It is disgraceful and shameful. I cannot think of a more blatant encroachment into the realm of Legislature where this kind of a blatant direction has been given. What does it mean? If these things are let to happen as they were, then the system will crumble and crash.

Sir, I have great respect for the Judiciary. In fact, all of us, members of all political parties have always counselled extreme restraint while discussing the Judiciary or judicial activities. But sometimes or other when such things are going on happening, we have to take cognizance. Today, the Supreme Court is appointing authorities without statutory backing. I will give only one instance. I do not want to take the time of the House by going on repeating instance after instance.

There is one instance. It is the Centrally Empowered Committee (CEC). The Supreme Court has appointed a Committee called the Centrally Empowered Committee which has no statutory backing. This Committee is performing Executive powers. As my colleagues who have spoken earlier said, the Parliament is responsible and accountable to the people. Executive is accountable to

us. Whom will the Judiciary be accountable to? So, is the CEC appointed without any statutory backing by the Supreme Court not usurping the powers of the Executive without any kind of responsibility or accountability on those issues?

Then, you have something called the Wildlife Board where again two of the CEC Members are placed. They will refer it over there and the same people will adjudicate matters and pass on. There are the kind of things which are going on. I think this is a dangerous trend which needs to be controlled or stopped as it were because you cannot let each of the organs go berserk. Where will this end?

I will conclude shortly. Sir, my immediate predecessor, Shri Swain gave certain instances. I agree with him that certain mistakes had taken place. But those are aberrations and mistakes. Should we correct them or should we let the system break down? That is the question that we have to ask ourselves. In a certain case, the Judiciary had come up at the appropriate time to our rescue. It so happened and it is well and good. But it can happen the other way round. These are things which cannot be judged based on one or two instances here and there and we have to look at them. We have to look at them in totality.

One of my colleagues had mentioned about appointment of judges and postings. Sir, this is probably the only country in which judges appoint themselves. I do not know what is happening about the constitution of the Judicial Commission. I hope the hon. Minister, in his reply, will enlighten on this point.

As far as the judges are concerned, they have also to be accountable. We are aware that some Members were expelled from this House in the cash-for-query scandal. Shri Swain will appreciate the fact that they were not expelled by a court of law. This House took corrective measures. It was a self-corrective mechanism by which all the leaders authorised the hon. Speaker to do it at that time and Parliament took that position. It is not as if always somebody will have to come with a *danda* and issue some sort of a warrant or judgement. We have to correct ourselves. This was done on more than one occasion and Parliament has set an example. But today, the sting operation can be held against any legislature or Parliament. Anything can be written or said. Of course later on, there are remedies. But if anything appears in the media or said about the Lordships, even

if it is correct, that will amount to contempt of court. Is this a healthy thing in a democracy? We should all ponder over it. I have no problem if tomorrow somebody files a case of contempt against me. If I have committed contempt, it is all right, I have no problem about that. But should the judges be exempt from this? Are they not human beings? Are they not part of the system? When a matter is before a Parliamentary Committee and the judges start issuing direction, how will the Lordships like it when the Parliament passes a Resolution on a matter that is *sub judice*? We do not even discuss either in our committees or in the House a matter which is before the court. We have shown that respect and restraint. But what about the courts?

These are matters which we need to rethink about. Judicial review is something which our Constitution permits. Judicial interpretation is certainly the job of the judges. The judges can strike down a dozen times any legislation saying that it is unconstitutional but we can also legislate two dozen times until we feel that the Constitutional deficiencies have been corrected. The ultimate authority to amend the Constitution lies with the Parliament and not with the judiciary. Otherwise, the Parliament has no relevance at all.

I would like to say only one thing. Now, this term "judicial activism" has become very popular. "Judicial activism" is all right. But where do you draw a line between "judicial activism" and "judicial despotism"? There is a very thin line between the two.

"Judicial despotism", in my opinion, is the worst kind of tyranny that can be imposed on a civil society, which has a democratic process or a following anywhere in the world. Therefore, we should prevent this "judicial despotism" or tyranny from engulfing our system. This is where we need some protection.

Before I conclude, I would like to quote Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, who said:

"The House is a large measure has a representative character and the court can never act as a Third Chamber of the House—ours is a bicameral Parliament and you cannot have a Third Chamber—even though it has the power to strike down an unconstitutional legislation and pronounce upon excesses outside the legislative chamber. The glory of our Constitution desires mutual reverence between the legislature and the judiciary in such a manner

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that comity and camaraderie become the majestic *modus vivendi*."

With these words, I conclude.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil): Sir, we are discussing a very important issue. We have decided to follow the parliamentary democracy in India. For that purpose, we have the Constitution. After sixty years of experience, we have come to a stage wherein we will have to discuss the after-effects of this Constitution.

Now, at the outset, I have to mention that people are supreme. The Constitution is the creation of the people. Now, we have come to a stage where the Constitution is supreme. After the Keshavanand Bharati case, we have enunciated the principle of not altering the "basic structure" of the Constitution. There are certain provisions in the Constitution which cannot be altered by this House or by anybody else. Those basic principles can be altered by constituting a new Constituent Assembly. That is possible only if dictatorship comes or something like that happens. So, that is the position we have now reached. There is no provision in the Constitution for changing the "basic structure" of the Constitution. That is the doctrine that we follow.

Now, the three pillars of the Constitution are executive, judiciary and legislature. It is an accepted principle that these pillars should work together, in a complementary way, helping each other, understanding each other, doing their job in their respective field with utmost care and caution. That is the principle enunciated in the Constitution. Each pillar is supreme in its respective field. There should not be any encroachment into the powers of these three pillars.

The functions and powers of these three pillars have been clearly defined in the Constitution. As per the provisions of article 124(4), the Supreme Court was established and the Chief Justice is appointed. The Supreme Court is also provided with certain powers. Powers are enunciated in Article 124. Article 124, Sub-Clause (4) deals with impeachment of the Judges by this House. That is the only provision in the Constitution which makes the Judiciary accountable and no other provision in the Constitution is making the Judiciary accountable to any authority under the Constitution.

When we speak about Judiciary as an independent body, independent in every field—there is no doubt about

that—independence must be followed by accountability. These are two sides of the same coin. One side of the coin is Judicial independence. The second side of the same coin is it must be accountable. When we take into consideration these three pillars of our Constitution, we will definitely see that the Executive is accountable to the Legislature, the Executive is fully accountable to the House and we, the Members of Parliament, are accountable to the people in every sense of the word. But, unfortunately, the Judiciary is not accountable to any authority under the Constitution except this impracticable Article 124 which deals with the impeachment provisions. That impeachment provision is a back chapter in our Constitution. We had our bitter experience of the Ramasamy case. In that case, we found that we were helpless in bringing the Judiciary to accountability. There was an attempt at that time by the present Congress Government also.

In 1962, the Judges Inquiry Act was passed. But it proved to be an unworkable statute. Subsequently, in 2006, we were discussing the Judges Inquiry Bill making the Judiciary, to some extent, accountable. There is no other provision. If a man has taken oath, he is not accountable to anybody except to Article 124, Sub-Clause (4). That is the position in our Constitution. What is the result of that? There is no other country in the world where Judges appoint themselves, where Judges determine their conditions of service, where they determine when they should retire. Even the age of superannuation is determined by the Supreme Court. There is no other country in the world where such a situation exists. The power of appointment is fully with the Judges. They are appointing themselves. How did it happen?

In 1990, the Supreme Court decided that consultation means consent. There is no such definition even in the Chambers Dictionary about this thing. But, unfortunately, our Supreme Court has given the interpretation that consultation means consent. What is the result? The Contempt of Judiciary Act prevails to a very large extent. While Judges are appointed, father is a Judge. Son-in-law is a Judge, Grandson is a Judge, all members of one family. Once Justice Malimath appeared before my Committee to explain that we reached such a situation that in the matter of appointment of Judges, there are so many irregularities. Natural justice is being denied. It has become a family matter. In the same family, we will find all these persons—father is a Judge, son is a Judge, grandson is a Judge, son-in-law a Judge and nobody else. This is the position now prevalent in the country in

this matter. They have expressly stated that the old system should be revived. Unfortunately, the Government at that time was involved in so many scams that it did not refer the matter to a larger Bench. Now, it has become a permanent law of the land and no other country in the whole world, I tell you, there is such a provision. Unfortunately, in our country, that is the position. They themselves decide it. They appoint themselves. They determine the conditions of service. That is what we have experienced now. Should we not change it? We will have to change it.

You will see that recently, we have passed a Bill about the Contempt of Courts Act. There is the provision justification by truth.

It is only a small matter. When it came to High Court, they could not even tolerate that. Justification by truth is a defence but the Delhi High Court did not accept it. They are not even amenable to a statute passed by this House giving effect to an amendment to the contempt of court. This Contempt of Court Act was passed during British Rule some hundred years back to build up the colonial rule. This is a state where parliamentary democracy is supreme. For that purpose, a simple amendment came into effect and the Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court are not amenable to such an amendment. In that case, they were sent to jail. Now, the Supreme Court decides whether we have the power from Contempt of Court Act. This is an encroachment. We all know that in our Constitution, we have been given some powers, privileges and immunities. These powers have been given for the proper functioning of this House. They are provisions in the Constitution giving special powers to Members of Parliament as well as State Legislatures in matters of privileges and immunities. In our interest, if we exercise them, we will be inviting judicial intervention at every stage and privileges and immunities will become a mockery. Who do we stand for privileges? The reasons is that for the proper functioning of the House, for the proper functioning of the democracy, we, the Members of Parliament, should enjoy some privileges just like in the case of courts, they get protection under the Contempt of Court Act. In the same way, we as Members of Parliament should have special powers, privileges and immunities of functioning in this House. Even that is being intervened and encroached upon by the courts. Now, they will look whether natural justice has been done or not. They will look into whether any right has been denied. That is the position now. Even the court is intervening in our proceedings.

We have our own Rules of Procedure. As per the Rules of Procedure, we have framed Rules for conduct of business in this House. Now, the supreme

16.22 hrs.

[SHRI ARJUN SETHI *in the Chair*]

Court is trying to indulge in spite of the fact that there is a specific provision in the Constitution that the courts should not interfere in the business of the House. They should not consider the legality or otherwise of any decision taken by this House. But, the courts have taken a new position giving whether any natural justice was denied. When the case of disqualification of membership of the House came up, the Supreme Court went into the question and considered whether any natural justice was denied. They have no right. But, they have looked into that process—whether any natural justice has been denied, whether Fundamental Rights have been denied. There is a specific constitutional bar for the courts not to intervene in the proceedings in the House. Unfortunately, there is an encroachment into our rights. I submit that all these pillars should work together in complementary. Unfortunately, the Judges of Supreme Court think that they are supreme in the sense that nobody can control them. Even the President is helpless in the matter of appointment of Supreme Court Judges and Chief Justice where the Law Minister of the Central Government is just a postman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you concluded? Please conclude.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: If you want, I will stop. I am talking about the Legislature.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude, because there is another speaker from your party.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN: I am concluding.

In our country, there is judicial activism now. Through Public Interest Litigation, the courts can decide anything under the Sun. They can decide whether the House is functioning properly. If a PIL is filed in the High Court or the Supreme Court, they can decide anything. So, judicial activism has gone to such an extent that they are always interfering in the functioning of this House. Therefore, I would request the Government to constitute a National Commission for Judicial Accountability and that

[Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan]

must be an independent Commission. We have our experience. In Pakistan, President Pervez Musharraf has dismissed the entire Supreme Court and all the judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan were put under house arrest. A new Supreme Court was formed and with their approval, he is sworn in as the President of Pakistan for the second term. Such a situation will not come in India. The Judiciary has its own position in our country and it must continue.

Now, I would like to say a few words about corruption in the Judiciary. A retired Chief Justice of India has said that 40 per cent of the higher Judiciary in our country is corrupt. That is what he has said. So, what is the way out? The only way out is bringing a National Commission where the Judiciary must be made accountable and that is the need of the hour. The present Bill that is pending before the House, that is, the Judges Inquiry Bill is only an eye wash. During the NDA regime, a National Judicial Commission Bill was introduced in Parliament, but it got lapsed. Therefore, a new Judicial Commission Bill should be introduced in this House and the Judiciary must be made accountable to it with regard to all its irregularities and corruption.

Finally, I would like to say that all the three organs of the State should be supreme in their respective fields and there must be complete harmony between the three pillars of the Constitution. With these words, I conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you that you gave me time to speak on such an important subject. The constitution of India is the unique constitution among the democratic constitutions of the world, because our constitution is the end result of our hundred years long national struggle. The leaders of our nation had developed and nurtured people rule and parliamentary democracy during the hundred years of freedom struggle. So, when our constitution was framed all the basic tenets of our national movement like democracy, personal liberty, nationality, secularism and religious freedom were incorporated in our constitution. Our hon'ble colleague has referred many times about Nehru ji. He was the Secretary. The first sitting of the constitutional reforms was held in Lucknow. It is known as the All Party Lucknow Conference. Modh. Ali Jinnah, Motilal Nehru, Shri Tej Bahadur Sapru and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya had also participated in that conference and Jawahar Lal ji participated as the Secretary of the

Conference. So, I feel that the basic ideas of supremacy of the Parliament of India were evolved during the freedom struggle of India because during that period though the Parliament of India existed, but it was in a way subservient. Viceroy had veto power over the decision. The Governor had veto power over the decisions of the legislative Assemblies of the States. Viceroy and the Governor had the power to reject the decisions taken by the Parliament and assemblies. That is why, keeping in view the diversity of India, the leaders of the national movement voted in favour of the supremacy of Parliament. Today, keeping in view the functioning of our constitution during the last 50-60 years, I feel that if Nehru were alive, he would have changed his views and even during the course of framing of constitution itself he changed his perception and highlighted that there should be no supremacy of any organ for vibrant, permanent and long lasting democracy of India. So, while making the constitution of our country the separation of power was adopted. Parliament is essentially the mirror of the sufferings and agony of the common people of India and they are reflected through it, so, it is the pivot of our democracy. I do not consider it supreme, however, it is the pivot.

When the makers of our constitution put their signatures on it after the *functus officio* in Constituent Assembly, they all said that they give this constitution to ourselves to rule us. They gave it to themselves because they considered themselves the representatives of the people and they believed that no one is supreme, rather there should be a rule of law and the rule should be based on law and the law should have control over the Parliament, judiciary and the Executive. The objective behind this idea was that the judiciary should not go beyond the limits of the laws and the Parliament should also not pass the basic spirit of our constitution while formulating laws and should not transgress the limit. The emphasis has been given on the independence of judiciary for monitoring it. So, I would like to submit that the makers of our constitution were far sighted the democracy of the country by way of dominating the other organs by infringement of powers. That was our working so the date on which the Constituent Assembly of India was to be dissolved, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Baba Saheb Ambedkar had said a very important thing that it is the functioning of the constitution that decides which is a good constitution and which is a bad constitution. Moreover the extent of merit and demerit of any constitution is decided or can be decided only on the basis whether those in power are ruling according to

the constitution while completely following its spirit or not. So, I feel that in view of the past functioning of the various organs, I can say with pride that three organs of our country have never transgressed the 'Lakshman Rekha' laid down by the constitution of India. If any such attempt was made to transgress the jurisdiction, then efforts were made to maintain balance through checks. Thus, today the constitution of India is working. I am very pleased to state that despite dictatorship rule in our neighbouring countries the democracy in our country is functioning quite efficiently.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you may see the history of entire functioning of the constitution of India. The hon'ble Minister has rightly said that the day the constituent Assembly wound up, it started functioning as the interim Parliament. The first general election was held in 1952, however, the Bihar Government abolished Jamindari system prior to this in 1949-50 itself. Maharaja Kamakhaya Prasad Singh approached Darbhanga and Ramgarh Court against this decision. The judgement was given that the right to property is a fundamental right but when Jamindari system was abolished the interim Parliament introduced first amendment Bill to amend that section of the constitution of India that deals with the fundamental rights. It was said in the interim Parliament that the property of any person can be acquired for public purpose. In public interest it should be the power of the executive of India, that is why this amendment was passed. The Supreme Court also accepted this. Had the Supreme Court held different opinion, it would have had reviewed the amended sections of the law regarding fundamental rights, however, it did not do so. The emergency was imposed in the country. When the executive had two third majority in the House it became powerful and then the judiciary was made subservient to Parliament. After superseding three senior most judges of the Supreme Court, the fourth judge was appointed as the Chief Justice of India and then emergency was declared. I fail to understand as to why our CPI colleague remain antagonized with judiciary. The reason is that it was CPI who supported emergency more than the Congress. However, I can say with pride that then came the Kesavananda Bharati case. That was the judgement of the six judges bench. When the Government of India appealed again, then there were 12 judges and all of them observed that the Parliament of India has right to amend any section of the constitution of India if it does not affect the basic structure of the constitution. The Parliament of India has no right to change the basic structure. The Parliament accepted this observation.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, today I submit that the three organs have not crossed the 'Lakshman Reka' in consonance with the need of time and situation. When the judgement by the Supreme Court was given, Shri Nathpai introduced a bill in which it was said that the Parliament of India can amend any section of the constitution of India. Many amendments were there in that Bill. In that it was said that it can amend any section of the constitution of India except the chapter on the fundamental rights. However, the Parliament of India ultimately accepted the judgement of the Supreme Court and till today situation is the same. The Parliament has been respecting the 'lakshman rekha' of the Supreme Court of India. Often it is debated in the Parliament that certain legislation, if passed will affect the basic structure of the constitution of India, so we cannot pass it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, in 1964 there was a serious clash between the judiciary and the Parliament of India over Uttar Pradesh. One hon'ble Member of the Assembly over there had brought out a derogatory pamphlet against the other hon'ble Member. The Assembly summoned him after having passed a resolution against him and awarded him a sentence of one week. After the pronouncement of sentence the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court reduced his sentence to two days and bailed him out. After that the Assembly was convened and a warrant was sent to both the judges for contempt of the Assembly and for keeping their order in abeyance as a right of contempt of the legislature on the lines of the contempt of court is available to us as was pointed out by my hon'ble friend. The largest ever Bench of judges in the country was constituted to go into this matter. Thirty-six judges of the Allahabad High Court sat together and stayed the arrest warrants for their two judges. But this matter came up before the Supreme Court as well as the President of India. It was referred to the Supreme Court of India. The Supreme Court defined frontiers of the legislature and the judiciary. Both of them cannot interfere in the domain of each other. The judiciary is still following this. When this Parliament passed a resolution and expelled 11 of its Members, the Supreme Court had to observe that it was well within the powers of the Parliament and they were not ready to interfere in this regard.

I would, therefore, like to submit respectfully that the Judiciary and the Legislature have adhered to their respective jurisdictions and the Executive of India has also not tried to encroach upon and overlap the powers

[Shri Mohan Singh]

of both these organs over these years. I would, therefore, like to submit that all the three organs of the State are functioning in a balanced manner. Our friend was saying that the Judiciary issues orders quite often that there would not be any red light stoppages for their vehicles and the vehicles can pass through the same. Judges often issue orders that their vehicles would have red beacons on their top, there would be a flag on their vehicles and all others would not be allowed to do so. I would like to put very humbly that the Judiciary have not remained confined to this only over these sixty years. The Judiciary have decided lahs of cases and the orders cited above constitute merely an insignificant fraction of it and I am of the view that only inactive Members of Parliament can attribute judicial activism to the Judiciary only because of this small fraction. Neither the Parliament nor the Executive needs to be active and the same is applicable for the Judiciary also. No active Member of Parliament has the right to raise fingers at the judicial activism to hide his inactiveness. I would like to politely submit this point. All the three need to be active in their respective spheres. The constitution has empowered you for this. Who tells you to interrupt the proceedings of the Parliament and get the Bills passed only through voice vote after a lot of din and uproar and without any discussion? Have the Judiciary issued such an order for you? You need not criticize the judiciary if you cannot discharge your duties properly and enact the legislation in haste amid pandemonium and without any discussion thereupon. I would conclude after submitting four or five suggestions, as I understand that you are going to ask me to wind up.

Firstly, I would say that the party system of the country is the backbone of Parliament. The Parliament will automatically get weakened if you cannot rectify the party system and you need to be perturbed if the Judiciary intervenes due to the weakness of the Parliament. In my view it should not be considered an act of judicial activism but your inactiveness and misdeed if you get houses allotted from the Parliament Pool and retain the same even after you cease to be a Member of Parliament inviting a judge's intervention. Therefore, the two organs need to view each other in right perspective.

I would, therefore, give three-four suggestions to strengthen the Parliamentary system. Electoral reforms are a must in this regard and the Parliament of India needs to be very serious to find ways how to stop the entry of fraud, unscrupulous elements and beastly fellows with excessive money power.

Sir, all efforts should be made to purify public life in India. Furthermore, the party system in India has totally eroded the system of election within its ranks. When we say that the Parliament of India is reflection of the people's will, I would like to ask whether the political parties represent the will of their workers? In all political parties a few leaders at the top level run the show in an autocratic style and that continues to go on. I have to say with regret that every political party is lacking in popularly elected institutions from top to bottom and these have become non-existent. Therefore, the party system requires urgent overhauling.

Sir, my third suggestion is that the electoral system of this country which involves crores of Rupees needs to be reformed. Even if some one is not in politics but he has ten crore rupees, not withstanding his source of income, and if he donates Rs. 1 crore as subscription to a political party, his ticket gets finalized that very day and the workers working for the party for years are excluded & ignored. Therefore, the election system is needed to be improved most.

Sir, the next things I would like to say is that the Parliament has all the powers in respect of the public money. I regret to say that when I was a student of B.A., Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had visited to inaugurate our University's student Union. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia was contesting election against him. Lohia ji levelled an allegation on Jawaharlalji that he had done nothing for his Lok Sabha constituency, Phoolpur. In reply, what Jawahar Lalji spoke in the meeting of our student Union, I listened to that very carefully. He said that he was the Prime Minister of India and he was responsible for the development of the entire country. Across the country, first of all, Madras and Tamil Nadu would be developed, entire Uttar Pradesh would be developed and lastly, my Lok Sabha constituency would be developed. You see what is going on now. It was said that the leadership of this country has an international view. Further, it was said that the leadership of this country has a national view. Then it was being said that the leadership of this country has a regional view and now the leadership of the country has its focus only on a particular Lok Sabha constituency. In such a situation, how is it possible to run the country's system? So, there is a need to bring about a substantial change in it.

Sir, about judiciary, I would like to say that there is only section 174 in the constitution of India by which the judicial authorities could be impeached. But during the

10th Lok Sabha, Sir, you were also present at that time, discussions were held for three days till midnight and at least when it came to issue whip for impeachment, this Parliament got divided into states and no whip was issued and the Judge got reprieve. So, I would like to say that transparency has to be brought in the appointment of judges for making the judiciary of the country transparent. It has been made mandatory for us to make the details of our properties public out it is not so in the case of judges. I know many judges and how they have acquired their properties. So, there should be transparency in their life and pattern of appointment. The constitutional right of Parliament for initiating impeachment process against them should be withdrawn from the constitution and there should be a simple legislative mode in this regard whereby the Parliament can impeach any judge of the Supreme Court by way of a simple majority. This should be the right of the Parliament.

Sir, further, I would like to say that only the Constitution of India has been considered the World's unique Constitution for the reason that individual may directly knock at the doors of the Supreme Court and the High Court for his/her liberty. During my student days when I was acting as a party worker, I was imprisoned for eight months under section 160(17) of the Constitution. I invoked the writ of the Habeus Corpus in the Supreme Court from the Naini Jail. The judge called me and freed me within five minutes. The people who imprisoned me were reprimanded badly and the Supreme Court ordered to prosecute them. Therefore, the judiciary has the supreme power for enforcement of civil rights.

[English]

The independence of the judiciary, for the larger interest of this democracy, should be preserved and it should be strengthened. I am of this opinion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhansi): Mr. Chairman, Sir, a discussion is being held today in this august House on a very important subject. I express my thanks to hon'ble Gurudas Dasgupta ji for introducing the subject with this objective.

We are the largest democracy. The entire World knows this fact. Today, I was listening to the speech of

Mohan Singh ji. The way the largest democratic country and the democratic system is working is very sad and it requires serious thinking. I am making a reference to democracy. I shall definitely air my views do speak on how the functioning of judiciary, executive and legislative can be made cordial. A good subject has been brought for discussion. It's not a question of favouring outside. Ours is the largest democracy. You must be remembering that an Anti-Defection Bill was introduced in this august House in 2002, under which it was provided that ideological differences in the party could be the ground for forming a separate party. Further anyone seeking to leave the party for the sake of money or post or dignity, could be expelled from the party for six years only, but could be expelled from the party not for six years only, but also for ever. But do the ideological different within the party stand for internal democracy in the party or not? I would like to ask whether internal democracy in party, political party is now safe with this act in place. True, we are having discussion on a big subject today. We are having discussion on a big subject today. We are having discussion on parliamentary democracy, judiciary and executive. When the views differ, then you are not free to depart yourself. If you seek to depart you are likely to be dismissed. This is what has been in provided the Anti Defection Bill.

16.52 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

The day this law was enacted, internal democracy became a thing of the past. Now the internal political democracy, democracy of political party is not safe. Being somewhat liberal, I do not hesitate to say that internal democracy is not safe. Democratic dictatorship is more dangerous for the democracy and patriotism. The democracy of political party is democratic dictatorship. That is not clear that there is dictatorship, but this is the fact. I leave this point here. There is a need to have a long discussion on it.

We are discussing on the issue on how can we have co-ordinal functioning of Judiciary, Legislatures and Executive. I believe that these three organs are like a three pillars of democracy, and the Indian Constitution is supreme in it. Are we functioning according to the Indian Constitution or not? Several hon'ble Members have stated that Executive is accountable to legislature and the legislature is accountable to people and the Judiciary is accountable to the Indian Constitution. A learned Member

[Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav]

has stated just now that judicial activism is the outcome of the failure of executive or legislature to fulfill their responsibility. I doubt whether Constitution provides for the encroachment in each other's sphere irrespective of the failure of one organ to discharge its responsibility properly because Constitution has provided for the separation of powers for all the three organs *i.e.* judiciary, executive as well as legislature. Article 211 is very clear about it, as we all know, as the honourable Members are aware about it. It clearly states:—

[English]

Article 211 regarding restriction on discussion in the Legislature states that:

"No discussion shall take place in the Legislature of a State with respect to the conduct of any Judge of the Supreme Court or of a High Court in the discharge of his duties."

[Translation]

It means we do not interfere in sub-judice matters but what the judiciary including the Supreme is doing? Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is very evident to you. I don't hesitate to remind whether you did not receive the notice? The issue of parliamentary question was completely an internal matter of the House. When 11 hon'ble Members lost their membership on cash for very issues, Court intervened, issued notice and that too against the hon'ble Speaker, Speaker is not a party, Parliament can pass any motion, whether the same is moved by the leader of the opposition or by the leader of the House, Parliament can pass the motion. Nowhere the Speaker is a part and parcel of it, but the Delhi High Court issued notice to the hon'ble Speaker regarding the dismissal of 11 hon'ble Members from the House when the same was recommended by the House.

A Committee was constituted under the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, the Committee gave its recommendation on the 'Cash for query' issue against the 11 hon'ble Members, the recommendations were read out in the house, the house gave its approval, it is an internal affair of the House, but on this issue the notice was issued to the hon'ble Speaker. Is it not a fact? Does not this act qualify as activism? I agree with several hon'ble Members. It is nothing but judicial activism. The Constitution does not empower them to do so. If it is our failure—it is our

weakness, we are not been able to discharge our duties, then equally is not it true that 4 crore cases are pending in the Courts? Hon'ble Law Minister who often provides data in response to the question in the House is setting here. 4 crore criminal cases are pending in the Court for the last ten to fifteen years. ...*(Interruptions)* for how long the four crore cases have been pending, is it not a failure of the Judiciary? Who will be accountable for the same in the history of Judiciary? Will we decide the criminal matter in the Parliamentary? We are not empowered for the same, we cannot do that. In the same manner the Judiciary can't investigate the proceeding of the House. The Hon'ble Members were speaking on the Supreme Court order on Jharkhand. In which directives like video cameras to be installed, tape to be recorded, D.G.P. to be sent, Chief Secretary should go and monitor the voting pattern in the Legislative Assembly etc. were given. Does the Constitution empower them to encroach in the legislative affairs.

Article 212 states:

[English]

- "(1) The validity of any proceedings in the Legislature of a State shall not be called in question on the ground of any alleged irregularity of procedure.
- (2) No officer or Member of the Legislature of a State in whom powers are vested by or under this Constitution for regulating procedure or the conduct of business, or for maintaining order, in the Legislature shall be subject to the jurisdiction of any court in respect of the exercise by him of those powers."

[Translation]

Is it a Legislative Assembly or the Parliament, there are provisions in the parliamentary democracy that the hon'ble Speaker's decision would be supreme, but whether encroachment in its domain was made or not? How does this act of Supreme Court not qualify as judicial activism. I would like to say that among Legislature, Executive and Judiciary, it is the Judiciary particularly which is crossing its 'laxman rekha' and there are many examples to substantiate this fact. Due to the time constrain I have quoted only the Jharkhand example.

The issue of OBC was passed in this very House. The article 15(4) was already there. On the basis of the article 15(4) there are 52% people who are socially and

educationally backward; However the provisions of the 27% reservation to their children in educational institutions, IITs, IIMs and other institutions of higher education like in Delhi University also has been provided for. Community having 52% population should be given these opportunities.

[*Translation*]

If any child is not fit for medical and engineering, higher education, he gets scrutinized automatically in five years and is not promoted. However, at the time of admission itself their entry is prevented. As such, there is one-sided, undeclared reservation upto 70-80 percent in this country.

17.00 hrs.

How will they be associated with the mainstream in this way? How will the deprived classes of the society will be brought to the mainstream of the country? If they do not associate with the mainstream, how will the country get strengthened? Now Article 15(5) has been passed by both the Houses-Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, but a question mark has been passed by both the Houses-Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, but a question mark has been put on relevance of Parliament. That is why I would like to raise this issue here. Now since the Parliament has the right to enact a law, this power is vested only with the Parliament. Of course, the Supreme Court is the supreme authority to interpret this law. It has every right to review the laws, but the right to frame a law is vested with us *i.e.* Parliament. Now that legislation was stayed for one year. During this one year, the OBC children have been debarred from admission in education or other technical institutions. Now, it is being said that this law is being put up in before a bigger constitution Bench. All this game was played by only two judges altogether. How is it not being disposed of now?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that even the judges are delivering verdicts and observations in consonance with their mindset based on their own personal perceptions due to which the present situation is evolving. I would like to say very frankly that today's discussion is also as a result thereof.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are out most senior, learned person of law. I would like to ask a question on what basis the appointment of judges is being made while the Article 312 of the Constitution states that there should be

an All India Judicial Service Commission for this purpose. Persons having experience as advocate for ten of fifteen years are eligible for appointment as judges provided they belong to the family from which judges are selected. How many such families are there? I count you the figure. There are 123 such families in the country from which judges are appointed. Sir, there is constraint of time, otherwise I would have told you in detail.

Sir, I would like to give you an example that an advocate falling in the selection test for the post of Munsif Magistrate is appointed as the judge of a High Court just because he has the experience of 10-15 years in legal practice. In this way those who have no merit or talent for Munsif Magistrate become the judges of High Courts. How will this country run? That is why I would like to mention it with a heavy heart that there should be an All India Judicial Service Commission. I demand that on the lines of the competitive examinations held for the IAS, IPS, there should be an All India Judicial Service Commission for this purpose.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to mention about what happened in Allahabad. There the High Court had given a decision that the minority status of the Muslims of Uttar Pradesh be revoked because their population is 18.4 per cent. It is worth mentioning that in 2002, the Constitution Bench of the hon'ble Supreme Court had said in its verdict that minority status will be granted to the community having less than 50 per cent population. The decision of the Supreme Court is considered to the law of the land. Then, there is the decision of Allahabad High Court which is something different. I would like to say this thing just because of justifying what I am saying. When the decision of the Supreme Court is considered as the law of the land, then, how this Court is giving a new constitutional direction different from the said verdict. That is why I have requested and urged you in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, not only this, there are also so many things which I cannot tell you here due to constraint of time. It is also a matter of concern for democracy that the OBCs were debarred from reservation and in this matter apprehension of the petitioner was taken into account. There was also no detailed hearing on this petition. The hon'ble Supreme Court stayed it *ex-parte* on 19th March, 2007 on a Public Interest Litigation petition taking into account only the apprehension of the petitioner. How will the Legislative and the Executive work in this way? I would, therefore, request that in view of the

[Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav]

supremacy of the constitution of India, the Legislative, Executive and the Judiciary should discharge their obligations accordingly. They should maintain restraint in their own jurisdiction, only then democracy could be saved and kept intact. In my opinion, some constitutional measures must be taken to maintain a balance and keep co-ordination among these three pillars of democracy—Executive, Legislative and the Judiciary so that the parliamentary democracy of India could be strengthened. Hon'ble Members have discussed the issue of corruption in the House. Corruption is the subject of impeachment and the result of it is well known. With your kind permission, I would like to give you one example. Some days back, there was a court Verdict in which it was said, 'no work-no pay' i.e. those who will not work will not get pay, but when a strike was held in the AIIMS, this decision was reserved and order was passed to pay those also who were involved in the said strike. That is why I said that the decisions keep on changing on the basis of personal perceptions. As such, apprehensions are created about the judicial system in the minds of the people, a question is put on the judicial system. This is stretched to the extent that even the prerogative of choosing the Union Council of Ministers that rests with the Prime Minister is looked into and thus interfered with. I would like to submit that these three pillars of democracy should function within the purview of their own jurisdiction as defined by constitution. There should not be overlapping and overreaching of powers over one another, only then the Parliamentary democracy will remain intact. As far as corruption is concerned, membership of eleven hon'ble Members was terminated only some time back. The courts were taking interest in this matter at the first place on the plea as to how the Parliament has taken a decision to this effect but when the Supreme Court had said in its decision that it was the prerogative of the Parliament and it had every right to take a decision in this regard, they are now giving vent to their feeling. Since, at that time, you did not accept the notice, no presiding officer does so, I think, it was wise of you, by doing so you boosted the dignity of Parliament. So, now it is being said that criminal suits may be initiated against these eleven terminated members under the Parliament of Corruption Act. As such, I am saying that there is judicial activism and a situation of clashes is being created solely by the judiciary, the jurisdiction of the Legislature is being over reached. I would, therefore, request that an autonomous commission like the Election Commission should be constituted to investigate the cases of corruptions that come into notice within the Judiciary,

Executive and Legislature. The decision of that Commission should be final for all people whether they are working in Judiciary, Executive or the Legislature. This Commission may investigate all details of movable and immovable properties of these people and its report may be deemed as final. This commission may be provided autonomous powers, then only there will be a check on corruption.

Corruption originates from the top echelons, not from the lower rungs, so it will have to be checked at this level itself.

With these words, I conclude my speech.

[English]

SHRI VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH (Bhilwara): Sir, are we going to get a chance to speak? I have not spoken at all in this Session.

MR. SPEAKER: Your name stands at number five in the list of speakers from the BJP. There are still about 26 names and if I allow five minutes to each one of them, then you can think how much time it is likely to take. Therefore, let Members from each party be called first.

SHRI VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH: Sir, it is an important subject.

MR. SPEAKER: No doubt it is an important subject and that it is important is being realized.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (Sriperumbudur): Sir, today a very important and a very interesting debate is taking place in the House on the issue of separation of powers. Today, I hope this discussion will bring a full stop on the overlapping and over-reaching powers of the Judiciary over the Legislature. It is also an acknowledged fact that the Executive, Parliament and Judiciary are the three pillars of democracy. Each one of the pillars has defined powers under the Constitution of India. The Founding Fathers of the Constitution are fully aware of their importance. Dr. Ambedkar had enacted a very good Constitution for India and we are following it. Each one is to function not in conflict with and in collusion with the other but in consonance with each other. It is the right of every citizen as well as the Members of Parliament either in the House or outside or in the Press to make a statement or fair comment on matters of public interest.

If the Executive and the Legislature go beyond or against the provisions of the Constitution, it is always their prerogative to correct it. But at the same time, development programmes and economic progress of the country cannot be stalled by motivated persons by filing litigations in the court. The courts must always pierce through veil, find out the motive behind them and take a serious view of the matter and take appropriate steps against the persons responsible for stalling the progress.

In this regard, I would like to register two points this House. Regarding 27 per cent reservation in higher educational institutions in Southern India, earlier Dr. Karunanidhi and other leaders had protested and demanded the UPA Chairperson and the Government of India to enact a law. Our Minister for Human Resource Development brought a Bill and we unanimously passed the Bill in the House. This was the brain child of Shri Arjun Singh, the interest of the UPA Chairperson and the hon. Prime Minister and the interest of the UPA Chairperson and the hon. Prime Minister and the request of our Chief Minister, Dr. Karunanidhi. But later on, it was sent to the court and the court stayed it. This was asked by our leader, Dr. Karunanidhi. This was regarding the 27 per cent reservation for backward classes.

MR. SPEAKER: Let us not go into individual cases. This is not right. After all, they have the right to decide on it.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: Sir, the 27 per cent reservation was stayed by two judges in the court. We come here with the majority support of the people and we enact a law here in their interest, as is given in the Common Minimum Programme. We had promised the public that when we come to power, we will bring this amendment and protect the interests of the OBCs. But what has happened? Two judges sitting in the court passed orders to stay it. Is it in the interest of the public or is it in the interest of democracy?

MR. SPEAKER: We cannot go into all these pending matters.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: We are law-makers and they are law-protectors. They can only protect the law whereas we make the law. ...(Interruptions) When I was a practising advocate, I always spoke in the interest of individuals. When I was practising, I thought that the

court has the supreme power and I used to fight for individuals. When anyone rises in protest, I used to highlight suitable points in the court as I was worried about the individual concerned. But when I have got the votes and got elected by a majority of the people, I think about the majority interest and not individual interest. I have to go by public interest, that is the verdict given by the people. We are making law only for their interest and not for any individual. In this case, the court has encroached upon the powers of Parliament. The powers are overlapping. This should be condemned. Another issue is the Ram Setu. It is 100-year old dream project of the people of Tamil Nadu. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, let us not go into the pending matters. This is not right. After all, we have the highest regard and respect for the judiciary. The only issue is we have to function in harmony.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: Today the issue is about the harmonious relationship between the three pillars. That is why we can speak. At least today we have to be harmonious.

In that project, the court interfered. ...(Interruptions)

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: But this is not harmony ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: He has a point. Let there be respect for each other. It is not a one-way traffic.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: It is a 100-year old dream project of the people of Tamil Nadu. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: That is a pending matter. We are not going to decide here on its merits.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: When it was in progress, the court intervened and stayed. In the all-party meeting we decided to go for a *bandh*. There is a right to strike in the country. In all the States and all over the world, *bandhs* are being conducted. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Right to strike is not recognised.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: The Supreme Court has given the stay. When *bandhs* were held in Kolkata and Kerala, it was not stayed, but it was stayed in Tamil Nadu. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: It depends on the hon. Judges.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: They have not given even 24 hours. They stayed it before 18 hours. There were holidays on Saturday and Sunday. In-between on Monday, that is 1st October, the *bandh* was about to be held. So, there were holidays for three days, except 1st October. The officials and other sections of the people of Tamil Nadu were in a holiday mood. But before 18 hours the Supreme Court stayed it. But no one responded to it. The people were against the Court. No one respect the Court. Is it not wrong to give a stay in this way? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: It was on the basis of the decision of the hon. Judges. They are entitled to it.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Krishnaswamy, you please do not go into the merits of individual cases. I said that earlier also. Let us have a discussion on a very high level.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: The judicial officers should have applied their mind. they should have thought whether such a stay, given 18 hours before, will be successful or not. This is the mindset of the judicial officers, which is prevailing now. As Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan said, judgements are pronounced not on merits of cases, but on the basis of...*

MR. SPEAKER: We should discuss basic issues, not individual cases. We should show fullest respect to the judiciary as they are entitled to. My only view is that it should be reciprocal.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY: The judicial officers are like that. How can they overlap and over-reach over the legislature and the executive? This is my question.

The Parliament is supreme. The temple of democracy, that is Parliament, should be protected at any cost. With these words, I conclude.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU (Rajapur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I seek your permission to speak from this seat.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU: Sir, first of all let me thank you for allowing me to participate in the discussion on this very important issue. I thank my friend, Shri Gurudas Dasgupta for initiating the discussion on this important issue in the sixtieth year of India's Independence. We are today functioning as a democracy. Fourteen Lok Sabhas have been voted to power in the last 55 years, from 1952 onwards. We are, in a way, making ourselves proud and are also keep telling rest of the world that we are a great functioning democracy. That is an advantage over many other countries, including some of our neighbours. Therefore, this proud tradition of being a democratic country has been possible because of many things, including a very important fundamental decision.

The modern States world-wide have taken the decision which we have followed is to separate the functions of the State into three different functionalities—The Judiciary, the Executive and the Legislature. So, the harmonious functioning of these three guarantees that the institution of democracy will function in a proper manner to the satisfaction not only of those who really created the Constitution but also to the satisfaction of the citizens of the country. But, Sir, over a period of time, we have been seeing a lot of tensions developing among these three institutions. The question is: Who is really right in this? We always claim that Parliament is supreme. It is supreme. In a democracy, the people who vote the Government in, who elect their representatives and legislators, definitely they are supreme. Parliament is supreme. But who guarantees the supremeness of this Parliament? This supremeness can also be maintained, retained and at the same time, the citizens of the country will really feel assured that this Parliament as an institution, Parliamentarians as functionaries are also serving the cause for which they are elected. So, there has to be an institution independent of Parliament to ensure that it will make sure that Parliament functions as a sovereign body. That function has to be discharged by a Judiciary as per our Constitution, as per the wish of the people of this country. They very strongly feel that this is an institution which will actually guarantee it.

*Not recorded.

Let us look at many areas. In many areas, we are a very unique country. I know that in Delhi, for example, in the winter months of the year, we always see that there is a very big smog. Delhi was considered as one of the cities which is most polluted not only in the country but in the world. When a person called Shri Anil Agarwal went to the Supreme Court with a Public Interest Litigation saying that Delhi's air quality should be improved, because of that single petition, the Supreme Court directed the Government and the Government had to improve the pollution standards of this particular city. Sir, an ordinary citizen anywhere in the country can write one post-card of 50 paise—I do not know what is the cost. It may be 60 paise or one rupee now—and that post-card is considered by the Supreme Court and the High Courts in many States as a petition and they act on it. This is something which is very unique in India. I do not think there is any other country in the world where you will find that an ordinary citizen can straightaway go to the Supreme Court and get justice for the plea he is making.

In the olden days, people used to say: "If you go to the Darbar of a Raja or a Maharaja, ring the bell, you will probably get justice." Nowadays, when we are being the Rajas and Maharajas, probably, if we fail to deliver justice, justice can be provided only by courts.
∴ (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Justice should be according to law. "Law" means what is constitutional.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU: That is right. Probably, we make the law and the justice is supposed to be dispensed through the institution of Judiciary. But, Sir, the point that I am making is that definitely Parliament is supreme. The Constitution has guaranteed that freedom to us. At the same time, we also have the right to change the Constitution. We have the ability to make laws but those laws once made have to be interpreted probably to ensure that according to this law whether the country is functioning or not. This is to be guaranteed by the Judiciary.

I want to make a little different point here about the relationship not only between the Judiciary and the Parliament—many of us have spoken on it—but also I would like to speak about the relationship between the Executive and the Legislature. What is the Executive? A Legislator becomes an Executive as per our system. In other countries like the United States of America, for example, a legislator cannot become an Executive. In fact, it has separated its power so much that a legislator cannot become a Member of the Executive. That is so by law. But in India, we are saying that the Executive

Members, particularly the Ministers and the Prime Minister have either to be Members of Parliament when they become so or within six months, they have to become Members of Parliament. When we talk about a legislator becoming an Executive, the relationship between the Executive and the Parliament has to be revisited after sixty years of experience that we have gained. We have seen that in India, the Executive is very powerful. I had been a member of the Executive. I can say about that. I am not trying to blame the Executive presently sitting in the Treasury Benches. I am talking about the Executive as an institution. We have seen that Members of Parliament are relegated to the position of making noise in Parliament, they are not being heard. Their voice never gets heard by the Executive.

MR. SPEAKER: Why? You are making a point. I respect you very much. The question is that if the Members are alert, they can make the Executive accountable. You are a very senior and respected Member. Only to the Legislature, the Executive is accountable for its every functioning. Once a judicial executive order is passed, the Parliament cannot question that.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU: That is precisely the point that I am trying to make. The Executive is supposed to be presided over by the elected Members of Parliament. But, in reality, we are seeing that the Executive is being run not by the elected representatives, but by those who are appointed over a period of time and whose tenure is guaranteed by the Constitution. Therefore, what we are really seeing in reality is that we, the Members of Parliament, are not being able to represent. The Members of Parliament are not really becoming the Executive, but somebody else is executing the functions of the Executive. It is really a challenge before us. How do we make sure that in a democracy, the Members of Parliament should really become Executive and they will run the country? Many times, the Judiciary has held the Executive responsible for the actions for which I think they preside over it, but not necessarily responsible for it. I think we really need to demarcate. In my opinion, we have demarcated the responsibilities, we have separated the powers, but we have not codified the roles and the responsibilities of the individual functionaries of these particular different organs. For example, a Member of Parliament is expected not only to be a law maker, that we primarily are, but to play many other roles. The Constitution expects from a Member of Parliament to also fix the drainage line, to fix the water line and so many other things. But, now in the absence of a proper codification, it becomes extremely difficult for either a Member of Parliament to know what

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his real role is and also for the constituent to judge the performance of the elected representative. It is high time that we move not only for separation of responsibilities but we must also go into the issue of codification of responsibilities, rules and functioning of individual functionaries. All these three, particularly between the Executive and the Legislature, must be considered. In the absence of it, we will always find some conflict.

There are some issues which we need to consider. For example, we need to consider primacy of Parliament. Policy making is whose responsibility. We normally feel that the Executive makes policy. Actually speaking, the Executive, by definition, has to execute a decision. It means that obviously the policy has to be made by somebody else. Now, in the absence of not codifying it and the vacuum being created, the Judiciary is filling the vacuum by saying that we will make the policy. If you codify it and say that it is the Parliament whose responsibility primarily it is to make policy on any subject, if the Executive wants to make they are free to do it. Place it before the Parliament, but no policy can be finalized and can be implemented unless it has the approval of the Parliament. So, policy making is another area where we need a fundamental relook.

As I have been saying, failure of any institution gives rise to vacuum which is filled by whichever institution can do that job. In India, we are saying that Judiciary is overactive. But, in my opinion, Judiciary is actually filling up the vacuum. Sir, you have been an extremely great lawyer of the country and you have been the Speaker of the House. You have actually been participating in all the three organs—in fact, not really participating in the Executive—but you have been actually supervising the Executive in some way. So, my earnest request to you in this 60th year of Independence would be that we should constitute a very high power committee of Members of Parliament to relook into all these issues and to see how to increase the efficacy of the Members of Parliament individually because as an institution, we are very powerful, but individually, we are very powerless. It is a real contradiction in itself. So, my request would be that codification is of extreme importance. Let me give you an example. In the United States, the President of USA, who is supposed to be the most powerful man in the world, cannot appoint his own Ministers. All the Ministers that he appoints have to be confirmed by the Senate.

MR. SPEAKER: Including Judges.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU: Including Judges and including Ambassadors. Why do we not think about moving away to a system where Parliament as an institution will be able to look into some of the functionaries? Why should we not look into these issues in a separate way? In our country, the Ministers are all elected Members of Parliament. But I talk about other important functionaries. This type of reform is really called for because maybe, we are succeeding as a democracy, but individual functionaries of these institutions are not able to perform their roles as effectively as they would have otherwise liked to perform.

Sir, the Standing Committees that we have are really important institutions through which we really operate and transact the business of the House in a very significant way. So, we really need to move towards second generation Standing Committees in which these Standing Committees then will be able to play a proactive role and that is what is really needed to be done.

Sir, I am very happy that, thanks to you, I could speak on a subject like this because my predecessor, who once contested the election from my constituency, Mr. Nath Pai also used to speak on this subject. Maybe I was not present at that time, but I hope I continue this tradition of speaking on a subject which was so dear to his heart. He is no longer living now. So, I am sure that my constituents will be happy if I can perform a role that they expect from me and that can happen only if we bring about a radical change in the way in which we really function.

MR. SPEAKER: You are already performing.

Hon. Members, the time allotted for all the parties is over long back except one or two parties and no more time is left except for those who will speak now. I will try to accommodate as many as possible. But please cooperate and be brief.

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH (Allahabad): Mr. Speaker, Sir, can you extend this debate for tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKER: Let us go on for a while more.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA (Sambalpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I would like to extend my thanks to you because you have allowed a discussion on this very important subject under Rule 193 which has been brought by Shri Gurudas Dasgupta and Shri Basu Deb Acharya. In my opinion, the wordings should have been a little different. Now, this is a discussion on the

need for harmonious functioning of three organs of the State, that is, Legislature, Judiciary and Executive, though I would have liked to add media also here. Though our Constitution does not mention the media as an organ, this is one of the four pillars of our democracy and unless all these organs, including the media, function harmoniously, I think will not improve.

Sir, our Constitution clearly defines separation of powers. There is no confusion, there is no ambiguity and no organ of the State should take on itself the onerous responsibility of the other one as prescribed in our Constitution. No Constitution can function if the autonomy of each of the organ is not respected by other organs. The Judiciary, as much as the Legislature and the Executive, is dependent for its proper functioning upon the cooperation of the other two.

Our Constitution entails that none of these organs would be vested with unbridled power so that no organ or individual assumes power of despotic proportions. As you know, article 361(1) of our Constitution very categorically states that the President or the Governor of a State shall not be answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his office or for any act done or purporting to be done by him in the exercise and performance of those powers and duties. Article 121, as you know, bars the Legislature from discussing the conduct of any Judge in the discharge of his duties except upon a motion of impeachment. It, likewise, bars the court from questioning any alleged irregularities of procedure in the Legislature according to article 122. By and large, the principle of separation of powers in this country has worked well in our country. Yet, there have been sometimes disputes concerning different issues creating doubt about the capacity of our constitutional set up to deal with such situations satisfactorily.

Sir, I want to quote one of your observations which you made in one of the seminars. You have very correctly stated that:

"The problem starts when a particular organ assumes that it has inherent superiority or a monopoly over other or that it alone can solve their problem."

Sir, it is your statement.

A few months back, hon. Chief Justice of India at a seminar, where the hon. Prime Minister was also present,

stated that the tension between the three organs is an inevitable consequence of judicial review which is the power of Apex court to determine the constitutionality of the law made by the Legislature and to review the Executive's decision and such tension is natural, according to the hon. Chief Justice of Supreme Court. But in my opinion, sometimes, judicial review is not the only reason of tension or disharmony between the Legislature and the Parliament.

Shri Kishore Chandra Deo was correctly mentioning that the court came out with an order and asked the Attorney-General to submit the report of the Standing Committee on the Quota Bill, before it was brought in this House. Such orders also sometimes create disharmonious situation and that has to be avoided.

MR. SPEAKER: I would not have allowed it.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Fortunately, the other day, I think, the court changed the order.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): Sir, the discussion can continue tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: All right.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Sir, harmony is disturbed when one organ tries to encroach into the clearly defined area of other. But the onus also lies on the politicians. We, the politicians, should hold impartial and judicious view on this problem. When a particular judgement of the court or an interpretation of law suits us politically, we enormously welcome it, we congratulate the decision of the court. But if it does not suit us, we condemn it.

Sir, when the decision of the House, to expel the eleven Members of Parliament in a case of Cash for Query Scam, was taken, you refused to receive the notice of the court. The whole House appreciated it. This enhanced the image of the House. Then, ultimately, the court came out with an order approving what decision the House has taken, all sections of the House congratulated it. But what happened when the court came out with a judgement regarding the Jharkhand case? A section of the House opposed it and a section of the House, to whom the judgement suited, welcomed it.

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Therefore, in my opinion, the opportunistic attitude towards the judgement of the courts by the politicians, the Members of the House, enables the court to interfere into our own affairs.

The political parties in this country, in my opinion, should broadly agree on the definition of what is judicial activism. In one case we define judicial activism in one way and in another case, we define judicial activism in another way. I think, this opportunistic stand of the Members of the political parties is encouraging the judiciary to encroach upon our areas, in my opinion.

Sir, nobody is a God in a democracy. We are all creation of this Constitution. This House is the creation of this Constitution. The Executive, sitting there is, the creation of the Constitution. Likewise, the court is also the creation of the Constitution. Nobody is above Constitution, except the people of this country. Sometimes, we forget that. All the three organs very conveniently sometimes forget this theory.

Sometimes the judges try to pose themselves as super human beings, who are above all the vices; all the sins and can solve all the problems on the earth by their orders and observations. They are in the habit of passing sarcastic remarks during the course of trials. Many examples are there. Against whom? Against the politicians, against the bureaucrats. They cast aspersions on their integrity and ability. Umpteen examples are there, I am not going to quote them.

Likewise, the politicians never hesitate to vomit our feelings as, to some extent, we are doing today against the judges whenever we get the platform immune from judicial scrutiny, like this House. That also, we sometimes do not forget to do. This cannot help in having harmonious relations.

My good friend, Shri Kharabela Swain is not here. He was mentioning that because there is a Supreme Court, the CBI is not functioning or the Court is restraining the CBI from functioning as an organ, or as a Department of the Government. It is because there is a Supreme Court, therefore, the Jharkhand Assembly thing was set to right.

I would like to remind that when the dark Emergency was declared in this country in the year 1975, there was also a Supreme Court. In 1973, just two years before declaration of the Emergency, the path-breaking ruling in

Keshavanand Bharati case came way back in 1973. The Emergency was declared in 1975. In Keshavanand Bharati case, the Court propounded the doctrine of the basic structure of the Constitution. But, what happened after two years? Two years later, the historic atrocities of the Emergency days against the basic structure of the Constitution, and other great violations of the Fundamental Rights and the freedom of ordinary citizens, did not bother the conscience of the hon. Court. They did not bother the Court. Even though Keshavanand judgement was thrown to pieces by the Emergency regime, the Court did not bother. Of course, after the revocation of the Emergency, the Court rectified its own order. This was even admitted by one of our respected retired Chief Justices, Mr. Chandrachud, who said later on that during those days of 19 months, even Judges were acting under fear. Therefore, I said that nobody is a God. Nobody is above our Constitution. The Judges are also human beings. They are not Gods.

MR. SPEAKER: Very much so.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Sir, the hon. Member was pointing out as to what should be the role of other organs. When there is inactivity on the part of the Parliament, when there is inefficiency and inactivity on the part of the Executive, the Court intervenes. That is the right of the Court.

MR. SPEAKER: Under what provision?

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Again, I would like to quote you, Sir. In one occasion you said this. Suppose—some Member was telling here—more than 2.5 crore cases are pending all over the country. I think a large number of cases are pending in the Supreme Court. A number of cases are pending in the High Court. If this House takes this plea that huge number of cases are pending, and the Court is unable to dispense justice to the people, can this Parliament take over the responsibility and the duty of the Court?

MR. SPEAKER: No, it cannot.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: It is like that. So, every organ should function under its limitation. It is okay that there are a number of Bills pending with the Government; the Government is sitting over the Bills. Can the court say that because the Parliament is unable to pass the Bills, the Court will take the right of the Parliament and pass judgement? This does not help harmonious relation.

Many hon. Members here were quoting that there are umpteen instances when the Judiciary has intervened in the matters entirely within the domain of the Executive, and entirely within the domain of the Legislature. I would like to cite a few instances. Even the Judiciary is coming out with orders determining age and other criteria for admission in nursery schools. Even the Judiciary is coming out with order fixing criteria for a free seat in school, supply of drinking water in school, number of beds in a hospital, the size of speed breakers in the Delhi roads etc. When there are larger cases, more important cases pending before the Judiciary, and when a matter is purely within the functioning of the Executive and when the court is interfering in such a matter, how can we expect that there will be harmonious functioning?

One another important factor is this. When Parliamentarians become corrupt, people go to the Court. There are ample examples when the Court has come out with strictures, orders and even has punished the politicians. When the Executive is corrupt, and when the politicians fail to deliver justice to the people, our electorate, people go to the Court. So, there is highest regard for the Court by the ordinary citizens in the country. But, when there are allegations of corruption against the Court, where will the people go? This is a very much turning point in our democracy. You go through the newspapers of the past six months. You will find a number of stories leveling allegations against hon. Judges. Who will rectify this situation?

According to a survey conducted by the Transparency International and Centre for Media Studies, every year, Rs. 21,068 crore change hands as bribe in 11 service sectors in this country. Do you know, Sir, what is the share of the Judiciary? It is, Rs. 2,630 crore; the under-table business that happens. This is not my opinion. This is the survey. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No, no. Which survey?

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Sir, this is not my allegation. I am quoting the survey report. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Who is the surveyor?

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: This is the Transparency International and Centre for media Studies, New Delhi. This is their survey. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Are these figures of the world over?

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: It is of the country.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it pertaining to India only?

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Yes, Sir. They have surveyed around 22 service sectors. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I do not know as to what this group is.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Sir, this is not my allegation. This is the survey report which I am quoting. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Acceptability of the survey is there. Let us avoid that. You are giving a figure which nobody knows.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Sir, as you know, a large number of cases are pending. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, there are allegations of corruption. The country is agitating how to solve that.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: The country is agitating how to get rid of these things.

Another point which I would like to mention is that there are a large number of vacancies in courts, and that is one of the reasons why justice is not dispensed to the people in proper time. The cases are pending for years and decades. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Who selects the judges?

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Sir, I am coming to that. So far as subordinate court judges are concerned, I will hold the State Government and the Central Government responsible. But what is happening in the High Court, Sir? There are number of vacancies in the High Courts, around 26 per cent vacancies. What is the collegium of judges doing? Can the Government appoint judges without the approval and recommendation of the collegiums of judges?

MR. SPEAKER: No.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Sometimes, Sir, judiciary accuses the Executive and the Legislature for not filling up the vacant posts of judges but the responsibility lies with the judiciary itself. There is a collegium of judges. Rather, I would like to ask the Judiciary as to what they are doing. Why are they not filling up their own vacancies and trying to dispose of

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the pending cases expeditiously? Therefore, the point—I will do one wrong and I will accuse others—is not harmonious functioning. That is my point.

Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Law Minister as to why the Government is sitting over the Judges Equitable Bill. The Standing Committee has already submitted its Report. What debars the Government from coming with the Judges Equitable Bill? I hope, the hon. Law Minister will give answer to this when he gives his reply.

Sir, I am concluding. Therefore, Sir, my final statement is that we, the politicians, should have introspection, the Executive should have introspection, the Executive should have introspection and the Judiciary also should have introspection. We all, including the Media, have to introspect ourselves as to what we have done, where we are crossing the limit and why we are crossing the limit, what are the lacunae in the Legislature, the Judiciary and the Executive. That introspection should be there to solve this problem.

But, in spite of all these lacuane, we are leveling so many charges on the Judiciary. Sir, you will be surprised to note that in spite of the alleged judicial activism, interestingly the politicians and the bureaucrats are losing ground among the public. Sir, it is a fact. The judiciary is perceived to be doing better even though there is a huge backlog. Why is this happening? Therefore, Sir, introspection is required on the part of the politicians, the Judiciary and the Executive.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, it is going to be six o'clock soon. If you want, this discussion will continue tomorrow also. But there are a large number of names. If you all agree, we can continue this discussion till 7 p.m.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: Sir, I have a personal difficulty. There is a wedding of my son. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the wedding of your son?

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: Yes, Sir. My brother's son—Gen. Bhardwaj's son—is getting married.

MR. SPEAKER: You can go.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: Sir, I need your permission. My colleague is here. I will reply tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: I think, we can continue up to seven o'clock.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack): Sir, what happens to the urgent matters of public importance?

MR. SPEAKER: It is at 7 p.m.

Now, Dr. P.P. Koya.

17.50 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

DR. P.P. KOYA (Lakshadweep): This is a very, very important topic. All the hon. Members, who spoke before me, have highlighted the importance. It appears from the speech of everyone, who participated, that they have come fully prepared and they have expressed themselves in very, very clear terms.

We known everyone of us is proud that this is the biggest, the largest and the most matured democracy. It is in this country only, after Independence, the democratic process has gone on without any interruption. Every Member is happy that this is the country where a written Constitution is there. The Constitution was prepared. The Constitution has not suddenly fallen from somewhere. It was negotiated and discussed by eminent personalities of the day for months and years together. Then, they came out with one of the best Constitutions of the world. Even today this Constitution is a referral book to any country which is preparing a new Constitution for their own administration. Such beautiful Constitution we have got.

The Constitution gives us a Government. The Constitution has given us this system wherein the democracy prevails upon the three pillars. Of course, I will not be spared if I do not add the new one, that is, the Fourth Estate, that is, the media. The clear cut duties and responsibilities of each one of our pillars, namely, the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary, are well marked in the Constitution and other laws.

There is a *Lakshman rekha*. As many of my predecessors said, there is definitely a *rekha* which cannot be easily crossed unless somebody feels that he can do it. Without honouring the sentiment of the other section, if somebody crossed, it has to be checked. In this system, the Legislature, otherwise, the Parliament is supreme just

because this is accountable, of course, for a maximum of every five years. Periodically, we go to the people, upon which this democracy or anywhere in the world's democracy is the form of the Government where the voice of the people is supreme. In that case, in India we go to people periodically and get their affirmation. They vote to us for a maximum of five years or sometimes even earlier also we are going to the people and get their assent. That means, indirectly, the whole nation is representing through the Parliament. So, in that case, the supremacy of the Legislature cannot be questioned in a democratic system just because this is the organ where it is checked periodically, and it reflects the ideas of the people.

Having come to these three particular divisions, our areas of duties and responsibilities are well marked in the articles of the Constitution, and very illustrious speakers have already highlighted the importance of the duties and responsibilities of each wing. I am not going into the details because of paucity of time.

You know very often a decision is taken in Parliament means it is discussed well in the Parliament and it is participated by all the sections of the House. If so required, it will be referred to what is called the Standing Committee or sometimes even to a Joint Parliamentary Committee. They study the subject in depth. They interview the witness. They call the experts and finally come to a conclusion. Then, the Bill is presented here. The Bill is discussed. With majority or sometimes unanimously, the House passes the Bill. That means, it withstood the scrutiny of all the shades, colours of all shades. In that way, the Bill is passed.

But in the case of Executive, there may be erosion in their responsibilities. Parliament is there to check their responsibilities. If they erode the line, there is Parliament to check their responsibilities or duties. If the Executive crossed the line, there is Judiciary to check whether they are crossing it or not.

But as of today, I do not think there is any effective mechanism to check the hyper activism of judiciary. That should have been the reason why people are participating so much attentively and contributing their might.

Even the mover of the discussion, hon. Shri Gurudas Dasgupta has gone in full details, step by step, of the issue and he has come out with concrete solutions and suggestions as to how can we overcome these difficulties.

If a person has to get elected to the Parliament, first of all he has to please the Party, then he has to please the people, his voters. My illustrious colleague Shri Kharabela Swain was very much anxious about the 50 per cent limit. In a multi-party democracy, an elected member need not get a simple majority of the electorate, that is 50 per cent; yet he is elected. Without the votes, he cannot walk into the Parliament. He has to meet everyone. If they are pleased they are voting for him and if they are not pleased they are not voting. But, we meet every individual, every citizen of this country before coming to this Parliament. There is always the check and balance. It is not a question of numerical number that we are getting. But we are exposed. We are meeting everybody. We are presenting our case. We are making our promises to them. Then only we are coming here.

Having come here, we are watched. As somebody has said, we are not Gods, we may commit some mistake. Then, immediately, it is questioned. Somebody has taken a little money knowingly or unknowingly for asking the Questions here. This House has taken up their case. We have discussed it threadbare. We have discussed it in details. We have taken action. We have formed a Committee. They have gone into the details. We have taken appropriate action and today none of them is sitting in this House.

My friend Shri Prasanna Acharya was telling that there should be an introspection. We did it. When we realised that some Members were not behaving up to the mark of their membership, we have questioned them. We had our own introspection. We formed a Committee and they are punished. Upon this also, another organization should not have reacted, upon such a collective, well-thought out, well-discussed and well-taken decision. They should not have taken the decision that was taken.

We are questioned. The Executive, the hon. Prime Minister is questioned. The other Members of his Cabinet are questioned. When they selected they are undergoing scrutiny. But what about the judiciary? There is no scheme for questioning them. There were charges, there were allegations that somebody's son is having so many offices, so many connections, so many illegal contacts etc. This was brought about by the Fourth Estate, thanks to the media. It was well brought out. Even this maligned office was functioning from the official bungalow of the judge.

[Dr. P.P. Koya]

I will be failing in my duty if I do not bring out one more thing. Even for the appointment of a peon, appointment of a gazetted officer etc, there is something called police verification. Where is the verification for the appointment of a judge? There are instances where the judges were appointed where they were already having criminal cases pending in some court. There is no system to verify that because there is no need for a police verification. But for a clerical post, for the post of a peon, there is a provision for police verification.

Some time back, there was the unanimous decision, of the Parliament that was commented upon by the judiciary. It is not good. As my illustrious colleague earlier said, there was a will to bring about rectification in all this. Where is the Judicial Commission? It has not come. That is a mistake of this House. There should have been a Commission. Now the judges are appointed by themselves. But not a doctor or an engineer is appointed by their own community. Here the judges are appointed. There are no formalities.

In so many election petitions, the Members are unseated. We accept it gracefully. We go to the higher court or otherwise some of them even go back to the people and get elected and then only come here and establish themselves. Like that, if somebody is not questioned, it is very unfortunate. The Parliament takes the decision and somebody else disposes the decision. This will not go together. This is the pillar of the same house. If one pillar is shaken, the whole house will shake.

Therefore, this is my warning. If the survival of the House of the country is required, then all the three organs should behave properly within their *lakshman rekha* limits. If somebody crossing it, then it is a bad signal. This is my warning to all the existing pillars and to our media colleagues also. I call upon each one of them, especially, the Judiciary not to cross the *lakshman rekha*. Let it be taken as a message for one and all.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY (Nalgonda): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I think that this is a very important discussion, and this was being postponed for quite some time. We were doubtful whether this discussion will at all come up for discussion. However, today we are discussing this important subject.

A discussion on the issue of harmonious relationship between the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary has become a necessity because the relationship in the

recent period has not been that harmonious. There is a clash between the three organs of the State. Of course, it is not necessary to undermine one of the organs to prove that the Legislature is supreme.

I believe that there is a question of ideology and a question of politics involved when we discuss this type of issues. There are some sections in our society, who do not want change; who do not want reforms; and who would like to take shelter behind the rule of law and take shelter behind the courts. This is the reason that they are trying to argue that the Judiciary is supreme, and that the rule of law is more important than the rule of the people.

As we say that the Parliament is supreme and that the Legislature is supreme, it does not mean that this body is supreme. Actually, it is the people who are supreme, and the peoples' will is reflected through the Legislature. This is the reason that we say that the Parliament should be supreme. It is not that wiser people are sitting here than anywhere else. Perhaps, the learned judges of the high Court are more educated or more experienced. But the point is that besides the separation of power, there are separate responsibilities and duties for each organ. The Parliament and the Legislatures are given a responsibility to rule the country, and to take the country towards its destiny. We are responsible to the society; the Executive is responsible to the Parliament and the Legislature; and the Legislature is responsible to the people.

Here lies the most important thing. How are we held responsible? I am saying this because every five years the Legislators will go to the people. Sometimes, even the Parliament may do something wrong, and we will be punished if we do something wrong. I would like to refer here to a very famous Editorial published in the *London Times*. I have not read it myself, but through my friends I have heard about it. There was a discussion in Great Britain also about the question of supremacy of the Judiciary and the Legislature. In this Editorial, it seems, it has been referred whether the British Parliament has got the right to take a decision whether all the blue-eyed boys can be drowned in the river Thames. The Editorial say: "Yes, and if they are proved to be wrong, then these Parliamentarians will be thrown into the river Thames when they go in for elections."

What is the responsibility and accountability of the other organ? I do not undermine the judiciary, its rights

and capacities. The founding fathers of our Constitution, apart from providing for separation of powers, have very carefully drawn checks and counterchecks in the Constitution. Every legislation made by our Parliament can go through the scrutiny of the court. They have this right of judicial review. But when it comes to the question of people's will, this Parliament will have the right to amend the Constitution if necessary, which has been done several times.

I would like to refer to one or two very important aspects. If this Parliament was not allowed to carry on the basic reforms, which has brought revolutionary changes in our society, we would have been still in the 19th century. Concentration of land in the hands of a few in the country was to be broken for which the land reforms were necessary. In the name of the rule of law, in the name of defending the fundamental rights of people, the court said that possession of land was a fundamental right, it cannot be taken away without paying compensation. We can imagine what would have happened in the country if there were no land reforms! If huge amounts of money had to be paid to landowners in the name of compensation, would the land reforms have been successful? Of course, land reforms have not been completely successful and the land has not yet gone to the tiller. But the concentration of land in a few hands is broken.

Likewise, when the Parliament made some legislations on the question of reservation, the harmonious relations between the legislature and the judiciary entered dire straits. The judiciary in the name of merit wanted to halt it. It is, of course, so in this type of issues. Naturally there was a lot of discontent and dissatisfaction among various sections of the people. Let us see how the judgment will come in this type of issues now. I would like to refer to the issues like bank nationalisation, nationalisation of several other resources, the abolition of privy purses which was the demand of the people. On all these issues there were some people who wanted to say that fundamental rights were being taken away by the Parliament. In *Kesavananda Bharati's case* it was stated that the basic features of Constitution still cannot be touched. Of course, it is very vague. The case itself is not very clear. Though they say there is clarity, there is no clarity about it. The Constitution of this country has been framed by the Constituent Assembly. The rights of that Constituent Assembly later passed on to Parliament. That is the reason why we could go for the amendments to the Constitution whenever necessary.

I do believe that judiciary has got a very big role to play in this country. The countercheck of the judiciary is also very useful for us also at the same time. But they should not cross the *Lakshman Rekha*. If they do that, that will be very dangerous for the country.

I would like to mention that criticism in the name of vote bank politics is a very uncharitable type of comment. However, Parliament is making every legislation only on the basis of politics and only the rule of law can defend this country. This, as I said in the beginning, is a question of ideology. How do you look at the destiny of the nation if you do not want any change in the society, if you do not want any change in the country. Then, in the name of rule of law, all these reforms, all this type of developments and everything can be stopped.

Now, the most important thing is this—there is a criticism that Parliament is not doing its job or the legislature is not satisfactorily working. It is true; we should make a self-criticism and we should discuss these things. Unfortunately, the number of days of working of Parliament is getting reduced; some sorts of problems do come up in the functioning of Parliament reduced; some sorts of problems do come up in the functioning of Parliament; and we are unable to discuss issues.

Around our country, in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, etc., people are fighting for democracy, but here in India, we have democracy, but in this supreme body of democracy, that is Parliament, we are unable to discuss most important issues of the people. That is the reason why, dissatisfaction creeps in.

I do not think this type of weaknesses should make somebody interfere in the will of the people. As our friend was telling earlier, pending cases of 2.5 crore does not mean that the courts are not functioning. That should be set right; the legislature should be set right; and the harmonious relationship should continue. But certainly it should be accepted that Parliament or the legislature is supreme.

[Translation]

SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH (Rajgarh): Sir, I would like to extend my thanks to hon'ble Gurudas Dasgupta and Basu Deb Achariaji. It would have been better had you included Media also along with these three organs as Media cannot be ignored in democracy. The discussion would have been more meaningful had it also been

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included along with Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. However, despite that I would like to extend my thanks.

First of all, I would like to discuss the Executive. Today the biggest problem in Executive is corruption. Corruption keeps on increasing and is posing unfathomable threat. When we discuss corruption people refer to Arthshasatra of Kautilya and say that he has also mentioned that corruption was also prevailing at that time. It is certainly mentioned in Arthshasatra that it is very difficult to know as to how much water has been drunk by a fish. Similarly, it is very difficult to know as to how much money has been taken out from the treasury and where did it go. I do not agree to it. We cannot completely eliminate corruption, however, we can certainly check it. When we refer to Arthshasatra we should know that Kautilya has also written as to how we can put check on corruption. Talking only to encourage corruption and not taking any measures as suggested in Arthshasatra to check corruption, is not justified.

One problem is the centralization of power especially in those political parties which are in power though it is not true about all parties. Corruption increases wherever there is centralization of power. Wherever there is decentralization of power there is less corruption.

Just now our colleague made his submission. He has full right to express his view and I am not criticizing him. He said that we should contribute our one-month salary for Raebareli Institute to be set up through the Petroleum Bill we have passed now. All right, it is his personal opinion and I would not like to say anything in this regard. However, it would have been better had he said that all the Members should give their one month salary to the widows of those martyrs who sacrificed their lives on the border or the widows of those police officers who were killed while fighting terrorists or those poor persons who cannot get education or the sick persons who cannot afford medical treatment.

Someone has said about corruption that

[English]

It is a low risk and high profitability venture.

[Translation]

There is a need to change this attitude; only then, we can have a transparent executive. With your permission

I would like to quote Chief Vigilance Commissioner, Mr. Mittal. He has said that—

[English]

The problems with the executive are following. The first thing is scarcity of goods and services.

[Translation]

There is lack of resources required for running the executive and eliminating corruption. Second thing is red tape and delay. The red tapism and the tendency of executive to delay the work is the biggest hurdle in the functioning of executive that increase corruption. The third thing he says is

[English]

lack of transparency in Government in spite of passing the RTI Bill.

[Translation]

Then he says the delay in departmental inquiries. If any departmental enquiry is initiated, it takes years to be completed, however, nothing comes out of such inquiry.

At the end he says a very remarkable thing that if departmental inquiry is initiated against an IAS officer and the other IAS officer is conducting inquiry, then, he will certainly favour the guilty officer. Similarly, if a custom officer is conducting inquiry against another custom officer he will try to protect him. This system of departmental inquiry in executive is not justified so it needs change. Nearly 12.5 per cent people of the total 100 crore population of our country are the employees or officers either in the Central Government or the State governments or banks and public sector undertakings. It is the responsibility of these 12.5 population to run the executive efficiently and judiciously and do justice with the rest 88 crore people. When they try to establish and assert their authority and maintain distance from the people, then, fingers are raised against executive.

For example, 30-35 years back whenever there was election, Patwari and incharge of police station of area used to make round of the villages and tell villagers to cast their votes in favour of a particular person only. Then, the people were so scared that they cast their votes only after the appeal of the Patwari and Collector. But today situation is not the same because changes

be.
has

have taken place in the country. These changes have taken place due to 'Panchayati Raj' and education which is a commendable thing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, discussion was held here on CBI. Who selects the director of CBI? Who are the members of the committee that selects the director of CBI? The secretary of Home Affairs, Personal Secretary and the Revenue Secretary are members of this committee. They select the Director of CBI and most of the CBI enquiries are conducted against these officials. It is not appropriate. The selection process of CBI director should be transparent and any retired judge or retired military officer should be included in that committee. It is the responsibility and commitment of our executive to attain nine percent growth rate. Now what are the hurdles in the way of attaining nine per cent growth rate? The World Bank, in its recently released business start up report has given the position of India in terms of delay in starting the business in the country. What is the position of India on that scale? We are at 134th position in that report. China stands 71 point ahead of us as very effective measures have been taken by China to check corruption in the country. In the year 2004 i.e. in one-year time 772 cases were filed against corrupt officials and they were punished in China. Punishment was awarded in 25 thousand bribery cases and 500 judges were convicted in one-year time in China. If the executive adopts this type of functioning then very soon we can proceed towards the target, otherwise, it will be very difficult. Rs. 61 thousand crore of the Central Government are outstanding against income tax defaulters who are top tax payers like big industrial houses, corporate houses and rich people. What steps are being taken by the Central Government in this regard? Why this amount is not realized? This amount of Rs. 61 thousand crore is gradually going to reach Rs. 1 lakh crore. We should take strict action in this regard. Falli Nariman Saheb has said:

[English]

We the people and not the representative of the people.

[Translation]

If they use leaders for tax evasion then it is not appropriate and there is a need to bring transparency in it.

[English]

I would like to quote what Shri Aurbindoji said in 1938:

"Dishonest financial practices promise a bad look out when India gets Poorna Swaraj. Mahatma Gandhi is already having bad qualms out Congress corruption."

This is what Shri Aurbindoji told in 1938 and unfortunately, it is coming out true.

[Translation]

This is the position of NGOs. I am not opposing NGOs however, there are NGOs which are infested with corruption. As per one estimate there are 10 to 15 lakh NGOs working in the country. Some of them are good also but in some of them there is rampant corruption. There is a known fact about NGO that as per the rule, the surplus amount with NGOs is not taxable. I am not a financial expert, however, probably big industrial houses run NGOs to save tax. The hon'ble Minister of Finance should look into such matters so that such things do not happen. There are several names for NGOs, for example NPO—not for profit; VO—Voluntary Organization, CSO—Civil Society Organization; and CBO—Community Based Organisation. NGOs should operate however, strict action should be taken against the corrupt NGOs.

Many things have been said about judiciary. Through you, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the report of the Transparency International for the year 2007 in which many objectionable things have been said about us. I would like to congratulate hon'ble Bhardwajji who strongly refuted the claim. Despite that there is a need to make our judiciary more meaningful. As far the appointment of judges are concerned, till 1993, Parliament had some role in the appointment of judges, however, in 1993 one PIL was filed in the Supreme Court and the bench of the Supreme Court gave its judgment. Seven judges of the bench were in favour of the judgment and two judges opposed it. Thereafter, India became the first country in the world where judges are appointed by the judges themselves. Nowhere in the world judges are appointed by the judges themselves. For the appointment of judges in United States, the President refers the names of the prospective judges to the Senate and the Senate appoints judges by approving the name of the judges by a simple majority. In United Kingdom the Queen gives names to the Prime Minister and then the Prime Minister

[Shri Lakshman Singh]

appoints the judges, however, such is not the practice in our country. I would like to submit that the report of the Second Administrative Reforms Committee regarding the National Judicial Council should be implemented immediately because today 2.5 crore cases are pending in our district and tehsil courts and nearly 35 lakh cases are pending in the High Courts. How can these cases be disposed of? If the number of judges and the population of our country is taken into account the ratio is quite surprising. In our country for per 10 lakh of population the number of judges is ten or eleven while in U.S. the number is 107 judges and in U.K. it is 51. So, it is extremely necessary to increase the number of judges. The hon'ble Members have expressed their views about the Legislature. Due to the paucity of time, I will not say anything about legislature. I would like to draw your attention towards the Nyaya Panchayat. Panchayati Raj System was introduced in 1993 by amending the constitution and it was said that the Nyaya Panchayats would be constituted very soon. Today 14 years have elapsed since then but Nyaya Panchayats have not yet been constituted. The report of the Upendra Bakshi Committee is under consideration of the Central Government. This report wants the setting up of Nyaya Panchayat. I want that the Nyaya Panchayats may be set up at the earliest.

Thousands of years back, our tribal people used to resolve their disputes on their own through the Nyaya Panchayat. If we make the provision of such Nyaya Panchayats then 1000 new courts will be set up there will be one arbitrator per 50,000 population.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, with your permission I would like to quote from a book titled 'Encyclopaedia of Primitive Tribes in India'. In that book it has been mentioned as to how our tribals, Scheduled Tribes used to resolve their disputes through the judicial system. There is a 'Colam' tribe seem mainly in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and other States. In that book it has been mentioned:

[English]

"The headman formerly had considerable powers being entrusted with the distribution of land amongst the cultivators and exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction with the assistance of Panchayats".

[Translation]

Why should we not accord legal sanctity to the Tribal Panchayat that has been in existence for thousands of

years and incorporate it in Nyaya Panchayat Bill so as to reduce the present burden on the courts.

With these words, I conclude and extend my thanks to you that you gave me permission to speak on this important subject.

*SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (Palani): Sir, I thank you for the opportunity you have given me to participate in the discussion on the harmonious relations between the three organs of the state Legislature, Judiciary and Executive. Emphasizing the need for the same this resolution has been moved by our esteemed colleagues Shri Gurudas Das Gupta.

Legislature, Judiciary and Executive are the three organs of the state with powers to operate as three separate entities as provided for in the constitution. These three can not impose themselves on one another. There are certain other constitutional bodies like Union Public Service Commission that are there independent of these three organs of the state. Election Commission and Chief Election Commissioner are entrusted with the responsibility of conducting elections in the country.

Our constitution has demarcated the role with defined powers for these three organs of the state. One can not and should not overstep in to other's domain. They can not exchange their role and powers also. It is very clear that the Executive normally never interferes in the functioning of Judiciary. But we have been witnessing the trend of Judiciary interfering in the functioning of both the Executive and even the Legislature. For instance, when the Modern Architect of the country Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru was the Prime Minister of this country, there arose a need to bring about Land Reforms Act. Judiciary came in the way of that legislation. At that time our Prime Minister Nehru said that there can not be a third Chamber of Parliament to discuss on a legislation as we have only a bicameral Parliament to frame laws of the land as per the aspirations of the people.

The interference of Judiciary in the functioning of Legislature is not happening only now at present. The need for our first Constitution Amendment in 1951 came about because of the judiciary's interference in the functioning of the executive. If I may elaborate it, I may have to cite a law suit between the State of Madras and one Mr. Shenbagam Durairaj. It is a reported Judgement

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

in AIR 1951 Supreme Court 226. When the then Government of Madras issued a G.O to provide for reservation in Educational Institutions for students hailing from depressed classes and other socially and educationally backward classes including economically backward sections of the society, a petition was filed before Madras High Court claiming that the reservation was violative of Article 29 (2) of the constitution.

Though the Government of Madras advanced argument reiterating that it was the duty of the Government to provide educational facilities to the backward classes according to Article 46 of the constitution the plea from the Government was turned down by both the High Court and the Supreme Court. Since the G.O. was struck down by the Courts of Law, there arose a need to make the first ever amendment to our constitution. The then Union Law Minister Dr. Ambedkar, moved a Bill for that amendment of the constitution. Judiciary has been giving directions to Executive and Legislature because it has some jurisdiction over their functioning. Under Article 226 (1) failure on the part of the Administration can attract writ of mandamus. Judiciary has that power. In case when the law enacted by the legislature is against the interests and welfare of the people, law courts are empowered to call the foul. But the Judiciary can not interfere in the functioning of the Executive frequently in every matter. Similarly Judiciary can not overstep in to the affairs of legislature almost on a day to-day basis. People have a general feeling that the Judiciary has been interfering in the affairs of Administration and Legislature.

Let me point out to the suit Jagambika Pal Vs Union of India in 1988 and Anil Kumar Sahu Vs Union of India 2002, through which it was painfully felt that Judiciary was overstepping too much in the affairs of the Executive. Recently the Courts of Law raised a moot question whether the Parliament has the power to debar and remove the erring Members of Parliament. As early as in 1951 there was an instance when Shri H.C. Mudgal a Member of Parliament reportedly took money to raise a question on the floor of the House. The Prime Minister of the day Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru himself moved a resolution to strip him of his membership from the House. A committee was set up to inquire in to the conduct of the Member whether he had obtained pecuniary benefits for discharging his duty as a Member of Parliament. Later on a 227 page report was submitted to the House. Based on which, the action was ratified by the House and Shri Mudgal was removed.

In our present Lok Sabha, in the year 2005, eleven Members of Parliament belonging to several parties were to be removed for their misconduct in misusing their privileges. Our Presiding Officer, Hon. Speaker constituted a committee of members of Parliament to go in to the question of their misconduct whether they had taken pecuniary benefits for the normal discharging of their duty as Members of Parliament. On 21.12.2005 a report was received from the committee. On 23.12.2005 those members found guilty were removed. A litigation came up as a suit between Raja Ram Pal Vs the Speaker of Lok Sabha. Judiciary was found to be transgressing in to the jurisdiction of the legislature in taking up this petition and they went to the extent of issuing a notice to the Speaker. The Presiding Officers of all the legislative bodies of the country met and resolved to declare that Judiciary has no power to intervene in the functioning of Legislature. Our Hon. Speaker Shri Somnath Chatterjee took initiative to uphold the rights and powers of our Legislature. We were able to hold our heads high because we upheld our right to establish the measures ourselves. I would like to place on record my deep appreciation for his action in asserting that Judiciary can not overstep in to the domain of the Legislature. At that time our Hon. Speaker quoted in his observation the opinion of Shri Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer, "Judiciary is not a Super-Executive or a Super-Legislature".

It is only because of Judiciary going beyond its brief on certain occasions which is becoming rampant now, the need for this kind of discussions arise. At the same time we can not belittle the commendable job done by the Judiciary in their allowing certain public interest litigations. So many of our public transport vehicles were withdrawn from our roads and were run on CNG as per the directions of the higher Courts to overcome the problem of pollution in our National capital. We can not ignore. Similarly the judicial pronouncements on ensuring the safety of the pedestrians on the road needs to be remembered and appreciated. But when Judiciary fails to know its limits, we can not but condemn it. There are about two and a half crores of cases that are pending before the Courts of Law. In Supreme Court alone about thirty five thousand suits are pending. For instance, the case filed by a contractor who constructed our India Gate and other official buildings as early as in 1960 has not been taken up as yet. Atleast about ten such cases are pending for long. In Delhi alone, 15 lakh criminal cases are to be disposed off still. Due to Judicial enthusiasm some cases get undue priority. So Judicial officers must concentrate on to their jobs and must not overstep. Then

[Shri S.K. Kharventhan]

alone all the three organs of the state can function effectively and independently.

In our democratic country, all the officers, staff and employees are selected by a body. Legislative Assembly Members and Members of Parliament are elected by the people. But Judges are appointed by Judges themselves. Judicial officers are selected and appointed by themselves. A Judge can get his ward or kith and kin appointed by influencing his fellow Judge. We must change the judicial appointment procedures where there is scope for one Judge getting his son elected in lieu of other Judge getting his ward or daughter or kin selected. The appointment of Judges must be based on reservation system where the depressed classes and other backward classes are also represented. As such the Judiciary is not accountable to anyone. Government employees are answerable to the Government. Executive is accountable to Legislature and Legislators are accountable to the people. But, Judges go scot free even if they commit unfair things. They are left to themselves. This must be checked and regulated. There must be a panel to enquire in to the conduct of Judges against whom charges are levelled. Only when the Union Government initiates suitable action in this regard, we can make our Judiciary a responsive and accountable one. Only then we can save our Judiciary. All the three organs of our state must be accountable to our constitution and through which our people of the country.

Reiterating my view that Judiciary must not overstep and all the three organs of the State namely Legislature, Executive and Judiciary must have harmonious relations, let me conclude my speech.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur): Sir, today we are having discussion on a very serious subject. The Constituent Assembly was constituted under the chairmanship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Keeping in mind the Map of India, many hon'ble Members had constituted the Drafting Committee in this Central Hall under the chairmanship of Dr. Ambedkar to strengthen the parliamentary democracy. The Constitution has separately fixed the responsibility of Lok Sabha i.e. Legislative, Judiciary and Executive defining relations among them. Our country got independence on 15th August, 1947 and we adopted our constitution on 26 January, 1950 and 57 years are going to be completed since then. 60 years have elapsed since our independence. It is a matter of pride that our country has many languages and castes.

Despite that nobody can destroy our Parliamentary democracy. Many people might have tried to defame the country, we also fight each other, however, being citizens of India we also respect each other. The democracy of India is very strong. We have seen that army often take over the Government in Pakistan. General Mushrafji has just now vacated the post of army chief, however, nobody can become President in our country while holding the post of army chief. It is a different thing if somebody joins politics after retirement. The Parliament is supreme. The Parliament has the right to enact laws.

The executive is entrusted with the responsibility to implement the law. If law is not implemented in a proper way the judiciary also has right to get it implemented properly. However, these days it has been observed that the judiciary tries to assert its supremacy over Parliament despite the fact that Parliament enacts laws. Due to this our Parliamentary democracy is in danger. We respect the judiciary, however, it is also the responsibility of judiciary to give judgment according to the laws enacted by us.

Everybody can approach the court and all have right to do so. Many times people do not value educated persons. We all are dependent on each other. The democracy and the country can be strengthened if we respect each other. The Parliamentary democracy of India is best and it is acknowledged all over the world. We are proud of this. When Mahatma Gandhi and Baba Saheb Ambedkar signed Poona Act we got election right. Baba Saheb Ambedkarji had demanded for a separate electorate, however, Gandhiji was of the opinion that if Hindu society is divided then it can harm the social fabric of the Hindu society. So, Gandhiji was on dharna in Poona. In this situation Baba Saheb compromised. This issue is not concerned with it. Despite being born in a Dalit family he was entrusted with the responsibility to write Constitution of India. He was appointed the Chairman of the Drafting Committee on the orders of Mahatma Gandhi. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehruji and Rajendra Prasadji were among other Members of the Constituent Assembly. When Shri Rajendra Prasadji, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehruji, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patelji, Rajaji were assigned the work of drafting the Constitution, Shri Rajendra Prasadji said that the real framer of the Constitution was Baba Saheb Ambedkarji. All of them have contributed to the drafting of the Constitution, but Ambedkarji was more instrumental in drafting the Constitution of India. We feel proud of it. Despite the fact that Baba Sahebji was born in a society which was deprived of education, he rose to become a

Barrister and received education from Columbia University in London. He conveyed the message of communal harmony and tried to do justice with everyone in the Constitution whether it was a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, a Buddhist or a Jain. We are proud that Baba Saheb Ambedkar drafted the Constitution of the country. This is not the topic of the day.

The people belonging to Dalit Community are humiliated many times, but we are proud to say that Valmiki, the author of Ramayana, Vyasa the author of Mahabharata, Baba Saheb Ambedkarji, the framer of the Constitution of the country belonged to our community. All of us share the responsibility to strengthen parliamentary democracy. All of us are here because of Baba Saheb Ambedkarji. You are holding the office of the Deputy Speaker, because of him. We are making progress. In a press conference, a journalist asked me, why Brahmin girls marry us, I replied that Brahmin girls like us....(*Interruptions*) I mean to say that we are proud of the fact that Baba Saheb Ambedkarji drafted the Constitution of the country. Democracy will be strengthened in the country if only we maintain cordial relations with each other. All of us shall have to work unitedly in this direction. This is a very important issue. We shall work in the direction of making our country prosperous by maintaining cordial relationships with one another.

[*English*]

SHRI ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN (Baramulla): At the outset of my brief submission about this subject, I would like to place on record my thanks to the Mover of this Resolution and thanks to the hon. Speaker who has permitted the discussion. In this august House today, about this important subject, there were many thought-provoking speeches and some of the very important points have been highlighted by hon. Members who spoke before me. Mr. Mohan Singh has spoken about the subject. I associate fully myself with his speech, his suggestions and the concerns he has shown about the disharmony of the three organs of democracy. Shri Kishore Chandra Deo has also spoken very well and drawn certain very important issues before this House and his concern about the despotic activity of Judiciary, judicial despotism as he has mentioned here. That is very unfortunate because the equilibrium in the three important branches of the State—Judiciary, Executive and Legislature—in my opinion, they are not parallel. Parallels cannot meet anywhere. Our Parliament is not supreme. Our Parliament is subject to judicial review in certain matters.

The Judiciary can look into the law we make whether it is strictly according to the Constitution or not. We can make it again and we can improve upon it. Judiciary also is not supreme. Judiciary has also certain limitations and the Executive also cannot be supreme. So, in my opinion, this is a triangle. This is an equilateral triangle which meets to do a bigger function and performance of running the State. If one of the sides of the triangle shortens or does not perform the function, then another side plays a bigger role and that puts some sort of disharmony or sort of inequilibrium. So, one of the leading jurists has mentioned about this and I quote, "Separation of powers are poised on the liquid boundaries. When the balance is rocked, controversies arise and efforts are made by the polity as a whole to put the balance right." My concern is that the three pillars are equal and they have to keep their lengths and their angles equal. If they change, the equilibrium goes wrong. So, the question is in case something happens, as we have seen recently referring to, then the balance is disturbing. Luckily, we had Shri Somnath Chatterjee as our Speaker, when something happened between the courts and Parliament he put his foot down and he did not allow the boat to rock. Otherwise, it could have been a bigger controversy, but there are possibilities that sometimes, in case all the three branches are not functioning in harmony, disharmony can lead to a problem. I must remind this august House about our neighbouring country. What an unfortunate thing has happened about the Judiciary and the Executive in Pakistan and that has put the whole country in a problem. We are lucky enough to have democracy and we are lucky enough to have it stabilized, but the question is whether all the three branches perform their functions properly. Sir, the Executive is a very important branch. It is the front pillar of democratic system.

18.49 hrs.

[SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN *in the Chair*]

If Executive does not perform, who will take care. What has happened recently, as some of our colleagues have just now mentioned, that in case of Delhi where there was a lot of pollution, the Executive did not take appropriate action in time? Judiciary had to step in and everybody appreciated it. Once they (the court) got encouragement in this case, it meant that Executive is not performing its function properly. Procrastination, unfortunately, has shortened its performance, shortened its height. So, Judiciary has stepped in. If Judiciary steps in and you encourage it that way, then, unfortunately,

[Shri Abdul Rashid Shaheen]

equilibrium can tilt. The equilibrium should not tilt. My respected colleague Shri Suresh Prabhu talked about another aspect and he probably wants a total transformation of the system. It is my feeling that we are not at a level where we can totally transform the system because we are not America and we should not be America. We cannot go for Presidential form of Government and we cannot make the pillars parallel. So, the system which has been given to us by the founding fathers of our Constitution is good, we have to take care of this and keep the balance intact.

During this debate in this august House, the important question which has cropped up is that if one of the pillars does not perform its job according to the requirement so that the equilibrium remains intact, who can look after that and what can we do? In our democratic system, over a period of time, another pillar has steadily cropped up, as one of my colleagues has mentioned here and that is the media. The media is also an important pillar. The media has to oversee the functions of all the three pillars of this democratic system and they have to perform their job properly because transparency is very important. Now, transparency is there in the case of Parliament and transparency is also there in the case of Executive, but transparency is not available in the case of Judiciary. So, we have to very respectfully, without rocking the boat, without rocking the balance, we must think, the Parliament must think, and outside the Parliament also we must keep this debate alive till we come to a decision as to how we can set it right. How can the Judiciary also be made answerable so that we do not have any threat of the balance going wrong? We have to find an answer to this question.

Sir, we have taken up this very important discussion today in this august House and some points have cropped up with regard to what the Executive has to do. The Executive, being the front pillar, has to do its job very carefully and they have to deliver. In case they do not deliver, what will happen? That will be an accident and that accident should not happen.

We have got democracy in this country out of the sacrifices of the people. There are certain aberrations. Shri Suresh Prabhu mentioned here that we are now at a stage where we can just send a Post Card to the Supreme Court about our case and it will be taken care of. I would like to say to my hon. colleague that 2.5 crore cases are pending in different courts of our country. If a petitioner among them sends a Post Card to

a Supreme Court Judge or any other Judge, what will the Judge answer to him? If somebody is languishing in jail for more than 14 years or 16 years without any trial or the trial is dragging on, if he sends a Post Card to a Judge of the Supreme Court or any other Judge, what answer will the Judge give to him?

We have a lot of problems, but we should not think that we can have crash with the system. We have to maintain the equilibrium. For maintaining the equilibrium, all of us have to think as to how we can set it right. If we can give some valuable suggestions to set it right, it will be better. One good suggestion which has come up here in this discussion is that a Judicial Service Commission must be constituted immediately. In case the Judiciary goes wrong somewhere, what is the forum where we can talk about it? In the Parliament also, we are highly careful. We do not talk about *sub judice* matters and we do not talk about judges, if they do something wrong.

So, we have to find out a solution for this because the judges cannot be supreme, as Parliament cannot be supreme and Executive cannot be supreme. Let all the three pillars keep the balance and let all of us think as to how we can solve this problem.

DR. SEBASTIAN PAUL (Ernakulam): Mr. Chairman, Sir, we are discussing a very important matter touching upon the constitutional scheme of our Republic. The three branches of the State are functioning under the well known principle propounded by Montesquieu which is separation of powers and that is one of the basic structures of our Constitution also. That means the three branches of the Government should function independently, within the parameters and limitations prescribed by the Constitution. In that way, a very beautiful, sophisticated and delicate constitutional principle has been evolved, that is checks and balance. By checking each other, you are maintaining a balance and with that balance our Republic is moving ahead.

But, of late, especially after Emergency, we witnessed a new phenomenon, that is, judicial activism, first in the form of Public Interest Litigation and then judicial activism found many new pastures. Now, we feel that our Judiciary is heading towards judicial despotism and that has to be checked. Naturally, some occasion may arise where some over-stepping may happen, but we have to be careful, we have to be responsible and we have to learn from our experience. There is certainly—it is natural also—a

grey area in between these three branches and I think that grey area is intentional. That grey area provides the much needed leeway for constitutional manoeuvring avoiding friction, avoiding acrimony and ensuring harmony.

An important feature about Judiciary, which disturbs us of late, is its changing attitude. The philosophy of the judges has changed. Especially in this age of globalisation and liberalisation, the attitude of our judges has changed. The attitude of the Judiciary itself has undergone a great transformation and we feel or the general public feels that the Judiciary is lacking in public accountability as well as commitment to the people, commitment to the society.

What is the root cause of this trouble? The constitutional scheme provides a role for the Executive to play in the selection and appointment of judges. But the Judiciary has *suo motu* changed that rule or misinterpreted that in a way enabling the Judiciary to make appointments. Now, the judges are making appointments of judges. As has been pointed out by my colleagues, even in the United States the appointment of judges is subject to the scrutiny of the American Congress. So, we have to do something. We have to restore the constitutionally prescribed role of the Executive in the selection of judges. At the same time, corruption, inefficiency, backlog and all those things are disturbing us. So, we have to make our judges accountable.

Our theme is harmonious relationship among the three branches of the Government. But here we are concerned only with the Judiciary. What about the other organs? Is there any harmonious relationship between the Executive and Legislature? What is the importance of Parliament? We are all saying that Parliament is supreme, but day by day the credibility and role of Parliament is being eroded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you wish, you can continue tomorrow.

DR. SEBASTIAN PAUL: If permitted, I will continue tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House shall now take up Special Mentions. Shri Lonappan Nambadan.

19.00 hrs.

[Translation]

*SHRI LONAPPAN NAMBADAN (Mukundapuram): Sir, it has come to my knowledge that there is a move to serve beer and wine to passengers in Indian domestic flights.

I request that the move should be immediately stopped. The Air-hostesses working for different airlines in India, should follow the dress code that suits our cultural values, and the trend of making Indian women show pieces should end.

The air services in India, should follow the three language policy ensured in our constitution. Flights that perform services to different states, should have a few cabin crew members who know the concerned regional language.

Since, there are a number of air passengers, who know only the regional languages, there should be Air-hostesses who know the concerned regional language.

Following the three language policy ensured in the constitution other than English and Hindi the announcements should be made in the regional language of the state from which the air service operates.

There should be a provision to make available, major dailies and journals of the concerned state from which the flight takes off.

South Indian food should be made available in domestic flights.

[English]

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (Palani): Mr. Chairman, Sir, as the hon. Speaker informed earlier today, 3rd December is observed as 'International Day for Disabled Persons'. As per 2001 Census, India's population of disabled persons stood at 2,19,06,769. Among them, males are 1,26,05,635 and females are 93,01,134, which account for nearly 6 per cent as per the conservative estimates. Further, a recent report quotes that India's population of disabled persons is 8 per cent.

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Malayalam.

Sir, 75 per cent of the persons with disabilities live in rural areas; 49 per cent are illiterate and only 34 per cent are employed; and among them very few are only gainfully employed. Our Government is taking all steps to create an enabling environment for the disabled persons for their rehabilitation and empowerment through the adoption of National Policy for Disabled Persons. However, that is not seemed to be sufficient. Lots of disabled persons are poor. They are not getting adequate opportunities in education and employment. The private and corporate sectors are not willing to come forward to give them more employment. Moreover, the employment opportunities for disabled in the Government Departments are very meager and insufficient.

I shall, therefore, urge upon the Government to take further necessary steps for the upliftment of disabled persons and adequate funds should be allocated for their welfare, and opportunities should be created for them in all spheres. Further, the Government of India has to direct the State Governments and local authorities to strictly implement the Guidelines, to promote and sponsor research in the areas of prevention of disability, rehabilitation including community-based rehabilitation, job identification and on-site modifications in offices and factories and development of assistive devices including their psycho-social aspects.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can put it in a few words, without reading it, and wasting time.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (Midnapore): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government, particularly the Railway Ministry, to the miserable plight of the tens of thousands of small Railway Catering licensees.

It was the assurance given by the Railway Ministry that small catering/vending unit, trolleys, stalls, all these, operated by reserved category would continue and they will not be affected by the new catering policy. But the orders have been issued by IRCTC to recover licence fee from such small categories at the rate of highest tender/bid at the stations all over the country.

So, the point is this. How the small contractors and vendors belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, minority groups, freedom fighters and war widows can compete with the big contractors? How can they pay this huge license fee? I think, the Ministry will have to think over it and review its Catering Policy.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government to have a re-look on the New Catering Policy of 2005 and implement it on the line of the entire policy of 2000, to save the thousands of families of these small vendors. So, I bring this issue to the notice before the Ministry.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUMAN MAHATO (Jamshedpur): Sir, 'Swarna Rekha' Multipurpose Project was started in Jharkhand many years ago. Land has also been acquired from the cultivators. Huge funds have been spent on this scheme. I would like to urge through the House that this scheme should be completed at the earliest in the public interest, so that farmers over there get irrigation benefits.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have to inform you with great dismay that 15 villagers were travelling in a boat in village Tarsaura, Tahseel Sirathes of district Kaushambi, UP in my parliamentary constituency on 28th November. The boat drowned. Eight people were rescued, but seven women could not be saved. The bodies of Sheetla, daughter of Shri Mithai Lal, age 15 years, Kolahari, daughter of Shri Jagjeevan, age 15 years of village Terhar (Hisampur) Parsakhi and Reeta, Daughter of Shri Shiv Prasad Yadav, age 20 years, Shrimati Suggan Devi, wife of Shri Braj Mohan, age 35 years, Sonu Devi, Daughter of Shri Braj Mohan, age 15 years and Shrimati Shivrani Devi, daughter of Shri Ram Das, age 20 years of village Tarsaura have not been recovered so far.

Sir, the District Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police and the CO reached the site of accident. Villagers were saying that, when a young child, Prince fell into a borewell in Kurukshetra, Haryana, the army was called to rescue him, but the inefficient local administration made no efforts. Had the Administration made any efforts, their bodies could have been recovered by now. The local MLA ventured out by a Government boat on a pleasure trip and for fishing. Another local influential leader hosted a party over there. Through you, I would like to bring to the notice of the House that approximately 50 deaths have taken place there due to drowning during the last six months in my constituency. Through you, I would also like to draw the attention of the House towards the fact that a boy named, Jai Shankar, son of Shri Ram Man Yadav, who is a student of class VIII, swam to safety himself and also rescued four others persons with the help of an oar. I would like to demand that the Government grant a compensation of Rs. 10 lakh each

to the next of kin of the deceased from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund and honour the boy, Jai Shankar, son of Shri Ram Man Yadav, who is a student of class VIII with the President's Award.

SHRI SURESH WAGHMARE (Wardha): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the consumers are facing great inconvenience due to the shortage of LPG in various parts of the country. Due to non-availability of gas cylinders and connections and short supply of gas, the LPG distribution companies are supplying gas on prices higher than the original price to the consumers. I think that this kind of situation was not prevailing in the country four years ago. The consumers were not required to stand in queue for gas then. But now consumers are being compelled to purchase other inferior quality goods along with a refill connection. In my constituency, it has been observed that packets of tea are being sold with a refill connection. This kind of practice is going on in the country.

Through you, I would like to inform the Government that four years ago, gas connections were given on demand during the NDA regime, and people were not required to stand in queue. Therefore, a plan should be formulated to improve the situation and efforts made to streamline the system in real terms for the consumers. Moreover, steps should be taken to check the practice of forced sale of goods to the consumers.

[English]

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (Idukki): Sir, in Kerala, the price of rice and onion has been rising very rapidly of late. This is mainly due to the non-arrival of these products from the neighbouring States. Kerala basically depends on the neighbouring States for its food grains. This has been mainly due to the heavy rains and also due to shortage of wagons to transport these products.

In the case of rice, the main food item for Keralites, the rise in the price of per kilogram of rice has been Rs. 2. This has put the ordinary consumers into great difficulty. So, Kerala basically gets rice from Andhra Pradesh for its open market and for the PDS, it gets rice from Chhattisgarh. The State needs about 90,000 tonnes of rice every month, out of which 40,000 is for the open market consumers.

I would request the Central Government to very urgently intervene in this and supply the food grains that are needed for Kerala because from Panditji's time

onwards there has been a commitment to give enough food grains for Kerala because Kerala basically cultivates cash crops. So, in this hour of distress, the Central Government should urgently intervene and supply enough food grains, especially, rice to Kerala so that the ordinary consumers are not put to difficulties.

SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHALE (Bilaspur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, today on World Disability Day a population of about 10 lakh lepers, disabled, blind, maimed, crippled, deaf, mute and other physically and mentally challenged people of the whole country are deprived of any additional facilities due to which they are in a state of utter neglect and are compelled to lead a miserable life on the roadside pavements. Somewhere they are hungry, somewhere they are thirsty and somewhere they are suffering from various diseases with blood oozing out of their arms and legs. However, no facility is available to them, and they are not being given even tricycles to travel.

Those who are blind are in need of spectacles. The handicapped people need prosthetic limbs made in Jaipur. The deaf do not have the hearing aids; they are unable to speak with mouth. The fund being provided by the Government for facilitating all aids to such people is not adequate.

I would like to make a submission to the Government that while in case of the industries of industrialists turning sick, the Government provide them financial assistance in crores and this amount is never recovered, whereas they are providing a meagre amount for such needy handicapped people. I would like to demand the Government that additional funds may be allocated and a special campaign people. If they are able to do the work, they may also be provided loans. If they suffer from any disease, a district level programme for their treatment should be organized by the Government. Besides, funds, of Rs. 8 lakh provided to the Members of Parliament should be enhanced. With the launch of the aforesaid programme these people could get rid of the diseases to lead a better life and will also be grateful to the Government and make their standard of living better. So, the Government should launch a scheme like this. This is my expectation from the Government.

[English]

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack): Sir, just now I heard Mr. Francis George telling us about the non-availability of food grains, especially rice in Kerala. I would draw the

attention of this House and also of the Government, through you, to another alarming situation that is arising in our country relating to global warming.

Sir, global warming has cast a dark shadow over food availability in the coming years even as the country has begun to feel the increasing pressure of rising demand and stagnating production of food. Eastern India, which is considered key to the country's sustained food security accounting for about 63 per cent of total rice-growing area, is set to be seriously affected as the effects of climate change would be most perceptible on production and Orissa is projected to fare the worst.

By the year 2020 when the average temperature levels are expected to rise by around one degree and the ambient carbon dioxide concentration going up to 400 ppm (parts per million volume), the yield fall is estimated to be over nine percent only in Orissa. In other States like West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Assam and Uttar Pradesh the decline would be between five to one percent.

The scientists at Central Rice Research Institute which is in Cuttack have analysed the situation and have forecasted the magnitude of the problem in the making. Ten sites— Bhubaneswar and Cuttack in Orissa, Kalyani and Chinsurah in West Bengal, Jorhat in Assam, Faizabad in Uttar Pradesh, Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh, Pusa in Bihar and Raipur in Chhattisgarh were included in the analysis. The decline in rice yield has been found to be mainly due to the increase in the temperature. Flowering of rice is greatly affected by prevailing temperature.

Therefore, there is a need for intervention by scientist community who should endeavour to breed rice varieties that would adapt to high temperatures. I urge upon the Government to support such projects and come out with rice varieties with tolerance of at least two degree Celsius above average temperature which can give yield benefits to the farmers.

SHRI CHENGARA SURENDRAN (Adoor): Thank you, Sir. The famous Kottarakara Maha Ganapathy Temple is a century-old temple in my constituency. This temple is considered to be a Sabarimala Pilgrimage Sub-centre. Thousands of pilgrims are coming to the temple on their way to the Sabarimala Temple during Sabarimala pilgrim season which starts from November and goes up to January. Most of the pilgrims coming to Kottarakara from outside the State are the pilgrims from Tamil Nadu. This

is due to the train service between Virudhanagar and Kollam via Kottarakara. But the facilities now available in the Kottarakara railway station are not so adequate. If more facilities are provided in the railway station it can also attract more tourists coming to various tourist destinations such as Jadayupara at Chadayamangalam, Anamala at Konni, eco-tourism centre and Palaruvi at Thenmala etc. in the district.

Therefore, I would submit that the Union Government may take immediate steps to increase the facilities in Kottarakara railway station as in the case of Chengannur railway station in view of the increasing needs of the pilgrims as well as the tourists.

DR. K.S. MANOJ (Alleppey): Sir, I associate myself with the hon. Member on the issue.

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA (Mavelikara): Sir, I also associate myself with the subject.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. C. Krishnan to speak now. Dr. Krishnan, on your issue a statement has already been made by the hon. Minister for the purpose. Your mentioning it is not necessary because he has already placed a statement about the Malaysian issue before the House. You speak just one word about it.

Your issue has already been mentioned by the hon. Minister. You just make a mention only.

DR. C. KRISHNAN (Pollachi): Yes, sir. That is true. I will be brief.

The ethnic Tamilians in Malaysia have been living there for about 150 years. They have been taken by the British people for employment purposes. Their rights have been denied there and they have been exploited by the British people. They marched towards the British High Commission on 25.11.2007 to protest against their grievances. Their grievance was that they were exploited by the former British colonial masters.

They marched towards the British High Commission stating that justice should be given to them. They cannot pay the legal fees. Therefore, they are requesting Her Highness the Queen's Council itself to fight against the British Government to redress their grievances.

I am speaking on behalf of Shri Vaiko. Shri Vaiko has already written a letter to the hon. Prime Minister

regarding this issue. I wish that the Malaysian Tamils are given privileges in education, job and healthcare. ... (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe that MDMK's viewpoint has already come on record.

DR. C. KRISHNAN: They are treated as underprivileged and slaves. In the rally the Government used police force and arrested 200 persons using teargas and water canons. Those persons should be released through the diplomatic channel. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now.

DR. C. KRISHNAN: The Hindu temples have been destroyed.

Sir, I am coming to the last point. I wish and urge upon the Indian Government to take immediate steps—through the diplomatic channel—to protect the ethnic Tamilians living in Malaysia. Thank you very much, Sir.

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards the issue of steep hike in the prices of essential commodities including grains, cereals and even medicines. This has been causing unbearable hardship to the common people. The UPA Government is continuously reducing the food subsidy in each Budget. The Government has hiked the price of petroleum products seven times since it assumed power, and it is contemplating another hike. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri K. Francis George has already raised this issue.

DR. K.S. MANOJ: No, Sir. It was a separate issue.

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA: It was a separate issue.

The Government is also thinking in terms of raising the rate of food grains distributed to the BPL and APL cardholders. There is also a move to stop giving the food grains provided to the workers under the employment schemes.

The Government is indifferent in tackling the price hike, which is evident from the reported statement of the hon. Prime Minister in the media that price hike cannot be contained. In fact, the UPA Government never took

any positive measure to curb price hike. Instead, its policies have only helped the hoarders and forward traders.

The Left Parties and Women's Organisations, particularly, the All India Democratic Women's Association is continuously demanding the Government to take effective measures to curb price rise and save the poor people of this country. Thank you.

DR. K.S. MANOJ: Sir, we demand that there should be a separate discussion on this issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next issue to be raised is by Shri Ramdas Athawale. The issue of farmers has already been discussed. Hence, you can sum-up your submission very briefly.

(Translation)

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur): From 1995 to 2007, at least one and a half lakh farmers have committed suicide in which most of the cases are reported from Maharashtra, particularly from the Vidarbha region of this State. The incidence of suicides is continuing even after a package of Rs. 3,750 crore granted by the Prime Minister. So, my demand is that the loans outstanding against the farmers should be waived. Besides, prices the produce of farmers need to be fixed. Onions is produced in Nasik. If the price of onion is fixed at Rs. 10 per kg., they could get its benefit. If suicide of the farmers is to be checked, their loans must be waived.

We should work for increasing irrigation facility. Vidarbha has got a very fertile land, but the irrigation facility is scarce there. There are farmers who have not much land. There is surplus land of at least 20 crore acres in our country. The Government should take a decision in regard to developing them into agricultural land. I demand the from Union Government that the loans of the farmers should be waived.

(English)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next Member is Shri M. Shivanna. Please be brief, and do not make a speech at this late hour. You may mention only the relevant points.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA (Chamrajanagar): Yes, Sir.

[Translation]

*Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards the effective implementation of the Swaminathan Panel recommendation. Dr. Swaminathan panel has already submitted its report to the Government. It has recommended to fix the prices of agricultural products on a scientific basis. Cost of production for each crop must be taken into account while fixing the prices. The Swaminathan Committee has recommended scientific price of different crops, including wheat, paddy, sugarcane and hybrid maize. It is unfortunate that the farmers who are the backbone of our Indian economy are committing suicide. To prevent this menace the Government should take steps to effectively implement the recommendations of the Swaminathan Committee report. Therefore, I urge upon the Hon. Agriculture Minister to take immediate steps in this regard.

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD (Yavatmal): Mr. Chairman, through you, I would like to put up a very serious issue before the House. In this very House, there was a discussion on the report of the Nanavati Commission two years back. At that time, the hon. Prime Minister, intervening in the discussion, had said very seriously that he would take action against those who are guilty and rehabilitate the affected families and provide jobs to their wards. However, I regret to say that during these two years the Government have not provided job even to a single person. The Nanavati Commission had(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: This issue has been discussed several times in the House.

[Translation]

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD (Yavatmal): You may please, at least, allow me to speak about the assurance, whatsoever, given by the Government during discussion two years back. Two years have passed since the assurance was given. I will not take here the names of those who had provoked the riot. But, there were also some leaders who gave interviews on the first of December during the 9.30. National News which also contributed to trigger the riots. You may see the national news telecast at nine thirty on the first of December and will find those people. ... (Interruptions)

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI HARIBHAU RATHOD: Now some people are giving clean chit to them. I would say that it is wrong to give clean chit to those leaders. At the same time, those who have been the eyewitnesses of this incident are now keeping themselves out of the country due to lack of security and are giving interviews on T.V. ... (Interruptions) This fact should not be concealed. I would like to know from the Government whether they would bring them back by providing them security and interrogate them.

Sir, hon'ble Prime Minister had given assurance to rehabilitate and provide jobs to them, but this has not been fulfilled till date. I am saying this time and again because out of the 3000 people who had been killed, stabbed to death and burnt alive, 2200 people were my own. That is why I am raising this issue very frequently. Thus, there is a saying in Mahod Marathi "Jyanchya Jalta Tyanacha Kalta" meaning those who get burnt feel pain. I feel the pain because my people have been killed. That is why I am raising this thing again and again.

Sir, through you, I demand that action should be taken against those who had been involved in this incident. 23 years have passed since this incident took place. The children of those who were killed are now grown up. They are now of marriageable age, but due to lack of jobs they are not even in a position to get married. Through you, I demand the Government that jobs may be provided to the wards of the affected families, they may be rehabilitated and the guilty be punished.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House now stands adjourned till 11.00 a.m. tomorrow.

19.30 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, December 4, 2007/Agrahayana 13, 1929 (Saka)

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