

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- (1) Recommend a strategy for the extensive use of Information Technology in all areas of the national economy—agriculture, industry, trade, and services—as a critical input in making India a global economic power.
- (2) Prepare the design for building a world-class physical, institutional, and regulatory IT infrastructure, which is appropriate for India. This design will embrace the growing convergence of telecommunications, computers, consumer electronics, and the media infrastructure (minus its content).
- (3) Towards this end, determine the means for creating a National Informatics Infrastructure (NII) backbone, bridging it to the Local Informatics Infrastructure (LII) and the Global Informatics Infrastructure (GII). The design of the NII will be dynamic, taking into account the rapidly changing nature of Information Technology.
- (4) Recommend how NII can be created at an optimal cost by using the existing resources of the various wings of Government such as the Department of Telecommunications, Prasar Bharati, Railways, Power Grid Corporation of India, etc.
- (5) Suggest measures for achieving a massive expansion in the use of the Internet by all sections of society, especially in business and education, and development of Indian content on the Internet.
- (6) Recommend a strategy for boosting the learning and use of Information Technology in Indian languages. The Policy will suggest measures to promote the development of software, especially educational and commercial software, in Indian languages.
- (7) Develop a strategy for a twenty-fold increase in India's software and other IT service exports in the next ten years. In particular, the Policy will focus on the development of world-class software products and brands that can quickly establish global dominance.
- (8) Suggest measures to catalyze the growth of exports through the extensive use of E-commerce and EDI (electronic data interchange).
- (9) Suggest ways in which the use of IT can be maximized in the Government at all levels, so as to make its functioning people-friendly, transparent, and accountable.
- (10) Develop a strategy for dramatically increasing the PC density in the country and, to that end, ensure that every household and commercial establishment that has a telephone also has a computer. The strategy will aim to facilitate the availability of computer hardware, software, and connectivity at the lowest possible cost.
- (11) Devise a strategy for establishing a strong and internationally competitive domestic manufacturing base for computers, computer components, and peripherals.
- (12) Design a training and manpower development plan involving government agencies, private businesses, voluntary organizations, educational institutions and others to quadruple the number of IT professionals in the country in the next two years. The Task Force will suggest a plan to implement the commitment made in the National Agenda for Governance to ensure universal computer literacy in all secondary schools in the country. The plan will also aim at making available IT education to all those sections of the economy where it serves as a productivity multiplier.
- (13) Develop a strategic plan to raise the necessary financial resources to realize the objectives of the National Informatics Policy. This plan will rely on innovative means of funding that minimize government outlay.
- (14) Suggest an appropriate legal framework for the creation of an IT-based society, with due focus on intellectual property rights (IPR), secrecy, security, and safety of information.
- (15) Recommend how India can leverage its global competitiveness in InfoTech to play a prominent role in the development of IT in other countries, especially those that are underdeveloped.

Pakistan's Nuclear Plan

2241. SHRI RAMAKRISHNA BABA PATIL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Pak Nuclear-Plan terrorism linked US study" appearing in the 'Pioneer India', 27 May, 1998.

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

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE):

(a) Yes, Sir. Government have seen the news report regarding the annual US Congress Task Force report on terrorism and unconventional warfare.

(b) We are aware of consistent outside support to Pakistan in this field despite the existence of multilateral export control regimes, unilateral declarations of restraint and supply restrictions in producer countries.

(c) Pakistan's clandestine nuclear weapons programme and its linkage with terrorism has been highlighted and our security concerns emanating from such covert activities have been conveyed bilaterally to several countries and raised in various fora. Government remains fully committed to taking all necessary steps to effectively safeguard India's security and national interests.

Agriculture Credit

2242. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Governments have urged the Union Government to create a Central Fund to enable the States to increase the quantum of agricultural credit and contain the rate of interest at reasonable level;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government have accepted the proposal;

(c) if not, the time by which the Government are likely to take decision on the said proposal;

(d) whether the lack of funds in the States affected the welfare measures of the agriculture sector; and

(e) if so, the remedial measures Government propose to take?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) No request has been received from the State Governments for creation of Central Fund for increasing the quantum of agricultural credit and containing the rate of interest at reasonable level.

(b) to (e) Does not arise.

Production of Fish

2243. SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have identified the States where fish production has declined during Eighth Plan;

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

(c) the steps taken to increase the fish production during the Ninth Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) There has been no decline in fish production in any state during the Eighth Plan period. However, minor fluctuations in fish production

have been observed in the states of Goa, Himachal Pradesh and Mizoram during Plan Period.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) Steps have been taken by the Government of India to increase production of fish and other marine products as well as the productivity of fishermen and fishing industry. These steps inter alia include expansion of aquaculture in fresh and brackish waters, development of coastal marine fisheries, construction of requisite infrastructure such as fishery harbours and fish landing centres and development of human resources. A number of central sector and centrally sponsored schemes are being implemented for the development of fisheries and aquaculture in the States/Union Territories.

Digging of Wells

2244. SHRI A. VENKATESH NAIK :
SHRI SADASHIVRAO DADODA MANDALIK :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether digging of wells has been undertaken by the Central Ground Water Board during 1997-98;

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

(c) whether some locations have been selected for drilling of bore holes in Karnataka during 1998-99;

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

(e) the criterion laid down by the Central Ground Water Board to select the location for drilling bore holes; and

(f) the time by which the bore holes work is likely to be started in the States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Details of wells drilled by the Central Ground Water Board during 1997-98 are given in the Statement-I.

(c) and (d) The Central Ground Water Board has fixed a tentative target of drilling 978 wells in various parts of the country, including 103 wells in the State of Karnataka, during 1998-99 as per details given in Statement-II. Actual locations of wells depend on the requests of the State Government, results of the studies of remote sensing, geophysical survey and hydrogeological mapping.

(e) The criteria for selection of locations for drilling boreholes by the Central Ground Water Board include the need for ascertaining the availability, quality and quantity of ground water, requests of the State