

[English]

Abolition of Import Duty

1301. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have considered the proposal to abolish import duty on the equipment for Mega power projects in the country;

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

(c) the extent to which this decision will help in creating additional generation capacity of power; and

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

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) and (b) Government has recently recast its policy on the development of mega power projects both in the Public as well as Private Sector, which would cater to the power needs of more than one state. One of the policy decisions taken is that the import of capital equipment for these projects would be free of customs duty. This would bring down the tariff for sale of power by such mega projects and provide much needed relief to State Electricity Boards.

(c) It is visualised that through the revised mega power policy, a capacity of 15000 to 20000 MW would be added.

(d) As indicated above, the decision to exempt the mega projects from customs duty for import of capital equipment has already been taken.

Privatisation of National Highways in Goa

1302. SHRI RAVI SITARAM NAIK : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether certain works/facilities relating to National Highways in Goa are being privatised;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which this process is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government of Goa has proposed the construction of second Zuari bridge on NH-17 on Build, Operate and Transfer (B.O.T.) basis. The proposal is to construct a two lane prestressed

concrete bridge of about 895m length and approach roads of about 980m length for both sides.

(c) The proposal, recently received from Goa Government, is at an initial stage of scrutiny. As such, it is too early to indicate the time frame for completion of the process.

Amendment to Representation of Peoples Act

1303. SHRI AJAY KUMAR S. SARNAIK : Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Election Commission has advised the Government to amend the Representation of the Peoples Act to curb excess expenditure by the candidates during elections; and

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

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Pursuant to a decision taken in the meeting of political Parties held on 22nd May, 1998, the proposals made in this regard have been referred to a High Powered Committee headed by Shri Indrajit Gupta, Member of Parliament.

Power Production in Private Sector

1304. SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) the total demand and availability of power during 1996-97 and 1997-98 in the country and till-date, State-wise;

(b) whether there was a shortfall of more than 20 per cent in demand during the same period which is likely to go up in the coming years;

(c) if so, whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government for power production in the private sector to overcome this shortage;

(d) if so, whether any decision has been taken in this regard; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) The State-wise power supply position (energy) during the years 1996-97, 1997-98 and April-Oct., 1998 are given in the statement I & II.

(b) The shortfall in energy and peak demand in the country as a whole has been less than 20% during 1996-97, 1997-98 and April-October, 1998.