

Now, the increasing trend in bufferstock is largely due to lower offtake from the public distribution system. Again, it is substantiated by facts and figures. The intake from the PDS in 1991-92 was only 99.45 lakh tonnes. In 1993-94, it was reduced to 88.84 lakh tonnes. So, the godowns of the FCI is full but the stomachs of the people are empty. Why is it? It is because the people have no purchasing power. It is because of the fact that the price of the PDS and the actual market price are almost equal. So, in India, we have crores of people who cannot buy but who have the desire to consume.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have taken ten minutes.

PROF. SUSANTA CHAKRABORTY : It cannot be, Sir. But I will try to conclude.

As regards rate of inflation, many hon. Members have dilated upon it. So, I need not go into the details. Regarding the claim by the Government that the inflation rate is going down, I would like to say that the annual WPI average rose by 10.7 per cent in the post-reform years as against 7.2 per cent in the comparable period before the reform was launched. Who is responsible again? Is it not the new economic policy? During the same period, the price of food articles moved up by 10.6 per cent as against 7.3 per cent and price of primary commodities by 10.7 per cent as compared to 6.6 per cent. It may be noted that after the decline to 8 per cent in 1995-96, overall inflation rate still remains higher than 7.2 per cent which was the rate in the post-reform years. So, I challenge the claim of the Finance Minister that the rate of inflation is going down. The figures are in this fashion. I do not want to go into the details of the consumer price index and I do not like to express the feelings of the people who go to the market. I do not know whether the Ministers go to the market to purchase things for themselves. Do they know the prices of vegetables, pulses, etc.? But statistics indicate that the availability and the per capita consumption of edible oil in our country has decreased during the same period when Dr. Manmohan Singh took over charge as the Finance Minister of the country.

Employment growth as envisaged in the Eighth Plan has failed. The Mid-Term Appraisal has already accepted it. They failed to reach the target. In 1991-92, there was shortage of 5 million jobs and in 1992-93, the shortage was 2 million and in 1993-94, it was 3 million. I am quoting from the Planning Commission document. So, the target of the Eighth Plan has lagged behind by more than 10 million only during these three years. For the rest of the two years, how does the Government like to generate employment as envisaged in the Eighth Plan? I would like to have an answer from the Government.

Having looked at the comparative figures of the trade deficit during the three years in 1993-94, the

gap was only 250 million dollars. In 1994-95, it was 798 million dollars and in 1995-96, it is 1976 dollars. Is this the improvement that is envisaged? The imports have increased in 1995-96 from April to August. During these five months, imports increased by 37 per cent.

17.00 hrs.

(Mr. Speaker *in the Chair*)

Exports increased only by 27 per cent. The fiscal deficit which was Rs. 36,325 crore is estimated to have increased by Rs. 68,484 crore. So far as the foreign debt is concerned, in March, 1991 it was 83.8 billion dollars; today it is about 95.3 billion dollars. Our internal loan is again nearly Rs. 4,80,000 crore. Our indebtedness and repayment liability for the year 1995-96 is 12.3 billion dollars. So, the foreign exchange reserve is 20 billion dollars which because of the depreciation has gone down by extra two billion dollars. Now, we have to repay 12.3 billion dollars in this year itself. So, I would like to ask the Finance Minister as to what remains after this as foreign exchange, of which he boasts of.

Sir, I would need ten minutes more to complete my submissions. Should I continue now or should I continue later on?

MR. SPEAKER : You can continue afterwards.

Now, there are two statements to be made; one, by the hon. Prime Minister and one by the hon. Minister of Communication. It is better to hear the Prime Minister first.

17.02 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Launch of INSAT - 2C Satellite.

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO) : Sir, I am happy to inform this august House that INSAT-2C, designed and built by the Indian Space Research Organisation has been successfully launched this morning. The Ariane launch vehicle carrying INSAT-2C lifted off from Kourou in French Guyana at 04.53 hours IST and placed it in a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit with a perigee of 200 km and an apogee of 35,976 km. The satellite is now orbiting the earth every 10½ hours.

The INSAT Master Control Facility at Hassan in Karnataka required the telemetry signals from INSAT-2C about Two minutes after its injection into orbit and has confirmed that the health of the satellite is normal. Several manoeuvres are to be carried out before the satellite is made operational. The orbit of

INSAT-2C will be raised to its final geosynchronous orbit of 36,000 km. above the earth in the equatorial plane by firing the liquid apogee motor carried on board the satellite. The deployment of two solar arrays and two antennas will be carried out after the satellite attains near geosynchronous orbit. Subsequently, all the payloads on board will be checked out. The orbit raising, deployment and appendages and initial testing of all the payloads are expected to take about three weeks.

All these operations will be carried out from the INSAT Master Control Facility and I am sure this House will join me in wishing the ISRC Scientists and Engineers complete success in their mission to put INSAT-2C in the service of the Nation.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI (Ghandi Nagar) : Sir, I join the Prime Minister in congratulating and complimenting the scientists and technicians who have achieved this and who have made the country feel proud.

[Translation]

SHRI SHARAD YADAV (Madhepura) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would also like to associate myself with the hon. Prime Minister in congratulating the scientists, technicians and staff for this glorious achievement.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very happy to be able to associate myself and my Party with what has been said by our Prime Minister and other hon. Members here.

I wish to congratulate heartily our technicians and our scientists and everybody who has been connected with this project - the successful completion of this, in whatever manner they have been. Sir, it shows that our scientists and our technical personnel given an opportunity can achieve anything which you can be proud of and of world standard. That shows given the opportunity and proper R&D facilities for which the Finance Minister must open up his fist. They can achieve it. We can achieve world level expertise and of which we shall be proud of and we are proud of what has happened. I wish to join in congratulating everybody concerned with it.

[Translation]

SHRI BHOGENDR JHA (Madhubani) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also associate myself with what has been said by the hon. Prime Minister. I hope that we all taking a lesson from the achievement made by our scientists and the concerned officers, will dedicate ourselves with full confidence to the national advancement.

[English]

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE (Vijayawada) : We join the Prime Minister in congratulating the scientists on achieving this great laurel to our country.

[Translation]

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH (Sheohar) : I would like to congratulate our scientists and technicians for the glorious efforts that have been made in the field of Indian Science and technology and associate myself with the feelings expressed by the hon. Prime Minister and other Members of the House in this regard.

[English]

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI (Garhwal) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the achievements of which we can be proud of and we all join in congratulating our scientists but at the same time, I also want to remind this Government that a lot of our achievements by the scientists have not fructified. In this connection; I want to request the Prime Minister to come out with our Agni and Prithvi. Wonderful work has been done in that field. But nothing is being done. Therefore, all efforts of our scientists are not being fully utilized for the betterment of this nation and I would like this to be brought to the notice of the Prime Minister.

SHRI E. AHAMED (Manjeri) : Sir, this shows that our great country has crossed one more milestone in achieving the great success in the scientific field and it is a matter of proud for the entire country. I take this opportunity to convey my congratulations and eulogiums to all those who deserve it.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : I also join on behalf of my party to congratulate the scientists, technicians and all concerned for having taken a long leap in the field of space and space research. Sir, in Houston, USA, the NASA is reducing their activities. Now, it is very good time of us to enhance our activities. I congratulate the Prime Minister and also the Government and also the scientists once again.

SHRI ARJUN SINGH (Satna) : The hon. Speaker, Sir, this House held an exciting... (Interruptions) The hon. Speaker, the House is thrilled and excited by this news. It is totally in tune with the herculean and dedicated efforts the scientists, the experienced scientists of this country have been putting in over the decade.

I think, the time has now come when not only should we congratulate them but their advice should become an important input in many of our national policies, whether it is Defence, Communication, Space because they have almost a single-minded

approach to accelerate national interests, to further the interests of the country in those spheres of activities. It is time that they get recognition in these spheres also.

With these words, I join the sentiments expressed in this House in congratulating the scientists of this country.

[Translation]

SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH (Mainpuri) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I associate myself as well as my party with the feelings of the House and would like to quote two lines -

"Jahan Avtar Janme Hain, Pale Hain Veer
Rishi Yogi,

Na Koi Yah Samajh Baithe Ki Ab Yeh Bhumi
Parti Hai,

Yahan Ka har Naya Ankur Agar Pal Gaya
Dhang se,

Namoon Bankar Jayega Ki Upjau Dharti Hai,
Yeh Bari Upjau Dharti Hai."

Such people should be honoured by this House also. With these words I once again pay my heartiest congratulations to all the concerned persons.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Scientists, engineers, workers and planners who are responsible for making and launching INSAT II C successful have done us all proud and indeed deserve our heartiest congratulations which we have profusely given to them. Let the expression of appreciation by this House be communicated to the leaders, scientists, engineers and workers.

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO : We will do that, Sir.

17.04 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Award of Licences to Private Companies For Operating Basic Telecom Services

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : Hon. Speaker Sir... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The time of this House should be used for intelligent debate.

SHRI SUKH RAM : Hon. Speaker Sir, I wish to make a statement regarding the status of the tenders for award of licences to private companies for operating basic telecom service in various parts of the country. Marketing such a statement has become

necessary in view of the observations made by some hon. Members regarding the alleged favours extended to a private company M/s. HFCL Bezeq Telecom Ltd...(Interruptions)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Chittorgarh) : Mr. Speaker Sir, the House was informed that instead of 4 o'clock the Statement be deferred till 5 o'clock so that sufficient copies are available and the Hindi translation which was not complete be also made available. I am sure, this is purely an administrative difficulty, but it would help us if sufficient copies are made available because it is an intricate matter.

MR. SPEAKER : Have the copies been supplied to the Members?

SHRI SUKH RAM : Sir, copies are ready now and I think within five or ten minutes time, these will be supplied to the hon. Members...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

AN HON. MEMBER : The name of the company, which is being mentioned should be made clear.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : They want to delay it deliberately...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please, in our House, we do not have supplementaries on the Statement made by the Minister. Now let the Minister read out the statement.

I am told that copies were getting ready, maybe the copies are ready and they would be made available to the Members. They would be getting them.

[Translation]

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : Sir, you have stated that due to Hindi translation ...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I had heard from him. Let us understand and that this is a matter which was taken up at zero hour.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : I know, Sir, but this is because they themselves said that they would provide the copies.

[Translation]

SHRI ASTBUHA PRASAD SHUKLA (Khalilabad) : It is our right. What is the Government doing ? Crores of rupees have been spent.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Will the Parliamentary Affairs Minister or somebody get the copies of Hindi version and made available?

...(Interruptions)