

RAJYA SABHA

List of Questions for ORAL ANSWERS

*to be asked at a sitting of the Rajya Sabha to be held on
Tuesday, the March 22, 2005/Chaitra 1, 1927 (Saka)*

**(Ministries : Civil Aviation; Company Affairs; Finance; Panchayati Raj;
Petroleum and Natural Gas; Tourism; Water Resources)**

Total number of questions — 20

Excise duty on medicines

*281. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to impose excise duty on medicines on maximum retail price instead of the price at which consumers buy medicines;

(b) whether it is also a fact that duty has been hiked to 35 per cent to make it further difficult for the daily users to buy medicines;

(c) what is the reason behind this sudden hike and how many medicines have been covered/spared by this hike; and

(d) the details thereof?

Streamlining of procedure in respect of education Loans

*282. SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the education loan provided by various public sector banks in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether getting education loan from

banks is very difficult whereas it is regularly announced that the procedure of loan has been simplified;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps being taken to streamline this system so that better service can be provided to the student community by the banks?

Internal audit system for Panchayati Raj System

*283. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating introduction of an internal audit system for all tiers of Panchayati Raj System;

(b) the steps being taken by Government to provide institutional framework to this system at the State and Union level;

(c) what will be the implications of this new institutional framework *vis-a-vis* the CAG who has been auditing 30,000 crores that are flowing into Panchayati Raj Institutions; and

(d) whether the proposal is part of the recommendations made at the Conference of the Panchayati Raj Ministers?

Three-tier system of Panchayati Raj

†*284. SHRI DARA SINGH CHAUHAN: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the rights accruing to the Pradhans, Members of the Development Committees and the district councils under the three-tier system of Panchayati Raj;

(b) the details of the schemes available and the moneys being provided under each scheme for the development of Gram-Panchayats;

(c) whether Government are aware that development work under the said schemes has not taken place in a satisfactory manner in Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh during the last three years; and

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

Oil companies' demand for revision in prices of petrol/diesel

†*285. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER
SINGH MAJITHA:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that Oil companies have sought the approval of Government for increasing the prices of petrol and diesel in the country in March, 2005;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard;

(c) whether Government consider the

demand for price hike made by the Oil companies justified;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the action Government propose to take in the matter?

Impact of Tsunami on Tourism industry in South India

†*286. PROF R.B.S. VARMA:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM
KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of tourists (domestic/foreign)/have been killed and the Tourism industry in South India has been affected badly due to the Tsunami disaster;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether any estimate has been made by Government for the same; and

(c) the special steps being taken by Government for the revival of Tourism industry in South India from the said setback?

Regulatory Commission for the petroleum sector

*287. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
SHRI LALIT SURI:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have planned to set up a Regulatory Commission for the Petroleum sector;

(b) if so, whether it is to protect the interest of consumers on the lines of Telecom and Power Regulatory Commission;

(c) if not, whether there are any other

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

specific purpose for establishment of such Commission for the Petroleum sector; and

(d) by when it will be commissioned?

Time-frame to bring down fiscal deficit

†*288. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a time-frame has been set to eliminate fiscal deficit by gradually reducing it;

(b) if so, the details of the time-frame;

(c) whether Government have also taken any decision to bring down expenditure in order to meet the said time-frame; and

(d) if so, the names of sectors in order of priority which have been earmarked for reduction of expenditure?

Pilot project for lignite gasification

*289. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether GAIL India with a foreign collaborator propose to implement a pilot project for lignite gasification in Barmer district of Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the quantum of gas that would be produced annually; and

(c) by when the work on the project is likely to start, the investment required for the project and how the gas would be utilized?

Differential in prices of petroleum products in States

*290. DR. A.K. PATEL:
SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI:

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

(a) what are the reasons that the prices of petroleum products vary in different States and they are the highest in Gujarat; and

(b) the reasons for different oil companies selling at different prices?

Subsidies on food and fertilizers

*291. SHRI A. VIJAYA-RAGHAVAN:
SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any report prepared with the assistance of National Institute of Public Finance and Policy on subsidies released during the year 2004;

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal in the report to reduce direct subsidies on food and fertilizers;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there is any proposal in the report to reduce minimum support price for farmers;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the competent authority accepted the recommendations of the report; and

(g) the details of the ratio of all direct subsidies paid by the Central Government

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the last one decade, year-wise and category-wise?

Income tax on sale of DEPB certificates

*292. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has received any letter from the Ministry of Commerce regarding the issue of levying income tax on the profits of sale of DEPB certificates;

(b) whether the above issue of levying income tax is causing a serious concern to the large number of small and medium exporters; and

(c) if so, the details about the income tax slab being applied and the steps being taken to solve the matter?

Air miss on Republic Day rehearsal

*293. SHRI EKANATH K.
THAKUR
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that on January 23rd, the Sukhoi aircraft was just 400 feet from the Air India Jetliner (minuscule in aviation terms) during the official rehearsal for the Republic Day fly past;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the minimum distance between two planes is supposed to be one thousand feet; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to prevent such incidents in future?

Increase in prices of crude oil, petrol and LPG

*294. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM
KSHATRIYA:

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

(a) whether Government have increased the prices of crude oil, petrol and cooking gas in the last three years; and

(b) if so, the quantum of increase?

Cancellation of route dispersal guidelines

*295. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to cancel route dispersal guidelines for private airlines; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

Increasing activity of drug traffickers in H.P.

*296. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is a signatory to the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic substances, 1988;

(b) whether Government are aware of the increasing activity of drug traffickers, both local and foreign, in the resource areas of Himachal Pradesh, smuggling drugs both into and out of the country;

(c) whether cannabis derivatives, hashish and charas produced here are traded freely among foreign tourists; and

(d) whether Government would crack down on the influx of backpackers into Himachal for purposes other than holidaying even at the cost of losing tourism revenue?

Disinvestment targets

*297. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the disinvestment targets of Government for the next two years;

(b) whether Government are considering to offload equity of blue-chip PSUs like NTPC, Power Grid Corporation, Public Sector Banks through Initial public offerings during the next two years; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Promotion of tourism in Assam

*298. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the tourism industry of Assam being in a poor state;

(b) the policy of the Ministry to realise the potentials of the State in the fields of eco-tourism and other sectors upto fullest extent; and

(c) the provision made in the Budget 2005-06, if any, to boost the tourism industry of Assam?

Implementation of river-linking projects in Madhya Pradesh

†*299. SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an important scheme related to linking of rivers of the country is under consideration of the Government;

(b) whether in the first phase a proposal of two projects is under consideration for Madhya Pradesh;

(c) whether the State Government of Madhya Pradesh has conveyed its consent to the Central Government for implementation of both the projects; and

(d) by when the work on both these projects is proposed to be commenced?

Bilateral air traffic rights

*300. DR. KARAN SINGH:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI
REDDY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to initiate talks with France, Germany, Hong Kong and China to enhance bilateral air traffic rights to meet growing consumer demand;

(b) if so, whether alongwith the related 'open sky' policy Government will liberalise bilaterals that have been done with the US and UK;

(c) if so, whether talks have already started with the other countries; and

(d) if so, by when, final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

NEW DELHI;
The 16th March, 2005
Phalguna 25, 1926 (Saka)

YOGENDRA NARAIN,
Secretary-General.

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

I N D E X

(Ministry-wise)

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