

RAJYA SABHA

List of Questions for WRITTEN ANSWERS

*to be asked at a sitting of the Rajya Sabha to be held on
Tuesday, the December 9, 2003/Agrahayana 18, 1925 (Saka)*

**(Ministries: Civil Aviation; Finance; Petroleum and Natural Gas;
Tourism and Culture; Water Resources)**

Total number of questions—153

Aviation financial package for Rajasthan

640. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the new aviation financial package for Rajasthan to develop infrastructure in the State, as announced by Government;

(b) how far it will help to boost tourism from abroad as well as within the country; and

(c) whether a similar proposal is also under consideration for other States; if so, the details thereof?

Proposal from Air Asia

641. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from Air Asia of Malaysia to start its operations in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government have taken thereon?

Expenditure on airport security

642. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that CISF has substituted the respective State police forces for ensuring the security of airports under Airports Authority of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this has led to an increase in expenditure of Airports Authority of India;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government have taken up the issue of this increased expenditure with appropriate authorities because AAI is possible not responsible for this decision; and

(f) if so, the response thereto?

New air traffic stipulation

643. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether international civil aviation authorities are considering lowering of air traffic corridors from 40,000 ft to 20,000 ft and also the gap between two corridors

from 4000 ft to 2000 ft. to allow increased air traffic;

(b) whether the new stipulations include enforcement of licence regulations for Air Traffic Controllers; and

(c) whether Pakistan has already introduced licencing system for ATCs as an abundant safety measure and if so, whether India is likely to follow suit?

Modernisation of airports in Southern States

644. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what are the on-going projects of modernisation of airports in the Southern States, State-wise and airport-wise; and

(b) what is the present status of each of these projects?

AI's code sharing agreement with Lufthansa

645. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether direct flights to the USA from Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi have been introduced as a result of new code sharing agreement between Air India and Lufthansa; and

(b) if so, details of the flights so introduced?

Global partnership for safe air travel

646. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have called for global partnership to make air travel fully secure;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a conference on Civil Aviation Safety and Security was held in New Delhi recently; and

(d) if so, the details of discussions held in the conference and the outcome thereof?

Non-functional metal detectors at airports

647. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that not a single door-frame metal detector put up at airports across the country is functional;

(b) whether it is also a fact that he has uncovered a Rs. 12 crore door-frame metal detector scam in his Ministry;

(c) if so, whether Government have made any investigations in this matter; and

(d) the action Government propose to take in this regard?

Food item banned by BCAS

648. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security has struck off pickles from the list of banned items in hand baggage; and

(b) if so, the list of the items that are banned and not banned in the new modified list?

Airspace Management

649. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: SHRIMATI KAMLA

MANHAR:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to make airspace management more flexible which will lead to ten to fifteen per cent expansion in the Indian air space;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether at present airspace is divided between civil and military operations and if so, the percentage of air space available to military organizations and civilian aircrafts; and

(d) whether the civil and Indian air force authorities have discussed air safety measures and if so, the outcome thereof?

Enquiry into Air Deccan aircraft accident

650. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA
RAO:

SHRI C. RAMACHAND-
RAIAH:

SHRIMATI KAMLA

MANHAR:

SHRI ABANI ROY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the inaugural flight of Air Deccan caught fire at Hyderabad Airport due to the failure of engine; and

(b) whether Government have instituted an inquiry into the incident and grounded/cancelled the licence of Air Deccan till the Inquiry Committee report is received and if not, the reasons therefor?

Anti-hijacking measures by AI and IA

651. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY
SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of anti-hijacking measures

that Indian Airlines and Air India are adopting;

(b) whether it is a fact that according to the rules of the civil aviation, all commercial aircrafts should seal their cockpits as a measure against hijacking;

(c) whether it is also a fact that measures taken are not sufficient to meet the challenges from hijackers; and

(d) the reasons for not going in for US norms with regard to sealing of cockpits?

IA's contract with New India Assurance

†652. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Assurance business of Indian Airlines for the year 2003-04 has once again been accorded to the New India Assurance Company;

(b) whether it is also a fact that neither the open tenders were invited for the purpose nor the guidelines of CVC were observed;

(c) whether the complaints from some of the MPs have also been received by him in this regard;

(d) if so, whether any inquiry by a neutral agency in the whole matter has been conducted by Government; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

International Airport at Noida (UP)

653. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) by when work to build an international airport at Noida in Uttar Pradesh to ease congestion on International Airport at Delhi is expected to start; and

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(b) by when the work is likely to be completed so as to make the airport operational?

Maintenance of helicopters

654. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have examined the relevant investigation reports relating to two helicopter crashes in August 2003, one in Jammu and Kashmir that killed five on board and the other off the Mumbai coast which killed 27 on board including several ONGC personnel;

(b) if so, the details of the major findings and the action taken/proposed to be taken thereon;

(c) whether it is a fact that the DGCA overlooked the violation of regulations for proper maintenance of helicopters; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the fresh guidelines issued to ensure strict compliance of the relevant norms?

Revenue from Open Sky Policy

655. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether interests of national carriers-Air India and Indian Airlines, have been adequately safeguarded with the announcement of Open Sky Policy to all foreign airlines from December 2003 till 2004;

(b) if so, whether any additional revenue is expected to be generated by our national carriers also; and

(c) whether Government have any plan to allow domestic private carriers like Jet and Sahara Airlines to operate on international routes so that Government

could earn maximum additional revenue through increased foreign tourist traffic?

Policy on private aviation companies

656. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow the Private Aviation Companies for air flights in the country; and

(b) what are the terms and conditions and the details of that policy?

Cargo handling facilities at airports in Maharashtra

657. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the name of airports in Maharashtra which are having cargo handling facilities at present;

(b) the details of cargo handled by them during the last three years, year-wise; and

(c) the airports where cargo complexes are proposed to be provided during the Tenth Five Year Plan?

Air connectivity to Port Blair

658. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMA-CHANDRAYYA:
SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA
SEKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether poor connectivity between the main Port Blair and the other Andaman Island is the hitch for active tourism of Andaman Island groups; and

(b) if so, the measures taken to open new connectivity other than Kolkata and

Chennai for encouraging domestic and foreign tourism in Andaman Island?

Animal & bird menace around airports

659. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether airports in the country continue to be haunted by stray animals and birds menace;

(b) whether two stray dogs at Nagpur Airport kept a Jet Airways plane in the air for about 20 minutes on August 27, 2003;

(c) the number of incidents of bird hits and stray animals intruding the airport flight zones during the last three years; and

(d) the steps taken and being taken to prevent any hazards involving stray-animals and birds on and around airports?

Purchase of executive jets from Brazil

660. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to purchase executive private jets named 'Legacy' from Brazil;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for purchasing these aircrafts from Brazilian aircraft maker; and

(d) the estimated cost of each aircraft?

New runway at Mangalore Airport

661. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Government of Karnataka has requested the Central Government to construct a new runway at the Bajpe Airport, Mangalore,

to enable larger aircrafts to land and take off from the Airport; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the time schedule for completion of the project?

Unauthorised travel in Air India flights

662. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the reported travelling of unauthorised persons by Air India flights to various places with the help of Air India staff;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken against such people and the staff involved?

Heli-Taxi service in Delhi

663. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to introduce a Heli-Taxi service to various places in Delhi on the pattern of Mumbai;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what would be its impact on the local transport system in Delhi?

Committee on purchase of aircrafts

664. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Committee of Experts has recommended not to acquire 35 new aircrafts at a cost of about Rs. 3,000 crore as they are not cost effective;

(b) if so, what are the other reasons for putting off the project to acquire new aircrafts; and

(c) whether some deficiencies in tendering process have been noticed and if so, the action taken by Government against the guilty?

Flights of Air Sahara

665. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air Sahara has announced daily flights to and from Colombo in Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the places in India where Air Sahara flights will start and the places where it will terminate; and

(c) by when these flights will be operative?

Aircrafts leased by Haj Committee

666. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether foreign aircrafts were leased by Air India on behalf of Haj Committee for Haj operations in 1998 to 2001;

(b) if so, the terms of the lease, year-wise;

(c) corresponding amounts charged by Air India/Indian Airlines/Saudia when they operated the Haj Charter Service for 2002 and 2003; and

(d) the Charter fare paid to the carriers by the Haj Committee in 2001, 2002 and 2003?

Rural branches of banks

667. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of rural branches of banks closed and opened by the Public Sector Banks during the last three years;

(b) whether Reserve Bank of India has liberalised the branch licensing norms and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Banks have started the revamping process to close unviable branches in rural areas;

(d) the branches closed as a result of grant of V.R.S. to staff;

(e) the number of loss-making branches which were closed; and

(f) the amount paid to the staff opting for VRS till date?

Implementation of VAT

668. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) when Government are going to convene a meeting of State Chief Ministers to work out details for implementation of VAT in the country;

(b) what are the details of States which have accepted to implement VAT;

(c) the reasons behind non-implementation of VAT by the remaining States; and

(d) what steps Government are taking to convince the States which have not so far agreed to implement VAT?

Central Economic Intelligence Bureau

669. SHRI R.S. GAVAI:

SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau has been set up for functioning independently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government are not effectively utilizing the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau in fighting economic offences, if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) the details of economic crimes investigated by the Bureau since its inception; and

(e) the action taken by it thereon?

Disincentive for not fulfilling lending target

670. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 911 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 29th July, 2003 and state:

(a) whether Government propose to abolish the provision of interest on Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) in respect of those Banks which do not fulfill the target of agricultural lending; and

(b) if not, what other disincentive Government propose to impose on them?

World Bank aid

671. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank has agreed to double the amount of funding for our country;

(b) if so, what is the game plan to speed up implementation of various projects on priority basis; and

(c) what is the action plan of the bank to uplift the poorer sections to speed up poverty alleviation in the country?

Unfair trading practices by mutual funds companies

672. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to charges of unfair trading practices (such as late trading) being framed against some important mutual fund managers in the USA;

(b) whether Government or SEBI have looked into the working of the mutual funds in India to find out if similar unfair trading practices are also prevalent in India; and

(c) if so, what are the findings of such an investigation?

Index of share prices

673. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the index of share prices has moved up considerably during the last few months;

(b) if so, the comparative figures of turnover and capitalization in the Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock Exchange during the corresponding period; and

(c) whether on the basis of this comparative figures, it is correct to refer to sensx as distinct from NIFTY to measure market growth?

Amendment to Central Sales Tax Act, 1956

674. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to amend the Central Sales Tax Act, 1956, to resolve the inter-State

disputes and avoid imposition of double burden of tax on Assessee; and

(b) if so, what are the salient features of the proposed amendments?

Expert Panel on Companies Act

675. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Expert Panel on the Companies Act and the Partnership Act suggested for creation of a separate category of companies, to be called as 'small private companies' and also suggested to exempt them from compliance with the general company law provisions;

(b) if so, the details of the major recommendations, apart from the above made by the expert panel;

(c) whether there is any provision in the proposed new category of companies with regard to closure of defunct companies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Japanese aid

676. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is likely to become primary recipient of Japanese aid this year as Japan has slashed its aid to China owing to latter's huge spending on arms, space and own aid programmes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether India anticipate same treatment owing to its expenditure on space ventures like putting a man in space and arms increase; and

(d) if so, the alternative sources of foreign aid in case of any need?

SEBI's clarification on investment limits

677. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether as per SEBI's clarification on investment limits for mutual funds schemes, investments in Government guaranteed debt securities will be applicable to all debts securities issued by public bodies or institutions such as Electricity Board, Municipal Corporation, State Transport Corporation among others and all guaranteed by State or Central Government and that Government securities issued by Central or State Governments or on its behalf by Reserve Bank of India will be exempted from the investment limits; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken in respect of States and their Corporations which have defaulted in the past?

Shares of Federal Bank and South Indian Bank

678. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether 23.5 percentage and 13 percentage of shares of Federal Bank and South Indian Bank respectively are with the ICICI as on today;

(b) if so, whether the above shares are to be sold to foreigners;

(c) if so, whether Government will direct ICICI not to sell the above shares to foreigners; and

(d) whether steps will be taken not to sell the banks of Kerala to foreigners?

Special Rehabilitation Cells for SSI Sector

679. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have recently directed all Public Sector Banks to set up Special Rehabilitation Cells for SSI Sector;

(b) if so, whether all Banks have complied with the directive;

(c) if not, which are the defaulting Banks; and

(d) what action Government propose to take in this regard?

Collection of Revenue

†680. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of revenue collected from the salaried class, wine companies and major industries during the last three years, year-wise, separately;

(b) the steps taken by Government to enhance the revenue being collected from the major industries; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Recovery of NPAs

681. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NPAs amounting to Rs. 54,086 crores are still to be recovered by the Public Sector Banks as on 31st March, 2003;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken to recover these NPAs during 2002-03 and how much recovery has been made till 30th September, 2003 and what is the target fixed till 31st March, 2004; and

(c) what is the total outstanding figure as on 30th September, 2003, with a break-up of balance recoverable out of outstanding dues as on 31st March, 2003 and new NPAs, if any, which became due?

Applications under self-employment schemes in Uttaranchal

†682. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of applications received under urban employment scheme by various banks functioning in Uttaranchal during the previous year and the current year so far and the number of applications accepted out of the same;

(b) whether the Ministry is aware of the fact, that most banks have taken more than the stipulated time; and

(c) if so, whether these banks would be directed to comply strictly with norms stipulated in the said scheme?

Funding of schemes by NABARD

†683. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of schemes submitted by the State of Uttaranchal for funding by NABARD;

(b) whether the said schemes have been granted approval for funding by NABARD; and

(c) if so, the separate details of amount sanctioned for various schemes?

Turn over of Insurance Companies

684. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total turnover of Public Sector Insurance Companies and Private Sector ones individually during the current financial year;

(b) what is the level of performance of public sector *vis-a-vis* the private sector; and

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(c) how many private players are in the field presently and how many more are being allowed to come into the field during the current year?

Excise duties on domestic hardware

685. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Information Technology has requested the Ministry of Finance to reduce excise and other duties on domestic hardware in line with W.T.O. requirement;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether it would reduce the receipt of Government and widen the deficit;

(d) the details of WTO's Information Technology Agreement and the name of items sought to be exempted from duty; and

(e) what is the outcome of recent backlash against outsourcing from developing nations in the U.S. and how far it is going to affect India's interest?

Regional Rural Banks

686. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Regional Rural Banks functioning in the country at present, State-wise;

(b) the number of these banks proposed to be set up during the Tenth Five Year Plan period, State-wise;

(c) the number of banks which were closed being unviable during the last three years;

(d) the profit and loss accounts of each RRBs functioning in Maharashtra as on 31st March, 2003;

(e) the loans of these banks lying

outstanding including bad debts as on 30th September, 2003; and

(f) the efforts made to effect recovery and improve their performance?

Customs check posts along Indo-Bangladesh border

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

(a) whether a recent survey by South Asia Development Facility supported by International Finance Corporation on trade between Bangladesh and seven North-Eastern States of India, revealed that out of Rs. 342 crores worth of trade in a year, only 52 per cent was done through legal routes;

(b) whether the survey also reveals that the rest of the trade is done through smuggling along the borders; and

(c) what steps are being taken to strengthen custom check posts along Indo-Bangladesh border?

Allowing ADB to raise funds from Indian market

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

(a) whether Government are considering to allow multilateral bodies like Asian Development Bank and International Finance Corporation to raise funds from Indian market through debt securities;

(b) whether Government would make it obligatory on these bodies to use the funds so raised within India; and

(c) whether any guidelines have been drawn up in this regard and if so, the details thereof?

Income tax exemption to Urban Development Authorities

689. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Urban Development Authorities, Housing Boards, and other similar statutory bodies enjoy Income-Tax Exemption u/s 10(20) of the I.T. Act;

(b) if so, whether the exemption has been withdrawn by Government, thereby bringing UDAs, HBs, etc., under the purview of Income Tax Act;

(c) whether such a measure is hampering the infrastructure development activities of such statutory bodies and resultantly their ability to attract indigenous and overseas investment;

(d) whether State Governments have requested for re-introduction of the IT Exemption; and

(e) if so, details in this regard and the Central Government's reaction thereto?

SFCs role in development of small and medium enterprises

690. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that State Financial Corporations play a vital role in the nurturing of small and medium enterprises;

(b) whether declining interest rates and other economic factors are adversely affecting the functioning of SFCs and as a result of which they are unable to assist the small entrepreneurs active in key sectors like edible oil, pharmaceutical drugs, textiles, cement, etc.; and

(c) if so, the details of SFCs where respective State Governments have

requested the Central Government for rehabilitation assistance from SIDBI and IDBI and what is Government's reaction thereto?

Income tax Ombudsman

691. SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR:
SHRI RAJU PARMAR:
SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY
SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to constitute Income Tax Ombudsman to resolve tax payers' grievances in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the proposed Ombudsman will handle technical disputes, legal disputes, etc. as in the case of banking and insurance sectors, and if not, what will be the power of proposed Ombudsman?

Softening of interest rate

692. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY:
DR. AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bankers and business community have been optimistic about the Reserve Bank's known stand of a softening interest rate regime, the poor common depositors including the pensioners and the senior citizens, who place their life savings with Banks and the farmers and workers, are on the receiving end, and are more helpless onlookers;

(b) if so, the steps contemplated to protect the interest of the common depositors, the peasants, workers and senior citizens; and

(c) the total estimated amount of (1) Employees Provident Funds (2) other

workers' funds and (3) deposits of pensioners and senior citizens with RBI and other Banks?

Performance of PSU banks

693. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA
RAO:
SHRI C. RAMA-
CHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Public Sector Banks have improved their overall performance during the last fiscal year reporting a substantial growth of more than 50 per cent in their net profit;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the dividend paid by the Public Sector Banks is inadequate as compared to their net profit, and if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what is the quantum of dividend paid by these banks for the last fiscal year?

Policy on OCBs investments

694. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
DR. A. R. KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are reviewing the policy on overseas corporate body investments in Indian companies as there is a ban on fresh portfolio investments in India by OCBs;

(b) if so, to what extent this policy will have its impact on various proposals including three proposals in the petro-product segments;

(c) whether the Department of Economic Affairs has asked the Foreign Investment Promotion Board to keep in abeyance a

decision on the three OCB investment proposals in the petroleum sector; and

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

Development and Reform Facility Programme

695. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI VAYALAR RAVI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Development and Reform Facility Programme was announced in the budget for 2002-2003 to incentivise States to introduce reforms that would accelerate growth;

(b) if so, whether Government have identified 132 districts spread across the country to be funded by the Central Government;

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken;

(d) what is the total amount so far released to the States; and

(e) how many schemes in these backward areas have been implemented so far?

Plantation companies

696. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of plantation companies banned by SEBI from raising funds during the last three years;

(b) whether there are any plantation companies in Madhya Pradesh that have been banned by SEBI for raising funds in the last three years;

(c) if so, the names of the companies and their Directors; and

(d) whether there are any plantation companies which have been declared defaulter or whose cheques have been dishonoured by the Bank and criminal cases filed against them; if so, the details thereof?

Rise in fraud cases in banks

697. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that fraud and corruption cases involving crores of rupees have been on an increase in a number of Nationalised Banks;

(b) whether it is also a fact that reconciliation of inter-branch accounts in a number of banks has been in arrears and heavy outstandings have been found in their accounts; and

(c) if so, what measures have been initiated by Reserve Bank of India and Government to check this and fix accountability to avoid recurrence of such cases?

Renaming of CBEC

698. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to change the name of the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) to the Central Board of Indirect Taxes, as this organisation is overseeing the execution of almost all indirect tax laws; and

(b) whether Government are considering to release one more post of Member in the CBEC exclusively for looking after the Service Tax administration; if not, the reasons therefor?

Non-declaration of IRS officers as proper officers

699. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons why the officers of Central Excise, customs, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Directorate General of Central Excise Intelligence are not being declared by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, as proper officers under the Wildlife Protection Act (1972), as it may greatly assist in the efforts of wildlife conservation; and

(b) whether there is any such proposal for necessary action before Government at present and if not, the reasons therefor?

Tie-up of Indian banks with Israeli firm

700. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an Israeli firm with pioneering expertise in drip irrigation has tied up with some Indian Banks to facilitate loans for drip irrigation projects in the country; and

(b) if so, what is Government's response thereto?

Investment of Commercial Bank in Government securities

701. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of commercial bank investments in approved Government securities as a proportion of their total assets at the end of September, 2003; and

(b) in what manner this proportion compares with the statutory minimum liquidity ratio?

Trend in lending to agriculture and small scale Industry

702. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the emerging trend in commercial bank lending to agriculture and small scale industry;

(b) whether Government are satisfied with this trend; and

(c) if not, what additional measures are contemplated to increase the flow of bank credit for agriculture and small scale industry?

Foreign loans received by State Governments

703. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the foreign loans received by the State Governments from bilateral and multilateral sources during the last three years, State-wise, year-wise and institution-wise;

(b) the interest charged on the Central Government on account of each of these loans;

(c) the interest rate charged on the State Governments by the Central Government on them; and

(d) whether Government are considering passing down the benefits to the States?

Boom in share market

704. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the share market is booming due to heavy buying by Foreign Institutional Investors;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have analysed the reasons for this buying spree by the FIIs; and

(d) whether the buying spree is due to the appreciated value of the rupee or due to other reasons togetherwith the details thereof?

Financial disclosure of public offerings

705. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government to improve financial disclosures and proceeds of public offerings; and

(b) what has been the outcome of such steps?

Missing cash in Corporation Bank

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

(a) whether it is a fact that a huge amount of cash went missing under mysterious circumstances from premises of Karol Bagh Branch of Corporation Bank in the first week of September, 2003;

(b) if so, the result of enquiry held in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that many cases of fraud in Banks in which employees of the banks were involved have come to notice during the last one year; and

(d) if so, the number of such cases in Delhi and the number of Bank employees found guilty?

Interest rates on agricultural credit

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

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have advised banks to reduce interests rates on agricultural credit and to ensure that farmers are able to borrow funds at single digit interest rates;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and the reaction from banking sector;

(c) whether it is also a fact that many public sector banks failed to comply with RBI guidelines prescribing 18 per cent credit to agricultural sector;

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

(e) the steps being taken to ensure that the banks honour the guidelines?

Money laundering at Alang ship-breaking yard

708. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence is aware of large-scale money laundering at Alang ship-breaking yard through underinvoicing and other manipulations;

(b) if so, the extent of such operations recently unearthed by DRI officials; and

(c) what preventive steps are being taken in this regard?

Cases pending in Appellate Tribunals

709. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than Rs. 90,000 crores is locked up in income tax disputes, with the existing number of Appellate Tribunals unable to handle the cases;

(b) whether Government propose to set up additional Appellate Tribunals to clear the backlog; and

(c) whether there are any proposals to revive setting up of a National Court of Direct Taxes initiated during early 1990s?

Recommendation of IMF chief

710. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the IMF Chief Economist Kanneth Rogoff has advised emerging Asian Economist at the annual meeting of the World Bank and IMF that accumulation of reserve beyond a point is a poor policy for the economy of the country and the world;

(b) if so, whether Government have given any serious consideration to the Rogoff's advice;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the prudent norms arrived at by Government for forex reserves?

Foreign exchange reserves

711. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite a very comfortable position of foreign reserve, Government propose to pre-pay foreign debts/loans by market borrowing or public issues;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if not, the details of debts/loans proposed to be pre-paid during the current year?

Conference on VAT system

712. DR. AKHILESH DAS : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Finance Ministers' Conference was held in New Delhi in third week of October, 2003 to sort out the issue of implementation of Value Added Tax system in different States;

(b) if so, what decisions were taken to implement the system; and

(c) what specific benefits and advantages are likely to accrue there from to the consumers?

Special credit scheme for women

713. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that though certain Public Sector Banks have drawn out specific schemes for extending finance to women, they do not generate information regarding credit provided to women by each of these Banks;

(b) if so, the details of schemes, Bank-wise and reasons for not generating data in that regard; and

(c) if answer to (a) be in the negative what are the details of credit provided by each Bank to women under various schemes during the last three years, year-wise and Bank-wise and State-wise?

Changes in exchange Control norms

714. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have asked Reserve Bank of India to introduce changes in exchange control norms to enable Indian companies and

individuals to acquire technology and R & D assets abroad;

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

(c) whether there will be any change in the existing ceilings on royalty payments; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Foreign exchange remittances received from NRIs

715. DR. VIJAY MALLYA :
SHRI LAJPAT RAI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) Foreign Exchange remittance received from NRIs and PIOs during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) what specific additional incentives are provided to the NRIs/PIOs besides liberalization in foreign direct investment facilities; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Increase in Government's subsidies

716. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government's bill on the major subsidies like food, fertilizer and petroleum rose by around Rs. 9744 crores to top Rs. 26,495 crores during the period from April, 2003 to September, 2003 as compared to Rs. 16,751 crores for the previous year amounting to 58 per cent increase in our subsidy bill;

(b) whether it resulted in a 60 per cent increase in our fiscal deficit; and

(c) if so, what are Government's views on this?

Recovery of unpaid taxes by credit card companies

717. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the credit card companies when converting their foreign exchange sales abroad to Indian currency, do charge commission from their Indian consumers, but are not paying service tax on the Commission amount;

(b) whether it is also a fact that such invoices of these companies do not separately show the exchange rate, the commission charged and service tax;

(c) if so, whether Government agree that these companies have under-paid service taxes; and

(d) what steps Government would take to recover the unpaid taxes?

Decline in revenue collection

†718. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a decline in revenue collection of direct and indirect taxes at some of the centres during the first six months of the current financial year in comparison to the last years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons for less revenue collection and the steps taken by Government to remove the shortfall?

Switching over to RITGS for high value denominations

719. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether R.B.I. is working upon a

plan to do away with cheques of high-value denominations and switch over to Real Time Gross Settlement System;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether safeguards against hackers are inbuilt in the system; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Interest relief to farmers

720. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have announced interest relief to the farmers;

(b) if so, details thereof along with the details of nature of loans covered under this scheme;

(c) whether it is a fact that this relief measures only covers the short-term loans;

(d) if so, whether Government have received proposals from the farmers who have availed long-term loans to be covered under this scheme;

(e) if so, whether Government have considered their proposal;

(f) if so, details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

Smuggling of drugs

721. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that expensive use of camouflage by smugglers in the shape of cavities in wooden artifacts, hollow opening in wheelchairs, private parts of the body, plastered legs etc., is helping them to avoid detection at Airport customs, etc., thus contributing towards large-scale smuggling of drugs;

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether custom mechanism both men and gadgets are being adequately equipped to detect such cases; and

(c) how many such cases have been detected in major International Airports like Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, etc., during the last six months?

Writing-off of NPAs of SBI

722. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) details of the loans written-off by State Bank of India and other Nationalised Bank during the last financial year;

(b) whether the write-off done in last financial year is more than previous years;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) details of the recoveries of NPA by these banks during last financial year in comparison to previous year?

Bank credit to SSI sector

723. DR. P.C. ALEXANDER: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that bank credit to the Small Scale Industries sector, which was 17.5 per cent of the net bank credit at the end of March 1998, declined to 11.1 per cent at the end of March, 2003;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what special measures are being taken/contemplated by Government to increase the share of Small Scale Industries sector in respect of bank credit?

Growth rate of GDP

†724. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a

decision to double the growth rate of GDP in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

Enactment of Public Money Recovery

725. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has recommended the Enactment of the Public Money Recovery;

(b) what are the complete details of such an Enactment; and

(c) the details of the States/Banks which have not made required recovery of public money from the parties?

Performance of public sector and private sector banks

726. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the performance of the public sector banks, individually, in this current financial year;

(b) what has been the performance of the private sector banks during the same period;

(c) which sectors have performed better; and

(d) what steps are being taken to improve the performance of the public sector banks?

VRS scheme in Canara Bank and Syndicate Bank

727. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Canara and Syndicate banks are coming out with fresh

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

proposals for VRS to its employees with a pay-off and pension scheme;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be implemented;

(c) what is the estimated outflow on account of this VRS at both these banks; and

(d) how many employees are likely to be given VRS under these fresh proposals?

Outstanding EPF against IFCI

728. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of Employees' Provident Fund lying outstanding against IFCI till date;

(b) the budget provided for the restructuring of IFCI during the fiscal year 2003-04;

(c) whether EPF organization has sought the intervention of the Ministry for payment of dues with interest by the IFCI; and

(d) if so, the decision taken by the Ministry of Finance and the time by which the defaulted money would be returned by IFCI?

Waiver of interest on crop loans

729. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Karnataka has requested the Central Government for waiver of interest on crop loan advanced during kharif season 2002 as drought relief measure in view of prevailing drought situation in the State;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Chief Minister of Karnataka has written to the Prime Minister for the purpose; and

(c) if so, what action has been taken in the matter?

Credibility of Co-operative Banks

730. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that credibility of Co-operative Banks including rural and urban banks have eroded severely during the past few years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the RBI and Central Government have taken or propose to take any concrete steps to maintain the credibility of Co-operative Banks in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Credit/debit cards

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

(a) whether the Reserve Bank of India has taken cognizance of the menace and harassment caused by banks foisting credit/debit cards on unsuspecting customers and extracting payments later;

(b) whether such cards are being issued free initially but later renewal/service charges are being debited to customers' accounts without their prior consent and knowledge; and

(c) what steps are being taken by RBI to curb such unscrupulous practices indulged into by banks?

Grants-in-aid to State Governments

732. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the 11th Finance Commission has recommended for release of grant-in-aid to the State Governments for utilization of the Local Bodies;

(b) if so, the details of the relevant recommendation and the amount sanctioned for period 2000-2005 for each State Government;

(c) the amount released between 2000-2001 and 2002-2003, year-wise;

(d) whether it is a fact that the due instalment of the grant for the year 2002-2003 has so far not been released to a number of States; and

(e) if so, details in this regard and by when the instalment would be released?

Committee on irregularities on allotment of retail outlets

733. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Two Judge Committee is looking into the irregularities of allotment of Retails Outlets (RO)/LPG distributorships;

(b) if so, the criteria followed for referring cases to this Committee and the number of cases referred to this Committee;

(c) whether more complaints about irregularities in selection of ROs/distributorships have been received for reference to this Committee and if so, the action taken thereon;

(d) by when the report of this Committee will be published; and

(e) the expenses incurred by Government/public sector oil companies on this Committee so far along with the details?

Finance for LPG storage facility

734. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to build a strategic storage facility for LPG

at an outlay of Rs. 2750 crores to cover 45 days' requirement of LPG;

(b) in what manner finance for this facility will be sourced; and

(c) whether USA has offered technical know-how to build LPG storage facility in India and if so, the details thereof?

Vigilance Mechanisms

735. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Vigilance Mechanisms in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and in the PSUs under the Ministry have been effective in curbing the menace of corruption;

(b) the number of complaints handled by the Vigilance Department in the Ministry and in PSUs about their employees during the last two years and the result thereof; and

(c) the steps contemplated to strengthen the Vigilance Mechanism in the Ministry and in PSUs?

Purchase of LNG from Iran

736. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether under a pact Government are bound to pick up one producing and one semi-discovered oil field in Iran in return for buying five million tonnes of LNG from Iran for 25 years;

(b) if so, what are the terms of the pact; and

(c) whether Iran has sent a list of five producing and semi-discovered blocks under the pact offering to share equity with an Indian Government firm; if so, what is Government's response thereto?

Production of petroleum and natural gas

737. SHRI BACHANILEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) the production of petroleum and natural gas last year;
- (b) how much it was increased or decreased; and
- (c) the number of new projects which are under exploitation for increasing the production of these products?

Oil revenue deficit

738. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) the estimated value of oil revenue deficit during the current financial year;
- (b) what steps are being taken to contain and reduce the deficit;
- (c) what are the main factors which contribute to this deficit; and
- (d) what will be the level of deficit in the coming years?

Violation of sale agreement by ESSAR

†739. SHRI LAJPAT RAI:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that Essar Oil Company is selling diesel at cheaper rates than the public sector oil companies in the country in violation of the earlier stipulated agreement;
- (b) if so, whether it is also a fact that while authorizing Essar Oil Company to sell petroleum products, the company had

been made to sign an agreement; and

- (c) if so, the details of the terms and conditions, compliance of which was compulsory by the company in order to get the rights of selling petroleum products?

VRS in IOC and ONGC

740. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

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

- (a) the number of employees of Indian Oil Corporation and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation who have opted Voluntary Retirement Scheme during the last two years;
- (b) whether Government are aware that a large number of retirees especially from ONGC are joining private oil companies as experts and sharing their know-how with them; and
- (c) if so, what is the number of such officers and what is Government's reaction thereto?

Sagar Samridhi Project

†741. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government are considering to launch a project called Sagar Samridhi for exploring the reserves of oil and natural gas in onshore, deep sea of India; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof?

Refinery capacity of HPCL

742. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to raise the HPCL refinery capacity at Mumbai and Vizag;

(b) if so, what is the present capacity of these refineries and what is the proposed raise; and

(c) the details of upgradations proposed to be carried out to achieve the objective?

Production of Ethanol-blended petrol

743. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ethanol-blended petrol is produced and supplied in India;

(b) if so, the details of its production and distribution network, State-wise including Andhra Pradesh;

(c) whether it would be made available throughout Andhra Pradesh;

(d) if so, by when;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor;

(f) whether Ethanol-blended petrol would help the sugarcane farmers in increasing the support price of sugarcane with much reduction in the price of a litre of Ethanol-blended petrol when compared to the price of a litre of petrol; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

Natural Gas Population Policy

744. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently Government have released Natural Gas Population Policy;

(b) if so, the salient features of the proposed policy;

(c) whether Government have any plan to set up a regulator for transmission, distribution, storage, etc; and

(d) in what manner Government would pool the resources to implement this policy?

FDI in LNG sector

745. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had placed LNG sector under General Licence list and have also permitted 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment, with a view to bridge the gap between demand and supply of natural gas in the country; and

(b) if so, the details of project recieved for foreign investment in this field and what decision Government had taken thereon?

ONGC's agreement with non-public financial institutions

746. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC is planning to rope in non-public sector financial institutions for hiring people at market related pay packages; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard including the stake to be held by the corporation in the joint venture?

Petrol pump in Alaknanda of South Delhi

747. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is no petrol/CNG pump in the vicinity of Alaknanda and Greater Kailash-II area of South Delhi;

(b) whether it is also a fact that customers have to drive down 2/4 kms. for filling up petrol;

(c) if so, what steps are being taken to set up petrol pump in that area on a priority basis; and

(d) by when this project will be implemented?

Sale of equity in IOC, ONGC and GAIL

748. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are seriously considering off-loading its equity in IOC/ONGC/GAIL through public offering;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount likely to be collected through this route and its application/appropriation in Government scheme?

Sale of ethanol mixed petrol

†749. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering selling of ethanol mixed petrol in some States;

(b) if so, the names of the such States; and

(c) the benefits that would accrue to these States?

Cess on petrol

750. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the amount allocated as cess on petrol during last two years;

(b) the amount provided to States, State-wise, out of this collection; and

(c) whether States including Madhya Pradesh have been deprived of their share?

Closed petrol pumps and LPG agencies

751. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of petrol pumps/diesel pumps/LPG agencies are lying closed in different parts of the country;

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

(c) what steps are being taken by Government to restart these dealerships?

Shortage of crude in Assam Refineries

752. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the strategy to meet the shortage of crude to Assam Refineries;

(b) whether ONGC and OIL have been surveying and digging wells vigorously to extract necessary crude locally in Assam; and

(c) whether ONGC has decided to produce crude from the Nagaland Oilfield?

Kerosene to Rajasthan

753. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the present quantity of kerosene allocation to Rajasthan;

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is a fact that Government have been curtailing kerosene allocation to the State;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether Government would consider increasing the allotment of kerosene to the State in near future?

Evaluation Committee on fuel from plastic

754. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have evaluated the claim of a Nagpur based scientist couple for production of petrol from plastic wastes;

(b) if so, the findings of the Evaluation Committee; and

(c) whether any prototype production unit for petrol from plastic wastes is under installation and if so, the location and capacity thereof?

Steps to improve security at Chitradurga Fort

755. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have so far been taken to improve security and other facilities at Chitradurga Fort in Karnataka; and

(b) the amount so far released during 2003-04 for this purpose?

Opening up of more islands in Andaman and Nicobar

756. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:

SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the tourism department of Andaman and Nicobar Islands has submitted a proposal to the Central Government requesting for opening up of more islands in the Andaman and Nicobar;

(b) whether it is a fact that the tourism department has identified 45 hectares of land in these islands for tourist promotion; and

(c) if so, the details of Government's plan to make it attractive and operative and give it wide publicity?

Tourist potential of NE region

757. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NE region has a great tourist potential;

(b) whether the NE States are now poised to welcome tourists; and

(c) the steps taken by the Central Government to promote tourism in the NE region to boost their economy?

Heritage gates of Aurangabad and Ellora

758. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to renovate heritage gates of Aurangabad and Ajanta and Ellora; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Japanese Government has sanctioned funds for development of Ajanta-Ellora etc; if so, the details of the project; and

(c) whether Japanese or any other foreign agency has sanctioned similar assistance for development/renovation of heritage sites in Orissa; if so, the details thereof?

Position of India among tourist destinations

759. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite the images of terrorism across the country, India has secured a position amongst the top ten tourist destinations;

(b) if so, the number of foreign and Indian tourists who visited different tourist destinations in each State in India during 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 so far; and

(c) what position India holds amongst the tourist destinations of the world?

Agreement with UNDP

760. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have recently signed an agreement with the United Nations Development Programme to launch a new brand of tourism;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether UNDP has agreed to provide funds for tourism; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the manner in which it is likely to be utilised?

Development of Dholavira as a tourist spot

761. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH:
SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since decided to develop Dholavira, ancient site in Gujarat, as a major centre for tourism and archaeological research;

(b) whether the site would also be brought on the world map to attract foreign tourists;

(c) if so, what steps are being taken in this regard; and

(d) by when it will be completed?

Display of Nizam's Jewels

762. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA
RAO:
SHRI RUMANDLA
RAAMACHANDRAYYA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh Government has requested the Central Government to display Nizam's Jewels in Hyderabad permanently; and

(b) if so, by when the matter would be finalised and decide the location thereof?

Pilgrimages in Uttaranchal under ASI

†763. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH:
Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to notify ancient Hindu pilgrimages Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri in Uttaranchal as protected sites under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have also proposed to ASI to maintain and beautify these spots; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

**Central assistance to Orissa
tourism industry**

764. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the tourism sector in Kerala is set to witness a boom and the State is expecting a decisive spurt in foreign tourists arrival;

(b) whether any help has been rendered by the Central Government to States to boost tourism industry;

(c) if so, details thereof; and

(d) whether the Central Government propose to extend such a help to the cash-strapped Orissa tourism industry to boost its economy, if so, the details thereof?

**Restoration of St. John the Baptist
Church, Mumbai**

765. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to restore the 463-year old St. John the Baptist Church at Andheri (East), Mumbai;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Power to officials of CEIB

766. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the reasons that everwith the existence of a specialized set-up like the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau, the Central Bureau of Investigation is handling investigations into financial frauds;

(b) whether Government propose to

empower the officers of the CEIB to investigate financial frauds in future; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

**Opening of Shivaji cell in Agra
Fort to public**

767. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cell in Agra Fort where Shivaji was locked is not opened to visitors;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken to open the Shivaji cell to public?

Higher entry-fee at Bhimbethka

†768. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the tourists specially the foreign tourists have made a complaint to Government regarding the higher entry-fee of the Bhimbethka tourist spot in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what consideration is being made by the Central as well as State Government to reduce the entry-fee with mutual co-operation?

**Light and sound show at
Charminar, Hyderabad**

769. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to organise a sound and light show on the pattern of Golconda Fort at Charminar in Hyderabad to promote tourism; and

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

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Erosion of Vivekananda Rock Memorial

770. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Swami Vivekananda Rock Memorial set amidst the ocean off Kanyakumari is under threat from rapid erosion of the rocks upon which this monument is built;

(b) if so, the details of findings of any recent survey made to assess the impact of sea waves buffeting the rocks under the Memorial; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken to preserve and conserve this magnificent monument?

Development of tourism sector in Rajasthan

†771. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of areas selected by Government for the development of tourism sector in Rajasthan during the current year; and

(b) the details of the outlines worked out by Government for the development of these areas?

Effects of pollution on Ajanta and Ellora Caves

772. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recent study by Geological Survey of India has revealed that noise and other pollution are making drastic effects on Ajanta and Ellora Caves;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures taken by Government to save these caves from pollution?

Development of Ranikhet as a hill station

773. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have decided to develop Ranikhet as a hill station in Uttaranchal as a tourist spot;

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

(c) whether Government have earmarked any amount during the current financial year for the development and the beautification of this hill station; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

Circular train through South India

774. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether representations have been received for running a circular train through South India to boost tourism; and

(b) if so, the action taken to implement the circular trains connecting important South Indian tourist destinations?

Unearthing of Indo-Greek settlement

775. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 2000 year old Indo-Greek settlement was unearthed while the laying of pipeline of Sardar Sarovar Project;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there existed a riverine port equivalent of a busy

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

modern Indian port like Kandla which flourished nearly 2000 years ago; and

(c) if so, the details of the finding?

General Assembly of World Tourism Organisation

776. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in October last, 15th session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organisation was held at Beijing;

(b) if so, what are the details of address of our Tourism Minister;

(c) the steps so far taken by Government to improve the conditions of foreign tourists to India; and

(d) what has been the impact of such steps?

Technical know-how to carry river water to remote areas

†777. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a project for taking Yangtze river water upto 1300 kms. by China is being carried out which is scheduled to be completed by the year 2010;

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

(c) whether Government have approached China Government in order to acquire technical know-how and other related information to carry on river water in the country to remote areas; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the success achieved so far?

Interlinking of Betwa and Parbati and Kalisindh Rivers

†778. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the projects relating to interlinking of rivers ken to Betwa and Parbati and Kalisindh to Chambal have been sanctioned;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether information regarding the cost of construction of these projects and completion period has also been ascertained; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

River basins fed by Himalaya and rain water

†779. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rivers of the country get water primarily from the ice-melting in the Himalayas and rain water;

(b) if so, the names of river basins dependent on Himalayan ice and rain water;

(c) the quantum of water the country gets from the above-mentioned types of basins; and

(d) the quantum of water being utilised at present from each of the above-mentioned sources separately?

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Reservoirs maintained by Central Government

†780. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI LAJPAT RAI:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are 71 reservoirs in the country which are maintained by the Central Government;

(b) if not, the facts in this regard and the total water storage capacity of such reservoirs; and

(c) the annual expenditure made on their maintenance?

Erosion by Ganga river

†781. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any action plan for the permanent solution to the problem of severe erosion by river Ganga in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar to West Bengal;

(b) if so, the present status of the schemes thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the details of arrangements made by Government to stop the exodus of the people from more than twenty villages of the Patori, Mohanpur, Vidhyapati Nagar areas of Samastipur District in the State of Bihar which are getting affected by the severe erosion?

Report of the Task Force on interlinking of rivers

†782. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:
SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA
SEKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 101 given in Rajya Sabha on 18th February, 2003 and state:

(a) whether the Task Force constituted on 13-12-2002 to carry out study under scheme for connecting peninsular rivers and Himalayan rivers with each other and transfer of water from basins with surplus water to water-scarce areas for the maximum use of water, has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, by when the same is likely to be submitted?

Meeting of the Chief Ministers' of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

783. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMA-CHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether drinking water problems in Andhra Pradesh has been solved after the meeting of the Chief Ministers of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in September, 2003;

(b) if so, the agreements made on this account;

(c) the role of the Central Government to bury the hatchet between two States; and

(d) what is Government's reaction thereto?

Central assistance for modernisation of Tungabhadra canals

784. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to assist in modernization of Tungabhadra

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

canals for mutual benefit of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to resolve water sharing issues?

Long term solution to drought

785. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are working on long term solution to drought;

(b) if so, the details of the 30 inter basin riverlinks including basins having surplus water to share, State-wise and category-wise;

(c) the details of 174 pilot recharge projects State-wise and category-wise;

(d) the steps taken for propagating rain water harvesting, State-wise, as on today; and

(e) the details of funds provided, if any, to Kerala State to abate water scarcity during summer season for the last three years, year-wise, project-wise and category-wise?

Topography maps for interlinking of river projects

786. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chairman of the Task Force assigned with the feasibility of the River Linking Project had asked the Surveyor General of India for topography maps of the Indian rivers required for the study;

(b) if so, whether objections were raised for making available the maps, on the grounds that they were secret documents and their placement on the website to invite technical opinions about feasibility of the

dream project would involve security problems; and

(c) if so, how the problems and related objections have been resolved?

Availability of water

787. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per the World Water Development Report, India is ranked 133rd in a list of 180 countries in its ability to make water available for its population;

(b) if so, what are Government's views on this matter; and

(c) the action plan to resolve this problem?

Repair of damaged and weak bunds of rivers in Assam

788. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) what strategy has been worked out by Government for repairing the damaged and the weak bunds to rivers in Assam;

(b) whether Government have offered money and suggested measures to fight flood in the coming year;

(c) if so, what are details of the plans; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Share cost of Sardar Sarovar Project

789. SHRI BACHANILEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that payment of arrears towards share cost of Sardar Sarovar Project by the participating

States viz., Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan are not being paid by them to Gujarat regularly;

(b) whether Government propose to take suitable effective steps in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Cloud seeding technology to control drought

790. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Karnataka has adopted cloud seeding technology to tackle drought in the State;

(b) whether Government are also aware that several States including Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra are trying to emulate Karnataka's cloud seeding experiment;

(c) whether Karnataka Chief Minister has urged the Central Government to evolve a national policy on cloud seeding to help drought prone area of the country; and

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard?

State Government of Orissa's proposal to Central Government for flood-control

791. SHRI B.J. PANDA : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Orissa has taken special steps to control floods in river Mahanadi, Tel and Ib if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the State proposes to implement river interlinking projects and to construct barrages over river to control floods, if so, the details of the project with cost involved; and

(c) whether the State Government has submitted a proposal in this regard to the Central Government, if so, the status thereof?

Survival of Hirakud Dam

792. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that serious doubts are being raised about the survival of the world's longest earthen dam, the Hirakud;

(b) whether International Commission On Large Dams (ICOLD) has observed that lifespan of large dams could go down by 50 per cent in tropical areas;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the researchers have said that siltation will take its toll on the dam by 2030, 37 years earlier than its planned life; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take to prevent siltation of the dam?

NEW DELHI;
The 3rd December, 2003
Agrahayana 12, 1925 (Saka)

YOGENDRA NARAIN,
Secretary-General.

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