

RAJYA SABHA

List of Questions for WRITTEN ANSWERS

*to be asked at a sitting of the Rajya Sabha to be held on
Tuesday, the July 13, 2004/Asadha 22, 1926 (Saka)*

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

Total number of questions—68

Expansion of runway at Mangalore airport

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

(a) whether the expansion of runway of
Bajpe Airport at Mangalore has been taken
up;

(b) if so, what is the present status of
the work;

(c) by when it will be completed; and

(d) whether there is any proposal to
operate international flights once the
runway and expansion works are
completed?

Review of open sky policy

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

(a) whether Government have reviewed
the open sky policy, especially the
provisions relating to bilateral landing rights
being granted to various foreign airlines;
and

(b) if so, the results thereof and the fresh
guidelines proposed, if any, in this regard?

Financial performance of IA

236. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA:
Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be
pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian
Airlines has incurred a loss of Rs. 93 crores
in the first six months of this financial year;

(b) if so, whether the loss is expected to
increase in the second half of this year;

(c) what are the reasons for the high
losses of Indian Airlines this year;

(d) whether Indian Airlines is taking any
steps to reduce its losses; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Modernisation of Babatpur airport

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

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a
scheme to beautify and provide
afforestation at Babatpur airport in Uttar
Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether funds have been provided
for the said purpose;

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
 (e) by when beautification and afforestation is likely to be completed?

Concessional schemes of Indian Airlines

238. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Indian Airlines has attracted more passengers after the announcement of concessional fare schemes of travel between various cities;
 (b) if so, the details thereof for the last two months;
 (c) whether Indian Airlines has any proposal to announce more such schemes;
 (d) if so, the details thereof; and
 (e) what other commercial strategies do Indian Airlines have to get better seat occupation in its planes?

International airport status to Nagpur airport

†239. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to accord international airport status to Nagpur airport;
 (b) if so, the details thereof; and
 (c) by when a decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

Expansion and upgradation of air strips in Uttaranchal

†240. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of air strips in Uttaranchal and the number out of them, being used for regular flights;

(b) whether the State Government has sought assistance from the Central Government for their expansion and upgradation; and

(c) if so, the details of the assistance being provided by the Central Government in this regard?

Modernization of Delhi and Mumbai airports

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

- (a) whether any fresh initiatives have been taken recently to speed up the process of upgradation and modernization of Delhi and Mumbai airports; and
 (b) if so, the details thereof, including the phased time-bound programmes drawn up for completion of the projects?

Fleet acquisition plans for AI and IA

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

- (a) whether Government have reviewed the fleet acquisition plans of the Indian Airlines and Air India; and
 (b) if so, the results thereof and the fresh programme drawn up, if any, for fleet acquisition with a view to improving the competitive edge of the two airlines for their short and long-haul routes?

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Consumer-oriented Civil Aviation Policy

243. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently considered the question of laying down a consumer-oriented Civil Aviation Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken and being taken in the light of the new policy to make Civil Aviation services more consumer-oriented?

Private participation in airport modernization

244. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since reconsidered the question of modernization of international airports at Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore etc. through private participation;

(b) if so, the terms for such private participation;

(c) if so, what decisions have been taken in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken and being taken for implementation thereof?

Duty free shops at airports

245. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Airports Authority of India had invited applications from Indian/foreign companies for opening duty free shops at Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and at some other airports;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of Indian and foreign companies which submitted their applications in this regard;

(d) whether it is a fact that no Indian company was found suitable for the purpose and only two foreign companies were selected to open duty free shops at these international airports;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the criteria adopted for selection of companies in this regard?

FDI cap in airport modernisation

246. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that FDI cap in the joint venture companies for modernisation and restructuring of Delhi and Mumbai airports has been reduced to 49 per cent;

(b) if so, the details of promoters or financial institutions that are going to hold the remaining 51 per cent stake in the above project; and

(c) what measures AAI propose to take about the work force?

Valuables missing from baggages of passengers

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

(a) whether it is a fact that missing of valuables from inside the baggage of the passengers is on the rise;

(b) if so, the number of complaints received from passengers during the last three years, year-wise and airport-wise; and

(c) the details of efforts made or proposed to be made by AAI to curb this menace?

Improvement in flight safety record

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the year 2004 saw the poorest flight safety record in 50 years of civil helicopter operations in the country;

(b) whether the record has worsened due to violation of the operating norms laid down by Government and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, DGCA;

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to improve the flight safety record of helicopter operations; and

(d) whether the private airlines are the ones whose record in flight safety and maintenance of aircrafts is the poorest?

Irregularity in Centaur Hotel sale

249. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the CAG report in December, 2003 which found loss of Rs. 145 crore in the revenue in the course of sale of Centaur Hotel, Mumbai of Hotel Corporation of India;

(b) whether Parliamentary Standing Committee in its report to the Parliament on 10th March, 2003 had observed a number of irregularities in the above sale and recommended CVC enquiry;

(c) whether Government are getting the deal investigated by CVC or CBI, in view of the above; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Committee on facilitation

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Civil Aviation has suggested for creation of a Standing Committee on Facilitation under the Chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary to improve the inter-agency functioning;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Ministry has recommended for doing away with the immigration checks for incoming Indians and outgoing foreigners; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

Election to Board of IATA

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

(a) whether it is a fact that International Air Transportation Association (IATA) held its AGM at Singapore in June, 2004;

(b) whether it is also a fact that CMD of Air India failed to get elected/nominated as one of the Governors on the Board of IATA in the election;

(c) whether Government are aware that nominee of Jet Airways has instead been elected/nominated on the Board of IATA; and

(d) if so, to what extent the interests of National Carriers viz. Indian Airlines and Air India are likely to be adversely affected?

Requisition of land by Madhya Pradesh

†252. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the State Government of Madhya Pradesh has sought ten acres of land from Airports Authority of India; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government thereon?

Companies Act, 1956

253. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are preparing a concept paper for a comprehensive overhaul of Companies Act, 1956, to upgrade the legislation and to make it easy to interpret;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government are considering to set-up a National Company Law Tribunal benches as a part of this overhaul; and

(d) if so, the details of the States in which National Company Law Tribunals are proposed to be set-up?

Withdrawal of equity from NHB

254. SHRI S. M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Reserve Bank of India propose to withdraw its equity from the National Housing Bank;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what is the total holding of RBI in the National Housing Bank;

(d) whether RBI has given any specific reasons for this withdrawal; and

(e) if so, what are the details thereof?

Assistance to Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal

†255. SHRI SURESH BHARDWAJ: SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some of the States are not making full use of the Central assistance received under various schemes;

(b) the amount of assistance provided by the Central Government to the Government of Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal under various heads during the last three years;

(c) whether the State Governments have utilised the amount of assistance provided by the Central Government;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the heads under which this amount has not been utilised?

Collection of service tax

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

(a) whether Government would consider to grant the State Governments a major role in the collection of service tax;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether action will be taken to exempt tax on husk, plantation leaves and mats made of pandunas leaves and impose tax on rubber, pepper, cardamom, cashew and tea at the last point of purchase; and

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

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

Interest rate on farm loan

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

(a) whether Government have taken necessary steps regarding reducing the interest rates on agricultural loans keeping in view the financial condition of farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the details of the latest policy of Government in this regard?

Sale of RBI shares in NABARD

258. SHRI S. M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Reserve Bank of India has expressed its desire to sell its total share in NABARD to Government or some other agency;

(b) what is the value of the present share-holding of RBI in NABARD;

(c) what are the reasons for RBI's proposal to sell its shares in NABARD;

(d) whether Government are considering the request of RBI; and

(e) whether any decision has already been taken in this regard?

Withdrawal of RBI equity in SBI

259. SHRI S. M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Reserve Bank of India has decided to withdraw its equity in the State Bank of India;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have studied this proposal;

(d) whether it will be in the public interest to allow RBI to withdraw from holding equity in State Bank of India; and

(e) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to stop RBI from withdrawing from the ownership of State Bank of India?

Rural branches of banks

†260. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of branches opened by the Nationalised and Private sector banks in the rural areas of the country, besides urban areas during the last three years;

(b) whether Government are aware that financial activities in the rural sector are on the increase;

(c) if so, what initiatives have been taken for opening branches of banks in rural areas keeping in view the above; and

(d) the number of rural branches proposed to be opened during the year 2004 and by when the said target would be achieved?

Foreign debt

†261. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of increase in foreign debt during the last two years upto December, 2003 and the total foreign debt at present and to what extent it is more as compared to that in 1999 and 2000;

(b) the total international assets of Banks in the country by 2003 and to what extent they have increased or decreased as compared to those in 1999-2000; and

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(c) the market borrowings of Central Government by June, 2004 and to what extent they are less as compared to those in the last year?

Waiver of Central loans to States

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

(a) whether interest accrued on loans accounts for more than 10 per cent of the total State Government's expenditure;

(b) if so, the details as on date, State-wise, category-wise;

(c) whether a concept paper from the Planning Commission suggests the waiver of all Central loans granted to the States;

(d) whether Government would implement the above concept paper;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(g) the present status of Central loans granted to States, State-wise and category-wise?

Tax on income from agriculture

†263. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal to bring the income from Agriculture under the net of income tax is under the consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

Income-Tax Assesseees in Karnataka

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

(a) what is the number of Income-Tax Assesseees in Karnataka;

(b) whether PAN has been allotted to all Income-Tax Assesseees;

(c) if not, how many are yet to get the PAN;

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to give PAN to all IT assesseees in Karnataka; and

(e) the total revenue collected from Income-Tax from Karnataka during 2003-04?

Concessional loans by IDA

265. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether International Development Association (IDA), and affiliate of the World Bank, makes concessional long-term loans to its member countries;

(b) whether it is a fact that the IDA credits carry no interest charges but a service charge of 0.75 percent; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that the credit to India upto 30th July, 1987 is repayable in 50 years with a grace period of 10 years?

Enhanced bank credit for farmers

266. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently announced a package of debt relief and enhanced bank credit for farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof, indicating the total estimated bank debt outstanding against the farmers, indicating principal amount and the interest accrued thereon;

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(c) whether the package also includes one-time settlement of loans of all small and marginal farmers;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action so far taken in the light of the package?

Fraudulent claims of export incentives

267. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some cases of fraudulent claims of export incentives by export-import companies, under various export promotion schemes, have been unearthed by the Customs;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years;

(c) the amount involved in these frauds;

(d) whether some officials of the Customs have also been found involved in this fraud;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) the action taken against such unscrupulous officials of the Customs and the export-import companies involved in it; and

(g) the measures taken or proposed to be taken to ensure that such frauds are not committed again?

Black money in the country

†268. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that parallel economy of black money exists in the country;

(b) if so, the amount of money involved in this parallel economy; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to bring this money in the mainstream of the economy?

Declaration of dividends by banks

269. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Reserve Bank of India has barred banks with high bad loans and low capital from declaring dividends without its permission;

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

(c) the names of Nationalised Banks which fall in this category;

(d) the amount of dividend so far paid by these banks to Government during the last three years, year-wise;

(e) whether any of these banks have sought permission of the Reserve Bank of India for payment of dividend; and

(f) if so, the reaction of the Reserve Bank of India thereto?

Private equity investments

270. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Committee headed by Member, Planning Commission has recommended fresh norms for private equity investments; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

Loan for agriculture sector

†271. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have recently decided to enhance the amount of loan provided for agriculture to

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

the farmers by financial institutions to give relief to them;

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the total amount of loan fixed by Government for agriculture sector; and

(c) whether Government have made any assessment of loan amount required for the agriculture sector and if so, the details of that amount?

Revenue deficit

†272. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set a target to completely do away with the revenue deficit in the budget by the year 2008;

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

(c) the target fixed for each of the coming years to reduce the deficit to achieve this target?

Recovery of Taxes

273. SHRIDIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 684 given in the Rajya Sabha on 26th November 2002 and state:

(a) the total amount recoverable on account of Corporate Tax, Customs duty, Income Tax and Central Excise duty as on 31st March 2001, 31st March 2002, 31st March 2003 and 31st March 2004 (Provisional);

(b) whether any special effort is being taken to arrest the increasing trend of outstanding unrecovered taxes on above account, seen during the last few years;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Co-operative banks without licence

274. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as many as 419 Co-operative banks in the country are functioning without licence from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI);

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

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

Appreciation of Rupee

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the exporting community is putting pressure on the RBI to arrest the appreciation of Rupee as it is creating problems for exporters;

(b) whether it is also a fact that due to appreciation of Rupee, according to the NCAER, the over all export performance decelerated from 20.8 per cent in April-December, 2002 to 14.4 per cent in the corresponding period of 2003; and

(c) if so, what steps the RBI is taking in this regard?

Loan for non-agricultural purpose

276. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons seeking loans from different financial institutions for non-agricultural purpose in the year 2003-04;

(b) the number of non-agricultural loanees getting loans in the year 2003-04, State-wise;

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(c) the amount of subsidy provided for non-agricultural loanees in 2003-04; and

(d) what steps will be taken to increase the amount of subsidy to loanees in the year 2004-05?

Agricultural loans

277. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of middle-class farmers, marginal farmers and rich farmers who applied for agricultural loans in the year 2003-04;

(b) the number of farmers of different categories who actually received loans;

(c) the number of farmers of each category who were getting agricultural loans and were refused in the year 2003-04, State-wise; and

(d) the plans of Government to provide loans to the farmers in the year 2004-05?

GDP growth rate

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

(a) whether it is a fact that GDP growth rate is expected to grow over 8 per cent during the current fiscal;

(b) if so, the factors responsible for the same; and

(c) in what manner Government propose to cash in the growth in the international arena?

Foreign exchange reserve

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

(a) whether it is a fact that forex inflow has been continuing thus inflating Forex Reserve;

(b) if so, whether Government have arrived at a safe and optimum level to keep the Forex Reserves and utilize the balance for repaying the foreign debt;

(c) if so, details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Target of rural credit by banks

280. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite RBI stipulations, flow of credit to agriculture and other rural enterprises from commercial banks both in public and private sector has been unable to achieve the annual targets perennially;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps contemplated, if any by Government to ensure compliance of the target by the Banks; and

(d) the steps taken if any, for implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Joint Committee on Revitalisation Support to Co-operative Credit Structure headed by Shri Balasaheb Vikhe Patil as the then Union Minister of State for Finance?

Power Project of Kochi Refineries Ltd.

281. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of the proposed 500 MW Power Project by Kochi Refineries Ltd.;

(b) whether the necessary clearance for the Project has been granted by Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

(c) if so, whether India, Iran and Pakistan have agreed to set up this pipeline;

(d) if so, whether formalities in this regard have been worked out; and

(e) by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

Exploration of Oil

282. SHRIMATI VANGAGEETHA:
SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:

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

(a) whether any appraisal of the latest discovery of oil has been made;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether more oil has been struck in Barmer district of Rajasthan recently;

(d) if so, the details of the development plan proposed to explore more oil in Barmer district of Rajasthan; and

(e) the other potential fields in the new northern basin?

Protection of Indo-Iran gas pipeline

283. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan Foreign Minister has declared that his country would be glad to give guarantee for the security of proposed US \$3 billion gas pipeline that would stretch from Iran to India, crossing Pakistani territory;

(b) whether Pakistan Foreign Minister had proposed a meeting between officials of the two countries to discuss the issue of protecting pipeline in Pakistan;

Shifting of ONGC offices from Dehradun

†284. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some of the sub-offices of ONGC Headquarters at Dehradun have been shifted to some other places; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the justification for shifting these sub-offices to some other places?

ONGC's overseas acquisition

285. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the ONGC Videsh Ltd., the overseas investment arm of ONGC, has chalked out a comprehensive plan for acquisition of oil and gas fields abroad to augment the country's energy security;

(b) if so, the details thereof, including the likely project-wise investment and additional oil or gas potential expected therefrom; and

(c) the present status of similar major acquisition made during the last three years?

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

LPG stations in Bangalore

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

(a) the number of LPG filling stations functioning in Bangalore at present;

(b) whether Government are aware that autorickshaw owners in Bangalore are being put to hardship due to inadequate number of LPG filling stations; and

(c) the number of new LPG filling stations which are proposed to be opened in Bangalore?

Supply of gas through pipeline

287. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to supply Natural Gas through pipeline for domestic cooking purposes;

(b) if so, the quantum of gas produced and supplied during the last three years together with the details of areas covered under the programme;

(c) whether it is a fact that the target set for providing gas through pipeline has not been achieved in a number of areas, particularly in Delhi; and

(d) if so, the details of the steps proposed to be taken for improving the situation?

Indo-Iran gas pipeline project

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

(a) whether it is a fact that India and

Iran are discussing to lay a pipeline for transportation of gas to India;

(b) if so, the details of the project;

(c) whether it is also a fact that India expressed its concern over pilferage of gas in some of the countries enroute India;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether it is also a fact that Iran has agreed to bear 50 per cent cost of the project; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

Demand for LPG

†289. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that demand for LPG is constantly increasing in the country;

(b) if so, what was the demand of LPG during the year 2002-03 and 2003-04, separately;

(c) the estimate of its demand during the year 2004-05;

(d) the total quantum of LPG imported during the said period;

(e) its price during the same period, separately; and

(f) the countries from which gas was purchased along with country-wise rates?

ONGC Videsh's overseas projects

290. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ONGC Videsh has invested for exploration and production of crude oil in foreign countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(c) the terms on which these investments have been made, benefits expected and the risk factors involved?

National Gas Hydrate Programme

291. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that GAIL has taken up National Gas Hydrate Programme which can be a cheaper source of gas when compared to LNG to meet the needs of the country;

(b) whether any research centre has been set up in the area of gas hydrates; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Loss due to non-revision of oil prices

†292. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of loss being suffered due to non-revision of prices of petrol and diesel in domestic market despite hike in the prices of oil in international market; and

(b) the details of production and consumption of oil in the country, State-wise?

LPG agencies in U.P. and Delhi

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

(a) the total number of LPG agencies operating in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi;

(b) the number of consumers served by each of those agencies in these States; and

(c) the details of the number of LPG connections given by them during the last three years, district-wise?

Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar archipelago and Lakshadweep islands

294. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to throw open the restricted Andaman and Nicobar islands archipelago on the east coast and the coral lagoons of Lakshadweep islands on the west coast to private operators to build super resorts and luxurious hotels for the global, ritzy, ultra luxe traveller; and

(b) if so, the details of the proposed project and whether the national security aspects have been fully examined?

Development of tourist centres in Uttaranchal

†295. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the number of tourist destinations earmarked in the country which are proposed to be further developed for the benefit of tourists under the current Five Year Plan;

(b) whether such tourist destinations have also been identified in Uttaranchal with the help of Central assistance; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Promotion of health tourism

296. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government have any plan to promote health tourism in the country;

(b) whether any proposal for this purpose has been prepared by the Ministry of Tourism;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Ministry of Tourism has identified or targeted any section or sector to help in promoting Indian tourism in other countries of the world; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Toxic ground water

†297. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the level of ground water has gone down dangerously;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the ground water at many places has become toxic;

(c) if so, the district-wise details of the ground water in the country and the districts which are severely affected; and

(d) the number of districts in the country where ground water has become severely toxic, district-wise?

Completion of irrigation projects

298. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have announced a two-pronged strategy to complete the 26 pending irrigation projects on a fast track basis to benefit 17.6 lakhs acres and stabilize the existing cut of 41.54 acres;

(b) if so, whether any action plan in this regard has been worked out;

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

(d) by when it is likely to be implemented and completed?

Diversion of water from Mullaperiyar Dam

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

(a) whether Government are aware of any diversion of water through the Erachipalam duct of the Mullaperiyar Dam unauthorisedly by the neighbouring State;

(b) whether any study has been initiated on the leakage and the unauthorised diversion of water;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, whether action will be taken to protect the dam and the unauthorised diversion of water, if any, from the Mullaperiyar Dam?

River linking project

300. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present status of the river linking project to solve the drinking water problem of millions of people in the country;

(b) whether there is any proposal to divert the rivers of Western Ghats to eastern direction; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to declare rivers of Western Ghats as cultural heritage?

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

**Water management
policy**

‡301. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of measures taken by

Government in view of constantly growing problem of potable water; and

(b) whether Government are contemplating to formulate any appropriate policy in respect of water management?

NEW DELHI;
The 7th July, 2004
Asadha 16, 1926 (Saka)

YOGENDRA NARAIN,
Secretary-General.

‡Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

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