

RAJYA SABHA

List of Questions for WRITTEN ANSWERS

*to be asked at a sitting of the Rajya Sabha to be held on
Thursday, the August 19, 2004/Sravana 28, 1926 (Saka)*

(Ministries : Prime Minister; Agro and Rural Industries; Atomic Energy;
Coal and Mines; Communications and Information Technology;
External Affairs; Labour and Employment; Non-Resident Indians
Affairs; Ocean Development; Personnel, Public Grievances and
Pensions; Planning; Road Transport and Highways; Science and
Technology; Shipping; Small Scale Industries; Space;
Statistics and Programme Implementation)

Total number of questions — 155

National Advisory Council

1624. SHRI ARUN JAITLEY:
SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI:
SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a National Advisory Council has been constituted in June, 2004;

(b) if so, the details thereof including its legal and constitutional position and the organizational structure of the Council;

(c) the details of the expenditure earmarked, relationship with Prime Minister's Office, the objectives, functions, responsibilities, accountability and authorities, if any, entrusted to the said Council; and

(d) brief details about antecedents of individuals inducted as members thereof?

Cottage industries in Rajasthan and Punjab

1625. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA :
Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposals from the State Governments of Rajasthan and Punjab for developing Cottage Industries in the States;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the funds allocated for this purpose during the last three years to the States and the rate of development of Cottage Industries in the States?

Projects of Kerala Agro Industries Corporation

1626. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:
Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether many projects submitted by the Kerala Agro Industries Corporation are under the consideration of the Competent Authority;

(b) if so, the action taken thereon;

(c) if so, the details of such proposals under the consideration of the Competent Authority;

(d) whether there is any proposal for Agro Clinics and Agro Business Centres, establishing godowns in rural areas in Kerala; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Disposal of radio-active sources

1627. SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) is facing any problem in disposal of radio-active sources used for medical purposes in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the system of disposal of radio-active sources used by AEC in India?

FDI in mining sector

1628. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government have approved about Rs. 4,000 crores of foreign direct investment in mining sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the country had been deficient in high value minerals because of low investment and lack of advanced technology required for detailed exploration;

(d) whether Government are considering to provide incentives to boost private investment and to make industry more productive and competitive; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Terminal benefit to employees of Bharat Gold Mines Ltd.

1629. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 3,000 employees of Bharat Gold Mines Limited, which was closed in 2001, are yet to receive terminal benefit;

(b) whether Government had received any representation in this regard from the employees of B.G.M. Ltd.;

(c) whether Government are considering to provide revival package for B.G.M. Ltd.; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Employment to land losers in Basundhara West Project

1630. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an agreement was made on 16th January, 2001 regarding employment of land losers in Basundhara West Project; and

(b) if so, how many land losers have so far been appointed?

Setting up of coal washery by SECL

†1631. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) has provided land on lease to M/s. Iron Coal Benefication Private Limited to set up Washery;

(b) if so, whether SECL was authorised to provide the land on lease which was acquired for extracting coal;

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(c) whether permission was taken from State Administration to provide land on lease; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Jobs for ex-servicemen in CIL

† 1632. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any guidelines have been drawn up to provide the jobs for transportation for loading to ex-servicemen in Coal India Limited ;

(b) whether it is a fact that drivers of the vehicles should be ex-servicemen;

(c) whether all the drivers of the companies working under SECL are ex-servicemen and they should be Armed Forces personnel;

(d) if so, the number of ex-servicemen employees belonging to Army, Air Force and Navy that are working in companies under SECL; and

(e) the details thereof?

Seeping of sea water in Neyveli

1633. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is a fear of seeping in sea water in Neyveli region of Tamil Nadu due to pumping out of huge quantity of water from the Neyveli Lignite Corporation's mines;

(b) whether Government have conducted any survey to investigate the matter; and

(c) whether there are any norms with regard to the pumping of water from deep mines?

NALCO expansion plan

1634. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Aluminium Company (NALCO) has drawn up a Rs. 4000 crore expansion plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time-frame by which the expansion plan would be taken up and completed?

Production of Coal

1635. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total production of coal of various grades in the country, grade-wise;

(b) the total demand of coal of various grades in the country;

(c) whether the coal is imported;

(d) if so, the quantity of coal of various grades imported during the last three years, the value thereof and the countries from where imported, year-wise;

(e) whether the Coal India Limited has taken measures to reduce imports by augmenting production of coal;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) by when, India would become self-sufficient in this regard?

Employment to displaced persons by MCL

1636. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of land record holders displaced for mining operation by Mahanadi Coalfields Limited;

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(b) the number of such land oustee family provided employment and number of families left out till 31st March, 2004; and

(c) whether Government have any specific proposal to clear the backlog of such eligible persons selected by respective selection committee of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited within a specific period of time?

Vacant posts in BSNL and MTNL

†1637. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of posts of various categories lying vacant in different circles of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. as on 31st July, 2004;

(b) since when these posts are lying vacant and the details of the action taken by Government to fill the same; and

(c) by when, all these vacant posts are likely to be filled up?

Teledensity in the country

†1638. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the existing rate of teledensity in the telecommunication sector in the country, State-wise; and

(b) the details of the share of BSNL's telecommunication services provided in urban and rural areas of the country, State-wise?

Non-availability of cables in Bihar

†1639. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the telephone facility is not being provided to telephone subscribers of Bihar due to non-availability of cables for the last two years;

(b) if so, the number of applicants registered in the waiting list as on date, district-wise and by when, telephone facility would be provided to them; and

(c) whether Government propose to ensure immediate availability of landline service of B.S.N.L. at village level in all the districts of Bihar including Madhubani, if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

Telephone exchange capacity in Karnataka

1640. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the present capacity of the telephone exchanges in the State of Karnataka, exchange-wise;

(b) the number of phones presently lying out of order in the cities of the State during the last one year, till date; and

(c) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Circulation of counterfeit postal stamps etc.

1641. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the instances of detection of circulation of counterfeit postal stamps and circulation/encashments of fake Postal Orders, National Saving Certificates, Kisan Vikas Patras and other small saving instruments dealt with by the Post Offices in the country, till date; and

(b) the steps taken, if any, for precaution, prevention and detection of circulation of counterfeit postal stamps and other valued postal instruments, besides these small saving certificates?

Personal Accident Insurance for customers

1642. SHRINANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would introduce Personal Accident Insurance for customers who use Land-Line/WLL/Mobiles Services to attract more customers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Outsourcing of I.T. services

1643. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite outsourcing of IT services having become hot political issue in election-bound US, Microsoft is planning to expand its operations in India;

(b) whether the British based Colt Telecom has decided to transfer some 350 jobs to India from Germany by the end of the year 2004;

(c) whether Colt Telecom has also decided to shift another 250 jobs to India from its London Headquarters; and

(d) whether the NASSCOM has been promoting India as an ideal destination for global telecom and IT majors?

Tariff for domestic and mobile telephones

†1644. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the tariff for domestic telephones is higher than that for mobile phones;

(b) the per minute tariff differences between the domestic telephones and the mobile phones;

(c) the reasons for these differences; and

(d) the details thereof?

Non-availability of BSNL Sim Cards in AP

1645. SHRINANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the BSNL Sim Cards, for BSNL intending cellphone users, are not easily available anywhere in Andhra Pradesh due to their heavy shortage;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if so, whether Government would assure of supplying enough BSNL Sim

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Cards in view of heavy demand, at every centre, immediately before intending customers get diverted *en-masse* to other Private Communication Corporate Bodies; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Pre-paid and post-paid cell phones in AP

1646. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH. Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cell phones *i.e.* pre-paid and post-paid, which are working in Andhra Pradesh and in areas under Hyderabad District Telecom;

(b) the number of Cell Towers which are at present functioning in the twin cities of Hyderabad;

(c) whether there are any plans to increase them to improve signals;

(d) whether Government would assure of restoring three minutes or at least two minutes pulse rate for out-going calls from BSNL Land-Line Phones to BSNL cell phones;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

Capacity of telephone exchanges in U.P.

1647. SHRI VEER SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the present capacity of the telephone exchanges in the State of Uttar Pradesh, exchange-wise;

(b) the number of phones lying out of order in the cities of the State with specific

reference to districts of Moradabad and Jyotibaphule Nagar, exchange-wise, during the last year, till date; and

(c) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard specifically where WLL/landline connections are also not working?

Conversion of telephone exchanges into electronic

1648. SHRI SANTOSH

BAGRODIA:

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether all telephone exchanges in major cities in Rajasthan and Punjab have been converted into electronic;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when, the said conversion is likely to take place?

Withdrawal of facilities from All India SC/ST Telecom Employees Welfare Association

1649. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any letter or Office Memorandum was received by the Deptt. of Communications regarding withdrawal of facilities provided to earlier All India SC/ST Telecom Employees Welfare Association; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken by the MTNL Management thereon?

Public sector telecom growth

1650. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government owned telecom companies have failed to keep pace with the private sector in the country;

(b) if so, the facts and the details thereof;

(c) whether the telecom growth in private sector has increased manifold than that of public sector; and

(d) if so, the details of the plans formulated to increase the public sector telecom growth in the country?

Access to IT

1651. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is growing gap between the rich and the poor in terms of access to information technology;

(b) whether it is a fact that middle class people are not able to afford computers;

(c) what steps Government would take to make available at reasonable prices the simple computers with internet, e-mail and other simple functions;

(d) whether any effort has been made to make computers available within the reach of middle class ; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

Software export

1652. SHRI R. SHUNMUGA-SUNDARAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of States that are exporting Software, with State-wise details thereof; and

(b) what is the role of Software Technology Park of India in encouraging the States which are already exporting software and other States which have shown interest in this field?

Internet Hub at village post offices

1653. SHRI R. SHUNMUGA-SUNDARAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to provide internet hubs at village post office; and

(b) the number of post offices in rural areas which have e-mail or e-post facilities and how many additional post offices would be provided with these facilities in the current year?

Optical Fibre Cable in U.P.

1654. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to connect all sub-centres of Telecommunication Department in Uttar Pradesh with Optical Fibre Cable and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(b) whether the construction work of tower being installed to provide cellone mobile phone service in the rural areas of U.P. has been completed and if not, the reasons therefor and by when, it would be completed?

Tele-density

1655. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR:
Will the Minister of
COMMUNICATIONS AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be
pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that almost half of the country (*i.e.*, 13 out of 27 circles) has missed the telecom revolution and have a much lower tele-density than the pan-Indian average of 7.02 as on the 31st March, 2004;

(b) whether it is a fact that the telephonic penetration per 100 people in these 13 circles ranged between 1.5 and 5; and

(c) if so, the efforts Government propose to make so that the telecom revolution reaches everywhere?

**Reduction in the rates of private
lease-hold International
Telecommunication Lines**

†1656. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA:
Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be
pleased to state:

(a) whether Telecom Regulatory Authority of India proposes to reduce sharply the rates of Private Lease-hold International Telecommunications Lines (IPLC) with a view to making high transmission capacity lines affordable to promote a swift-accessible Internet in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when, the final decision would be taken in this regard?

**New telephone exchanges in
Uttaranchal**

†1657. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will
the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the places where new telephone exchanges have been opened in the State of Uttaranchal during the last three years;

(b) whether a new exchange has been opened at Sanglakoti in Pauri also;

(c) whether Government are aware of the fact that most of these exchanges including Sanglakoti exchange are not working properly; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to improve their services?

Criteria for postal facilities

1658. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN:
Will the Minister of
COMMUNICATIONS AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be
pleased to state:

(a) the details of the criteria for setting up post offices in both urban and rural areas;

(b) the number of villages in the country where post offices are required to be set up under the existing norms, State-wise;

(c) by when, Government propose to set up post offices in these villages; and

(d) whether Government would consider employing the EDs of the Postal Department in the proposed new Post Offices?

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Rental concession to senior citizens

1659. SHRI SANJAY RAJARAM RAUT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that MTNL is providing special concession to the senior citizen subscribers in the monthly rental;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are considering to provide special concession to B.S.N.L's senior citizen subscribers in the monthly rentals;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

Slump in export of computers

1660. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether export of computers has slumped during the year 2002-03 as compared to the year 2001-02;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that there is no decrease in export of computers in the coming years?

Development of Simputers

1661. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our companies have developed simputers and these are now in use in the country; and

(b) if so, the details of this latest model of computer and how far it would help us to record additional data and provide additional benefits to the users?

Spectrum Policy

1662. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) by when, Government are going to come out with a comprehensive policy on spectrum to redress the several problems that are being faced by the telecom operators;

(b) whether any consultations have been started by TRAI in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the outcome thereof?

Mobile phone sets in N.E.R.

1663. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of mobile phone sets in the North-Eastern States;

(b) the names of the sub-division of Tripura covered/not covered by mobile phones;

(c) whether the terrorist prone areas have been covered by mobile phones;

(d) whether all out efforts would be taken to cover the major towns of the State of Tripura within a shorter time-frame; and

(e) whether more sets of mobile phones would be made available for Agartala?

Rural telephone obligation

1664. PROF. ALKA BALRAM
KSHATRIYA:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI
REDDY:

Will the Minister of
COMMUNICATIONS AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be
pleased to state:

(a) whether Telecom Regulatory
Authority of India has proposed switching
over to revenue sharing regime for collection
of Access Deficit Charge, the money to be
paid by operators of BSNL for carrying
out rural telephone obligations;

(b) if so, whether this move could lead
to a fall in tariff especially from mobile
phones to fixed line phones;

(c) if so, to what extent this proposal
would be beneficial to the telephone users;
and

(d) to what extent, rural telephone
obligations would be met by this decision?

Merger of ITI Limited with BSNL

1665. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:
Will the Minister of COMMUNI-
CATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any letter was submitted
during the months of May-June 2004 to
the competent authority by the ITI
employees for merging ITI Limited with
BSNL as the production wing of the latter;

(b) if so, the action taken thereon;

(c) whether there is any attempt to
upgrade the technology level of ITI to the
required level;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether there is any attempt for

treating ITI Limited as the manufacturing
partner of M/s BEL in the implementation
of National ID Card project; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

**Speed post services at Gurusahaiganj,
Kannauj**

†1666. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will
the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the post
office situated in Gurusahaiganj of District
Kannauj has not been linked with All India
Booking Speed Post Service;

(b) if so, whether non-computerization
of the said post office is one of the factors
responsible for the same; and

(c) whether Government would take
necessary action to link the above said post
office with All India Booking Speed Post
Service by making the above post office
computerised?

**Telephone connections in Kannauj,
U.P.**

†1667. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will
the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
be pleased to state:

(a) the number of telephone connections
allotted in Gurusahaiganj, District Kannauj
(U.P.) out of the applications made between
March, 2002 to March, 2004 alongwith
the number of applications still in the
waiting list;

(b) the total capacity of the said
telephone exchange;

(c) the reasons for inordinate delay in
providing telephone connections;

(d) whether Government's attention has

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

been drawn towards the mismanagement prevailing and apathy of the employees to the public grievances in the said telephone exchange; and

(e) if so, whether Government would try to improve the system in the said telephone exchange by taking appropriate action in this regard?

Iraqi mission in Mumbai

1668. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have allowed Iraq to reopen its mission in Mumbai;

(b) if so, does it mean that India has recognized US backed interim Iraqi regime as sovereign one;

(c) whether Government are going to increase its mission's strength in Iraq; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Resolving outstanding issues between India and China

1669. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been recently any move either from the Chinese or from the Indian side to resolve all our outstanding issues including the Indo-China border dispute;

(b) if so, the details thereof including progress, if any made in this direction;

(c) if not, whether India would take any

initiative in this regard so as to stabilise our relations with China; and

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

Bilateral dialogues with Pakistan and USA

1670. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to have a comprehensive bilateral Indo-US and Indo-Pak dialogue;

(b) if so, whether it would cover all areas including trade, industry, tourism etc.; and

(c) what other plans are being formulated and implemented in this regard?

Indian hostage episode

†1671. SHRIMATI KUMKUM RAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of Indian hostage episode in Iraq Government would issue a list of those countries where the lives of Indian labourers or workers are in danger; and

(b) what measures Government are taking to avoid the recurrence of the problem like Indian hostage episode in Iraq; and

(c) the details thereof?

US Deputy Secretary's statement regarding India

1672. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US Deputy Secretary

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

of State Richard Armitage has made anti-India statements in Islamabad on his recent visit there;

(b) whether he discussed violation of human rights in Kashmir with Government as he claimed in Islamabad; and

(c) whether it is an interference in internal affairs of India by USA?

Trainers to Iraq

1673. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to send trainers to Iraq to help the present Government of Iraq;

(b) if so, how many people have already gone and how many are being sent, category-wise; and

(c) what steps have been taken for the protection of these people being sent to Iraq as trainers?

Helpline services and open houses for expatriates in Saudi Arabia

1674. SMT. KAMLA MANHAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia is setting up a 24 hour helpline for its expatriates in distress and our diplomatic mission in Riyadh and Jeddah are also in the process of organising open houses on every second Thursday of the month to settle the problems of their expatriates;

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

(c) the names of the other countries where Indian missions propose to start helpline services and conducting open houses?

Calling back of High Commission's officials

1675. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during April, 2003 the officials of the Indian High Commission in Mauritius were called back en-mass;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken, if any, to avoid recurrence of such development that warranted en-mass calling back of HCI officials, in future?

Foreign policy with regard to East

1676. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would consider evolution of a foreign policy for the East which will benefit the Eastern and North-Eastern States of the country;

(b) whether free trade among the Eastern Neighbouring Countries with India would be considered;

(c) whether any discussions have been held with the neighbouring countries in the East; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Collection of fingerprints of US visa seekers

1677. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY
SIRIGIREDDY:

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the embassy of US has recently made an announcement that from April, 04, two electronic fingerprints would be collected from visa-applicant;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is applicable to visas issued before July, 2004; and

(d) the details of the countries in which its biometrics in visas has been introduced by the people?

Indian labourers in Gulf countries

†1678. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that number of Indian labourers and employees are living in slave like conditions in the Gulf countries;

(b) whether some of mason labours, truck drivers are working under the contractors;

(c) if so, the number of such labours in the Gulf countries; and

(d) whether Government have provided any facility to them for their return to native place at their own will?

Racial discrimination against Indian nurses abroad

†1679. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that a discrimination is being made against Indian nurses and women in the foreign countries on the racial basis and they are also being deprived of promotions;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have discussed the matter with foreign countries, and if so, the details thereof?

Indo-China trade talks

†1680. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any talk with regard to increase in trade have taken place recently during Indo-China talks;

(b) whether there is any scheme with regard to reopening of Indo-China silk route; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Attempt to release Indian hostages in Iraq

1681. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite its avowed commitment to ideals of secularism, India has drawn a blank on its attempts to get three Indian hostages held in Iraq, released;

(b) whether India had explored the mediation of respected Muslim leaders like Yasser Arafat and other clergies, in pursuance of its mission; and

(c) whether India has information that the Iraqi kidnappers were not politically motivated jihadists, but extortionists looking for ransom money?

Negotiation for release of Indian hostages

1682. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of Indian nationals held hostages in Iraq;

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Indian embassy is the negotiator for the release of Indian hostages; and
- (d) if not, what efforts have been made to get the release of hostages?

Safety of Indians in Iraq

†1683. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by the Government for the safety of Indian citizens in Iraq after some citizens of Indian origin were taken hostages in Iraq;
- (b) whether Government have taken stringent measures for the safety of Indian citizens in other gulf countries in addition to Iraq; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

Unhelpful attitude of Indian Embassy in France

1684. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government are aware on 16th May, 2004 an Indian and his wife, while landing at Paris Airport, lost their return ticket, foreign exchange, credit card, and on his persistent request to Indian Embassy, no help whatsoever from Indian Embassy was given to this stranded Indian couple;
- (b) if so, the reason for this unhelpful attitude adopted by the Indian Embassy; and
- (c) what are the MEA guidelines to Indian Embassies in such cases?

Fishermen detained by Pakistan Security Agencies

1685. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI: SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government are aware that Indian fishermen and boats are being taken into custody by the Pakistan Security Agency while fishing;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the number of fishermen presently detained and boats confiscated by Pakistan Security Agencies including for Gujarat State;
- (c) the steps proposed to be taken to resolve this matter; and
- (d) whether Government are considering signing an agreement with the Pakistan Authorities on the lines of the agreement between India and Sri Lanka?

Losses to Delhi-Lahore bus service

†1686. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether D.T.C. bus from Delhi to Lahore is running almost unoccupied due to non-issuance of visa by Pakistani embassy in Delhi since two months and as a result D.T.C. is incurring heavy loss;
- (b) whereas the bus from Lahore to Delhi is running with its full strength of passengers as visa is easily issued by Indian Embassy at Lahore;
- (c) if so, whether Government have expressed its concern to Pakistan Government in this regard; and

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(d) if so, the Pakistan Government's reaction thereto?

Extradition of former Chairman of Union Carbide

†1687. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have issued notice on 6th May to Government of United States of America for repatriation of former Chairman of Union Carbide, Warner Anderson, who is also a prime accused responsible for Bhopal gas tragedy of 1984;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reply of the Government of United States of America in this regard;

(c) other steps being taken by Government for repatriation of Warner Anderson besides its paper work; and

(d) by when the said accused is likely to be repatriated?

Pendency of passports

1688. SHRI N.K. PREMA-CHANDRAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would consider to reduce the pendency experienced in processing passport applications;

(b) the number of applications pending in passport offices of Kerala with office-wise details; and

(c) whether Government would also consider to strengthen the district-wise facilities for the speedy disposal of passport applications?

Threats to Pakistan High Commission in India

1689. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that Pakistan High Commission in India is under threat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether other foreign Embassies/High Commissions are also under threat; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government for their protection?

Single visa travel for SAARC countries

1690. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to introduce single visa travel for all SAARC countries; and

(b) the details regarding the efforts made by Government in this regard?

Major non-NATO ally status to Pakistan

1691. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Government's reaction to United States decision to give Pakistan the status of their Major non-NATO ally;

(b) whether the same has been conveyed to the United States, if so, their response thereto;

(c) to what extent India would be under pressure strategically *vis-a-vis* their neighbour; and

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(d) in what manner Government propose to meet this situation?

Indian, Brazilian and South African foreign Ministers meeting

1692. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Foreign Ministers of India, Brazil and South Africa met in Delhi in March, 2004 to discuss matters of mutual interest;

(b) if so, the topics of discussions during parleys and decisions arrived at, particularly with reference to the scope of three countries being members of enlarged Security Council of the United Nations;

(c) by when the Security Council is expected to be enlarged to make it more representative of world opinion; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government to implement the decisions taken at the Delhi meeting referred above?

Safety of Indian students in Russia

1693. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a Youth Terrorist Group in Russia is targeting non-white foreigners, particularly students, studying in Russia which has spread a panic amongst Indian students in Russia; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken to ensure safety of Indians, particularly students in Russia?

Hostage truck drivers in Iraq

1694. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have seriously taken the issue of the three truck drivers held hostage in Iraq recently;

(b) whether Government have any report of the Indian working in Iraq in different fields; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Indians working in Iraq

† 1695. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that over 7,000 of Indians are earning their livelihood by means of various kinds of work in Iraq;

(b) if not, the exact number thereof and the kind of work they are engaged in;

(c) whether it is also a fact that most of them are interested in returning to India; and

(d) if so, the estimated number thereof and arrangements Government have made to bring them back?

Facilities for confidence-building measures

1696. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any efforts have been made or pressure put to persuade India by the US to resume talks at any point of time in the last six months;

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(b) the efforts made by India on its own to build confidence-building measures with Pakistan during the above mentioned period; and

(c) whether the same has borne fruit in the recent past?

Proposed rail link between New Delhi and Hanoi

1697. SHRIMATI PREMA

CARIAPPA:

SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering a proposal for rail link to connect New Delhi with Hanoi;

(b) if so, the complete details of the proposal with estimated cost to be incurred on the said proposal; and

(c) whether any agreement has been signed on the proposed rail link by the Indian Government with the Chinese Government during the recent visit of Prime Minister to China, and if so, the details thereof?

Efforts to get Indians released from Pak jails

†1698. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the efforts made by Government to ascertain the status of 930 civilians, 407 fishermen, 54 PoWs and 2 Indians detained in Pakistani jails alongwith the levels at which these efforts were made;

(b) whether Government are also taking the help of International Red Cross Society in the matter;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) since when the said 54 PoWs and other persons are languishing in Pakistani jails; and

(e) what is the condition of their health?

Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails

†1699. SHRI MOTILAL VORA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of political prisoners, general prisoners and fishermen released by India and Pakistan from their respective jails since 1.1.2003 till date;

(b) the basis on which they were released;

(c) names, addresses and other details of each person released;

(d) the number of years they were in Pakistani jails and the charges imposed on these persons; and

(e) the number and details of prisoners and fishermen who at present lodged in Pakistani jails?

Extradition of Quattrocchi

1700. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY

SIRIGIREDDY:

SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA

RAO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Federal Court of Malaysia dismissed the latest appeal to secure the extradition of Quattrocchi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Swedish Principal Investigation Officer of Bofors gave a statement that Quattrocchi

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

should be interrogated in the Bofors pay off case; and

(d) if so, what Government of India is planning to do in the light of the dismissal of appeal and Principal Investigating Officer's opinion?

Most favoured nation status to India by Pakistan

1701. SHRI RAMA MUNI
REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA
RAO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has indicated that very shortly it is going to confer the 'most favoured nation' status to India;

(b) if so, the details of the move; and

(c) in what way it would help India and Pakistan bilaterally to cement bilateral relations and also to increase the trade between the two countries?

Duping of Indian workers abroad

1702. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether several Indians duped in the Gulf on promise of good job but exploited on landing there; and

(b) the steps taken by Indian Embassy to assist such helpless persons in coming back to India?

Indo-China relations

1703. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether both India and China are seriously engaged to address the issues for improving the relations;

(b) if so, the total number of meetings held between the two Governments;

(c) if so, whether further discussion between Indian and Chinese delegations on border dispute was held recently;

(d) if so, at what stage the border issue is at present; and

(e) whether Chinese attitude in solving the border dispute has changed a lot and it is willing to compromise on all border issues?

Kidnapping of truck drivers in Iraq

1704. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether three Indian truck drivers operating in Iraq have been kidnapped by a militant group which has threatened to behead them unless India ensures that no Indian provides any kind of service support to the US army in Iraq;

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

(c) the measures taken by Government for safe release of these Indian truck drivers; and

(d) the success achieved in these efforts?