RAJYA SABHA

List of Questions for WRITTEN ANSWERS

to be asked at a sitting of the Rajya Sabha to be held on Tuesday, the April 26, 2005/Vaisakha 6, 1927 (Saka)

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

Total number of questions — 155

International Airport for Kolkata

3401. SHRI. N. K.
PREMACHANDRAN:
SHRI MANOJ
BHATTACHARYA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Japan has offered to build a state of the art international Airport for Kolkata:
 - (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) what is Government's response thereto?

Upgradation of Delhi Airport

3402. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government are seeking private sector participation in upgradation of Delhi Airport;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether upgradation of infrastructure is to be completed before the start of Commonwealth games; and

(d) if so, the details of the funds being provided for the purpose and when the work is likely to commence?

Removal of First Class seats in AI Flights

3403. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Air India has decided to remove First Class seats in their flights to benefit the Economic Class passengers; and
- (b) if so, whether the First Class seats are closed for commercial reasons?

Suggestions to boost aviation industry

3404. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have received any suggestions to give the much-needed boost to the Indian aviation industry; and
- (b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

Accidents involving small aeroplanes/ helicopters

†3405. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of reports of investigating Committees in connection with the accidents of small aeroplanes/halicopters having a single engine during last five years;
- (b) whether Government are implementing the recommendations of said reports;
- (c) whether the safety arrangements made by Government in this regard are at par with the international standards; and
 - (d) if not, the details thereof?

Under utilisation of cargo capacity of IA

3406. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: SHRI HARISH RAWAT: SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Indian Airlines aircraft cargo capacity remained unutilised in the last couple of years resulting into a loss of Rs. 369.25 crore;
 - (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps taken to check the declining trend in the carriage of cargo?

Estimated increase in passenger seats/

3407. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that with the introduction of more airlines, Indian Airports need more runway, exit routes and trained pilots to operate flights;
- (b) if so, the steps being taken by Government in this regard; and
- (c) what are the details of aircrafts crisscrossing Indian skies at present and what are the estimated increase in number of seats and ATR's during the next two years?

Extension of runway at LGB airport, Guwahati

3408. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the extension work of runway of Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoli International Airport, Guwahati has been completed for landing of Jumbo aircrafts to facilitate the Haj Pilgrims of 2006 of North Eastern Region to go to Jeddah directly, instead of taking them by small aircraft to Kolkata;
- (b) whether it is a fact that this year the Haj pilgrims had to wait at Kolkata Airport about 8 to 9 hours because of incompletion of runway at LGB International Airport, Guwahati; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Revision in Commission to agents of AI

- 3409. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that Air India suffered a huge loss due to suspension of sale of its tickets by the Agents of Air India from 1st April, 2005;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that Government have now agreed to revise the commission and also agreed to most of the demands of the Agents of Air India; and
 - (d) if so, the details thereof?

Establishment of new airports

- †3410. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that certain State Governments have sought permission to establish new airports in view of the increasing number of tourists;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and
- (c) the total expenditure likely to be incurred on this?

Availability of aeroplanes in comparison to the passengers

- †3411. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) whether the number of aeroplanes is much less in comparison to the demands of the passengers in the country;
- (b) if so, the number of new aeroplanes operationalised during the last five years; and

(c) the number of aeroplanes available in the country at present and the average daily operationalisation of the aeroplanes out of them?

Penalty on airlines on cancellation of flights

- 3412. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government are considering to impose heavy penalties on any domestic or international airlines who cancel their scheduled flights without proper intimation except bad climate;
 - (b) if so, by when it will be started; and
 - (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Operation of small airstrips

- 3413. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government are considering to enhance and make small airstrips operational in various parts of the country for flying of small passenger and cargo planes;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and how many districts will get benefit by air connectivity in the country; and
 - (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Extension of airstrips in Uttaranchal

- †3414. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government of Uttaranchal has sent any proposal to his Ministry for extension of airstrips and to make them

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

operational for regular air services apart from Dehradun Air Strip; and

(b) if so, the details of the proposals sent and whether Airports Authority of India is going to take over the development work of some of Airports of the State?

Refresher courses for helicopter pilots

- 3415. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government are aware that in U.S.A., refresher and training courses are compulsory for the Pilots and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether it is a fact that after the helicopter accident that killed former Lok Sabha Speaker G.M.C. Balyogi, Government decided to hold refresher and training courses for chopper pilots which never took off:
- (c) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and
- (d) what steps Government propose to take to ensure the safety of passengers travelling in choppers in the light of various crashes that took place during the last three years?

Anomalies in travel concessions to Senior Citizens

- 3416. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) whether some Senior Citizens have pointed out gross anomalies in 50 per cent travel concession being given to them;
- (b) if so, the details of anomalies with the reasons for not allowing the usual relief in the event of the patients travelling to seek medical assistance; and

(c) the number of Senior Citizens availed air travel concession on Indian Airlines in the last two years with purpose of travel?

Violation of traffic rights

- 3417. SHRI B. J. PANDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that certain airlines have been found violating the traffic rights;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government propose to rein in such airlines; and
 - (d) if so, the details of the action plan?

Retirement age of pilots

- 3418. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that the retirement age of Pilots was increased recently;
- (b) if so, what is the new retirement age; and
- (c) what is the international standard of retirement age for pilots including countries like USA, UK, France etc.?

Abandoned airstrips

- 3419. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) the details of abandoned/unused airstrips in the country, State-wise;
- (b) whether Government have any plan to repair and use all or some of these airstrips for commercial purposes; and
 - (c) if so, the details thereof?

Enquiry into helicopter accident in Saharanpur

3420. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether two Ministers of the Haryana Government were killed in a helicopter crash on 31st March, 2005 in Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government have instituted an inquiry into the helicopter crash;
 - (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Indian Air Force has offered its assistance in probing the helicopter crash; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereto?

Cargo handled by Chennai Airport

- 3421. SHRI R. SHUNMUGA-SUNDARAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:
- (a) the details of increase in export cargo from Anna International Air terminal, Chennai in the year 2005-06;
- (b) the details of international freight airlines which are carrying cargo from Chennai alongwith the cities connected by them; and
- (c) the plans for expanding the nearby non-metro airports in order to decongest the Chennai Airport?

Registered organizations under Society Registration Act

- 3422. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:
 - (a) the names of the organizations

- registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 in Bihar;
- (b) the purposes for which these organizations have been registered;
- (c) whether any such organization has been found working in violation of the aims and objects for which it was registered; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken against such organizations?

Non-payment of Investors' deposits by NBFCs

- 3423. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:
- (a) what is the number of complaints received against the Non-Banking Financial Companies for non-repayment of investors' deposits during the last two years;
- (b) the names of the companies against whom penal action has been taken by the Government for defaulting in repayment of deposits accepted by them; and
- (c) whether the depositors have since received their deposits and if so, the number thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Upgradation of e-Governance

- 3424. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government are planning to upgrade the e-governance in the Ministry of Company Affairs which will provide corporates and others easy and secure online access to all the services of this Ministry including filing and registration and to provide enhanced accessibility to company data to various stakeholders;

- (b) if so, what is its financial outlay and what is time-frame for completion of this upgradation;
- (c) whether incurring of this comparatively extra expenditure will be commensurate with the benefits likely to be achieved; and
 - (d) if so, the details thereof?

Revamping of exit norms for firms

- 3425. SHRI C. RAMACHAND-RAIAH: Will the Minister of COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to recast the exit norms to make it easier for out of business firms and directors who do not want to be associated with firms; and
- (b) if so, the complete details of the proposals being considered by Government?

Inflation rate

†3426. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that inflation rate had been 8.7 per cent during the month of August in the year 2004-2005;
- (b) if so, how much it was more in comparison to the inflation rate in the beginning or at the end of the year 2004-2005; and
- (c) the reasons for being the highest in the month of August?

Interest rates on educational loans

- 3427. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) the details of interest rates that are being charged by various institutions for education purpose;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the Planning Commission expressed its opinion to slash the interest rates on educational loans to make them more affordable;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that the Planning Commission has proposed to give Income Tax relief on such borrowings; and
- (d) if so, action contemplated by Government in this regard?

Guidelines on VAT by the Empowered Committee

- 3428. SHRI DARA SINGH CHAUHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government are aware that clear guidelines with respect to implementation of VAT in case of industrial catering services have not been issued by the Empowered Committee on VAT;
- (b) whether it is a fact that in-house catering wherein the employer provides food to the employees of the company have also been brought under VAT by some State Governments:
- (c) if so, the reasons for this distortion and anti welfare measure;
- (d) whether steps being taken to correct this anomaly; and
 - (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Guidelines for giving educational loans to students

3429. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the rules/guidelines laid down by Nationalised Banks for giving educational loans to students;
- (b) the amount earmarked by banks for this purpose for the year 2005-2006; and
- (c) what is the remedy available to poor students/parents who are denied educational loan on grounds of surety, assets etc. by the banks in violation of guidelines?

Misappropriation of funds earmarked for farmers

†3430. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the loans given to farmers of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh by district co-operative banks and various finance agencies in States are insufficient to meet the needs of these farmers;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that the employees of the said banks cheat the farmers by misappropriating funds;
- (d) if so, total number of complaints received during the last two years; and
- (e) the details of action taken on the said complaints?

Development of Economy

3431. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that India has opened up its economy for global capital floors as outlined by the Prime Minister;
- (b) if so, what are the areas of foreign investment which India is envisaging for development of Indian economy?

Regional disparities in States

3432. SHRI R. K. ANAND: SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that regional disparities in the States had increased during the last decade;
- (b) if so, what are the reasons and how they can be removed;
- (c) in the light of the above, whether the scope of the Finance Commission will be enlarged in order to reduce the interference of the Centre in the financial management of the States and the discretionary transfers;
- (d) whether Finance Commission would be accorded permanent status; and if not, the reasons for the same?

Imposition of Excise duty on MRP

3433. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have announced imposition of a levy of Excise duty on the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) of drugs/medicines with an abatement of 35 per cent;
- (b) whether Government have, in the process, factored in the post-production expenses incurred by pharma companies; and

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(c) whether this change-over from excise on transfer price to excise on MRP would entail re-packaging/marking of revised prices, on the stocks lying in factories as required under Drug Price Control Order regulations?

Finance Minister's meeting

- †3434. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that the issue of VAT was discussed in the VAT and the pre-Budget 2005-06 discussions in the meeting of the Central and State Finance Ministers held on 3rd February, 2005; and
 - (b) if so, the details thereof?

Employment for unemployed youth in Nagaland

3435. SHRI T.R. ZELIANG: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government are aware of special package announced during 2003 for employment of 25,000 unemployed youths in Nagaland;
 - (b) if so, the steps taken thereto; and
 - (c) if not, the reason therefor?

Direct tax arrears

3436. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the arrears of income tax, corporate tax, direct and other indirect taxes for the year 1997-98 to 2004; year-wise;
- (b) whether any action has been taken to collect the arrears;
 - (c) if so, the details thereof; and
 - (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Policies of banks towards rural people

3437. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

- Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether the Ministry of Rural Development has expressed unhappiness over policies of banks towards rural people;
- (b) whether Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna of Government did not do well in some areas because of some bank branches;
- (c) if so, whether the Ministry of Rural Development has approached the Finance Ministry to urge banks to provide liberal loans to rural poor; and
- (d) if so, what is the reaction of his Ministry and banks?

Central assistance for infrastructural development programme of North Karnataka

3438. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: SHRI LALIT SURI:

- (a) whether the State Government of Karnataka has submitted any proposal seeking central assistance for implementing the D.M. Nanjundappa Committee recommendations on regional imbalances;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the State Government has requested the Planning Commission to meet half the expenditure suggested by Nanjundappa Committee; and
- (c) what is the demand/proposal from Government of Karnataka to take up infrastructural development programme for North Karnataka?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Investment in retail section

3439. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that various PSUs had reserved a substantial quantity of shares in retail investors investing upto Rs. 50,000 last year;
- (b) whether this practice is not being followed by private sectors; and
- (c) if so, what steps are being taken by SEBI to ensure that small investors in retail section investing upto Rs. 50,000 are allotted a substantial quantity of shares in private sectors also?

Amount deposited in Regional Rural Banks

†3440. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Regional Rural Banks are scheduled banks;
- (b) if so, whether such an information has been issued to all the Government departments and their attached departments;
- (c) whether Government and semi-Government departments and institutions deposit their money in these banks; and
- (d) if so, the deposited amounts of Government in all the 196 regional rural banks till 31st March, 2004 alongwith the bank-wise details thereof?

Rates of Taxes on items under VAT system

†3441. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA: DR. MURLI MANOHAR

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that to determine tax under value added tax system which has been implemented since April 1, 2005; the rates have been fixed as 0.1 per cent, 4 per cent, and 12.5 per cent;
 - (b) if not, the facts thereof;
- (c) the details of the items selected under each of the above categories; and
 - (d) the grounds for the above selection?

Waiver of loans to Karnataka and Orissa

3442. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: SHRI B.J. PANDA:

- (a) whether it is a fact that State Government of Karnataka has made a request for waiver of their loan and readjustment of high rate of interest;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government would also extend this facility to the cash-strapped State Orissa which is under unsustainable debt burden; and
- (d) if so, the details of the relief proposed to be offered to Orissa State?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Production of growth rate

3443. SHRI MANOJ
BHATTACHARYA:
SHRI N.K.
PREMACHANDRAN:
SHRI KARNENDU
BHATTACHARJEE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government's attention have been drawn to the reported statement of the PM that even with the most optimistic projections, the average growth rate in the next few years is not likely to cross seven per cent;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and reasons for this pessimism; and
- (c) whether Government have any special proposal for a higher growth rate and if so, the details thereof?

Provision of residential telephones to the officers

- †3444. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that Government provide residential telephones to the officers;
- (b) whether it is also a fact that Government take over such telephones and reimburse bills of such officers who already possess these phones;
- (c) if so, whether Government will also reimburse the telephone bills of such officers who have taken connections from private companies and pay monthly rent of Rs. 75/- but the pulse rate of such phones is 99 paise, slightly more than MTNL:
 - (d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefore?

Credit flow to SSI sector

3445. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) what is the credit flow to SSI sector from public sector Banks bank-wise and State-wise during the last three years; and
- (b) what are the efforts made by Government to improve upon the flow of credit to SSI sector?

Road map for banking reforms

3446. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

- (a) whether his Ministry has decided to set up a regulator for the pension sector and announced a road map for banking reforms which include allowing 74 per cent FDI in private banks;
- (b) whether according to the Common Minimum Programme there was need to strengthen financial sector regulators and run them professionally to foster competition;
- (c) if so, what are the steps Government propose to take for preparing a road map for banking reforms; and
- (d) by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Speedy clearance of applications received under section 35AC of the Income Tax Act

3447. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) what are the total no. of applications received by the Income-Tax Department annually for clearance under section 35AC of the Income Tax Act for various projects;
- (b) what is the time taken to clear such proposals;
- (c) whether it is a fact that many proposals are pending for more than a year or so for clearance;
- (d) what are the reasons for such undue delay for clearance of these proposals; and
- (e) what steps are being taken to speed up the clearance of the pending proposals?

Disbursement of agricultural credit

3448. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) what has been the performance of the Nationalised Banks regarding disbursement of agricultural credit in the last two financial years and so far during the current year; and
- (b) whether the disbursement was below 40 per cent norm and if so, the reasons therefor?

Charging of higher rate of interest from SSI sector

†3449. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a relatively

higher rate of interest is being charged by the commercial banks from the small scale industry sector while disbursing them loans as compared to the big industries;

- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the commercial banks are complying with the guidelines prepared by the Reserve Bank of India while sanctioning loans to the small scale industries;
- (d) if not, whether they would be compelled to follow the guidelines of the Reserve Bank of India; and
- (e) if so, by when and if not, the reasons for charging a relatively higher rate of interest from the small scale industries?

Committee to look into cost of obtaining MAPIN

3450. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR:

- (a) whether Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) have constituted a Committee to look into the coverage and cost of obtaining Market Participants and Investors Identification Number (MAPIN) for the market participants and investors;
- (b) if so, what is the composition and terms and reference of the Committee;
- (c) whether certain agents are still carrying out the registrations when the main issues including the issue of overcharging of registrations are being discussed by the Committee; and
- (d) if so, whether SEBI will issue directions to agents for termination of registrations till the report of the Committee is finalized and if not, the reasons therefor?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Profit earned from US-64

3451. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: DR. AKHILESH DAS: SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government in bailing out the US-64 small investor of the crisis through a package in 1999 and 2003, made a huge profit of over Rs. 2,800 crore; and
- (b) if so, whether Government have drawn out any scheme to equitably distribute this profit amongst the small investors to whom it legitimately belongs and the details of such scheme?

Service tax and VAT on industrial catering

3452. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: SHRI DARA SINGH CHAUHAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether both service tax and VAT are applicable on industrial catering where the employer serves food to its employees in company premises as part of staff benefit;
- (b) if so, the rationale behind imposition of both the taxes on such in-house catering wherein food is prepared for company employees only and is not meant for outside sale;
- (c) the steps being taken to rectify this anomaly, which has created confusion and rethinking in industrial houses providing food to their employees due to increasing tax burden; and
- (d) if so, by when clear direction in this regard is likely to be issued?

Tax dues against ITC

†3453. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA: SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that an amount of Rs. 803 crores as tax was outstanding against tobacco trading company, ITC;
- (b) if not, the details of amount which Government have sought from the said company:
- (c) whether it is also a fact that as per the agreement between Government and said company only Rs. 350 crores have been paid; and
 - (d) if so, the details thereof

Growth rate of GDP

†3454. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI: SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

- (a) whether Government are aware that the growth rate of Gross Domestic Product of the country has declined to 6.2 per cent in the third quarter of 2004-05 and if so, the extent of adverse effect of this decline on the growth rate of the whole year;
- (b) the reasons for decline in pace of growth rate in the third quarter of the year 2004-05 and the measures being explored for its compensation;
- (c) the percentage of growth rate of the whole year in the year 2004-05 and to what extent this rate is less in proportion to the target of Tenth Plan; and

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(d) the steps being taken to achieve the growth rate fixed for the Tenth Plan?

Government borrowings from market

†3455. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: DR. MURLI MANOHAR IOSHI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government have taken a decision to borrow Rs. 83,000 crores from the market only in the first six months of the year 2005-06;
 - (b) if so, the facts in this regard;
- (c) the reasons for borrowing such a huge amount of loans in the very beginning of the year;
- (d) whether it is also a fact that the economy of the country would also be affected by borrowing this amount from the market; and
 - (e) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

Rise in prices due to VAT

†3456. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that there would be rise in prices as a result of implementation of VAT;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that not only traders but the people at large would also be affected by the same;
- (d) if so, whether Government are considering to take any measure to bring

consensus among the traders in this regard;

(e) if so, by when and the details thereof?

Restructuring of ailing Co-operatives

3457. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether he has discussed at length the task force report on restructuring of ailing Co-operatives in India;
- (b) if so, whether the task force had observed that any financial restructuring without tracing the root cause of weakness of Co-operatives would not result in a sustained revival of the system;
- (c) if so, whether it had recommended number of measures to be taken;
- (d) whether he has accepted recommendations of the task force; and
- (e) by when, they are likely to be implemented?

FDI in PSUs

3458. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: SHRI MATILAL SARKAR:

- (a) the number and the names of Government undertakings where FDI has entered during the current year;
- (b) the names of Government sponsored organisations where foreign direct investment has increased during the current financial year; and

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(c) the reasons behind these occurrences?

P.L.R. based interest rates

†3459. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Reserve Bank of India has not framed clear guidelines regarding interest rates based on P.L.R. due to which banks are recovering interests from P.L.R. arbitrarily;
- (b) whether P.H.D. Chamber of Commerce and Industry has also raised similar demand:
- (c) if so, whether Government would take any concrete steps in this direction keeping in view the interests of small scale industries and small debtors; and
 - (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Income Tax collections in Andhra Pradesh

3460. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the total Income Tax collections in Rajahmundary and Tanuku in Andhra Pradesh in 2003-04 and 2004-05;
- (b) what were the targets for these two towns;
- (c) whether Government have issued directions to ensure that assesses are treated with maximum respect in these areas;
- (d) details of such directions given to the respective officers; and

(e) steps proposed to improve the image of the department all over the country?

Uniform sharing of tax burden

3461. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government are aware of the protest against higher personal tax rates, particularly from the salaried class;
- (b) whether it is a fact that non-salaried people with comparable or even higher living standard end up paying just nominal tax, which is much less compared to the tax paid by the salaried class; and
- (c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to ensure that the people from service/business/profession are made to share tax burden uniformly?

Circulation of fake currency notes

- †3462. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that some foreign anti-social elements are spreading their network by introducing fake Indian currency of different denominations in the markets across the country specially in the State of Bihar and in the North-Eastern border areas thereby creating a possible danger of a parallel economy in the country; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the effective steps taken so far by Government in this regard?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Merger and consolidation of banks

3463. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government propose to initiate merger and consolidation of the Public Sector Banks;
- (b) the details of different aspects of merger of Public Sector Banks in relation to the public interests; and
- (c) how Government propose to safeguard the present pattern of networks of banks spreading upto the village level and the flow of credit to the rural people?

Review of borrowing norms by Secondary Market Advisory Committee

3464. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that SEBI has asked its Secondary Market Advisory Committee to review the existing norms for the borrowing and lending programme for securities;
- (b) whether it is a fact that SEBI has stopped renewing the licences given to entities which were allowed to provide the above facility earlier; and
 - (c) if so, the reasons behind this move?

Increase in retail investors in IPOs

3465. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has decided to increase the retail investors' portion in IPOs to 35 per cent from the current 25 per cent; and
 - (b) if so, the details thereof?

JBIC's aid for slum improvement in Karnataka

- 3466. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether the State Government of Karnataka has submitted a proposal for obtaining funds from JBIC for slum improvement and rehabilitation of certain major cities and towns of Karnataka; and
- (b) if so, the details in this regard and the present status of the proposal?

Loans to unemployed youth in Uttaranchal

†3467. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the loans granted to unemployed youth under various Central schemes by the Banks operating in State of Uttaranchal during the last two years;
- (b) whether the targets fixed in this regard have been achieved by these Banks; and
- (c) if not, the steps being taken by the Ministry to get the target achieved by these banks?

Exemption of Hindu temples from Income Tax

- 3468. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether the Central Government has received any proposal from the State Government of Karnataka to amend Section 10(23BRA) of the Income Tax to exempt Hindu temples from Income Tax Act;
 - (b) if so, the status of the same; and

(c) the reasons for the long pendency of the said proposal?

Privatisation of Public Sector Banks

- 3469. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government have received suggestion for privatisation of Public Sector Banks:
 - (b) if so, the details thereof; and
 - (c) Government's reaction thereto?

Loans to SCs/STs/OBCs by Banks

3470. SHRI T.R. ZELIANG: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of steps taken by Government to simplify its policy for providing loans to SCs, STs, OBCs, small and marginal farmers, labourers and poor educated/uneducated unemployed youths through the Banks in the country;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the number of applications received and sanctioned for granting loan by Nationalised Banks under various selfemployment schemes during the last three years, State-wise?

Premium fixed income to pensioners

- 3471. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that despite privatisation of Insurance Sector, there is no premium fixed income product available from the insurance sector;
- (b) whether it is a fact that this has adversely affected the LIC products which offered one-time premium fixed income to the pensioners; and

(c) whether his Ministry would advise Insurance Sector to devise a product with one-time premium and minimum assured income to address the concerns of the pensioners?

Termination of MIP 2000 Scheme of UTI

- 3472. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that the Monthly Income Plan-2000 (second) scheme of Unit Trust of India (UTI) has been terminated on 31st March, 2005;
- (b) if so, what are the reasons for not refunding the principal amount of the above scheme to unit holders after its termination:
- (c) whether UTI will give interest on the delayed payment after 31st March, 2005 to unit holders; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor and by when the unit holders will get their principal amount?

Implementation of VAT

- 3473. SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether clear instructions have been issued for implementation of VAT to States who have already agreed to implement VAT from April 1, 2005;
- (b) whether any common list is under preparation of various items put under VAT particularly for complete exemption and under 4 per cent category and if so, the details thereof: and
- (c) whether in order to maintain uniformity across the country particularly

for items under 4 per cent exemption category, Government propose to advise the State Governments and if not, the reasons therefor?

Opening of branches of NABARD in Tamil Nadu

3474. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is proposed to set up office/branch of NABARD in various cities in Tamil Nadu:
 - (b) if so, the details thereof; and
 - (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

World Bank report on Fiscal Reforms

3475. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the World Bank in their report 'State Fiscal Reforms in India' has outlined certain measures to prevent serious fiscal deficit;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of recommendations made in this report for poverty eradication?

Closing down of District Co-operative and Agricultural Development Banks

†3476. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the names of District Co-operative and Agricultural Development Banks in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh which have been ordered to be closed down during the last three years;
 - (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
 - (c) number of beneficiaries, investors

and employees affected thereby; and

(d) the action being taken to reopen these banks?

Levy of Income tax on profits of sale proceeds of DEPB

3477. SHRI SURESH BHARDWAJ: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a letter from the Ministry of Commerce was received by him wherein the issue of levy of income tax on the profits of sale proceeds of DEPB has been raised;
- (b) whether the large number of small and medium exporters are affected by the issue of levying of Income Tax which is causing a serious concern to them; and
- (c) if so, the steps being taken to solve the matter?

Promotion of officials of excise and customs Deptt./Income Tax Deptt.

†3478. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Group 'A' Officers of Income Tax Department and the Department of Central Excise and Customs are promoted after four years but Group-II and Group-III Officers remain deprived of promotion and if so, the reasons for such anomaly in the matter of promotion in the same Department;
- (b) whether Government propose to take any initiative for removing this anomaly and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether the Central Board of Direct Taxes is going to take any action in this regard, if so, the details thereof?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Smuggling of containers from Kochi port

- 3479. SHRI N. K. PREMA-CHANDRAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether any instance of smuggling of containers from Kochi port in Kerala by defrauding Customs and Central Excise has been brought to the notice of Government;
- (b) whether Government have conducted any inquiry into the matter and if so, the outcome of such inquiry thereof;
- (c) whether Government suspect any rackets behind forgery and whether the defrauding affects the internal security of the country; and
- (d) whether Government are considering that the existing system of clearance procedure requires modifications in view of the above incident and if so, the details thereof?

Tax on salt

3480. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that salt is still taxed by the Centre and State Governments in the form of sales tax, rent as land given to salt pans, royalty etc.;
- (b) if so, the details of above tax, royalty etc. imposed on per metric tonne of salt and rent collected per annum, per acre of land given to salt pans for last three years, year-wise, State-wise and category-wise;
- (c) whether steps will be taken to exempt salt from tax in the light of the Seventy fifth anniversary of "Dandi March";
 - (d) if so, details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

Financial crunch in Bihar

- 3481. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that Bihar is facing financial crunch:
- (b) if so, what contingency and longterm plans are being made to meet the situation; and
- (c) the details of suggestions/requests received by the Central Government in this regard; and the action taken thereon so far?

Powers to excise authorities to attach assets

- 3482. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government propose to arm excise authorities with powers to provisionally attach assets including property when assessments are still in process;
- (b) if so, whether a separate Bill to this effect is being introduced in Parliament; and
- (c) whether Government would provide adequate safeguards to prevent any possible misuse of these powers by excise authorities?

FDI inflow compared to China

- 3483. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that China attracts about 10 times more Foreign Direct Investment than India;

- (b) if so, the details of the FDI in both the countries during each of the last two years and the reasons for China attracting more FDI than India;
- (c) whether Government have contemplated any steps to attract more FDI into the country; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Micro-insurance project

- 3484. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) the salient features of the micro-insurance project;
- (b) the target beneficiaries of micro-insurance project;
- (c) whether this micro-insurance project is already being implemented;
- (d) if so, the details of the implementing agencies and the number of persons insured during the last two years, State-wise; and
 - (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

Use of forex reserve for creation of infrastructure

- 3485. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to utilise a portion of forex reserve for creation of infrastructure;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that IMF Chief is not in favour of such a proposal;
 - (d) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the final decision taken by Government in this regard?

Implementation of VAT

3486. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that VAT has been implemented w.e.f. 1st April, 2005 but the concerned State Governments have not issued notification to that effect before the crucial date:
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) whether VAT will be implemented by different State retrospectively?

Waiver of interest on agricultural loan

- 3487. SHRI N. R. GOVINDRAJAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government have any proposal to waive interest on agricultural loan and convert it into long term loan to help out the drought hit farmers in various States in the country; and
 - (b) if so, the details thereof?

Illegal money transfer through Internet banking

- 3488. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that fraud cases of illegal money transfer through Internet banking have come to the notice of Government; and
- (b) if so, what measures have been taken/ are being taken to protect the interest of the account holders?

Rate of interest on EPF

- 3489. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government propose to enhance the rate of interest applicable to Employees' Provident Fund to 9.5 per cent;
- (b) if so, whether necessary orders have been issued in this regard; and
- (c) whether as a goodwill gesture to the senior citizens, the rate of interest in respect of the Senior Citizen Pension Bonds would also be increased to 9.5 per cent and if so, by when the orders are likely to be issued to give comparable benefits to the pensioners?

Action against striking bank employees

3490. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details regarding the strikes by the staff and officers of Nationalised Banks in the country during the last one year as a result of which public had to face great difficulties:
- (b) the reasons for strikes by the staff and officers of concerned banks;
- (c) whether Government have taken any action against such bank employees; and
 - (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Facilities to Panchayats

- †3491. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Central Government is considering to provide facilities for

- enforcing the Panchayati Raj Act;
- (b) whether it is also a fact that Government are providing funds to some metropolitan cities of Uttar Pradesh;
 - (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether Government would provide funds for betterment of gram panchayats and metropolitan corporations of Uttar Pradesh; and
 - (e) if so, in what manner and by when?

Development of community centres through Panchayats

- 3492. SHRI C. RAMA-CHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government are contemplating to encourage community development through Panchayats in the country;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government have drawn any plans or schemes for the development of community centres which can provide drinking water, healthcare services and free education to poor section of the society;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Production of petroleum products in Rajasthan

- †3493. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:
- (a) the area of Rajasthan where the largest reserve of petroleum substances has been found;

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

- (b) the estimated capacity of crude oil reserves found in Barmer region of Rajasthan;
- (c) by when, the production of petroleum products is likely to be started from these reserves; and
- (d) the share of Rajasthan in the profit of this production and details thereof?

Mixture of Hydrogen Gas with Natural Gas

- 3494. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that Hydrogen Gas in being mixed with Natural Gas for being used for fuel purposes;
 - (b) if so, the details in this regard; and
- (c) what are the advantages/benefits accruing out of mixture of Hydrogen Gas in Natural Gas and its efficacy as efficient fuel?

Increase in prices of crude oil

†3495. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA: SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that due to increase in prices of crude oil in the international market on April 4, 2005 and also due to Governments' tax, the prices of diesel and petrol are likely to increase in the country; and
- (b) if so, the amount of extra money to be collected per litre in the form of tax on

petrol and diesel in the country as a result of price rise in international market?

Smuggling of High Speed Diesel

3496. SHRI SANTOSH
BAGRODIA:
SHRI HARISH RAWAT:
SHRI K.B. KRISHNA
MURTHY:
SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that huge quantity of High Speed Diesel (HSD) is being smuggled into the country from Gulf and is being sold of petrol pumps after adulterating it with kerosene oil;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto; and
- (c) the quantum of HSD that has been smuggled into the country during the last two years?

Asian Gas Grid

3497. SHRI R.P. GOENKA:
SHRI ANAND SHARMA:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA
RAO:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY
SIRIGIREDDY:

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

- (a) whether Government are considering a proposal to set up an Asian Gas Grid;
- (b) if so, the details of the proposal and the names of countries that will constitute the proposed grid; and
- (c) in what manner it would help India in meeting its petroleum requirements?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Change in oil exploration licensing policy

†3498. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

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

- (a) whether Government are considering to brings changes in oil exploration licensing policy;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government are considering to introduce single window facility for the convenience of the investors;
- (d) whether Government have received any complaints from the investors; and
 - (e) if so, the details thereof?

HPCL's policy on disposal of oil stock

†3499. SHRI ISAM SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of petrol pumps renovated by Delhi division of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (H.P.C.L.) in Delhi during the last three years;
- (b) whether old stock has been deposited in godowns;
- (c) whether any scrap Committee was constituted to sell the old stock;
- (d) the amount desposited in H.P.C.L. after sale of the scrap during the last three years;
- (e) whether it is a fact that the old stock has not been deposited in godown and also the money has not been deposited in the company after sale of the scrap and where has the old stock gone; and

(f) the rules of H.P.C.L. company to dispose off the old stock?

Transfer of oil and gas blocks to private companies

3500. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of oil or gas blocks, discovered by ONGC and other related PSUs which have been transferred to private multinational companies through open bid;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the development cost incurred by the PSUs are not being realised from the private and multinational companies; and
- (c) whether it is also a fact that private and multinational oil companies are enjoying extra benefits through waiver of social responsibilities of PSUs?

HPCL's refinery project in Saudi Arabia

3501. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the HPCL is considering to set up refinery facility in Saudi Arabia;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that OVL and LOC were considering the prospect of exploration and protection in the field of Natural Gas sector;
 - (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether any discussions were held with the Government of Saudi Arabia in this regard; and
 - (f) if so, the details thereof?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Directions on setting-up of oil refineries

3502. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that setting-up of refinery at the well head of any well by any Public Sector oil company would be a cost reduction measure:
- (b) if so, whether Government have issued any directions in this regard;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that many State Governments had demanded to set up refineries at the place where oil were discovered; and
 - (d) if so, the details thereof?

Ban on export of kerosene oil and ATF

†3503. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Indian Oil Corporation and other oil producing companies have demanded imposition of ban on export of kerosene oil and ATF;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether Government propose to revise its export policy?

Recommendations of Agarwal Committee

3504. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are reports of irregularity in the allotment of petrol pumps and a Committee headed by

- S.C. Agarwal was constituted to inspect such irregularities;
- (b) the number of allotments which were found to be irregular in the report of the Committee with State-wise details;
- (c) what action has been taken or is being proposed to be taken against such allotments; and
- (d) what criteria has been set out regarding allotment of petrol pumps?

OVL's overseas contracts

3505. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) the total oil equity acrage that has been contracted abroad by OVL;
- (b) the time-frame for the production of Oil/OEG from these acrages/concessions; and
- (c) what is the projected production of oil from the overseas investment by the year 2010 and 2012?

Estimated annual loss to exchequer

3506. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) what is the estimated annual loss to exchequer due to adulteration of petrol, diesel and lubricants in the country as per information available with the Ministry; and
- (b) what efforts have been made to reduce the adulteration at various levels *i.e.*, from refinery to retail sale and how far these efforts have been successful in checking the adulteration?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Adulteration of petrol and diesel

3507. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the adulteration of petrol and diesel is a big ticket scam that involves an annual recurring loss of at least Rs. 10,000 crore to the exchequer;
- (b) whether it is a fact that about 30 to 40 per cent of PDS kerosene is diverted for adulteration; and
- (c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to check the adulteration of petrol and diesel?

Study on demand for kerosene

3508. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the SKO dealership has in general become economically unviable and allocation of SKO all over the country has been reducing over the last few years due to increase in release of LPG connections:
- (b) if so, the details of the efforts being made by the oil companies and district civil supplies authorities to increase profitability of SKO-LDO dealers;
- (c) whether Government propose to conduct a study of the demand of kerosene at various prices and to strengthen the kerosene distribution system; and
- (d) whether Government propose to increase the commission for SKO-LDO dealers?

LPG distributions in district headquarters

†3509. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) the names of the district headquarters of various States in the country wherein agency for LPG distribution has not been authorised;
 - (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) by when, it is proposed to authorise any agency in such district headquarters;
- (d) the details of the action being taken for the same?

Allotment of petrol pumps in Himachal Pradesh

3510. SHRI SURESH BHARDWAJ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of petrol pumps (retail outlets) allotted by public sector oil marketing companies *viz*. Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd., Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. and Indo-Burman Petroleum Corporation Ltd. in Himachal Pradesh during the period from May, 2004 to 28 Feb., 2005 alongwith names and addresses of allottees company-wise; and
- (b) what was the criteria and the procedure adopted for the allotment?

Issue of Bonds by oil companies

- 3511. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government have any plan to float Oil Bonds to cover up the losses

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

that are being incurred by Public Sector Oil Companies;

- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government are giving subsidy on petrol, diesel, kerosene and cooking gas; and
- (d) the losses that the oil companies are incurring due to subsidy given to the items at (c) above during the last three years, year-wise and item-wise?

Retail outlets of oil PSUs

- 3512. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:
- (a) the number and location of the retail outlets set up in Tamil Nadu by the Central Government PSUs during the last three years;
- (b) the locations proposed to be set up during the next three years; and
- (c) the number of retail outlets which are in existence in Tamil Nadu, districtwise?

Involvement of Ministry of External Affairs in Indo-Iran project

- †3513. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:
- (a) progress made in high-level talks between Iran, Turkmenistan and Myanmar, including various other countries regarding Indo-Iran gas pipe line project;
- (b) whether his ministry would undertake consultations with the Ministry of External Affairs regarding progress made in the said project and talks to be held with various countries;

- (c) whether the said work was handled by Ministry of External Affairs till recently:
- (d) whether any representative from the Ministry of External Affairs would be included in the meetings to be held at international level; and
- (e) whether the pipe line which is to be laid between Iran and India would pass through Pakistan and who will be responsible for the security of the said pipe line?

PCRA's awareness programme on fuel crisis

3514. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Petroleum Conservation and Research Association of India is seized of the impending fuel crisis India is facing and to fine-tune its mass education and awareness programmes through press and electronic media;
- (b) whether the oil companies would consider sponsoring walking clubs and use of manually propelled vehicles for short distance commuters and students; and
- (c) whether the oil companies would also sponsor dedicated pedestrian and cycling tracks along the highways and roads within urban areas?

ONGC's LNG plant in Russia

- †3515. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Oil and Natural Gas Commission is considering on the possibility of installing Liquefied Natural Gas Plant in Russia;

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) by when the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

Fund for exploration of crude

- 3516. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:
- (a) what is the quantity of crude oil produced in the country in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 respectively;
- (b) the targets for crude oil production in this current year;
- (c) whether Government have any plans to increase exploration for oil and hydrocarbons in the country; and
- (d) if so, the details of plans to fund expanded exploration for crude oil in the country?

Sale of equity of MRPL

- 3517. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government have signed any agreement with ARAMCO to sell equity in MRPL;
- (b) if so, the details of this joint venture between ARAMCO and ONGC owned MRPL:
- (c) the gains to the country from such an agreement;
- (d) whether crude will be supplied at concessional prices; and
 - (e) if so, the details thereof?

Impact of rising oil prices on oil companies

- 3518. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:
- (a) the oil prices in the international market during the each of the three years; year-wise;
- (b) whether due to increase in oil prices, the oil companies in the Country are heavily burdened making it difficult for them to invest in infrastructure and other businesses; and
- (c) if so, the remedial measures taken by Government in this regard?

Promotion of Health Tourism

- 3519. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) whether there is any proposal to promote health tourism so as to make India as a medical hub;
- (b) if so, the details including steps taken and criteria adopted, if any, to identify and accredit potential institutions and States as on today, category-wise;
- (c) the details of institutions accredited for the above purpose, State-wise as on today;
- (d) whether there is any proposal to identify the indigenous Indian Systems of Medicine for above purpose;
 - (e) if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether any proposal has been received from State Governments for promoting health tourism; and
- (g) if so, the details including action taken on the above report?

Opening of International Convention Centre to encourage tourism

†3520. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BALAPTE: SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to open International Convention Centre in order to encourage the tourism in the country;
- (b) if so, the complete details thereof; and
- (c) to what extent tourism is likely to be boosted thereby and the total expenditure likely to be incurred thereon?

Meeting of National Tourism Advisory Council

3521. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether in a meeting held recently, the National Tourism Advisory Council expressed serious concern over the fast depleting population of several wildlife
- (b) if so, the details of other discussions held during the meeting; and
- (c) the action plan suggested to tackle the situation and save the tourism industry?

Tourism policy

3522. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any Tourism Policy in the country;

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

Additional accommodation under tourism projects in Orissa and H.P.

†3523. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: SHRI SURENDRA LATH:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) the targets fixed to attract tourists in Orissa in the Tenth Five Year Plan and the number of tourists visiting Orissa from the year 2002 to till date, year-wise;
- (b) the number of projects being run for making arrangements of additional accommodation under the tourism projects taken up in the States of Orissa and Himachal Pradesh and the amount of money allocated as the Central share in the current plan period; and
- (c) the amount of money provided so far as Central share for destination tourism, rural tourism and eco-tourism in both the States and for the projects earning huge amount of revenue?

Assistance to States for development of tourism

†3524. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government provide assistance to different States for the development and promotion of tourism;

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

- (b) if so, whether the States Government of Punjab, Chhattisgarh have sought assistance to promote tourism in the States:
- (c) whether the Central Government are considering to grant any special package for it; and
 - (d) if so, the details thereof?

Cultural tourism

- 3525. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government are considering to make India as a Cultural Tourism destination, with a view to earn revenue;
- (b) if so, whether necessary infrastructure will be made therefor; and
 - (c) if so, the details thereof?

Special tourism sector in U.P.

- †3526. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government have received any proposal regarding special tourism sector in Uttar Pradesh;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the action taken by Government on this proposal?

Development of international standard garden in Karnataka

- 3527. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) whether the State Government of Karnataka has sent some proposals for

development of international standard garden at Linganamakki Dam, Shimoga District, for providing Sound & Light Show at Golgumbaz, Bijapur, development of Siddarabetta Hill ranges in Tumkur District, construction of tourist hostel at Indian Heritage Academy, Bangalore, promotion of endogenous tourism project at Sagar, District Shimoga, and Karkala in Dakshin Kannada District, and certain large revenue generating schemes at Gadag, Soundatti (Belgaum), Mysore, Hapi (Hospet), including Bandipur Tiger Reserve; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the present status of each proposal/ project?

Development of tourism

- 3528. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to give a new fillip for the department of tourism in the country:
 - (b) if so, the details thereof; and
 - (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Allocation for development of tourism

- 3529. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) the income generated by her Ministry during the last 2 years, State-wise; and
- (b) the amount allocated for the department of tourism, during last 2 years State-wise?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Tourists visiting States

- †3530. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) the total number of tourists visited different States of India during the last three years and total revenue earned through them, State-wise;
- (b) whether the number of foreign tourists has also decreased in Jammu and Kashmir and North Eastern States;
 - (c) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the effective steps being taken by Government to improve the present situation in the above States?

Agreement between India and Singapore to promote tourist circuit

- 3031. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that India and Singapore have agreed to co-promote and market both the countries as a tourist circuit;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, including results of studies made, if any, on the broad pattern of tourists visiting both India and Singapore and projections of inflow of additional tourists to the two countries;
- (c) the details of the strategy drawn for special focus on tourists from any specific country(ies) in the initial stages; and
- (d) the details of experience of the existing similar tourist circuit, consisting of Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand?

Decline in foreign tourists

†3532. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of foreign tourists visited India in the year 2004-05 and to what extent this number was more or less as compared with that of the year 2003-04;
- (b) the foreign currency earned through the visit of foreign tourists into India and steps being taken by Government to attract the foreign tourists to visit India; and
- (c) the initiative taken for granting the industry status to the tourism in India alongwith the revenue earning by Government through the service tax in tourism sector?

Task force to promote health tourism

- 3533. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry, along with the Ministry of Health of Family Welfare, set up a Task Force to promote health tourism in the country;
- (b) if so, whether the Task Force submitted its recommendations to Government; and
- (c) what action plan does his Ministry has to promote and publicise health tourism through its India tourism offices located in various parts of the world?

Potential of cruise tourism

- 3534. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that there is a great potential for cruise tourism in the country;
- (b) whether it is also a fact that Government have constituted a Committee to make India an attractive cruise tourist destination;

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

- (c) what are the recommendations made by the Committee; and
- (d) the details of posts identified for this purpose in the eastern parts of the country?

FDI inflow into tourism sector

- 3535. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that Tourism industry has been declared as priority sector by Government for FDI flow into this sector:
- (b) if so, when the industry was declared as priority sector by Government;
- (c) the number of projects, after declaring tourism as priority sector, sanctioned by Government; and
- (d) the total amount of FDI flown into this sector since declaration of this sector as priority sector?

Development of tourism in Punjab

- 3536. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:
- (a) whether the State Government of Punjab has submitted any special plan for development of tourism in the State to remove regional imbalance;
- (b) if so, the salient features and estimated cost thereof;
- (c) the Central Government aid sought therefor; and
 - (d) Government's response thereto?

Tube-wells in rural areas

†3537. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have fixed an amount of rupees thirty thousand per case for erecting tube-wells in rural areas while average cost of boring a tube-well in Madhya Pradesh has been assessed to be fifty thousand due to hilly and plateu structure of surface:
- (b) whether Central Government are considering to increase the present amount of assistance to fifty thousand; and
- (c) if so, by when, Government would consider to provide the increased amount to the State Government of Madhya Pradesh?

Rapid irrigation benefit programme

- †3538. SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:
- (a) the criteria for providing Government assistance to the backward States under the Rapid Irrigation Benefit Programme;
- (b) whether these criteria are different from that fixed for the hilly States, if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) whether Government would ensure that Madhya Pradesh will not be discriminated against in comparison to the hilly States in the matter of providing assistance to the backward States?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Effect of rivers interlinking project on coastal water and marine resources

- †3539. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government have made any study with regard to impact of immersion of river on the coastal water and fisheries resoruces in view of the question raised about the viability of river linking project;
- (b) whether it is a fact that water borne diseases and health related problems will develop as a result of linking of rivers;
 - (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the details of the steps Government have taken to address those problems?

Ganga Flood Control Commission projects on flood crisis in Bihar

†3540. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI: SHRI RAVI SHANKAR

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

PRASAD:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Ganga Flood Control Commission had prepared projects to do away with flood crisis particularly in Bihar:
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the numbr of projects completed till March, 2005 out of them;
- (d) total number of remaining projects about which decision have been taken to complete the same during the year 2005-06; and
- (e) the reasons for not taking such decision in this regard so far?

Chief Ministers conference on interlinking of rivers

3541. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have decided to convene a meeting of Chief Ministers next month to evolve consensus on programme to inter-link rivers;
- (b) if so, whether Ministry has decided to hold bilateral discussions with State concerned to understand and address their apprehensions on issue;
- (c) if so, what are main difficulties these State Governments have pointed out to Ministry; and
- (d) whether Ministry is prepared to overcome these difficulties of States in implementing the inter-linking of rivers;

Talks with Nepal on flood

†3542. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government have initiated a talk with Nepal during the last years to save Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal from the threat of flood caused by the water of the rivers coming from Nepal;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government have decided to contact Nepalese Government to prepare

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

an action plan to make progress in this direction during the year 2005-2006;

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

Pending water projects in Chhattisgarh and Punjab

†3543. SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR: SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether water projects of Chhattisgarh and Punjab States are pending for approval of the Central Government;
- (b) if so, the projects of the above States which were to be implemented during the current year; and
- (c) by when the said projects are likely to be implemented?

Survey on declining ground water table

- †3544. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that ground water level is constantly declining in the country;
- (b) if so, whether Government have got any survey made in this regard;
- (c) if so, the details of the said survey, State-wise;
- (d) the detailed plans made by Government to improve ground water level and funds allotted to States in this regard; and
- (e) the reasons for the pendency of schemes/programmes sent to Government by Madhya Pradesh in this regard?

Increase in irrigated land

3545. SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) the total area of land fit for irrigation in the country;
- (b) the percentage out of which is lying unirrigated as on date particularly in Tamil
- (c) whether Government have formulated any scheme to convert the unirrigated land into irrigated land;
 - (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps being taken by Government to increase irrigated land in current year?

Serious flood situation in Assam

- 3546. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:
- (a) whether Government are aware that the State of Assam faces a serious flood situation year after year due to Brahmaputra and Barak river;
- (b) if so, what specific measures Government have taken during the last few years to contain floods which causes harm to agriculture and loss of lives and property in the State; and
- (c) whether Government have any plan in hand in this regard and if so, the details thereof?

Per capita water availability

3547. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the national per capita water availability;

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

- (b) the per capita availability of water of each State/UT;
- (c) the ideal per capita water requirement; and
- (d) steps taken to make more water available in the water scarce region?

Water utilisation efficiency

- 3548. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:
- (a) whether he has launched a programme for improving water utilisation efficiency; and
 - (b) if so, the details thereof?

Allocation for irrigation projects

- 3549. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:
- (a) the details of total amount allocated for irrigation projects during the Tenth Plan, State-wise:
- (b) the details of total amount utilised so far and the names of the States alongwith the details of the projects completed during this period; and
- (c) the details of the projects to be completed in this respect?

Decline in ground water table in MP

- †3550. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:
- (a) whether ground water table has decreased immensely in Madhya Pradesh during the last three years;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, districtwise; and

(c) the steps Government are taking to provide relief to common men facing the shortage of drinking water as a result of decrease in the ground water level?

Problem in irrigating cultivable land

- 3551. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:
- (a) whether it is a fact that many areas of the country are drought prone areas, and having problem in irrigating cultivable land;
- (b) whether Government have taken initiatives so far to cope with the problem, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether Government have any plan to inter-linking the rivers of the country to provide irrigation water to such areas, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether Government have made any study of shortage or need of water, Statewise, if so, the details thereof and if not, reasons therefor?

Inter-State projects

- 3552. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:
- (a) whether many inter-state projects approved for creation of irrigation potential have not been completed due to lack of coordination amongst the States;
- (b) if so, the details of the approved projects meant for creation of irrigation potential; and
- (c) the status of the implementation of the projects and reasons for delay in implementation?

[†]Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Kalasa Bhanduri Nala Scheme

- 3553. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:
- (a) whether the Kalasa Bhanduri Nala Scheme sent by the State Government of Karnataka is pending with the Central Government for approval;
- (b) if so, when the above proposal was sent;
- (c) what is the estimated cost of the above proposal and the extent of land to be irrigated from the above scheme; and
- (d) what is the present status of the above proposal?

Implementation of unauthorised irrigation projects in Krishna and Godavari river basins

3554. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any all-party delegation from Karnataka has submitted any memorandum requesting the Central Government to prevent Andhra Pradesh from going ahead with the implementation of unauthorized irrigation projects in Krishna and Godavari river basins; and

(b) if so, what is the present status?

Conservation of water

3555. SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) the various schemes launched by Central Government to conserve water keeping in view the failure of monsoon frequently;
 - (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether Government propose to initiate new water conservation schemes in the country to yield desired results?

New Delhi; *The 20th April*, 2005 *Chaitra* 30, 1927 (*Saka*)

YOGENDRA NARAIN, Secretary-General.

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