

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 29, 2003/Vaisakha 9, 1925 (Saka)*

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

Total number of questions—155

Review of civil aviation treaty with Malaysia

4022. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA
RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL
AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are reviewing
their decisions pending under Civil Aviation
bilateral treaty with Malaysian Government
keeping in view the serious assault incidents
against Indian IT Professionals in
Kualalumpur;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is Kuala Lumpur's reaction to
India's protest in this regard?

Targeted passenger traffic

4023. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA : Will
the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be
pleased to state:

(a) the percentage growth of passenger
traffic in IA during the last three years, year-
wise;

(b) the percentage growth of passenger
traffic in AI during the last three years, year-
wise;

(c) whether it is a fact that the civil
aviation sector set 5 per cent growth target
for 2002-2003;

(d) if so, whether the target has been
achieved; and

(e) if not, the reasons for not achieving
the target, apart from 9/11 attack?

Participation of Lufthansa Airlines in airport modernisation

4024. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY:
SHRI C. RAMA-
CHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION
be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Lufthansa
Airlines has proposed to participate in the
modernisation of airports in the metro cities
in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government
thereto?

Improvement in ground services of AI

4025. SHRI S.M. LAL JAN BASHA:
Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be
pleased to state:

(a) whether any step has been taken to
improve ground services of Air India;

(b) whether it is a fact that response from
sales offices of Air India is not very prompt
or efficient;

(c) in what way Government will ensure that Air India improves its functioning to make it competitive;

(d) whether any plan has been finalised to change the outlook and work culture of Air India's employees; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Revision in air and cargo fares

4026. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines, Air India and other private air operators like the Jet Airways have lately hiked the air fares and cargo fares;

(b) if so, to what extent indicating the revised and the previous fares; and

(c) the reasons for such a hike?

Free tickets to artisan

†4027. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of free tickets provided to the artists, dance groups and the performers of other arts by Air India and Indian Airlines separately every year during 1999, 2000 and 2001 in commercial interests together with the dates of their journey as well as the details of their destinations and the fares in each case; and

(b) the number of such other free tickets given in addition to this and the total expense incurred on that?

Making air travel safer

4028. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state the details of the steps being taken by Government for making air travel safer in different parts of the country?

Replacement of obsolete equipments

4029. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that electronic equipments that are used by air traffic controllers all over India are old and obsolete; and

(b) if so, whether Government have any plan to replace the old equipments?

Training institutes under DGCA

†4030. PROF. R. B. S. VARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of technical training institutes recognised by Government so far for AME Licence course through DGCA;

(b) the names of the institutions which have been recognised out of them during the last three years along with the year-wise details thereof; and

(c) the total number of students passed the examinations from these institutions during last three years?

Cargo handling of airports in Gujarat

4031. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of airports in Gujarat which are having cargo handling facilities at present, airport-wise;

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

(c) the details of airports in the State where cargo handling facilities are proposed to be made available within next few years?

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Guidelines on FDI in Aviation Sector

4032. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA
SEKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow 49 per cent FDI in the key areas of civil aviation;

(b) if so, whether the clearance for foreign investment in civil aviation would be done on a case-to-case basis;

(c) if so, what are the guidelines that have been formulated;

(d) whether this new policy will be effective from 1st April, 2003;

(e) if so, the total number of countries which have applied for investment in civil aviation sector; and

(f) whether the foreign investors have to form joint ventures with Airports Authority of India, Indian Airlines or Air India to enter the segment?

New agency for airport security

4033. SHRI MANOJ BHATTA-
CHARYA:
SHRI PARMESHWAR
KUMAR AGARWALLA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal to hand over airport security to the Central Industrial Security Force is under active consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the name of the agency presently entrusted with the work of looking after security in the airports;

(d) the reasons for assigning this work to a new and non-aviation organisation;

(e) whether C.I.S.F. would be given the charge of both the domestic and international airports throughout the country; and

(f) by when, the new agency will be put in place?

Restructuring of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security

4034. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI
BARUPAL:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are examining a proposal to restructure the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) to make it more effective in the changed aviation security scenario;

(b) if so, whether the Parliamentary Consultative Committee had urged the need to have a fresh look at the manpower requirements of BCAS both at the headquarter and field level;

(c) if so, what are the main points of restructuring proposals that are being worked out; and

(d) to what extent the security of the airports have been further strengthened?

Agreement with Saudi Arabia in air services

4035. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India has signed an agreement with Saudi Arabia for increasing the frequency of their flights, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is also a fact that originating points have been added in the flight map of AI; and

(c) whether such kind of agreement has been signed with other countries for new destination/originating points or increase in the frequency of flights?

Voluntary Retirement Scheme in Indian Airlines

4036. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:
SHRI PARMESHWAR
KUMAR AGARWALLA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines have launched a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) targeting to reduce its non-operational workforce;

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

(c) whether this scheme would also be applicable to cabin crew, pilots, technicians and aircraft engineers;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the reduced force would affect the functioning and profitability of the Airlines in the present scenario of competition; and

(f) the alternative arrangement made to meet the situation arising out of shortage of workforce?

New cell at airports

4037. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up a new cell at the airports to oversee

planning, development and upgradation of the airports;

(b) if so, the details of revamping plan, with special focus on security aspects; and

(c) whether this will cover some selected airports, if so, the details thereof?

Open sky policy

4038. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has urged upon Government to go in for open sky policy to boost tourism and generate investment and employment; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto?

Airmiss near Nagpur

4039. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the airmiss which occurred on 17th February over Nagpur between Chennai-bound Indian Airlines aircraft and Taiwan's Eva Airways flight was due to malfunctioning of Radar after it got struck by lightning a few days earlier; and

(b) if so, the reasons for not taking timely action to make the Radar function properly especially when no back-up facility was available to monitor the separation between aircrafts flying over Nagpur and the officials responsible for this serious lapse?

Commercial use of Safdarjung Airport

4040. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal with Government to dismantle the existing Safdarjung Airport and commercialise the vacant land to generate additional revenue;

(b) if so, the details of the commercial/ other activities which are planned to be carried out on the land; and

(c) whether Delhi's new Master Plan permit the use of land for commercial activities?

Integration of civil and military aviation facilities

4041. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA
RAO:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a need to update national aeronautical policy integrating civil and military aviation facilities;

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

(c) what steps are being taken to update the policy?

Purchase of new aircrafts

†4042. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total numbers of aeroplanes purchased during the last five years by Government from Airbus Company and Boeing Company for Air India and Indian Airlines with the year-wise details thereof;

(b) whether Government propose to buy more new aeroplanes; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Air service between Delhi and Ranchi

4043. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any plans to connect the Jharkhand Capital Ranchi with New Delhi by a direct flight;

(b) whether there are any immediate plans for providing more air services from Jharkhand; and

(c) whether any private airlines are planning to start their services for Jharkhand?

Regulatory Authority for privatisation of airports

4044. SHRI N. K. PREMA-CHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set-up a Regulatory Authority in connection with the privatisation of Metro International Airports;

(b) whether Government also propose to allow the private sector to invest in the upgradation of International Airports, if so, the details thereof and the stage at which the matter of private participation stands at present; and

(c) whether Government would consider to relax the Air Charters Policy?

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

**Air service between Delhi and
Ludhiana**

4045. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is any proposal with Government to restart air service between Delhi and Ludhiana;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any survey has been conducted in this regard, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Accident involving IC 724 of IA

4046. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that recently the Indian Airlines flight IC 724, with 144 passengers on board, from Kolkata to Bangkok crashed on to the tarmac during take off as, reportedly, the right rear wheel of the aircraft slipped through an ants-ridden and weakened surface of the runway;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the results of any inquiry conducted into the incident; and
- (c) the steps taken for proper upkeep and maintenance of the runway and other infrastructural facilities at the Kolkata airport?

Improvement of Rajahmundry airport

4047. SHRI S.M. LAL JAN BASHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1369 given in the Rajya Sabha on 3rd December, 2002 and state:

- (a) whether other nearby airports like Rajahmundry will also be improved; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof?

**Acceptance of cash deposits from
credit card holders**

4048. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT
RAO:
SHRI K. KALAVENKATA
RAO:

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government are aware that the State Bank of India does not accept cash deposits from the credit card holders as is being done by other banks in the metropolitan cities and insists on payments by cheques;
- (b) if so, what are the reasons for not providing credit card holders the facility of making cash payment for deposits;
- (c) whether Government propose to introduce such a facility in the State Bank of India to credit card holders; and
- (d) if so, the steps taken by Government in this direction?

**Representation of Indian Sugar Mills
Association**

4049. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA
RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Sugar Mills Association and other organisations are demanding for retaining tax on sugar, excise duty, Central cess on sugar and excise duty on molasses for a short period of one year in the light of the pathetic condition in which the sugar industry is passing;
- (b) if so, the details of the representation made by the ISMA; and
- (c) the action taken by Government on their request?

Concessions for EOUs and SEZs

4050. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Export Promotion Council for Export-Oriented Units and Special Economic Zones have represented for continuance of the concessions under section 10A and 10B of the Income Tax Act for some more time;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) what steps, if any, has been proposed in the current year's budget for a tax holiday for 100 percent EOUs and SEZs?

Rate of taxes on companies

†4051. SHRI ABHAY KANT PRASAD: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the comparative rate of taxes being imposed on companies in India and other developing countries in the world;

(b) whether surcharge is also imposed on the companies in India despite higher rate of company tax here; and

(c) if so, the details of such tax structure and the reasons therefor?

Filing of Income Tax returns by political parties

4052. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of political parties which are maintaining the books of accounts properly and filing annual returns;

(b) what are the general source of funding of these parties;

(c) the steps taken to bring all political parties under the tax net; and

(d) the steps taken to prevent the black money flow into the coffers of parties?

Private companies in pension sector

†4053. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to allow entry of private companies in pension sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

Seizure of Narcotics

4054. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have seized narcotics and other similar drugs worth several crores of rupees during the last one year;

(b) if so, the details thereof with the value of narcotics seized during the last one year; and

(c) the number of persons who have been Arrested/detained by the Law Enforcement Agencies in drug pedaling in Gujarat so far?

Liberal withdrawals from Special Deposit Schemes

4055. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to permit liberal withdrawals from Special

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Deposit Schemes aggregating Rs. 1.25 lakh crore;

(b) whether it is also a fact that 80 per cent of the corpus of the provident is invested from Special Deposit Schemes;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reasons for allowing liberal withdrawal from SDS?

Investment of PSUs in share capital market

4056. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of PSUs under various Ministries and total investment towards share capital and loan capital made therein;

(b) the number of PSUs out of the above which have earned profit and paid dividend to Government during 2000-2001 and 2001-2002;

(c) the percentage of dividend to the investment;

(d) the number of PSUs which have eroded their entire paid-up capital and if so, the reasons for the same; and

(e) the quantum of public money involved in and what plans Government have with regard to these companies?

NPAs of banks

4057. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that net Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) for all scheduled commercial banks have declined;

(b) whether it is also a fact that gross NPAs of these banks have increased;

(c) if so, what are the comparative figures for the last three years; and

(d) what steps are being taken by Government to check the menace of growing NPAs?

Borrowers of Central Bank of India, Jhanjharpur, Bihar

†4058. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) details of the borrowers of Central Bank of India of Jhanjharpur, Bihar, who have taken the loan of one lakh or more alongwith date of borrowings, the amount borrowed and also total payable amount with interest thereon during the last three years;

(b) the details of the progress made by Government to recover such kind of debt;

(c) whether there are such borrowers who are not repaying their loans since long; and

(d) if so, the action being taken by Government to recover the same?

Customs duty on edible oils

†4059. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of custom duty increased on edible oil during the last three years because of which domestic producers could not get adequate benefit;

(b) if so, whether Government have any plan to provide adequate benefit to the domestic food producers; and

(c) if so, the decisions taken thereon so far?

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Special Agricultural Credit Plan

4060. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Reserve Bank of India has formulated Special Agricultural Credit Plan to achieve distinct and marked improvement in the flow of credit to agriculture;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether all the Public Sector Banks are implementing this plan; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor, Bank-wise?

Pre-payment of high cost loans

4061. DR. M. N. DAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning to allow States access to additional market borrowings in 2003-2004 to pre-pay high cost loans contracted in the past with funds raised through fresh loans at a lower interest rate;

(b) if so, whether additional market borrowings would be over and above budgeted market borrowings for States in the ensuing fiscal year;

(c) if so, what is the exact quantum of additional market borrowings that States would be allowed to access in the coming fiscal year; and

(d) what is the total amount to be made available to States to retire high-cost debt?

Tax exemption to doctors and lawyers

4062. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Service Tax has been levied

on ten more services in the proposed Budget 2003;

(b) what are the reasons for grant of the exemption to Doctors and Lawyers from the levy of service tax; and

(c) the reasons for not bringing rich farmers under the tax net?

Under/over assessment of direct taxes

4063. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of under/over assessment of direct taxes detected by audit during the last two years and the amount involved;

(b) the reasons for under assessment; and

(c) the number of cases rectified till now and the recovery made?

RBI's notification on relaxations given to NRIs

4064. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has notified the relaxations announced by the Finance Minister for the Indian diaspora on 10th January; and

(b) if so, the details of the notification?

Reduction in rate of interest on relief bonds

4065. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to cut down the rate of interest on the relief bonds;

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

(c) whether the gestation period for the bonds is also likely to be reduced and if not, the reasons therefor?

Irregularities by SEBI

4066. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention have been drawn to the irregularities and corrupt practices in the functioning of SEBI; and

(b) whether there is a proposal to give the investigation to CBI for further probe into the irregularities and corruptions in SEBI?

Implementation of Official Languages Act of 1963 in the Public Sector Banks

4067. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Official Languages Act, 1963 makes it mandatory for all the Public Sector Banks to ensure that the computerisation is done in Bi-lingual Mode;

(b) if so, the details regarding Public Sector Banks in India where computerisation had been done in Bi-lingual Mode, State-wise, District-wise and Mandal-wise; and

(c) if not, the reasons for not introducing Bi-lingual Mode in the computerisation of all the Public Sector Banks?

Seizure of goods by Customs Department

4068. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government maintains any record of the goods seized by the Customs Department at their warehouses in four major metropolitan cities;

(b) if so, the details of the seizure and the record; and

(c) the amount of the seizure at Mumbai International Airport and how it is being disposed of?

Currency notes printing presses in the country

†4069. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the locations of currency note printing presses; and

(b) the details of measures taken to bring transparency in the printing of notes and to make these notes safe from being copied?

Flow of funds to rural sector

4070. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that credit flow to rural sector is very slow in comparison to the urban industries;

(b) the amount advanced by banks to rural and urban industries during the last three years, bank-wise, industry-wise and year-wise;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government have asked the banks to enhance their lending to the rural industries, while advising them to set up 'Rural Industry Fund' on the lines of 'Capital Venture Fund'; and

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(d) if so, the details in this regard and the reaction of the financial institutions to the advice?

Inspection under Section 209

4071. SHRI MUNAVVAR HASAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspection under Section 209 was ordered against DSQ Software, Padmini Polymers, Ranbaxy and Piramal Group;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have received any applications from these companies for compounding the offences under Section 621-A; and

(d) what are the names of the companies and the details of offences?

Cut in interest rates on investment schemes

4072. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation against the Budgetary proposals to cut down the interest rates on the various investment schemes offered by Government; and

(b) if so, the details of the representations and Government's response in this regard?

Competition Commission Bill

4073. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to amend proposed Competition Bill which seeks to end both public and private

monopolies as a result of corporate mergers, acquisitions and privatisation of PSUs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether cabinet has decided to scrap the MRTP Act and dissolve the MRTP Commission and to set up Competition Commission of India to replace MRTP Commission;

(d) if so, by when Competition Commission of India is likely to be set-up; and

(e) the details with regard to the functions and powers of this new Commission?

RBI credit policy

†4074. SHRI ABHAY KANT PRASAD: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Reserve Bank of India has changed its interest rate and finance policy;

(b) if so, number of times above changes made during the last three years alongwith details thereof;

(c) the reasons therefor and benefit derived from the same; and

(d) whether Government propose to ensure that loans are easily sanctioned by public sector and commercial banks under private sector to industries, farmers, businessmen, individuals and pensioners for purchase of flats?

Mid-term review of credit policy by RBI

4075. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Reserve Bank of India had made mid-term review of the credit policy of Government; and

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(b) if so, what are the findings of the Reserve Bank and Government's reaction to the review?

Centre's aid to States implementing VAT

4076. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have decided to provide more Central funds to meet States' revenue loss due to the launch of the Value Added Tax regime from April 1, 2003;

(b) if so, the total States which have implemented the VAT;

(c) whether Central Government have provided for only Rs. 700 crore in the union Budget for meeting shortfalls in revenue receipts as a result of transition of VAT;

(d) if so, whether Central Government are committed to providing hundred per cent support to States for revenue shortfalls; and

(e) if so, to what extent the provisions has been increased for the purpose?

Grant/assistance to NGOs by Japanese Government

4077. SHRI ARJUN SINGH:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Japanese Government extended grant/assistance to five more Non-Governmental Organisations under its grant/assistance for grassroots projects scheme;

(b) if so, what are the total grants so far provided;

(c) what are the projects that will be covered under this grant;

(d) what are the NGOs that have been receiving this grant;

(e) whether any agreement in this regard have been signed between the NGOs and the Japanese Ambassador; and

(f) if so, whether all the earlier projects which were stopped by the Japanese Government have been allowed to provide grant to them?

Assistance to Co-operative banks

4078. SHRI B. J. PANDA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Co-operative Banks have asked for relief of Rs. 1,800 crores Central assistance in the event of implementation of the scheme of waiver of interest on farmers loan, announced by PM;

(b) if so, the details of assistance proposed to be given, bank-wise; and

(c) the amount of loan granted by the banks for the current kharif season and the amount of interest which is sought to be waived?

Investment by Indian Companies in other countries

†4079. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the investment has been made by the Indian companies on a large scale in Australia, Germany, Japan, Spain, Egypt, Morocco etc.;

(b) if so, the total amount invested by Indian companies in the said countries till the end of December, 2002; and

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(c) the business being run by the said Indian companies?

(e) what steps are being considered by Government to meet the situation?

Sugar export scandal

4080. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMA-CHANDRAYYA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Excise Department has ordered a high-level probe into the multi-crore sugar export scandal;

(b) if so, whether investigations in all sugar units have been ordered for five years with priority being given from January, 2000 onwards;

(c) whether any reports in this regard have been received from the inquiry committee;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what action has been taken in this regard?

NRI remittances from Gulf region

4081. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been reported that NRI remittances from the Gulf region, which recorded a sharp jump in the first two months of 2003 had a greater impact during the war;

(b) if so, whether this shortfall has effected the remittances and it is a major factor in the accumulation of foreign exchange and had an impact in the exchange rate;

(c) if so, to what extent the NRI remittances have been eroded;

(d) to what extent it had an impact on our foreign exchange earnings; and

Grants to NGOs by Japan

4082. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the names and the number of NGOs who received grants from Japan during the last three years;

(b) the amount utilised by each NGO out of the grants received from the Government of Japan; and

(c) whether Central Government have received the utilisation certificates from these NGOs?

Reform in Co-operative sector

4083. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to undertake any major reforms in Co-operative sector in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the remedial measures taken by Government in this regard?

Economic growth rate

4084. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the I.M.F. has lowered its growth projections for india for 2003;

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

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by Government in this regard so as to maintain the growth as originally projected?

Waiving duty on import of life saving drugs

4085. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a request from the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) for waiving duty on life saving drugs and security related imports; and

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

Non-utilisation of World Bank loans by Maharashtra

4086. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Maharashtra Government has not utilised World Bank loans given for the purpose of health, education, roads etc.;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for not utilising the World Bank's loan by State Government of Maharashtra; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that because of this World Bank is not giving further loan to the Government of Maharashtra?

Task Force on creditors right

4087. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government was considering last year for setting up a task force on Creditors Right;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how would the task force help the creditors?

Payment of interest on debts

4088. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether half of the revenue receipts are used for payment of interest on debts;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to reduce debt burden?

Reduction in customs duty on imported wine

4089. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government in the Union Budget for 2003-2004 has reduced customs duty on imported wine whereas excise duty on edible oil has been increased; and

(b) if so, the rationale behind such a move?

Embezzlement of bank money by PSUs in U.P.

†4090. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of incidents of embezzlement of bank money by PSUs in Uttar Pradesh during the last three years alongwith amount involved in it;

(b) whether such incidents of embezzlement of bank money by PSUs have also occurred in other States;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government will fix any guidelines for extending loan to loss making PSUs and other institutions so that their money should not be lost;

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

- (e) if so, by when; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor?

Revenue mobilisation in North-Eastern States

4091. SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the State-wise revenue mobilisation by North-Eastern States *vis-a-vis* Central Budgetary allocation for 2001-2002;
- (b) what kind of effort has been envisaged by Government for employment generation in these States; and
- (c) what kind of scope exists in North Eastern States for revenue generation?

Waiting list for SC/ST Officers of Indian Economic Service

4092. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the number of SAG level SC/ST officers of Indian Economic Service are placed under compulsory waiting list since June, 2001;
- (b) if so, whether they are in receipt of salary and perks without doing any work for the last 20 months; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for keeping them on waiting list for so long?

Economic growth rate

4093. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that economic growth has slipped to 2.6 per cent during October-December, 2002;

- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) what has been the rate of economic growth during January-March, 2003 and steps being taken to improve the rate of economic growth?

New rating system for securities by GIC

4094. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the General Insurance Corporation (GIC) will devise an all new rating system for securities in consultation with Asian reinsurance companies of China, Japan, Korea etc.;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the reasons for having the new rating system and the problems being faced in the existing system?

Fiscal Deficit

4095. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the fiscal deficit was comparatively lower from April to December this year as compared to the previous financial year;
- (b) if so, what were the factors that have contributed to the restriction of deficit; and
- (c) what are the overall expectations towards the end of the financial year?

Pending cases in Debt Recovery Tribunals

4096. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of Debt Recovery Tribunals set up in the country and which are operational as on date;

(b) what is the total number of cases pending as on December, 2002;

(c) what is the rate of disposal of cases by the DRTs; and

(d) what is the total amount of recoveries made during the last fiscal year?

Memorandum against VAT

4097. DR. AKHILESH DAS : Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether business and trade representatives from all over the country recently presented a Memorandum to the Prime Minister against imposition of VAT in respect of business transactions;

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

(c) Government's response thereto?

Aid by European Investment Bank

4098. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that European Investment Bank proposed to lend 50 million Euros to small scale industries in the country;

(b) if so, whether the proposal has been finalized;

(c) whether Government have finalized any strategy for disbursement of loan; and

(d) what are the details in this regard?

Income Tax raids in Jarkhand

4099. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of raids conducted by the Income Tax Department in the year 2002 in the State of Jharkhand;

(b) the details of these raids separately for Industrial houses, Business concerns and Government officials;

(c) the unaccounted amount unearthed during these raids in terms of tax evasion; and

(d) whether Government agrees that no information be given to media till the time these are verified; if so, what steps Government propose to take in this regard?

Private placement of shares by Reliance

4100. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Securities and Exchange Board of India has written to Centre over the alleged irregularities in private placement of shares by Reliance Industries Ltd.;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether SEBI has powers to proceed against such violations of its guidelines and if so, the reasons for SEBI referring the issue to Centre?

Repayment of foreign currency convertible bonds

4101. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government

have allowed the Indian companies to repay foreign currency convertible bonds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any limit has been fixed when it is made out of local requirements; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

NPA's of Banks

4102. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the gross NPA's of public sector banks, scheduled commercial banks, regional rural banks and scheduled cooperative banks separately as on 31st March, 2002 and 31st March, 2003 (latest figures);

(b) the amount of bad debt written off so far by the above banks separately;

(c) the reasons for the levels of NPA's remaining high as compared to international standards; and

(d) the effect of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 over NPA's?

Shortfall in excise duty collections

4103. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the net receipt from Central excise duties during the financial years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 as against the budget estimates;

(b) the reasons for shortfall, if any;

(c) the increase in value of production in the manufacturing sector as against the increase in Central excise receipts;

(d) the percentage of down fall and the reasons for it;

(e) whether the scheme for levy of duty on the basis of capacity of production on processed fabrics resulted in the fall of revenue collection; and

(f) if so, the steps being taken to plug leakage of revenue?

Private operators in General Insurance

4104. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of private players in General Insurance;

(b) how many of them have made a net profit in the year 2002; and

(c) the performance of public sector undertakings (PSUs) in the insurance sector in the year 2002?

IRDAs directives to non-life insurance companies

4105. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) has directed all the four public sector non-life insurance companies (New India Assurance, Oriental Insurance, United India Insurance and National Insurance) to bring down the level of their management expenses;

(b) if so, the reasons for this direction; and

(c) the reasons for the surge in the management expenses?

Fiscal incentives to NER

4106. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) details of fiscal incentives granted to existing and new industries of NER with duration, nature and target group entitled for such incentives;

(b) the objectives, entitled industries, date of commencement and expiry of transport subsidy;

(c) whether the circumstances of allowing these incentives at commencement are different from now;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) if not, in what way Government propose to discontinue such incentives and make the industries viable; and

(f) the proposal, if any, to support existing industries of NER and to make NE as special economic zone?

New Pension Scheme for Government Employees

4107. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to introduce a new pension scheme for the serving Central Government Employees;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the date with effect from which the new scheme is likely to be put in place?

Action under sub-section 5 of section 4 of the Companies Act

4108. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the names of those

companies have been struck out from the register of the Registrar of Companies u/s 4 (5) of the Companies Act, 1956 who have failed to enhance their paid up capitals as stipulated in the said section; and

(b) if no, what action is being considered for the failure of the office of Registrar in this regard?

Fees realised by Department of Company Affairs

4109. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total fees realised by Department of Company Affairs during financial years 2000-2001, 2001-2002 and 2002-2003;

(b) what is the total expenditure incurred during the above periods, year-wise; and

(c) whether the expenditure incurred commensurate to the services rendered and fees realised?

Corruption in Income Tax Department

4110. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to Government's notice that there is rampant corruption in the Income Tax Department for the settlement of refund claims;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto; and

(c) the corrective action proposed to be taken in this regard?

AMFI Mutual Fund Distributors test

4111. DR. M.N. DAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been made mandatory to pass AMFI Mutual Fund Distributors test being conducted by NSE otherwise their agency will be terminated; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the reasons for which the commission of agents have been stopped who could not pass the prescribed test and whether Government propose to do away with clause and release commission of all the agents whose agency have been terminated?

Income tax rebate for dependents

4112. DR. M.N. DAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1997 given in the Rajya Sabha on 10th December, 2002 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that rebate is available under section 80DD of the Income Tax Act for the dependent family member of the Government servant;

(b) if so, the reason for which the rebate is available only for one dependent irrespective of the number of dependents; and

(c) whether Government propose to remove the anomaly and give benefit for the number of actual handicapped dependents?

Notice to M/s Seagram Mfg.

4113. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2738 given in the Rajya Sabha on 17th December, 2002 and state:

(a) the latest position in regard to the two show cause notices issued to M/s Seagram Mfg. limited for evasion of custom duty and also indicate the amount of customs duty and penalty received so far; and

(b) what is the progress so far made in respect to criminal complaint filed against the company and its officials in the said case?

Premium collection by LIC

4114. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the premia collections of LIC during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that the premia collections in 2002 have fallen short;

(c) if so, the reasons for such a decline in premia collections;

(d) whether it is because of lesser number of LIC agents in the corporation; and

(e) whether the LIC is thinking of increasing the number of agents to tighten its hold in the market?

Credit guarantee fund of SIDBI

4115. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have introduced Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Small Scale Industries which is being implemented by SIDBI;

(b) if so, the details and salient features thereof; and

(c) the number of SSI units benefited under the scheme in Andhra Pradesh and rest of the country since its inception, year-wise, State and Union Territory-wise?

Decline in loans disbursed by SIDBI

4116. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is decline in the quantum of loans disbursed by SIDBI in Andhra Pradesh and other parts of the country;

(b) if so, the details of the quantum of loans disbursed by SIDBI during the last three years, year-wise and State-wise;

(c) whether this has resulted in setback to Small Scale Industry Sector in the country; and

(d) if so, what remedial measures Government propose to take in this regard?

Loans for unemployed graduates in Uttaranchal

4117. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the problems faced by the unemployed graduates in getting loans from the Banks in Uttaranchal;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to relax such rules for the unemployed from backward and snow bound areas and other weaker sections in the State as special case; and

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

Financial aid to Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh

†4118. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the financial aid provided by

Government to Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh respectively during last year;

(b) whether Government have made an assessment from different points of view while providing financial aid to both States whereas geographic situation of both is same being hilly States; and

(c) whether Government will provide financial aid to Uttaranchal equal to that of Himachal Pradesh?

Funding mechanism for infrastructure projects

4119. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) by when Government are going to implement the innovative funding mechanism for the major infrastructure projects in the Ministries of Surface Transport, Railways, Civil Aviation etc.;

(b) how the scheme is going to be operationalised;

(c) whether the budget allocation is sufficient to bridge the viability gap; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Implementation of VAT

4120. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that majority of the States have expressed their willingness to implement VAT from June, 2003;

(b) whether there is any specific provision relating to VAT and decision of legislative powers between the Union and States under the current constitutional scheme; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Road map for introduction of VAT

4121. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a fresh decision on the road map for introduction of the Value Added Tax (VAT) regime in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any study has been made to assess the negative impact of the uncertainty prevailing over a period of time and the sudden postponement of the VAT regime, originally proposed from 1st April, 2003, on companies' inventory stocks and losses across various States and product categories;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) an analysis of the views expressed by various States so far on the new system?

Buy back of domestic debt

4122. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to buy back its domestic debt worth Rs. 40,000 crores in the next fiscal year from various banks at discounted premium; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the benefits likely to accrue there from to Government?

Sub-Committee on printing of currency notes

4123. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Reserve Bank of India had appointed a Sub-Committee which overruled the recommendations/suggestions of a High Powered Committee earlier formed by Government with regard to printing of currency notes in India; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

Attachment of Maharashtra Government Treasury

4124. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that IFCI has invoked the guarantee of Maharashtra Government through Debt Recovery Tribunal for recovering its loan of Rs. 50.69 crores to a Sugar Cooperative resulting in attachment of Treasury and Reserve Bank of India account with RBI;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Central Government have also given a number of guarantees for the loans taken by Central Public Undertakings from Financial Institutions; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the precautions taken to avoid a similar situation at the Centre?

Export of Ethanol

4125. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to export Ethanol to Japan and Australia;

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

(c) by when, exports would commence?

ONGC Videsh's Vietnam Project

4126. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

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

(a) whether ONGC Videsh expects \$ 60 million annually from Vietnam Project;

(b) the details of the projects that have been set-up in this country by ONGC Videsh;

(c) whether these projects are in collaboration with other foreign agencies, if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of countries where the company has been carrying out oil exploration along with the success achieved?

Gas agencies in Punjab

4127. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of gas agencies present in Punjab, district-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to set up more gas agencies in the State;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) by when it is likely to be set up?

Purchase of oil from international market

4128. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is wise to keep importing oil while it is still cheap having the fact in mind that if the US-Iraq war stretches long the oil prices in international markets could sky rocket; and

(b) if so, the details of oil purchase by Government from the international market in the last six months?

Impact of Exim Policy on oil sector

4129. DR. A.R. KIDWAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Exim Policy, 2003-2004 promoting oil marketing companies to go in for direct imports of petrol and diesel have been welcomed by all the oil companies;

(b) if so, the details of the companies which will be involved in importing petrol and diesel directly for their retail outlets;

(c) to what extent it has helped in fulfilling the demands of oil and petroleum products to the consumers;

(d) what other steps Government propose to take to deregularise the oil industry further; and

(e) whether this decision of Government will check the prices of these products?

Companies involved in exploratory drillings

4130. SHRI DARA SINGH CHAUHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of exploratory drilling which are being conducted for petroleum and natural gas, both on shore and off shore, State-wise and the results thereof;

(b) the names of companies/ organisations engaged in drilling operation and the terms of reference in each case;

(c) the number of exploratory drilling which are operating in Mahanadi Basin and east coast off shore and by which companies/ organisations and since when and current status of each drilling; and

(d) the number of new wells which have started functioning during each of the last three years and amount of additional oil/ natural gas produced from such new wells during each of the last three years?

Price charged by private LPG Suppliers

4131. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether people living in rural/hilly and remote areas depend upon private agencies for their LPG supply;

(b) whether the price of LPG supplied by private agencies is more than the price charged by Government companies;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what steps have been taken to ensure supply of LPG to people living in remote areas at the same price as charged in plain areas?

New forms of methane based compound fuels

4132. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that Western countries are researching on newer forms of methane based compound fuels available in abundance under sea;

(b) if so, whether India has moved in this direction and to what extent;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether any under water oil exploration surveys were conducted in the last three years; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

FDI in petroleum sector

4133. SHRI C. RAMA-
CHANDRAIAH:
SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that Government

propose to take measures to boost FDI in the petroleum sector';

(b) if so, what are the measures proposed;

(c) by when they are proposed to be implemented; and

(d) what are the targets being proposed to be fixed for FDI?

Leakage of Gas in Mumbai

4134. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there was leakage of Gas in Mumbai on 12th February, 2003;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what remedial action Government have taken to prevent such incidents?

Demand for petroleum products

†4135. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any assessment with regard to demand of petroleum products in the country during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the estimated demand of each petroleum product during the current year; and;

(c) the details with regard to possibility of hike in prices of petroleum products like LPG, diesel and petrol etc. again?

Agency for transportation of crude oil

4136. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he had recently shot down

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

Disinvestment Minister's proposal on restoring nodal agency status to Shipping Corporation of India for transportation of crude oil; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

Allocation of kerosene to Orissa

4137. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the present monthly allocation of kerosene oil to Orissa;

(b) whether any request has been received to enhance monthly allocation of kerosene oil to Orissa; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to allocate minimum 50,000 KL to Orissa as per their requirement?

Commercial production of bio-diesel

4138. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since taken a decision for the mass production of bio-diesel;

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

(c) whether the soil of Rajasthan and particularly areas around Jaipur is most suitable for the production of bio-diesel;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the sector in which bio-diesel would be most suitable; and

(f) by when, the commercial production of bio-diesel would commence?

LPG requirement of Karnataka

4139. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total requirement of LPG cylinders per month by domestic consumers in Karnataka;

(b) whether Government are aware that pilfering LP gas from domestic cylinders and refilling it in cylinders of autorickshaw LPG Kits is going on in Bangalore and the other parts of Karnataka; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to stop such pilferage of LP gas from domestic cylinders?

Fire in gas pipeline in Mumbai

4140. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether underground fire in a gas pipeline of Mumbai Mahanagar brokeout on 13th March, 2003;

(b) whether an enquiry panel was set up;

(c) if so, what are its findings; and

(d) whether Government would formulate regulations/standards for laying and operating underground utilities in all the Metro cities to eschew such incidents?

National Policy on Culture

4141. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 4359 given in the Rajya Sabha on 7th May, 2002 and state:

(a) whether Government have formulated a National Policy on Culture;

- (b) if so, the salient features of the policy;
- (c) whether specific provisions are proposed to be incorporated for bringing legislation to protect cultural heritage sites and properties; and;
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

**Financial assistance to Travancore
Devasom Board, Kerala**

4142. SHRI N. K. PREMA-CHANDRAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any proposal has been received from the Kerala Government to declare Sabarimala as a natural centre of pilgrimage;
- (b) whether Government have taken any decision in this regard;
- (c) whether any proposal seeking Central aid to improve the pilgrim tourism has been received from the Travancore Devasom Board; and
- (d) whether Government are considering to extend the financial assistance to the above project?

Aerospace Museum in Bangalore

4143. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:—

- (a) which are the new galleries added to the Visveswariah Industrial and Technological Museum, Bangalore since 2000 till date;
- (b) whether it has come to the notice of Government that Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has opened an Aerospace Museum in Bangalore; and

- (c) whether Government propose to take steps to exhibit the models/pictures etc., of Aerospace Museum at VITM by taking up the matter with the HAL authorities to facilitate visitors to see the developments in Aerospace at one place?

**Financial assistance to voluntary
organisations in Gujarat**

4144. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government provide financial assistance to voluntary organisations engaged in preservation and promotion of Tribal Culture in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the number of such organisations functioning in Gujarat at present; and
- (d) what has been the performance of these organisations in the State so far?

**Unutilized funds for the pilgrimage
centres of U.P.**

4145. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the year-wise quantum of Central Fund released to Uttar Pradesh for the development of pilgrimage centres during the Ninth Five Year plan period;
- (b) whether Central grant was on the basis of matching contribution by the State Government or otherwise;
- (c) the quantum of Central Fund, which remained unutilized and the reasons therefor; and;
- (d) the proposed allocation for the purpose during the Tenth Five Year Plan period?

Completion of Khammam project

4146. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Tourism Corporation proposed to expand the paper project in Khammam district with an investment of Rs. 260 crore;

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

(c) by when the work on this project is likely to start?

Plans to encourage tourism

4147. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:

DR. ABRAR AHMED:

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

(a) whether Government have formulated any short-term and long-term plans to encourage the foreign as well as domestic tourists in the country; and

(b) the outcome of Government's plans?

Affect of Iraq war on tourism

4148. SHRIMATI SHABANA AZMI: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the tourism industry has called for a three-pronged strategy from the Government to counter the negative impact of war in Iraq;

(b) if so, whether Government has been urged to set a crisis management team, service tax exemption for two years and abolition of inland air travel tax of 15 per cent to boost domestic aviation sector;

(c) if so, to what extent the war had a negative impact on the country's tourism; and

(d) to what extent crisis management team has been able to give recommendations to meet the war impact on tourism?

Development of tourist destinations

4149. DR. ABRAR AHMED:

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

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

(a) whether Government have decided to develop important tourist destinations and circuits including ancient monuments, places of cultural importance and places of historical importance in consultations with State Governments/UT Administrations; and

(b) if so, the places identified for development during the current year?

Protection of Tipu's fort in Karnataka

4150. MISS MABEL REBELLO:

SHRI B.J. PANDA:

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

(a) whether Tipu's fort in Karnataka is facing damage and virtual collapse of its parts and whether the Archaeological Survey of India has been warned of this;

(b) whether this heritage site has developed major cracks; if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this is the result of increased pressure from encroachers; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to maintain and protect its heritage character?

Cultural and Musical programmes in monuments

4151. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any policy/users manual not to use monuments as auditoriums;

- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the details of the cultural and musical programmes conducted in monuments like Taj and other important monuments over the years?

Tourist spots affected due to drought in Rajasthan

†4152. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether various tourist spots in Rajasthan have been affected due to drought;
- (b) whether lakes, which are the centre of attraction of tourists, have dried up due to drought;
- (c) whether Government have made any scheme for bailing out State Government from this menace; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Harassment with foreign tourists

4153. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of cases of violence/harassment of foreign tourists visiting the country each year during the last three years;
- (b) whether it is a fact that a German national named Pamela Probest was man-handled by a policeman;
- (c) what action has been taken against the accused; and;
- (d) what help was rendered by Government to help the victim in this case?

Revenue generation by tourism industry

4154. SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the revenue generation in US dollar by the Indian Tourism industry for the Financial Year 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002;
- (b) how much is India's share in percentage terms of global tourism year-wise for the last three years both in terms of number of tourists and earnings; and
- (c) whether there has been any trend/shift in the nationalities of the tourists visiting India over the past few years?

Clearance to pending projects of tourism

4155. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a number of proposals of the tourism sector received from the State Government of Assam are pending with Government;
- (b) if so, since when and the reasons for the delay in taking any decision by Government; and
- (c) by when a final decision is likely to be taken?

Facilities to foreign tourists

†4156. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that inspite of increase in the number of foreign tourists, the facilities being provided to them are negligible;

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether Government propose to encourage foreign tourists from whom huge amount of foreign exchange is earned, coming to India by increasing the facilities being provided to them; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Opening of Bhojshala and Kamal Maula Mosque

4157. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Madhya Pradesh has sought clear orders from Government about the timing for opening of the (1) Bhojshala and (2) Kamal Maula Mosque to the respective communities;

(b) if so, Government's response thereto; and

(c) whether Government have taken any step to lay down rules and guidelines for offering prayers at old and ancient places of worship in various monuments, if so, the details in this regard?

Bhagwat Geeta festival at Kurukshetra

4158. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a suggestion has been received that instead of organizing an annual Mahabharat festival at Kurukshetra, it would be more appropriate to have a Bhagwat Geeta festival; and

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

Facilities to temple at Tanjavour

4159. DR. KARAN SINGH : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether steps are being taken to further improve facilities at the magnificent temple at Tanjavour; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

Duty-free shops at sea-ports

4160. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is no duty-free shops in any Indian port;

(b) whether Government propose to set up duty-free shops at some of the sea-ports;

(c) if so, the names of such sea-ports; and

(d) by when these are likely to be set up?

Research on utilisation of rain water

4161. SHRI PRASANTA
CHATTERJEE :
SHRIMATI CHANDRA
KALA PANDEY:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to promote the research on utilization of unutilized rain water to tackle the problems of water crisis in various parts of the country; and

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

Recharging of ground water in Gujarat

4162. SHRI RAJU PARMAR : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of sharp decline/shrinking of ground water table in most of the districts in Gujarat;

Private participation in irrigation projects

†4167. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether many irrigation projects are lagging behind their original time schedule;
- (b) if so, the State-wise details thereof;
- (c) whether Government are contemplating to invite private partnership to complete the said project; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Surface water balancing

4168. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether in the "UN fresh water year" an expert scientists group has commissioned a feasibility study on "framework concept for surface water balancing in India", with special emphasis on drought prone areas like that of Gujarat and Rajasthan;
- (b) if so, whether Government have also undertaken a similar study for surface and underground water balance with emphasis on drought prone areas, during the "UN fresh water year"; if so, the details in this regard; and
- (c) the steps taken and being taken to coordinate Government effort with such expert groups or to support and supplement their effort?

Funds allocated to J & K for irrigation projects

4169. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have released any amount to the States for projects which improve utilization of irrigation facilities;

- (b) if so, the total amount released; and
- (c) how much fund has been allotted to Jammu and Kashmir?

Master plans for conservation of water

†4170. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any master plans have been prepared for utilizing the traditional water sources;
- (b) if so, the States in which master plans have been prepared so far alongwith the details thereof;
- (c) by when the master plans would be prepared for rest of the States; and
- (d) by when the implementation on water conservation would be started?

Completion of irrigation projects

†4171. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the State Governments have utilised the amount allocated for the irrigation projects during the Ninth Five Year Plan;
- (b) if so, the State-wise details of the amount allocated and the amount actually spent; and
- (c) the names of the States alongwith the details of the projects completed during the said period and the details of projects to be completed during the Tenth Five Year Plan?

Completion of medium and large irrigation projects

†4172. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether several large and medium

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

scale irrigation projects financed wholly and partially by Government are pending for more than ten years;

(b) if so, the State-wise details thereof and the names of the pending projects; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to complete these projects?

Features of Paleo Water

4173. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Geographical Research Institute (NGRI) has conducted any survey on the oldest water sources in India;

(b) if so, whether any such survey has been conducted in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh;

(c) if so, whether the age of Paleo Water has been ascertained; and

(d) the characteristics features of such water?

Water Resources Consolidation Project of Karnataka

4174. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Water Resources Consolidation Project, to cover 58 taluks has been sent to World Bank by Karnataka Government; and

(b) if so, the present status of the above project?

Clearance to Salgaon Dam Project, Rajasthan

4175. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU) : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Rajasthan has requested Government for expeditious clearance of the Salgaon Dam Project in Rajasthan;

(b) what is the significance of this project, and details in this regard; and

(c) Government's reaction in this regard?

Dialogues with neighbouring countries for sharing of river water

4176. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Task Force set up to evaluate the inter-linking of rivers has suggested dialogues with neighbouring Nepal and Sikkim on river water sharing;

(b) if so, whether such dialogues will also be held with Bangladesh; and

(c) whether it would have been appropriate to initiate such dialogues with neighbouring countries which should have been preceded by a consensus among the Indian States over sharing of their surplus river water?

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