

under the same terms and conditions of service, including Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS), enjoyed by them earlier when under ITDC management. The employees of the hotels at Kovalam, Kolkata, Manali, Khajuraho and Varanasi who have not opted for VRS, have also been transferred to the new owners, duly protecting their existing service conditions. The interest of the employees of hotels Aurangabad Ashok, Kanishka & Indraprastha would be similarly protected. The services of all the employees of Hotel Bangalore Ashok (including Airport Restaurant) have been transferred to the new lessee duly protecting their existing service conditions. At Chandigarh, there were no employees.

Labelling on Soft Drinks

407. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the harmful effects of carbonated soft drinks on health and their habit-forming nature;

(b) whether Government are also aware that many foreign countries make it mandatory to label soft drink bottles and cans with warning about presence of caffeine, calorie content and the type and amount of sweetener used;

(c) whether Government have conducted any study to find out which foreign country has regulations for such compulsory markings;

(d) whether Government have any plan of introducing such mandatory labelling of soft drinks in the country; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Carbonated beverages conforming to the standards as laid down under PFA Rules, 1955, are safe for human consumption.

(b) to (e) Government is aware of the labelling regulations prevalent in foreign countries. Specific labelling provisions have been prescribed under PFA Rules, 1955, at par with International Labelling Provisions for

those products containing artificial sweeteners. Following additional labelling requirements for these products are under process:-

- (i) A declaration "Contains caffeine."
- (ii) A declaration "quantity of sugar added."
- (iii) A declaration "no sugar added" in the product.
- (iv) Product containing artificial sweeteners shall be packed and sold with all the prescribed declarations on the body of the containers. These products shall not be packed and sold in returnable glass containers where prescribed label declarations cannot be incorporated on the body of the containers.

Cheaper Hepatitis-B vaccine

408. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:
SHRI RAJU PARMAR:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Hepatitis-B spreads very easily and one in every twenty Indians is already infected with this killer disease;

(b) if so, the steps Government have taken or propose to take for protection against this disease;

(c) whether cheap vaccines are available in the country for the poor; and

(d) if not, the steps being taken to procure Hepatitis-B vaccines at cheaper rates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) Hepatitis-B spreads through unsafe sex, unsafe blood transfusion, unsafe injections etc. and also from mother to child. Hepatitis-B is preventable by ensuring precautionary measures. Studies undertaken so far, indicate that about 3% to 5% of the population in the country is suffering from Hepatitis-B infection. The following