

The agenda discussed was: (i) Validity of HIV strains prevalent in India and different parts of the World; (ii) Methods of diagnosis of HIV infection; (iii) HIV infection as the cause of AIDS.

Some of the participants were of the view that the causative agent of AIDS i.e. the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus has not been identified and that there are other diseases which give a false positive test for HIV. The representative from ICMR clarified that several strains of HIV has been isolated in India and elsewhere in the world. The present available HIV testing kits are highly sensitive and specific for detection HIV infection and false positive results do not occur at any significant level, provided the procedure for testing is correctly followed. As far as the efficacy of antiretroviral drugs in prevention of mother to child transmission is concerned. It has been scientifically proved to be an effective way to prevent HIV transmission in newborns.

It was the impression of representatives of ICMR and WHO that some of the participants had biased opinions which were not scientifically sound and did not know much about national and international scientific status of HIV research.

Also, it is a well established scientific conclusion that HIV is the causative organism for AIDS.

Assistance for Computer Education in Andhra Pradesh Schools

*500. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the request of the Andhra Pradesh Government for providing Rs. 12.54 crores for introducing computer education in schools has been withheld in the Ministry of Human Resource Development;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when would it be cleared for opening computer education at the rate of one high school in each mandal with a provision of matching 251 lakhs by the State Government?

[28 April, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) No, Sir. As soon as the said proposal was received from Govt. of Andhra Pradesh in December, 1998 they were duly informed of the modifications that were being envisaged in Govt. of India's Computer Literacy and Studies in Schools (CLASS) scheme and therefore were requested to await the clearance of the modified CLASS scheme. Processing of modified CLASS scheme is at an advance stage of clearance. As soon as it is cleared, the proposal of Govt. of Andhra Pradesh would be examined in the light of the modified CLASS scheme.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Disinvestment in Public Sector Fertilizer Plants

3652. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

- (a) the plants producing fertilizers in the public sector which have been identified for privatisation or disinvestment;
- (b) to what extent the production would be affected by such uncertainty;
- (c) whether there is a proposal to close down some public sector fertilizer plants; and
- (d) if so, the names of such plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) Based on the recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission, Government have decided to disinvest 51% of NFL's equity and 32.74% of its equity in MFL out of Current 58.74% holding through sale to a strategic buyer along with transfer of management control. In case of both the Companies, the process of selection of global adviser/merchant banker through global tendering is underway. In case of four other public sector Companies, namely FACT, PPCL, PPI and RCF, which have been identified for disinvestment, the process is at an initial stage of seeking approvals.

It is envisaged that disinvestment and resultant change in ownership shall not affect production of these plants and shall instead, exert pressure on the Companies to further improve performance, enhance efficiency, achieve higher profits and face the market challenge.