

MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) There have been reports from time to time about the flow of illegal funds to various secessionist and militant organisations through clandestine channels and in contravention of the law. The Government and all the concerned security and enforcement agencies have been continuously making efforts to contain such possibilities through sustained vigilance, inquiries and investigations, and operations against various secessionist and militant organisations in different parts of the Country.

Hike in the Prices of Petroleum Products

*217. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA:
SHRI SANATAN BISI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Oil Pool Account deficit would increase to Rs. 15,500 crores by the end of current financial year despite recent hike in prices of petroleum products;

(b) whether Government are sustaining a loss of Rs. 13 crores on account of oil deficit annually;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether there is any proposal for another hike in the prices of petroleum products; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (e) The cumulative outstandings of the oil companies from the oil pool account which were Rs. 5,700 crores as on 31.3.96 are estimated to be Rs. 15,500 crores by 31.3.97. Deficits have arisen in the pool account because the sales realisation from the products did not fully cover the costs incurred. The position of the oil pool account is monitored on a

continuous basis and remedial measures taken to contain the deficit.

LPG connections in 1996-97

*218. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the target of new domestic LPG connections for the year 1996-97;

(b) the number of new connections released by various oil companies, so far; and

(c) what steps are being taken to augment the LPG supplies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) The target for release of new LPG connections in the country during 1996-97 has been fixed at 20 lakhs.

(b) Public Sector Oil Companies have released 10,86,792 new LPG connections during April-Oct./96.

(c) Efforts are constantly on to release LPG connections to as many applicants as early as possible. Plans have been drawn for higher availability of LPG by increasing the capacity of existing production sources, putting up new plants and through higher imports through existing and new facilities.

Proposal from Andhra Pradesh under Remote Area Development Programme

*219. DR. D.. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal under Remote Area Development Programme was forwarded on the 31st October, 1995, for sanction of Rs. 246 crores for Mehboobnagar district;

(b) if so, whether the proposal is still pending with Government for technical and financial clearance;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the reasons for not clearing the project so far; and

(e) by when it is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. YERRAN NAIDU): (a) to (e) Information is being obtained from the State Government and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Steps to revive tourism in Jammu and Kashmir

*220. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRO SHINDE:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether following successful elections to Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly in Jammu and Kashmir, any special efforts have been/are being made to revive tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and to restore its lost glory as a tourist attraction; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI S. R. BALASUBRAMONYAN): (a) and (b) With the improvement in the ground situation in the State of J & K, efforts have been initiated to revive tourism in the State. One of the major steps taken by the State Govt, in this direction is declaration of tourism as industry. The State Government also proposes to start Winter Sports at Gulmarg during the current year. The State Government is also considering a special package of incentives for the people associated with the Tourist trade which include interest subsidy on the loans taken by various damaged Units, re-construction of departmental and J & K Tourism Development Corporation assets, repairs of local tourism infrastructure and the launching of massive publicity campaign. Government of India have already announced writing off of outstanding loans and interests of all borrowers who

have not been able to repay due to militancy and whose original borrowing is less than Rs. 50,000/-. Government of India have also decided to provide an amount of Rs. 2.40 crores for setting up of a Convention/ Conference Centre at Leh to give a further fillip to tourism in this area.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Relaxations in the Forest and Environment Act for Maharashtra

1355. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Maharashtra Chief Minister had requested the Prime Minister in 1996 to make relaxations in the Forest and Environment Act, for implementation of development works in Adivasi areas of Maharashtra; and

(b) if so, the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) Yes Sir, the letter was received from Chief Minister Maharashtra in July, 1996 highlighting the hardships being faced by the Adivasies due to enforcement of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and suggesting delegation of power to grant permission under the provision of this Act to the State Government upto an area of 5 ha.

(b) The proposal of Chief Minister Maharashtra was examined by the Ministry of Environment & Forests and the position is as follows:—

The relaxations in the guidelines issued under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as amended on 25th October, 1992 has already been provided. In respect of proposals for laying of transmission line, pipelines for drinking water supply and exploratory drilling for prospecting of oil which do not involve any felling of trees, simplified procedure has been prescribed in the guidelines. The condition of raising