

transfer and incorporate them in an agreement or any other appropriate legal instrument they may be executed between the parties”.

The Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta granted a stay order on the transfer of the lease of 11-B on 16.4.96 on a public interest petition filed by Shri Gurudas Dasgupta and Shri Jibon Roy, Members of Parliament. The writ petition had been dismissed by the Hon'ble High Court on grounds of jurisdiction on 10.5.1996. However, the operation of the order was stayed by the Hon'ble High Court for a period of three weeks upto 31.5.1996. On a petition by the Joint Venture Company against this order the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court ordered on 14.5.96 that the interim stay granted by the learned trial judge will remain suspended till the disposal of the appeal preferred by the Company and the appeal preferred by Shri Gurudas Dasgupta and Shri Jibon Roy against the order dismissing the original writ petition on jurisdiction grounds. These appeals are yet to come up before the regular bench.

The subject is very important and needs detailed examination on various aspects. However, since the matter is pending before the Court, the Government would like to await the judicial verdict.

(b) and (c) According to Ministry of Mines a proposal has recently been received by F.I.P.B. for mining of limestone in Assam and its export to Bangladesh. This proposal has been supported by the Ministry of Mines.

A list of cases for grant of prospecting licence/mining lease approved during 1995-96 by Ministry of Mines is given below:

	Mining Lease	Prospecting Licence
Assam	One case of Limestone. One transfer	

	Mining Lease	Prospecting Licence
	case of Limestone	
Meghalaya	—	One case of Limestone.

(d) In view of reply at (b) and (c) above, does not arise.

Reservation for Women in Government JOBS

*176. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is going to take appropriate measures for 33% job reservation in Government establishments for women; and

(b) in what manner this job reservation shall benefit women, particularly belonging to weakest strata of our society without being uplifted in respect of education and skill?

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) and (b) The proposal to provide for reservation to women in jobs under the Central Government is under consideration.

Acute Shortage of Essential Supplies in some parts of the Country

*177. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item in Indian Express dated the 18th March, 1996 stating that States like West Bengal, Maharashtra, etc. were starving of their allotted quota of wheat and rice resulting in hard hitting suffering to the poorer sections of the population who draw their sustenance from Public Distribution

System while nation's grainaries in Punjab and Haryana were over-flowing; and

(b) the facts in this regard and names of all the officers of Food Corporation of India responsible for such an acute shortage of essential supplies in various parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTERS OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA

PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) The news item appeared in the Indian Express dt. 18.3.96 was seen by the Government. As the stocks of foodgrains in the central pool continued to be comfortable, there had been no difficulty in supplying wheat and rice to the State/UTs including West Bengal, Maharashtra etc. for PDS during 1995-96. The average monthly offtake of rice and wheat for PDS/RPDS in West Bengal and Maharashtra in year 1995-96 was as under:—

(In Lakh Tonnes)

State	Rice	Wheat	Total
West Bengal	0.37	0.70	1.07
Maharashtra	0.30	0.51	0.81
All India	7.88	4.41	12.29

As against the lifting of rice and wheat indicated above, the stocks held by FCI on different dates were as under:—

(In Lakh Tonnes)

Date	West Bengal		Maharashtra		All India (Central Pool)	
	Rice	Wheat	Rice	Wheat	Rice	Wheat
1.4.95	3.61	0.96	8.04	5.82	180.0	87.2
1.10.95	3.81	1.16	6.51	4.57	130.0	169.5
1.1.96	3.45	0.52	5.46	3.23	154.0	131.5
1.2.96	3.76	0.63	5.35	3.01	160.8	114.9
1.3.96	3.73	0.74	5.48	2.83	161.8	99.4
1.4.96	3.41	0.72	5.32	2.85	141.4	86.0
1.5.96	3.14	0.87	5.38	2.76	137.4	122.4
1.6.96	2.95	1.13	5.02	2.66	135.4	152.3

(All Figures Provisional)

The stocks of rice and wheat in the country stood higher than the requirements for PDS. The same position prevailed in Maharashtra and West Bengal except in January, 96 and February, 96 when the stock of wheat on the first day of the month was a little lower than the average monthly offtake in the state. There were some movement constraints

affecting the stock position during a few months after September, 95 in the Mumbai City and Calcutta Metropolitan Areas. This was mainly due to lesser availability of railway rakes due to heavy passenger traffic in Mumbai Areas and difficulty on the part of Calcutta Port Trust to accept rakes from the Eastern Railways for placement at Jinjra Pool

(JJP) godown of FCI in Calcutta Port Trust Area. The situation has improved since then.

In the aforesaid context, there seems to be no scope for fixing responsibility on any FCI officers.

Import and Export of Pepper and Cardamom

*178. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of income to Government from export cess on pepper in the last three years;

(b) whether it has come to the notice of Government that the cess is affecting adversely the export of pepper;

(c) if so, whether Government would take steps to abolish the export cess on pepper;

(d) the quantity of cardamom imported by India during 1995-96;

(e) the reasons for Government not stopping the import of cardamom as its price in India is falling?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) The revenue from cess on export of "Black Pepper" during the last three years is given below:—

Year	Revenue (Rs: Crores)
1993-94 (Actuals)	0.60
1994-95 (Revised Estimates)	0.60
1995-96 (Budget)	0.65

Source: Receipts-Budget Document 1995-96 of Ministry of Finance.

(b) and (c) Presently cess on export of spices including pepper is collected under

the provisions of the following Acts:—

RATE OF CESS

- (i) The Agricultural Produce Cess Act, 1940 0.5% Ad valorem
- (ii) The Spices Cess Act, 1986 2% Ad valorem
 - (a) Spices in raw form 1% Ad valorem
 - (b) Spices in the form of curry powder, spice oils & oleoresins, other mixtures where spice content is predominant

Cess on export of pepper (except green pepper in brine) under the provisions of the Spices Cess Act, 1986 was exempted upto 31.03.1996. Review of taxation burden on exports including cess is an on-going process and, as and when considered necessary, exemptions on specified items are notified. Such exemptions from levy of cess are expected to make our agricultural exports more competitive.

(d) Quantities of cardamom imported during 1995-96 are as under:—

	QTY (MT)	Value (Rs. lakh)
(i) Small Cardamom	53.36	39.38
(ii) Large Cardamom	2552.25	1040.61
(iii) Others (Incl. Large Seeds)	20.92	8.28
Total	2626.53	1088.27

Source: DGCI&S, Calcutta.

(e) Cardamom being a consumer item, is under the negative list of import and hence cannot be imported except against an import licence.

Child Labour in Bidi Sector

*179. SHRI V. RAJAN CHELLAPPA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the steps proposed to regulate child labour in bidi sector;