

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) There has been a regular dialogue between the Government of India and the Government of Nepal on handling cross-border crimes and security concerns.

The institutionalized bilateral mechanism of Home Secretaries talks looks into these issues. The last round of Home Secretaries talks were held in New Delhi on October 31-November 1, 2008, in accordance with the decisions reached during the official visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal to India in September, 2008. During the Home Secretaries talks, both sides discussed enhancing ongoing efforts to control activities of criminal and anti-social elements along the India-Nepal border. They stressed the need for cooperation and information sharing between law enforcement agencies of both countries in combating trans-border crimes, and agreed to take measures for better coordination in intelligence sharing. In order to effectively counter the menace of fake currency, both sides agreed to initiate capacity building programmes to enhance the capability of enforcement agencies in this area and in tackling money laundering, cyber crime and financing of terrorism.

During the official visit of External Affairs Minister to Nepal from 24-26 November, 2008, both sides agreed to take necessary steps, based on agreements reached at the last round of Home Secretaries talks.

Coal shortage in NTPC

*148. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a coal shortage in the country and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and State Power firms have approached his Ministry to meet the shortage of coal in power projects;

(b) whether all the power projects have been facing coal shortage;

(c) whether the Board of Coal India Ltd. has approved a first ever proposal to import coal;

(d) if so, the total coal to be imported;

(e) the total requirements; and

(f) to what extent import of coal would meet the shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): (a) and (b) As per Annual Plan 2008-09, Planning Commission envisaged some gap between estimated demand of coal for power utilities and source-wise availability including that from Coal India Limited (CIL) and Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL). Therefore, keeping in view estimated production and expected power generation targets as well as with a view to build the coal stocks at power plants, Ministry of Power was advised to retain last year's target of 20 million tonnes for imports by power utilities during 2008-09. In spite of CIL and SCCL meeting

their Annual Action Plan (AAP) targets of supply to power utilities during April-November 2008, due to lesser materialization as against quarterly planned movement of coal on account of various factors including loading/unloading and movement constraints, short-term production constraints in the linked source, increase in Plant Load Factor (PLF), increase in consumption of coal per unit of power generation and lesser materialization of targetted imports by power utilities, there has been an overall depletion of coal stocks at the power plants.

(c) to (f) During the meeting convened in Planning Commission in September, 2008, *inter-alia*, the position relating to supply of coal to power utilities during 2008-09 having regard to projected demand of power utilities and supply of coal from various sources including targetted import was discussed and it was decided that to meet power generation target and to have some cushion in coal supplies, additional 11 million tonnes was to be imported, out of which CIL was advised to import 4 million tonnes. CIL Board has approved import of 4 million tonnes of coal by CIL for power utilities during November, 2008 March, 2009. Since the overall requirement of power utilities during 2008-09 has been estimated at 373 million tonnes, it is expected that with planned production and the targetted imports by power utilities and CIL, sufficient coal would be available for meeting power generation requirements in the country during 2008-09.

Marine emergency relief fund

*149. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of marine casualties, loss of ships in the Indian territorial waters etc. have gone up in the last few years;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that his Ministry has decided to create Marine Emergency Relief Fund to address the above and other issues;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a Committee of Experts has been set up to look into all these aspects; and

(d) if so, the details of recommendations made by the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU):
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Proposal for creation of Marine Emergency Fund is under consideration.

(c) and (d) A "Committee on urgent measures for prevention of marine casualties and emergency response" has studied and made recommendations on the measures to reduce the marine casualties in the Indian coastal waters. The recommendations made by the Committee include preventive and rehabilitation measures including restriction on old vessels; stringent inspections and creation of Emergency Fund. The Committee has also made recommendations for an emergency response mechanism for responding in emergency situations; salvage and oil