

(a) whether Government is making efforts to bring back treasure including private articles of Maharaja Daleep Singh son of Sher-e-Punjab Ranjit Singh and the last emperor of Sikh empire;

(b) whether Government is aware that a Sikh organization has written a letter recently to Queen to bring back Maharaja's treasure along with his letter, diaries and articles which were taken to Britain during 19th century;

(c) whether Government has any list of other legacies plundered from India and taken to Britain; and

(d) if so, the efforts being made to bring them back to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Slum free India

2161. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any project to make India slum free in near future;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for no improvements in civic amenities in slums all over the country;

(d) whether his Ministry has prepared action-plan for cities like Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government has recently announced a new scheme called Rajiv Awas Yojana for the slum dwellers and the urban poor. The scheme is aimed at providing support to States that are willing to provide property rights to the slum dwellers with an effort to create slum free India.

(c) to (e) Urban development/slum upgradation is a State subject. The reasons for no improvements in civic amenities in slums include the lack of adequate investment in housing and basic amenities by States/Urban Local Bodies in slums in addition to continued migration and other factors. It is upto the concerned States/Cities to prepare action plans for improvement in civic amenities in their respective States/cities. The Ministry has not prepared any city-specific action plan.

Dialogue on IPI pipeline project

2162. SHRI MANGALA KISAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country has re-started its dialogue with Iran on the \$8 billion Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipe line project during the visit of Secretary of Iran's National Security Advisor also;

(b) whether the country has reiterated its stand "cost-wise" by asking Iran to put the clause "Supply or Pay" in the Indo-Iran agreement as well as to ensure New Delhi's fears for proper safety of pipe line through Pakistan; and

(c) if so, the time period that Iran would take to sell the required gas to India and Pakistan as per IPI gas pipe line project agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) Government of India has been discussing with the Government of Iran the Iran-Pakistan-India Gas (IPI) Pipeline project since 2005 and also did so during the visit of the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council to New Delhi on June 12, 2009.

(b) India is pursuing the import of natural gas from Iran through the Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline project. Various issues, viz., pricing of gas, delivery point of gas, project structure, assured supplies and security of the pipeline, transportation tariff, transit fee for passage of natural gas through Pakistan etc., are involved in the discussions between the participating countries. Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions, as all aspects have to be carefully examined and deliberated upon to the satisfaction of the participating countries to protect each country's interest and to avoid problems in the future for the successful operation of the pipeline.

(c) Work on the Project can commence only after satisfactory resolution of issues under discussion amongst the participating countries. As such, completion schedule of the Project cannot be laid down at this stage.

Relations with Canada

2163. SHRI SABIR ALI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the bilateral, multilateral or international arrangements for improving our relations with Canada; and

(b) the more steps that are envisaged to further strengthen the ties with that country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) India and Canada have several bilateral mechanisms for dialogue such as Foreign Office Consultations, Strategic Dialogue, Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism, Trade Policy Consultations, Joint Committee on Science and Technology, Environment Forum, and Working Group on issues related to agriculture. Both countries have signed Agreements or Memorandum of Understanding in areas such as agriculture, science and technology, avoidance of double taxation, environment, air-services, extradition, and mutual legal assistance.