

(a) whether a discussion was held with regard to National Food Security in the recent meeting of the National Development Council;

(b) if so, the efforts made or proposed to be made for creating structural framework in this regard; and

(c) the details of action taken with regard to implementation of this National Policy?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) During the meeting of the National Development Council on 24th July, 2010, mid-term appraisal of the 11th Plan was discussed. Many aspects of the National Food Security were discussed highlighting the fact that better agricultural performance, especially performance in food production is crucial for food security. Efforts being made in many States to increase agricultural productivity were also discussed and adoption of better technologies was emphasized. Several Chief Ministers emphasized the need for strengthening of Public Distribution System and early operationalization of the Food Security Act.

Government has been working on various aspects of the proposed National Food Security Act. The Empowered Group of Ministers constituted for considering various issues related to the proposed law, has been deliberating on issues like better estimation of poverty levels, methodology for identification of poor families/individuals, entitlements for distribution of subsidized foodgrains, reforming Targeted Public Distribution System, linking of TPDS entitlements to Unique Identification numbers of citizens, etc. On conclusion of these deliberations, Government will come out with a draft of the National Food Security Act for inviting views/suggestions.

Achievement of targets of railway safety plan

*389. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that not a single zone of Railways has achieved the target of Ten Years Railway Safety Plan which started from 2003;

(b) whether there is a shortage of 85,100 staff in all sections concerning safety, including operating, electrical, mechanical and civil operations;

(c) whether it is a fact that the observations of CAG in this regard have not yet been complied;

(d) the total amount collected from the special railway safety surcharge, which was ranging from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 100/- from the travellers; and

(e) whether it is still being charged?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) The currency of Corporate Safety Plan (CSP) will come to an end only on 31.03.2013. Upto 31.3.2010, there has been 92.27% financial progress on works under Corporate Safety Plan, which is more than pro-rata progress.

(b) Arising and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process. As on 01.04.2009, there were 89,024 vacancies in safety categories.

(c) The CAG Report was presented in the Parliament on 03.08.2010. Action has already been initiated on the Highlights and Recommendations mentioned in the Report.

(d) During the year from 2001 to 2007, the total amount collected from passengers by way of levying safety surcharge on passengers tickets was Rs. 3784 crores.

(e) With effect from 31.03.2007, the surcharge has been subsumed in passenger fares.

Maintenance and preservation of HOR/VIP quota

*390. SHRIMATI KUSUM RAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a standing order of Railway Board regarding maintenance and preservation of requisitions received under High Official Requisition (HOR)/VIP quota since 1998;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this order is not being followed properly by Railways on the pretext of voluminous work involved in maintenance and preservation thereof;

(d) if so, the reasons and the justification therefor;