

major currencies in the international markets. Under this system, the exchange rate of the rupee was Rs. 39.495 per US dollar at the end of March 1998 and it was Rs. 44.680 per US dollar at the end of June 2000.

(d) The developments in the financial markets in India and abroad are monitored closely both by the Government and the Reserve Bank of India and appropriate measures are taken, as and when necessary from time to time, to reduce excessive volatility in the exchange rate, prevent the emergence of destabilizing speculative activities, develop an orderly foreign exchange market condition and to help maintain adequate level of foreign exchange reserves.

Privatisation/Deregulation of Port Sector

*37. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to privatise and deregulate the port sector in stages as was done by the British and Malaysian Governments;

(b) if so the details of the plan; and

(c) what will be the policy in regard to hiring of labour and the role of Dock Labour Boards?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH):
(a) and (b) No, Sir. However, as part of Government's liberalisation policy, the port sector was thrown open for private sector participation in 1996. The following areas have been identified for private sector participation:-

(i) Leasing out existing assets of the port.

(ii) Construction/creation of additional assets such as:

(a) construction and operation of container terminals.

(b) construction and operation of bulk, break bulk, multipurpose and specialised cargo berths.

(c) Warehousing, container Freight Stations storage facilities and tank farms.

(d) Cranage/Handling Equipment.

(e) Setting up of captive power plants.

(f) Dry docking and ship repair facilities.

- (iii) Leasing of equipment for port handling and leasing of floating crafts from the private sector.
- (iv) Pilotage
- (v) Captive facilities for port based industries

(c) The existing guidelines on private sector participation in ports contain adequate safeguards for the port labour. The Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) (Inapplicability to Major Ports) Act, 1997 has been passed by Parliament which provides for merger of Dock Labour Boards, in consultation with unions, with the respective Port Trusts.

High Court Bench at Rajkot

***38. SHRI LALITBHAI MEHTA:**
SMT. SAVITABEN SHARDA:

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the proposal for the establishment of a High Court Bench at Rajkot in Gujarat is under Government's consideration;
- (b) if so, by when the decision is likely to be taken;
- (c) if not, whether the proposal by Government of Gujarat and Bar Associations of Gujarat has been negated; and
- (d) whether the Benches of the High Court have been established in other parts of any of the States; if so, the details of the places where they have been established?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY):

(a) to (c) Representations have been received from the Bar Associations etc from time to time, for establishment of Benches of Gujarat High Court at Rajkot, Surat, Vadodra, Kutch and Bhavnagar. However, no proposal in this regard made in consultation with the Chief Justice of the Gujarat High Court has come from the Government of Gujarat. Necessary action in the matter can be taken by the Central Government only on receipt of such a proposal.

- (d) The requisite information is given in the enclosed statement.