

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS**Snooping by US authorities on Indian Nationals**

*62. SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken up with the US Government the matter of snooping on Indian nationals by US authorities; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID):

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government has raised with the U.S. Government its concerns over reports of access by U.S. agencies to internet communications emanating from India. Government views any violation of Indian laws relating to the privacy of information of Indian citizens as unacceptable. This was also discussed with US Secretary of State John Kerry during the fourth Indian-US Strategic Dialogue in New Delhi on 24 June, 2013. Secretary Kerry said that the reported surveillance programme deals only with metadata (broad patterns of telephony data and internet traffic) and does not access the content of such data. He also said that the programme had helped in avoiding terrorist attacks.

Affordable houses in the country

*63. SHRI PANKAJ BORA: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government with the available infrastructure has been able to assess the requirement of affordable houses for middle class throughout the country, and if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(b) whether Government proposes to appoint a regulatory body to control the prices of cement and steel in order to meet the challenging demand, and if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (DR. GIRIJA VYAS): (a) According to the Technical Committee on Urban Housing Shortage constituted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, there is an estimated shortage of 18.78 million at the beginning of Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012). The shortage has been assessed to be as under: