

Starvation deaths In Orissa

254. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a recent telecast of the news reel depicting suppression of starvation deaths in Orissa has been taken note of; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to bring out the truth for immediate corrective measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) No such matter has specifically come to notice.

(b) No "starvation death" has been reported by the Government of Orissa so far. As and when specific information in respect of "starvation death" or major deficiency in the functioning of the Public Distribution System is received, a Team of Officers is deputed to look into the same at the earliest.

Starvation deaths in States

†255. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH "LALAN":
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the news-item regarding starvation deaths in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra and Rajasthan;

(b) if so, whether any action was taken by Government to confirm these news-items; and

(c) if so, the details of the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) Reports of starvation deaths have appeared in section of the Press.

(b) and (c) Government have constituted a Task Force to check irregularities and for general inspection and monitoring of implementation

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

of the Targetted Public Distribution System and the Antyodaya Anna Yojana. As and when specific information is received in respect of starvation deaths or major deficiencies in the functioning of the Public Distribution System, a Team of Officers is deputed to visit the areas concerned. So far such teams have been sent to Orissa and Rajasthan, amongst other States.

Rejection by Pakistan to use land route for Indo-Afghan trade

256. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan has rejected Afghanistan's request to use country's land route for continuing its trade ties with India;

(b) if so, whether Indo-Afghanistan trade would continue through alternative route avoiding Pakistan territory; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) to (c) Pakistan has not allowed trade-related and some other Indian products destined for Afghanistan to enter through the India-Pakistan border.

India-Afghanistan trade and economic relations continue to strengthen and expand through commercially available channels and routes to Afghanistan.

Visit by foreign dignitaries

257. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the foreign dignitaries who visited India since August, 2002 till date;

(b) the issues on which deliberations were held with each of the dignitaries;

(c) whether any bilateral agreements were signed with them; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (d) The information is given as under: