

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI DEVI LAL): (a) and (b). Floods cause fairly widespread damage in Bihar almost every year. The tentative loss suffered in Bihar during 1989-90 is estimated to be Rs. 9.50 crore.

[English]

Setting up of Digital Electronic Telephone Exchange at Udumalpet

2693. SHRI B. RAJARAVI VARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to construct a new building for telephone exchange at Udumalpet; and

(b) the time by which the building will be constructed and a digital electronic telephone exchange with 2000 lines set up there?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN): (a) Yes, Sir. there is a proposal to construct a telephone exchange building of Crossbar type.

(b) The building is likely to be completed by September 1991 and 2000 line Crossbar Exchange is expected to be commissioned by middle of 1992 subject to availability of stores. No Digital Electronic Exchange is proposed at this place.

Indo-Bangladesh Talks on Bilateral Problems

2694. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to hold a fresh round of talks with Bangladesh for the solution of the bilateral problems; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJARAL): (a) and (b). During my visit to Bangladesh from 16-18 February, 1990, all bilateral issues were discussed and it was agreed that the talks would be carried forward when the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh visits India for the third meeting of the Joint Economic Commission.

[Translation]

Telephone Exchange at Ramgarh in Bihar

2695. PROF. YADUNATH PANDEY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the building of telephone exchange has since been constructed by his ministry at Ramgarh in Hazaribagh, Bihar; and

(b) if so, the time by which the telephone exchange is likely to start functioning at Ramgarh?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The bldg. for telephone exchange at Ramgarh in Hazaribagh has been completed.

(b) This telephone exchange is likely to start functioning by March, 91.

Issue of Forged Passports

2696. DR. BENGALI SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any cases of issuing forged passports from Lucknow and Bareilly Passport Offices have come to light during the last six months;

(b) if so, whether any enquiry has been conducted in this regard; and

(c) if so, the findings thereof and action taken against the persons involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Does not arise

[English]

Break Through in Coconut Tissue Culture

2697. PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any break through has been made in the coconut tissue culture;

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

(c) the research institutes presently engaged in this research work?

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI DEVI LAL): (a) No Sir.

(b) Techniques have not succeeded due to the presence of phenolic inhibitors.

(c)1. Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kasaragod, Kerala.

2. Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu.

3. Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

4. National Chemical Laboratory, Pune, Maharashtra.

Loss Incurred by Cochin Shipyard

2698. SHRI A. CHARLES: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the loss incurred by the Cochin Shipyard during 1989-90;

(b) the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken to improve the financial health of the Shipyard?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) As the financial year is not yet over, the final audited figures of loss are not available. But the anticipated loss for 1989-90 is Rs. 25.87 crores (approx.)

(b) The main reasons for losses are:

(i) The difference between end price of indigenously built ships and the actual cost of production, as the present pricing formula is related to international parity prices and not related to the actual cost of production.

(ii) Heavy interest burden on the loan portion of the capital structure of the company and working capital loans from the banks.

(iii) Higher cost of indigenous inputs.

(iv) Longer delivery time due to long lead time required for procurement of indigenous inputs.

(v) Low productivity.

(c) Various proposals based on the recommendations made by BICP and High Level Committee