

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA): Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House as soon as received.

Conference of Afro-Asian Legal Consultative Committee

1676. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Conference of Afro-Asian Legal Consultative Committee was held in Kuala Lumpur in July, 1976; and

(b) if so, whether law of the sea figured in the Conference?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI BIPINPAL DAS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

Electronic Exchanges for Telex Traffic in Bombay and Delhi

*1677. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA. Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether electronic exchanges are to be installed to handle telex traffic in Bombay and Delhi by the Overseas Communication Service;

(b) if so, whether any contract has been signed with any foreign firm in this regard; and

(c) if so, the salient features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (DR. SHANKER DAYAL SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A contract has already been signed with M/s. Haaler of Switzerland for supply of necessary equipment for the Bombay Centre. Its

estimated cost is 8.0 million Swiss Francs (Rs. 2.58 crores approx.) and it is being financed under the 3rd Swiss credit. The net estimated cost of the project is Rs. 4.35 crores. The Telex Exchange will have an initial capacity for termination of 450 international telex trunks, with provision for extension to 2000 trunks by additional equipment in course of time.

A project report for installation of an electronic telex exchange at the New Delhi Centre, with substantial indigenous content, has also been drawn up and is likely to be approved shortly; its estimated cost is Rs. 4.27 crores.

Enforcement of Minimum wages for Farm Labour

1678. SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government have given a directive to the Chief Ministers to enforce the minimum wages for farm labour and to give them protection; and

(b) if so, how far it is being implemented, State-wise?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA): (a) and (b): The need for effective and speedy implementation of the rates of minimum wages in respect of agricultural labour has been brought to the notice of the State Governments; the need for ensuring vigilance to see that the interests of agricultural labour are fully protected has also been impressed on them.

Various State Governments are taking action to strengthen the inspection machinery and to increase the number of claims authorities under the Minimum Wages Act so as to ensure effective implementation.