

the country to work in gulf countries for lucrative jobs;

(b) if so, how many persons have left and gone to gulf countries during the last three years; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to stop brain drain occurring as a result thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM (SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA) : (a) and (b). A total of 48 employees of Cochin Refineries Limited had gone abroad from 1982-83 to 1984-85 purely for better remuneration and not because of any closure of the refinery.

(c) Does not arise.

Expansion of telecommunication facilities in Maharashtra

2263. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the plans for expansion of telecommunication facilities in the State of Maharashtra during the next five years;

(b) the benefits that will accrue to the rural areas/hill areas;

(c) the areas that will be benefited; and

(d) those areas which will still remain uncovered ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) Detailed plans for expansion of Telecommunications facilities in the state of Maharashtra for the next five years have not yet been finalised, since allocation of funds for Telecom Department for the 7th plan is not decided. However, demands are proposed to be fully met in rural areas.

(b) About 200 long distance public telephones and small Automatic Exchanges for fulfilling the demands in rural areas/hill areas are proposed to be installed subject to availability of resources.

The rural areas will derive the following benefits out of telephone facilities :

(i) Improvement in socio economic conditions

(ii) Control of Rural to urban migration

(iii) Reducing isolation

(iv) Substitute for travel

(c) and (d). All areas are proposed to be covered subject to feasibility, demands and resources.

Offer of U. S. assistance for strengthening and modernising Indian defence capabilities

2264. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether as reported in Hindustan Times dated and June, 1985, the U.S. Under Secretary for Defence has offered U.S. assistance to reduce India's dependence on Soviet arms by strengthening and modernising Indian defence capabilities;

(b) whether Government have considered the offer; and

(a) if so, their reaction in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO) : (a) and (b). Government have seen the reported news item. No specific offer was made by the U.S. Under Secretary for Defence Policy in this regard during his visit to India in May 1985.

(c) Does not arise.