

formulate a new agricultural policy on the lines of the industrial policy to bring about speedy development of the rural sector and economic betterment of the farming community;

(b) if so, the salient features of the new agricultural policy; and

(c) the time by which the new agricultural policy would be implemented?

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI DEVI LAL): (a) to (c). The Government has appointed a High Powered Committee to go into the issues relating to treating agriculture on par with industry. The Committee is to review the policies and programmes for the promotion of agriculture in the country specially with a view to generating export surpluses. The Committee is expected to submit its report within six months.

Establishment of Seed Farm by State Farms Corporation of India in Tripura

634. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Tripura Government has requested for setting up of a Seed Farm in that State by the State Farms Corporation of India;

(b) whether Officers from his Ministry had visited Tripura and cleared this project;

(c) if so, the reasons for delay in starting the Seed farm; and

(d) when it is likely to be started?

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI DEVI LAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d). A team of officers of the State Farms Corporation of India and the Development of Agriculture & Cooperation inspected the proposed site in Tripura in August, 1989, and held discussions with the State Government. In the light of their recommendations, the request of the State Government was not found feasible both on financial and administrative grounds.

Deposits of Consumers for Telephone connections

635. SHRI VAMANRAO MAHADIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Department of Telecommunications and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited had collected huge amount as deposit from the consumers of different cities for telephone connections;

(b) if so, the amount collected by them; and

(c) the amount out of it utilised for the provisions of fresh Telephone connections?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) and (b). Deposits are to be made by prospective subscribers at the rates prescribed by the Department at the time of registration. The rates vary depending on the category under which the subscriber registers and the capacity and type of the exchange system. In the case of DOT, the amounts deposited at the time of registration are credited to the Ministry of Finance and are not available to DOT until the connections provided at which time, the money is placed back at the disposal of the Department. This is in turn adjusted towards the deposit of one year rental in the case of Non- OYT subscribers in the case of OYT

subscribers a rebate is given in rentals. The amount realised by the Department from the prospective subscribers and credited to the Ministry of Finance during 1988-89 is Rs. 93 crores. In the case of MTNL the deposits received by them were Rs 38.56 crores and retained by them, being a Corporation.

(c) Out of the deposits Rs.31 Crores was utilised by DOT and RS. 38.56 by MTNL for providing new telephones. This is against a total outlay of about Rs. 2057 crores.

Restoration of Bombay-Konkan Coastal Passenger Service

636. SHRI VAMANRAO MAHADIK: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state the steps being taken to resume the Bombay-Konkan Coastal Passenger service?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN) : The two steamers M.V. Konkan Sevak and M.V. Konkan Shakti, which were being operated by shipping Corporation of India between Bombay and Goa, were placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Defence with effect from 29.1.1988 and 2.5.1988, respectively. M.V. Konkan Shakti was built in 1964 and M.V. Konkan Sevak in 1965. Both the vessels have outlived their normal life. Government of India had suggested to the Governments of Maharashtra and Goa that they might consider acquiring, singly or jointly, suitable new or second-hand vessels and share the losses, if any, involved in running this service. In the mean time, applications from three private parties were also cleared for acquisition of vessels for operating passenger services between Bombay and Goa. Government is also examining the possibility of resumption of this service with the two Konkan vessels after return of the vessels by Ministry of Defence and their undergoing Annual Passenger Survey/repairs.

Loss of Business in Speed Post Service

637. SHRI VAMANRAO MAHADIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is loss of business in the Speed Post Service due to simultaneous operation of the same business by private couriers; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to increase the business?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) No Sir. Both Postal speed post and couriers are competing.

(b) We are advertising & taking steps to offer a better service.

Profits by Posts and Telecommunications Departments

638. SHRI VAMANRAO MAHADIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Posts and Telecommunications Departments are earning profit ; and

(b) if so, the profits earned/loss incurred during the financial year 1988-89?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) While the Department of Telecommunications has been earning profits, the Department of posts is incurring deficit.

(b) The profits of the Department of Telecommunications during the financial year 1988-89 on cash basis was approximately