

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) The increase in the prices of pulses and edible oils during the current financial year may be mainly attributed to the lean season factor, lower or stagnant production and the prevailing drought conditions. However, hoarding of the commodities by some traders may also have contributed to the price rise to some extent

(b) Action against unscrupulous persons indulging in malpractices in trade of essential commodities such as hoarding and blackmarketing, is being taken by the States/Union Territories under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, so as to ensure easy availability of essential commodities to the common man at reasonable prices. The Central Government has urged them from time to time to vigorously enforce the provisions of these two legislations and bring to book hoarders, blackmarketees and other anti-social elements.

Telephone Advisory Committee of Bangalore Telephones

4568. SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) when the period of the last Telephone Advisory Committee of Bangalore Telephones expired;

(b) whether it has been re-constituted; and

(c) if not, when it will be reconstituted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) The term of the last Telephone Advisory Committee of Bangalore expired on 30.11.1986.

(b) It has since been reconstituted.

(c) The Question does not arise in view of reply to part (b) above.

Supply of Coal for Ceramics Industries in Saurashtra

4569. SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) the category in which ceramics is placed in the priorities given for the supply of coal to industries,

(b) how does this category compare with other industries in the small scale sector;

(c) the representations made for upgrading the existing category for ceramics; and

(d) the steps taken to ensure that ceramics industries in Saurashtra (Gujarat) do not close down for sake of coal?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) to (c). Railways fix the priority for allotment of wagons for various categories of freight cargo. The movement of coal is included in priority 'C' of the Railways Preferential Traffic Schedule General Order. In the movement of coal, core sector including power, railways, cement, steel, fertilizer enjoys higher priority than the non core sector in which ceramic industries are classified. However, ceramic industries enjoy higher priority than most other industries in non-core sector.

No representation has recently been received by the Railways for upgrading the existing priority for ceramics.

(d) Close liaison is being maintained by Coal India with Railways, State Governments and Ceramic Industries in regard to movement of coal. CIL offers coal to the consumers by road against shortfall in rail movement, provided the consumers apply for the same. Additional quantities are offered from Coal India stockyards to avert closure of industries.