

in August, 1987, the representations received were duly considered.

No proposal for amending the Essential Commodities Act is under consideration.

#### Buffer Foodgrains for SAARC Countries

2524. SHRI PRAKASH V. PATIL: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether at the recent SAARC meet in Kathmandu, a proposal was mooted to have food buffer for the use of the member countries in times of drought or flood;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme drawn up; and

(c) when it is going to be constituted and made functional?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI H.K.L BHAGAT): (a) An agreement for establishing SAARC Food Security Reserve was signed on 4.11.1987 by the SAARC member countries at the 3rd Summit held recently in Kathmandu.

(b) The Reserve shall consist of wheat or rice or a combination thereof. The initial size of the Reserve will be 200,000 tonnes. Each member country will be required to earmark the allocated amounts of foodgrains as its share of Reserve, to be maintained within that country. The share allocated to India is 153,200 tonnes. In terms of the Agreement, each member country shall be entitled, subject to certain conditions and procedures, to draw on foodgrains forming part of the Reserve in the event of an emergency.

(c) The Agreement will enter into force on a date to be determined by the SAARC Council of Ministers, provided that the member countries have collectively earmarked at least 125,000 tonnes of foodgrains on that date for the purpose of the Agreement.

#### Modernisation of Chinakuri Coal Station in West Bengal

2525. SHRI NARSING SURYAWANSHI: SHRI PRATAPRAO B. BHOSALE:

Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to take help from the Federal Republic of Germany to conduct a study on modernising the Chinakuri Coal station in West Bengal; and

(b) if so, the further developments in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) and (b). Federal Republic of Germany has agreed to finance a Feasibility Study on applicability of a suitable caving method with powered supports to mine the thick seam in the Chinakuri colliery of Eastern Coalfields Limited. The feasibility study has been entrusted to a German consulting firm under a contract signed recently.

#### Salt Stocks

2526. SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the salt stocks are mounting in salt producing areas of the country;

(b) if so, the reasons of rise in salt stocks; and

(c) the steps Government intend to stimulate domestic and export demand to ease salt stock accumulation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The increase in salt stocks is primarily due to drought conditions during the last three years in major salt producing States with the resultant extension of salt manufacturing season.

(c) Some of the steps taken by the Government to stimulate domestic and export demands to ease salt stocks accumulation are:

(i) New industrial units for production of Soda Ash/Caustic Soda have been licensed. The present units have been advised to maximise their production to increase the consumption of salt.

(ii) Fresh assignment of land for salt manufacturing has been kept in abeyance for two years.

(iii) Export of common salt has been decanalised and brought under OGL.

#### Installation of Digital Electronic Exchange Equipment in Maharashtra

2527. SHRI ASHOK SHANKARRAO CHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether digital electronic exchange equipment is being imported and installed in district headquarters in the country in order to improve the telephone services in the rural areas; and

(b) if so, the names of the district headquarters in Maharashtra where the digital electronic equipment is being installed priority basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Yes, Sir. Limited number of small capacity digital exchanges are being imported and installed in some district headquarters and towns.

(b) The name of district headquarter in Maharashtra where MEAX type electronic exchange is proposed to be installed in Gadchiroli.

[Translation]

#### Setting up of Cement Factory in Udaipur

2528. SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreement was reached in 1984 to set up a cement factory in Udaipur in the foothills of Himalaya with Indo Nepal cooperation; and

(b) if so, the brief details thereof and the present position in regard to its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI M. ARJUNACHALAM): (a) and (b). A proposal to set up a cement factory in Udaipur in Nepal was initially projected as a part of Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1977 by the Minister of Industry with his Nepalese counterpart. Consequently, the possibility of implementing this project as a joint venture project was explored. Viability studies and sensitivity analysis of the project was carried out, which revealed that the joint venture project would not be commercially viable. The project was, therefore, not pursued.

[English]

#### Temporary Telephone Connections in Andhra Pradesh

2529. SHRI S. PALAKONDRAYUDU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of temporary telephone connections sanctioned during the last three years in Andhra Pradesh, yearwise;

(b) the total number of temporary telephone connections sanctioned and rejected in Secunderabad-Hyderabad, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam of Andhra Pradesh; and

(c) the reasons for rejection during 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) The required information is given below:—