

(d) Preliminary work on the implementation of the Haldia project (to be implemented by the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation) is in progress.

Preparatory work regarding the Maharashtra project is in hand.

(e) Foreign assistance, wherever required will be considered at the appropriate time.

Status of National Thermal Projects Corporation

2390. SHRI M. V. CHANDRA-SHEKARA MURTHY: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Thermal Project Corporation has been given the status of S.T.C. and SAIL;

(b) if so, the main reasons for the same;

(c) what will be the investment target;

(d) further investment plans; and

(e) to what extent the status has helped this Corporation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN): (a) and (b). The National Thermal Power Corporation has been recently recategorised as a Schedule 'A' Public Sector Undertaking of the Government of India after taking all factors into consideration specially the magnitude of investment being undertaken through the Corporation.

(c) and (d). An investment programme of Rs. 3580 crores has been approved so far for the setting up of four Regional pit-head Super Thermal Stations and the associated Transmission lines by the Corporation. There is a provision in the present Five Year Plan for the taking up of new projects of pit-head generation in the Central sector through NTPC.

(e) Recategorisation of the Corporation has resulted in the upgradation of the senior posts permitting the induction and retention of suitable technical and managerial personnel by the Corporation.

E.C.L. not following the Guidelines regarding appointment and to open new Mines

2391. SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the ECL is not following the guidelines regarding the appointment and to open new mines;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) steps taken by Government against the E.C.L. authorities in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN): (a) to (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Coal based Chemical Plant at Raniganj

2393. SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state the details of steps so far taken by him on the West Bengal's proposal for setting up a Coal-based fuel and Chemical plant at Raniganj in West Bengal?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHOUDHURY): The Government of West Bengal is reported to have engaged the Fertilizer (Planning and Development) India Limited for the preparation of a feasibility report for the coal to methanol plant proposed by the State. Discussions were held between officials of Department of Coal, Government of West Bengal and their consultants, Fertilizer (Planning and Development) India Ltd., with a

view to settle coal linkage and project site and these consultations are in progress.

Issue of new LPG Connections

2984. SHRI DAULATSINHJI JADEJA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of LPG connections as on 31st December, 1980 throughout the country;

(b) whether Government announced that about one lakh connections of LPG will be issued monthly from 1st January, 1981; and

(c) if so, the number of connections issued monthly w.e.f. 1st January, 1981 against the announced figures?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI P. C. SETHI): (a) A total number of approximately 32 lakh customers are registered with the oil companies as on 31st December 1980.

(b) and (c). In accordance with the decision taken in this Ministry to release new gas connections from 1st quarter of 1980-81, the oil companies were to release one lakh gas connections per month in the country from March this year onwards. As such a total number of approximately 3.5 lakh customers have been enrolled by the oil companies till the end of June this year.

Loss of Silver Parcel by Post Office, Kolhapur

2395. SHRI R. K. MHALGI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a representation dated 23-3-1981 from Kolhapur (Maharashtra) regarding the insured silver post parcel (Insured for Rs. 7000/-) lost by the Post Office;

(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government in the matter; and

(c) if no action taken so far, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KARTIK ORAON): (a) to (c). No such representation dated 23-3-1981 has been received. However one complaint dated 29-3-1981 regarding non-delivery of Varanasi City Insured parcel No. 826 dated 5-7-80 for Rs. 7,000/- was received at Kolhapur and it is being investigated.

Agreement between PTI and National News Agency of South Korea

2396. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR GOYAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Press Trust of India and Yonhap—National News Agency of South Korea, have entered into an agreement on news exchange between the two countries; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) and (b). The Press Trust of India as also other news agencies in the country, are in the private sector and Government does not normally interfere in their professional functions.

The Press Trust of India have confirmed that they have entered into an agreement with YONHAP National News Agency of South Korea for exchange of information between the two news agencies. The agreement is reported to be in line with the trend among Asian News Agencies to conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements enabling them to launch an Asian News Network for better flow of information in Asia.