

Tripura, a draft agreement to be executed between the Government of Tripura and M/s. Jay Shree Tea and Industries Ltd., Calcutta had been submitted to the Central Government for their approval ;

(b) if so, when it was submitted and the reasons for the delay in according necessary sanction for the conclusion of the said draft agreement ; and

(c) the broad details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The draft agreement was received by the Central Government on 18.1.66. The draft agreement was examined and it was found that it required to be re-written. The Tripura Administration was, therefore, requested to prepare a fresh draft for which certain guide-lines were indicated. The revised draft is still awaited from the Tripura Administration.

(c) Briefly stated, the original draft agreement was for a lease of right of removal of 14,150 cubic meters of plylogs of certain selected 16 timber species, above certain minimum girth limits, every year for 31 years from the Government forests of Udaipur, Belonia and Sabroom civil sub-divisions of Tripura Union Territory. Different classes of timber with the proviso that these rates could be revised every 5 years, if the lessor so desired, but to the extent of not more than 15% each time. The proposed lease period of 31 years was also kept renewable at the option of the lessor for a further period, should the lessee apply in this behalf and should he have performed the terms of the original agreement satisfactorily in the opinion of the lessor.

#### Telephone Trunk Lines between Silchar and Agartala

10276. SHRI KIRIT BIKRAM DEB BURMAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the telephone trunk lines between Silchar and Agartala have since been strengthened for installing the 8-channel carrier system ;

(b) if so, whether the work has been completed and if not, when it is likely to be completed ; and

(c) the steps taken to provide a direct circuit between Agartala and Shillong and the cost thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL) : (a) Yes.

(b) The work has been completed.

(c) An 8-Channel carrier system for Agartala-Silchar route has been ordered and allotted on priority. The installation of this system, which has been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 95,000/-, will enable the provision of a direct circuit between Agartala and Shillong. The work is likely to be completed during the current financial year.

#### Agartala Telephone Exchange

10277. SHRI KIRIT BIKRAM DEB BURMAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a scheme for conversion of the Agartala Telephone Exchange (Tripura) to Automatic Exchange has run into difficulties and has failed to make any progress for over 4 years ;

(b) if so, the nature of the difficulties ; and

(c) the steps which are being taken to resolve the same and how long it is likely to take to complete it ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b). Conversion of Agartala Telephone Exchange (Tripura) to automatic working, involves construction of a new building for which a suitable land in a central locality is required. Efforts to locate a suitable land for this purpose, even with the assistance of the local Govt., have not borne fruit so far.

(c) Efforts are being made to secure a suitable alternative plot. As soon as the land is acquired, action, to construct a suitable building for the proposed Exchange, will be taken. Commissioning of the Main auto exchange may take about 5 to 6 years after the land is acquired.