

this purpose is under consideration of the proposed partners. The total project cost is estimated to be Rs. 5.0 crores. The purpose of the proposed project is monitoring of genetic variation by DNA figure printing, establishment of Gene Banks, semen analysis and determination of the time of ovulation, embryo transfer, artificial insemination etc.

(c) and (d) No foreign technical or financial assistance is visualised.

[*Translation*]

**Shifting of Air Force Command Headquarter
from Jodhpur**

887. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA:

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the headquarter of the Air Force command is being shifted outside Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) if so, whether *status quo* would be maintained in this regard in view of strategic importance of Jodhpur and also representations from the State Government and people's representations; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. Headquarter of South Western Air Command is proposed to be shifted to Gandhinagar (Gujarat) from Jodhpur (Rajasthan).

(b) Gandhinagar is operationally better located and there is better infrastructure available at Gandhinagar.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Same as (b) above.

[*English*]

**Condition of NH-23 from Rourkela to
Banarpal and Ranchi**

888. KUMARI FRIDA TOPNO: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the worse condition of National Highways from Rourkela to Banarpal and Rourkela to Ranchi;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to develop these roads;

(c) whether the Government have applied for World Bank or Asian Development Bank loan for the development of these roads;

(d) if so, the time by which the Government are expecting to get the loan the scheduled time to start the work; and

(e) if not, the other sources from which the Government desire to provide funds for the development of the NH-23?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATARAMAN): (a) and (b) National Highways are being maintained in traffic worthy condition within available resources. Further, improvement works such as widening, strengthening, reconstruction of weak and narrow bridges and geometric improvements etc., are also being carried out in a phased manner subject to the availability of funds, traffic needs and inter-se priority.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Question does not arise.

(e) The development of National Highway 23 passing Orissa is being considered through normal budgetary support.

National Telecom Policy

889. PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the achievements made in the field of telecommunication after implementation of the National Telecom Policy;

(b) whether the Government have conducted any inquiry into the circumstances arising out of implementation of the telecom policy due to which targets have not been achieved;

(c) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(d) the number of applicants waiting for telephone connections in the country as on date and the number of the village panchayats and villages where telecommunication facilities are still not available and the manner in which the target is likely to be achieved by 2000 A.D.?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) to (d) A Statement is placed below:

Statement

National Telecom Policy, 1994

1. 8.73 million telephones have been provided during the Eighth Plan period. The waiting list, as on 31.3.97, was 2,887 million. It is planned to provide 2.9 million telephones during 1997-98 which does not include telephones to be provided by the private sector; upto 31.10.97, 8,72,583 new telephone connections had been provided.

2. Out of 6,04,374 villages in the country, 2,67,832 villages had been covered upto 31.3.97. It is planned to cover another 83, 000 villages during 1997-98, upto 31.10.97, 10,669 villages had been further covered with telephone facility. As on 31.3.97, a total of 3,45,178 public telephones have been installed in urban areas. Another 1,38,750 public telephones are programmed to be provided