

to increase the gold production in our country. The Geological Survey of India is the nodal surveying agency which explores gold in our country. The Government will strive its best to give more money to the Geological Survey of India.

Looking to the demand of gold in our country, after liberalisation of the economy in 1993, the new Mineral Policy was announced. Previously, gold was reserved only for the public sector, now gold is open for the private sector also viz, both for foreign and domestic investments. It is because gold is a very high risk area more money is required. Modern technology is required. Geological survey is not adequate equipped to tackle this problem. So we are inviting investment to produce more gold in our country.

[Translation]

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question was about the number and names of the foreign companies through which we are undertaking our mining work but that has not been replied.

[English]

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA : I categorically said that after the liberalisation of economy in our country, we are encouraging both foreign and domestic investments. Regarding the specific question regarding which foreign company involved in gold exploration in the country, there is a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Hindustan Zinc and BHP, Australia for mineral recovery in the eight districts of Rajasthan.

[Translation]

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has told in his reply to my question that an additional reserve of 6.73 metric tonne gold ore was explored during the years 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96. He has informed about many such other places. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister the quantity of gold ore explored in Gurhar hills of Madhya Pradesh and at other places in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. What are the figures available with him in this regard.

[English]

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA : Sir, I cannot give the actual figure right now. It is because gold is a very high risk area. Exploration is going on. The recovery percentage is not because gold in our country is of poor grade.

[Translation]

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a technical matter and when any survey is conducted, it becomes known as to how much quantity of gold is available at a particular place. Mr.

Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister is not giving us actual figures.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He has said that figures are not available with him.

SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister as to what are the Government's foreign investment policy in respect of mining work. How much capital has been invested and what are the conditions thereof?

[English]

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA : After the liberalisation of our economy, new policies were announced and mineral sector is opened both for the domestic and foreign investments. Gold has also attracted enquiries. Foreign investment is good. There is no automatic approval for equity participation in gold. It is done on case to case basis. The Foreign Investment Board gives permission on certain conditions. The conditions are the size of the project, commitment of the external resources, previous track record of the company, level of technology to be employed in the project and financial status of the company.

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### PCO/Radio Telephones in Gram Panchayats

\*364. SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH :  
SHRI DEVI BUX SINGH :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any scheme is being introduced by the Government for linking the Gram Panchayats with Public Call Office and Radio Telephones in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) the number of Gram Panchayats linked with Public Call Offices and Radio Telephones in the country till now, State-wise; and

(d) the target fixed for 1997-98 in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) There is already an existing scheme in the Department for providing public telephones in all the villages of the country including Gram Panchayats. The Radio technology such as Multi Access Rural Radio (MARR) is utilised wherever technically necessary.

(c) The details are provided in the enclosed Statement.

(d) The targets for 1997-98 is yet to be finalised.

**Statement**

S. No.	Circle	Total Gram Panchayats in Circle as on 28.2.97	Gram Panchayats Provided with VPTs as on 15.3.97
1.	Andaman Nicobar	67	53
2.	Andhra Pradesh	19533	17095
3.	Assam	2485	2080
4.	Bihar	11792	8907
5.	Gujarat	13510	12215
6.	Haryana	5946	5400
7.	Himachal Pradesh	2757	2460
8.	Jammu and Kashmir	1461	740
9.	Karnataka	5676	5340
10.	Kerala	982	982
11.	Madhya Pradesh	30922	19226
12.	Maharashtra	24937	22249
13.	North-East	4241	2206
14.	Orissa	5261	4973
15.	Punjab	11743	9252
16.	Rajasthan	9178	8208
17.	Tamil Nadu	13288	12994
18.	Uttar Pradesh (E)	61262	19054
19.	Uttar Pradesh (W)	16609	7998
20.	West Bengal	3295	3225
21.	Calcutta Tel	468	107
Total		245413	164844

[English]

**Regional Office of the Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd.**

\*365. SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Regional Offices of the Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited are proposed to be wound up;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any new guidelines have been chalked out to intensify the mineral exploration activities in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b) In the interest of consolidating and improving the

financial position of the Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL) the Expert Committee set up by the Ministry of Mines has recommended the replacement of the present 3-Tier structure by a 2-Tier structure by abolishing Area Offices. Certain action was initiated towards implementation of these recommendations. However, on receipt of some representations, the recommendations are presently under review.

(c) and (d) As per the new Mineral Policy, 1993 announced by the Government of India, mining sector has been thrown open to private investors including foreign parties. Therefore, MECL, in order to operate in an open and competitive environment is required to improve its operations by adopting modern techniques of exploration. MECL is to expand its operations by securing more and more exploration jobs on contractual basis which will make the Company financially viable while its role on promotional exploration activities will be limited to the budgetary support from the Government.

**Serials**

\*366. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether most of the serials shown on Doordarshan are trivialising serious social issues;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the norms fixed for selection of serials on TV network;

(d) whether any irregularities have come to the notice of the Government regarding approval of serials;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Government propose to set up a committee to select a slot and serials for Doordarshan;

(g) if so, the details of the composition of the said committee;

(h) whether the Government also propose to associate CBI officials in this regard; and

(i) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir. It is Doordarshan's constant endeavour to approve programmes which propagate high social values combined with wholesome entertainment. In particular, preference is given to programmes which promote good socio-cultural values, among other things.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The broad criteria for selection of serials are as follows :

(i) Storyline and its contemporary relevance;