

any part of the country including coastal areas of Maharashtra. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has several schemes for assisting exporters. Financial assistance of Rs. 57.1 lakhs have been provided by the Ministry to 'Mahagrapes' a cooperative unit of Maharashtra., for setting up of post-harvest facilities with a view to encouraging export of grapes from Maharashtra. Export of products of some of the fruit & vegetable processing units located in coastal areas of Maharashtra are already taking place.

(b) Government has formulated schemes for assisting research in development of suitable packaging materials.

(c) The Ministry proposes to introduce a scheme for grant of financial assistance for setting up of Food Processing Training Centres in different parts of the country where training in processing locally available raw-material for manufacture of value added products could be imparted.

(d) and (e). The Ministry have formulated Plan schemes for providing financial assistance to the cooperative sector for development of food, fruit & vegetable processing facilities in rural areas, establishing or enlarging food, fruit & vegetable processing facilities and development of infrastructure for mushroom cultivation and processing. In the cooperative sector, assistance is granted in the form of loans given by National Cooperative Development Corporation at a concessional rate of interest. NCDC is also providing financial assistance to State Governments for establishment of fruit & vegetable processing units in the cooperative sector.

Integrated Steel Plant

3055. SHRI RAMCHANDRA GHAN-GARE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased

to state:

(a) the progress made so far in the construction of the Integrated Steel Plant at Bhugaon in Wardha District; and

(b) the time by which the production work is likely to be started and its potential of employment generation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b). M/s. Lloyds Steel Industries Ltd. (formerly M/s. Integrated Steel Ltd.) is implementing a project to manufacture cold rolled steel strips at Bhugaon in Wardha District. As reported by the company, civil construction has made considerable progress and orders have been placed for plant and machinery. Commercial production is expected to commence by the middle of 1993 and the project is expected to generate employment for about 80 persons.

Use of Guar Gum

3056. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Guar Gum a substance commonly found in South Asia and used as a filler and thickener in soups, gravies and salad dressings and an ingredient in processed food as calorie free and can be effectively used for controlling blood sugar and reducing blood cholesterol; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to popularise and promote the use of Guar Gum as a food ingredient in processed foods?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: (a) and (b). Guar Gum is one of the crops of semi-arid areas like Rajasthan, Madhya