

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA : Sir, I do agree with the hon. Member. The Steel Authority of India invested more than Rs. 10000 crore in the last five years for modernisation of its three steel plants at Bokaro, Durgapur and Rourkela. But nobody can get the effects of modernisation immediately. It will take some time for that. Modernisation means improvement of the techno-economic performance of a plant. All over the world, day by day new technologies are coming up. So, it is necessary for the Steel Authority of India to modernise its plants.

But, I would like to take the example of Bhilai. We have invested huge amount of money in the modernisation of Bhilai. From Bhilai also, we were not getting immediate benefit. But today we are deriving maximum profit from the Bhilai Steel Plant. You never get the full effect immediately. The effect of the Durgapur started immediately and the production has gone up to 81 percent of capacity in June of this year. The production of Durgapur is going up. Its capacity utilization will be 100 per cent.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : But Railways is importing rails, from China.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA : Secondly, about Rourkela, we can see the effect from next year.

The hon. Member has put a very important question regarding Railways importing rails from abroad. I do agree that same technologies adopted by the SAIL are old. We have to be competitive. We have to modernise the industry. We have to adopt new technology. With this intention, the Ministry of Steel is going to give Rs. 150 crores every year for the purpose of Research and Development in the steel industry from this year. I am hopeful that it will be helpful for the progress of good and modern technology.

SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY : The Steel Authority of India is considered to be one of the *navaratnas* of our Public Sector Undertakings. Particularly, the performance of 1996-97 has been the worst in terms of profit. The Minister has conceded in his statement that one of the main reasons is the cost escalation of inputs. You look at the inputs, and mainly the increase in the coal price and the petroleum price and increase in railway freight and increase in power tariff. All these I am sure, certain more of this type is absolutely down the road will inflate the input price. Considering this reason, I would like to know what exactly the Steel Authority of India would do.

I am thankful to the Minister for conceding in his statement that he is hopeful that the Steel Authority of India

would be profitable.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA : Sir, I do not agree at all with the hon. Member when he says that last year was the worst year of SAIL. This is not true at all. In 1996-97 also, the profit is higher than all other previous years, except last two years. It is known to everybody that in business the theory of trade cycle is applicable. In the last two years, there is boom in consumption in the steel industry not only in India but all over the world. So, the profit was higher. But, if you are to compare the profit of the SAIL in the last ten years, the last year's position is the third position and this is the position not confined only to India. For example, today no European company is doing very well in the field of steel production. Their profit also declined by 40 per cent. The profits of SAIL is also declined.

MR. SPEAKER : Having been the Minister of Information and Broadcasting myself, I cannot deny the maiden opportunity to Mr. Reddy here. So, I go to next question Q. No. 26.

Conference on Electronic Media

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*26. SHRI SUBRAHMANYAM NELAVALA :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether a Conference of State Ministers on electronic media was held in New Delhi during 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the points discussed in the Conference and the decisions arrived at;

(d) the details of demands made by the State Governments particularly the Government of Maharashtra; and

(e) the reaction of the Union Government there to?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (e) A Conference of State and Union Territory Ministers of Information and Cinematography was held on October 29, 1996 which discussed the issues related to

electronic, film and print media and interpersonal media.

The following recommendations, as far as electronic media is concerned, were adopted during the Conference:

1. Expansion of Doordarshan facilities during the IXth Plan would be carried out on technical planning and proposals for special investments for difficult regions like North-East would be prepared.
2. The State Governments/UTs were requested to immediately communicate their reasonable requirements after fixing up priority so that IXth Plan proposals could be suitably framed.
3. State Governments in general endorsed an autonomous status for AIR and Doordarshan.
4. Broadcasting Bill should be formulated so as to have adequate regulation of the Satellite TV Channels.
5. Most of the State Governments observed that the existing Cable TV (Regulation) Act needed substantial amendment to ensure the proper regulation of cable TV networks.
6. The State Government's demand for exclusive time slot on Doordarshan was noted.

The Major demands raised by various state Governments, inter-alia, included strengthening of media infrastructure and communication network in the States by way of establishing/upgrading/opening new media offices/stations in various parts of the States. The Government of Maharashtra had made a demand that IInd Channel of Doordarshan be made available to the remaining parts of the State and extensive news coverage from the State should find a place in the National News telecast. There should be an increase in the percentage of news coverage of the State in the regional news bulletin. As far as the demand for covering the entire State of Maharashtra with DD-2 is concerned, it may be mentioned that extension of DD-2 in all the States would be taken up under a phased programme depending upon the availability of financial resources, manpower and other infrastructural facilities. In regard to the coverage of the State in the regional/national news, it is the endeavour of the Doordarshan to provide fair coverage to all the State.

SHRI SUBRAHMANYAM NELAVALA : Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Ministry has taken any decision to increase the regional language time, particu-

larly for Telugu programmes following the decision taken in the Conference of State Ministers' which was held in 1996.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Sir, at this Conference of State Ministers it was urged that more time should be spared for regional network. The time in DD-1 is very limited. We are sparing four hours' time, i.e. from 4.30 to 8.30 in the evening. We are also further exploring the avenues of expanding time for regional networks. We appreciate the genuineness of demand but we have not been able to take a decision so far.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : For more than six years the Government of India has been dreaming to introduce a legislation on the electronic media. Now we are in 1997. The entire nation is anxious to know from the hon. Minister whether he will be successful in introducing such a legislation in this Session or not.

Secondly, as per the last Conference of the State Ministers of Information and broadcasting, his Ministry will take up the task of upgrading, modernising and introducing the electronic media communication system to the maximum extent. I would like to know the progress made in this regard.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Firstly, I thank the hon. Minister . . . (Interruptions)

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : Old habits die hard! Does it mean the Congress party is going to join the United Front Government ? . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Sir, this was the same mistake that Shri Vajpayee made as the Prime Minister. Some of our habits die very hard; I have no difficulty in confessing to this limitation . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : You will not get enough time to get out of this habit . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : My hon. friend has raised the question of granting autonomy to the electronic media. Both the Houses of Parliament passed the Act in 1990. It gives me immense pleasure that it has fallen to my lot to announce that the autonomy will be granted on the electronic media and I seek the support and blessings from parties across the political spectrum. This is a non-controversial, nonpartisan matter.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Congratulations !

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : This is a matter to which we as a nation are committed. We are committed to this as

a polity . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI P. UPENDRA : This was what I conceived !

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : What was conceived half heartedly by Shri Upendra was delivered by me whole heartedly.

My friend, Shri Reddy has referred to the need for expanding the network. I agree with him, but he must persuade the Parliament to grant more funds for the purpose. As it is, it gives me pride to tell you that Doordarshan has the largest terrestrial network in the world. We have more than 800 transmitters and no other broadcasting corporation in the world has this kind of a network. We need to expand it more; we need to use this for other social and educational purposes. If you get me more funds, I am more than willing to do this.

[Translation]

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI : I want to know as to how much time has been allotted for Urdu programme. Does the Minister consider that time adequate and whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government.

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Sir, it is our endeavour that more time is spared for all Indian languages like Hindi and other languages, including Urdu. We are looking at it and we shall do our best.

[Translation]

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question which I asked has not been answered. My question was as to how much time has been allotted for Urdu programmes at the moment. In Doordarshan and whether the Government has any intention to increase the time slot or not.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : We intend to increase the time slot but I do not have the facts as to how much time has been allotted presently.

[English]

12.00 hrs.

MR. SPEAKER : Please put a one sentence question. Otherwise, the time is over.

[Translation]

KUMARI UMA BHARATI : Hon. Speaker, Sir, I want

to ask a very small question from the Minister. The former Minister had committed in the House that he would constitute a Committee of MPs soon to check obscene and vulgar programmes being telecast from the Doordarshan and the Committee would ponder over as to what sort of programmes should be made. Since Mr. Reddy is the Minister how he should tell as to what action has been taken in this regard and how long it would take to constitute that Committee.

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : The Standing Committee of Parliament on Communications is going into that question. I may also invite suggestions from you. I am worried about the vulgarity that is shown both on the big screen, on the small screen and in the foreign programmes. I share your concern. I invite your suggestions as to how our vision can be translated into reality.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Power Tariff

*23. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are Contemplating to introduce dual-power tariff from the consumers in the country;

(b) if so, whether the said dual-power tariff would be Calculated on the basis of peak-hours and normal hours;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the concept of the peak hours; and

(d) the average rate of power-tariff charged from various categories of consumers at national level as on March, 1997 and the rates proposed under the new dual power tariff systems ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) In view of (a) above, do not arise. However, in West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Time-of-Day (TOD) tariff has been introduced for industrial consumers provided with TOD meters. In Gujarat there is an additional charge on industrial consumers during 7.00 AM to 11.00 AM and 5.00 PM to 9.00 PM.