

last year. Eastern Region is surplus in power of which Bihar is a constituent and hence the State has to augment its transmission and distribution system to absorb more power. The financial condition of Bihar State Electricity Board has to improve to enable drawal of full share from Central Sector stations, and improve the power supply to customers in the State.

National Accreditation Board Testing and Calibration Laboratories

1153. SHRI PRASAD BABURAO TANPURE :
SHRI S.S. OWASI :

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories has been registered as a society;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the extent to which this move is likely to help the Indian exporters; and

(d) the response of the foreign countries thereto?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The decision for setting up NABL as a society under the Societies' Act, 1860, was taken by the Government during 1995 as a part of the decision in setting up Quality Council of India (QCI). QCI is expected to set up two other accreditation boards viz., National Accreditation Board for Products and Quality System Certification, and National Accreditation Board for Quality Management Personnel & Training Organisations. NABL is expected to operate as a separate society under the Department of Science & Technology now and at an appropriate stage, it is to be merged with QCI. Setting up of NABL and QCI were aimed towards satisfying the needs of Global Approach to Conformity Assessment for Product Acceptance across the frontiers of the countries. World Trade Organisation has recognised non-acceptance of test results and test certificates as Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).

(c) and (d) International acceptance of NABL has become essential to create conditions by which test result and test certificates from accredited laboratories in India are accepted by the overseas laboratories, so that there is no need for re-testing and holding up the ship for unloading at the port for a long time. As a society, NABL will have the flexibility to facilitate setting up infrastructural facilities, so that

NABL can enter into Multi-lateral Recognition Agreements (MRAs) with regional accreditation bodies. NABL is now a full member of Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) and a Mutli-lateral Recognition Agreement between APLAC and NABL is on the anvil.

Vocational Education

1154. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether steps have been taken to promote vocational education in the country;

(b) if so, the stages in school or colleges at which the courses have been introduced;

(c) the courses recommended by Central Government to different State Governments and Universities;

(d) whether the Government propose to revise some vocational courses introduced at the secondary level; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Pre-Vocational Education at the Lower Secondary stage, vocational courses at the plus two stage and at the under graduate level in colleges.

(c) At school level the State Governments start the courses as per their requirements. The Universities/Colleges introduce courses in identified subjects as per the guidelines of the University Grants Commission.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) A Working Group was constituted to assess the current implementation position and suggest suitable modifications. Recommendations of the Working Group have been circulated to States/UTs for their comments.

Solar Powered Traffic Signal Lighting System

1155. SHRI SURESH WARPUDKAR : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Central Electronics Limited has designed and developed Solar Powered Traffic Signal Lighting System;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;