

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the proposals made in an article by the Chairman of National Committee on Science and Technology Working Group on de-salination published in a weekly dated April 4-10, 1976; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SANKAR GHOSE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) R&D work is in progress in BARC (Bhaba Atomic Research Centre) Bombay, CSMCRI (Central Salt & Marine Chemical Research Institute), Bhavnagar etc.

Solar Energy

*573. SHRI NITIRAJ SINGH CHAUDHURI: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state the progress made on harnessing Solar Energy so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SANKAR GHOSE): R&D on devices for utilization of solar energy by direct photo voltaic conversion and by thermal utilization of solar energy is underway. A major experimental project on Space Heating has been completed at the Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited plant at Hardwar and is under evaluation at present. An integrated project prepared by the Department of Science and Technology for the engineering development of solar thermal devices for rural, urban and metropolitan sectors, has been approved by the Energy Research Committee and is in progress.

Foreign projects for execution by Engineering Projects of India

*574. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Engineering Projects of India are receiving enquiries for execution of a number of projects from abroad, especially from Gulf and Arab countries;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the measures taken by Government to utilise this opportunity and accept these offers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) and (b). Engineering Projects (India) Limited entered the overseas market about three years back. During this period their participation in international tenders has resulted in orders of the value of Rs.38.13 crores being secured by them in the Middle East, South East Asia and Europe. EPI is now poised to secure more business in the future.

(c) To facilitate orders being placed on EPI Government provides counter guarantees against bank guarantees obtained by EPI. Furthermore, EPI has been permitted to open regional offices in Kuwait and Baghdad for business promotion. Similarly Government assists EPI in negotiations with international financial institutions and foreign governments. Besides all this, whatever reasonable assistance and support EPI might require in their export efforts, it is always made available by the Government.

Manufacture of simple functional T.V. Sets

*575. SHRI R. S. PANDEY: SHRIMATI BHARGAVI THANKAPPAN:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any follow up steps have been taken in pursuance of the Prime Minister's advice to the television manufacturers that simple and functional T.V. sets should be designed and their manufacturing and marketing cost be reduced;