

(a) the measures taken to attain the production target of coal for 1974-75; and

(b) whether any improvement in production is expected as compared to the preceding year, if so, the facts of the case thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUBODH HANSDA): (a) and (b). In order to meet the growing demand for coal, especially in the context of the oil crisis the production is proposed to be stepped up from the current estimated level of about 78 million tonnes to 95 million tonnes in 1974-75. The measures taken to increase production include re-organisation of the mines after rationalisation, intensive working of the open cast mines and the mechanised underground mines introduction of four shift working of coal face and seven-day working in selected collieries, in consultation with the trade union leaders procurement of the needed equipment, reorganisation of the transport facilities including centralisation of loading, effecting improvement in industrial relations, ensuring uninterrupted power supply, arrangements for adequate supply of explosives, etc.

Restoration of Communications and Diplomatic Relations with Pakistan

8859. SHRI M. M. JOSEPH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether according to an English Daily newspaper, there is a possibility of holding discussions between India and Pakistan on restoration of their postal, tele-communication and travel links at Islamabad within a month;

(b) whether the successful completion of these talks presumably at Ministerial level would clear the way

for restoration of diplomatic relations;

(c) whether talks between Pakistan and Bangladesh to establish trade relations, followed by diplomatic relations are also expected; and

(d) whether it is all due to a successful Tripartite Agreement reached at Delhi recently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) As the House is aware, the Joint Indo-Pakistan Communique issued on April 9, after discussion with Pakistan Minister of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs, indicated that it was agreed that the time had come for exchange of delegations to discuss implementation of normalisation measures envisaged in para 3 of the Simla Agreement. When these discussions commence, restoration of postal, telecommunication links and travel will be taken up first. We have since written to Pakistan asking for a mutually convenient date to be fixed for these talks.

(b) India's well-known stand is that there should be some substantive progress in the implementation of normalisation measures before diplomatic relations can be resumed.

(c) There have been press reports to this effect.

(d) The Tripartite Agreement has cleared the way for further talks to implement normalisation measures and establish durable peace in the sub-continent.

Article entitled 'New Jeep Scandal' appeared in a Bombay Weekly

8860. SHRI BHAGIRATH BHANWAR: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to an article "New Jeep Scandal" published in a Bombay Weekly dated 9th February, 1974;

(b) if so, what are the reactions of the Government on the various allegations levelled therein; and

(c) whether Government will make any judicial inquiry in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRY (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The allegations in the article manily relate to the financing arrangements for the purchase of jeeps for one of the political parties in 1971 Mid-term elections and release of trucks by a leading truck manufacturer to the same party for financing the recent elections in U. P. and Orissa. There being no control on the sale and distribution of commercial vehicles including jeeps, modality of sale of these vehicles is the sale concern of the manufacturers and their dealers. Government are thus not required to supervise the release of commercial vehicles by the manufacturers. The question of making any judicial inquiry in the matter, therefore, does not arise.

Tour of Assam and Meghalaya by U.S. Diplomat

8861. SHRI TARUN GOGOI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS on the 21st March, 1974; and

(a) whether some U.S. diplomat recently toured Assam and Meghalaya on the 21st March, 1974; and

(b) if so, whether these were held responsible for earlier disturbances in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has no information to this effect.

Meeting of Non-aligned Oil Producing Countries at Algiers

8862. SHRI P. GANGADEB:
SHRI V. MAYAVAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether oil producing non-aligned countries did not agree to give any price preference to the developing oil importing countries at the Algiers meeting held on the 20th March, 1974; and

(b) if so, reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) and (b). No specific proposals to give price preference to the developing oil importing countries could be discussed in depth at the meeting of the 17-member Coordination Committee of Non-aligned countries held in Algiers from March 19 to 21, 1974. However, the meeting decided to set up a working group consisting of Guyana, Sri Lanka, Liberia and Nepal to hold consultations with the Non-aligned members of O.P.E.C. These consultations will prepare the ground for discussions with the O.P.E.C. designed to explore the possibilities of cooperation among Non-aligned countries for resolving the difficulties facing certain Non-aligned countries. The meeting also agreed on the need for cooperation among the Non-aligned countries in evolving, urgently and in a spirit of solidarity, all possible measures to assist the Non-aligned and other developing countries affected by the oil crisis.