

(b) if so, whether the industry which has grown from a turnover of Rs. 2,000 crore in 1991 to Rs. 7,800 crore in 1995-96 is all set to take a plunge in its growth;

(c) whether the telecom equipment manufacturers association has pointed out that Rs. 5,000 crore investment in the industry is lying grossly under utilised;

(d) whether the export earnings of the industry have plummeted from Rs. 300 crore in 1995-96 to Rs. 100 crore in the current year;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the steps the Government propose to take to improve the telecom manufacturing turnover?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) Information available with the Department of Telecommunications indicates that the turnover for the current year is likely to be of the same level as of the last year.

(c) Telecom Equipment Manufacturers Association have been claiming the under utilisation of their manufacturing capacity.

(d) and (e) The actual position about the export earnings will be available after the close of the financial year. The production achieved and capacity utilisation depends on production planning which the firms carry-out, at the beginning of the financial year based on market assessment. The exact reasons for under utilisation of capacity is not known to the DoT.

(f) The following steps have been taken in this regard :

- (i) Licenses for Services to be provided by private operators are having expedited.
- (ii) Expeditious technology transfers, enhanced external commercial borrowings, permitting foreign investment through holding companies, nationalisation of duties etc.

#### LPT/HPT in Himachal Pradesh

1074. SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) the number of LPT and HPT transmitters proposed to be set up in Himachal Pradesh to promote Doordarshan and to ensure coverage of Doordarshan all over the State;

(b) the provision of expenditure made for this purpose and the amount spent during the last six months in this regard;

(c) whether the requisite staff have been provided for maintenance of HPT in Himachal Pradesh so far;

(d) the details of the staff falling short for HPT at Simla; and

(e) the time by which the said staff is likely to be provided?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) One HPT, 6 LPTs and 23 VLPTs are, at present, under implementation/envisaged to be set up in Himachal Pradesh subject to availability of resources and other infrastructural facilities.

(b) The total Capital cost of the sanctioned projects is Rs. 1941 lakhs and the total expenditure incurred upto December, 1996 is Rs. 554.43 lakhs.

(c) The requisite staff for the HPTs in Himachal Pradesh has been sanctioned.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

#### Gauge Conversion

1075. DR. BALIRAM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to reply given to Unstarred Question No. 737 on July 16, 1996 and state :

(a) whether the conversion work of meter gauge line into broad gauge line between Shahganj and Mau Railway Station has been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the total expenditure incurred thereon;

(c) the details of the long distance trains proposed to be run on this section; and

(d) the time by which the trains are likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Total cost of the project is Rs. 43.83 cr.

(c) and (d) The matter is under consideration and action as found feasible and justified will be taken.

#### New Telephone Exchanges in Bihar

1076. SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state;

(a) whether the Government propose to open new telephone exchanges in Bihar during 1997-98; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, District-wise?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The programme of 1997-98 has not been finalised yet.

#### Committee on Exploration of Diamond

1077. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether some State Government have constituted a high level committee to monitor various aspects of diamond mining and to ensure transparency in this regard; and