

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 3117 PCOs have been sanctioned on out of turn during the last three years i.e. 1995, 1996 and 1997. During 1997, 16 PCOs have been sanctioned on out of turn basis only to the army authorities in J&K on security considerations.

(c) Prior to 18.7.96, the discretionary powers to sanction PCOs on out of turn basis were vested with the Hon'ble Minister of Communications. With effect from 18.7.96, the Govt. had decided to abolish all discretionary quotas enjoyed by the Ministers. It was also decided by the Government that in areas where it is considered absolutely necessary to make a small number of out of turn allotments, a committee should be constituted to make such allotments under clear rules and guidelines. Pursuant to this decision of the Government, a Committee of Senior Officers have been constituted in the department of telecoms to consider and recommend the requests from the following categories of persons for allotment of STD PCOs for consideration and approval of Minister Communication. However, the number of out of turn allotment of PCOs shall not exceed ten sanctions per month.

The category of the persons is:

- (a) One of dependents of Freedom fighters.
- (b) Handicapped including blind persons.
- (c) Ex-servicemen/war widows.
- (d) Retired DOT employees or their dependents.
- (e) Charitable Institutions/Hospitals.
- (f) Army cantonments and other security sensitive places.
- (g) Persons with special or extraordinary circumstances deserving compassionate consideration and deemed fit by the committee.

Generation of Power in Rajasthan

2907. Er. SHANKAR PANNU : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

- (a) the total quantum of power generation in Rajasthan;
- (b) whether the Government have proposed to invite private sector for power production in the State;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the power likely to be produced as a result of this;
- (d) the amount proposed to be invested by the Union Government in the construction of Suratgarh Thermal Power Plant; and
- (e) the time by which the production is likely to commence?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARA-MANGALAM): (a) As per the information available, the total quantum of energy produced during 1997-98 in Rajasthan is 11157 million units.

(b) and (c) The policy on widening the scope of private sector participation in power generation, supply and distribution announced in 1991 is continuing for development of power projects in all the States of the country. As on date two Independent Power thermal power projects—Dholpur Power Project of 702.7 MW and Barsingsar Lignite Power Project of 500 MW have been techno-economically cleared by Central Electricity Authority (CEA).

(d) and (e) The Government of India is not proposing to make any investment in the Suratgarh Thermal Power Project which is a state sector project. Phase-I of the project is expected to commence generation of power in 1998-99 and the project is expected to be fully commissioned in 1999-2000.

Shahtoosh Shawls

2908. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Wildlife Act fails to curb trade in Shahtoosh" appearing in the Indian Express, dated July 7, 1998.

(b) whether despite the ban in India, Shahtoosh shawls are still available in private and Government outlets throughout the country; and

(c) if so, the action taken by the Government to prevent this trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. However, a certain amount of clandestine trade in Shahtoosh shawls exists. The enforcement agencies of the Central and State Govts. regularly carry out raids against the traders and action is taken as per the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

[Translation]

By-pass Scheme on National Highway No. 7 and 27

2909. SHRI CHANDRAMANI TRIPATHI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had sanctioned a by-pass scheme on the National Highways No.7 and 27 passing through the Rewa town;

(b) the time fixed for completion of the said scheme;

(c) the reasons for non execution of the scheme even after acquisition of land; and

(d) the likely time by which the aforesaid scheme would be completed?