

(a) whether the cement industry is facing deteriorating financial position;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) the cement units closed down in Gujarat and other parts of the country during the last three years and the reasons for their closure;

(d) how many of them have been reopened and the mode of their reopening; and

(e) what financial and other assistance is being given or offered to those cement units by Government afresh so as to increase production?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGAL RAO): (a) to (e). A Statement is given below.

Statement

(a) and (b). Representations have been received from cement industry that is facing financial problems due to increase in input costs and fall in market price of non-levy cement.

(c) and (d). Among the large cement plants, during the last three years, Sone Valley Portland Cement Company Ltd. Japla, in Bihar has been closed since September, 1985. Other cement plants like Dwarka Cement Works in Gujarat and Jaipur Udyog Ltd. in Rajasthan, have been closing down and resuming operations. M/s Jaipur Udyog Ltd. is, however, closed since 1st July, 1988. The Cement factory of M/s. Rohtas Industries Ltd. in Bihar and Sewree Cement Plant of Shree Digvijay Cement Company Ltd. have been lying closed for more than three years. It has been reported that the factories had to be closed down due to financial and managerial problems. M/s. Dwarka Cement Works, in Gujarat has been reopened by a new management and it has started production since March, 1988.

(e) As regards M/s. Jaipur Udyog Ltd, the State Government of Rajasthan as also

the company have made a reference to the BIFR. The case of M/s. Sone Valley Portland Cement Co. Ltd. is also with the BIFR. Further action with regard to their rehabilitation will be taken after the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction have given their decision.

Sickness in Small Scale Units

*381. SHRI SURESH KURUP: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for sickness in small scale units in the country; and

(b) whether it is due to competition which large scale units who are entering small scale sector or due to managerial inexperience?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGAL RAO): (a) and (b). A number of causes, both internal and external, often operating in combination have been responsible for industrial sickness in the small scale sector. Some of these causes are faulty planning, management deficiencies, inefficient financial control, diversion of resources, inadequate attention to R & D, obsolescence of technology and machinery, poor industrial relations, inadequate demand, shortage of raw materials and other inputs, power cuts, inadequacy of working capital, delay in sanction of working capital and time gap between sanction of term loan and working capital and other infrastructural constraints.

Separate Channel for Rural Audiences

*382. SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government to open a separate channel with a distinct identity and exclusively devoted to rural audiences to make television a tool of socio-economic reforms and development as recommended by the Joshi Committee;

(b) if so, the likely date by which this recommendation will be implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-
TARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF IN-
FORMATION AND BROADCASTING
(SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT): (a) The Joshi
Committee has not recommended any such
separate channel.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Amendments to ONGC Act

*383. SHRI AJOY BISWAS: Will the
Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL
GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Malaviya Committee
and other Committees have recommended
comprehensive amendments to the Oil and
Natural Gas Commission Act, 1959;

(b) whether the ONGC has put forward
for consideration of Government these
amendments to the Act; and

(c) if so, what steps Government pro-
pose to take to modify the provisions of the
ONGC Act at an early date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATU-
RAL GAS (SHRI BRAHMA DUTT): (a) and
(b). Yes, Sir.

(c) Action has been initiated to amend
the Act in respect of those provisions where
modifications have been considered neces-
sary.

Reopening of Ashok Paper Mills

*384. SHRI ABDUL HAMID: Will the
Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken for the revival and
rehabilitation of the Ashok Paper Mills of
Assam including the amount paid;

(b) the outcome thereof; and

(c) when the Mill is likely to be reo-
pened?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI
J. VENGAL RAO): (a) to (c). The Central
Government has offered to provide neces-
sary assistance to the Government of As-
sam for the reopening of Ashok Paper Mills
as envisaged in the Assam Accord. Consul-
tations with the Government of Assam on the
modalities for the revival and reopening of
Ashok Paper Mills are in progress.

A sum of Rs. 2.84 crores was released
to the Government of Assam in August, 1986
as ways and means advance forwards pay-
ment of post salaries and wages of employ-
ees and for emergent repair of plant, build-
ings and equipment of Jogighopa unit. This
advance was later on converted into non-
plan grant in March, 1987.

On a reference made by the Company
in June, 1987, the Board for Industrial and
Financial Reconstruction has declared
Ashok Paper Mills as a Sick Industrial
Company in terms of Sick Industrial Compa-
nies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985, and has
initiated necessary proceedings under the
Act.

Inclusion of Andal and Pandaveswar Exchanges in Rural Automatic Ex- changes

*385. SHRI PURNA CHANDRA
MALIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICA-
TIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for
inclusion of Andal and Pandaveswar Ex-
changes in the Rural Automatic Exchange;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICA-
TIONS (SHRI BIR BAHADUR SINGH). (a)
No, Sir.