

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF ATOMIC ENERGY AND SPACE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) to (d) The Department of Science and Technology has sanctioned a programme recently on an experimental basis in Angara block of Ranchi district. This experiment proposes to develop a science and technology resource base and technical back-up support system in the rural areas with a view to enhance the capability of the people there in implementing some of their development programmes, Broadening of the programme will depend upon the results of this experiment.

Procurement of Voting Machines

2572. SHRI VISHNU KANT SHASTRI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Election Commission of India has procured electronic voting machines from B.E.L. and Electronic Corporation of India worth about fifty crores before 1989 general elections;

(b) whether the machines were put to use; if so, the constituencies where these were used and the result regarding performance thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefore;

(d) whether Government propose to use those machines in any forthcoming elections; if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether the machines are in working order or require repairs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE, AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Seventy-five thousand Electronic Voting Machines each were

purchased from M/S Bharat Electronic Ltd., Bangalore and Electronic Corporation of India, Hyderabad in 1989 at a cost of around Rupees Seventy-five crores.

(b) These machines have not been put to use so far.

(c) Election Commission of India has informed that the machines could not be used due to: non-availability of adequate time to impart practical training to polling personnel and to familiarise the electors in the operation of machines, doubts and apprehensions expressed by some political parties and non-availability of sufficient number of machines.

(d) The Election Commission has informed that it has decided to explore the possibility of using the machines in the next general elections. It has also decided to ascertain the views of all National and recognised State Political Parties before taking a final decision in the matter.

(e) According to Election Commission, as and when a decision to put the machines to use is taken, the working condition of the machines at that stage will be got tested.

Infrastructure bottlenecks in Industry

2573. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item in 'Times of India' dated 30th November, 1995 captioned 'Weak Infrastructure Worries Industry' according to the latest survey conducted by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the remedial steps Government have taken or propose to take to ensure that infrastructure bottlenecks especially in the areas of power roads, telecom, ports and railways do not affect the overall industrial performance in the country?