

Setting up the National Museum of Natural History in the Capital

883. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what was the purpose of setting up the National Museum of Natural History in the Capital under the Ministry of Environment and Forests;

(b) to what extent the said purpose has been served by the Museum;

(c) the amount spent by Government on this Museum;

(d) whether it is a fact that adverse reports on this Museum have appeared in the Press recently;

(e) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(f) whether Government have ordered an enquiry *into* the matter;

(g) if so, what progress has so far been made thereon; and

(h) if the reply to pan (f) above be in the negative, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE {DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY): (a) The National Museum of Natural History was set up to develop a natural history museum in the Capital to depict the flora, fauna and ecosystems of the country; to conduct educational activities relevant to natural history; ecology, environment and conservation for the benefit of the public; to promote non-formal education among children and to create environmental awareness among the masses; to develop educational resources and to conduct ecological research consonant with the scope of the Museum.

(b) The Museum has developed four major Exhibit Galleries depicting flora, fauna ecosystem of the country and dealing with ecology and conservation. The Museum also conducts a large number of educational activities round the year, which include a mobile museum ser-

vice, organisation of temporary exhibitions, school service activities, teacher orientation workshops, community awareness programmes, environment education courses for children, special programmes for handicapped children, etc. The Museum also has been listed in the International Museum Directory. Thus, the working of the Museum is directed towards subserving the objectives for which it has been set up.

(c) The Museum is an on-going organisation and its annual revenue budget at present is in the region of Rs. 115 lakhs.

(d) to (h) The Government have seen recently reports in the Press criticising the Museum in the implementation of Indo-US Herpetological Project. This project is a research project undertaken by the National Museum of Natural History in collaboration with the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, USA to study the environmental diversify of the amphibians and reptiles in selected regions of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Such of the specimens collected by the field teams from selected sites as require further examination and analysis are sent to the Carnegie Museum. The project provides that 50 per cent of the collected specimens will be returned to the National Museum of Natural History after completion of their study at the Carnegie Museum.

Since very limited field work was reported to have been completed upto 1990, an extension of the project for another three years was approved In terms of the Memorandum of Understanding governing the Project.

Conversion of Telephone Exchanges into Electronic Exchanges in Arunaehal Pradesh

884. SHRI NYODEK YONGGAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state;

(a) what are the total number of telephone exchanges in Arunaehal Pradesh which are proposed to be converted into electronic exchanges during 1990-91 and 1991-92; and

(b) what fresh steps have been taken up so far to expand the telecommunication network in Arunachal Pradesh?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAI PARKASH). (a) In Arunachal Pradesh during 1990-91 (I) 12 No. of Telephone Exchanges have already been converted into Electronic Exchanges upto 27-2-91 and (II) 9 more Nos. of Telephone Exchanges are likely to be converted into electronic exchanges upto 31-3-91. During 1991-92 most of electromechanical telephone ex-charges are likely to be replaced by Electronic Exchanges.

(b) The 8th Plan proposals have been formulated with an objective to provide by the end of 8th Five Year Plan telephones practically on demand in telephone exchanges of capacities below 5000 lines. All the district headquarters in Arunachal Pradesh are proposed to have STD facility by 1991-92.

Construction of Fourth Brahmaputra Bridge

885. SHRI NYODEK YONGGAM: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state what is the reasons for the delay in starting the proposed construction of the Fourth Brahmaputra Bridge at Bogibil of Dibrugarh District of Assam?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): Constitutionally, Government of India is responsible for the development and maintenance of roads/bridges declared as National Highways under National Highways Act, 1956 and all other roads/bridges are essentially the responsibility of the respective State Governments. The proposed bridge over river Brahmaputra near Bogibil does not lie on a National Highway and hence it is within the purview of the State Government of Assam. It has not

been taken up for the construction so far because of paucity of funds.

Financial crisis of Vizag Shipyard

886. SHRI A. NALLASIVAN; Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether representations have been received from Hindustan Shipyard Staff Association, Visakhapatnam and Hindustan Shipyard Labour Union, Visakhapatnam regarding the difficult financial position of this premier Shipyard;

(b) what are the problems faced by Vizag Shipyard; and

(c) what steps are taken or proposed to be taken by Government to defuse the crisis facing the Shipyard at Vizag and to continue its work of Ship Building?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The basic problem being faced by Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam, is acute shortage of funds arising out of huge losses accumulated over the years. As on 31-12-1990, the provisional accumulated loss of Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. stands at around Rs. 273.20 crores. Following are the other important problems being faced by the Shipyard:—

(i) Lack of orders;

(ii) Low productivity; and

(iii) Low realisable prices for ships under construction etc.

(c) A number of steps are presently under consideration of the Govt, for revival of the Shipyard. These include capital restructuring, upward revision of Govt. subsidy payable for construction of ocean going vessels, duty-free imports upto 50% of realisable price of the vessel etc.