

संचार मंत्री (श्री जार्ज फर्नांडिस) : (क) जी नहीं। डाक-तार विभाग लगातार ऐसी आवश्यक कार्रवाई कर रहा है जिससे देश की टैलीफोन प्रणाली के कार्यकरण में आगे और सुधार हो सके।

(ख) वर्ष 1980-81 तक एक संचार उपग्रह स्थापित करने का प्रस्ताव विचाराधीन है।

†[THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) No, Sir. The P&T Department is taking necessary action on a continuing basis to make further improvement in the working of telephone system in the country.

(b) A proposal for setting up a Communication Satellite by 1980-81 is under consideration.]

भारत-श्रीलंका सांस्कृतिक समझौता

331. डा० लोकेश चन्द्र : क्या बिदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या भारत का श्रीलंका के साथ कोई सांस्कृतिक समझौता हुआ है, और

(ख) क्या सरकार उक्त समझौते के अन्तर्गत श्रीलंका को 'कपिलवस्तु प्रदर्शनी' भेजने का विचार रखती है ?

†[Indo-Sri Lanka Cultural pact

331. DR. LOKESH CHANDRA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India have entered into any cultural pact with Sri Lanka; and

(b) whether Government propose to send the 'Kapilvastu Exhibition' to Sri Lanka under the said pact ?]

विदेश मंत्री (श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी) :

(क) जी नहीं।

(ख) प्रश्न नहीं उठता। लेकिन श्रीलंका सरकार ने यह अनुरोध किया है कि 'कपिलवस्तु' के अवशेष उन्हें उधार दे दिए जाएं ताकि इन्हें वे श्रीलंका की प्रदर्शनी में दिखा सकें, भारत सरकार उनकी इस प्रार्थना पर विचार कर रही है।

†[THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJ-PAYEE) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise. But the Government have under consideration a request from the Government of Sri Lanka for loaning 'Kapilvastu' relics to them for exhibition in Sri Lanka.]

Appointment of public men as envoys

332. SHRI SHRIKANT VERMA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have laid down any criteria for selection of distinguished public men for appointment to diplomatic posts abroad; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJ-PAYEE) : (a) and (b) No specific criteria have been laid down, but broadly speaking Government take into account the experience and eminence of persons whom it appoints from public life to diplomatic posts abroad.

Contract for raw saltpetre at Hanumangarh

333. SHRI RAGHBIR SINGH GILL : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the contract for raw saltpetre in Tehsil Hanumangarh of Rajasthan is given to a few parties only; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to take steps to ensure giving of such contracts through public auction ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BIJU PATNAIK) : (a) and (b) Saltpetre is one of the minerals not governed by the Mineral Concession Rules, 1960 but by the Minor Mineral Concession Rules of the concerned State Government.

Rule 20 of the Rajasthan Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 1959, provides that minor minerals may be leased out by

public auction or by inviting tenders to be submitted for acceptance by the authority, of the State Government, competent to grant the lease. The report obtained from the State Government indicates that the saltpetre deposits in Hanumangarh Tehsil were notified in the Rajasthan Gazette dated 15th October, 1970 and auctioned on the 2nd December, 1970 in favour of the highest bidder for a period of five years, which lease commenced from the 22nd March, 1971. The lessee applied for renewal of his lease under rule 16(b) of the Rajasthan Minor Mineral Concession Rules, which permits the State Government to renew the lease for a period equivalent to the period of the original lease and where the State Government is satisfied that mines have been improved by the lessee and that substantial investments in machinery and equivalent have been incurred by him, the State Government may further grant second, third and fourth renewals each for a period equal to the period of the original lease. The State Government have reported that, consequently the question of reauction of the leased area does not arise, and have added that in their opinion the lessee has developed the area and also put up an industry based on this mineral and made considerable investment.

Harassment to Asians in U.K.

334. SHRI F. M. KHAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the Press report which appeared in the Sunday Standard of the 24th April, 1977 to the effect that angry protests have come from Asian leaders in UK for alleged police sex snoop on immigrant couples of Asian origin; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

Complaints had been received that while investigating genuineness of marriage-

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es, the concerned authorities in Britain had sometimes asked questions relating to personal (sexual) relationship. After investigating these complaints, the British Government have decided that officials should no longer question parties to a marriage as to their sexual relationship and that this aspect should not be discussed during the interview unless the parties volunteer information on the subject.

Vijayanagar steel plant in Karnataka

335. SHRI F. M. KHAN : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a sum of Rs. 1,500 crores has been sanctioned for the steel plant at Vijayanagar in Karnataka ;

(b) if so, what progress has been made in setting up the plant; and

(c) by when the plant is likely to be completed ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BIJU PATNAIK) : (a)

No, Sir. The Detailed Project Report has been received only recently and is under scrutiny by Steel Authority of India Limited.

(b) 7,367 acres of land out of total of 9,021 acres required for the plant have been acquired. The rest of the land is Government land. Preliminary action for acquisition of land for the township has been taken. Works relating to raw material investigations, Topographical Surveys, Geophysical investigations, Preliminary water supply and power supply schemes by the State Government authorities have been completed.

(c) The date by which the plant is likely to be commissioned will be known only after the Detailed Project Report has been scrutinised and approved by the Government of India.