

(c) With the approval of CCEA, the Government on 2nd June, 2008 had notified the policy for encouraging production and availability of fortified and coated fertilizers in the country wherein the indigenous manufacturers/producers of the subsidized fertilizers were allowed to produce fortified/coated subsidized fertilizers up to a maximum of 20% of their total production of respective subsidized fertilizers. This ceiling of production of Neem Coated Urea (NCU) was increased from the limit of 20% to a maximum of 35% of their total production *vide* notification dated 11th January, 2011.

The Government *vide* notification dated 7th January, 2015 removed the cap/restriction to produce Neem Coated Urea and *vide* subsequent notification dated 24th March, 2015 made mandatory for all the indigenous producers of urea to produce 75% of their total production of subsidized urea as Neem Coated Urea.

Subsequently, *vide* notification dated 25th May, 2015 Department of Fertilizers has made it mandatory for all the domestic producers of urea to produce 100% as Neem Coated Urea with an extra MRP of 5% (of ₹ 5360/- per MT) to be charged by the fertilizer manufacturing entities from farmers. Entire quantity of indigenously produced urea and imported urea is being neem coated w.e.f 1st September, 2015 and 1st December, 2015 respectively.

(d) The P&K fertilizer companies have reduced the MRP of MOP, DAP and NPK by ₹ 5000/MT, ₹ 2500/MT and ₹ 1000/MT respectively in the month of June 2016 and again ₹ 1300/MT for DAP in the month of December, 2016 and it seems that the reduction of prices of P&K fertilizers will encourage the farmers to use more P&K fertilizers which will help the balanced use of fertilizers.

#### **Delay in OFC-Based Network for Defence Services**

2602. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that OFC-based network for Defence Services is witnessing considerable time and cost overrun due to one reason or the other, if so, the reasons for the delay; and

(b) whether Government has formulated any strategy to complete the work in a time-bound manner for putting an effective communication network in place, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) OFC based network for Defence Services has two components:

- (i) Laying of Optical Fibre Cable (OFC).
- (ii) Procurement and installation of equipments.

The Project is being executed by BSNL. As per tenders for OFC, the tendered cost is more than the estimated cost. Similarly, for tenders issued for equipments, the tendered amount is more than the estimated cost. Thus, there will be cost overrun for the project.

The time overrun has occurred due to numerous reasons, such as:—

- Delay in Right of Way (RoW) approval from State and Central Government and their agencies.
- Limitation of working season in mountainous areas, due to snow cover and weather conditions etc.
- Law and Order situation in Jammu and Kashmir State and some North Eastern States.
- Delays in tender finalisation.
- Court cases by bidding parties.

In order to ensure early completion of project regular meetings are being held by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) with concerned State and Central Government Departments and their agencies. The bottlenecks and hindrances are sorted out in these co-ordination and monitoring meetings.

#### **Number of telephone exchanges in the country**

†2603. SHRI SURENDRA SINGH NAGAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the number of telephone exchanges existing in the country, as on date, State-wise;

(b) the number of telephone exchanges in the rural areas of the different States during the present Five Year Plan;

(c) the details of those areas where telephone exchanges are not functional as on date, State-wise;

(d) the details of the telephone exchanges which have undergone modernisation and upgradation, so far, State-wise; and

(e) the steps taken/being taken by Government to ensure smooth functioning of

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.