estimation in nutrient terms for the Ninth Five-Year Plan were 140.27 lakh MTs nitrogen and 33.33 lakh MTs phosphate for 2001-2002 for the whole country.

(d) To optimise the indigenous fertilizer production, the following facilities/ concessions have been made available to the fertilizers industry by the Government at present:

i) Deemed Export Benefits to indigenous suppliers of capital goods to fertilizer projects provided such supplies are made under the procedure of international competitive bidding.

ii) Reasonable return on investment to the entrepreneurs under the Retention Price-cum-Subsidy Scheme, at present applicable to existing urea capacity.

iii) Concession on sale of decontrolled phosphatic and potassic fertilizers to farmers.

iv) Import of capital goods for setting up of new plant/modernisation of existing units at a concessional rate of customs duty.

v) Import of fertilizer raw materials and intermediates at a concessional rate of customs duty.

Expansion of Nellore Fertilizer Company

2070. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government proposed to expand the Nellore Fertilizer Company;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the proposed increased output would start actual production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (c) No proposal to expand any Nellore Fertilizer Company has been received by the Government. However, a proposal of Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO), to set up a new ammonia-urea plant in Nellore District of Andhra Pradesh with an annual urea capacity of 7.68 lakh metric tonnes at an estimated capital cost of Rs. 1736 crore has been approved in principle' by the Government, subject to investment appraisal by the Public Investment Board (PIB).

Investment appraisal of this project was undertaken by the PIB in its meeting held on 9.7.99. In June, 2000, the Government considered and deferred the proposal for taking a final investment decision on the project. This proposal was based on the observations of the PIB regarding the viability of the project, desirability of encouraging use of LNG as feedstock to reduce the incidence of subsidy and the need to stagger the implementation of the proposed projects due to limited demand supply gap forecasts.

Self reliance in fertilizer production

2071. PROF. M. M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government have chalked out any short term and long term programme to make the country self reliant in the production of fertilizers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the effective steps initiated by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Government of India's policy has been to achieve maximum degree of attainable self-sufficiency in nitrogen production. In 1999-2000, the country achieved self-sufficiency to the extent of about 94% in the case of nitrogen.

In the case of phosphates, the paucity of domestic raw material constrains the attainment of higher degree of self-sufficiency. Recognising this, a deliberate policy-mix has been adopted which involves modulation of three options: (i) domestic production based on indigenous/imported rock phosphate and imported sulphur; (ii) domestic production based on imported intermediates, viz. Ammonia and phosphoric acid; and (iii) import of finished fertilizer, viz. Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) and complex fertilizers. In 1999-2000, about 70% of the requirement of phosphatic fertilizers was met through the first two options. The level of self-sufficiency is likely to improve further in 2000-01 with the contribution to phosphate fertilizer production by new plants at Paradeep and Dahej amounting to 17% increase in production target in 2000-01 as compared to actual production in 1999-2000.

There are no known commercially exploitable reserves of potash in the country and the entire requirement of potassic fertilizers for direct application as well as for production of complex fertilizers is met through imports.