

and allow it to function smoothly to the benefit of different types of users of postal services.

The Department has also initiated schemes to provide value-added services based on satellite connectivity. Transmission of Money Orders using satellite and the introduction of Hybrid Mail Service are two such schemes. Twenty-six micro earth stations capable of transmitting and receiving satellite signals have already been set up in the country and 49 more centres are targeted to be completed by the end of the current year.

#### Telecom Routes

4502. SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry has identified some long distance Telecom routes to be handed over to the private sector, under the build operate and transfer (B.O.T.) scheme; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[Translation]

#### Computerisation of Post Offices

4503. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHOUDHARY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken steps to computerise the Post Offices in the country;

(b) if so, the number of Post Offices computerised so far;

(c) whether any date has been stipulated for computerisation of all the Post Offices in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps being taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) During the 8th Five Year Plan, the Department of Post plans to modernise postal operations by induction of technology. The plan envisages introduction of 5000 computer-based counter machines to provide more efficient and responsive service at the post office counters to the customers. Computer-based technologies are also being introduced in the area of mail processing and other activities like accounting, inventory control and storage and retrieval of date.

(b) More than 1650 postal counters in 642 post offices in the country have been provided with personal computer-based counter machines. In order to optimise the benefits of computer-based counter machines, the counter function and the front-office in selected and

important post offices are also being modernised. 106 post offices have been covered under this programme and 500 more post offices are planned to be covered during the current year.

(c) to (e). Introduction of computer-based technology requires trained manpower and adequate financial resources. The programme of computerisation is, therefore, being implemented in phases, keeping in view the availability of resources and appropriate skill upgradation of the existing manpower through extensive training programmes.

[English]

#### Transnational Pipeline Schemes

4504. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to promote a system of transnational pipelines on the lines of those existing in Europe and North America;

(b) if so, the benefits likely to be accrued therefrom;

(c) the steps being taken to sponsor and promote the related schemes;

(d) the initiatives being taken by the Government and Indian entrepreneurs in that direction; and

(e) the overall plan for development of transnational pipelines schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH KUMAR SHARMA) : (a) to (e). An Agreement on Principal Terms has been signed with Oman for the import of 56.6 MMSCMD of natural gas through pipelines. An MOU has been signed with Iran for the import of 50-75 MMSCMD of natural gas through pipelines. The feasibility studies for both the pipeline systems are in progress.

#### Rehabilitation of Oustees

4505. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have formulated any policy for the rehabilitation of the population, tribal and non-tribal, displaced as a result of the implementation of major development projects;

(b) whether the tribal communities are in addition paid any compensation for the loss of the tribal land and the recurring income therefrom;

(c) whether there is increasing resistance by the tribals to the implementation of development projects which would affect their land and livelihood and lead to uncontrolled migration of nontribals from outside; and

(d) whether the Government have taken any steps to assuage the fears and apprehensions of the tribals?