

Improving Transmission of A.I.R. Port Blair

290. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the broadcasts of A.I.R. Port Blair are not audible in the entire Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and time and again representations have been made to Government to instal a high power transmission set for improving broadcasts of AIR Port Blair;

(b) if so, what action Government contemplate to take and when;

(c) whether Government are considering to have satellite system to provide television facilities to the remote and inaccessible areas for better communication of mass media; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (KUMARI KUMUDBEN M. JOSHI): (a) Yes, Sir. The reception in the Islands will, however, improve considerably when the present temporary antenna is replaced by the directional antenna system, work on which is already in hand.

(b) To improve the coverage further, a scheme for installation of a 100 KW MW transmitter at Port Blair has been included in the approved 6th Plan (1978-83). Implementation of this scheme will be taken up as soon as financial sanction is issued.

(c) and (d). The Indian National Satellite, expected to be launched in early 1982, can be deployed for providing TV service in remote and inaccessible areas of the country. However, taking into account the optimum viewing time and availability of only two transponders in the INSAT, plans are under consideration to cover the Island areas through terrestrial system only. The plans are

yet to be approved and their implementation will depend upon the availability of resources, allocation of funds etc.

Oil Exploration in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

291. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of continuous increase of crude oil price Government propose to explore oil possibilities in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands vigorously;

(b) whether natural gas in large quantities is available in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, if so, details of action being taken to tap it commercially; and

(c) if the reply to part (a) above is in the negative, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI P. C. SETHI): (a) The Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) is continuing its efforts to explore oil gas possibilities in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

(b) ONGC drilled an exploratory well in the Eastern Shelf of Andaman where gas was struck on testing in June 1980. The gas flowed at a rate of 1.8 lakh cubic metres per day through $\frac{1}{2}$ " choke. Further operations had to be suspended due to the on-set of monsoons.

ONGC has a plan to take up drilling of an exploratory well in the Western Shelf of Andaman from December 1980 to be followed by an assessment well in the Eastern Shelf where gas has already been discovered.

Further drilling programme to determine the commerciality of the hydrocarbon deposits in the area will depend on the processing and interpretation of the data which will be obtained from these wells.

(c) Does not arise.