

(c) the reasons for accumulation of such a large amount; and

(d) the action taken to recover the outstanding dues from them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As on 30.6.1998, Rs. 1343.44 crores is due from the Circle Cellular Operators.

(c) and (d). The Cellular Operators Association of India has represented that most of the projects are non-viable with reference to the present terms and conditions, as their original projections, with regard to demand, number of subscribers have not proved to be correct. The Association has demanded extension of the licence period as well as moratorium on payment of licence fees for two years. In some cases, Bank Guarantees to recover the outstanding licence fee payment could not be encashed on account of stay granted by Courts/TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India). In order to verify the points made by the Association, the Bureau of Industrial Costs & Prices (BICP) have been entrusted to conduct a detailed techno-economic study of the Cellular Industry. Pending the BICP study ICICI (Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India Ltd) were also requested to undertake a quick study of the Operational performance of the Cellular Service. The matter is under Government's consideration.

Income Tax Tribunal Bench at Vijayawada

4727. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a demand for opening of an Income-Tax Tribunal Bench at Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether the Government have agreed to set up the bench in principle; and

(c) if so, the reasons for the delay in opening the Bench?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It has not been found possible to accede to this demand. However, Government has recently approved the setting up of a Bench of the Tribunal at Visakhapatnam.

(c) Does not arise.

Transmission and Distribution Losses

4728. SHRI ARJUN SETHI : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Low Plant Load Factor and heavy Transmission and Distribution losses of thermal power plants have been a cause of much concern to the Government during the last few years; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to meet the challenges posed by the said factors?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) and (b): The sector-wise Plant Load Factor (PLF) for year 1996-97 and 1997-98 and on all India basis is given below:

Sector	(PLF %)	
	1996-97	1997-98
State Sector	60.3	60.9
Central Sector	71.0	70.4
Private Sector	71.2	71.2
All India	64.4	64.7

Transmission and Distribution (T&D) losses during 1994-95 and 1995-96 were 21.13% and 22.27% respectively.

The Government constantly reviews the working of thermal power stations in the country and have identified the problems of different thermal power stations. Various measures are being taken to solve these problems which include Renovation and Modernisation of old units, supply of required quantity and quality of coal, training of O&M personnel, and strengthening of Transmission and Distribution system. T&D losses in the country which were 15% till the year 1996-67, have increased gradually to about 22.27% in 1995-96. The major losses occur in subtransmission & distribution system. Power distribution falls within the purview of SEBs/State Governments. CEA has issued comprehensive guidelines on reduction of T&D losses which, *inter-alia*, include identification of high loss area, upgradation of operation voltages, reduction of length of LT lines, location of distribution transformer nearer to the load centres, installation of shunt capacitors, improvement in construction and operation techniques and practices.