

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the details of four conditions contained in the Memorandum of Understanding of the four companies; and

(f) the time by which a settlement is likely to be expected out of court?

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

(a) No, Sir.

(b) In view of (a) above the question does not arise.

(c) and (d) Since cellular telephone service in Delhi and Mumbai has not been introduced by MTNL the question of price war does not arise.

(e) There were eight conditions proposed with MOD by the private operators and not four conditions as indicated in the question. The eight conditions are as follows:—

1. The Metro Operators shall withdraw the following Petitions pending before the Delhi High Court/Telecom Regulatory Authority of India:—

(a) Civil Writ Petition no. 3964 of 1998 in the matter of Cellular Operators Association of India and others Vs. Union of India and another.

(b) Civil Writ Petition no. 4666 of 1998 in the matter of BPL Vs. Union of India and another. It is agreed that the petitions referred above shall be withdrawn within seven days with the right reserved to the parties, to revive their cause or defences in case the terms provided herein are not implemented by 30 April, 1999. These withdrawals shall be subject to the approvals, permissions and orders of the Hon'ble High Court.

2. Although the present licence agreements of the Metro Operators envisage only two cellular service providers per Metro, it is agreed that the Metro Operators shall not object to the entry of MTNL as the 3rd cellular service provider. Consequent to this agreement of the Metro Operators, it is agreed that introduction of any additional service provider(s) in Delhi and Mumbai shall be subject to the recommendations of the TRAI as to the need and timing of additional service provider(s).

3. There shall be level playing field between MTNL and the Metro operators in all the terms and conditions of the licence including the licence tenure and in all aspects to *inter alia*, ensure rapid market expansion and reduced costs to customers through modified licence fee requirements, so that no operators, public or private, is disadvantaged in any respect.

4. Government shall take appropriate steps to ensure level playing field condition between all service providers.

5. The role of the TRAI shall be adequately strengthened to enable the Authority to serve as an independent Regulator and to ensure speedy and effective resolution of all disputes between service providers. Appropriate amendments in the pleadings before the High Court, statutory amendments, if any needed, shall be carried out immediately.

6. Parties also agreed that the appeals pending before the Hon'ble High Court will also stand disposed of in the light of the present MOU. The judgement of Hon'ble Ms. Justice Usha Mehra dated July 16, 1998 passed in first Appeal no. 89,93,94 and other batch cases of 1998 will also be set aside and all orders passed following the said Judgement shall be treated as set aside by consent of all parties.

7. This agreement shall not in any manner restrict the Group on Telecommunications constituted by the Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Government from formulating and adopting a revised New Telecom Policy.

8. All procedural and other substantive actions shall be ensured to be duly taken by the concerned persons for proper implementation of all the terms hereof including by way of executing required agreement/amending agreement etc.

(f) No time limit can be given since MTNL was not agreeable to the terms of the MOU.

[Translation]

Biological Tests on Ganga Water

905. SHRI TEJVEER SINGH:
DR. ASHOK PATEL:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the continuous increase in the level of pollution of the river Ganges and failure of all

efforts made by the Union and State Governments in this regard, now biological tests are proposed to be conducted for "Safe Ganga Water" management;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the places where these tests are proposed to be conducted and the time by which this exercise would be completed alongwith the cost likely to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) The Research Committee of National River Conservation Plan has approved the Biological Monitoring of the Ganga River and the study has been initiated by inviting proposals from various Research Institutions.

[*English*]

Retail Outlets of LPG/Petrol/Diesel in Orissa

906. SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of retail outlets for Diesel/Petrol/LPG have been announced and interview are being also done for the allotment to the deserving candidates in the Orissa recently;

(b) if so, the details of such places advertised for the State of Orissa with the location thereof;

(c) whether irregularities and favouritism are alleged to have been made in the selection process thereof; and

(d) if so, the facts in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In addition to the locations pending from previous marketing plans, a total of 24 retail outlet dealerships and 41 LPG distributorships have been included for Orissa in the marketing plan 1996-98 and supplementary marketing plan 1996-98. Selection process, which includes advertisement in Press and interview by the Dealer Selection Board, is a continuous process and is in progress.

(c) Some complaints about irregularities and favouritism in the selection process in Orissa have been received. Action is taken on such complaints in accordance with the established procedure.

(d) Does not arise.

Oilfields Abroad

907. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN AHAMED: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the IOC and the ONGC propose to buy oilfields abroad;

(b) if so, the amount of investment likely to be made in such purchases in 1998-99 and 1999-2000.

(c) whether the companies have completed the unit cost of crude oil after taking into account the capital and operational costs; and

(d) if so, the cost computed per barrel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir. Acquisition of equity oil abroad is one of the objective pursued by the two companies.

(b) and (c) The specific investment proposals would depend on size of opportunity, its possible potential, availability of infrastructure and other operational aspects. The cost cannot be worked out in advance as it depends upon several factors as listed above.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply to (b) and (c) above.

[*Translation*]

Losses to SEBs

908. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the transmission and distribution losses suffered by State Electricity Boards during the last three years;

(b) whether these losses are more than double as compared to the developed countries; and