

[*Translation*]

SHRI ARIF BAIG: Sir, just now the hon. Minister said that the Supreme Court has taken a decision in case of 6 big companies, whose names have been given, and amount worth crores of rupees is due from them. The hon. Minister also said that a very small amount has been recovered from them. May I know the steps being taken to recover all the dues and the reason why such leniency is being shown to them?

[*English*]

SHRI M.S. GURUPADASWAMY: The hon. member has answered his own question. They went to the court; when they go to the courts, the courts take a long time to decide and during that time we cannot do anything at all. Now, the Supreme Court has decided in our favour and we are taking steps to recover these arrears.

Gas Based Project in Northern Region

*394. **SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY:** Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any potentialities for development of gas based projects in the Northern region;

(b) if so, whether any schemes for harnessing this potential source of energy is being formulated; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) to (c). Availability of gas in the Northern electricity region is, presently, restricted to the gas supplied through the Hazira-Bijaipur-Jagdishpur (HBJ) pipeline. Gas based power projects are under operation at Anta (Rajasthan), Auraiya (Uttar Pradesh) and Delhi. Another project is under execution at Dadri in Uttar Pradesh. Depending upon the availability of natural gas, more gas based power projects are

proposed to be taken up for implementation in the Northern electricity region.

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY: Most of this natural gas is being wasted into the atmosphere by burying out or for want of storage or transportation facilities through the pipeline. As per my knowledge three-fourths of it is being wasted like this. May I know from the hon. Minister what percentage of this natural gas is being burnt out and if there is any proposal in the Ministry to extend this HBJ pipeline to Punjab, and similarly to the East up to West Bengal and to the South?

SHRI M.S. GURUPADASWAMY: This question pertains to the Northern Region and also my colleague. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: You will appreciate that it is a question of joint effort.

MR. SPEAKER: I am concerned with the reply.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, the hon. Member wants to know as to how much of this natural gas is being wasted. It is apparent that this question should be replied by the Minister of Petroleum only, however, as per my information, at the time of the beginning of Seventh Five Year Plan when this scheme was implemented, 40 per cent of the gas was being wasted. Now that percentage has come down to 30, but still 30 per cent is being wasted. A proposal from Punjab had been received by the Central Government to extend the HBJ pipeline upto Punjab, but no decision has been taken in this regard so far.

[*English*]

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had projected this requirement in 1988 and then in 1989. I am happy that this demand had already been given to the Ministry. The hon. Minister has already

stated that nearly thirty per cent of the energy is being wasted. It is expensive to transport coal for thermal plants and as far as the hydro energy is concerned it is nearly fully tapped in Punjab. May I request the hon. Minister to take down my suggestion for extending the HBJ pipeline upto Punjab for having a gas based power plant?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, I have taken note of the suggestion given by the hon. Member. During the course of the Eighth Plan, gas availability is expected to increase. A part of this gas is expected to be transported through the HBJ pipeline for supply of gas to new units. The programme includes the schemes for evacuation and utilisation of gas, which is presently being wasted at the moment.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Sir, the present requirement of power in Madhya Pradesh is about 2500 megawatt and there is a shortfall of 17 per cent in availability. Sir, the hon. Minister knows the bulk of the power generation in Madhya Pradesh is thermal based and therefore, it is located in eastern part of Madhya Pradesh. The northern part of Madhya Pradesh, therefore, has to incur very great transmission losses and there is no possibility of thermal based power plants in the northern part because there is no coal. The only possibility is a gas based power plant. The hon. Minister knows the HBJ pipeline passes through the district of Guna in the northern part of M.P. and goes on touching the districts of Gwalior, Datia and on to Uttar Pradesh.

Sir, the Madhya Pradesh Government has submitted four proposals of gas based power plants of 450 megawatt each at Gwalior, Raigarh, Jhabua, Guna and Datia. We are facing a very acute power shortage especially in the northern part of Madhya Pradesh. And the industrial loom there is unprecedented. So, there is going to be a very acute power shortage situation. I met the hon. Minister in this regard. I have also met the hon. Minister Shri Gurupadaswamy in this regard. And they have assured me that they will try and expedite the clearance

or contemplate the clearance of gas based power plants in Gwalior/Datia and in Guna. I would like the Minister to enlighten me on this because this is going on for such a long time. The main advantage of gas based power plant is that it is very easy to establish and it can be put up on a short time. I would like to know the latest position on this and whether the hon. Minister can give me an assurance that by such and such a date, this plant will be either cleared or atleast a decision will be taken on this subject.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, I share the feeling of Shri Madhavrao Scindia and I have already stated that during the course of the Eighth Plan gas availability is expected to increase. There is a programme for expansion so that the gas which is being wasted today can be evacuated and may be utilised for power generation of other purposes. Sir, what the hon. Member has said about the gas based power projects, I am in total agreement with him. In fact, Sir, I very strongly feel, and this is only my personal view, that whatever gas is available, priority should be given for the generation of power by utilising this gas.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: The Minister is not entitled to have his personal views while answering the question.... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Would you be kind enough to allow me to complete my answer? I am merely saying this. I am not joining issue with the hon. Member. But he is protesting. I am saying that I am in total agreement with him. But even then he is protesting. O.K. I do not agree with him. He has not allowed me to complete the answer. In fact, I have already taken it up. Today whatever gas is available, its linkage has been committed to fertiliser plants, for other purposes and the gas based power projects too. I have already taken up this matter with my colleague, Shri Gurupadaswamy and he is also very much in agreement with it. We are trying that at least in future whatever additional gas is available, priority is given for setting up power projects based on gas.

And since the question mainly relates to northern region and Madhya Pradesh comes in western region, I will not be able to respond to the specific power projects which have been mentioned by the hon. Member. But if he needs, I can supply that information.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: It is my information that commercially exploitable quantities of gas have been discovered in the region of Jaisalmer. Further it is my information that commercially exploitable gas which has been discovered in Jaisalmer is currently not being utilised. Further, there is a proposal for the setting up of a suitable power plant etc. in or around Jaisalmer by the Government of Rajasthan as proposed to the Government of India. What is the status of these two aspects?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: ONGC and OIL have found small quantities of non-associated gas in Jaisalmer in Rajasthan. The quantity is considered too small for commercial extraction. 50,000 cubic metres of gas per day has been committed for the proposed Ramgarh gas based power project of the capacity of 3 mw of Rajasthan State Electricity Board. As orders for the main plant and equipment are yet to be finalised, it is not possible to indicate any commissioning schedule for this project at this moment.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SANTOSH BHARTIYA: Is it true that foundation stones of the four factories licensed to be run on the gas to be supplied through HBJ pipeline, have not been laid so far, and that gas is not being utilised fully.

Will the Government consider the proposal for setting up gas based power projects at places nearer to HBJ pipeline, such as Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh or the districts of Madhya Pradesh instead of fertilizer factories so that the basic requirement of the increasing the generation of power is met.

Sir, I am asking this because fertiliser

can be imported whereas electricity cannot be imported.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, what the hon. Member as stated is true. The construction of the fertilizer factories which have been promised gas through HBJ pipeline, has still not been started. As per my information, notices have been issued to the licence holders of these factories by the Ministry of Petroleum. Perhaps one month's notice has been given to them. It is true that gas has been promised to these factories. The hon. Member has rightly stated that fertilizer can be imported from outside but not the electricity. It is true that if that gas is made available for power generation, 300 MW power stations based on it can be set up. Since the Ministry of Petroleum has already issued notices, further decision in this regard can be taken only when that period expires.

[*English*]

SHRI ANANTRAO DESHMUKH: Sir, the Government of Maharashtra has often requested the Union Government for the extension of pipeline from Bombay High to Vidarbha and Marathwada region of Maharashtra, for setting up some gas-based industries in that region. So, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether they are considering this request favourably.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, this question is related to gas-based power projects. If there is a question of extension of HBJ pipeline to some parts of Maharashtra, I think, the Petroleum Ministry will be in a better position to reply to the question.... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI ANANTRAO DESHMUKH: There is a demand for power projects also from Maharashtra, Sir... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: You need not lose your cool. I am not trying to evade the question. Sir, I think I have already stated that in the Eighth Plan, we have the plan for the expansion of the capacity of the HBJ pipeline so that more gas is made,

available for power generation or for other purposes. I have already stated that. Since that has not been finalised so far and since the matter is basically dealt with by the Petroleum Ministry, I am not in a position to go into the specific as to which places this line will be extended.

Restoration of Kanchanjangha Express and Janta Express

*396. SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a persistent public demand to immediately restore the two important Calcutta bound trains, Kanchanjangha Express and Janta Express of North-East Frontier Railway;

(b) if so, when these trains are proposed to be restored; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Kanchanjangha Express is a daily train to Howrah. Janta Express from New Bongaigaon was cancelled in August 1987.

(b) There is no proposal to reintroduce Janta Express.

(c) Poor patronage.

[*Translation*]

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Railways has introduced new trains at many places but not a single train has been sanctioned for North-eastern Frontier Railway. The trains which were already in operation have also been cancelled. What is the reason behind it? Similarly, can the Gaur Express which starts from Malda, can be extended upto Alipurduar or not? Is there any provision to introduce any new train on the N.F. Railway, if not, the reason therefor?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: This

train has not been withdrawn by the present Government. It was first cancelled in 1987 and then the decision to withdraw it for ever was taken in 1988. So far as the hon. Member's second question is concerned, at present the circumstances are not favourable for introducing new trains in this region.

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY: The eastern region is backward. There demand is long standing. Petroleum and other mineral products from Assam are transported to this area, from the security point of view too, this is a very important area. Our hope from the new Government have also dashed to the ground. Do the present Government intend to introduce good trains there. There has been a long standing demand to introduce a direct train from Tinsukia to Ranchi, Sambhalpur, Nagpur and Bombay. Will the hon. Minister take it into consideration.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: I will certainly consider it, but it will take some time.

[*English*]

DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME: Sir, my submission is that on the very important railway line from Khana Junction to Sainthia Junction which is only seventy-one kilometre, only single line is there. We have no double line from Khana to Sainthia. This is a very important track but there is no double line. The local people have demanded so many times for the double line but this demand has not been fulfilled. This time the hon. Railway Minister has not considered this proposal but this is very much important. I would like to know whether the hon. Railway Minister will go into doubling this track in the near future.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Sir, this is a suggestion for future action.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Sir, the previous Government had got some allergy to the very name of 'Janata'. So, they did not reintroduce the 'Janata' train. I think the present Government has got no such al-