

(a) the steps taken by Government to improve the telephone services, especially the long distance trunk calls throughout the country; and

(b) the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) Steps taken so far to improve the telephone services are given below :

Local Telephone Services

- (i) Replacement of life-expired and worn out telephone exchanges by modern switching system and provision of adequate spares for maintenance of serviceable equipment;
- (ii) Improvement and expansion of inter-exchange junction network with provision of cable PCM and microwave systems;
- (iii) Rehabilitation of the external plant which is the weakest link of the system by use of jelly filled cables, pressurisation of dry cables, providing ducts, dressing up of DPS, Cabinets, and Pillars.
- (iv) Inducting electronic telephone exchanges in a number of cities.
- (v) To reduce complaints on Directory Enquiry Service, this service is being computerised.

Long Distance Trunk Telephone Services

- (i) Stable and reliable transmission media are being provided for long distance trunk circuits, over the satellite, Microwave, Coaxial and UHF (Radio systems), linking the national, main and difficult terrain routes.
- (ii) Standby trunk circuits to keep the trunk service working round the clock have been provided on the national/Main routes.
- (iii) A close watch is kept over the performance of the Trunk Manual Ex-

changes working at the State Capitals, through a close surveillance and monitoring cell.

- (iv) Additional/New Trunk circuits have been provided wherever justified to cope with the trunk traffic to minimize delays on trunk calls.
- (v) Additional trunk Boards have been provided wherever justified.
- (vi) Employment of short duty/Reserve Trained pool staff, telephone operators to improve staff position.
- (vii) Provision of Demand Trunk Routes wherever justified.
- (viii) Opening of additional Demand Trunk Manual Exchange such as in Bombay (Prabhadevi).
- (ix) Provision of light weight good quality headgear sets.
- (x) Provision of Electronic Trunk Timing Indicators. Besides, the following are being planned :
 - (i) Provision of Push Button Diallers.
 - (ii) Provision of a 'POSTEX' (Paperless Operation of Trunk Exchange) at Trivandrum on experimental basis as a first step towards computerisation of Trunk Manual Exchanges in the country.
 - (iii) Increasing the capacities of electronic trunk automatic exchanges and phasing out the Pentacenta cross-bar trunk automatic exchange equipment which is responsible for failure of STD Calls :
 - (iv) Provision of Digital Trunk Automatic Exchanges has been planned for 17 stations in the country.
- (b) The details are as per (a) above.

Requirement, production and prices of Indigenous and imported newsprint

1193. SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA :
SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL :
SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMA-
CHANDRAN :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the annual requirement of newsprint in the country and the annual production;

(b) the quantity of newsprint imported annually to meet the requirement;

(c) the price of indigenous newsprint;

(d) the price of imported newsprint;

(e) whether it is a fact that the price of indigenous newsprint is higher than the imported one and if so, by how much and the reasons therefor; and

(f) the steps being taken to reduce the prices of indigenous products and supply to the users at par with the imported one ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) :

(a) The demand for newsprint which was estimated at 3.85 lakh tonnes in 1984-85 is expected to increase to about 5 lakh tonnes per annum by 1989-90

(b) The quantity of newsprint imported during the last three years is as follows :

1983-84 193,607 tonnes

1984-85 240,324 tonnes (This includes 27,650 tonnes towards election quota, backlog servicing and for Delbi Telephones)

1985-86 230,000 tonnes (estimated)

(c) to (e). The price of imported newsprint (48.8 gsm) for the quarter January-March, 1986 is Rs. 6980 per tonne for high-seas sale and Rs. 7030 per tonne for buffer stock sale, exclusive of customs levies. The price of indigenous newsprint is as follows :

National Newsprint & Paper Mills Ltd.	Rs. 7860 P. T. (55 gsm)
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Hindustan Newsprint Ltd. Mysore Paper Mills Ltd. Tamil Nadu Newsprint & Papers Ltd.	} Rs. 8960 P.T. (52 gsm)
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The main reasons for the higher price of newsprint are :—

(i) Higher capital investment per tonne of installed capacity and higher input cost per tonne of newsprint.

(ii) Scale of operations and difference in raw material-mix.

(f) Continuous efforts are being made to improve the capacity utilisation of the existing units in the country and reduce cost of production by ensuring timely and adequate supply of major inputs, better inventory management and other measures.

Sanction of petrol pumps and gas agencies in Kerala

1194. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of petrol pumps and gas agencies sanctioned in Kerala during 1985; and

(b) the number of petrol pumps and gas agencies proposed to be sanctioned during 1986 ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH) : (a) The Oil Industry has included 53 LPG dealerships and 9 retail outlet dealerships in its 1985-86 Marketing Plan for Kerala State. The locations included so far in the Annual Marketing Plans of the Oil Industry will be commissioned from time to time, after following in each case, the prescribed procedure of advertisement, selection by the Oil Selection Board and appointment on the basis of the recommendations of that Board. In 1985 in Kerala Letters of Intent to selected candidates were issued by the oil marketing companies in respect of 15 retail outlet dealerships and 42 LPG distributorships.

(b) The Marketing Plan of 1986-87 has not yet been finalised by the Oil Industry.