

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) and (b).

Post Offices:

Government's objective is to provide post offices in those areas where such facility does not exist, subject to the fulfilment of departmental norms in this regard and availability of resources. In urban areas, departmental sub-post offices are accordingly being opened in newly developed project areas, industrial estates, industrial townships, satellite colonies developed in the periphery of cities, etc.

Telecom Services:

Yes, Sir. The Government propose to introduce new schemes for expansion of telecom services to provide infrastructural assistance to the entrepreneurs in setting up industries. As per Eighth Plan objectives, industrial growth centres have been declared as special focus areas in providing priority for Telecom facilities.

[English]

Privatisation of Coal Based Power Projects

5787. SHRI GOPI NATH GAJAPATHI: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any proposal for privatisation of the coal based Thermal Power Plants in Orissa;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the stage at which the proposal is pending; and

(d) the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) Yes, Sir. An MOU has been signed between the Government of Orissa with CEA, USA Inc. in respect of the Talcher Thermal Power Station (460 MW).

(b) Such decisions are taken by the State Governments/SEBs concerned. The MOU states that the proposal has been mooted to increase the reliability and plant load factor of the Thermal Power Station and to obtain as much additional generation capacity and corresponding energy from the Power Station as quickly as possible and at a reasonable cost.

(c) and (d). The MOU has been entered into in order to establish a framework for further investigation by CEA, USA Inc. regarding the technical and financial feasibility of O&M management, acquisition, ownership, renovation and modernisation of the Thermal Power Station.

Indore Bypass

5788. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA VARMA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the '4-laning of Indore section' and the 'Indore Bypass' are to be constructed with World Bank assistance;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the expected financial assistance and the latest estimates of the cost;