

proposal before the Union Government; and

(f) if so, the details of response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH KUMAR SHARMA): (a) and (b). Although the concept of Southern Gas Grid has been accepted in principle, no investment decision has been taken as yet.

(c) and (d). The principal terms of the Long Term Gas Supply Contract to be signed with Oman Oil Company are being discussed.

(e) and (f). The Chief Ministers of the Southern States have demanded the early projectisation of the gas grid. The State Governments of the Southern region have been asked to firm up the locations and the requirements of gas based projects.

[*Translation*]

LPG Distribution

202. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any proposal from foreign companies for distribution of LPG in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the cities in which the foreign companies propose to start gas distribution system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH KUMAR SHARMA): (a) to (c). A few foreign companies have plans to market LPG by setting up joint ventures with Indian private and public sector companies. These foreign companies include Shell International, Caltex Petroleum Corporation, Mundogas etc. They are in the process of developing necessary infrastructure for importing and marketing LPG.

Power Shortage in Madhya Pradesh

203. SHRI KHELAN RAM JANGDE: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the shortage of power being faced by Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat at present and the annual loss suffered by the States during the course of transmission of power;

(b) whether the Union Government propose to check the loss suffered due to transmission and to provide any financial assistance to the States for modernisation to transmission system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) The shortage of power being faced by Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat at present are 9.6% and 3.6% respectively. The annual T&D loss suffered by Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat during 1992-93 were 22.52% and 22.20% respectively.

(b) Comprehensive guidelines have been issued by Central Electricity Authority to the Power utilities for reducing Transmission and Distribution losses. These include, conducting of Energy Audit

for identifying the system elements responsible for excessive losses, installing capacitors to improve the voltage profile, preparation of system improvement schemes for strengthening the improvement of the systems, installing tamper-proof meter boxes, intensifying surprise raids and launching prosecution against the persons found indulging in theft of energy. Theft of energy has been made a cognisable offence from August 1986 under the provision of Section-39 of the Indian Electricity Act, 1910. An incentive scheme was also introduced by the Government of India among the State Electricity Boards/Electricity Departments from the year 1987 for bringing about reduction in Transmission & Distribution losses. Power distribution falls within the preview of Electricity Boards/Electricity Departments constituted by the State Governments. The power utilities have to arrange financial resources on their own for modernisation of their power systems.

[English]

Foreign Assistance for Shipping

204. SHRI SANDIPAN BHAGWAN THORAT: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be please to state:

(a) whether the Government have received offer for foreign investment in the shipping sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto;

(d) the details of foreign assistance sought for development and modernisation of ports in Maharashtra; and

(e) allocation and utilisation of central funds during the last three years for development of shipping and ports in Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER):
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Government have approved the proposals of the following foreign companies:—

Sl. No.	Name of the Company	Nature of foreign investment
1.	M/s. Geepee Shipping Company Limited, Bombay.	40% foreign equity participation to acquire the vessels.
2.	M/s. Sea. Span Shipping Company Bombay.	51% foreign equity participation to acquire the ships.
3.	M/s. Ready Foods Limited Bangalore.	50% NRI contribution to operate Shipping Services.