

(c) the total investment involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH KUMAR SHARMA): (a) to (c). The management of future demand and supply of oil and natural gas is dependent upon various factors which include indigenous crude and natural gas production, availability of petroleum products from the refineries, materialisation of demand and adequate infrastructure.

Towards securing enhanced crude oil supplies in the country, Government is making all efforts to increase the exploration of crude oil within/outside the country by allowing joint ventures and private sector participation to supplement public sector oil companies. Government is also taking measures to increase the production of crude oil and natural gas from indigenous sources and is also exploring the possibilities of importing natural gas/LNG.

Government have allowed private investment in the oil refining sector. As against the existing refining capacity of 57.40 MMTPA, the total refining capacity in the country after the expansion/debottlenecking of existing refineries, setting up of new grass-root refineries JVCs and private sector refineries including EOUs, is expected to be around 153 MMTPA. This capacity would be sufficient to meet the projected demand of petroleum products, since the demand of petroleum products in the year 2001-2002 is estimated to be about 102 MMTPA.

Government has planned to put up necessary infrastructure at the post locations, storage tankages and pipeline net work in the country for inland product movement, based on future demand.

It is not possible to quantify the amount of investment required for execution of above strategic measures at this stage. Quantum of investment would depend on the cost and time frame of various projects conceived for implementing these strategic measures.

Tapping of Telephones

711. DR. SHRIMATI K.S. SOUNDARAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the telephone of leading politicians and journalists are being tapped in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details with reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Sir, no agency of the Government is authorised to conduct any surveillance on any one for political purposes.

(b) and (c). Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Foreign Investment

712. SHRI A. INDRAKARAN REDDY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether any foreign investment has been sought from France, England, Canada, Germany, Australia, China and USA for technology in respect of blasting galleries and longwall sub-level caving and for lignite mines;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any assistance has been sought on turn key basis; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) and (b). Currently no investment has been sought from England, Canada, Australia, China and USA for technology in respect of blasting gallery and longwall sub-level caving in coal mines and for lignite mines.

France is currently giving assistance for introduction of blasting gallery technology in two mines, namely, GDK-10 Incline and GDK-8 Incline, of Singareni Collieries Company Ltd. (SCCL). Total contract value for these two project is FF 63.65 million. GDK-10 Incline has since been completed and GDK-8 Incline is progressing as per schedule. Agreement includes a provision of performance guarantee for both these projects. Recently French Government has agreed to provide credit of FF 25 million for introduction of blasting gallery technology in VK-7 project of SCCL.

In lignite sector, Germany has been supplying technology and making available concessional credit. Bilateral discussions between India and Germany to obtain financial support for 1st Mine Expansion Project and for other non-mining projects of Neyveli Lignite Corporation are in progress. Foreign exchange component for the 1st Mine Expansion Project has been estimated at DM 227.48 million. The capacity of the lignite mine is proposed to be increased to 10.5 million tonnes per annum from its present capacity of 6.5 million tonnes per annum as a result of this expansion project.

(c) and (d). For none of these projects, assistance was sought on turnkey basis.

New Channel

713. SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD:

SHRI TARA SINGH:

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state: