

(c) whether the Government have made any specific comments on the working style of Board of Governors/Directors of Kandla Port Trust; and

(d) if so, the details of profit or loss of Kandla Port Trust for the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) : (a) No Sir.

(b) No Sir.

(c) No Sir.

(d) The Operating Surplus of Kandla Port Trust during the year 1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 is given below :-

Year	Operating Surplus
1994-95	63.06 crores
1995-96	71.84 crores
1996-97	80.77 crores
1997-98	100.95 crores

[Translation]

Progress on Literacy Grant

141. SHRI A. VENKATESH NAIK : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether many States are still lagging behind in respect of literacy;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the percentage of literacy in these States; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to achieve the target of total literacy in the country by 2001 A.D.?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) and (b) As per 1991 census, the States/Union Territories where literacy rate is below the national literacy rate of 52.21% are Bihar (38.48%), Rajasthan (38.55%), Arunachal Pradesh (41.59%), Uttar Pradesh (41.60%), Andhra Pradesh (44.09%), Madhya Pradesh (44.20%), Orissa (49.09%), Meghalaya (49.10%) & Dadra & Nagar Haveli (40.71%). The reasons for the slow progress in these states, inter alia, are comparatively larger number of illiterates, dearth of committed volunteers, lack of literacy tradition/movement, gender bias against women, diverse socio-cultural factors, etc.

(c) The National Literacy Mission has the objective of making 100 million non-literates in the

15-35 age-group functionally literate in a time bound manner through its principal strategy of literacy campaigns.

Forecast of Earthquake

142. SHRI SURESH CHANDEL : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether any comprehensive study has been undertaken with regard to seismic pattern in India;

(b) if so, the findings thereof;

(c) whether any progress has since been made in respect of forecast of seismic pattern; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) and (b) Studies have been made on the distribution and nature of earthquakes in India and its neighbourhood. On the basis of these studies and other geological and geophysical features, seismic zoning map of India has been prepared by Bureau of Indian Standards dividing the country into five Seismic zones. Zone V is the most vulnerable to earthquakes, while zone I is the least. Broadly, the zone V comprises of entire north-eastern India, parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, West Uttar Pradesh Hills, Rann of Kutch, North Bihar, North East region and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Zone IV covers remaining parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar and Himachal Pradesh, Union territory of Delhi, Northern parts of U.P., Sikkim, parts of West Bengal, Rajasthan and Gujarat and small portion of Maharashtra near West coast. Zone III comprises of Kerala, Goa, remaining parts of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, parts of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Zone I and II cover the remaining parts of country.

(c) and (d) There is no scientific technique anywhere in world to forecast the occurrence of earthquakes with reasonable degree of accuracy, with regard to space, time and magnitude.

[English]

Proposal for Road Development Projects in U.P.

143. SHRIMATI KAMAL RANI :
SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of U.P. had

submitted some proposals of road development projects regarding National Highways to be financed by private sector during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Counter Guarantees to Private Power Projects

144. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) the Government's policy in the matter of issue of counter-guarantees for private investments in infrastructure sector;

(b) whether Government have lately granted counter-guarantees to a number of private power projects since March, 1998;

(c) if so, the details of the projects and the terms of the counter-guarantees signed;

(d) whether the counter guarantees were signed without finalizing the project basics; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) to (c) Government of India (GOI) enunciated a private power policy in 1991 aimed at encouraging the flow of private capital to the power sector. This was due, among other reasons, to insufficient resource generation and dwindling budgetary support in the face of very large investment requirements in the power sector. To instill confidence in the private power developers, GOI considered issuing counter guarantees to private power projects that were identified as developing rapidly. In May, 1998, Government of India revised the procedure for issue of counter guarantee to private power projects. Under this procedure, it has been decided that counter guarantee will be given only for the event of termination and will be limited to the outstanding foreign debt only.

Subsequently, the Government have issued counter-guarantee in the case of the Visakhapatnam Thermal Power Project (1040 MW) of M/s Hinduja National Power Company Limited (HNPC) in Andhra Pradesh, Bhadravati Thermal Power Project (1082 MW) of M/s Central India Power Company (CIPCO) in Maharashtra and 250 MW single unit lignite based

Neyveli Thermal Power Project of M/s ST-CMS Electric Company in Tamil Nadu.

(d) and (e) All the above projects have been issued techno-economic clearance of Central Electricity Authority (CEA) and the counter-guarantees will become effective after fulfillment of various conditions specified in the agreements.

Setting up of Mega Power Plants

145. DR. T. BABARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have approved the scheme for setting up Mega Power plants which would cater to more than one State;

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

(c) whether the Government propose to set up the power trading corporation in which the Power Grid Corporation, National Thermal Power Corporation, National Hydro Electric Power Corporation and financial institutions would hold stakes;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) and (b) Government has recently recast the policy on development of mega power projects. According to the revised policy, certain project sites, both in the Public as well as Private sector have been identified for setting up such mega projects which would cater to the power needs of more than one state. The Standing Independent Group constituted by the Government would initially be the apex body to oversee the implementation of the mega private power projects. The principles of competitive bidding would be adhered to as far as possible, while obtaining tariff offers for private sector projects. These projects are being given certain concessions and are being linked to reforms. It is expected that these projects would result in low tariffs and would also help in catalysing reforms and accelerating the establishment of systems that would transfer power across states and regions.

(c) to (e) Yes, Sir. A Power Trading Company (PTC) would be established with majority equity participation by Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. (PGCIL), along with National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and other financial institutions. Concerned State Governments/State Electricity Boards (SEBs) would also be co-opted, if found feasible. The PTC would purchase power from the identified private projects and sell it to the identified State Electricity Boards. This would help in project development as