

of places identified where the said system is likely to be introduced first;

(d) whether private companies have been allowed to set gateways under the Government authority in this field;

(e) whether VSNL is likely to lose its revenue on account of the said decision;

(f) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken or proposed to be taken to compensate VSNL for loss; and

(g) the precautions taken by the Government in regard to security considerations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. One specific proposal i.e. from M/s. Iridium India Telecom Limited (IITL) for operation of Global Mobile Personal Communication by Satellite (GMPCS) Service has been cleared by the Government and a provisional licence agreement for operation of the service was signed with the company on 28.10.98.

(c) It is a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) System, providing global coverage. The system provides for a unique number for the subscriber and Global mobility in other countries where it has been authorised for operation. M/s. IITL is yet to market its services in India. The details in this regard are not available with the Government.

(d) Yes, Sir. The Government after considering all aspects has stipulated that Gateways (Earth Stations) for all licensed systems would be located in India and their operation and maintenance would be with an authority/organisation designated by the Government.

(e) and (f) It will be possible that certain calls in the CGMPS service will be established bypassing the International Gateway Switch of VSNL. However, the licence agreement provides that VSNL will be compensated when the International Gateway is bypassed.

(g) Specific proposals for GMPCS licence are cleared from the security angle by a High Level Inter-ministerial Committee consisting of Secretaries of Department of Telecom, Department of Space and the Secretaries of the Departments/Organisations dealing with security related issues.

Extraction of Sea Minerals

505. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to invite participation of the private sector in the programme for development of technology for extraction of minerals from ocean;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) As of now, there is no proposal for inviting the participation of private sector, in the development of technology for extraction of mineral resources from the ocean.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

[English]

Extension of Operational Jurisdiction of MTNL

506. SHRI K.P. MOHAN:

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:

SHRI T.R. BAALU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to hand over the Chennai and Greater Chennai Telephones from the control of the Department of Telecommunications in Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited;

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

(c) the parameters being adopted for transferring such telephones to M.T.N.L.;

(d) whether the Government have any proposal to install a separate exchange for the use of internet consumers at Chennai; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Government has not taken any decision.

(b) and (c) In view of (a) above, the question does not arise.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) As a part of National Internet Backbone, it is proposed to set up internet node at Chennai also.

Cultivation of Rice

507. SHRIMATI RANEE NARAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Assam has approached the Union Government for providing help for cultivation of rapid growing summer rice; and

(b) if so, the decision taken by the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) There is no specific proposal of the Government of Assam under the on-going Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Intensive Cereals Development Programme—Rice for assistance on cultivation of summer rice. However, Agriculture Production Commi-

ssioner, Government of Assam in his letter of 18th November, 1998 has suggested area increase under summer rice as one of the thrust areas under the strategies for doubling food production in the State of Assam during the next ten years.

[Translation]

Pending Scheme of Gujarat Plan

508. SHRI JAYSINHJI CHAUHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of schemes/projects of Gujarat Government lying pending with the Union Government for clearance;

(b) the time since when these projects are lying pending and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) The information received from Gujarat Government indicates that there are 22 Schemes/Projects pending with various Ministries such as Environment and Forest, Rural Areas and Employment, Agriculture, Power etc. No proposal is pending with Planning Commission for approval.

Transmission Relay Station/Centre in Assam

509. SHRI A.F. GOLAM OSMANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Doordarshan Relay Stations/Centres in the State of Assam with locations thereof;

(b) whether the Government are aware of the poor reception in the Lower Assam Districts of Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Dhubri, Kokrajhar and Goalpara;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government propose to strengthen the system to make Medium Wave Broadcasting available over the region by setting up a powerful permanent Station either at Barpeta or Bongaigaon; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MUKHTAR NAQVI): (a) A statement is enclosed.

(b) and (c) Whereas TV coverage to Bongaigaon, Dhubri, Kokrajhar and Goalpara is being provided by Low Power Transmitters, operating at these places, Barpeta lies in coverage range of High Power Transmitters, functioning at Guwahati.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Statement

Existing TV Transmitters in Assam

High Power Transmitter

Dibrugarh

Guwahati

Silchar

Low Power Transmitter

Bongaigaon

Dhubri

Diphu

Goalpara

Golaghat

Haflong

Hatsinghimari

Hojal

Jorhat

Kokrajhar

Lumding

Margherita

Nagaon

Nazira

North Lakhimpur

Sonari

Tezpur

Tinsukia

Dibrugarh (DD II)

Silchar (DD II)

Very Low Power Transmitter

Digboi

Transposer

Guwahati

Cyclone Victims Relief

510. SHRI ARVIND KAMBLE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state: