

(c) and (f) Tamil Nadu Government had sought improvement in telecom facilities and better attention to investment needs. Steps have already been taken to earmark funds for Tamil Nadu and Chennai Circles commensurate with their developmental requirements.

Rehabilitation Schemes For Gulf Returnees

3963. PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Kerala has asked for special assistance for rehabilitating the Gulf returnees;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) : (a) and (b) The Government of Kerala had requested the Union Government to contribute a certain amount from the "Emigration Clearance" fees and from the unclaimed security deposits collected by the Protectors of Emigrants to set up a "Migrant Workers' Welfare Fund". This fund was proposed to be used for the relief and rehabilitation of workers returning to India after service abroad, and for training, identification and preparation of projects, infrastructural facilities, placement systems, etc.

(c) In response to the proposal, the Government informed the Government of Kerala that there would be legal and technical difficulties in utilising the funds generated by the "Emigration Clearance" fees and by security deposits (which are refundable) for the benefit of persons from just one State and that alternative schemes should be examined. However, a proposal for the setting up of an "Indian Overseas Workers' Welfare Fund" is under consideration of the Government. Once this has been set up, it would be possible to extend some financial assistance (i) to workers who return to India due to disability during employment abroad, and (ii) to families of workers who may die during employment abroad.

STD/ISD/PCOs in Gujarat

3964. SHRIMATI BHAVNA DEVRAJBHAI CHIKHALIA :

SHRI JAYSINHJI CHAUHAN :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Panchayats in Gujarat having ISD/STD/PCO and Fax booths during the last year;

(b) the total number of STD/PCO Fax etc. opened in Gujarat during the said period;

(c) whether the Government have received any

representation from the Gujarat Government to open new STD/PCO/Fax and Telex facilities in the State particularly in the rural areas;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which these facilities are proposed to be provided?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA) :

(a) During the last year no STD/ISD/PCO and Fax booths were opened in Panchayats.

(b) During last year i.e. 1997-98 in Gujarat 3402 ISD/STD/PCOs and 17 Fax booths were opened.

(c), (d) and (e) No representation has been received from the Gujarat Government in this regard.

Solar Wind Diesel Hybrid System

3965. SHRI C. P. RADHAKRISHNAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether projects for solar-wind-diesel hybrid system for electrification is under consideration of the Government; and

(b) if so, the locations identified for setting up the said projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) and (b) There is no specific proposal under the consideration of the Government for setting up of a solar-wind-diesel hybrid system for village electrification. However, the design, development and deployment of hybrid energy systems of various kinds are being promoted through research and development projects and soft loan schemes.

As per the existing policy, specific project proposals are formulated by the States in accordance with the general guidelines issued by the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources. Such proposals are examined on merits for possible financial support by the Government, in addition, under a separate scheme the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA), a Public Sector Undertaking under the Ministry, provides soft loan assistance for installation of hybrid energy systems, including solar-wind-diesel energy based systems. At present there is no application for seeking soft loan for solar-wind-diesel energy based hybrid systems with IREDA.

Licence Fees Structures

3966. SHRI NADENDLA BHASKAR RAO : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :