

efforts made by the Union and State Governments in this regard, now biological tests are proposed to be conducted for "Safe Ganga Water" management;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the places where these tests are proposed to be conducted and the time by which this exercise would be completed alongwith the cost likely to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) The Research Committee of National River Conservation Plan has approved the Biological Monitoring of the Ganga River and the study has been initiated by inviting proposals from various Research Institutions.

[English]

Retail Outlets of LPG/Petrol/Diesel in Orissa

906. SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of retail outlets for Diesel/Petrol/LPG have been announced and interview are being also done for the allotment to the deserving candidates in the Orissa recently;

(b) if so, the details of such places advertised for the State of Orissa with the location thereof;

(c) whether irregularities and favouritism are alleged to have been made in the selection process thereof; and

(d) if so, the facts in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In addition to the locations pending from previous marketing plans, a total of 24 retail outlet dealerships and 41 LPG distributorships have been included for Orissa in the marketing plan 1996-98 and supplementary marketing plan 1996-98. Selection process, which includes advertisement in Press and interview by the Dealer Selection Board, is a continuous process and is in progress.

(c) Some complaints about irregularities and favouritism in the selection process in Orissa have been received. Action is taken on such complaints in accordance with the established procedure.

(d) Does not arise.

Oilfields Abroad

907. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN AHAMED: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the IOC and the ONGC propose to buy oilfields abroad;

(b) if so, the amount of investment likely to be made in such purchases in 1998-99 and 1999-2000.

(c) whether the companies have completed the unit cost of crude oil after taking into account the capital and operational costs; and

(d) if so, the cost computed per barrel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir. Acquisition of equity oil abroad is one of the objective pursued by the two companies.

(b) and (c) The specific investment proposals would depend on size of opportunity, its possible potential, availability of infrastructure and other operational aspects. The cost cannot be worked out in advance as it depends upon several factors as listed above.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply to (b) and (c) above.

[Translation]

Losses to SEBs

908. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the transmission and distribution losses suffered by State Electricity Boards during the last three years;

(b) whether these losses are more than double as compared to the developed countries; and