

AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (d) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. is exploring the possibilities of setting up naphtha cracker project in Tamil Nadu. The proposal presently is at preliminary stage.

Gas Cracker Project in Assam

976. DR. JAYANTA RONGPI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the progress of Gas Cracker Project in Assam has been going on as per schedule;

(b) if so, the reasons for the delay and the time by which the project is likely to be commissioned;

(c) the amount spent by the State or Union Government on the project; and

(d) the number of local persons given employment in the project so far?

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) to (d) A Joint Venture Company, Reliance Assam Petrochemicals Ltd. (RAPL), has been incorporated for the implementation of the project. Government of Assam has identified 1262 acres of land at Tengakhat for setting up the cracker complex, a part of which belonging to the Government of Assam has been handed over to RAPL. The remaining land is under acquisition of the Government of Assam. The Government of India has committed to supply gas for the production of 2 lakh Tonnes Per Annum (TPA) of Ethylene at a concessional price of Rs. 600 per thousand standard cubic meter for 15 years. In this regard Gas Supply Agreement between RAPL and OIL is in advance stage of finalisation. Substantial investment is expected to flow after finalisation of Gas Supply Agreement and handing over of entire land to RAPL. RAPL has started recruitment for the cracker project. 65 graduate engineers belonging to State of Assam have already been recruited and currently undergoing training in various units of Reliance Industries Ltd. The project is estimated to cost Rs. 3600 crore and likely to be completed within 44 months from the date of signing of Gas Supply Agreement or handing over of the entire land, whichever is later.

[Translation]

Telecom Services in Bihar

977. DR. MADAN PRASAD JAISWAL:
SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of applications are waiting for the telephone connections in various telephone exchanges under the Betia region in Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof, exchange-wise;

(c) whether the condition of the telephone services have been found unsatisfactory in Darbhanga district in Bihar;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to clear the waiting list, expand the telephone exchanges and to provide better telephone services?

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

(a) and (b) The waiting list of various telephone exchanges under Betia region in Bihar is as per the statement attached.

(c) All telephone exchanges in Darbhanga district are electronic. The telephone services in Darbhanga District in Bihar is quite satisfactory. The fault rate of the last three months is given below:—

November 98	6.9%
December 98	6.8%
January 99	6.5%

(d) Not applicable.

(e) The Government proposes to take the following steps to clear the waiting list, to expand the telephone exchanges and to provide better telephone services.

1. It is planned to provide 185000 lines of switching Capacity and 131000 Direct Exchange Lines in Bihar during 1998-99. Out of this, 51720 lines of switching capacity and 50121 No. of new telephone connections were provided upto 31.1.99.
2. External plants are being expanded and upgraded.
3. Overhead/analogue transmission media are being replaced by digital UHF/OFC transmission media.