

categories of consumers are fixed by State Governments/SEBs concerned under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948 wherever the State Electricity Regulatory Commissions have not been set up. The Central Government has no role to play in fixing the tariff for various categories of consumers in the states.

Development of Oilfields by Private Companies

1003. DR. SUGUNA KUMARI CHELLAMELLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to award Oilfields for development to the private companies;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the reasons for not developing the fields by the National Oil Companies themselves?

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) Since 1992, Government has signed 17 contracts for development and production of discovered fields. Further, 12 discovered fields have been awarded for private participation.

(b) and (c) Some of the reasons for awarding of these fields for private participation are:—

- The marginal economics of the fields;
- Considerable investment required;
- To augment production;
- To tide over the resource crunch;
- To obtain state of art technology.

Scheme for Dredging of Haldia Navigational Channel

1004. SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Calcutta Port Trust has submitted to the Government a comprehensive scheme of capital dredging of Haldia Navigational Channel; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal is under consideration.

Construction of By-Pass on NH-4

1005. SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the By-pass of Akola on National Highway-4 has been finalised;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if so, the time by which it is likely to be commenced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. It is proposed to take up the construction of Akola by-pass on National Highway No. 6 in the Maharashtra State on B.O.T. (Build-Operate-Transfer) basis. The pre-qualification of the bidders has also been completed.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The work is likely to commence by June, 2000.

Targeted Traffic Projection of Major Ports

1006. SHRI R.S. GAVAI : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the major ports achieved the targeted traffic projections for the period between April to December, 1998;

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

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN):

(a) and (b). The cargo traffic handled by Major Ports during April to December, 1998 fell short of the