

and burners sold by their LPG distributors. The LPG customers/prospective customers are at liberty to procure LPG stoves/hot plates from any source as per their choice subject to the condition that such appliances are of an approved make.

(b) to (e) In the event any complaint received from customers/prospective customers regarding forced sale of LPG hot plates/stoves by distributors, the Indian Oil Corporation carries out investigation/verification of such complaints and suitable action is taken based on the findings as per policy in vogue.

Length of Inland Waterways

884. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA:
SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of length of the inland waterways in kilometres at present;

(b) whether the Government propose to extend the existing length of the inland waterways so that pressure could be reduced on other means of transport;

(c) whether any plan has been formulated in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN):
(a) The length of navigable waterways in the country is 14,544 kms. as per National Transport Policy Committee (NTPC) Report of 1980. Out of this length, national Waterways declared so far i.e. the Ganga, the Brahmaputra and the West Coast Canal are having a total length of 2716 kms.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. Several potential waterways of the country have been studied for their techno-economic feasibility. Based on the outcome, new waterways would be considered for declaration as National Waterways as well as their subsequent development subject to availability of resources.

[English]

Instalment Corporation Limited

885. SHRI KARIYA MUNDA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to refer

to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 5741 dated July 27, 1998 and state:

(a) whether number of Criminal Cases/Civil Suits filed by various parties against the Directors of M/s. Instalment Corporation Limited have since been pending or are under consideration of Courts;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) further action contemplated in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) and (b) This Department has no information about the criminal cases/civil suits filed by various other parties against the Directors of M/s Instalment Corporation Limited. However, based upon the Inspection Report u/s 209A of the Companies Act, 1956, Registrar of Companies, Kanpur has filed prosecutions against the company and its Directors for violations of sections 58A, 147, 159, 209A, 220 and 252 of the Act, which are pending in the Court of Special Chief Judicial Magistrate, Meerut (U.P.).

(c) Since the matter is sub-judice, no further action is required at this stage.

[Translation]

Recommendations of TRAI on Telephone Tariff

886. SHRI RIZWAN ZAHEER KHAN:
SHRI A.C. JOS:
SHRI SADASHIV RAO DADOBHA MANDLIK:
SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN:
PROF. P.J. KURIEN:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken any decision on the recommendations of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India on tariff;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons for delay in taking the final decision;

(d) whether the Government have also taken a decision to the tariff by treating 2000 Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCA) on par with local charges;

- (e) if so, whether it has affected revenues;
- (f) if so, the extent of loss of revenues as a result thereof;
- (g) whether the Government propose to redefine the Local Calling Area; and
- (h) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) to (c) As per the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act 1997, the power for fixation of telecom tariffs has now been mandated to TRAI. In exercise of this power, the TRAI has brought out a consultation paper containing telecom tariff proposals for wider consultations service Providers, Consumer organisations and the public. The TRAI has not yet issued any notification on tariff.

(d) it has been decided to treat SDCA (Short Distance Charging Area) as a local area with effect from 15.08.1998. These orders apply to all SDCAs in the Country. The charges for calls made within the SDCA are treated at par with local call charges.

(e) and (f) The loss of revenue on account of (d) above has been estimated to be about Rs. 37.34 crores per annum.

(g) and (h) There is no such proposal at present.

[English]

Restructuring of Petroleum Sector

887. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government propose to restructure the petroleum sector;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government have set up a committee in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

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 (e) Government had set up a Strategic Planning Group on Restructuring of the Oil Industry ('R' Group) comprising of eminent experts from the Public Sector and Private Sector. Energy Experts of International Repute and Distinguished Academicians to review the Strategic Restructuring Plan by the Oil Industry Planning Group and make final recommendations to meet the policy objective and initiatives required for Restructuring the Oil Industry. Based on these recommendations Government decided to dismantle the Administered Price Mechanism from 1.4.1998. New Exploration Licensing Policy has been announced to encourage oil and gas exploration. Government have also allowed oil companies in the downstream sector to enter Exploration and Production sector. Refining is de-licenced. Government have also allowed parallel marketing of LPG, SKO and LSHS in addition to allowing direct imports of some of the products like FO, Naphtha (restricted) and petro-chemical feed stocks (viz. Benzene, Toluene, Xylene), pet Coke etc. Natural gas is also on OGL and no license for its import is required. Government have been encouraging Direct Foreign Investment in this sector.

[Translation]

Maintenance of NH-3

888. SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH RAJUKHEDI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

- (a) the amount spent on the maintenance of National Highway No. 3 in between Indore to Sindhwa during last three years;
- (b) whether some proposal is under consideration regarding widening of the highways by trimming the two ghats—Bhairon ghat of Manpur and Bakaner ghat, lying in the region of this Highway; and
- (c) if so, steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) The amount spent on maintenance of NH-3 between Indore to Sindhwa is as under:

Year	Expenditure (Rs. in lakhs)
1995-96	272.49
1996-97	317.67
1997-98	266.88