

State Government to effectively empower Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as also to incentive Panchayats at all three level to be transparent and accountable in their transactions;

(b) whether in this regard, Government is processing the World Bank's offer to contribute up to one billion US dollars of International Development Association (IDA) funds to any scheme designed to incentivise devolution by States to the PRIs and promote transparency and accountability in their functioning; and

(c) if not, whether Government is contributing, or proposes to contribute, to such a scheme from their own resources?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI C.P. JOSHI): (a) to (c) Under the Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS), the States are incentivized to devolve powers to PRIs. This scheme is funded by the Central Government. There is no proposal at present to seek external funding for this scheme. Expansion of the scheme is subject to availability of funds.

Gas linkage of power companies

980. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that around 200 applications seeking gas linkage for about 250 million standard cubic meters a day by power companies are lying pending with the Ministry;

(b) if so, whether Government has formulated any guidelines for allocation of gas to the power companies and streamlining the process of recommending the cases to the Ministry; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JITIN PRASADA): (a) Various applications requesting gas allocations for new power plants requiring over 550 million standard cubic meters per day (mmscmd) of gas have been received.

(b) and (c) The Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) constituted to consider and decide issues relating to pricing and commercial utilization of gas under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) has decided that, subject to the availability of gas, necessary allocations from KG D6 fields will be made to power projects in pipelines as and when they are ready to commence production.

Revision of APM price of natural gas

981. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has revised the Administered Price Mechanism (APM) price of natural gas in the country;