(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that some hurdles are being foreseen in this behalf in the 'mid-term appraisal' of Tenth Plan; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Planning Commission has already dissolved wit effect from 1st October 2004 the Consultative Groups set up for the Mid-term Appraisal of Tenth Five Year Plan (2002—07).

(b) and (c) It has been decided to revert to the earlier practice of consulting individuals separately as part of the Mid-Term Appraisal process. The exercise of Mid-Term Appraisal of Tenth Plan (2002—07) is progressing satisfactorily and no hurdles are being experienced in the process of Appraisal of the Plan.

Non-working of PCOs in far-flung areas

†*30. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that PCOs in far-flung rural areas of the country remain out of order due to prolonged faults in telephone lines and instruments;

(b) if so, the number of the PCOs that remained out of order for more than three months, State-wise; and

(c) the steps contemplated by Government for improving the telephone system at the PCO level?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) Sir, PCOs generally do not remain out of order for long duration. However, some Village Public Telephones (VPTs), working on MARR system, WLL system and on long overhead lines have remained out of order for longer duration than normal period for restoration.

(b) PCOs other than VPTs lying faulty for more than 3 months; NIL. State-wise list of VPTs that are lying faulty for more than three months as on 31.10.2004 is given in Statement-I (See below).

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(c) Steps being taken to improve VPTs are given in Statement-II.

Statement-I

State-wise details of VPTs lying faulty for more than 3 months

Sl. No.	State	VPTs faulty for more than 3 months at present
1.	Andaman & Nicobar	6
2.	Andhra Pradesh	1192
3.	Assam	3402
4.	Bihar	1573
5.	Jharkhand	1213
6.	Gujarat including Daman, Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli	75
7.	Haryana	115
8.	Himachal Pradesh	333
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	2247
10.	Karnataka	427
11.	Kerala	1
12.	Maharashtra	1739
13.	Goa	0
14.	Madhya Pradesh	8925
15.	Chhattisgarh	3970
16.	Meghalaya	710
17.	Mizoram	434
18.	Tripura	165
19.	Arunachal Pradesh	324
20.	Manipur	116
21.	Nagaland	277
22.	Orissa	6085
23.	Punjab including Chandigarh	2
24.	Rajasthan	3718
25.	Tamil Nadu including Chennai & U.T. of Pondicherry	0
26.	Uttar Pradesh	7461
27.	Uttaranchal	919
28.	West Bengal including Kolkata	8683
29.	Sikkim	48
	Total	**54314**

Statement-II

Steps taken to improve VPT services

* Replacement of VPTs working on MARR system and long overhead lines by WLL. 1,13,839 MARR VPTs have been replaced by WLL as on 31.10.2004 and balance 81,847 VPTs are planned to be replaced progressively by June, 2006.

* Replacement of faulty FWTs.

* All exchanges have been converted to digital electronic exchanges.

* Use of Jelly filled cables in the outdoor network.

* Opening of more telephone exchanges thereby reducing exchange area size.

* AMC with vendors who have supplied WLL equipment.

National Highways in Karnataka

*31.DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the length of National Highways in Karnataka and the total amount spent on their maintenance during the last three years;

(b) the proposals pending for upgradation of State Highways into National Highways and by when these would be cleared; and

(c) the programmes of the present Government in connection of Golden Quadrilateral roads in Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND' HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The total length of National Highways in Karnataka is 3843 km. The details of amount spent for maintenance of National Highways in Karnataka during the last three years are as under: