

good influence over Pakistan to prevent them from this type of activities.

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as per the discussion in their Eighth Session of Indo-Iran Joint Commission Meet, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what are the projects in Iran for which on-going negotiations are to be reviewed. Also I would like to know what are the specific areas identified in the Joint Commission Meeting for setting up of joint ventures in such area as agriculture, machinery, pharmaceuticals, textiles, machines, tools, auto parts, passenger cars and leather goods.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: These are the areas which have been identified and naturally, the Government is not going to establish these Industries. Our private sector organisations will go, talk to each other and identify these areas.

As regards some of the projects in which public sector organisations are participating, I have referred to a couple of railway projects including the one, Tehran Metro rail project, which has been given to our HMT for implementation. We are waiting for the Iranian side to open a Letter of Credit.

As regards providing facilities for berthing and quick transportation in the sea, an agreement was signed during the presence of His Excellency, the Foreign Minister of Iran, with the Minister of Surface Transport; and I think, it was done by our Minister of State, who is incharge of Surface Transport.

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: Sir, what about his answer regarding the projects in Iran for which on-going negotiations are to be reviewed?

MR. SPEAKER: This kind of question is not allowed.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I have identified a number of projects which are on-going and I have indicated the amount involved in them.

MR. SPEAKER: This can be replied in writing not orally.

SHRI PRAMOTHES MUKHERJEE: Thank you for giving me this chance. I want to learn from the Government through your goodself whether the agreement made between these two countries will be utilised in respect of development of trade and how far the agreement will be valid for the development of mutual understanding to combat terrorism in our country.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as the trade is concerned, I have already indicated the figures. If you look at it, it is expanding. For example, in 1989-90, our total export to Iran was Rs. 132 crore and our import from Iran was Rs. 389 crore and after 5-6 years in 1993-94, i.e. after four years, it has gone up to Rs. 500 crore of export and import is about Rs. 1189 crore. These two figures are indicative of the expansion of trade between these two countries from joint venture. And as regards economic cooperation, for that also I have indicated the various projects which are there.

On one point I would like to give additional information in response to the question which was referred to by

another Member earlier. In the Conference of United Nations Human Rights Commission, we have voted in favour of Iran out of those countries which are participating in it.

[Translation]

### M.A.R.R. Scheme

\*182. SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the work done so far under the Multi Access Rural Radio (M.A.R.R.) Scheme of the Union Government for telecom facilities in rural areas; and

(b) the action taken by the Government to streamline the telephone system in rural areas under the said scheme?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) As per National Telecom Policy, Public Telephone facility is to be provided to all the villages in the country progressively by the year 1997. As on 31.12.1994 out of 159302 (now the latest figure is 1,72,000) village public telephones provided, 47579 are based upon MARR System.

(b) To streamline the telephone system in rural areas, the following steps have been taken.

(i) Indigenously developed MARR equipment of latest technology is being inducted in the network.

(ii) In order to reduce dependence on erratic power supply in rural areas, solar energy is being used.

(iii) Telegraph facilities are being made available on such public telephones and wherever technically feasible, STD service is also being provided.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have not got the correct answer to my question. Yet, I would like to know from the Minister through you, that how much amount has been spent by the Government on the rural areas so far under M.A.R.R. Scheme. How many villages have been connected under this scheme so far, particularly in Uttar Pradesh? A target on 1,59,302 P.C.O.s was fixed by the Government, whereas the achievement was only 47,579 P.C.O.s. I would like to apprise the Government that the facility which has been provided in rural areas is not functioning properly and batteries of the wireless set which have been provided in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh have got spoiled during the last one year, that the telephone facility is in a miserable condition throughout the country.

SHRI SUKH RAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have replied more than what the honourable Member had asked so that he may know clearly. So far as the Telephone system in villages is concerned, we are using two technologies for that. One is by overhead copper wiring and the other is Radio technology in which we are using M.A.R.R. system. For the first time, in 1988, E.R.C. Society developed M.A.R.R. Technology and we got about 650 units from

them. Regarding the amount spent on it accordingly to the tender, I will let you know. The information received from field is that technically there are many defects in it. Finally, we cancelled the order for 500 units but we provided Telephone connections in about 6250 villages by using this technology. However, this technology has failed, though I have been told that it is working in 6200 villages. So, we have decided to replace them. ITI had also given us about 755 such system, but they were also defective and are being repaired in their repair centre. But some of them have been got from Private companies and their quality equipment is working properly. In this way, we have connected 47,579 villages with the help of Radio technology. In some of these villages, there is problem due to the defects in this technology and in the rest of the villages, which have been connected by overhead wires, a lot of incidents of theft are occurring as the copper wire is quite costly. Sometimes, wires got broken due to seasonal variations and maintenance is not carried out due to thunder storms. So, I admit that there are lot of defects in the connections provided in villages. Therefore, we have decided that there should not be any defects in the M.A.R.R. quality equipments which we are to get. Wherever there would be any defects, we would remove them. Therefore, I admit that there are some problems in the villages.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA: Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to thank the Government that the Government have admitted that there is corruption at a large scale in this department because Government have admitted that theft was going on at a large scale.

My second question was that MARR System was introduced only in rural areas, we agree to it. The rural areas are in a miserable condition today. Formerly this system was not being introduced, as today also the rural areas are devoid of education, drinking water, electricity and health. Now that this system has been introduced, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister towards Agra-Ferozabad commissioner, as this is all happening there due to the corruption of the subordinate officers of T.D.M. If a demand note is served in the name of a person and the other person bribes the officer, the officer in return gives him the connection. You are well aware of the corruption prevailing in Agra-division. So, I would like to request the hon'ble Minister whether he would keep a watch on it from time to time and would take action against such corrupt officers.

SHRI SUKH RAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I did not admit in reply to his question that there is large scale corruption.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government have admitted it. Theft is going on, it is true. Personally, I respect the hon'ble Minister, but it is true that corruption is prevailing there.

[Translation]

SHRI SUKH RAM: At least I have a right to reply you. I did not admit that this system is not functioning due to corruption. It is easy to level allegations. Merely levelling the charges will not do. You will have to prove those corruption charges.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA: I am ready.

SHRI SUKH RAM: I do not say that system is working smoothly everywhere. There may be some mistakes. After all, one crore families have been provided telephone connections in the country. There can be some mistakes at some places. I want to assure you that if you bring me a case involving any corruption, I would get it enquired and inform you about the results within a limited time. But at least you should come out with some facts.

SMT. GIRIJA DEVI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble Minister has says that they would provide telephones to all the villages by the year 1997. However, there are many constituencies, unfortunately including my own constituency, for which I have been asking the various Ministers for the last four years where the connections have not been released to the persons who have deposited the money. No exchange has been installed in any large area.

Secondly, where M.A.R.R. system has failed, I have informed about that I had already cautioned the hon. Minister one year back about the resentment prevailing in the Hazaribagh area and, had told that the area has not been connected with the relay area and telecommunication system has also been paralysed. You did not pay any attention to it. Therefore, the policy to provide telephones to all the villages by 1997 is misleading. Have you prepared any draft for this? If so, then give details thereof.

SHRI SUKH RAM: Whenever something is brought to my knowledge by any hon. Member, I definitely look into that. I want to tell you that we did prepare a draft and on the basis of that draft only we decided to provide telephone connection to all the village by 1997 and the same was included in the Telephone Policy.

However if we provide telephone facility to all the villages, then a total amount of approximately Rs. 4000 crore would be required. We are bringing a competitive environment of privatisation in the country. Such a system took 4 years in Britain but I hope in our country the process will be completed within a period of 7-8 months i.e. by September-October. We have made a provision stipulation that they will have to provide at least 10 percent telephone connections in villages. We would accept their tenders on this condition only. We have also told them that we will give weightage to the number of connections provided in the villages. We have provided telephone connections to 1.75 lakh villages approximately. But there are many shortcomings. I am not saying that everything is going on smoothly. I rely on the information given by the hon. Members in respect of their constituencies... (Interruptions)...

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI: We do not receive the replies of the complaints made by us... (Interruption). Hon'ble Minister is giving explanation here... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: No running commentary please. Behave like an M.P.

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASRAF FATMI: It is not a running commentary, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: No, it is not correct. If you want, you can ask a question. You are behaving like a child here.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI: But it is a fact that we write letters, but the hon. Minister does not reply ... (Interruptions).

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: It is not going on record. Please sit down now.... (Interruptions).\*

MR. SPEAKER: Do not hold the house to ransom... (Interruptions)\*

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down now.

[Translation]

SHRI SUKH RAM: If you are not satisfied with my reply then you may raise the question, I will reply to every question. But this much I will say that by the year 1997, we would provide telephone connections to all the villages. A big amount would be required. Some work will be done by the private sector and the remaining will be done by our department. We will make improvement by removing the shortcoming through modern technology.

[English]

### National Road Policy

\*183. SHRI RUPCHAND PAL:

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to frame/finalise the National road Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTRY OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) To enable private sector participation in road building, Government is intending to amend the National Highways Act, 1956. The entrepreneur will build the facility with his resources and will be permitted to collect fee in return for his investment.

(c) The National Highway Policy will be formulated based on the discussions in the Parliament.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Sir, the existing seventy-seven

national Highways, covering a length of about 34,000 kilometres, are not only inadequate in the present circumstances but there is also unevenness in the growth of National Highways network. There are more than 130 proposals from different State Governments pending with the Central Government covering a length of about 38,000 kilometres. Now that the Government is proposing changes in the National Highways Act to involve the private sector, as the Government needs more money, may I know from the hon. Minister what steps are being taken to ensure the correction of the existing distortion in the national highways network, which is causing so much discontent and irritation and which is being exploited by the secessionist forces in different regions, may be in the North-East or in many other places, which is known to the House.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, the National Highways constitute only two per cent of the total road network in the country. In 1951, we had 22,255 kilometres, which till today, has gone up to 34,058 kilometres. We have identified plans, till the year 2001, for 66,000 kilometres. If we take the additional 31,942 kilometres, which is or converting the highways from two-lane to four-lane, we require something like Rs. 20,000 crore. But we have already identified, through a study done by the Asian Development Bank, over 10,000 kilometres of roads which requires, at today's rate, another about Rs. 80,000 crore. If we were to just fulfil the requirements of the Chief Ministers, the Members of Parliament and others, we need something to the tune of Rs. 60,000 to Rs. 70,000 crore.

The demands have come for just one year. But the total resources I am getting are of the order of Rs. 2,460 crores. We are practically losing Rs. 15,000 crore per year because of bad roads. Keeping that in view and as we are opening up our economy, we said that we would open up nine sectors which practically cover many areas in the country. Some of them are:

(i) Amritsar to Chandigarh to Delhi to Patna to Calcutta to Bhubneshwar and right upto Madras and Kanyakumari;

(ii) In the central area, right from Delhi to Bangalore to Kanyakumari via Trivandrum, going from Kerala State;

(iii) A road going from Delhi via Gujarat and straight Bombay and then to Bangalore and then going down to Kanyakumari;

(iv) A road from Bombay to Calcutta.

In this way we have practically linked the whole country. This is the study done. To take up these proposals, I need something like over a lakh of crore of rupees. The Government does not have the resources. So we thought of a plan that we will offer this on expressways to the private sector to come and build and operate. For that I am bringing a legislation in the Parliament. I hope I will get it during this month or next month. In that I will be able to identify practically the needs of the Members of Parliament and all the Chief Ministers and have a feasibility study done.

\*Not recorded.