

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the 'Navbharat Times' dated August 15, 1996 captioned, "Courier sevaon se pichadti ja rahi hai speed post";

(b) if so, whether the Speed Post Service of the Postal Department is deteriorating continuously in comparison to that of private courier services;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government propose to take any concrete steps for making this service more comprehensive and effective; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There is no evidence of deterioration in the Speed Post Service in comparison to that of private courier services. In fact, traffic & revenue generated from speed post has increased impressively over the years which reflects satisfaction of the customers in general.

(c) Does not arise in view of the reply in the (b) above.

(d) and (e). Government has taken a policy of consolidating the existing network of speed post instead of its unbridled expansion. A station is brought under speed post national network only when there is sufficient potential traffic to make it financially viable and when it is operationally feasible to provide a service standard compatible with speed post norms. Also, for better monitoring of the quality of service computerisation of processing has been undertaken in important cities.

[English]

Nepali Telefilm

3274. SHRI R.B. RAI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number and titles of Nepali tele-film scripts received during the last three years after the inclusion of Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution;

(b) the number of scripts approved during above period;

(c) the number and names of films completed as on date; and

(d) the amount allotted and released so far?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

(SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) During the last three years, only one proposal for production of a telefilm in Nepali titled "Astitwa" has been received in the Central Commission Unit of Doordarshan on 12.04.1996.

(b) None so far, Sir.

(c) and (d). Do not arise.

Sugar Mills

3275. SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH:
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY:

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of sugar mills are lying closed for a long time and as a result thereof thousands of workers are facing financial problems; and

(b) if so, the reasons for their closure and the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to revive these mills?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) The number of sugar mills and the sugar seasons since when they have not reported the production are given below:-

Year from which production is not reported	No. of sugar mills
1967-68	1
1970-71	2
1975-76	1
1983-84	1
1984-85	2
1985-86	1
1986-87	1
1991-92	3
1993-94	6
1994-95	7
1995-96	10
Total :	35

(b) The closure of a sugar mill may be due to a variety of factors, such as inadequate cane availability, uneconomic size, old and obsolete plant and machinery, technical and managerial problems, financial constraints etc. Sugar mills have themselves to prepare schemes for rehabilitation/modernisation and get them approved by the concerned institutions. Financial assistance is also available from the Sugar Development Fund (SDF) at concessional rate of interest for such rehabilitation/modernisation scheme, subject to their fulfilling the conditions laid down.

[Translation]

Foreign visits by Minister and Officers

3276. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the number of foreign visits made by the Minister as well as the officers of his Ministry to boost tourism in the country during the last two years;

(b) the total expenditure incurred on these foreign visits, year-wise; and

(c) the percentage in terms of the targets likely to be achieved as a result of these visits?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b). Necessary information is given as under:-

Year	No. of foreign visits undertaken		Total estimated expenditure
	Minister of Civil Aviation & Tourism and Minister of State for Tourism	Officers	Rs. in lakhs
1994-95	7	13	29.51
1995-96	4	13	16.11

Some of the above mentioned visits were to participate in specialised International travel marts/tourism faire such as World Travel Mart in London, ITB in Berlin, etc.

(c) It is not possible to allocate what percentage of the target is expected to be achieved as a result of such visits since promotion of tourism in the overseas tourist generating markets is a continuous process. While tourist promotion campaigns undertaken by the Minister and the officers create lot of positive image of the country in the overseas media and travel trade, the other factors that contribute to boost foreign tourist traffic are advertising and publicity, familiarisation tours to India by foreign travel agents, tour

operators, journalists, TV teams, holding of fairs and festivals, public relations etc.

The increase in the tourist traffic achieved during the last 2 years is as follows:-

1994-95	+1.9%
1995-96	+14.8%

Salary and other facilities to the staff of ITDC

3277. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN *alias* PAPPU YADAV: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that the salary and other facilities of the staff of India Tourism Development Corporation situated at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi are less than the other staff members of this Department;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the time by which the equal pay scales and other facilities are likely to be provided to these employees?

THE MINISTER FOR PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b). The cafeteria at the National Media Centre, Shastri Bhawan New Delhi has been given on contract basis to ITDC by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting on a no profit and no loss basis. The contract is valid upto 23.8.1997. To operate this cafeteria, the employees were recruited by ITDC on contract basis on a consolidated salary and are being provided other facilities as per their terms of appointment.

(c) As the operations are not run on a commercial basis, the question of providing equal pay scales and other facilities to these employees does not arise.

[English]

Deletion of Scheduled Broadcasting of Election

3278. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:
SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the election broadcast/telecast by Bhartiya Janta Party were aborted due to refusal of the Doordarshan and All India Radio because of the use of the words Vande Mataram and Jai Shri Ram during the last elections in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the rationale behind this decision; and

(c) the action taken against the defaulting officers?