

ger. Will the hon. Minister give an assure to restore the quota of 10 kilogram of wheat per unit?

MR. SPEAKER: The reply has already been given just now. 9

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR:
Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I want to know the from hon. Minister whether Government propose to set up an Export Centre between Kumaun and Bareilly Division keeping in view that much expenditure has to be incurred on transportation of rice to Delhi for onward transmission for export. If so, by when?

MR. SPEAKER: Export comes under the Ministry of Commerce. Don't link it with other things.

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR:
Mr. Speaker, Sir, rice is exported and it comes under his Ministry.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Will the Minister like to respond to this?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: There is nothing in it. I can reply to his question. He can come to me and we can talk it over with the Commerce Minister.

[Translation]

10-22

Post offices upgraded during Seventh Plan

*693. **SHRI RAM TAHAL CH-
UDHARY:** Will the Minister of COMMUNI-
CATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of post offices in various States and Union Territories upgraded during the Seventh Five Year Plan, year-wise;

(b) the number of post offices upgraded in Ranchi district of Bihar during the above period; and

(c) the details thereof

[English]

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI
P.V. RANGAYANAIDU): (a) to (c). A State-
ment is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) The information is furnished in the attached Annexure.

(b) and (c). No Post Offices were up-graded in Ranchi District of Bihar during the 7th Five Year Plan.

ANNEXURE

No. of Post Offices Upgraded During Seventh Five Year Plan

	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Total
1. North Eastern	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Himachal Pradesh	—	—	14	49	1	64
3. Haryana	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. Orissa	—	—	—	1	2	3
5. Karnataka	1	3	1	2	—	7
6. Punjab	—	1	—	—	2	3
7. Kerala	—	—	—	—	—	—
8. Rajasthan	—	—	—	—	—	—
9. Andhra Pradesh	—	1	—	1	1	3
10. Gujarat	—	—	—	—	—	—
11. Delhi	—	—	—	—	—	—
12. West Bengal	—	—	—	—	—	—
13. Maharashtra	13	2	—	—	—	15
14. Tamil Nadu	1	1	1	—	2	5

No. of Post Office Upgrades During Seventh Five Year Plan

	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Total
15. Assam	—	—	—	1	2	3
16. Madhya Pradesh	—	2	2	1	1	6
17. Jammu & Kashmir	—	—	—	—	—	—
18. Uttar Pradesh	—	—	—	—	—	—
19. Bihar	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	15	10	18	55	11	109

[Translation]

SHRI RAM TAHAL CHOUDHARY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reply given to my question is not clear. I had asked the reason for not upgrading any of the post offices of Bihar during Seventh Five Year Plan whereas many of the post offices in Ranchi District are of lower status. Why this step motherly treatment is meted out to Bihar by the Government? I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government proposes to upgrade the post offices of Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is true that the post offices of Bihar could not be upgraded because the proposals sent by their Department did not fall under those categories which were selected for the purpose of upgradation.

So far as Ranchi District is concerned, they had sent recommendations for upgrading six extra-departmental post offices. But all the six did not fulfil the prescribed norms and hence the proposal was turned down.

But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, as per the policy of the Government at least one post office will be provided to the villages within the periphery of 3 kilometres. It is also the target of our Government. We are going to cover the whole country under this policy including Bihar. The post offices of the required category will be sanctioned for Bihar.

SHRI RAM TAHAL CHOUDHARY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister might be aware that Chhota Nagpur and Santhal districts are backward and tribal areas. The villages are situated at a considerable distance. I want to know whether the Government propose to increase the number of post office in Chhota Nagpur and Santhal Districts keeping in view the distance of the villages in those districts?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: As I have said, the policy has been formulated in such a manner that nobody will have to walk more

than three kilometres for getting postal facility. However, we have to examine whether the post office will run or not. The opening of a post office will not be successful unless there is business. After considering all aspects, the Government has formulated such a policy where backward and hilly areas will be categorised separately. Three thousand of population is required to open a post office. But in hilly area, only population of 500 will serve the purpose. We have formulated the policy after taking into account all the aspects.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: What do you mean by the running of a post office. Does the post office run? Will it be decided on the basis of monetary benefit?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Sufficient postal work for at least three-four hours should be there for a person who has been employed there. What is the use of a Post Office if the sufficient postal work is not there. In rural parlance, it is called running of a Dak-Khana.

SHRI SURAJ MANDAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as a matter of rule, they have laid down a criterion to open a post-office at every 3 kilometres in the country. Shri Choudhary in his submission has made a request to provide it at within a radius 1 1/2 kilometres instead of three kilometres, particularly in Chhota Nagpur and Santhal Pargana region of Bihar because the habitation of just hundred families is considered to be a village in those areas whereas in other areas of the country a village comprises habitation of 500-1000 families. I would like to know whether the Government will consider framing separate rules in regard to opening of post-offices in the tribal areas which have been given special category status by the Central Government?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: As I said earlier, the Government's policy is to provide postal-services to the maximum number of people. In this regard the criterion fixed by the Government is in the form of guidelines only. For example, in Jaisalmer area there is no Post-Office within a radius of every three kilo-

metres as there is no village there within a range of 25 kilometres. These guidelines have been laid so as to serve as norms for opening of post offices. We shall continue to give priority to opening of Post Office depending upon the needs of the people in a particular area.

[English]

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: The upgradation of post offices is related to the question of upgradation of employees also. As you are aware, there are more than three lakh extra departmental employees. If this upgradation is made, then those ED employees also will be upgraded and they will get service there. The Government is planning to increase the number of post office. I want to know whether the Government is setting up post offices in each panchayat and upgrade the ED employees and post them in these post offices.

There is a big failure in the opening of new post offices. This has been mentioned by the CAG Report that a number of post offices were planned to be opened during the Seventh Plan but the Government has failed to open them. I want to know: what was the target and what is the achievement and why was the failure there?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: As far as upgradation is concerned, the hon. Member is very right. The moment you upgrade a post office, it means that there is a workload in that post office. So accordingly, the strength of the personnel also goes up. As far as the panchayat is concerned, I have given a thought over it that when we are connecting a panchayat with a telephone can we not have a post office in each panchayat?

But that does not work in a hexagon when you work out operational functioning of the Post Office. So, what we thought was that we will keep a distance of three kms. Within a Panchayat there may be a village which is already having a Post Office. May be that Panchayat headquarters does not

have a Post Office. Now, shifting that Post Office to the Panchayat headquarters will create a lot of problem. So, we will keep the distance criteria maintained, may be the Panchayat headquarters may not have, but the Panchayat will have. So, that is in our mind.

Regarding E.D. employees requirement, as on today, we are opening extra departmental Post Offices where we have work for three to four hours. We will employ these extra departmental employees there.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Why is it called extra-department? They are very much part of the Postal Department. Why this extra-department nomenclature? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: I agree with the hon. Member. What we thought when it was decided to put the words Extra Department, that it is a part-time job given to a citizen of that place where for three hours he works in the Post Office and for rest of the time he works in an other place. We cannot pay him the full salary. We are paying salary of Rs. 300/- or somewhere Rs. 450/- for part-time.

Then the Service Rules are such that the moment he becomes an employee, he cannot work somewhere else. But, it is also under consideration that people want to be called 'Postal Worker' instead of calling it 'Extra Departmental Worker'.

As far as these workers are concerned, till the moment we have Post Offices with the required workload all over the country, we have to continue with Extra Departmental Worker because we have Extra Departmental Post Offices. This nomenclature is connected with that work.

Regarding the Seventh Plan target, it is a fact that we did not meet the Seventh Plan target. There were some shortcomings and for this a separate question may be asked, so that I can give full information about the reasons of not fulfilling the Seventh Plan target.

SHRI MOHAMMAD YUNUS SALEEM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wonder if the hon. Minister is aware that in the good old days the postman were given uniforms for use and they were the regular employees of the Postal Department. Now, in our country, particularly in the villages, thousands of persons are employed on daily wages, and nobody can say by seeing a person that he is postman. Now, the result is that the mail is not distributed regularly in villages for eight to ten day together. One fine morning that person comes and distributes the mail money orders and disappears for another ten days. There is no discipline, there are no service rules applicable to such postman. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that these persons who are working on daily wages have been working for years together and their services have not been so far regularised? Is he going to consider to regularise their services, employ them as regular postman and supply them with uniforms so that they may be recognised as the postmen of the Department?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Sir, the basic problem, which the House will agree with me, is the culture what it was in the Department. The postman was not only serving as a postman, but he was considered to be a symbol of national integration. He was loved by the whole society and he was having that respect which was in the profession itself. We are slightly lacking in that. I accept that and that is why we initiated few steps in the Department to have on-the-job training. It is not only the salary and the job, but the personal touch which was there. Family must be expecting a letter, family must be expecting a money-order, that sincerity was in that profession earlier, which is slightly lacking in the Department, I accept that. We are taking some steps to bring that culture back. We are giving them proper training, we are making them feel that this is service. This is not only that you get a salary and you do a job as a salaried person, but you must get attached to the locality. They must know the locality's feeling and locality's requirement.

As far as efficiency in mail is concerned, we do a test trial. We see how much time it takes from one corner of the country to the other corner of the country, from the remote village to the remote village. In the test trial, it is coming to four to five days as on today. One odd case which the hon. Member has mentioned, I can look into it, but we are trying to bring it to three days where mail could be delivered anywhere to anywhere. Efforts are on. It is a long process. Improvement is needed but more efforts are needed in this sector and we are trying on this.

As regards the daily-wage workers, I have said that the daily wages thing is because the Extra-Departmental category workers are being employed on a part time basis. It is very difficult to regularise all the workers because the workload is not that much as it should be for being a regular employee of the Department.

SHRI MOHAMMAD YUNUS SALEEM: That is not correct, I am sorry.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: I can share the information with the hon. Member in case he has something by which we can improve the system.

As regards uniform, uniform is given to all the postal employees. We are trying to bring that culture also where they go in uniform and do the postal service.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, does the upgradation of post offices mean upgradation of the working conditions of the postmen? If it is so, then recently your Department has taken a decision that after 15th of September, the postmen will not go to the first floor and second floor, that is, they will not climb any staircase. Will the hon. Minister please revise that decision and cancel it?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: This is one of the suggestions that in a multi-storeyed building, just to have more efficiency and fast delivery, we will have a delivery place. Instead of going to every house and taking two hours to deliver at one location itself, we

thought that we will request the resident of that locality that they can have the post box available on the first floor or on the ground floor itself where the whole mail could be delivered. This is one of the suggestions which comes from various forums as a food for thought and we are discussing it. We have not taken any decision on that line but it is one of the suggestions to improve the service.

We have also taken a decision- I forgot to mention during the earlier question- to start and award for the best postman of the quarter at the Division level, not at the big Circle level. We can select the best postman out of, say, 1,000 postmen or 1,500 postmen and give some incentive to him so that he works better and there is a competition in the Department to improve the service.

[Translation] 21

SHRI MOHANLAL JHIKRAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, earlier a bogie of the Railway Mail Service used to be attached to the passenger trains with a letter box in it. This arrangement was very convenient for the people. But now that arrangement has been done away with. Would the hon. Minister be pleased to state the reason for discontinuing the Railway mail Service?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: That has not been abolished completely. Earlier the process of sorting mail used to take place in the train itself. Now a change has been introduced in this system. Sorting work is done first and the sorted articles are packed in the bogie in order to carry those directly to the destination. If the hon. Member requires details regarding this, he should put a separate question. 21

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI: The hon. Minister has made provision for opening Post Office at every kilometre in hill areas. The same geographical conditions exist in plateau areas of Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Topography, living conditions and means of communication in this region are the same

as in hill areas. Will the hon. Minister be pleased to state whether the criterion laid down for hilly areas will be followed in the case of the plateau areas of Bundelkhand also?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: We do not have objection to this if the geographical conditions are the same. We shall consider their case under the existing guidelines.

[English] 22

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: Sir, there is a need for extension of services rather than upgrading them. First of all, I would like to know whether at present there is any order against the opening of Extra-Departmental post offices in very thickly populated urban areas.

If there is I would like to know from the Government whether they can sanction departmental sub-post offices at places where the departmental post offices cannot ensure delivery, particularly at places where the pressure of growing population warrants it. The sub-post offices can serve the purpose which the departmental post office cannot do.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Sir, I have already said that there are some guidelines to open these post offices, sub-post offices and extra departmental post offices. But these are the guidelines only. There is nothing that-alright, there is a guideline and nothing could go one centimetre this side or that side. This is basically to the service of the citizen. Wherever the hon. Member feels that this service is required in this form, the Department is prepared to open a post office in this category.

[Translation] 22-30

Implementation of Assam Accord

*694. SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state: