

private sector and leading experts from academic and research institutes, has been formed. Sunder Rajan Committee report will form the input material for the consideration of the 'Strategic Planning Group'. There is no proposal as yet to scrap the present system of allotment of retail outlets and LPG agencies.

[Translation]

Telephone Exchanges in Bihar

3519. SHRI PREM CHAND RAM : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of telephone exchanges opened and converted into electronic exchanges in Bihar during 1994-95, separately;

(b) whether the Government propose to open more electronic telephone exchanges and convert the remaining exchanges into electronic exchanges in the State during 1995; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) Number of new telephone exchanges opened=33 Number of telephone exchanges converted into electronic = 7.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) During the year 1995-96, it is planned to open 30 numbers of electronic telephone exchanges and to convert three numbers of electro-mechanical exchanges. The remaining two numbers of electro-mechanical exchanges will be converted into electronic when they have lived their useful life.

Telephone Exchanges in Maharashtra

3520. DR. GUNVANT RAMBHAU SARODE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to increase the number of telephone lines in the existing telephone exchanges in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details of those exchanges; and

(c) the estimated expenditure to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 20,36,556 lines of Net Switching Capacity are planned to be added during 8th Five Year Plan in Maharashtra including MTNL Bombay. 9,79,298 lines have been added so far. 10,57,258 lines are proposed to be added during the remaining period of 8th Five

Year Plan. The No. of exchanges to be expanded or added depends upon availability of different types of equipment and demand in particular location and is decided on year to year basis.

(c) An estimated expenditure of about Rs. 4900 crores is to be incurred for additional lines in Maharashtra including MTNL Bombay during 8th Plan.

[English]

Telephone Services in West Bengal

3521. SHRI SUBRATA MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any steps are being taken to improve the telephone services in West Bengal, particularly in North Bengal districts; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) Yes, Sir. It is a continuous process.

(b) (i) Out of 496 exchanges in West Bengal State, 481 exchanges have already been converted into electronic exchanges in which North Bengal districts. Out of 114 exchanges, 110 exchanges have already been converted into electronic exchanges. All the exchanges are working satisfactorily.

(ii) 19.5 thousand new lines is proposed to be installed during 1995-96 in North Bengal Area out of which some of the equipment will be used for replacing the old exchange lines.

(iii) S.T.D. facilities will be commissioned for remaining stations of North Bengal during the year 1995-96 subject to the availability of equipment and accommodation.

Commemorative Stamp

3522. DR. R. SRIDHARAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any representations for issue of commemorative stamp in the honour of Mr. Wilhelm Cunard Roentgen who had discovered X-Ray;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). It has been decided to issue a stamp on Mr. Wilhelm Cunard Roentgen in 1995 to mark the 100 years of Discovery of X-Ray.