

[English]

Autonomous Council

1703. DR. JAYANTA RONGPI : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Union Government are aware of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Government of Assam and the Representative Movement Organisations of Autonomous Districts of Assam on April 1, 1995 in the presence of Union Home Minister;

(b) if so, the details of the M.O.U. especially in regards to planning and finance of the Autonomous Councils of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills; and

(c) the details of the steps taken by the Union Government to implement the clauses of M.O.U.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS : (SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The MOU provides for exercise of executive powers in respect of a larger number of subjects and also additional legislative powers to be conferred on the two Autonomous councils under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution with a view to providing greater autonomy to them within the State of Assam. As regards Planning and Finance, it is provided in the MOU that the State Government will, before the beginning of the financial year, give an indication to the Councils of the overall financial allocations for them. The Councils will, thereafter, prepare and pass their own budget and forward it to the State Government for being included in the overall State Budget. Ordinarily, no change will be made in the budget as proposed by the Councils. However, if for any reason it becomes necessary to do so, the Councils would be consulted and would be explained the reasons for the change.

In the finalisation of the Annual Plan, for the discussions with the Planning Commission, officers of the councils would be included in the State delegation.

A suitable mechanism will be evolved to monitor the adequacy and promptitude in release to the Councils by the State Government of funds meant for the Councils.

(c) While the MOU is to be largely implemented by the State Government, the Union Government, has since obtained the approval of the Parliament to the amendment to the Sixth Schedule of the constitution providing for exercise of greater legislative powers by these two councils in the State of Assam. The amendment also provides for exercise of discretionary powers by the Governor of Assam in respect of matters specifically indicated.

[Translation]

Annual Budget of SPG

1704. SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria) : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the annual budget of the Special Protection Groups at present;

(b) the amount spent by the Government on the security of the very important and important persons during each of the last two years and the current year so far;

(c) whether the Government propose to cut down such expenditure;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : (a) The annual budget of the SPG for 1995-96 is Rs.31.90 crores.

(b) Information is being collected.

(c) to (e). The need for security and scale of security arrangements are reviewed periodically. This is a continuing exercise. The security arrangements are modified/withdrawn as warranted from time to time.

Conversion of Telephone Exchanges

1705. SHRI N.J. RATHVA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of manual X-bar telephone exchanges converted into electronic exchanges so far, State-wise;

(b) whether any target has been fixed for providing telephone facility during the remaining period of Eighth Five Year Plan;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any criteria have been fixed for providing S.T.D. facility in the tribal/rural/backward/urban areas;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) to (c). The information is given in the enclosed statement in remaining 2 years of the Eighth Five Year Plan (1995-97), it is planned to provide about 62 lakhs New Telephone Connections in the country subject to availability of equipment and other resources.

The location of an Exchange, however, depends upon the capacity of existing system and fresh demand and is worked out on year to year basis.