

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) The channel is already quite popular among Malayalee population in the Gulf countries.

(b) to (d). DD-4 is telecasting 14 hours of programmes per day at present. However, due to constraints of resources, manpower and other infrastructural facilities, it is not possible to increase its telecasting time for the present.

[Translation]

Telephone network in rural areas with foreign capital

3348. SHRI NITISH KUMAR :
JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to use foreign capital resources for telephone network in rural areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have taken any steps for the foreign capital investment so far in this regard;

(d) if so, the details of the foreign capital investment made till July, 1996; and

(e) the target fixed for total foreign capital investment in rural areas during 1996-97?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (e). Seven Indian registered companies having foreign equity (as detailed in attached statement) have been given LOIs (Letters of Intent) for providing Basic Telephone Service including Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in ten Telecom Circles. As per their roll out plan submitted alongwith the bids they propose to provide 1,55,590 Village Public Telephones in first three years. No licence has been issued till date to any of the LOI holders, and hence the question of foreign capital investment and its target does not arise.

STATEMENT

Name of the Bidder	Name of the Circles for which LOI issue	Foreign Equity percentage	Village Public Telephone to be provided by private operator in first 3 years
M/s. Basic Tele-services Ltd.	Tamil Nadu	25% to 49%	3904
M/s. HFCL BEZEO Telecom Ltd.	Delhi U.P. (West) Haryana Orissa	41%	NIL 38783 1931 39500
M/s. Tata Tele-services Ltd.	Andhra Pradesh	10%	9635
M/s. Techno Telecom Ltd.	Bihar	15%	22000
M/s. Essar Comm- vision	Punjab	10%	5442
M/s. Reliance Telecom.	Gujarat	10%	8635
M/s. Hughes Ispat Ltd.	Maharashtra	40%	25760

Lack of Telephone facilities in Madhya Pradesh

3349. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULESTE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that Telephone facilities are lacking in the tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh, particularly in Mandla and Bilaspur districts;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps being taken for its improvement;

(c) whether the Government propose to connect all tehsil Headquarters with Mandla District Headquarters by Telephone; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b). The telephone facilities in tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh including tribal areas of Mandla and Bilaspur districts are adequate. The existing status and plan for expansion of telephone exchange systems in these areas is given in *Statement*.

(c) and (d). Yes, Sir. Mandla, Niwas and Dindori are the three Tehsils in Mandla district Dindori THQ is already connected to Mandla DHQ through Satellite System. Niwas THQ has been planned to be connected to Mandla DHQ through Satellite.

STATEMENT

The existing status and plan for expansion of telephone exchange systems in the Tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh, Mandla District and Bilaspur District

S. No.	District	Existing Status			Plan 1996-97	
		Existing cap.	DELs	Waiting List	Net Cap. addition	DELs addition
1.	Mandla (tribal area)	368	308	0	480	288
2.	Bilaspur (tribal area)	3464	2002	2006	1456	874
3.	Madhya Pradesh (Tribal area)	150638	108811	5213	7800	5600

Telephone connection on Medical ground

3350. DR. G.R. SARODE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have provided telephone on Medical Ground;

(b) if so, the criteria rules for the allotment;

(c) whether the temporary telephone connections have been provided to the applicants on the Medical Ground after their registration under general specific category;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether the Government propose to abolish this system.

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

(b) Temporary connection on medical grounds can be given for six months on double the rental charges. If extension of temporary connection on medical grounds is required beyond six months, applicant has to register for a telephone connection.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) It is felt that six months period is sufficient for a temporary requirement of a telephone connection. If a

subscriber wants a telephone connection beyond six months, he should therefore register for a telephone connection.

(e) No, Sir.

Reduction in Excise Duty

3351. JUSTICE GUMAN LAL LODHA :
PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have recently announced reduction in the excise duty for the steel industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether despite this announcement the steel producing units will have to pay more amount as excise duty in comparison to last year;

(d) if so, the major reason therefor; and

(e) whether the price of Indian Steel is likely to go up in the World Market because of increase in the excise duty?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.