

ments of the Government of India is under consideration. As regards Department of Telecom, there is no scheme of having second time bound promotion after 26 years. However, the scheme of biennial cadre reviews for relieving the stagnation in technical and allied cadres in Group 'C' and 'D' has recently been approved and is under implementation.

(b) The second time bound promotion scheme under consideration in the Department of Posts is self-financing. Matching savings will be provided to off-set the extra expenditure.

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

Indo-Soviet Friendship

1349. SHRI G.S. BASAVARAJ: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether USSR had assured full support to India on Kashmir issue during the Prime Minister's recent visit to USSR;

(b) whether India's friendship with Soviet Union has further strengthened by this visit; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) Yes, Sir. During the PM's recent visit to the Soviet Union the Soviet leaders expressed their full understanding and support for India's stand on Kashmir.

(b) and (c). Yes, Sir. The visit has further cemented the bonds of friendship and close cooperation between our two countries and opened new vistas for future cooperation.

[*Translation*]

Telephone Service in Mandi and Shimla Districts

1350. SHRI MAHESHWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of telephone exchanges in Mandi and Shimla districts which remained out of order during 1 January, 1990 to 15 July, 1990 and the period for which these exchanges remained out of order and the reasons therefor separately; and

(b) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) No exchange remained out of order during 11.90 to 15.7.1990 in Mandi and Shimla districts. However there have been interruptions on trunk lines connecting the following exchanges to their parent trunk exchange due to land slides.

Shimla District

SARAHAN 20.5.90 to 5.6.90

DOFDA 20.5.90 to 10.6.90

Mandi District

Nil

(b) As a long term measure, the open wire lines are planned to be replaced by radio systems which are more reliable even in adverse weather conditions.

Connecting of Kulu District by S.T.D.

1351. SHRI MAHESHWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work to link Kulu District through S.T.D. with remaining parts of the country is in progress; and

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be-completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) By March, 1991.

Alternative Road to Link Kulu District

1352. SHRI MAHESHWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Highway No. 21 is closed several times between Mandi and Manali due to land slides during the rainy season and Kullu and Lahaul Spiti

Districts are cut off from the rest of the country from traffic point of view;

(b) if so, the number of times that Highway remained closed during 1990 and the number of days for which it remained closed each-time;

(c) whether there is any proposal to link the Kulu district with other parts of the country by an alternative road;

(d) whether any suggestions have been received in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. National Highway 21 between Mandi and Manali remained closed in different stretches as under as informed by the State PWD:—

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Date of closer</i>	<i>Duration of closure (days)</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
1.	9.2.90 & 10.2.90	1/2 day
2.	13.2.90 & 14.2.90	1/2 day
3.	1.3.90	3/4 day
4.	20.3.90 & 27.3.90	7 1/2 days
5.	25.6.90	1/6 day
6.	9.7.90 to 13.7.90	4 1/2 days
7.	15.7.90	1/12 day
8.	28.7.90 to 30.7.90	1 1/2 day

(c) to (e). While no proposal has been received from the State Govt., a suggestion has been received for developing the link from Mandi to Bajaura via Katuala and Kandi

to serve as an alternative route to Kullu which has been referred to the State Government.