

Telephone Facilities in Villages

1035. SHRI HUSSAIN DALWAI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of villages in the country which are presently covered by telephone facilities ;

(b) the time by which Government propose to cover the entire rural area with telephone net work ;

(c) whether any time-bound programme has been chalked out by his Ministry in that direction ; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) 21,310 villages in the country are having telephone facility i.e. Long Distance Public Telephone as on 15.1.85.

(b) The telephone facility is likely to become accessible within five kilometres to most of the habitations in the country progressively by 1990.

(c) Yes, Sir. A tentative programme has been formulated. This however will be subject to availability of financial and material resources.

(d) The telephone facility is planned to be extended progressively to principle villages in 23,000 Hexagons of 5 KMs side each during the 7th Five Year Plan period 1985-90, subject to availability of financial resources and material.

Opening of branch Post Offices in the village of Jaisalmer Barmer, Joohpur and Nagaur Districts of Rajasthan

1036. SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Union Government propose to open branch post offices in villages having a population of one thousand or more in Jaisalmer, Barmer, Jodhpur and Nagaur Districts, the most backward areas in Rajasthan, on the basis of the 1981 census so as to provide direct communication link between the rural masses of the area and the rest of the country; and

(b) if so, whether this will be done during the current year and 1985-86 ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) Shiv Pachpaha and Chohtan Tehsil of Barmer District, Jaisalmer and Pokharan Tehsils of Jaisalmer district, Phalodi, Oslanm, Shergarh and Jodhpur Tehsils of Jodhpur district are considered as backward areas for the purpose of postal development where the relaxed norms of opening of post office in a cluster of villages having a population of 1000 or more within a radius of 1.5 kms apply.

(b) Post Offices are opened progressively in a phased manner subject to availability of funds. During 1985-86 opening of requisite number of post offices in these areas will be considered subject to the availability of fund and lifting of economy ban on creation of new post.

Safety of Ammonia Storage Installation of fact at Ernakulam

1037. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Will Bhopal be repeated in Cochin" appeared in the 'Financial Express', New Delhi on the 9th March, 1985 ; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken to dispel the widespread apprehension on the safety of Fertilizer and Chemicals Travancore Ltd's (FACT) ammonia storage installation at the Wellington Island, Ernakulam ?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) To dispel the widespread apprehension on the safety of Fertilizer and Chemicals Travancore Ltd's Ammonia storage installation at the Wellington Island, Ernakulam, the Press was taken around the installation on 1st March, 1985. After seeing the installation and the safety and monitoring arrangements, the press were satisfied that the fears of the general public about the safety of the tank were unfounded.

Representations of extra Departmental Employees of Posts and Telegraphs Department

1038. SHRI B.B. RAMAIAH : Will the